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Hui-neng's Wisdom of Spiritual Liberation

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Abstract- Hui-neng developed the Buddhist thought of liberation and constructed the theory of spiritual liberation with Chinese characteristics. Hui-neng's theory of spiritual liberation is a kind of life wisdom, which aims to make people free from various afflictions and realize the freedom of the spirit. In order to achieve this goal, he explored the causes of afflictions, found the ways to liberate people from afflictions. According to his view, all afflictions (psychological problems) originate from evils and deviations, especially greed(贪 : Tan), hatred(嗔 : Chen), delusion(痴 : Chi) that are the three poisons of consciousness called by Buddhism. Because the roots of evils and deviations are giving rise to thoughts(动念 : Dong-nian) and arising in one's own mind(起心 : Qi-xin), the best way to free from any afflictions is no-thought(无念 : Wu-nian), no-dwelling(无住 : Wu-zhu), no-mark(无相 : Wu-xiang), which are able to make people's mind have no impediment so that the spirit will be at ease or lightheartedness.

Keywords: *hui-neng; spiritual liberation (moksha); wisdom; fan-nao(烦恼, affliction); e(恶, evile); xie(邪, deviation); du(毒, poison).*

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Hui-neng's Wisdom of Spiritual Liberation

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Abstract- Hui-neng developed the Buddhist thought of liberation and constructed the theory of spiritual liberation with Chinese characteristics. Hui-neng's theory of spiritual liberation is a kind of life wisdom, which aims to make people free from various afflictions and realize the freedom of the spirit. In order to achieve this goal, he explored the causes of afflictions, found the ways to liberate people from afflictions. According to his view, all afflictions (psychological problems) originate from evils and deviations, especially greed(贪: Tan), hatred(嗔: Chen), delusion(痴: Chi) that are the three poison of consciousness called by Buddhism. Because the roots of evils and deviations are giving rise to thoughts(动念: Dong-nian) and arising in one's own mind(起心: Qi-xin), the best way to free from any afflictions is no-thought(无念: Wu-nian), no-dwelling(无住: Wu-zhu), no-mark(无相: Wu-xiang), which are able to make people's mind have no impediment so that the spirit will be at easy or lightheartedness.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The theory of liberation is a very important theory of Buddhism(Li, 2016), which purpose is to free people from the bitter sea of their suffering, find a reasonable reason for people's suffering to comfort people's soul, and make people feel at ease to bear the suffering. Hui-neng integrated Chinese Confucianism and Taoism to sinicize Buddhism's theory of liberation, and constructed the theory of spiritual liberation with Chinese characteristics, which basic goal is to get rid of all afflictions, and the ultimate purpose is to make people's spirit at easy or lightheartedness(Li, Yang, Zhang, 2020). Hui-neng's theory of spiritual liberation is a kind of life wisdom, which has very important practical significance for people to solve psychological problems,

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cultivate positive psychological quality, improve spiritual realm and meet people's growing yearning for a better life.

II. AFFLICTION AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL ROOT

a) *The meaning of affliction*

By the analysis of the Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction) said by Buddhism, it is able to be found that the affliction is actually the psychological problems people suffer from. "the meaning of Fan (烦, Vexation)" in affliction is disturbance or harassment; "the meaning of Nao (恼, anger)" is disorder or confusion. It can be said that the meaning of Fan-nao (affliction) is Jian-si-huo(见思惑), the confusion of seeing and thinking) to disturb people's inner peace and make people upset. In fact, it is the psychological troubles or problems people encounter today, mainly the emotional troubles such as Kong(恐, fear), Y'ou(忧, worry) and Nu(怒, anger)(Wang, 2014), etc. Kong (恐, fear) refers to panic, scare, terror, anxiety, etc., which is usually the emotional distress when the goal of self-protection is threatened. Y'ou (忧, worry) refers to anxiety, sadness, tension, etc., which is a kind of emotional disturbance when individuals feel that their goals may be difficult to achieve and closely related to fear. Nu (怒, anger) refers to irritation, annoyance, hatred, sullenness, indignation, dissatisfaction, resentment, regret, etc., which is usually the emotional distress when people's goal realization process is frustrated or encounter obstacles (Li, 2016a, 212). These emotional distresses do not work in isolation, but closely related to each other, usually forming a complex of emotional distresses. From this point of view, the liberation from afflictions is actually to solve people's psychological troubles or problems.

