

CHU VĂN TUẤN\*

**OBJECTS OF WORSHIP IN SOME TAOIST  
ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE RED RIVER DELTA AT  
PRESENT**

***Abstract:** Currently, some Taoist places of worship have appeared in the Red River Delta area (also known as Taoist temples, where worshipping Taoist deities and Taoist practices). Some Taoist places of worship are new establishments, some have been rebuilt based on the religious existing establishments such as Ba Chua Vuc Temple in Hung Yen. Through surveying these Taoist places of worship, the article focuses on introducing objects of worship or Taoist deities at three establishments. Thereby, this paper contributes to research on the current situation of Taoism in Vietnam.*

***Keywords:** Taoism; object of worship; Taoist places of worship; Taoist temples; Red River Delta.*

**Introduction**

Recently, some Taoist worship establishments have appeared in the Northern Delta region. Some of them are completely new constructions, the others have evolved from existing places of worship<sup>1</sup>. It can be said that these Taoist establishment are really Taoist places of worship that cannot be confused with other worship establishments such as communal temples, shrines, Buddhist temples, etc. In my opinion, they were methodically built from the object of worship to the arrangement and the practice of the ritual. This phenomenon is worth researching because the appearance of Taoist worshipping establishments in recent years has important meanings.

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\* Institute for Religious Studies, Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences.  
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Firstly, it shows the revival of Taoism, which is a religion that was introduced to Vietnam for a long time, only existed in the people's beliefs through activities and practices. It does not like religions such as Buddhism or Catholicism. The previous Taoist temples were converted into communal temples, shrines, Buddhist temples for a long time, so people can't imagine what a Taoist temple is like, what are the objects of worship, and how the rituals take place.

Next, the appearance of Taoist establishments has shown the transformation from temples to Taoist temples as in the case of the Ba Chua Vuc Temple. These are certainly interesting research topics. In addition, the appearance of the aforementioned Taoist establishments also poses problems for the state management of belief and religious activities.

Based on the survey results of 3 Taoist establishments in the Red River Delta today such as Son Nam Temple (Ba Chua Vu Temple), Tam Quan Temple, and Luong Son Temple (Lương Sơn tiên quán<sup>2</sup>), the author initially indicates the worshipping objects at these 3 establishments, as well as, some comparisons and comments on the objects of worship and the arrangement at the 3 establishments.

### **1. An overview of some Taoists temples in the Red River Delta today**

#### ***Lương Sơn tiên quán (Lương Sơn Temple)***

This Taoist temple is in Luong Son district, Hoa Binh province, about 45 km from Hanoi. Luong Son Tien Quan was founded and built by daoshi Nguyen Tong Nhue, one of few Taoist monks in Vietnam today. This Taoist temple was formed two years ago and is still in the process of construction and completion. Unlike some other Taoist temples, the objects of worship are arranged in the caves. Compared to Son Nam quan (Ba Chua Vuc Temple) and Tam Quan quan, Luong Son Tien Quan has a large worship space, its objects of worship are also more diverse. During our field trip on September 12, 2020, Luong Son Tien Quan is building an altar to worship Ba Chua Thuong Ngan (Princess of the Forest). The arrangement of the objects of worship is as follows:

*Thanh Linh động (Thanh Linh cave):* it is considered as the main sanctuary, the place to worship many deities. The top row is dedicated to the three gods (Tam Quan) such as Hạ Nguyên giải ách Thủy Quan (who dispels calamity), Thượng Nguyên ban phúc Thiên Quan (who blesses), Trung Nguyên xá tội Địa Quan (who pardons). The second row includes Thái Bạch Kim Tinh, Táo Quân, Dược Vương Tiên Y, Lỗ Ban. The third row includes Trần Triều Hưng Đạo Đại Vương, Nam Tào, Bắc Đẩu, Thái Âm Tinh Quân, Thái Dương Tinh Quân, Liễu Hạnh Công Chúa, Phù Đổng Thiên Vương, Tản Viên Sơn Thánh, Chử Đồng Tử, Tứ Trục Công Tào (ruling time and 4 seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter), Thiên Lý Nhân, Thuận Phong Nhĩ.

