



THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TANG-SONG POETRY AND ZEN BUDDHISM THOUGHT

Tian Tian

School of Chinese Language and Literature, Central China Normal University, Wuhan 430077, Hubei – China.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5546-8968> |  tiantian1@mails.ccnu.edu.cn

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Abstract: The Tang and Song Dynasties were a time when Zen Buddhism was prevalent, and it was also a critical period for the rapid development of ancient Chinese literature. The literati at this time were generally influenced by Zen Buddhism thoughts, and their literary ideas were all-encompassing and rich in layers. Poetry was introduced into Buddhist gatha to explain Buddhist principles, and the infiltration of Zen made poetry have a pure and distant Zen state. Poetry and Zen merged with each other in the literati's works, thus shining brilliantly in the history of ancient Chinese literature. This paper will start with the times' background and specific poetic texts, focusing on the relationship between Zen Buddhism thoughts and poetic works in the Tang and Song Dynasties, in order to explore how the two combine and influence each other.


Keywords: Chinese Literature. Tang and Song Dynasties. Zen Buddhism. Buddhist poetry.

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Resumen: Las dinastías Tang y Song fueron una época en la que prevaleció el budismo zen, y también fue un periodo crítico para el rápido desarrollo de la literatura china antigua. En esta época, las ideas literarias eran omnicomprensivas y ricas en estratos. Se introdujeron poemas en la gāthā budista para explicar los principios budistas. La infiltración del budismo zen dio a la poesía un ámbito zen claro y significativo, por lo que brilla en la historia de la literatura china antigua. Este artículo partirá de los antecedentes de la época y del análisis de los textos, y se centrará en la relación entre el pensamiento del budismo zen y la poesía en las dinastías Tang y Song para explorar cómo ambos se combinan e influyen mutuamente.

Palabras clave: Dinastías Tang y Song. Budismo Zen. Obras literarias. Poesía.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TANG-SONG POETRY AND ZEN BUDDHISM THOUGHT

*Tian Tian*¹

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INTRODUCTION

Zen Buddhism is the abbreviation of the Sanskrit word “dhyāna”, which means meditation in silence. This kind of thought originated from ancient India's yoga. After the formal establishment of Buddhism, Zen Buddhism was adopted as an important practice for liberation.

According to legend, Buddha Sakyamuni said in the Lingshan meeting that

The inheritance of Zen Buddhism is different from that of other Buddhist sects, and has a unique method. All the tips, languages and methods of Zen Buddhism point directly to the consciousness that everyone has. When we see our original nature, we obtain consciousness, and our life is the life of consciousness. We have become enlightened Buddha (Pu, 1999, p. 11).

The true Dharma eye treasury² was taught to Mahākāśyapa, who became the first generation of Zen Buddhism masters in India. Since then, the teachings of Zen Buddhism have been passed down from generation to generation. Until the twenty-eighth, Patriarch

¹ School of Chinese Language and Literature, Central China Normal University, Wuhan 430077, Hubei – China. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5546-8968>. Email: tiantian1@mails.ccn.edu.cn.

² A Buddhist term, Zen Buddhism is used to refer to the whole of Buddhism, and can also be understood as the essence of Buddhism.

Bodhidharma went to the East to promote Buddhism, and Zen Buddhism officially fell in the East (Hsu, 2001, p. 438).

