

The Spread of Buddhism in Chinese Culture

Abstract

In China, there are three traditional culture include: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The first two are Chinese culture, and Buddhism is a foreign religion introduced from India.

Keywords: Culture, Buddhism, Chinese Cultural Studies, Chinese Revolution, Intellectual History.

Introduction

In China, there are three traditional culture include: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The Confucianism and the Daoism are Chinese culture, and Buddhism is a foreign religion introduced from India in china.

Chinese culture starts in china with the Yellow Emperor, over about 5,000 years ago.

Ancient Chinese philosophers speak about many deities who passed on to humans essential elements of culture. For example, Chinese characters created by Cangjie, agriculture imparted by Shennong, and Sui ren revealed the uses of fire. In spite of this, the Chinese culture preserved its individuality and unique identity.

Under the influence of these faiths, Chinese culture has generated a rich and profound system of values in china. The concepts of five cardinal virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness are all products of Chinese ancient religions' teachings. These principles have constantly played out over China's long history.

Mohism was an ancient Chinese philosophy which explain logic, rational thought and science that developed by the academic scholars who studied under the ancient Chinese philosopher Mozi and these were described in an eponymous book: the *Mozi*.

Confucianism, also known as Ruism, was always being the official ideology throughout most of Imperial China's history, and mastery of Confucian ideology was the primary criterion for entry into the imperial bureaucracy. There was often conflict between the ideologies, e.g. the Song dynasty Neo-Confucians believed Legalism departed from the original spirit of Confucianism.

Confucianism is the ideology that described a tradition, a philosophy, a religion, a humanistic or rationalistic religion, a way of governing, or simply a way of life. Confucianism ideology developed from the Chinese philosopher Confucius, who considered himself a retransmitted of the values of the Zhou dynasty golden age of several centuries before.

In 67 C.E., Buddhism reached China from ancient India.

Buddhism is the world's fourth-largest religion with over 520 million followers, or over 7% of the global population, known as Buddhists. Most Buddhist traditions enjoy the goal of overcoming suffering and the cycle of death and rebirth, either by the attainment of Nirvana or through the path of Buddhahood. Buddhist education centres vary in their interpretation of the path to liberation, the relative importance and canonicity assigned to the various Buddhist texts, and their specific teachings and practices. Widely observed practices include taking refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, observance of moral restraints, monasticism, meditation, and the cultivation of the Paramitas. Theravada Buddhism has a widespread interested following in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand.

The integration of Buddhism into China with the native religious culture formulates an interesting enigma. The only 'foreign' religion to integrate itself into the hearts and minds of the Chinese masses, Buddhism



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has gained unprecedented success in comparison to the numerous other religious culture—Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam—that were likewise spread along the Silk Roads to China.

Aim of the Study

In this paper, we will explore the rise of the religious philosophy Buddhism in Chinese culture.

Basic Belief in Buddhism

Buddhism is a global religion. It has a complex history and system of beliefs. Around the world the religion of Buddhism is the religion of about 300 million people. The word Buddhism comes from 'budhi', means 'to awaken'. It has its origins about 2,500 years ago when Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, was himself enlightenment, or nirvana, at the age of 35. The principle theme of Buddha is in Three Universal Truths and Four Noble Truths, which he then taught to the people for the next 45 years.

Buddhism is a philosophy because philosophy 'means love of wisdom'. The core of Buddhism is science which can be made into a system, which depends upon seeing and testing facts and stating general natural laws. Because the Four Noble truths can be tested and proven by Buddhism this depends more on understanding than faith.

Three Universal Truths

1. Everything in life is not permanent and always changing.
2. Because nothing is permanent, a life based on possessing things or persons doesn't make you pleasure.
3. There is no immortal, unchanging soul and "self" is just a collection of changing characteristics or attributes.
4. Four Noble Truths-
Human life has a lot of adversity.
The cause of adversity is greed.
There is an end to adversity.
The way to end adversity is to follow the Middle Path.
5. Buddha taught people that not to worship him as a god and everyone should take responsibility for their own lives and actions. He also taught that the Middle Way was the way to nirvana. There are eight rules for following the Middle path.

The Eightfold Path

1. Good understanding and viewpoint (based on the Four Noble Truths).
2. Good values and attitude (compassion rather than selfishness).
3. Good speech (don't tell lies, avoid harsh, abusive speech, avoid gossip).
4. Good action (help others, live honestly, don't harm living things, take care of the environment).
5. Good work (do something useful, avoid jobs which harm others).
6. Good effort (encourage good, helpful thoughts, discourage unwholesome destructive thoughts).
7. Good mindfulness (be aware of what you feel, think and do).
8. Good meditation (calm mind, practice meditation which leads to nirvana).

