

Historical Logic, Theoretical Connotations, and Practical Pathways for Actively Guiding Buddhism to Adapt to Socialist Society in the New Era

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Abstract: Actively guiding religions to adapt to socialist society is the most fundamental task and direction of religious work of the Communist Party of China in the New Era. As a religion that has been introduced into China for more than two thousand years and has become deeply integrated into traditional Chinese culture, Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society is an inevitable trend of historical development and also a requirement for the innovative development of religious work in the New Era.

Taking historical logic, theoretical connotations, real-world dimensions, and practical pathways as its basic framework, this paper reviews the historical trajectory and contemporary transformation of the Sinicization of Buddhism. It explains the ideological foundations and value compatibility between Buddhism and China's socialist society, analyzes the main directions of current practice, and proposes mechanisms to promote the healthy transmission of Buddhism and deepen the process of adaptation in the New Era. The study aims to provide theoretical references and practical ideas for the high-quality development of Buddhist work in the New Era.

Keywords: New Era; Sinicization of Buddhism; Socialist Society; Adaptation; Practical Pathways

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1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Contemporary Value

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, socialism with Chinese characteristics has entered the New Era, and religious work has taken on a new historical position and new requirements^[1]. At the National Conference on Religious Work, Xi Jinping pointed out that actively guiding religions to adapt to socialist society is a clear theme and key focus in handling religious affairs in the New Era. He also established "adhering to the direction of Sinicization of religions" as a major task of religious work in the New Era^[6].

Buddhism has the largest number of believers in China, the deepest historical accumulation, and the closest integration with Chinese culture among all religions. The effectiveness of Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society directly affects the overall situation of religious work and relates to ethnic unity, social harmony, and cultural security.

From the perspective of contemporary value, the theoretical significance of this study lies in systematically reviewing

the historical logic and theoretical system of Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society, thus addressing the current lack of integrated research that connects history, theory, and practice. The practical significance lies in proposing feasible and operational pathways based on the actual conditions of religious work in the New Era. These pathways can provide practical guidance for the Buddhist community to uphold the direction of Sinicization and achieve healthy transmission, while also offering references for the Party and the government in managing religious affairs according to law and advancing Buddhist work in the New Era.

1.2 Review of Relevant Policy Documents and Academic Studies

From the perspective of policy development, China's policies concerning the adaptation of religions to socialist society have undergone continuous exploration and improvement. In the early years of the People's Republic of China, the policy of freedom of religious belief was implemented, encouraging democratic reform within religious communities. This marked the initial stage of adaptation between religion and the new democratic society, as well as socialist society.

After the reform and opening-up period, the 1982 document "Basic Viewpoints and Basic Policies on Religious Issues during the Socialist Period of Our Country" systematically explained the basic principles for handling religious affairs during the socialist period and proposed that religious activities should adapt to the socialist system. In 2001, the National Conference on Religious Work further enriched and developed the theoretical meaning and practical requirements of "adaptation."

Entering the New Era, Xi Jinping's important statements on religious work have formed a systematic and comprehensive theory and policy framework for the Party's religious work. These statements elevated the principle of "actively guiding religions to adapt to socialist society" to a new theoretical level and proposed the major requirement of the "five forms of guidance," providing clear direction for Buddhist work in the New Era^[3].

From the perspective of academic research, existing studies on this topic mainly focus on three aspects: the historical dimension, the theoretical dimension, and the practical dimension.

First, from a historical perspective, scholars review the spread and development of Buddhism in China and explore the internal patterns through which Buddhism integrated into Chinese society.

Second, from a theoretical perspective, scholars examine the relationship between Buddhist teachings and socialist core values, as well as their integration with China's excellent traditional culture.

Third, from a practical perspective, researchers explore ways in which Buddhism participates in public welfare activities and cultural development.

These studies provide a solid academic foundation for this paper. However, some limitations remain. Most studies analyze the issue from only one dimension and lack comprehensive integration of historical logic, theoretical connotations, and practical pathways. Research on new requirements and challenges of adaptation in the New Era is still relatively limited, and the specificity and operability of practical pathways need further strengthening.