*Diêu Trì cung (Diêu Trì Palace):* The top row is dedicated to Kim Tây Vương Mẫu, who is considered as the wife of the Jade Emperor (Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế), Cửu Thiên Huyền Nữ (who is considered as the first younger sister of the Jade Emperor), Hoàng Thiên Hậu Thổ (who is considered as the second younger sister of the Jade Emperor). The second row is dedicated to Bà chúa Thượng Ngàn, Liễu Hạnh Princess and Quan Âm Đại Sỹ Từ Hàng Chân Nhân.

*Động Tam Thanh (Tam Thanh cave):* This is a place to worship many Taoist deities. The guard outside the door is a statue of Vương Linh Quang with red hair and red beard; next is the statue of Thái Ất Chân Nhân; The altar of Võ Tái Thần Trần Triều; The altar of Tam Thanh includes Ngọc Thanh, Thượng Thanh, Thái Thanh; The altar to worship the Jade Emperor consists of the statue of the Jade Emperor in the middle, Tiên Đồng and Ngọc Nữ are beside; the front row has statues of Tây Vương Mẫu, Đông Hoa Đế Quân, Đẩu Mẫu Nguyên Quân, Thái Ất Thiên Đế, Thái Bạch Kim Tinh; The altar for worshipping Tây Vương Mẫu, Đông Hoa Đế Quân, Đẩu Mẫu Nguyên Quân, Thái Ất Thiên Đế, Thái Bạch Kim Tinh; The altar of Hoàng Thiên Hậu Thổ is in the middle; Statues of Khố Cung Thần and Chúa Kho Ngân Khố are on the two sides.

In addition, the objects of worship at Luong Son Tien Quan are also arranged in places such as Động Quan Âm (the place to worship Quan Âm Đại Sỹ Từ Hàng Chân Nhân), Tứ Ngự Cung (the place to

worship 4 gods such as Tứ Vi Đại Đế, Trường Sinh Đại Đế, Câu Trần Đại Đế, Hoàng Thiên Hậu Thổ), the place of worshipping Thần Nông Viêm Đế, Huyền Thiên Trấn Vũ, Thập Văn Xương, Mạnh Bà Thần, Địa phủ, Thành Hoàng (tutelary deity), Thổ Địa (Lord of the Soil and the Ground), Sơn Thần (god of mountain), Long Vương Cung, etc.

***Sơn Nam quán (Bà Chúa Vực temple)***

Sơn Nam - Bà Chúa Vực temple is in Hung Yen City, Hung Yen province, located in Sơn Nam Plaza tourist area, about 40 km from Hanoi. It was originally Bà Chúa Vực Temple where worshipping Thiên phi Linh Uyên Thánh Mẫu Thủy Cung (people used to call Bà Chúa Vực because of her help to control water). It has existed for a long time. In recent years<sup>3</sup>, this temple has been dedicated to worship the Taoist deities, it was added the name Sơn Nam quán. Specifically, the arrangement of worshipping objects is as follows:

The altar of Thiên Phi Linh Uyên Thánh Mẫu Thủy Cung (Bà Chúa Vực) is considered the main god of the temple. The altar of Đẩu Mẫu Nguyên Quân has the statue of Đẩu Mẫu Nguyên Quân shaped like a Bodhisattva with 8 arms, the two sides are statues of Cửu Tinh Đại Đế and Thất Tinh Bắc Đẩu. The altar of three Gods (Tam Quan) such as Hạ Nguyên giải ách Thủy Quan (Thủy Quan), Thượng Nguyên ban phúc Thiên Quan (Thiên Quan), Trung Nguyên xá tội Địa Quan (Địa Quan).