Dharma came during the Southern and Northern Dynasties in the sixth century. At that time, China was in an era when various Buddhist sects coexisted and Buddhist thought was spreading in an all-round way. The thoughts of the Fahua Sect³ and Pure Land Sect⁴ prevailed in the north, while the beliefs of the Nirvana Sect⁵ spread in the south. Dharma's coming to the East added another sect against the background of different Zen styles in the north and south, and also set a benchmark for the future history of Chinese Zen Buddhism. Afterward, Patriarch Dharma successively teach and spread Buddhism to the second Patriarch Huike, the third Patriarch Sengcan, the fourth Patriarch Daoxin, and the fifth Patriarch Hongren, which were called the "Five Patriarchs of the Eastern Land". During the Tang Dynasty, under the sect of the fifth Patriarch Hongren, there were two great disciples, Huineng and Shenxiu. The Zen method characterized by Shenxiu's gradual enlightenment was mainly spread in northern China, known as Northern Sect, and was supported by the ruling class at that time. Huineng's sudden enlightenment mainly spread in southern China, known as Southern Sect. In the twenty-second year of Kaiyuan of the Tang Dynasty (734), Shenhui, a disciple of Southern Sect Huineng, defeated Master Chongyuan of Northern Sect at the slide conference held by Zen Buddhism and replaced the Northern Sect as the main vein of the Zen Buddhism, which was widely disseminated and influential throughout the country (Xie, 1997, p. 36).

The characteristics of Zen Buddhism thought itself just intersect with the art of poetry, so after its spread, it greatly affected the appearance of poetry from the Tang to Song Dynasties and brought about completely different changes in social aesthetic taste. This paper aims to explore the relationship between poetry and Zen Buddhism thought in the Tang and Song Dynasties. Through the analysis of the characteristics of Zen Buddhism thought and the famous writers' works in the Tang and Song Dynasties, it reveals the embodiment of Zen Buddhism thought in poetry and further explores how to combine and influence each other between literary and artistic works and Zen Buddhism thought.

³ Fahua Sect: A sect of Chinese Buddhism, also known as Tiantai Sect, was founded in the 6th century AD. At the beginning of the 9th century, the Japanese monk Saizumi passed this sect to Japan. In the Heian period (784-1192), it developed side by side with the Shingon Sect, and it was known as the "Two Sects in Heian" in history.

⁴ Pure Land Sect: One of the Chinese Buddhist sects, also known as "Lian Sect", was founded by Shandao in the Tang Dynasty. Pure Land Sect has been widely popular since the middle Tang Dynasty, and merged with Zen Buddhism after Song and Ming Dynasties.

⁵ Nirvana Sect: One of the Chinese Buddhist sects, also known as Nirvana School. It is named after studying and disseminating the Mahaparinirvana Sutra.

1 CHARACTERISTICS OF ZEN BUDDHISM THOUGHT

Zen Buddhism advocates “passing from mind to mind”. The Buddhism taught by Zen is not the Buddhism recorded in words. Sticking to words will hinder the understanding of Buddhism. Therefore, it is necessary to “not set up words”, but to teach students to face to face through teachers and apprentices, who are separated from language and words and do not rely on any sutra theory, so that the disciples can become self-enlightened with the great meaning of Dharma’s great meaning, which has become a major feature of Zen Buddhism (Lei, 2020, p. 191). According to Zen Buddhism, the highest realm and the life’s greatest pursuit are to realize self-consciousness, develop one’s spiritual world, and free oneself from troubles and pains. The way to get rid of oneself is to know the true mind, and “true mind” refers to the pure mind. All living beings have the original pure mind. Zen Buddhism is to let living beings know their pure mind. Knowing one’s own true mind means gaining enlightenment, and one can become a Buddha by returning to one’s pure mind (Cheng, 2021, p. 151).

Generally speaking, the popularity of any kind of religion, in addition to the attractive doctrine, also must adapt to the local “soil” in order to develop. The ancient Chinese society’s unique political system, ethical concepts and natural conditions cannot be changed, so Zen Buddhism must be reformed to adapt to the China’s actual situation, in order to take root on China’s soil. It can be said that from the combination of Laozi’s and Zhuangzi’s thought, and the metaphysics of Wei and Jin dynasties, the religious atmosphere of Zen Buddhism became weaker and weaker, but its interpretation of the life’s meaning became stronger and stronger. When Zen Buddhism finally became a lifestyle and philosophy, it completed the process of transforming from an exotic religion to a religion suitable for the Chinese literati’s taste (Fang, 2021, p. 48).

