

From the Indigenization of Foreign Religions to the Sinicization of Religion

-----Take Buddhism and Christianity as Examples

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ABSTRACT

The success or failure of indigenization, or the high or low level of indigenization, determines the different fate of Buddhism and Christianity in China. In a sense, the success of Buddhism indigenization is the failure of Christianity indigenization. So, why is the indigenization of Buddhism successful in China while the indigenization of Christianity has not yet been realized? What factors have had a critical impact on this? Many scholars have studied this problem and put forward different views. In this paper, I summarize the views of scholars and put forward my own opinions.

Keywords: *Indigenization; Sinicization; Buddhism; Christianity*

1. INDIGENIZATION AND SINICIZATION

Indigenization, also called localization in Hong Kong and Taiwan, is a term translated from English. There are some differences in the understanding of this term. From the perspective of its use in Chinese context, it includes two aspects: one is the indigenization of discipline, academic research or theory. For example, the indigenization of sociology is a combination of reasonable elements of foreign sociology and the reality of local society. It is to promote the understanding and application of sociology to local society and to form sociological theories, methods and academic orientations with local characteristics (Zheng Hangsheng, 2004: 145)^[1]. Second, it refers to the indigenization of economy. It means that in the process of producing and operating activities in the host country, the foreign subsidiaries of the multinational corporations, in order to quickly adapt to the economic, cultural and political environment of the host country, fade home country color of the enterprises, and apply local strategy in the fields of personnel, capital and technology development to make them become authentic local companies (Zhang Chengbin, 2006:40)^[2]. The Indigenization we are talking about here actually involves some of these two aspects. If seen from the indigenization of its doctrine, it involves the first aspect. In terms of its organizational operation, the second

aspect is involved. So in general, the term "indigenization" first refers to a process, a process from "non-native" to "native" state, which is to make something or things native or adapted to local conditions and realities. Secondly, it refers to some forms of expression of its results.

Of course, in China's special historical environment, indigenization is often associated with sinicization and having Chinese characteristics. From its basic meaning, although there are certain differences, the final result or purpose is basically the same, so in this sense, their basic meanings are consistent. So in China, we can call indigenization sinicization, or having Chinese characteristics. Therefore, in this sense, marxism sinicization and the socialist theory with Chinese characteristics can be considered as the indigenization of marxism in China. From the above analysis, we can see that the extension of indigenization is wider, its meaning is more inclusive. Sinicization and having Chinese characteristics are essentially the specific manifestations of indigenization in a particular country. Indigenization in Japan, therefore, we can call it Japanization or having Japanese characteristics, in other countries and regions, we call it x nationalization and regionalization.

In general, the indigenization of religion refers to a process in which a religion is integrated into local culture and social environment and has certain regional

characteristics in the process of spreading from its birthplace to other regions. In contemporary China, the sinicization of religion has its specific meaning. It is to fully implement the party's basic principles of religious work, adhere to the orientation of the sinicization of religion, actively guide religions to adapt to socialist society, and unite the religious people and believers to make new contributions to building a moderately prosperous society in all respects and realizing the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation. This is actually the development stage and concrete manifestation of religious indigenization in a particular time and space background.

2.THE INDIGENIZATION OF BUDDHISM AND THE INDIGENIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA

Buddhism and Christianity are both foreign religions or cultures in China, so they are faced with the problem of indigenization after they were introduced into China. By solving the problem of indigenization, foreign religions can survive and develop in China and become an important part of the local culture, which can be further developed. Otherwise, foreign religions can be very difficult to survive and develop in China. From the final historical results, it can be said that Buddhism has successfully indigenized itself. Chinese Buddhism had formed its own theoretical system, spiritual practice and organizational system, with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Now when we talk about Chinese Buddhism, no one thinks of it as an alien religion. Believing Buddhism is no longer regarded as believing a "foreign religion", but believing a local religion.

In contrast, Christianity has not been successfully indigenized in China, or the level of indigenization is very low. Compared with Chinese Buddhism, Chinese Christianity didn't form its own unique theoretical system and practice way, most of the theoretical contents and the ways of practice are derived from the west, and the local believers lack original contribution to this. Especially in the aspect of organization and management, there is always a place where the relationship is not straightened out. Therefore, Christianity has always been considered as a foreign religion and a heterogeneous culture in China. Christianity is still difficult to integrate with traditional Chinese ideology and culture, and has a certain distance from Chinese nation's psychology. At present, there are about 6 million Catholics and 38 million Christians in China (Zhong Hua Ren Min Gong He Guo Guo Wu Yuan Xin Wen Ban Gong Shi, 2018)^[3].