b) *Fan-nao (烦恼, Affliction) stems from the evil and deviation born in people's mind*

According to the view in 'The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra', E(恶, Evile) and Xie(邪, Deviation) born in people's mind is the source of all Fan-nao(afflictions) or troubles. Hui-neng said: "The World Honored One was in Shravasti City.....If we discuss its appearance, it is 108,000 miles away, but in immediate terms, it is just beyond the ten evils and the eight deviations within us.to get rid of the ten evils first and you will have walked one hundred thousand miles. Next get rid of the eight deviations and you will have gone eight thousand miles.merely practice

the ten wholesome acts; then what need will there be for you to vow to be reborn there? But if you do not rid the mind of the ten evils, what Buddha will come to welcome you? 'deviant thoughts' are ocean water. 'Afflictions' are the waves. 'Cruelty' is an evil dragon. 'Empty falseness' is ghosts and spirits. 'Defilement' is fish and turtles, 'greed and hatred' are hell, and 'delusion' is animals.....Inwardly, it illuminates the self-nature and casts out the three poisons. The hells and all such offenses are destroyed at once. Inwardly and outwardly there is bright penetration.....Merely purify your mind; that is the 'West' of your self-nature." (Huang, 1996, 60-62; Hui-neng, 2001, 182-188; Jia, 2011, 95-96) Here, Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch, not only clearly points out that the ten E(恶, evils) and eight Xie(邪, deviations) result in people's Fan-nao(烦恼, afflictions), but also points out that the way to get rid of Fan-nao(烦恼, afflictions) is to understand the mind and see the self-nature so as to get rid of evils and deviations in mind. In this way, Hui-neng organically combines the liberation from Fan-nao(烦恼, afflictions) and the promotion of spiritual realm.

i. E(恶, Evil)

There are ten E(恶, evils), including the three evils of the body (killing, stealing, prostitution), the four evils of the mouth (false words, two tongues, evil mouth, Qi language), and the three evils of the consciousness (greed, hatred, delusion), which is the ten evils in the word "ten evils cannot be forgiven". Among them, the three evils of consciousness are the most important evils in Buddhism, which are the three Du(毒, poisons) that result in people's Fan-nao(烦恼, afflictions), that is, the root of afflictions. 'Mahayana Huang(Da-cheng-yi-zhang)' points out that "these three poisons can generally perturb all the afflictions in the three realms, and all the afflictions can harm all the living beings". They attack the three realms and do great harm like poisonous insects and beasts. Hui-neng believed that once people were poisoned, especially the three poisons of consciousness, their mind would be unbalanced so as to result in psychological disturbances or psychological problems, and their soul would be devastated. Only by eliminating all utilitarianism, without any greed, hatred and delusion, and keeping the inner "purity", would people get rid of their afflictions (Zeng, 2014).

Tan(贪, greed) refers to various desires that people are never satisfied with fame, wealth, etc. In Buddhism, there is the idea that the six roots in contact with the outside world produce six dusts. It is the contact between the two to result in that people have various desires to want to possess, and pursue unremittingly. 'Saddharmapundarika-sutra' points out: "Greed is basic among the causes of all sufferings." There is an old saying in China that "people die for money, birds die for food", which is all about human

