

The Concept of Balance in Taoist Trade: Yin Yang in Economic and Social Interactions

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Abstract. This paper describes one of the religions in ethnic Chinese known as Taoism, which is a teaching derived from the book of God. This teaching teaches Godhead, namely worshipping and recognizing the existence of Thian, known as the almighty God and worshipping many gods and goddesses. The purpose of this research is to reveal the conception of sustenance in business for Taoists contained in Siu Tao. This research was conducted at Taokwan Sinar Damai, a Taoist association in Makassar City, South Sulawesi Province. This research used a qualitative-descriptive method. Data collection was carried out using in-depth interview techniques to Taokwan administrators and congregations, observations, and also supported by literature studies. The results of this study show that the form of seeking sustenance through business is trading materials, jewelry, and worship. In Taoist belief, seeking sustenance requires a balance known as the Yin Yang symbol, or what is conceptualized as a binary opposition.

Keywords: Belief; Tao; sustenance; business; Yin Yang; binary opposition

1 Introduction

Koentjaraningrat [1] views religion as a system he called a "religious system" whose essence consists of four components, namely (1) Religious emotions that cause humans to have religious feelings and spirit; (2) The belief system or belief system includes all beliefs primarily in God and supernatural life, including value systems and moral norms; (3) The rite system as an effort by man to establish relationships and approach God and his attitude towards the environment; (4) Social solidarity or social system. Religion is divided into five aspects or dimensions, namely: (1) The dimension of belief; (2) The dimension of worship; (3) The dimension of passion; (4) The dimension of experience; and (5) Knowledge dimensions.

It is undeniable that Taoism has existed ±5000 years starting from the day of Huangdi (Yellow Emperor), then popularized and developed since Lao Zi and inaugurated as a religion by Zhang Daoling. In studying the Tao, we depart from ourselves without being represented by others to live the Tao. Tao exists in everyday life, therefore Taoists must be normal human beings, whole people. The whole person is a human being who knows, understands and understands and little by little implements the principles/concepts of humanity, society, association, society that is flexible and correct and does not deviate from worldly life.

As a creature of faith, humans understand that in living life, sustenance is an inseparable aspect, which is believed to come from God Almighty. Therefore, in praying, a servant of God

not only asks for the salvation of the hereafter, but also requests to be given good sustenance obtained through good and abundant means. However, sustenance is a concept that is further understood not only as things that refer to finances – such as money including profit – but the entire gift of God Almighty. This last understanding, shows that sustenance either as a word, term, or concept is something that cannot be separated from God in a religious teaching. Taoist religion is no exception [2].

Etymologically, Tao means way or road in which there is certainly a direction, rule, and principle, which further makes the word Tao understood as Tao itself, as philosophy, as religion, and as divinity [3]. Taoist religious teachings that focus on the goodness of the soul order, make people have a balanced attitude in living life, especially in order to get sustenance.

Although in essence sustenance – both as a term and as a concept – refers to the entire gift of God Almighty, humans as servants are still required to always try to find sustenance in addition to managing and developing the sustenance that God has given. The manifestation of these efforts is then reflected in various types of work, which is, none other than showing the same understanding in every religious teaching about the conception of sustenance itself. Of course, Taoists are no exception, because in everyday life we can find them also trying, together with adherents of other religious teachings, to get sustenance. On the other hand, in order to realize these efforts, or when working as a manifestation of these efforts, especially interactions between humans and interactions between humans, become significant. Because through this we will be able to collect more sustenance than has been given, or in other words as the realization of the form of business, which is summarized in economic, business, and industrial terms. Social interaction thus becomes an inseparable part of the conception of sustenance even though it is essentially, or even is, derived from God [4].

The study that will be held, making adherents of Taoist teachings in Makassar City as the object of study, focusing on; a form of effort in order to obtain sustenance and a model of social interaction between entrepreneurs who adhere to Taoist religious teachings with similar entrepreneurs and who adhere to religious teachings other than Tao. Through the study that will be held, it is expected to form knowledge about the views of Taoists through social interaction in building business relations among Taoists and religious teachings outside Tao.

2 Research Method

This research was held in Makassar City for five months with the study location at Taokwan Sinar Damai Temple. In the research process, three data collection techniques were applied, namely; observation techniques, in-depth interview techniques, and literature study techniques. The data results are then analyzed by applying taxonomic analysis techniques.

Observation techniques are applied to understand social situations by identifying three things, namely; activities, actors, and events. In the process of collecting data, this technique is applied by observing various worship activities, Taoist and Taoist leaders, in addition to materials related to Taoist worship at Taokwan Sinar Damai Temple, located on Jalan Flores Number 04-Makassar City. In-depth interview techniques are applied to understand the knowledge that informants possess. In the process of data collection, this technique was applied to understand the concept of sustenance understood among Taoists, namely those who became informants with the main criteria of Taoists, with a total of 15 informants. With regard to data or understanding sourced from the application of literature study techniques in the research held,

it is not understood as additional or secondary data but primary or primary, at the level of data obtained through the application of observation techniques and in-depth interviews. This is because the literature in question is a Taoist teaching guide given by informants.