The Zen Buddhism thought in the Tang Dynasty should be modeled on the *Platform Sutra* written by Huineng, a representative of the Southern Sect. From an ideological point of view, the theory of the equality of Buddha’s nature and the theory of sudden enlightenment, as advocated by Zen Buddhism, are some of the important reasons for their prosperity and development in the Tang Dynasty. The long and difficult road to becoming a Buddha, originally preached by Buddhism, has discouraged many people. In the *Platform Sutra*, becoming a Buddha is to observe one’s mind and discover one’s Buddha’s nature. Everyone has a Buddha’s nature, so there is no need to go to the outside world to find it. From this point of view, the theory of mortal divinity in Zen Buddhism subverts the theory of birth, in the theory of destiny, the traditional concept of hierarchy, in the sense of being born into high and low, and it is replaced by everyone who can become a Buddha. This is undoubtedly an ideological revolution, narrowing the distance between Buddha and the public. In addition, the *Platform Sutra* also pointed out that “As long as the bottom of my heart is clean, I have

already reached the Western Pure Land in my own nature” (Li, 2016). That is to say, if you deliberately leave your normal life to seek the Buddha, you will run contrary to the Buddha. “Buddha’s mind” and “pure land” come from the inner mind, without seeking outside (Lai, 2013). Lay Buddhists who practice at home can still be filial to their parents and have children, which resolves the conflict between Zen and traditional Chinese filial piety. Zen, traditional Chinese Confucianism and Taoism have become the mainstream of Chinese culture, and even the phenomenon of the three religions, being sacrificed together, has appeared in many places.

Developed to the Song Dynasty, Zen Buddhism still maintained the goal of pursuing “purity” and “transcendence”, but it had undergone tremendous changes in the development of secularization and philosophy compared with Zen Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty. Zen Buddhism thought in the Tang Dynasty believed that the universe was static and unchanging and regarded the contradiction between the ephemeral life and the universe’s eternity as the ultimate contradiction faced by human beings. Therefore, they constantly pursued the great event of getting rid of life and death. It is reflected in the literati’s and bureaucrats’ life attitude that they escape from the world by integrating themselves into the mountains and rivers completely, and realize a short-term detachment in the life’s forgetfulness and of experience. While in the Song Dynasty, Zen Buddhism put more emphasis on secularization, and did not require people to know eternity through the pure life of living in mountains and forests, but instead focused on sudden enlightenment in the heart. By constructing the spiritual world and expanding the boundary of the mind, the inner eternity in the world is realized (Li, 2021, p. 165). It can be seen that the literati of the Song Dynasty went a step further on the basis of the Tang Dynasty literati’s understanding of mountains and rivers, and paid more attention to the reflection on history and life through Zen Buddhism thought to resolve the accumulated depression (Chung, 2017, p. 175).

2 IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF ZEN BUDDHISM THOUGHT AND TANG-SONG POETRY

During the Tang and Song Dynasties, the social economy was highly prosperous and the cultural achievements were numerous. Driven by the imperial examination system and patriotic enthusiasm, literati groups are eager to make contributions and show their ambitions. However, being constrained by the social and political system, most of them can only sink into subordinates, and nine times out of ten they are depressed. At this time, the transcendence of spirit and spiritual freedom, pursued by the ever-developing Zen Buddhism thought, attracted their attention. Hui Neng said, “Buddhism is in the world, and it cannot be separated from the world” (Li, 2016, p. 35). Since Zen monks, who carry the burden of saving sentient beings, no longer need to leave this world to seek Buddhahood, then they, scholars and officials with heavy responsibilities, do not need to retreat from the world

passively, as long as they actively enter the world while maintaining the freedom of mind. Literati and officials in the Tang and Song Dynasties got rid of the the outside world's because of Zen, and gained the detachment of the heart. With one foot in the square, they fulfill their responsibilities to the patriarchal society by being filial to their father, loyal to the emperor, governing the family and governing the country. At the same time, with one foot outside the square, they devote themselves to mountains and rivers, practice Zen and worship Buddha, in order to obtain spiritual rest or relief. Therefore, the Zen Buddhism thoughts in the Tang and Song Dynasties caused great changes in the literati's aesthetic attitude, aesthetic requirements and aesthetic taste at that time, which made their poems and works have a strong Zen flavor.