Altar of the Jade Emperor with Nam Tào, Bắc Đẩu on the both sides, there is a statue of Hùng Vương Thánh tổ (Hung King); the altar of Đức Thánh Trần Triều Hưng Đạo Đại Vương decorated solemnly, worshiped with many mandarins of the Tran dynasty; the altar of Thái Bạch Kim Tinh Tài Bạch Khố Cung Thần; the altar of Tứ Bất Tử; the altar of Thái Dương Tinh Quân; Thái Âm Tinh Quân; the altar of Chúa Sơn Trang; the altar of Văn Xương Đế Quân; the altar of Thổ địa (Lord of the Soil and the Ground), Thành Hoàng (Thiên Hạ Long Đô Thành Hoàng Đại Vương<sup>4</sup>) on the outside; the altar of Ông Hoàng Mười Quan (on the left), Ông Hoàng Bảy Quan (on the right), Ông Hoàng Bơ Quan (in the middle); in the front, there is the altar of five

tigers; the altar of Thái Ất Chân Nhân; the altar of Táo Vương phủ; the altar of Cửu Thiên Huyền Nữ; the altar of Hoàng Thiên Hậu Thổ; the altar of Trạng Trình Nguyễn Bình Khiêm, Hải Thượng Lãn Ông Lê Hữu Trác, Tả Ao Tiên sinh. *In particular, there is a place to worship Uncle Hồ in Son Nam temple.*

Đông Nhạc Palace (Thập điện Diêm Vương) has a separate space. The arrangement of Đông Nhạc Palace is as follows: the statue of Dong Nhạc Great Emperor in the middle, Âm Dương sư and Phong Đô Great King on both sides, and Thập điện Diêm Vương.

In addition, there are worship paintings of Trương Thiên Sư, Lỗ Ban tổ sư, Dục Vương Tiên Y, Vương Linh Quang, Trần Vũ Đại Đế, Tứ Đại Nguyên Soái, Thủy Thần, Hòa Thần, the paintings of stars such as La Hầu, Kế Đô, etc..<sup>5</sup>

### ***Tam Quan quán (Tam Quan temple)***

The temple is located in Huong Ngai commune, Thach That district, Hanoi. Compared to the two aforementioned Taoist temples, Tam Quan is smaller, however, in terms of objects of worship, it is also quite complete and similar to the others. In the main sanctuary, the statues of three gods (Tam Quan) are in the middle, in front of these statues is Tứ Trục Công Tào; Ban thờ Đẩu Mẫu Nguyên Quân, besides there are Bắc Đẩu Thất Tinh and Cửu Tinh Đại Đế<sup>6</sup>; The altar of Ban Đông Nhạc Đại đế<sup>7</sup>; the statues of Dục Vương Tiên Y, Thái Ất Chân Nhân, Táo Vương, Trương Thiên Sư, Võ Tài Thần, Trần Vũ Đại Đế, Thần Nông Viêm Đế, Lỗ Ban Tổ sư, Cửu Thiên Huyền Nữ, Thái Bạch Kim Tinh, Văn Xương Đế Quân, Thái Thượng Lão Quân<sup>8</sup>, Hoàng Thiên Hậu Thổ are next to. The Jade Emperor is worshiped in a solemn altar; Tây Kim Vương Mẫu<sup>9</sup> is in the same row with the Jade Emperor. Although the altar to worship the Jade Emperor has a combination of worshipping other gods such as Hùng Vương Thánh Tổ (Hùng King), Tứ Bất Tử (the Four Immortals), Liễu Hạnh Princess is worshiped separately. There is also an altar to worship Thành Hoàng Đại Vương (tutelary deity), Thổ địa (Lord of the Soil and the Ground), etc.

## 2. Position and function of worshipping objects at three Taoist temples

In this part, the article introduces the position, role, and function of these objects. The origin of those objects will be indicated in the future research.