1.3 Research Approach, Theoretical Framework, and Methods

This paper follows a main line of "history-theory-reality-practice." It reviews the historical patterns and contemporary transformation of Buddhism's adaptation to different social contexts and analyzes the historical logic of adaptation. It further explains the ideological foundations and value compatibility between Buddhism and socialist society, thereby clarifying its theoretical connotations.

Next, the paper analyzes four practical dimensions of Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society in the New Era, identifying its real-world requirements. Finally, it proposes mechanisms to promote the process of adaptation, forming a complete and coherent analytical framework.

The research methods used in this paper mainly include literature review, historical analysis, and the integration of theory and practice.

First, the literature review method is used to systematically examine policy documents on religious work issued by the Party, Buddhist scriptures and historical records, and related academic research, providing a theoretical foundation for the study.

Second, the historical analysis method takes the trajectory of historical development as the main line, summarizing the historical patterns of the Sinicization of Buddhism and identifying the historical inevitability of adaptation.

Third, the method combining theory and practice starts from real scenarios of religious work in the New Era, linking theoretical interpretation with the development of practical pathways, thus ensuring the practical relevance of the research.

1.4 Definition of Core Concepts

Active-guidance refers to a process in which the Party and the government act as the guiding subjects, whereas religious personnel and believers serve as the objects to be guided. Its core lies in guiding the religious community through ideological leadership, policy regulation, and law-based administration. Through this process, the religious community is encouraged to achieve conscious political identification, cultural integration, and social service, and to continue developing along the direction of adapting to socialist society. The fundamental goal is to build the broadest possible consensus among both believers and non-believers, so that all people can work together toward the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Sinicization of religions means actively guiding religions to adapt to socialist society. In essence, it refers to guiding religions under the leadership of socialist core values and rooted in Chinese culture. Religions are encouraged to achieve conscious political identification, cultural integration, and social adaptation, and to follow a path of religious development with Chinese characteristics. This also aims to prevent tendencies toward de-Sinicization or detachment from local cultural traditions.

Adaptation to socialist society does not require religious figures and believers to abandon their religious faith. Rather, it requires them to observe national laws and regulations, support the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system, practice socialist core values, and place the highest interests of the state and the overall interests of the Chinese nation above all else. Religious activities are expected to be integrated into the broader process of socialist development, forming a positive interaction between the healthy transmission of religion and social progress.

2. Historical Logic: The Historical Tradition and Contemporary Transformation of Buddhism's Adaptation to Its Social Context

2.1 Historical Patterns of the Sinicization of Buddhism: From Dependence on Political Authority to Integration into Society

Since Buddhism was introduced into China during the late Western Han and Eastern Han periods, its more than two thousand years of development can be understood as a history of continuous adaptation to Chinese society and gradual localization.

At the early stage of its transmission, Buddhism encountered challenges in interacting with indigenous Confucian and Daoist traditions, kinship systems, and social structures. The principle that “without reliance on the ruler, Buddhist affairs could not be established” became a key guideline for early Buddhism in adapting to Chinese society. During the Wei, Jin, and Northern and Southern Dynasties periods, Buddhism adopted the method of geyi Buddhism, using concepts from Lao-Zhuang metaphysics to explain Buddhist doctrines, thus achieving an initial stage of intellectual localization.

During the Sui and Tang dynasties, indigenous Buddhist schools such as Tiantai, Huayan, and Chan emerged one after another, forming a Buddhist theoretical system with distinct Chinese characteristics. At this stage, the Sinicization of Buddhism was largely completed, and Buddhism transformed from a “foreign religion” into an “integral component of traditional Chinese culture.”

During the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Qing dynasties, Buddhism became increasingly secularized and popularized, further integrating with Confucian and Daoist traditions. This integration formed a cultural pattern in which Confucianism governed society, Daoism cultivated the body, and Buddhism cultivated the mind. The spiritual core of Buddhism gradually penetrated Chinese philosophical thought, literature and art, customs, and ethical traditions.