In addition, Zen Buddhism advocates meditation and enlightenment through practice. The Buddhist principles it emphasizes are mainly a kind of inaction and a leisurely, calm and open-minded attitude toward life. The way of thinking represented is actually a poetic way of thinking. This coincides with the ancient Chinese literati's taste. Yan Yu, a poetic theorist in the Song Dynasty, used Zen as a metaphor for poetry in *Canglang Shibua* and talked about the law of poetry in the language of Buddhism. He said: "In general, the law of Zen lies in the wonderful enlightenment, and the law of poetry also lies in the wonderful enlightenment. Only enlightenment is what we should practice, and it is the true color of life" (Yan, 2014). This is where Zen and poetry, Buddhist aesthetics and poetic aesthetics have a theoretical connection.

2.1 THE PURSUIT OF ZEN IN POETRY CREATION - TAKING WANG WEI AS AN EXAMPLE

The core of Zen Buddhism thought is the pursuit of the "pure mind", and it is believed that one can become a Buddha by returning to one's own pure mind. After this kind of thinking is combined with ancient Chinese literati and officials, it is often expressed in the form of pursuing tranquility and expressing love for mountains and rivers. Among them, the most prominent representative is Wang Wei, who is known as the "Poetry Buddha"⁶. Wang Wei was born in a family of officials, and was influenced by good traditional cultural education and scholarly fragrance. He is good at poetry and painting, and is proficient in rhythm. In his early years, he had the ambition of Confucianism to govern the world. In his middle years, he had a Taoist recluse's demeanor. And, in his later years, he acquired the essence of Buddhism to govern his mind, which is very in line with the ancient traditional scholar-bureaucrats' ideal living situation, who "[...] become an official from Confucianism, become detached from Taoism, and retired from Buddhism" (Ni, 2006). The Zen in Wang Wei's poems is mainly manifested in the ethereal and quiet artistic conception, the leisurely

⁶ Wang Wei, a famous poet and painter in the Tang Dynasty, was known as the "Buddha of Poetry" because of his sincere devotion to Buddhism. His painting ability is outstanding, and later generations regarded him as the ancestor of Southern Sect landscape painting.

state and the artistic expression form of “sudden enlightenment”. Such as the poem *Autumn Evening in the Mountains*:

*After fresh rain in mountain bare,
Autumn permeates evening air.
Among pine-trees bright moonbeams peer,
Over crystal stones flows water clear.
Bamboos whisper of washer-maids,
Lotus stirs when fishing boat wades.
Though fragrant spring may pass away,
Still here's the place for you to stay.*

The poem first expresses the Zen meaning of “quietness” from the “bare mountain”. The rain was beginning to fall in the mountains, everything is renewed, and nature is free from any earthly pollution. At this time, the poet’s affection for nature is aroused, and he fully appreciates the life’s inner rhythm in the universe and the joy of emptiness in the depths of his heart. He may harbor a holy feeling in his heart, which is somewhat similar to what Christians call divine love, which penetrates the universe’s deepest part (Zhou, 2005, p. 55). Then, the poet described the bright moon’s leisurely poetic environment, green pine-trees, clear spring, bamboo, lotus, fishing boat and washer-maids. Although the poem described the bare mountain, it wrote the human activities of “washer-maids” in it. There is no trouble in the world, only hearing the noise of the happy washer-maids returning, from which one can feel the simple and leisurely Zen with a peaceful life’s atmosphere (Liu; Wu, 2015, p. 25).