greed. Nowadays, fraud, cajoling and being cheated are all resulted in by "greed". Attaching importance to having said by Erich Fromm in his book '*To Have or to Be*' is also a form of greed. The people who have the trait of Attaching importance to having or possessive way of survival focus on the possession of things, people, and spirits, regard possession as the purpose of existence or life goal, and the virtue of human being (Peng, 2010). They pursue the possession of people and things instead of living in harmony with others and outside things, which would lead to tension and deterioration of the relationship between human being and nature and between people (Li, 2017, 223). People who take possession of things or others as their life pursuit or existence goal would inevitably lead to their inability to get along with things and others harmoniously and promote each other, so that they would not move towards a state of more freedom, self and thusness, on the contrary, it is easy to slide into the dilemma of general anxiety, depression and crisis (Peng, 2012).

Chen(嗔, Hatred) includes various anger and resentment, etc. Hatred is able to make people fall into Bitter Sea of affliction, be entangled by the troubles suffered by them, cause their mental imbalance, and directly affect their life and enterprise. Hatred and greed are completely opposite. Greed is caused by love, while hatred is anger and other emotions caused by difficulties, which seriously threatens mental health. The harm of mental health problems caused by people's hatred to society and individuals is obvious to all. Such as "Road rage" and "waiting rage", etc., in today's society are typical manifestations of the hatred.

Chi(痴, Delusion) is stupid, which mainly refers to that people do not know what to do, so it is also called Wu-ming(无明, ignorance or darkness). Wu-ming(无明, ignorance or darkness) is linked with the delusion in the mind of all living being, which results in that the brightness of people's mind-nature is covered, making them in stupidity, with black and white reversed. Hui-neng pointed out: "Worldly men, deluded and confused, do not see Prajna. They speak of it with their mouths, but their minds are always deluded." (Huang, 1996, 35; Hui-neng, 2001, 122) "the Prajna wisdom which people of limited faculties possess is fundamentally no different from the Prajna that men of great wisdom possess. Hearing this Dharma, why do they not become enlightened? It is because the obstacle of their deviant views is a formidable one and the root of their afflictions is deep. It is like when thick clouds cover the sun: if the wind does not blow, the sunlight will not be visible. Prajna wisdom is itself neither great nor small. Living beings differ because their own minds are either confused or enlightened. Those of confused mind look outwardly to cultivate in search of the Buddha. Not having awakened to their self-nature yet.....When your

own mind constantly gives rise to right views, afflictions and defilement can never stain you. That is what is meant by seeing your own nature.” (Huang, 1996, 37; Hui-neng, 2001, 135) Here, Hui-neng made it clear that Chi (痴, Delusion) makes people not realize their own self-nature or wisdom of Prajna, so that they have evil ideas and infinite troubles in their hearts, which means that ignorance or darkness is able to cause a lot of afflictions and disorder. Accidents and disputes caused by ignorance or darkness would hinder people's cultivation, then give people other more troubles, which would make people trap into them and suffer from them so as difficult to get mental peace.

ii. *Xie(Deviation)*

The Xie(deviation) said by Hui-neng refers to the eight Xie (deviations) in the Buddhism, which respectively are deviational language(邪语, Xie-yu), deviational view(邪见, Xie-jian), deviational thought(邪思, Xie-si), deviational karma(邪业, Xie-ye), deviational life(邪命, Xie-ming), deviational progress(邪精进, Xie-jing-jin)(邪方便, Xie-fang-bian: deviational convenience), deviational idea(邪念, Xie-nian) and deviational meditation(邪定, Xie-ding). They are the opposite of the Noble Eightfold Path (Aryastangika—marga), which seriously hinder the practical way of people's obtainig spiritual harmony.

Deviational language (邪语, Xie-yu) is the wild words, obscene words and bad words from people's mouth, which are easy to hurt others and results in the dissatisfaction of others and the deterioration of interpersonal relationship.

Deviational view (邪见, Xie-jian) is improper notions or even evil ideas, which is called prejudice, bigotry, wrong views and so on today, which may cause people to make a lot of mistakes, suffer setbacks or failures, and be hit by various kinds of blows due to unclear understanding of problems.

