

Zen Thought of Monk Tianruweize in the Yuan Dynasty

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Abstract: In the late Yuan Dynasty, the famous monk Tianruweize advocated the combination of Zen and pure land Buddhism, proposed the pure land of the mind, the self-centered Amitabha and the double practice of Zen and pure land sect. He lived in seclusion but became famous. His base of Buddhism, the Lion Forest Garden in Suzhou city, became a model of temple garden architecture in the South of the Yangtze River. With him as the center, the group formed to participate in meditation and enlightenment and promoted the cultural exchange and integration of various nationalities.

Key words: Tianruweize; chanting and drunkenness; pure land sect; double practice of Zen and pure land Buddhism; Lion Forest Garden

1. Introduction

Tianruweize was a famous monk in the late Yuan Dynasty. He learned from the great monk Mingben and inherited the spirit of the great monk Zonggao in the Song Dynasty. He combined with the needs of the development of the social era and advocated the Buddhist meditation of the unity of Zen and advocated the pure land, self Amitabha, double practice of Zen with pure land Buddhism. he was one of the leaders of the southern Zen in the history of Chinese Zen. The Zen masters secluded in the jungle, scholar-officials liked Zen, high officials and dignitaries often came to ask questions such as Mongolia and color characters. It promoted the exchange and integration of ethnic cultures. The Lion Forest Garden also became a model of temple garden architecture in the south of the Yangtze river, leaving a valuable material and cultural heritage for the world.

2. First, the Life Experience of Monk Tianruweize

Tianruweize was born in 1286 in Luling Lianhua county, died in 1354, His dharma name is Weize, his surname is Tan, He was an important representative figure of Linji Zen in the south of Yuan Dynasty, Yuan Dynasty royal preceptor gave him the honorary title of Buddha's heart Puji Wenhui great debate Master and an embroidered cassock with gold.

He was born in the famous Tan clan. When he was young, his family was in decline. He said "When I was young, I fell in love with Buddhism. I began to learn Buddhism from the age of 10. When I was 14 years old, I learned from monk Zhaoru."

In 1303, Weize, at the age of 18, became a monk at Heshan Ganlu monastery in Yongxin, a neighboring county. During this period, he studied Buddhism with great diligence. However, due to lack of guidance from an eminent monk, he often had only a little knowledge and was eager for success. As a result, haste makes waste. And he himself didn't realize at the time that it was a big no-no. He wasted much time more than a decade.

When Weize was 21 years old, he heard from other monks about master Mingben, so he decided to go to Tianmu Mountain in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province to learn from the master. During the period of practicing Zen at Tianmu Mountain, Weize was most influenced by master Mingben and became his most proud disciple, inheriting and carrying forward the Linji clan dharma. Two frustrating events in Tianmu Mountain prompted Weize to reflect on his way of learning Buddhism, and finally to comprehend the life and death issues and achieve complete enlightenment. In the year of 1322, he was able to divide his views and officially began to become a grandmaster. The scholar Weisu of the Yuan Dynasty commented that once upon a time, monk Zhongfeng advocated the Tianmu Mountain in Hangzhou, and scholars gathered there. Among his many disciples, the one who got his true story and was able to carry it forward was monk Tianru.

After the death of master Mingben in 1323, Weize left Tianmu Mountain, wandered around and lived where he was, having no fixed abode. For more than 30 years, Followed the Mountain Forest Zen style represented by master Yuanmiao and master Mingben, He practiced ascetic seclusion and spread Buddhism, not blocking himself, but keeping a proper distance from the imperial court and not holding official temple positions. In 1328, he came to Songjiang Huating and retired to practice Zen among the nine peaks. Just as he said "One futon in half room, nine peaks on the Wusong river. Although hidden in the mountains, keep away from the secular life and maintain social contact. During the period of seclusion, although no effort to visit. There were so many visitors. Temples in Jiangsu and Zhejiang invited me to be their

abbot, but I firmly refused to accept that. In the past 12 years, I was known by more and more people.”