3. HISTORICAL REASONS FOR SUCCESS AND FAILURE OF INDIGENIZATION

Success or failure of indigenization determined the different fate of Buddhism and Christianity in China. So, why did the indigenization of Buddhism succeed in China while the indigenization of Christianity never materialized? What are the key factors that have influenced this? Many scholars have studied this problem and put forward different viewpoints. Here, I have summarized the views of some scholars, and put forward my own opinions.

3.1 Cultural integration and adaptation

The indigenization of Buddhism presents a very complicated situation through various ways and methods. It is not only manifested in religious belief, theological theory and other aspects, but also manifested in many aspects such as the etiquette system, organizational form and practice of Buddhism. For example, Chinese Buddhism combined the production mode and life style of the small peasant economy with self-sufficiency in feudal society in China, and advocated the "equal weight of agriculture and zen", which fundamentally changed the begging system of Buddhism in India.

Buddhist religious spirit deification alleviated the distance between Indian Buddhism and Chinese traditional ideology and culture mainly on the level of religion concept and religious beliefs, removed the obstacles for the spreading of Buddhism in China, and opened the door for the general public to accept Buddhism. Then, the Confucianization of Buddhism laid a solid foundation for the character of social ethics and mind theory of Chinese Buddhism and created conditions for the ruler, the upper aristocracy and cultural scholars to accept Buddhism further. The Taoism of Buddhism embodied the integration of Buddhism and Chinese traditional speculative philosophy, which was called "the religion of philosophy". From the very beginning, the buddhist scriptures borrowed many traditional Taoist terms. In Wei and Jin dynasties, it was through the confluence of metaphysics that Buddhism was officially put on the stage of Chinese academic thought (Hong Xiuping, 2006:8-9)^[4].

Although Christianity is original in the Middle East, it developed into a world religion mainly in Europe, and thus became a typical western religion, which makes it lack a natural affinity derived from similar geo relations with traditional Chinese culture in the East. Comparing it with Chinese native cultural mainstream--Confucian culture, we will find that there are important essential differences between them. Although Christianity also pays attention to its own atonement, it ultimately depends on the salvation of the external gods, while

Confucian culture emphasizes inner transcendence, and inner sanctification is the core of Confucianism. The Confucianists think that everyone can become Yao and Shun, in contrast to which, Christianity emphasizes original sin, that is, not everyone can be Christ, but only the servant or the lamp of God. At most they can get the salvation of God through atonement (Liu Dan, 2002:106)^[5].

Christian views are contrary to Confucian ideology of "Tao" and "good humanity", which are concerned by Chinese traditional culture. The classical Chinese Confucian thought holds that human nature is essentially good and at best defective, so it does not admit that people are born guilty. Since there is no original sin, of course there is no need for God to save it. The defects of human nature can be solved through the education of Confucian ethics, so as to become a person with perfect personality. In this aspect, the moral education of Christianity does not show its brilliance, and its heterogeneity further limits its moral education role.

Christianity has a strong tendency to secularization, that is, to emphasize entering the world, try to transform the society and save the life, which makes it unavoidable to conflict with the worldly rulers of the land it was introduced to, thus making its spread restrained. Its supremacy of God is also difficult to make the emperor and the ruling group with absolute power truly accept. Ordinary people are also difficult to understand theocracy because they are accustomed to accepting the rule of secular regime. Christianity has always adhered to doctrines and failed to make corresponding changes according to China's actual conditions to adapt to Chinese traditional culture, which made its indigenization difficult to succeed. This point is highlighted in the famous "etiquette dispute" in the history of Chinese Christianity. The Pope banned Chinese Christians from practicing Chinese etiquette, eventually leading Qing court to declare a ban on Christianity, known as "a-hundred-years ban." The development of Christianity in China during the period of prohibition was seriously hindered and the number of believers in China was greatly reduced (Gu Chuanyong, 2016:59)^[6]. This shows that if Christianity wants to achieve indigenization, it must use local cultural resources to explain it anew and appropriately. On the other hand, it also shows that if Christianity wants to be accepted by local people, it must respect and obey the will of the ruler, otherwise missionary activities cannot be carried out smoothly.