This historical process clearly demonstrates a fundamental pattern in the survival and development of Buddhism: its continued existence depends on its ability to adapt to and integrate with the social environment in which it exists. Only by responding to the needs of the times, integrating into local culture, and serving broader social interests can Buddhism maintain lasting vitality^[4]. Conversely, separation from social reality and local culture inevitably leads to decline. This pattern forms the historical foundation for Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society in the New Era and represents an enduring historical law.

2.2 Reform Movements in Modern Buddhism and the Intellectual Tradition of “Adapting to the Times”

Entering the modern period, Chinese society experienced unprecedented transformations, and Buddhism faced both survival

crises and pressures for reform. In response, reform movements centered on adapting to the needs of the times gradually emerged.

In the early twentieth century, Taixu proposed the concept of “Buddhism for Human Life” (rensheng fojiao) and initiated a Buddhist reform movement. He criticized traditional Buddhist practices that emphasized superstition, withdrawal from society, and avoidance of worldly affairs. Instead, he emphasized that Buddhist teachings should remain engaged with the world and that enlightenment should be realized within social life. He advocated that Buddhism should be rooted in real life, serve social development, and undertake responsibilities for national salvation and public welfare. These ideas laid an important intellectual foundation for Buddhism’s adaptation to modern social transformation.

Later, Yinshun further developed the idea of Humanistic Buddhism (renjian fojiao), bringing Buddhist doctrines back to everyday life and social reality. This became a central intellectual orientation guiding Buddhism’s adaptation to modern social development.

After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, the Buddhist community upheld the principle of patriotism and devotion to religion. It actively participated in land reform and democratic reform, abolished feudal privileges and exploitative systems within religious institutions, and established democratic management within Buddhism. These developments marked a crucial step in Buddhism’s adaptation to both the new democratic society and socialist society.

After the reform and opening-up period, Zhao Puchu systematically explained the contemporary meaning of Humanistic Buddhism. He proposed that Buddhism should “carry forward its fine traditions and serve socialist modernization.” Under this guidance, Buddhist communities participated in public welfare, charity, and cultural development, laying a solid foundation for Buddhism’s adaptation to socialist society.

The reform process of modern Buddhism clearly reflects an intellectual tradition centered on adapting to the times and serving society, providing important historical experience for advancing adaptation in the New Era.

2.3 The Positioning and Requirements for Buddhist Development in the Theory of Religious Work in the New Era

Entering the New Era, Xi Jinping’s important statements on religious work have formed a systematic and comprehensive theoretical framework and policy system for religious affairs. This framework defines a new historical position and new requirements for the development of Buddhism.

At the 2021 National Conference on Religious Work, Xi Jinping proposed nine guiding principles, among which “adhering to the direction of Sinicization of religions” and “actively guiding religions to adapt to socialist society” were identified as core requirements.

In the New Era, the major requirements for the development of Buddhism are summarized as the “five forms of guidance.” These include guiding believers to love the country and the people, safeguard national unity and ethnic solidarity, and serve the highest interests of the state and the overall interests of the Chinese nation. They also include supporting the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the socialist system, and following the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Furthermore, believers are encouraged to practice socialist core values, promote Chinese culture, and integrate religious teachings with Chinese culture. They are required to observe national laws and regulations and consciously accept law-based state administration. Finally, they are encouraged to participate in reform and opening-up and socialist modernization, contributing to the realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

These requirements clarify the meaning and direction of Buddhism’s adaptation to socialist society in the New Era, representing a contemporary development and elevation of the historical logic of the Sinicization of Buddhism.

3. Theoretical Connotations: The Ideological Foundations and Value Compatibility between Buddhism and Socialist Society

3.1 The Compatibility between Buddhist Ethics and Socialist Core Values

Socialist core values represent the shared value pursuit of the whole society in the New Era and serve as the guiding framework for Buddhism’s adaptation to socialist society. Many important ideas within the ethical system of Buddhism share deep conceptual connections with socialist core values, providing an intellectual basis for their organic integration.

From the national perspective, the values of “prosperity, democracy, civility, and harmony” advocated by socialist core values correspond closely to the Buddhist ideal of “adorning the land and benefiting all sentient beings.” Buddhist scriptures emphasize that one should practice the bodhisattva path with wisdom and compassion, shaping a prosperous, peaceful, civilized, and harmonious world through moral cultivation and good deeds. This vision shows an internal value alignment with the New Era goal of building a modern socialist country.