Ancient Chinese Civilization

China along with east Asia Egypt and Mesopotamia (modern Iraq and Iran) is an ancient civilization aged more than 5,000 years old. Ancient China was one of the oldest extant civilizations in the world and continues to the present era. Chinese civilisation has its origins in the Yellow River Basin, where the first Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties appeared. The name 'China' comes from the Sanskrit *Cina* (derived from the Chinese Qin Dynasty, pronounced 'Chin') which was translated as 'Cin' by the Persians and seems to have become popularized through trade along with the Silk Road from China to the rest of the entire world.

The Xia Dynasty (2070 BCE – 1600 BCE) is the very first dynasty in China to be described in ancient historical chronicles. Ancient China Civilization existed around 3000 BC. Confucianism was developed during the Qin dynasty of Ancient China and was in around 200 BC. This was the time when Formation of government, politics in China started. The word China itself developed from a word pronounced as Chin and is porcelain or ceramic. One family rule in ancient China was very famous. Following is the timeline of the Chinese civilisation:

Timeline of Ancient Chinese History

1766 BCE: official date for the founding of the first historic dynasty in China, the Shang dynasty

1122 BCE: Western Zhou dynasty begins after the overthrow of the last Shang king

771 BCE: Eastern Zhou dynasty period starts after the sack of the Western Zhou capital;

The first phase is traditionally divided into two: the spring and autumn (771-481 BCE) and the Warring States (481-221 BCE) periods

551-479 BCE: Confucius, China's renowned philosopher, lives

221 BCE: The First Emperor, Qin Shih Huang, completes and takeover of all other Chinese states

202 BCE: The Han dynasty founded, after several years of chaos following the fall of the Qin

220 CE: The fall of the Han dynasty is a renowned marker for the end point of the ancient period of Chinese history.

The Chinese culture features an abundance of the fine material and spiritual values, unchanged over millennia. Chinese culture includes customs and traditions, language, music, dances, painting, language, cuisine, clothing and applied art. Of special note is Chinese written language. The Chinese written language, one of the world's ancient languages is unique in its own way, since even now the Chinese write with the help of the same alphabet that was used five thousand years ago. First the Chinese were writing on wooden plates, then on silk and at the turn of our era, they invented paper.

The End of Ancient Chinese Civilisation

There is no official definition of "Culture" settled on all over the world, and the definitions be inclined to rely deeply on who is doing the defining and for what function. The Han dynasty was ruled until 220 CE, until it broke up into several successor states. This opened a period of weakness for China, when no single dynasty was able to establish its rule

over the whole country, and when barbarian peoples from surrounding regions were able to found a multitude of states within China. This was a dark period in Chinese history. Society was disrupted, trade declined and many towns shrank, but even in barbarian-occupied areas administration staffed by Confucian-educated officials continued to govern, and Chinese civilization continued largely as before. About 100 A.D. the Han started to decline. The bureaucracy became corrupt and the centralised power weakened. Local landlords became more powerful as king's control and supervision declined. They increased the tax burden on the farmers and common peoples and took many of their farms

Compounding this political weakness and the farmers and common people unrest were the effect of several devastating epidemics that wiped out nearly half the population. With all this internal turmoil, the weakened Han dynasty could not fend off the advance of the Hun invaders.

Even after the Han fell there was not a permanent disruption of Chinese civilization. Briefly, the Sui dynasty ruled. Then in 618 the Tang dynasty emerged as one of the most gorgeous in Chinese history. They re-established Confucian thought and revived and promoted upon the Han style of bureaucracy. After the Hun violation and the fall of the Han dynasty, the Chinese never had to re-established their civilization.

The British played quite an important role in China's decline during the nineteenth century. By the nineteenth century china was experiencing economic problems. The British tried to gain access to the Chinese trade markets for some time but the Chinese Emperor Qianlong declined in 1793, saying they had all the goods/ manufactures they required. Through this external interference China declined economically, politically, socially, etc. throughout the nineteenth century, and a result was the early twentieth century revolutions and uprisings in China. The historians J.M. Roberts contend that 'Queen Victoria [the British] may have launched the Chinese Revolution unintentionally'.

Merger of Buddhism in Chinese Culture

In my opinion, civilisation need to build a good relationship with culture (like China), before start

spreading a faiths, beliefs, idols and religions. Civilians must be aware of other culture and traditions that might affect the success of a Religion. Successful religion do a perfect research about the foreign countries not only about their economical, political and financial factors but also attitudes , faiths , beliefs, idols and behaviour that might seems inappropriate to other culture. Buddhism is an example of such a civilisation that majority of their corporation wants to make only a profit and not seeking for building a good relationships. Thus, china nowadays are more smarter, successful and knowledgeable than other countries.

Buddhism is becoming popular in china for a number of reasons. The first good reason is Buddhism has answers to many of the problems in modern materialistic societies. Because, Buddhism culture could be shared, learned, based on symbols, integrated and dynamic.

It also includes a good understanding of the human mind which are now discovering to be both very advanced and effective.

Conclusion

Buddhism is considered as the most important religion in Asian countries. Developed from Indian roots, it has affected culture, politics, philosophy an even standards of living from last two thousands years in china. Buddhist from china prefers artistic ways to express their feelings and thoughts.

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