3.2 The time of the two religions to be introduced into China is different

When Buddhism was early introduced into China, it was from the turn of Han Dynasty to Wei, Jin and

Northern and Southern Dynasties, which was a historical period of frequent war and people's severe disaster. This made it spread widely, and contact, communicate and integrate with the local ideology and culture, which formed a Buddhist trend of thought with unique Chinese characteristics. The reasons are the following. On the one hand, it was because of the social turbulence and people found it hard to live at that time. The samsara view, the outlook on life, the causality view, and so on, relating to the former life, the present life and the afterlife, which was proposed by Buddhism, comforted Chinese people who suffered so much to a great extent. On the other hand, the feudal rule at that time was not yet consolidated, and Buddhism helped to reign, so it was respected by the feudal rulers and was then widely spread and accepted. The mutual use of royalty and religious power is religious power served the kingship.

In Tang Dynasty, when the early Christianity was introduced, Buddhism had basically formed the mainstream of Chinese traditional culture with Confucianism and Taoism, and had made it mature. That is, Christianity failed to catch up with the period of participating in common construction of Chinese traditional culture. This was especially true in late Ming and early Qing. The spread of religion benefited from the troubled society and the suffering people in many times, but in late Qing Dynasty, the Opium War and its subsequent military aggression and the signing of the unequal treaties made it more often linked to the aggression of the powers in China, which aroused strong repugnance among the people. In late Qing Dynasty, the whole human science and technology had developed considerably after the industrial revolution, and the progress of science and technology had weakened the influence of Christianity, one of the religions opposed to science, on Chinese intellectuals (Liu Dan, 2002:108)^[7].

3.3 The spreading strategies of the two religions in China are different

After late Ming Dynasty, when Christianity spread to China on a large scale, its missionary strategy was mainly through the dissemination of Western learning and the establishment of education, hospital, news and publishing and other institutions, which were far inferior to the translation of their own classics. Thus, the results seemed to make people more aware of western culture and device learning than Christianity and its doctrinal teachings. This is not very helpful to the spreading of Christianity.

While Buddhism was introduced into China, the first was to translate and explain the Buddhist scriptures. The translation of Buddhist scriptures had long been the most important aspect of the spreading of Buddhism in China. Many eminent monks and Buddhist scholars in history are famous for their translation or annotation of sutras. This is not only conducive to the elimination of

language barriers, but more importantly, to understand the meaning of the scriptures according to the thinking of Chinese people. Therefore, Buddhism itself had been widely spread (Liu Dan, 2002:111)^[8].

3.4 The two religions have different missionary motives

The introduction of Christianity often has a distinct political color. Although not all of the missionaries were rangers sent by imperialism, Christianity often became the precursor of the imperialist economy and military invasion, which objectively contributed to the imperialist invasion. The introduction of Buddhism into China is almost without political color. On the contrary, the smell of religion itself is quite strong. That is to say, the introduction of Buddhism was mainly for religious purposes rather than political and economic purposes (Tang Dachao, 2001:71-72)^[9]. Generally speaking, Buddhism was introduced into China mainly to propagate Buddha dharma and save common people from suffering. While Christianity was introduced into China in late Qing Dynasty with its special political and economic purposes. That is to seek political privileges and economic interests.

3.5 The relationship between politics and religion is handled differently

The key is that Buddhism has handled the relationship between politics and religion better. One is to attract the attention of the rulers by means of deification and divination and then to gain the support and trust of the rulers. Two is to actively participate in politics and give counsel to the ruling class. Three is to maintain a certain distance from the political center and retain the independence of Buddhism to a certain extent, which means that Buddhism should not rely solely on the support of the rulers. Four is to adjust the aspects of Buddhist ideology and behavior norms which are incompatible with Chinese political ethics. After the introduction of Buddhism to China, it never really believed that Buddha dharma was higher than the royal law, but on the premise of recognizing the supreme status of Buddha dharma, follow the laws of the secular regime, that is the king's law, while follow all kinds of Buddhist commandments.

But in the light of the state of the spreading after the Opium War, Christianity had always been free from the official rule of China. The typical manifestation is that the Christian missionaries enjoyed the extraterritorial power, and Chinese law was hardly binding on it. This made Christianity difficult to get the trust and support of the rulers. A series of ecclesiastical cases in late Qing dynasty and early Republic of China not only deepened the distrust, but also aroused the disgust and antipathy of the ruling class. This shows that Christianity did not

adopt an attitude of cooperation with Qing government, nor did it accept the management of Qing government and demonstrate its role in favor of the secular regime. As is known to all, no religion can develop and expand without the support of the secular regime, nor can it be indigenized.

