

先天下之憂而憂——

范仲淹

Be the First to Be Concerned about the Woes of Others— Fan Zhongyan

宣化上人講述於1987年6月5日

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BIOGRAPHIES | 人物誌

名仲淹，字希文，北宋江蘇吳縣人。幼孤家貧，事母至孝。讀書於長白山之禮泉寺，偶見窖金，不動聲色，覆之不取。後貴時，對僧言此事，取金建寺。

才高志遠，力學不倦，以天下為己任，言：「士當先天下之憂而憂，後天下之樂而樂。」宋仁宗時為相，上十事疏，改革政治，惜被舊派反對，國之不幸。

母卒，請僧誦功德經超荐，孝心感應觀音助念，藉菩薩力，其母生天。因之，篤信佛教，好善樂施。置義田，濟族人；捨新房為學舍，施舊宅為天平寺。臨終時對家人云：「昨夢

Fan Zhongyan's given name was Zhongyan, and his courtesy name was Xiwen. He was from the Wu County in Jiangsu Province during the Northern Song Dynasty. He lost his father when he was a child and his family lived in poverty. Despite this, he took care of his mother with utmost filiality. He studied at the Liquan Monastery in Changbai Mountain. One day he accidentally found some gold in the basement, but he was unmoved by what he saw. Without taking any, he concealed it without a word. Later when he became a high official, he told the monks at the monastery about this and the monks dug up the gold for monastery construction.

Fan Zhongyan had great wisdom and high aspirations, and diligently studied tirelessly. He regarded the whole world as his own responsibility, saying, "Be the first to be concerned about the woes of others and the last to share the weal of others." He became prime minister during Emperor Ren's reign, and he proposed ten vital points and initiated political reformation. However, the reformation was opposed by conservative officials and eventually failed, and thus it was the misfortune for the country.

When his mother passed away, he invited monks to recite meritorious sutras to cross her over. His filial piety and faith received the response from Guan Yin Bodhisattva, who helped him with the recitation. With the power of the Bodhisattva, his mother was reborn in the heaven realm. Due to this occurrence, he had solid and firm faith in Buddhism, and he was charitable and rejoiced in doing meritorious deeds. He bought some farmland specifically to help out the poor in his clan. He turned his newly purchased house into a school, and donated his old house to be converted to Tianping Monastery. At the last moment of his life, he told his family, "In my dream last night, I saw all the lotus flowers turning into golden color in the Pools of Seven Jewels. It is time for me to be reborn in the

池中蓮華皆金色，我當歸矣！」寂然而逝，年六十三，諡為文正，後人稱為范文正公。

范仲淹是宋朝時候的一個大儒，他的文章、道德都足以做人的典範，所以我們講一講他。仲淹是他的名字，他的字叫希文，是北宋江蘇吳縣人。他很年輕的時候就喪父，成為孤兒，家裏又很貧窮，可是他對母親很孝順。因為家裏窮，所以他就到一座寺廟裏讀書，這寺廟叫禮泉寺。有一天，他無意中見到寺中的地窖裏藏著金子，他雖然窮，可是窮斯不濫，沒有貪心，所以又把金子覆蓋起來，不動聲色。等到他做大官的時候，才告訴廟上的僧人那兒有藏金。僧人就把金子發掘出來，用來修建寺廟。

范仲淹的智慧非常高超，志氣也很遠大，所以一心讀書，力學不倦。他的志願是以天下為己任，也就是說他願意管理天下事：天下若有一個人沒飯吃，就等於自己沒有給他飯吃一樣；若有一個人沒衣服穿，就等於自己沒有給他衣服穿一樣。他以天下為己任，不推諉到旁人身上，所以他有兩句名言：「先天下之憂而憂，後天下之樂而樂。」

「先天下之憂而憂」，我們讀書人應該在一般人沒有發現問題之前，先研究怎樣解決問題，為天下的事情深思熟慮，詳細思考。「後天下之樂而樂」，等到所有人都得到利益快樂，都安居樂業了，然後自己才能享受快樂。所以他以不好的事情先由自己承擔，好的事情就讓給旁人，這也就是不和人爭利益。

宋仁宗時他為宰相，為了改革當時一些不良的政策，為民請命，向皇帝呈上十事疏，建議革新政治。可惜引起朝廷一些舊有的官僚權貴怨恨，就用勢力來反對改革。於是在他們的誣陷中傷下，新政不到一年就失敗了，這實在是國家的不幸。

范仲淹有「先天下之憂而憂，後天下之樂而樂」的思想，所以對母親也特別孝順。等到他母親死了之後，就請僧超度。因為他至誠至孝，所以感動觀世音菩薩來幫助念經，令他母親得到感應而升天。這足見他對佛法有深刻的認識，所以能請僧超度母親。

☞待續

Land of Ultimate Bliss!" He then passed away peacefully, at the age of sixty-three. He earned the posthumous title of Wenzheng ("a man of literary elegance and righteousness"), and thus people referred to him as the Noble Fan Wenzheng later.

Commentary:

Fan Zhongyan was a great Confucian scholar during the Song Dynasty. Both his literature and his virtues were good enough to make him the model of people. This is the reason why we are discussing about him today. Fan Zhongyan was his real name, and his courtesy name was Xiwen. He was from the Wu County in Jiangsu Province in the Northern Song Dynasty. His father passed away in his youth and he lived with his mother. Although his family was very poor, he was very filial towards his mother. Due to the poverty, he went to study at the Liquan Monastery in Changbai Mountain. One day, he uncovered some hidden gold in the basement. However, he'd rather die of poverty than be greedy, so he covered the gold again without a word. After he became a high official, he told the monks at the monastery about the buried gold. The monks dug up the gold and used it for monastery construction.

Fan Zhongyan had great wisdom and high aspirations, and diligently studied tirelessly. He regarded the whole world as his own responsibility; in other words, he cared about all the problems in the world. When someone had no food, it was as if he had no food; when someone had no clothes, it was as if he had no clothes. He undertook all the responsibilities by himself, never passing the buck. He had a famous quote: "Be the first to be concerned about the woes of the people, and the last to share the weal of others."

We scholars should "Be the first to be concerned about the woes of others"; before anybody else has realized the problems, we should have already thought about them deeply and researched possible solutions thoroughly. Also we should "be the last to share the weal of others." When happiness and benefits come, we wait until everyone else has settled down with the happiness before we enjoy. We bear the hardships and let others enjoy the happiness first. We do not fight for the benefits.

He became the prime minister during Emperor Ren's reign. To change some bad policies for the sake of the people of the country, he proposed ten changes to the emperor and suggested political reform. However, this caused the hatred of some officials and they opposed the reform with their power and status. As a result of their slanders and defamation, the reform failed within one year. It was indeed the misfortune of the country.

He was very filial to his mother. When his mother passed away, he invited monks to cross her over. Due to his ultimate sincerity in filial piety and faith, even Guan Yin Bodhisattva was touched and helped him reciting sutras. Thus his mother received the merit and virtue and was reborn in the heaven realm. From this we can see his deep and profound understanding of Buddha dharma.

☞To be continued