

Achievement and Influence on Chinese and Korean Buddhist Culture made By Indian Monk Zhi Kong

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It used to be long lasting and close Buddhist culture exchanges among the ancient oriental countries. Zhi Kong, an Indian senior monk in the 14th century, was one of the outstanding figures in Buddhist history. As an outstanding missionary in the history of Buddhism exchanges among ancient India, Srilank, China, Koryo (DPR Korea and South Korea today), Zhi Kong has made great contributions to the spreading and exchanging of oriental Buddhism. As for exchanging and mixing traditional culture between Korea and China, it will be of great significance to research on Zhi Kong' s achievement and influence on the spreading of Buddhism between the tow countries.

In my opinion, Zhi Kong has made the following achievements:

First, Zhi Kong mixed the Buddhism with individual culture of different nationalities, thus enriching the Buddhism as well as branding it with obvious nation and nationality characters. As an Indian senior monk, Zhi Kong' s main study was Indian Buddhism. However, during his stay in China for over 40 years, he has paid great attention to studying the Chan sect of Han Buddhism. He has translated and annotated great amount of Han Buddhist sutra, contributing a lot to carrying forward Han Buddhist doctrine and dogma. Zhi Kong has spent over 20 years in preaching Buddhism places where Han Buddhism was prevailing, like Beijing, Nanjing, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, etc, as well as translating zen Buddhist sutra. He achieved great success in studying Han Buddhist Chan sect, for which he received high praise from the local Buddhist circle and the Emperor of Yuan Dynasty. However, he was not

satisfied with the achievement made in China. He went on spreading Han Buddhism in Koryo. While spreading Han Buddhist doctrine in Koryo, Zhi Kong paid attention to absorbing the traditional national culture. By combining the Han Buddhist doctrine and the national traditional culture of Koryo, Zhi Kong stressed on the commandment of Chan sect, and advocated to abandon aboriginal religion and the custom of animal sacrifice. What he advocated has been popular among the monks and believers and has made great contributions to the spreading and localization of Han Buddhism in Koryo.

The second, Zhi Kong emphasized on spreading Buddhism in the ethnic group areas in China and established a profound religious relationship with the groups. In his over 40 years' experience of preaching Buddhism in China, Zhi Kong spent more than 20 years preaching Buddhist Chan sect in the areas inhabited by ethnic groups, like Zang, Yi, Dai, and Bai groups in Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, Guizhou, and Yunnan. In my opinion, the praise rewarding work when Zhi Kong spread Buddhism among the ethnic groups was that he not only spread the Chan sect, but also preached the Esotericism based on the local situation that the ethnic groups believed aboriginal religion and witchery. His preaching was suitable to the local situation, therefore, was effective. Zhi Kong got popular among the believers. Most of the ethnic groups began to believe in Buddhism. It helped the union and harmony among the ethnic groups in China to some extent, thus winning good social result.

The third, Zhi Kong paid attention to building Buddhist temples. When preaching in Yunnan, he hosted the construction of Zhengxu Temple, named Zhnegxu Chan Temple, on Lion Mountain in Wuding County. The Temple has become the most influential in the southwest as a temple with the most typical Chan feature. Today, the Zhengxu Chan Temple receives a large number of believers for worship, and has been the most influential temple in Yunnan. After the construction of Zhengxu Chan Temple, Zhi Kong went to Yangzhou, Korea to build Huiyan Temple on Tianbao

Mountain. There he established rules for the Temple and recruited monks. He preached in Korea, and made the Han Buddhism localized.

The Zhengxu Temple on Lion Mountain in Wuding, Yunnan and the Huiyan Temple on Tianbao Mountain in Yangzhou, Korea were sister temples built by Zhi Kong. They are the signs of the good Buddhist cultural relationship between China and Korea. Both of the two temples are worshiped by believers keenly, which symbolizes the long lasting Buddhist culture exchanges and ever green friendship between the two countries.