3.6 Is it acceptable to the scholar bureaucrats ?

It is important to know that the biggest obstacle to the spreading of foreign culture in China is the traditional Chinese value and the imperial politics, and the scholar bureaucrat stratum is the most powerful maintainer of traditional values and the inheritor of social culture. It is this social stratum of great energy who has a fundamental influence on the attitude of the government to foreign culture and deeply restricts the development of foreign culture in China (Liu Shen, 1994:135)^[10].

The spreading history of Buddhism in China has proved to us that the most important reason why the indigenization of Buddhism can finally be realized is that Buddhism had won the recognition of local cultural elites in China. In this respect, Christianity is far inferior to Buddhism. In the 1920s, the anti-christianity climax initiated by the non-religious alliance was the most obvious example.

4. THE SINICIZATION OF BUDDHISM AND THE SINICIZATION OF CHRISTIANITY UNDER THE BACKGROUND OF RELIGION SINICIZATION

4.1 Conflict and functional substitution

The indigenization of religion focuses on the elimination of contradictions and conflicts between foreign religions and local society, such as classical translation, ethics, relations between politics and religion, the integration with the traditional culture, the recognition of the local intellectuals and so on. Finally, the foreign religion is accepted by the local people. The ultimate result of religious indigenization, or the successful manifestation of religious indigenization is the integration with local culture, which is regarded as an organic part of local culture by the local people. One of the most direct manifestations is to believe in a religion which was originally foreign is regarded to be believed in a native religion.

The Sinicization of religion focuses on giving full play to its positive functions and solving various problems existing in the real environment. For example, to give full play to the moral function of religion, that is, to play its due educational role in the operation of social system by giving full play to the instrumental and value

effects of religion. In this respect, some of the moral concepts in religious belief can be integrated with the socialist core values, and then become the moral foundation of the benign operation and coordinated development of society.

The exertion of the moral function of religion is not to blindly make people believe in religion, but to let people internalize the reasonable moral idea advocated by religion in their own moral system, and at the same time, to embody the restraint function of morality.

Religion can be the sacred canopy of secular morality. It is to use the sacred things of religion to protect and package things that are originally secular, to sanctify these secular things, to make secular things not only protected, but also to gain a holy halo. Then it makes people revere the secular things like revering religion and holiness. At the same time, religion can become a powerful engine for secular morality. To be specific, the role of religion in promoting secular morality is manifested in all aspects of moral life, but in any case, the examination function of religious morality, the benchmarking function of religious morality and warning function of religious morality are its indispensable contents.

4.2 The establishment of social trust

According to Max Weber's "Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism", protestant ethics is a kind of catalyst for the emergence of rational capitalism, and the two have a kind of affinity. The religious foundation shrinks and the pursuit of the kingdom of heaven is dissolved into sober professional ethics. According to the ethic view of Protestant Christianity, Protestant ethics can enable the emerging capitalists to use capital and wealth rationally, rather than rely on adventures, monopolies to gain wealth like traditionalism, to obtain wealth for the endless desires of the individual, and even to obtain wealth by means of unscrupulous means. This is the difference between rational capitalism and traditional capitalism. From this, we can see that religious ethics can have a certain constraint on people's commercial behavior through their own or the professional ethics based on it. For example, it advocates integrity management, diligence and frugality, punctuality and so on. These things later become important parts of rational capitalist professional ethics. After the rise of the socialist market economy, some Chinese entrepreneurs have converted to Christianity for a variety of reasons and internalized some of the Protestant ethics into their own moral systems. It seemed to them that there must be a transcendental and sacred constraint. Otherwise, the capital will lose control. People will not be able to face and deal with wealth properly, eventually lose themselves, or even go to ruin. However, whether this combination of capital and religious belief will produce the expected constraint

and guidance has not been fully proved. On the contrary, it has aroused the concern of the relevant parties. In fact, it reflects the concern of the secular regime for institutionalized religion or organized religion. Throughout the past dynasties, the central regime of the dynasties, brought the management of religion into its own jurisdiction and carried out complete control. It seemed to them, if organized religion is not well controlled, it is a potential threat. It is also common in history to revolt under the guise of religion.

Therefore, we can see that throughout the dynasties, organized religions such as Buddhism and Taoism were brought under the jurisdiction of the government, and the secret associations of the people were severely punished. Moreover, foreign religions such as Christianity, which has organizations, talented people, financial resources and have ties to certain foreign groups and forces, some people have always been wary of it and regard it as a potential tool for infiltrating and even making peaceful evolution of foreign forces. Therefore, from this point of view, Christianity must gain the trust of the government and prove to the government through its function and behavior that it is beneficial to the healthy operation and harmonious development of society and to the country, and thus eliminates the potential sense of distrust.