Wang Wei’s *Passing the Xiangji Temple* is, even more, a work of “Words embody Zen”. The poem says:

*I know not the whereabouts of Xiangji Temple,
It's several miles uphill reaching cloud height.
There's no path going in the old ancient trees,
How could bell sounds be from deep woods?
Spring water strikes sobbing precipitous rocks,
Sunlight looks chilly casting onto green pines.
As night falls, I stay at a pond's side by myself,
I sit and meditate to rid myself of evil thoughts.*

On the surface, this is a sightseeing activity of “passing Xiangji Temple”, but in fact, it is a process of seeking Dharma and practicing Zen. The first half of the poem vividly describes the process of seeking “not knowing” and enlightening after hearing the bell from the aspects of sight, hearing and touch. In the third and fourth lines of the poem, the faint bells from the deep mountains express the Buddha’s call without any trace. In the last sentence

of the poem, “*An Chan*” is a Buddhist term, which refers to the state of peace and tranquility of body and mind. Here, it refers to Buddhist thought. “*Du Long*” is used as a metaphor for the secular people’s desires. The poet borrows Buddhist scriptures to express the meaning of subduing delusion and being calm after hearing the Dharma and enlightenment. The art of artistic conception used by Wang Wei in his poems is inseparable from Buddhism. From the perspective of creative inspiration, artistic conception comes from “wonderful enlightenment”, and the wonderful enlightenment of Zen and poetry have something in common (Murck, 2019, p. 3). The poet’s selfless heart is deeply connected with the natural will of the landscape, and discovers the philosophy and Zen contained in the natural landscape itself. The stillness contains movement, and the movement is used to describe the stillness, and the eternity is felt in the momentary scene. The vitality of the mountains and rivers infects the poet, and what the poet comprehends in it is not only the nature’s physical and natural interest, but also the Zen interest that the poet feels in the landscape. People, mountains, rivers and Zen interests are integrated into one, but there is no trace, such as Wang Shizhen’s⁷ comments on Wang Wei’s five-character quatrains, “There is a most wonderful truth, it has a subtle language, needless to say, just show you a flower and you will be enlightened” (Pei, 2001, p. 59).

2.2 THE INFLUENCE OF ZEN BUDDHISM THOUGHT ON THE AESTHETIC TASTE OF POETRY

Under the tempering of life circumstances and the influence of Zen, the poets who practice Zen have an empty and clear heart, forming a life philosophy of “hold themselves aloof from the world” in politics, “following fate” in life, and “adapting to oneself” in adversity. Therefore, their poems have more unique aesthetic value and shine in the Chinese literary world.

Zen Buddhism believes that the tile’s highest state is the experience of “emptiness”, thus forming an aesthetic view of tranquility and indifference. Poems, such as Liu Zongyuan’s *Fishing in Snow* and Chang Jian’s *Inscribed at Rear Chamber of Dilapidated Mountain Temple* all have clear poetic scenes (Le, 2020). Yan Yu, a famous poetic theorist in the Song Dynasty, commented on poetry:

Poetry is used to chant emotion, and there is no trace to be found like an antelope’s horns. Therefore, its wonders are bright and clear, and cannot be gathered together. This is like the sound in the sky, the color in the image, the moon in the water, the image in the mirror, the language is exhausted but the meaning is endless. (Chen, 1987, p. 43).

This is a unique aesthetic realm achieved by poetry in Tang and Song Dynasties, and it also reveals its infinite charm. Therefore, “emptiness” and “solitude” often become

⁷ Wang Shizhen, a poet, litterateur and poetry theorist in the early Qing Dynasty.

the themes of poetry, which is most obvious in Wang Wei's poems, such as "sitting in an empty temple at night, and the pine wind blows over, like a cool autumn wind", "In front of the firewood gate, I am alone with the clouds in the empty forest", "Sitting alone in the quiet bamboo forest, playing the piano while singing and shouting" and other verses, which embody the state of emptiness. And this kind of emptiness is by no means dead silence, and there is the life's agility in the silence (Zhang; Zhao; Peng, 2007).