*Tam Thanh* (also called Tam Thanh Lão Tổ): This is the short name of the Three deities as Ngọc Thanh Nguyên thủy Thiên Tôn (Yuanshi Tianzun/ the Celestial Venerable of the Primordial Beginning or the Primeval Lord of Heaven), Thượng Thanh Linh Bảo Thiên Tôn (Lingbao Tianzun/ the Heavenly Lord of Spiritual Treasures), Đạo Đức Thiên Tôn (Daode Tianzun/ The Heavenly Lord of Dao and its Virtue, also known as Taishang Laojun/ The Supreme Venerable Sovereign/ Thái Thượng Lão Quân). It should be noted that Thái Thượng Lão Quân or Lão Tử. In the work *Người Việt Nam với Đạo giáo/ Vietnamese people with Taoism*, Nguyễn Duy Hinh stated that “Thái Thanh Palace is the place to worship Thái Thượng Lão Quân/ Taishang Laojun or Lão Tử or Đạo Đức Thiên Tôn”<sup>10</sup>. The Three deities are the supreme deities of Taoism, represented the formless realm (cõi vô sắc giới). Ngọc Thanh is at the top of these Three, considered to be before all things, appeared when the universe was in a state of “chaos”.

In an article, Phan Van Cac cited the work *Chân linh vị nghiệp đồ* of the author Đào Hoàng Cảnh as saying that the highest level of Taoist gods is Nguyên thủy Thiên Tôn. According to a legend, this god was born before Thái Nguyên, absorbed the gas of nature, flew to the realm of nothingness, stoped in the distant realm, no one knows where the extreme is)<sup>11</sup>.

The author Đào Hoàng Cảnh in the work *Chân linh vị nghiệp đồ* stated that Thái Thượng Lão Quân is ranked at the fourth level and considered to be Lão Tử (Lao Tzu).

*The Jade Emperor (Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế)*. In the Taoist temples, the Jade Emperor is usually worshiped in a separate altar, next to the statue of the Jade Emperor is usually tiên đồng and ngọc nữ. In Taoism, the Jade Emperor has the role of governing the gods in

all three realms: Heaven, human realm, and Hell. All human activities in life and after death are ruled by the Jade Emperor. However, there is a view that the Jade Emperor rules everything, this god is only mentioned by name without any role<sup>12</sup>.

*Tứ Ngự* includes *Tử vi Đại đế*, *Trường Sinh Đại Đế*, *Câu Trần Đại Đế*, *Hoàng Thiên Hậu Thổ*. In the work *Người Việt Nam với Đạo giáo/ Vietnamese people with Taoism*, Nguyễn Duy Hinh stated that “*Tứ Ngự* is the name of the Taoist gods. Those are the four heavenly emperors supporting Tam Thanh in the Taoist Heavenly Realm. The full names of them are *Hạo thiên kim nguyệt chí tôn Ngọc Hoàng đại đế*; *Trung thiên tử vi bắc cực Thái Hoàng đại đế*; *Câu trần thượng cung nam cực Thiên Hoàng đại đế*; *Thừa thiên hiệu pháp Hậu Thổ hoàng địa kỳ*”<sup>13</sup>. Thus, the four deities of *Tứ Ngự* worshiped in Taoist temples today are different from the views of Nguyen Duy Hinh as well as some other researchers.

*Thần Nông Viêm Đế (Shennong)*, this is a god with the role of teaching people hunting, farming as well as other occupations. At Son Nam temple, *Thần Nông Viêm Đế* is shaped from a rock in a lying position, placed in the front yard of the temple. At Lương Sơn temple, the god is shaped in a sitting position. At Tam Quan temple, the statue of *Thần Nông Viêm Đế* is shaped in a sitting position with a rice flower in his hand.

