

On the Impacts of “Neo-Taoism of the Wei and Jin Periods”

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Abstract

Neo-Taoism of the Wei and Jin periods exerted extensive impacts in different aspects of academia. This article focuses its discussion on three such areas: philosophy, interpretive theories, and political science and sociology.

Probably because of historical coincidence, or probably because of their similarity in essence or in form, Neo-Taoism connected itself with, and consequently absorb the essence of, Buddhism. In addition to the Ge-Yi Buddhism in the initial stage, Neo-Taoism continued to inspire the subsequent development in Buddhist theories and disciplines, such as the establishment of the Yuan-Jiao Model, representations in Zen, and so on. This article cites the example of Dao-An to illustrate the interactions between Neo-Taoism and Buddhism. It also points out Neo-Taoism's influences on Buddhism with such academic terminology as manifestation (體用), one-to-multiple (一多) and so forth.

Multiple Neo-Taoism was a continuation of Neo-Taoism on the basis of Taoism and Neo-Taoism. It reached its culmination with Cheng Xun-ying's insightful approaches to self-cultivation (修養論), and progressive development in perspectives (境界義) in Tang Dynasty.

Through the proposal of new conceptualization and terminology, Neo-Taoism of the Wei and Jin periods has enriched the nature of philosophy, developed its methods of thinking, and upgraded its quality of argumentation. With the breakthrough in conceptualization and methods of interpretation, it connected itself with the study of interpretation in the West. All these revealed the innovativeness of Neo-Taoism of the Wei and Jin periods.

As for its contribution or impacts on the political science and sociology, no consensus has ever been reached over the centuries. Yet, positive views have been increasing with time. With more education of the general public, Neo-Taoism political science has also demonstrated greater explanatory power and value.

Keywords: Neo-Taoism, Ge-Yi, Multiple Neo-Taoism, conceptualization