At the social level, the values of “freedom, equality, justice, and the rule of law” resonate with Buddhist teachings such as “equality of all sentient beings” and principles of justice grounded in dependent origination. Buddhism holds that all sentient beings possess Buddha-nature and that life does not differ in inherent worth. It promotes fairness and justice, encourages good conduct, and restrains harmful behavior. The Buddhist system of precepts emphasizes respect for individuals and the maintenance of social order, forming a value resonance with the development of a society governed by the rule of law.

At the civic level, the basic moral norms of “patriotism, dedication, integrity, and kindness” correspond with Buddhist ethical principles such as “loving the country and loving the religion,” “avoiding false speech,” and compassionate altruism. Buddhism has long advocated the principle of protecting the nation and benefiting the people. It emphasizes honesty, kindness toward others, and diligence in work, forming a comprehensive alignment with the overall goals of civic moral development. It should be noted that compatibility does not mean complete equivalence between doctrines and values. Rather, it refers to resonance at the level of core values. This compatibility creates theoretical space for interpreting Buddhist teachings and regulations in contemporary ways under the guidance of socialist core values.

3.2 The Ideas of Compassion, Equality, and Harmony in Relation to Common Prosperity and Social Harmony

Within Buddhist teachings, compassion for the world is the fundamental purpose, while equality and harmony form the core spirit. These ideas show strong compatibility with the development philosophy of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the New Era.

The central meaning of compassion lies in bringing happiness to all sentient beings and relieving their suffering. It promotes benefiting others, helping society, and serving the public good. This principle corresponds closely to the development goal of common prosperity in the New Era. The core aim of common prosperity is to address unbalanced and insufficient development, narrow the wealth gap, and allow all people to share the fruits of development. Similarly, the Buddhist concept of compassion encourages helping the poor and those in need, promoting charitable giving, opposing extreme inequality and excessive luxury, and supporting public welfare activities that benefit society as a whole. Throughout history, Buddhist communities have regarded helping society and benefiting people as an important responsibility, forming a long-standing tradition of charitable activity. In the New Era, this tradition provides an intellectual foundation for Buddhism to contribute to the realization of common prosperity.

The idea of harmony (he) is also a central philosophical principle in Buddhism. Buddhism teaches that all things arise through interdependent causes and conditions, and that relationships among humans, nature, and society are based on mutual dependence and harmonious coexistence. This perspective corresponds closely with the New Era goals of building a harmonious society and promoting ecological civilization.

In interpersonal relations, Buddhism promotes patience, tolerance, and gentle conduct. It encourages resolving conflicts and fostering harmonious relationships, thereby contributing to social stability. In the relationship between humans and nature, Buddhism advocates equality among all forms of life and respect for living beings. It opposes environmental destruction and unnecessary killing, forming a systematic ecological ethic. These ideas provide rich cultural resources for ecological civilization development in the New Era.

3.3 Humanistic Buddhism and the Tradition of Loving the Country and Loving the Religion in Relation to Contemporary National and Cultural Identity

Humanistic Buddhism represents one of the most important achievements of modern Buddhist reform. Its central idea is that “Buddhist teachings are not separate from the world, and practice is not separate from daily life.” It opposes withdrawal from reality and instead advocates that Buddhism should be rooted in human society, serve social development, and benefit

the nation. This idea closely aligns with the broader goals of national development in the New Era and provides a major intellectual orientation for integrating Buddhism into socialist social development.

In the New Era, the core meaning of Humanistic Buddhism lies in guiding the Buddhist community to combine religious practice with social service, and to connect individual cultivation with social development. Through participation in socialist modernization, practitioners can realize the value of religious cultivation. This approach represents a central practical direction for Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society.

The tradition of loving the country and loving the religion is an important cultural tradition of the Chinese nation and a necessary precondition for Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society in the New Era. From the ancient Buddhist idea of protecting the nation and benefiting the people, to the participation of Buddhist communities in patriotic movements during modern times, and to contemporary support for national development, patriotism has remained a consistent feature of Buddhist development in China.