*Hùng Vương Thánh Tổ* was the king who founded the Văn Lang state, opened the 4,000-year history of the building and defending the nation. Today, the worship of Hung King has become a belief and Hung King’s death anniversary has become the national festival. It demonstrates the tradition of remembering the source and worshipping those who contributed to the nation. At the Taoist temples, the statue of *Hùng Vương* is solemnly decorated. At Lương Sơn temple, Hung King’s statue is embossed on the cliff.

*Đức Thánh Trần (Hung Đạo vương Trần Quốc Tuấn)* was a national hero of the Tran Dynasty. After his death, he was deified by Vietnamese feudal dynasties, has been worshiped by people over the country at many different establishments such as communal temples,

temples, shrines, pagodas, etc., He also became a god of Taoism, has been worshiped in Taoist temples in Vietnam. In the Taoist temples, the altar to worship Đức Thánh Trần is placed in a solemn position and worshiped with the Yết Kiêu and Dã Tượng. In particular, at Lương Sơn temple, Đức Thánh Trần is not only worshiped as a deity with the role of protecting the nation and the people but the deity is also considered as a god of talent (tài thần). The altar of Võ Tài Thần Trần Triều is arranged in Tam Thanh cave with the statue of Võ Tài Thần Trần Triều Cửu Thiên Vũ Đế riding a white lion, there are the statues of Yết Kiêu and Dã Tượng on both sides, the statues of four mandarins, five tigers in front.

*Tứ Bất tử (The Four Immortals)* are Tản Viên Sơn Thánh, Chủ Động Tử, Phù Đổng Thiên Vương (Thánh Gióng), Thánh Mẫu Liễu Hạnh. According to my field research, the Four Immortals appeared at the three aforementioned Taoist temples. Tản Viên Sơn Thánh (the God of the Mountain) symbolizes strength and aspiration to conquer natural disasters. Phù Đổng Thiên Vương (Heavenly king of Phù Đổng) symbolizes the indomitable spirit and strength to defeat foreign invaders. Chủ Động Tử symbolizes love and Thánh Mẫu Liễu Hạnh (Mother Goddess Liễu Hạnh) is a symbol of female liberation. The Four Immortals were deified by the feudal courts and worshiped in many places of the country.

*Đông Nhạc Đại Đế* is the god of hell with an abacus to calculate human destiny. Under the authority of Đông Nhạc Thánh Đế, there were 10 kings of Hell who ruled the 10 gates of hell.

*Quan Âm Đại Sỹ Từ Hàng Chân Nhân* is a deity shaped like Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, worshiped separately; the statues of tiên đồng and ngọc nữ are next to with the role of saving and protecting people.

*Vương Linh Quang* is considered as a dharmapāla (Hộ pháp), usually stands in front of the Taoist temple's door with the role of protection.

*Huyền Thiên Trấn Vũ* is a Northern god who has merit in supporting the kings to exterminate the goblin, build castles, fight

enemies. Therefore, the god has an important role and function of protecting the court and peace of the people, exorcising evil spirits, demons, etc.

*Trương Đạo Lăng* was the founder of Ngũ Đẩu Mễ (the Way of the Five Pecks of Rice) during the reign of Emperor Shun of Han. Then, he was revered as Trương Thiên Sư, the ancestor of the Chính Nhất (the Way of the Celestial Master). Chính Nhất and Quanzhen (founded by Wang Zhongyang) are two major Taoist schools in China with different policies. If Quanzhen focuses on meditation, the Chính Nhất focuses on talismans and alchemy<sup>14</sup>.