Deviational thought (邪思, Xie-si), also called deviational ambition (邪志, Xie-zhi), evil thinking (邪思维, Xie-si-wei), refers to thoughts of desire, sorrow, harm, etc., namely, thinking about something that is bad or should not be thought, or thinking disorder or irrational due to the influence of desire, emotion, scourge, etc. It is easy to make people to behave irrationally, then harm others and themselves, such as being cheated.

Deviational karma (邪业, Xie-ye) refers to killing, taking what belong to someone else without their permission, fornication, and so on. People who do these things often worry about being punished or being done to themselves by others so as to lead to their psychological deviation, as Confucius said, “the villain always has a deep sense of sorrow”.

Deviational life (邪命, Xie-ming) refers to not to live according to the current social reality, that is, doing

something that violate the law and regulations, which harasses people's inner peace.

There are two meanings of deviational progress (邪精进, Xie-jing-jin). One is that people do not practice according to the correct ways so as to result in their continuous efforts but no progress or even having negative effects, just like gone mad because of improper practice ways; the other is to make continuous efforts to improve in the aspect of doing bad things, such as constantly improving the tricks of deception, etc. The former might make people mental imbalance, and feel more and more upset and annoyed, while the latter might produce the “deep sense of sorrow” mentioned above.

Deviational idea (邪念, Xie-nian) refers to the idea not in accordance with the law or the idea of evil, which is the idea or notion that produces in the mind that violates the law and discipline, infringes upon others, the society and even the country or nation. Deviational ideas usually disturb people's mind, result in their mental problems.

Deviational meditation (邪定, Xie-ding) is not positive, namely negative meditation. If deviational, not meditating may be better than meditation. The more meditating, the worse to make people into the devil way, which is more likely to lead to psychological imbalance, or even just produce complaints.

iii. *The harm of E(恶, evils) and Xie(邪, deviations)*

Hui-neng vividly explain the harm of E (恶, evils) and Xie (邪, deviations). He compares deviational heart to sea water, Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction) to wave, poison to evil dragons. The sea here is the bitter sea, and the deviational heart is the water of the bitter sea. So it may be said that the deviational heart generates the bitter sea that become the source of the mental suffering. In other word, it is the deviational heart to make people sink into the bitter sea. That Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction) is the wave in the bitter sea means that Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction) is the waves raised within people's inner hearts, surfy and rough and turbulent, which make people's hearts unable to be tranquil, disturb people's uneasiness and suffer unspeakably. Since the waves are a form of manifestation of seawater, it is able to be said that deviational heart is more basic or fundamental to Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction), which forms Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction) under the action of a certain force. The reason that the afflicting waves are able to appear is because the poisonous dragon is making waves and brewing storms on rivers and seas. On the basis of the image metaphor of evils and deviations, Hui-neng further compares greed and hatred to hell that is irreversible, and likened stupidity and delusion to brutes, which meaning is that greed and hatred are like a sin or karma that people create by their own mind in order to make them go to hell for punishment. If one's heart is

occupied and entangled with greed and hatred, he would be tortured into constant state of anxiety, suffering unbearably, just as a person with a lot of evildoers is sent to hell to accept unbearable punishment. Once do anyone get caught up in it, he would become anxious and unbalanced. Folly and delusion make people not distinguish between good and evil, confuse right and wrong, be disgusting, despised and annoying as an idiot or animal who is stupid, silly, vulgar, evil, malicious, greedy, cruel and self-degenerated.

