

Study on Buddhist and Confucian Thoughts of Fan Zhongyan —Taking JiDe in his works as examples

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Keywords: Fan Zhongyan, JiDe, Buddhist thought, Confucian values.

Abstract. There were some words and ideas of JiDe in the pre-Qin documents, but its original meaning has changed since Buddhism was introduced into China. In the Song Dynasty, the word JiDe has both Buddhist and Confucian meanings. Fan Zhongyan, a Confucianist in the Northern Song Dynasty, has repeatedly mentioned words and ideas of JiDe. Taking JiDe in his works as examples, this paper explores the feature of Buddhist thought accepted by Fan Zhongyan. His acceptance of Buddhist thought was completed under the guidance of Confucian values.

1. Introduction

Fan Zhongyan (989-1052) was an advocator of the Confucian revival movement in the early Song Dynasty. He carried out political reform with Confucianism as the dominant ideology and theoretical weapon. In addition, in the Song Dynasty when Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism were integrating, Fan Zhongyan accepted and promoted Buddhism to a certain extent.

In the ideological history of the Northern Song Dynasty, the integration of Buddhism and Confucianism is an important subject. Sun Haiyan [1] gathered and analyzed documents of Fan Zhongyan's visit to the Buddhist temple and his article on Buddhist doctrine. Mou Yongsheng [2] investigated his behavior related to Buddhism in his whole life. Xing Shuang, Hu Sui [3] comprehensively researched the Buddhist-related behavior and works of Fan Zhongyan, and revealed the Buddhist characteristics in his personality. Wang Guolin [4] proposed that Fan Zhongyan integrated Buddhism and Confucianism under the guidance of Confucian values. Researchers have reached a consensus on Fan's acceptance of both Buddhism and Confucianism. However, there is still a lack of a case in point and a deep analysis to illustrate the characteristics of Buddhist thought accepted and promoted by Fan Zhongyan.

Fan Zhongyan used the word JiDe or synonyms up to ten times in his writings. This word first appeared in the pre-Qin literature, and its meaning changed after Buddhism was introduced into China. By the Song Dynasty, JiDe has completely become a colloquialism related with karma and kind-heartedness, and has multiple meanings of Buddhism and Confucianism. It is no longer a terminology of certain specific religious or school. Taking JiDe in Fan Zhongyan's works as examples, analysing his preference of using the meaning of the word, we can see the characteristics of his acceptance of Buddhism.

2. The semantic feature of JiDe

2.1 The semantic before Buddhism was introduced into China

The word JiDe appears many times in pre-Qin literature, such as *There is nothing insurmountable as long as attach importance to JiDe (Dao De Jing)*, and *Five Emperors JiDe and gain the world (Yu Zi)*. That is to say, before Buddhism was introduced into China, there was already a word JiDe, and this term is associated with the monarch and the concept of nature law ideas.

There are also some Pre-Qin documents that do not use the word JiDe, but express similar retribution ideas, such as *There is happiness in a good family, and disaster in a bad family (Yi Zhuan,*

vol1), *fortune and misfortune follows good and evil* (*Han Fei Zi*, *vol8*), and *Justice in heaven, reward the good* (*Dao De Jing*). The difference is that it can apply to civilians rather than the monarch only.

In a word, the subject of JiDe can only be a monarch and a sage, and its meaning is not connected with ordinary people or their descendants before Buddhism was introduced into China.

2.2 The semantic change after Buddhism was introduced into China

After Buddhism was introduced into China, concepts of karma and metempsychosis were quickly accepted. *Wu Liang Shou Sutra* states that *They are noble, rich, wise, elderly, intelligent, talented, all due to JiDe*. It is a sign that JiDe is no longer exclusive to monarch. Advocating morality and kindness have a deep practical foundation in China. From the emperor to the civilians, they all believe in the idea of goodness and retribution. Therefore, JiDe became one of the Buddhist teachings that the public is most willing to follow. However, it has not yet been associated with the descendants.

It was not until the sentence *that if not return to their own will give future generations* (*Hou Han Ji*, *vol18*) of Jin Dynasty, JiDe was connected with the meanings of common people and good for future generations, and developed into the well-known meaning.

2.3 The semantic in the Song Dynasty

By the Song Dynasty, JiDe was both a Buddhist word and a Confucian expressions in the Song. On the one hand, influenced by traditional Chinese customs and culture, Buddhism in Tang and Song Dynasties has increasingly emphasized the merits of the present world and encouraged people to do good. On the other hand, Confucianism always emphasizes social care and moral obligations, which is the realm of enterprising mind.