In addition, the aforementioned Taoist temples worship many other deities that supporting study, career, money, health, peace, saving people such as Thái Ất Chân Nhân, Wenchang Wang (Văn Xương Đế Quân), Thái Âm Tinh Quân, Thái Dương Tinh Quân, Lỗ Ban Tổ Sư, Dược Vương Tiên Y, Long Vương, Mạnh Bà Thần, Long Đỗ Thành Hoàng, Sơn Thần, Thổ Thần, Bà Chúa Thượng Ngàn, Bà Chúa Sơn Trang, etc.. According to a Taoist at Lương Sơn temple, Taoism worships many gods arranged in a system such as Thái Thượng Lão quân, below is the Jade Emperor, Thần Nông Viêm Đế, Hùng vương Thánh Tổ, the Four Immortals, Tứ Trấn, ancestors, god of the Soil and the Ground (Thổ địa), tutelary god (Thành Hoàng), the Kitchen god (Táo Vương), ancestors of carpentry, sewing, construction, medicine, martial arts. Taoism also worships the stars, etc<sup>15</sup>.

### **3. Some comments on objects of worship at Taoist temples**

As mentioned above, the objects of worship or the divine system of Taoism is extremely diverse, including natural and human gods, some of them are legendary characters, some of them are national heroes who contributed to the country, after death they were worshiped by people, deified by the feudal dynasties. Some of them had the Chinese origin such as Trương Thiên Sư.

The plenty of objects of worship at the aforementioned Taoist establishments in terms of origin and function shows the fusion of many different types of beliefs and religions, especially traditional religions such as ancestor worship, patron god of the city worship,

Mother goddess worship, agriculture worship, god of wealth worship, ancestor of career worship, etc... Uncle Ho has been included in the Taoist deity system. It showed that the Taoist deity system has been continuously built up over time, which is a feature to keep in mind when studying the development of the Taoist deity system in Vietnam.

According to author Phan Ngoc in the article *Đạo giáo/ Taoism*, Taoism has built a unique heavenly court. The Taoist Heavenly Court consists of angels, fairies, and human gods. Angels include Tam Thanh, Tứ Ngự, Tam Cung, the Moon, the Sun, stars, the god of Wind, the god of Rain, the god of Thunder, the god of Lightning. *Tam Thanh* includes the Jade Emperor, Yuanshi Tianzun, Taishang Laojun who was the leader of Taoism. *Ngũ vương Lão quân* is the five kings in the five directions such as Thanh đế, Xích đế, Hoàng đế, Bạch đế, Hắc đế corresponding to the directions in the Wuxing (Five Phases). *Tứ ngự* are four gods: Ngọc Hoàng Đại đế looks after the Taoist heavens, Thiên Hoàng Đại đế takes care of the stars, the Moon, the Sun, the operation of the four seasons, Hậu thổ takes care of yin and yang, and the reproduction of all things.

The *địa kỳ* includes God of the Soil and the Ground (Tudishen/ thổ địa), the tutelary gods (thành hoàng), the xã tắc gods, Ngũ nhạc (the five famous mountains), Tứ độc (the four longest rivers), the mountain gods, and the river gods. The human gods are the saints, the ancestors, the masters, those who have merit in the human world, the Taoists who have cultivated to become immortals, in which there are 8 fairies as Lý Thiết Quỳ, Hán Chung Ly, Trương Lão Quả, Hà Tiên Cô, Lam Thái Hòa, Lã Đồng Tân, Tào Quốc Cậu<sup>16</sup>.

It can be said that the Taoist deity system is very rich and diverse. It reflects the polytheistic beliefs of the agricultural inhabitants who live in diverse natural conditions in terms of biological systems and climate, environment, etc. However, this system is not arbitrarily arranged. As in the aforementioned article by Phan Van Cac, Taoist Đào Hồng Cảnh (456-536) of the Northern and Southern dynasties (a period in the history of China) issued the book *Chân linh vị nghiệp đồ* in order to systematize the Taoist deities. In this book, Đào Hồng

Cảnh has gathered and systematized 700 gods of many different Taoist schools with 7 levels, each level with a governing god<sup>17</sup>, this system was added, developed through the stages, some deities were added, however, there are gods who always maintain their position and function in this system.