In the New Era, the core meaning of loving the country and loving the religion lies in maintaining unity between the two. It encourages religious figures and believers to recognize that the healthy transmission of religion depends on national strength and national rejuvenation. It also emphasizes that adherence to the leadership of the Communist Party of China and support for the socialist system provide institutional guarantees for the protection of religious freedom. This tradition forms a strong intellectual foundation for strengthening national identity and fostering a shared sense of belonging to the Chinese nation within the Buddhist community.

Buddhism is an important component of traditional Chinese culture. Its philosophical ideas, artistic forms, and ethical norms have become deeply embedded in Chinese cultural life^[5]. In the New Era, promoting deeper integration between Buddhist culture and the excellent traditions of Chinese culture is a key task of the Sinicization of Buddhism. It also serves as an important pathway for strengthening cultural identity and reinforcing cultural confidence within the Buddhist community.

3.4 The Internal Consistency between the Spirit of Buddhist Precepts and the Rule of Law and Public Morality

Precepts form the foundation of Buddhist practice. The central spirit of the Buddhist system of precepts is “refraining from evil, doing good, practicing self-discipline, and engaging in self-reflection.” The main norms of this system show a high level of internal compatibility with the development of a society governed by the rule of law and with the protection of public morality and social order.

The basic Buddhist precepts known as the Five Precepts—not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct, not speaking falsely, and not consuming intoxicants—are consistent with prohibitive provisions in national law and the fundamental requirements of public morality. The principle of not killing corresponds to the legal protection of the right to life. Not stealing corresponds to the protection of property rights. Not engaging in sexual misconduct aligns with the legal protection of marriage and family order. Not speaking falsely corresponds to the legal principle of honesty and trustworthiness. Not consuming intoxicants reflects widely recognized standards of public morality.

More broadly, the Buddhist principle of “avoid all evil and practice all good” corresponds closely with the legal ethos that respecting the law is honorable and violating the law is shameful, as well as with the basic requirements of civic moral development.

More importantly, Buddhist precepts emphasize self-discipline as the primary foundation of behavior. They encourage reflection and self-restraint beginning from inner awareness. This principle closely aligns with the requirement in the development of a law-based society to combine the rule of law with moral governance. In the New Era, guiding Buddhism to adapt to socialist society includes the important task of upholding the principle that national law takes precedence over religious regulations. Religious communities are encouraged to consciously follow national laws and regulations, conduct religious activities within legal boundaries, promote lawful self-discipline through the spirit of precepts, and actively safeguard the rule of law and public morality.

4. Real-World Dimensions: Practical Orientations for Buddhism's Adaptation to Socialist Society

4.1 Political Adaptation: Upholding Patriotism and Religious Commitment, Safeguarding National Unity and Ethnic Solidarity

Political adaptation is the precondition for Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society. Its main goal is to ensure that the Buddhist community maintains a high level of political awareness and remains consistent with the Party and the government.

In the New Era, political adaptation within the Buddhist community is mainly expressed in three aspects.

First, the Buddhist community consistently upholds the principle of loving the country and loving the religion. It consciously supports the leadership of the Communist Party of China, supports the socialist system, and follows the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It fully recognizes the significance of major national guiding principles and continues to strengthen political awareness, confidence in the system, and commitment to national unity.

Second, the Buddhist community firmly safeguards national unity and territorial integrity. It consciously resists separatist activities and maintains a clear and firm position on major national issues. At the same time, it actively promotes cultural exchanges across different regions and contributes to strengthening mutual understanding and emotional bonds among ethnic groups.

Third, the Buddhist community actively promotes a shared sense of belonging to the Chinese nation. It carries out education on ethnic unity and progress, encourages interaction and integration among believers of different ethnic groups, firmly opposes religious extremism, and resists infiltration activities conducted under the pretext of religion. Through these efforts, it contributes to safeguarding national political security and maintaining social stability^[8].