Taxonomic data analysis techniques are understanding certain domains according to the focus of the problem or research target. This research focuses on the concept of sustenance among Taoists, in establishing interactions with business developed in Taoists thus, domains related to the conception are then analyzed.

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Form of Business and Effort in Seeking Sustenance

The business carried out by Taoists in Makassar City is the same as the various types of businesses carried out in general, both by adherents of other religions, and by residents in other cities in Indonesia. The business in question is a business engaged in general trade, which is where there is an event of buying and selling services and materials that are part of general needs, and not in the industrial field where the manufacturing process is the core in the production stage. However, in this field, it does not mean that what is a common need is then viewed in the context of its legality, because there are certain materials that are not considered true in other religious teachings, as well as certain materials that are not allowed by the government. For the purposes of this study, the review of the form of business in question then only refers to trade in the field of building materials, the field of restaurants, and the field of supporting materials of worship.

3.2 Trading in the field of Building Materials

Commodities in the field of building materials, are as in general, such as stone, sand, glass, paint, and other materials in the construction of buildings. Therefore, there is no peculiarity in this field, in contrast to the trade that takes place in the material field of worship. However, trade in the field of building materials is unique, because then there is a pattern of social interaction that is devoted to maintaining relationships for business. It is undeniable that there are no restrictions on building material traders adhering to a particular religion, unlike in the field of worship. Resource owners or producers, distributors, and even consumers are very likely to have different faith backgrounds.

3.3 Trade in Jewellery

In seeking sustenance, it is very visible in the jewelry trade, because it has great advantages, both in the sense that it can be stored for a long time without reducing prices, besides it will still be purchased because it is used as a dowry, gift, investment, or for various other purposes. Huge profits are the main reason for gold sellers in Makassar City, especially for the Taokwan Sinar Damai congregation, which is why the traders establish cooperation – in a business context – friendship – in a social context – with the aim of business continuity. This is based on the statement of informant.

3.4 Trade in the field of Worship Materials

Unlike the two previous forms of commerce, trade in the field of worship is special, because it refers to what is believed in Taoist teachings. The commodities traded are also special, such as incense, firecrackers and mercon, and wedding equipment or for other special events such as Chinese New Year, Cap go me, and the great day of the Gods. Not only incense, firecrackers, mercon, as part of worship materials, there is also the placement of statues made directly by Taoists. In this context, the statue trade refers to one's skill in making statues and not selling statues, because informants are invited to stay together in the temple until the task of making statues and writings is completed.

3.5 Social Interaction to Support Business

Social interaction is important in running a business, both in the form of trade and industry, because the essence of business is the relationship between resource owners, producers, distributors, and consumers. This is because Taoists establish and maintain social interaction between Taoists and between religious people, both individually and in groups.

Relating to social interaction to support the business, informants believe in accordance with Taoist teachings, that it is related to sustenance. The beliefs of these informants are then understood through the application of ipan yu wo, which is done by building social interaction, strengthening it, and maintaining it. Ipan yu wo is interpreted by Taoists as half of human beings whose other half belongs to the god. This means that what is on earth is all the entrustment of the gods and goddesses embodied in benevolent deeds. In fact, this belief is not only applied among Taoists in Makassar City, but also with Taoists outside Makassar City and even South Sulawesi Province, both personally and communally, and with other religious communities with the same emphasis.

3.6 Yourself

In Taoism life is understood as flowing water, which means that in life there are good and bad, which a Taoist or devotee is obliged to live with attitudes categorized as good. These attitudes, including complete belief in the goddess, compassion or selflessness, patience and steadfastness and humility, earnest or sincere in living life, being thrifty, and other attitudes that basically refer to goodness that will later form self-virtue. This is then because Taoism focuses on 'self-bearing', which therefore makes self-existence a central part of Taoism, which is certainly the result of an understanding of Taoist teachings. Understand the understanding of 'self-bearing', therefore, its application in business does not only occur when the business is run but in the totality of life itself. For Taoists or devotees, this refers to 'self-bearing' in all life activities, where of course social interaction will occur.

3.7 Seeking God in the Clan

Taoists worship gods. The three main Gods, namely Mahadeva Thay Shang Lao Jun (the highest and oldest title, is also the incarnation of Yuán Shǐ Tiān Zūn (元始天尊), which means the Earliest, the Most Glorified) Er Lang Shen (The noble and powerful warrior God who kills and conquers demons and monsters in the mortal realm and who embodies justice and righteousness, and Jiu Tian Xuan Nu (a high-ranking goddess in Taoism known as the Goddess who created humans and patched up the heavens). In addition, there are also Tian Shang Sheng Mu (Ma Zu) (The goddess of the sea who helps sailors, and the protector of ethnic Chinese in the South and immigrants in Southeast Asia), Wang Mu Niang Niang, Xuan Tian Shang Di (The goddess known in Chinese mythology as the Goddess who governs the western heaven and also known as the Queen par Dewi who guards and governs the Goddesses), Fu De Zheng Shen (God of earth and prosperity and merit), Guan Sheng Di Jun (Supreme King of God who is

famous for being worshipped by many people), Cai Shen Ye (God who rules over wealth, wealth, or sustenance in Chinese mythology), Yue Lao Shen (God of marriage and love in Chinese mythology), and many more.