It can be said that the layout and worshipping objects of the three aforementioned Taoist temples are quite similar. The way the worshipping objects are shaped is similar, it shows that the position and role of the gods are basically consistent in all 3 establishments. These Taoist temples all have objects of worship in charge of Heaven, the human realm, and the realm of the dead or hell. This is understandable because the construction and arrangement of objects of worship in these establishments have done by Taoist Nguyen Tong Nhue. However, according to our observations, there are also some differences among the aforementioned temples. Firstly, Tam Quan temple and Son Nam temple worship Trương Thiên Sư (Celestial Master Zhang Daoling), the ancestor of the Chính Nhất school of Taoism, however, Lương Sơn temple -was built later- does not have a statue of Trương Thiên Sư. While Tam Quan temple and Son Nam temple worship gods of Chinese and Vietnamese origin, Lương Sơn temple focuses on arranging gods of Vietnamese origin.

Comparing the documents of the aforementioned articles with the objects of worship at Taoist temples shows that there is no consistency. Firstly, Phan Van Cac stated that Thái Thượng Lão Quân is Lão Tử, however, Lão Tử is just one of the embodiments of Thái Thượng Lão Quân (in the 3 aforementioned Taoist temples). The views of Phan Ngoc and Phan Van Cac are different in the name of Thái Thượng Lão Quân. Phan Van Cac stated that it is Thái Thanh, while Phan Ngoc stated that it is Thượng Thanh<sup>18</sup>, meanwhile, it is Thái Thanh (Đạo đức thiên Tôn) in Taoist temples.

There is a difference in the position of the Jade Emperor (Ngọc Hoàng Thượng Đế). According to the arrangement of Lương Sơn temple, the Jade Emperor does not belong to *Tứ Ngự*. However, according to Le Thi Chieng's viewpoint, the Jade Emperor belongs to

*Tứ Ngự*, has the task of governing the deities<sup>19</sup>. This is similar to the Chinese concept that the Jade Emperor belongs to *Tứ Ngự* and has the highest position in the *Tứ Ngự*<sup>20</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

Through the research on the worshipping objects and the arrangement of these objects in the three Taoist temples, we found that the worshipping objects of Taoism are extremely diverse over time which expresses the worldview, view of human life of the Vietnamese. Firstly, there are altars to worship the gods in Heaven such as the Jade Emperor and the gods rule Heaven. Then, there are altars for worshipping the gods of the human realm, such as the national heroes who were deified as Đức Thánh Trần. Next, there are altars to worship the gods of the land such as Đông Nhạc Thánh Đế, 10 kings of Hell. There are altars to worship the gods governing the forest such as the Mother goddess of the forest (bà chúa Thượng Ngàn). Finally, there is an altar to the gods who govern the waters such as the altar of the Dragon King (Long Vương).

The system of worshipping objects at the three Taoist temples with different roles and functions covers all areas of social life, from the scale of individuals, communities, to the nation. This contributes to satisfying the existential needs of people, in the life cycle from birth to death.

It can be said that the objects of worship in the Taoist temples manifest the Vietnamese people's conception of the world, human life, and life after death. These are subliminal conceptions of the formation and operation of the universe, as well as the needs of daily life such as study, exams, production, business, illness, medical treatment, marriage, childbirth, etc... The study of the arrangement of worshipping objects in the Taoist temples showed that the philosophy and tradition of ancestor worship, remembering the source when drinking water is expressed by worshipping Shen Nong (Thần Nông Viêm Đế), the god who taught human ancestors to cultivate and hunt; by worshipping Hung King (Hùng Vương Thánh Tổ), the ancestor of the Vietnamese; by worshipping national heroes with merits to the country such as Hưng Đạo Đại vương, etc.

In the past, the process of localization/Vietnamization of foreign beliefs and religions used to take place and it became an important feature of Vietnamese culture. Research on the arrangement of worshipping objects at the aforementioned Taoist temples, especially at Luong Son temple showed that the majority are Vietnamese gods. In addition, the shaping of worshipping objects also manifested Vietnamese identity. It helped to affirm the localization/Vietnamization of Vietnamese Taoism when promoting Vietnamese deities, especially Hung King, Trần saint, and the Four Immortals.