What's more, because of the wide acceptance of all social strata, JiDe has completely become a colloquialism, rather than a complete terminology of certain specific religious or school. According to their own ideas and needs, people emphasize the sememe belonging to the concept of Buddhism, such as karma, metempsychosis, and afterlife, or the concept of Confucianism, such as benevolence, benefit future generations, and the nature law ideas, even multiple meanings of Buddhism and Confucianism. Fan Zhongyan attached great importance to the meaning that the good deeds of ancestors will benefit future generations, for example.

3. The characteristics in Fan Zhongyan use of JiDe

3.1 Emphasizing good deeds

In the Song Dynasty, JiDe has the meaning of taking the initiative to do good deeds. which is highly respected by both Buddhism and Confucian. Fan Zhongyan highly praised the function of Buddhism in encouraging kindness. (*Collected Edition of Fan Zhongyan*, *vol4*)

What's more, he wrote that *My ancestors have JiDe for a hundred years and starting from me*. (*Preface of Collected Edition of Fan Zhongyan*) It indicates that Fan Zhongyan emphasizes the subjective initiative and creativity of human beings firstly. In other words, good karma can be achieved by human beings. It is the active behavior of the ancestors that can prosper from future generations.

Secondly, not only ordinary good deeds, Fan Zhongyan promotes morality and uses it for political reform. He wrote that *Rule by virtue, people are willing to be ruled* (*Collected Edition of Fan Zhongyan*, *vol7*) to emphasizes the role of morality in maintaining the rule of the Northern Song Dynasty. It can be seen that JiDe is not only a charity act but also a Confucian political act for Fan Zhongyan.

3.2 Emphasizing karma

Fan Zhongyan's writing of *Deep in virtue, benefiting future generations* (*Collected Edition of Fan Zhongyan*, *vol12*) shows a rule of vice and virtue. JiDe of Buddhism is based on karma, a basic term of Buddhism. There is similar retribution thought in Confucian classics also. Fan Zhongyan approves of karma and discussed in his writing. (*Collected Edition of Fan Zhongyan*, *vol13*)

Fan Zhongyan thinks highly of karma and moral value, but opposes utilitarian behavior and the value orientation of doing good for fame and gain.

Cannot be famous without accumulating good deeds (Zhou Yi), was interpreted by the predecessors as accumulating good deeds continuously will be famous all over the world. However, Fan Zhongyan thinks that it is wrong to regard fame as the purpose of good deeds, because it will produce liar and a hypocrite. That is, good deeds are the premise of honor and reward, but fame and fortune is not the only purpose of kindness.

This kind of spiritual transcendence is what Fan Zhongyan called MingJie, which greatly encouraged the Confucians at that time. *By the time of Fan Zhongyan, the morale of Confucian scholars was greatly improved, he made great contributions (Zhu Zi Yu Lei)*. The criterion of Confucian personality formulated by Fan Zhongyan also promoted the revival of Confucian and its transformation to neo-Confucianism.

3.3 Emphasizing future generations

It is worth noting that Fan Zhongyan emphasized the meaning of beneficial to future generations of JiDe. He used the word or meaning up to ten times in his writings, and almost every time uses the word, he associates it with descendants. The mention of posterity indicates Confucian values. Confucianism attaches great importance to affection filial piety and reproduction. *There are three forms of unfilial conduct, of which the worst is to have no descendants (Meng Zi)*. It can be seen that compared with afterlife and metempsychosis, terms valued by Buddhism, Fan Zhongyan pays more attention to the real world.

Besides, he created a fixed expression *starting from descendant (Preface of Collected Edition of Fan Zhongyan)*, which means that the former generation did not have a high official position but accumulated good deeds for the future generations.

The fixed expression has a profound influence. Later, there were not only a large number of articles quoting and collecting the sentence of Fan, but also many articles imitating and using Fan Zhongyan fixed expression, most of which were preface postscript and epitaph. In the Ming dynasty, this fixed expression was applied more frequently. According to incomplete statistics, there were 34 imitations of this fixed expression in Ming dynasty works, including starting from me, in the first person, and starting from somebody, in the third person. In this point, Fan Zhong won undivided admiration.

4. Conclusions

Using word JiDe, Fan Zhongyan attached great importance to the Confucian thoughts that related with enterprise, benevolence, and family ethics, while avoided the Buddhist thoughts that connected with afterlife and reincarnation. Therefore, the acceptance of Buddhist thought of Fan Zhongyan was completed under the guidance of Confucian values. At the same time, he attached great importance to the social function and the spirit world of Buddhism to enrich his political and social reform measures, it is also a Confucian value.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by Advanced Institute of Confucian Studies, Shandong University.

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