Asking for blessings to the deity and goddess can be done by praying. Taoist prayer is a form of religious activity. Praying comes from the words worship and yang (hyang), which means to worship God or Gods. Generally, every year Chinese people perform Chinese New Year prayers, ce it and cap go prayers, and cengbeng prayers. This cengbeng tradition is carried out from generation to generation to pay homage to the ancestors. The symbolic meaning of ancestral worship is reminiscent of a Chinese proverb that reads "drinking water must remember its source". The saying means that people should be grateful for the life lived now by remembering and honoring our ancestors because we would not have been born in this world if it were not for our parents and ancestors. People generally always pray for the protection of God or gods because people only understand and know the present situation, while the future does not know the least. If you encounter difficulties, there is always a thought of praying. The underprivileged want to change their fortunes, the rich want to be richer, the sick want to recover quickly, so all pray.

3.8 Charity Virtue

Charity (kongte), or what is termed kongte, is the pleasure of the Lord Goddess towards Taoists who maintain 'self-bearing' and always ask the God Goddess. Related to 'self-bearing', going back to the informant's previous statement about ipan yu wo and ipan yu kien, thus social interaction becomes the main media. Related to invoking the Lord Goddess, refers to praying, almsgiving, including sharing to the needy.

There are four meanings of Tao, namely First, Tao as Tao, in the sense of formless Tao, that is, "something" that existed before everything existed. The simplest Taoist meaning is "Way". There are also those who mean "Logic", Law, Guidelines, Rules. Tao is the true path of truth, rules, norms, ways, teachings to eternal perfection; Secondly, Tao as a philosophy is very popular and his most famous book is Tao Tek Cing, the work of Laozi, as a Taoist Great Prophet; Third, Tao as Taoist Religion, is the oldest religion in the World. His teachings started from the time of Huang Ti almost 5000 years ago, and were developed by Lao Zi (Thay Sang Lauw Cin) realized as a religion by Thay Sang Lauw Cin's disciple named Zhang Tao Ling; Fourth, Tao as a Spiritual Science. Taoist guidelines that are always harmonious in harmony with nature and balanced according to the symbol of Yin Yang, make Taoist spirituality not only concerned with spiritual matters, but also worldliness. Training body and soul, combining science with religion. This Taoist religion is a religion of divinity, which is to worship and acknowledge the existence of Tian / le Huang Ta Ti / the Almighty / God.

3.9 Balance in Seeking Sustenance

The essence of Taoism is the balance of life, where each person is able to carry out 'self-bearing' in various aspects, contexts, or lines of life, while maintaining a relationship with God and nature, with one goal being to obtain blessings or kongte. Therefore, the conception of balance in question then refers not only to spiritual issues alone, but also to various life problems, including in business where the conception of sustenance is located.

Balance in Taoism is symbolized through the concept of Yin Yang. In this symbol, life is interpreted as a circle which essentially consists of two parts, namely Yin - symbolized by white - as the part that represents the element of goodness and Yang - symbolized by black - as the part that represents the element of evil, where in the part Yin is found t Yang – symbolized as a small black circle – and vice versa in the Yang section Yin – symbolized as a small circle of

white color – to show that the complexity of life, which is by cause The balance of both, Yin and Yang, is the best way of living.

This understanding, makes the concept of Yin Yang has a breadth in meaning, which is certainly present in all aspects of human life, not least in the business context where the conception of sustenance is located. This breadth of Yin Yang's meaning, thus, contributes to the broad concept of balance, emphasizing that "if all matters are in correct proportion and alignment, heaven's energy will flow correctly and human prosperity will increase" [5].

The conception of Yin Yang has been formed along with the formation of Taoist or Taoist teachings. In the scientific realm, this concept is known in the concept of binary opposition, which is contained in the perspective of structuralism introduced by the French anthropologist named Claude Lévi-Strauss. Binary opposition is understood as an ontological issue, where reality in life is bound by a single law, in which the law consists of two opposites. Although Lévi-Strauss was not a Taoist, nor did he make Taoism part of the focus of his studies, binary opposition was the scientific aspect of Yin Yang, because it also emphasized the existence of two opposites, as Lévi-Strauss explained cooking and raw as well as natural and fermentation. However, because it is in the scientific realm – especially in the anthropological realm – it is important for every ontological question to be referred to methodological issues, including binary opposition [6].

4 Conclusion

In seeking sustenance, Taoists are familiar with the concepts of ipan yu wo and ipan yu kien which emphasize self-bearing, supplication to the Lord Goddess, and charity. The existence of this concept is through trade, which focuses on the fields of building materials, jewelry, and worship. The trading model takes place in social interactions that are not only focused on fellow Taoists but also on citizens with other religious teachings. However, the core of such interactions – and in general in the context of seeking sustenance – is balance, symbolized as Yin Yang. This equilibrium, is part of the laws of nature, as it is labeled as binary opposition.

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