In 1339, Weize came to Suzhou city, and his disciples in Suzhou city collected money to buy land near the east river and built a solid base of Buddhist in 1342. Because many stones from Taihu Lake shaped like lions, hence the name of Lion Forest Garden came out. At the same time, a lion in the Buddhist classics often refers to a great monk, so the seat of the speaking monk can be called the lion's seat. The name is also in honor of his teacher Mingben. A Zen temple built in the garden, the yuan emperor called it Lion Forest bodhi authentic Zen temple. For 13 years since then, Weize had taken the bodhi orthodox temple as the ashram. On the one hand, he had inherited the spirit of monk Zonggao and monk Mingben, and on the other hand, he advocated the double practice of Zen purification and actively promoted the pure land Buddhism while developing Zen.

3. Second, the Historical Background of Monk Tianruweize

The Yuan Dynasty was the first feudal dynasty in the history of China, which was unified by ethnic minorities. It had a vast territory, ethnic integration, self-confidence and openness, and frequent economic and cultural exchanges between China and other countries. The government of the Yuan Dynasty used to use the power of religion to maintain its dominant position and implemented equal and relaxed religious policies. In the time of Kublai Khan, in order to further strengthen the central government's rule over Tibet, the imperial system was established, and the Xuanzheng Academy was set up to manage the country's Buddhist affairs. Confucianism is no longer exclusive, the general Confucian scholars had been neglected for a long time, some people described the social and cultural structure of the Yuan Dynasty as “Buddhism has the highest social status, ranking first, Taoism has a higher social status, ranking second, and Confucianism has the lowest social status, worse than ordinary people who work for the government.” The imperial examination system of the Yuan Dynasty could not be compared with that of the Tang and Song Dynasties. It has not created a large number of bureaucrats and officials from the imperial examination class. In this way, Zen in the Yuan Dynasty lost a social factor that promoted its development.

In the middle and later period of the Yuan Dynasty, officials were corrupt, the society was turbulent, and bureaucratic scholar-officials were addicted to Zen. They included minor officials of the Han nationality and senior officials of the Mongols. According to the records of Ouyang Xuan, a scholar of the Yuan Dynasty, when master Weize was teaching the dharma, his disciples included senior officials from various regions and departments, they all listened attentively and respectfully.

In the middle of the thirteenth century, the status of Zen began to decline. Although the south Zen was the mainstream of Zen, it was the most prosperous, but due to the influence of the policy of respecting other religions and suppressing Zen, its development was limited. In 1288, Yang Lianzhenjia, President of south religions, called on the figures of south Buddhists to discuss the merits of Buddhist sect in public. This debate was actually a crusade against the south Zen. The attack on south Zen was the reflection of Kublai Khan's national hierarchy in Buddhism. Mr. Wei Daoru once said “The South is artificially inferior, which is no longer limited to the North and South as in the past, but the hierarchy being promoted by the ruling clique of the Yuan Dynasty, thus refuting Zen Buddhism. Any excuse from Zen is superfluous.”

In the middle of the Yuan Dynasty, the court gradually relaxed its attitude towards south Zen and began to pay attention to the influential Zen masters in the South, which led to the obvious differentiation of south Zen. Most of the Zen masters still kept the characteristics of south Zen in the early Yuan Dynasty, they did not cooperate with the imperial court, continued to live in seclusion in the mountains for practice, known as nunnery knowledge or mountain Zen. There were also some Zen masters, belonging to the utilitarian Zen, actively closed to the court, with political power, they abboted famous mountain temple, with high prestige. The former is represented by the Zen masters of the school of Yuanmiao and Mingben, including disciples such as Tianruweize, Qianyanquanchang, Wujianxiandu, Shiwuqinggong and Juechengbenyin. The latter is Yuansouxingduan, Xiaoyindayi, Tanfangshouzhong, Gulinqingmao and other representatives.

4. Third, Chanting Anddrunkenness from Monk Tianruweize

Weize inherited the Zen spirit of monk Zonggao and monk Mingben. Doubt from the study of questions, he began to focus on asking questions instead of answering questions. He said that Zen must be a big doubt of enlightenment, small doubt with little enlightenment, no doubt, no enlightenment. Mr. Yang Zengwen thought that among Mingben's disciples, Weize greatly expanded the method of chanting Buddha in the pure land along the path of Mingben Zen's double practice. With the thought of idealist pure land, the self Amitabha, including practice called chanting Buddhism in the pure land. In this way, the Buddhist meditation, which integrates the two forms of Zen and the pure land sect, will be pushed to a new starting point.