4.2 Cultural Adaptation: Promoting the Sinicization of Buddhism and Preserving the Excellent Traditions of Chinese Culture

Cultural adaptation is a central component of Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society. Its essence lies in continuously promoting the Sinicization of Buddhism and maintaining Chinese culture as its foundation, while integrating Buddhist culture with China's excellent traditional culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture.

In the New Era, cultural adaptation of Buddhism is mainly reflected in three aspects.

First, it involves the contemporary interpretation of doctrines and regulations. Guided by socialist core values, this process seeks to explore elements within Buddhist teachings that correspond to social progress and align with the traditions of Chinese culture. Doctrines and regulations are interpreted in ways consistent with the needs of contemporary Chinese development and cultural traditions. At the same time, elements that do not meet the requirements of the present era are gradually adjusted or removed, preventing tendencies toward de-Sinicization.

Second, cultural adaptation involves preserving and promoting the excellent traditions of Chinese culture. This includes exploring philosophical ideas, humanistic values, and ethical concepts found within Buddhist culture. It also involves protecting Buddhist historical sites, cultural relics, and intangible cultural heritage. In addition, efforts are made to promote the integration of Buddhist culture with traditional Chinese art forms such as calligraphy, painting, sculpture, and music, thereby enriching the contemporary expression of Chinese culture.

Third, cultural adaptation includes promoting the positive dissemination of Buddhist culture. It emphasizes resisting tendencies toward vulgarization, excessive commercialization, or entertainment-oriented distortion of Buddhist culture. Through appropriate and lawful channels, Buddhist communities are encouraged to communicate positive cultural values, share meaningful stories about Chinese Buddhism, support the global presence of Chinese culture, and enhance national cultural influence.

4.3 Social Adaptation: Participation in Public Welfare, Ecological Development, and Rural Revitalization

Social adaptation represents the practical pathway through which Buddhism adapts to socialist society. Its core aim is to guide the Buddhist community to make use of its unique strengths and actively participate in socialist modernization, realizing its value through service to society and the people.

In the New Era, social adaptation of Buddhism has formed three major areas of practice.

First, the Buddhist community actively participates in public welfare and charitable activities, continuing the tradition

of compassion and service to society. In accordance with laws and regulations, it carries out programs such as poverty relief, disaster relief, educational support, medical assistance, and elderly care services. Efforts are also made to establish standardized and professional charitable organizations and initiatives, contributing to the realization of common prosperity.

Second, the Buddhist community actively engages in ecological civilization development. Guided by ecological values such as equality among living beings and harmonious coexistence, it promotes the construction of environmentally friendly temples, encourages green and low-carbon lifestyles, and participates in activities such as tree planting, environmental protection, and biodiversity conservation. These efforts contribute to environmental sustainability and ecological development.

Third, Buddhism supports rural revitalization in a comprehensive manner. By drawing on its strengths in cultural resources, charitable work, and social networks, the Buddhist community participates in rural infrastructure development, cultural revitalization, and assistance to disadvantaged groups. These activities promote balanced development between urban and rural regions.

In addition, the Buddhist community actively participates in grassroots social governance. It contributes to resolving neighborhood disputes, promoting community harmony, and providing psychological counseling and emotional support. Through these activities, Buddhism serves as a constructive supplement to social governance and plays a positive role in maintaining social stability.

4.4 Adaptation through Internal Development: Strengthening Ethical Discipline, Institutional Regulation, and Talent Cultivation

Adaptation through internal development provides the fundamental guarantee for Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society. Only through standardized and healthy internal development can Buddhism better meet the requirements of socialist society. In the New Era, the core of internal development in Buddhism includes three main aspects.

First, it is necessary to continuously strengthen ethical discipline (daofeng). This involves maintaining the pure and dignified nature of Buddhism, firmly resisting disorderly commercialization within Buddhist activities, and opposing materialism and hedonism. It also involves guiding members of the Buddhist community to strictly observe precepts, devote themselves to spiritual cultivation, and uphold correct belief and practice, thereby maintaining a positive public image of the Buddhist community^[7].

Second, institutional development and regulation must be improved. This includes strict compliance with laws and regulations such as the Regulations on Religious Affairs, strengthening democratic management systems within temples, and improving internal systems related to finance, personnel, teaching, and safety. These measures promote standardized, law-based, and democratic temple management, while ensuring openness to government regulation and social supervision.