Zen Buddhism advocates that "the way is enlightened by the mind", directs attention to the human heart and tries to solve all problems by appealing to the function of the heart. Therefore, Zen Buddhism further develops the role of the heart, and believes that everything in the world is illusory, and only a person's "heart" is real and eternal. There are countless ways to practice Buddhism, but they are all based on the true heart of the moment. The countless methods of practice are ultimately derived from all beings' mind. This shows that the Dharma is the Dharma of the mind, and to practice the Dharma is to cultivate sentient beings to purify their minds (Puji, 1984). Only the individual's spiritual experience in the world has reality, and the reality of everything in the world comes from the observation of the "heart"⁸. It is in this kind of contemplation that the human mind and the external world are integrated into one, forming the "realm"⁹. In the mid-Tang Dynasty, the word "realm" was widely used in poetic theory works. The poetic theory of the Tang Dynasty borrowed "realm" to improve the aesthetic effect of subjective emotion on the object, which also represented that artistic conception theory has officially entered the field of literature and art, and aesthetics. Mr Ye Lang traced the historical evolution of this aesthetic category in the *Outline of the History of Chinese Aesthetics*. He believed that Wang Changling was the first to put forward this concept (Ye, 1985). In Wang Changling's *Poem Format and Style*, there is such a view: "Poetry has three realms: the first is the realm of things, the second is the situation, and the third is the artistic conception" (Wang, 1984). Later, in his work *Shishi*, Jiao Ran also used the Zen realm to comment on the poetic realm. And Sikong Tu's *Twenty-Four Modes of Poetry* also used Zen Buddhism thought. Finally, the transformation of the realm of Zen Buddhism to the realm of art is completed, forming an aesthetic concept based on "artistic conception" (Sikong, 2018). In the Song Dynasty, the discussion of "artistic conception" was further specified. For example, when Ouyang Xiu talked about his views on painting art in some poetry postscripts¹⁰, he advocated "meaning" as the highest realm pursued by painters, and pointed out that "meaning" is the special feeling and charm produced by painters when aesthetically contemplating objective objects. Pursuing the views of "painting meaning without drawing

⁸ Contemplation, Buddhist language. It refers to quietly observing the world and seeing things with wisdom.

⁹ Realm, in the eyes of Buddhists, the thousands of landscapes outside the body that people perceive and experience can all be "realm".

¹⁰ Poetry postscript, a short essay after the main text of the work, explaining the writing process, sources of information, etc. related to the work.

form, simple strokes but full meaning” reflects that what Ouyang Xiu is pursuing is exactly the realm pursued by Zen Buddhism.

2.3 POETIC IMAGERY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ZEN BUDDHISM

As an aesthetic concept, imagery is expressed through words (including words and phrases). Taking flowers, plants and trees as an example, in the literary works of the pre-Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, and Southern and Northern Dynasties, “pine and cypress” represents steadfastness, “orchid” represents nobleness, “chrysanthemum” represents seclusion, “fragrant grass” is connected with long-distance travel, and “willow branch” are always connected with the farewell... This becomes the image. In ancient Chinese poetry, imagery is an important factor in the formation of artistic conception. Influenced by Zen Buddhism thought, the imagery in Tang-Song poetry has richer ideological connotations and aesthetic value (Jiang, 2021, p. 46).