The pure land sect of China respects the Amitabha Buddha of the west, practices the pure land and practices the Buddha. The major classics include the classic of infinite longevity, Reading the classic of infinite longevity and the treatise on eternal life. In the middle and later period of the Yuan Dynasty, the belief of pure land was prevalent and had a growing influence on Zen.

Weize inherited the idea of pure land from monk Yanshou and monk Zonggao, and advocated the pure land Zen, which was called chanting Buddha. He wrote the pure land book named Pure Land or Ask. He believed that participants in meditation directly to the heart, could see the nature of the Buddha; People who practiced Buddhism could reach the pure land and see the nature. Was there any difference between the pure land and the pure nature? The new theory of the fusion of Zen and pure land was put forward, and on the basis of the pure land of idealism, it began to accommodate the pure land of the west into the Zen. He further communicated the pure land of the west with the pure land of the idealist and made the pure land of the idealist integrate into the content of the paradise.

5. Fourth, The Impact of His Achievement

Weize was a famous master in the late Yuan Dynasty, belong to Linji Huqiu school of ancestors. He lived in seclusion, but his fame spread far and wide. During his lifetime, he was honored by officials and scholars of Mongol and Han nationalities. He was commended by the court. After his death, the Lion Forest Garden, where he once preached dharma, became a model of the garden architecture of temples in the south of the Yangtze river. His works on pure land or ask and interpretation of the shurangama sutra were widely circulated and had a profound impact on the Buddhist world.

Lion Forest Garden, located in today's Suzhou city, Jiangsu province, is one of the four gardens in Suzhou, is also the world cultural heritage, China 4A tourist attractions. The garden was built in 1342, when his disciples raised funds to buy land for the construction of the garden for Weize. For garden rocks, shaped like lions, and in honor of Hangzhou lionrock of Mingben, hence the name lion grove. Due to the vicissitudes of the garden, the temple, garden and houses were separated and then combined, the traditional gardening techniques and Buddhist thoughts were integrated, and the modern Bei Family introduced western gardening techniques and ancestral halls into the garden, making it a temple garden integrating the principles of Zen and the pleasure of gardens, which is a model of classical private gardens in the South of the Yangtze River.

His work on the shurangama sutra will have a far-reaching impact. Since the end of the Yuan Dynasty and more than 200 years ago, people in shurangama have been admiring the shurangama and listening to it, but they only know that they have the shurangama and that they do not have the shurangama. The north and south lectern, teachers stick to the doctrine, after two hundred years came an objection. The teachings of the shurangama written by Taixian in the Ming and Qing Dynasties must be based on the annotations of the shurangama sutra.

His another masterpiece, Pure Land or Ask, had a great influence and was recognized by the pure land master. During the period of the republic of China, the 13th founder of the pure land sect, Yinguang, when reviewing the ten essentials of pure land, said "there are many books on pure land, the most important is the ten essentials." The Japanese scholar Yetianshanjin also gave a high praise, "since the Song Dynasty, although there are many people in China who advocate the double practice of Zen and purification, they have not made a systematic arrangement. Only the book of Pure Land or Ask can answer these questions."

Throughout the Yuan Dynasty, the South is the most economically and culturally developed region, attracting many non-Han populations such as Mongolians to live in, forming a distribution pattern of multi-ethnic integration. The government of the Yuan Dynasty worshipped Buddhism, and the officials and scholars of the Yuan Dynasty practiced Zen. Thus it can be seen that monk Weize has quietly formed around him a group of officials and scholars of various nationalities, including the Mongols, sermons and others. This minority group, instead of claiming to be foreign conquerors, broke ethnic barriers and prejudices, and willingly became friends and study with southern monks, thus promoting ethnic integration and cultural exchange. In this fusion process, a core figure of Zen, such as Tianruweize, cannot be ignored.

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