Zhi Kong also built Fayuan Temple with Jin People (Koryo people) in Yanjing (Beijing at that time). The temple was an important place for Zhi Kong to communicate with Koryo monks. Zhi Kong preached to Koryo monks like Laiweng, Zichao, Zhiquan, etc in the temple. Later on these monks have become eminent monks in Korea. Though an Indian eminent monk, Zhi Kong carried forward Buddhism in China and Korea by building temples, giving preaches, and teaching disciples. It's another achievement Zhi Kong made for the exchanges of Buddhist culture between China and Korea.

The fourth, Zhi Kong developed Chan Buddhism. After studying Buddhism for 12 years in India, Zhi Kong had a deep understanding of Xian sect and Esotericism of Indian Buddhism. When in China, Zhi Kong worked hard in learning Chinese, which helped him understand Han Buddhist Chan sect. What Zhi Kong mainly spread in China and Korea was Chan Buddhism. Commonly speaking, the key point of Han Buddhism is "to comprehend the Buddhist idea with one's heart", that is, as far as one has the Buddha in his heart, can he practice Buddhism and at last achieve success. The Zen Buddhism does not emphasize on the formal worship or long time reading of Buddhist Scripture, instead on the self-cultivation of the believer with his heart in understanding the Buddhism. The Chan Buddhism that Zhi Kong spread in China and Korea was called "Foxin theory" (heart believing theory), or Fuxin Sect.

However, in the ethnic groups area in southwest of China, the Buddhism Zhi Kong spread was Indian Esotericism. Compared with Buddhism, Esotericism has complicated system, abstruse doctrine, and profound spelling. To adapt to the local situation that aboriginal religion was popular among the ethnic groups, Zhi Kong spread Esotericism in the areas. It was a practical way of preaching. In this case, leaders, rulers and even the common mass in the ethnic groups areas like Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Hunan, and Guangxi welcomed Zhi Kong to preach, and accepted the commandment of Esotericism. With regards to religion, it was an advance for the ethnic groups to convert from aboriginal religion to Buddhism. Zhi Kong spread Chan Buddhism in the Han Buddhism prevailing areas like Beijing, Jiangsu, and Zhejiang, He also translated many Chan Buddhist sutra. But at that time, his influence was limited because what the ruling class emphasized was Tibetan Buddhism. The secretary of Yuan Empire controlled the believes of people in the country, thus Tibetan Buddhism was the dominant religion. The work Zhi Kong has done in spreading Chan Buddhism was not stressed by the Buddhist circle at that time owing to the limitation of the religion policy of Yuan dynasty.

However, what Zhi Kong spread in the ethnic groups has affected the people a lot. It was also a result of the social environment and the religion policy. The ruling class of Yuan dynasty paid attention to Tibetan Buddhism, while the Tibetan Buddhism was constituted of Esotericism. Generally, it was called Tibetan Esotericism. So, the Esotericism was easily accepted by the ethnic groups. It was a result of spreading by taking the local condition into consideration.

Zhi Kong developed Chan Buddhism, as well as spread Esotericism to a large extent. It was an achievement by Zhi Kong of spreading both Xian Sect and Esotericism at the same time.

In general, as close-neighboring countries separated only by a strip of water, China and Korea have an over 3000 years history of economic and culture exchanges. As early as in the Shang Dynasty in 1200 AD, exchanges of trade and culture has begun between the tow countries. The Buddhism was introduced into

China in the 2nd century and was introduced into Korea in the 4th century. The Buddhist culture exchanges is the important part of the traditional culture exchanges between the two countries. By this Symposium, we will pay more attention to the cooperation and research on the religious culture of our two countries.

As a province with the most ethnic groups in China, Yunnan is a place with the richest religion resources in China. We have Han Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Southern Hinayana, Christianity, Catholicism, Islamism, Taoism, and aboriginal religion in Yunnan. The religious culture in Yunnan is a precious resource for Korea and other countries. The religious culture is the result of human civilization with national and international characters.

I hope to cooperate with you to contribute to the further exchanges of religious culture between China and Korea, as well as that among the countries in the world.

Thank you.