Despite the great harm caused by poison and evil, due to the psychological tendency of drawing on advantages and avoiding disadvantages, common people tend to have the heart of fame and fortune, or lust for money, or infatuate with power, or lust for influence, or beg for the impossible, etc. They are easy to be poisoned by evil and deviation, which sows seeds of calamity suffering from psychological problems. There are also some people understand that the evils and deviations would bring their own Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction), but they are still unable to resist the temptation so as not to eradicate their lust for money, power chasing desire. Based on above analysis, it is people's Fan-nao(烦恼, affliction) caused by their desires and selfish that torment them and make them miserable and difficult to liberate. Taking possession of things or others as their life pursuit or existence goal will inevitably lead to the inability to get along with things and others harmoniously and promote each other. As a result, this kind of person can not move towards a state of more freedom, self and freedom, on the contrary, it is easy to slide into the dilemma of general anxiety, depression and crisis (Peng, 2012). For example, some corrupt officials, knowing that if corrupt, they must be caught – “not to stretch your hand, or else, you would be caught”, do suffer from the fear that they would be caught, but driven by a strong desire, they are still corrupt and don't close up their hands, so as to lose all standing and reputation eventually.

c) *E(恶, evils) and Xie(邪, deviations) are born in the heart*

According to Hui-neng' view, all of E(恶, evils) and Xie(邪, deviations) are born in people's own heart(Li, Du, Zhang, 2019). Because people's Fan-nao(烦恼, affliction) come from their E(恶, evils) and Xie(邪, deviations), the root of their Fan-nao(烦恼, affliction) is in their heart. Hui-neng point out: “Bodhi is the original self-nature, Giving rise to a thought is wrong.”(Huang, 1996, 46; Hui-neng, 2001, 155) Once giving rise to a thought or arising in the mind the mind, people's desires would come into being, then prayers (including the desire for becoming a Buddha) arise, which would cause fluctuation of the heart (Huang, 2016). Having desire for money, greed would be easy to

arise; having desire for emotion or feeling, lust and delusion arise; having desire for discontent, hatred arise. If one cling to his mind or dwell his thought, his soul would always be intertwined, bothered and imprisoned by his desire. Once does one have a prayer, he would be fear, worry, anger, and so on. If one's emotion exceeds the appropriate degree, he would do the extreme behavior of harming others and himself. For example, if one wants to succeed, he would always be afraid of failure and worry about success before he takes action. If failure, he would feel sadness and painful, abominate the causes that result in his frustration, even blame everyone and everything but not himself. According to Hui-neng's view, if one doesn't give rise to any thought or arise in his mind, he would see his original true heart or self-nature, which is the pure, peaceful and happy heart. On the contrary, as long as one has desires, he would want something. It is false for people to ask for anything, which would disturb their heart, make their heart not be calm, then make them fall into a certain amount of pain or Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction).

III. THE WISDOM OF LIBERATION

a) *The fundamental way to liberate from afflictions*

According Hui-neng's thought above-mentioned, the purpose and way to liberate from affliction is Ming-xin-jian-xing (understanding one's mind and seeing his nature)(Li, Zhang, 2019), which is Hui-neng's wisdom of spiritual liberation (Li, Du, Zhang, et al,). Hui-neng points out: “Mind is Buddha.....When one's preceding thoughts are not produced this is mind and when one's subsequent thoughts are not extinguished this is Buddha. The setting up of marks is mind, and separation from them is Buddha.” (Huang, 1996, 106; Hui-neng, 2001, 266) When the thought past, let it really past, not think about it, not regenerate, not cling to and repeatedly tangled in it. If not, the heart would be disturbed and not quiet. “The greatest misfortune in life is not the encounter of misfortune, but to be trapped in the past misfortunes or pains and unable to extricate oneself from them.” (Li, 2016b). Life is impermanent, it is always possible to encounter misfortune. How to deal with misfortune encountered? If the unfortunate thing has gone by, but one's heart does not go with it pass, still thinking about it, always adhering to it, he would let the past unfortunate always trouble himself, make himself miserable and vexed. On the other hand, if one lets it really pass away with time, stop thinking about it, generate some new positive ideas, he would see his true heart that is his self-nature or Buddha in all thoughts and in all mark created by his heart, forget all Fan-nao (烦恼, afflictions), reach the blissful realm of Buddhism (Li, Zhang, Ye, et al, 2019).