In addition, the system of deities showed that there is a fusion between the deities of Taoism and Buddhism. For example, the statue of Quan Âm Đại Sỹ Từ Hàng Chân Nhân (Bà Chúa Ba) was shaped like a Buddha with thousand hands and thousand eyes. Interestingly, the statue was shaped with 8 arms, the two arms in front shaped as Cundī, manifested a fusion with Tantric Buddhism. As mentioned above, the objects of worship at these Taoist temples have shown a mixture of traditional beliefs.

Finally, the appearance of Taoist temples showed the recovery of Taoism in recent years. Besides, the appearance of professional Taoist practitioners was the most basic element of religious activity. The development of Vietnamese Taoism, of newly restored and newly built Taoist temples, needs to be examined by the government, researchers, as well as people who practice Taoism. How to develop Taoism, promote its values, meet the spiritual needs of people, as well as avoid taking advantage of this belief or religion is a problem. /.

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**Notes:**

- 1 The case of Sơn Nam quán - Đền Bà Chúa Vực.
- 2 Lương Sơn tiên quán was named by the founder, located on the land of the founder and was not officially registered as a religious organization.
- 3 About ten years ago.
- 4 In my opinion, it is Long Đỗ Đại Vương.
- 5 Each year is assigned to a general, for example, the year of Mậu Ngọ is Lê Khắc Đại Tướng, the year of Kỷ Mùi is Phó Đổng Đại Tướng (The author's field material).
- 6 On the left of Tam Quan (Sơn quán).
- 7 On the right of Tam Quan.

- 8 The statue of Thái Thượng Lão Quân (Tài shang lão jūn) was arranged outdoors.
- 9 According to a legend, it is the wife of Ngọc Hoàng (Zhēnzǔ).
- 10 Nguyễn Duy Hinh (2003), *Người Việt Nam với Đạo giáo (Vietnamese people with Taoism)*, Nxb. Khoa học xã hội, Hà Nội, p. 485.
- 11 Phan Văn Các (2001), *Tim hiểu Đạo giáo và phả hệ thần tiên (Study of Taoism and Genealogy of deities)*, *Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo*, No.1, pp. 24-25.
- 12 Phan Ngọc (2000), *Đạo giáo (Taoism)*, *Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo*, No. 3, p. 14.
- 13 Nguyễn Duy Hinh (2003), *Người Việt Nam với Đạo giáo giáo (Vietnamese people with Taoism)*, Nxb. Khoa học xã hội, Hà Nội, p. 487.
- 14 Chu Xuân Giao (2020), *Đạo giáo thời Bắc thuộc: tổng quan, con đường du nhập và giáo phái chính yếu (Taoism during the Northern domination period: overview, introduction and main sects)*, *Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo*, No.7, p. 87.
- 15 The author's field material in the year 2019 and 2020.
- 16 Phan Ngọc (2000), *Đạo giáo (Taoism)*, *Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo*, No.3, p. 14.
- 17 Vũ Hồng Vận (2017), *Đạo giáo và những biểu hiện trong tín ngưỡng dân gian Việt Nam (Taoism and its manifestations in Vietnamese folk beliefs)*, Nxb. Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội, p. 36.
- 18 Phan Ngọc (2000), *Đạo giáo (Taoism)*, *Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo*, No.3, p. 14.
- 19 Lê Thị Chiêng (2003), *Linh Tiên quán - nơi tam giáo đồng nguyên (Linh Tiên quán - the three religions)*, *Nghiên cứu Tôn giáo*, No.3, p. 54.
- 20 Mã Thư Điền (1996), *Trung Quốc Đạo giáo chư thần (Chinese Taoist Gods)*, Nxb. Đoàn Kết, Bắc Kinh (in Chinese), p. 15.

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