Third, it is necessary to strengthen talent development. This requires following standards that emphasize political reliability, religious knowledge, strong moral character, and the ability to respond effectively in key situations. It also involves improving the education system of Buddhist institutes, strengthening education in patriotism, the rule of law, cultural knowledge, and religious learning, and cultivating a high-quality team of Buddhist professionals. Such efforts provide strong human resource support for the healthy transmission of Buddhism.

5. Practical Pathways: Mechanism Building for Actively Promoting the Healthy Transmission of Buddhism in the New Era

5.1 Theoretical Interpretation and Ideological Guidance in Upholding the Direction of Sinicization of Religions

Deepening theoretical interpretation and ideological guidance is a prerequisite for actively guiding Buddhism to adapt to socialist society. On the one hand, it is necessary to establish a theoretical research system on the Sinicization of Buddhism. This includes strengthening cooperation between academic scholars and the Buddhist community, forming regular mechanisms for academic exchange, and systematically organizing the historical experiences, theoretical meanings, and contemporary requirements of the Sinicization of Buddhism.

Efforts should also be made to identify elements within Buddhist teachings that are compatible with socialist core values and

Chinese cultural traditions, and to produce high-quality academic research that provides strong theoretical support for the Sinicization of Buddhism. At the same time, Buddhist communities should actively carry out the interpretation of doctrines and regulations, and establish mechanisms for reviewing and promoting interpretative work, ensuring that such work consistently follows correct political directions and value orientations.

On the other hand, a comprehensive ideological guidance system should be developed. Education in patriotism, the rule of law, and socialist core values should be incorporated into the curriculum of Buddhist institutes, training programs for religious figures, and guidance systems for believers. Regular themed educational activities should be conducted to strengthen awareness of national identity, citizenship, and legal responsibility, thereby reinforcing ideological foundations. In addition, Buddhist organizations should play a bridging role, ensuring that the goals of ideological guidance are effectively implemented at the grassroots level in temples and among believers, achieving broad and comprehensive coverage.

5.2 Improving Temple Management Systems and Modern Governance Structures

Improving modern governance systems in temples provides an institutional guarantee for guiding Buddhism to adapt to socialist society.

First, it is necessary to promote law-based temple management. All temple activities should strictly follow relevant laws and regulations, such as the Regulations on Religious Affairs and administrative measures governing religious venues. Temples should implement legal registration systems and establish management structures centered on democratic management committees. The responsibilities, procedures, and decision-making processes of these committees should be clearly defined to ensure democratic decision-making, democratic management, and democratic supervision.

Second, comprehensive internal management systems should be developed. Particular attention should be given to financial management systems, including financial transparency and auditing mechanisms. These measures help regulate temple income and expenditure as well as asset management, thereby reducing tendencies toward excessive commercialization.

Personnel management systems should also be improved. Standardized procedures should be implemented for ordination, training, movement, and supervision of monastic members, along with the establishment of complete personnel record systems. In addition, educational management systems should be strengthened to regulate the organization of religious activities and ensure that such activities operate within legal and regulatory frameworks.

Finally, a multi-level supervision system should be established. This system should include government regulation in accordance with the law, internal self-discipline within Buddhist organizations, and broader social supervision. Channels for public information disclosure should be improved, forming a governance structure that integrates government oversight, organizational self-regulation, and social supervision, thereby ensuring the orderly and healthy development of temples.

5.3 Promoting the Creative Transformation and Innovative Development of Buddhist Culture

Promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of Buddhist culture represents an important cultural pathway for guiding Buddhism to adapt to socialist society.

On the one hand, it is necessary to explore and preserve the valuable elements within Buddhist culture. This requires systematic review and evaluation of cultural content, preserving and promoting elements that align with social progress, reflect the traditions of Chinese culture, and convey positive values. At the same time, elements associated with superstition or inconsistent with contemporary development should be removed, allowing Buddhist culture to develop in a refined and constructive manner. Particular attention should be given to highlighting themes such as patriotism, charitable values, ecological awareness, harmonious coexistence, and moral conduct, thereby shaping cultural expressions that reflect the spirit of the New Era^[9].