4.3 The question of power boundary

The question of power boundary involves the coordination of government management and the autonomy of the church. In this respect, Buddhism is well done, but Christianity does not do well. Historically, after Ming and Qing Dynasties, Christianity had been for quite a long period of time, free from the administration of the government. After the founding of new China, there were Catholic underground churches and Protestant family churches. The former involves the issue of sovereignty and is not allowed to be discussed. The latter involves activities locations and understanding of three-self principles. In June this year, the State Bureau of Religious Affairs issued "the measures for the approval and administration of the place of religious temporary activities". Whether this method can deal with and solve the problem of good family church, it still needs time to test. In fact, three-self principle is neither original in New China nor unique now. Three-self principle was first proposed by Henry Venn, a British Christian, and Rufus Anderson, an American Christian, in the middle of the nineteenth century (two people were not jointly proposed, but it was not very clear who was earlier in two).

Three-self principle includes self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating. Self-governing means that the internal affairs of the church are independent of foreign religious groups. Self-support means that the economic affairs of the church are

independent from the financial affairs of foreign governments and foreign religious groups. Self-propagating is the preachers of native churches are responsible for both missionary work and interpreting the doctrines. Yu Guozhen advocated and established the first Chinese people's three-self church in China. In 1904, the independent Presbyterian Hall of Haining Road was built in the north of Shanghai. In addition, the Christian Church established by Wang Mingdao, the local church established by Ni Tuo Sheng, and so on, all of which also implemented three-self principles. These churches can be called Chinese self-reliance churches. The leadership of the Chinese government and the Communist Party of China to three-self churches is embodied in the following aspects: theological thought is approved by the government, the clergy is appointed directly or indirectly by the government, the government finances the basic expenses, the church organizations accept the leadership of the Religious Bureau, the members of the church must not be missionary in the places outside the churches, the establishment of the church needs the approval and restriction of the government, and so on. These policies are incompatible with the views of anti three-self. The key of the problem is how to divide the power lines between the two sides. In reality, the government has a lot of things to manage, especially in religious organizations under the administration of the government. Many religious organizations are not included in the government's jurisdiction. A large part of the reason that they do not want to join is their different understanding of the principle of self-government. They worry that they will be restricted after joining, lose many freedoms and lose their autonomy. The question is, in fact, whether Christians should obey God or to the power of the secular regime. Specifically, when to obey god and when to obey man. This actually involves the division of authority between autonomy and management.

5.CONCLUSION

In fact, indigenization or sinicization is a historical process of keeping pace with the times From the foregoing discussion, we can see that originally sinicization is a specific manifestation of indigenization. But in the context of the sinicization of religion, some subtle changes have taken place in their meanings. From the perspective of having local characteristics and adapting to local society and culture, Buddhism has been indigenized, while Christianity has not yet been completed. From this perspective, we can also say that Buddhism has been sinicized and Christianity has not been sinicized. But it still requires the sinicization of Buddhism, which indicates that the sinicization of religion is a process of advancing with the times. The sinicization of Buddhism in the context of the sinicization of religion requires that Buddhism should develop the characteristics of the new era and adapt to

the current Chinese society and culture. And the indigenization of Buddhism and buddhist sinicization we once said are more likely to have the historical characteristics of the time or a particular era, and to adapt to Chinese society and culture of a certain historical period in the past. Therefore, the sinicization of Buddhism in the context of the sinicization of religion in contemporary China is a kind of Buddhism sinicization based on the indigenization or sinicization of the past. Relatively speaking, the foundation of Christian sinicization is very weak. The task of indigenization has not been solved in the past. As a result, the problems to be solved and the challenges to be faced are different. The difference is that the sinicization of Buddhism also needs to solve the crisis and challenges it faces, such as over-commercialization, chicken soup for the soul, serious mystical factors and the threat of fundamentalism, so as to maintain the sanctity and purity of Chinese Buddhism(Cheng Gongrang&Zhu Yusheng,2016:105)^[11]. But the problems faced by the sinicization of Christianity are more serious. How to straighten out the relationship between state and religion, how to merge with traditional Chinese culture and how to obtain the recognition of most cultural elite, the problems that haven't yet been solved by indigenization are still to be solved. In short, the common denominator between the sinicization of Buddhism and the sinicization of Christianity in contemporary China is that both are conducive to the building of a moderately prosperous society in all respects and the great rejuvenation of Chinese nation.

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