Bells and chimes were originally ancient ritual instruments, but in the Buddhists’ eyes, the sound of bells and chimes can help people eliminate troubles, guide people’s hearts to become clear, and lead to a more transparent world. Therefore, the bell and chime in the poems have a meaning full of Zen. Such as the poet Jiaoran’s “A chime arrives at the cold mountain, and the heart turns to be clear” (Xu, 2017, p. 28) and the poet Chang Jian’s “Everything is silent, but the remaining bells and chimes sound” (Xu, 2017, p. 96). Flying birds are commonly used metaphors in Buddhist scriptures. It is said in *The Avatamsaka Sutra*: “Knowing the extinction of all dharmas is like a bird flying through the sky without leaving a trace” (Gao, 2016). Flying birds were used as metaphors to refer to the extinction of impermanence in Zen poems of the Tang Dynasty. For example, the poet Li Yuan said that “A hundred years are like a bird, and everything is gone” (Xu, 2017, p. 58), and Liu Zongyuan’s “The state of mind is like a hole, and there is no trace of a bird’s flight” (Xu, 2017, p. 124). The moon is an enduring classic image in Chinese classical poetry. It is often endowed with ideological connotations and emotional connotations, such as homesickness, noble character and consciousness of the universe and life (Xin, 2022, p. 68). In Zen classics, the moon is also a very frequently used classic image. In Zen, the bright moon is often used to refer to the perfect light of the original mind, and the water moon is used to refer to illusory non-existence. As Li Bai said: “Viewing the mind is as clear as the moon in the water, seemingly existing and seemingly non-existent, only by understanding and enlightening can one obtain the Bodhi Way” (Xu, 2017, p. 15). It means that all things in the world have shadows but no substance like the water and the moon, and their essence is illusory. Only when we understand the principle that things, such as the water and the moon, have no constant essence, we can observe the profound meaning of the original mind. Generally speaking, the natural images taken in Tang-Song poetry are often in cool colors, such as “clouds, bells, moons, mountains,

forests, water”, etc., in order to highlight the leisurely and empty artistic conception and Zen state.

2.4 DAILY POETRY WORKS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ZEN BUDDHISM

Under the influence of Zen Buddhism thought, a large number of Chinese localized Buddhist and Zen vocabularies appeared. These words not only appear in the works used to express the principles of Zen, but also appear in the works cited not to expound Buddhism and Zen thoughts, but only for expressing personal feelings or for the needs of creation. This explains, to a certain extent, how Chinese traditional society has transformed Buddhism as a foreign culture and the connotation of its language concepts. Concepts, such as “three lives” and “past life and present life”, often appear in Ci (a poetic form), but their meanings are not exactly the same as the original meaning expressed by Buddhism. Take the Bamboo Branch Song written by Yuan Jiao, a poet of the Tang Dynasty, as an example:

*Between the green willows the river flows along;
My gallant in a boat is heard to sing a song.
The west is veiled in rain, the east enjoys sunshine,
My gallant is as deep in love as the day is fine.*

Buddhism believes that there are “six samsaras” in the human world, so the theory of “past life and present life” is derived. Buddhism regards samsara as suffering, and tells the world that if people want to get rid of suffering, they can only jump out of samsara, and this process is the process of pursuing a holy place and becoming a Buddha. Therefore, the “three lives” taught by Buddhism are from the standpoint of breaking away from the world’s suffering and jumping out of the six samsaras. However, these concepts appearing in the poems are often associated with human feelings, especially love, which is inconsistent with the traditional Buddhist view that human emotions and desires are “illusory”.

CONCLUSION

During the Tang and Song Dynasties, Zen Buddhism thought continued to infiltrate and ferment in the field of literature and art. From the perspective of poetry theory, the traditional Chinese aesthetic scale changed, and “artistic conception” became the new aesthetic standard of poetry. In addition, the habit of using Zen as a metaphor for poetry and discussing poetry with Zen has brought poetry into a higher aesthetic realm. Poetry adds literary talent to Zen, and Zen adds realm to poetry. The combination of poetry and Zen makes Tang-Song poetry empty and spiritual, full of profound philosophical ideas. Zen Buddhism is different from Chinese classical literature and art and has different origins.

However, in the process of gradually absorbing Chinese native philosophy and adapting to the development of secularization, it has continuously attracted literati to accept and integrate its ideological essence and has become the enduring main line of Chinese Buddhist thought. It has triggered revolutionary changes in the fields of Chinese thought, culture and art. Its transcendent spirit urges people to pursue a free spiritual world in the limited life adversity journey, transcend the world's limitations and of space, and realize the liberation of mind and spirit.

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