On the other hand, new forms of cultural dissemination should be developed. In the communication environment of the New Era, new media technologies such as short videos, documentaries, and digital exhibitions can be used to present the positive cultural values of Buddhism to wider audiences. Through these platforms, meaningful stories about Chinese Buddhism can be shared, and integration between Buddhist culture and fields such as cultural tourism, artistic creation, public welfare, and education can be promoted. These efforts help create cultural forms with contemporary characteristics and position Buddhist culture as an important resource for preserving Chinese cultural traditions and strengthening cultural confidence.

At the same time, it is necessary to firmly resist tendencies toward vulgarization, excessive commercialization, and entertainment-oriented distortion of Buddhist culture. Safeguarding the cultural foundation ensures that the innovative development of Buddhist culture continues along a constructive and appropriate direction.

5.4 Strengthening Self-Education, Self-Management, and Self-Discipline within the Buddhist Community

Strengthening the system of self-education, self-management, and self-discipline within the Buddhist community provides an internal driving force for promoting Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society.

First, the functional role of Buddhist organizations should be fully utilized. This includes strengthening the development of the Buddhist Association of China and Buddhist associations at different local levels, clarifying their responsibilities, and improving their capacity to fulfill their duties. Buddhist organizations should be guided to conduct administration, management, and operations in accordance with the law. At the same time, industry standards and self-regulatory guidelines should be established and improved, guiding the healthy development of the Buddhist community.

Second, self-education within the Buddhist community should be strengthened. Regular training programs should be organized for members of the Buddhist community. These programs should not only improve religious knowledge, but also enhance political awareness, legal literacy, and cultural understanding. Such efforts help guide members of the Buddhist community to form sound perspectives on the nation, history, ethnicity, culture, and religion, thereby achieving continuous self-improvement and self-development. Through activities such as scriptural lectures and temple-based education, believers should be guided to maintain correct belief and practice, avoid superstition and extreme ideas, and consciously follow national laws and public morality.

Finally, self-discipline mechanisms within the Buddhist community should be improved. Internal systems of supervision and disciplinary action should be strengthened so that violations of precepts, professional standards, or legal regulations are addressed according to established rules and laws. Strengthening ethical discipline (daofeng) helps maintain the positive image of the Buddhist community. At the same time, a regular mechanism for self-evaluation should be established, allowing problems to be identified and corrected in a timely manner, thereby supporting the self-purification and healthy transmission of Buddhism.

6. Conclusion

Actively guiding Buddhism to adapt to socialist society is both a natural continuation of the more than two-thousand-year historical process of the Sinicization of Buddhism and an important task of religious work in the New Era. It is also an essential pathway for ensuring the healthy transmission and long-term development of Buddhism.

Through the analysis presented in this paper, it becomes clear that Buddhism's adaptation to its social context represents a fundamental historical pattern in its development. The compatibility between Buddhist teachings and socialist core values, Chinese cultural traditions, and the development philosophy of the New Era forms the theoretical foundation for such adaptation. Political adaptation, cultural adaptation, social adaptation, and adaptation through internal development represent the four major practical dimensions of this process in the New Era. Strengthening ideological guidance, improving institutional safeguards, promoting cultural innovation, and activating internal motivation constitute the primary practical pathways for deepening the process of adaptation.

Advancing Buddhism's adaptation to socialist society in the New Era depends fundamentally on upholding the direction of the Sinicization of religions. Its core lies in achieving conscious political identification, cultural integration, social service, and institutional self-regulation. Only by continuously adapting to the changing demands of the times, integrating into socialist society, and serving the highest interests of the state and the overall interests of the Chinese nation can Buddhism maintain its vitality and achieve healthy transmission and sustainable development.

For the Party and the government, it is necessary to uphold the fundamental principles of religious work, manage religious affairs according to law, strengthen ideological guidance and policy direction, and build broad consensus among members of the Buddhist community and believers. Through these efforts, they can be guided to contribute to the comprehensive construction of a modern socialist country and to the realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation^[2].

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