Hui-neng believes that not only are all thoughts born from the heart, but also destroyed by the heart; not

only are all marks formed by the heart, but also kept away from them by the heart. So it can be said that the pains, Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction) and so on are all born out of people's own heart, which are the result of giving rise to thoughts (动念: Dong-nian) and arising in their own mind (起心: Qi-xin). Anyone isn't able to end up life and death, come and go freely, until he understand this truth. It is the only way that people can keep their peace of mind, maintain their mental health, improve their spiritual realm.

The above analysis shows that psychological problems such as emotional distress are actually the result of people's own mental effects. Just because of this, Hui-neng told people not to give rise to any thoughts and arise in their own mind. Even if the usual mind and the mind of becoming Buddha do not have (Huang, 2016). Or else, once do people give rise to a thought or arise in their own mind, they would have Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction), unable to become Buddha and get enlightenment, which tell people not to grasp or beg for anything (Wang, 2014). Because the nature of the mind is originally empty, all dharma is originally nothing, even if anyone wants to pray and grasp them, he would get nothing. If one must ask for or grasp, he would only pray or get nothing but Fan-nao (烦恼, affliction) and pains. Praying and grasping is arising in one's mind, arising in one's mind is giving rise to a thought, giving rise to a thought would produce mark, producing mark is wrong or delusive.

b) *The way of Ming-xin-jian-xing*

The way of Ming-xin-jian-xing (understanding one's mind and seeing his nature) is 3-no that is Wu-nian (无念, no-thought), Wu-xiang (无相, no-mark) and Wu-zhu (无住, no-dwelling), in which Wu-nian is its doctrine, Wu-xiang is its substance, and Wu-zhu is its basis (Feng, 2015). "No-mark means to be apart from marks while in the midst of marks. No-thought means to be without thought while in the midst of thought. No-dwelling is the basic nature of human beings." (Huang, 1996, 74; Hui-neng, 2001, 209).

Wu-nian (无念, no-thought) is "without thought while in the midst of thought" (Huang, 1996, 74; Hui-neng, 2001, 209), "to view all dharmas with a mind undefiled by attachment" (Hui-neng, 2001, 149), which essence is not affected by external things to have the desire or greed that disrupt people's mind. Without any thought, people would recognize their original mind, contemplate and illuminate with the wisdom which brightly penetrates within and without, which is the original liberation (Hui-neng, 2001, 149).

Wu-xiang (无相, no-mark) is apart from marks while in the midst of marks (Huang, 1996, 74; Hui-neng, 2001, 209) or separate from all outward marks that can make people's mind peace and quiet and pure (Hui-neng, 2001, 210).

Wu-zhu (无住, no-dwelling) is not to care about any offence or infringement by others, regard it all as empty, have no thought of revenge. If so, we would not be affected by other, take the path that suits ourselves, which essence is to be a real self. It's like the Buddha said with a smile in the face of the abuse of a infidel: "I am my own master. I do things according to myself, not follow others' reaction." (Li, 2016b, 5) In daily realistic life, everyone's ability will not be reduced by others' depreciation, nor will it be promoted by others' praise. What others say and do is their own thing, therefore, we should not lose ourselves and affect our mood because of what they say and do, really be in charge of our mood and our business by ourselves.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the above discourse, the following conclusions is able to be drawn.

- i. Hui-neng's wisdom of spiritual liberation is helpful for people to liberate from their afflictions.
- ii. The afflictions suffered by people are born in their mind, it depends on their mind for them to liberate from their afflictions.
- iii. People's afflictions originate from their evils and deviations in their mind, therefore, it is necessary for them to abstain the evils and deviations in order to liberate from their afflictions.
- iv. The ultimate purpose and way to liberate from affliction is understanding the mind and seeing the self-nature.
- v. Understanding the mind and seeing the self-nature is the fundamental way for people to purify their soul and elevate people's mental realm.

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