

先天下之憂而憂——

范仲淹 (續)

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

宣化上人講述於1987年6月5日

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English translation by Alejandro Gracia



BIOGRAPHIES | 人物誌

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。因為這個關係，所以他更篤信佛教。他又好善樂施，購置一些田地作為義田，用來周濟窮人，凡是沒有飯吃的人，都可以領取義田所生產的糧食；他又周濟所有的親戚朋友，因為他把一切都看得很透，可以說是已經看破放下，得到自在。

另外，他把一座很大的新造官宅，拿來作為學校，又把舊時所住的屋宅地基，捨出來建天平寺。所以他在臨終前，對家人說：「我昨天晚上作了一個夢，夢裏見到西方極樂世界的七寶池和八功德水，池中的蓮花都變成金色。我大概應該往生極樂世界了。」說完這話，就寂然而逝、無疾而終，當時他六十三歲。

He was very filial to his mother. When his mother passed away, he invited monks to take her across. 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. He was charitable and rejoiced in doing meritorious deeds. He bought some farmland specifically to help out the poor and all his friends and relatives, thus the starving people could go and get grains there.

He saw everything very thoroughly and let go of desire; thus he attained ease. He turned his newly purchased house into a school, and donated his old house to be converted into Tianping Monastery. He passed away peacefully without any illness. At the last moment of his life, he told his family, "I had a dream last night. In my dream I saw in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, that all the lotus flowers turned into golden color in the Pools of Seven Jewels filled with the Waters of Eight Meritorious Virtues. I guess I will be reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss". He passed away right after saying this, at the age of sixty-three.

We now praise him with simple words:

Loyal and steadfast in serving his country,

Frugal and diligent in managing his family,

Cultivating himself wisely,

Kindhearted like a Bodhisattva,

His farms for charity helped the needy;

Benevolent policies were widely and expeditiously implemented.

贊曰：
 忠貞為國，勤儉治家
 修身有道，心腸菩薩
 義田濟眾，仁政風發
 宋代良臣，上品蓮華

「忠貞為國，勤儉治家」：他抱著一種忠貞為國的心。他治家崇尚儉樸，所以雖然做高官，有厚祿，可是不奢侈。雖然不知道他是不是吃齋，總而言之，他每天只是吃很少的菜蔬，非常節約；一生也不穿綢緞的衣服，只穿粗布衣服。這是一般人不容易做到的。

「修身有道，心腸菩薩」：他明白修身之道，主要就是去欲斷愛。他的心腸就像菩薩心腸，捨己為人。

「義田濟眾，仁政風發」：他購置義田，來利益眾生。他做宰相的時候，政聲足以移風易俗，令國家的治安非常平定。

「宋代良臣，上品蓮華」：他可以說是宋朝最好的宰相，所以他臨終的時候一定得到上品上生。

又說偈曰：

善修德本種蘭因，聰明穎悟超群倫
 清貧不濫明操守，高貴廉潔了宿生
 誠孝事母感天地，義田利人化含靈
 正氣凜然顯剛直，眾生榜樣邦永寧

「善修德本種蘭因」：他在前生大概做了很多善事，所以他的因果是很不錯的。

「聰明穎悟超群倫」：他和一般人是不同的，是很出乎其類，拔乎其萃。

「清貧不濫明操守」：他在最窮的時候，窮斯不濫，即使遇到金子也不要，固守清貧的節操。所以說：「君子固窮，小人窮斯濫矣！」

**This loyal and wholesome minister of the Song Dynasty,
 Deserves rebirth in an upper-grade lotus.**

Commentary:

Loyal and steadfast in serving his country, frugal and diligent in managing his family. He was always loyal and faithful to his country.

Although he was very well paid as a high government official, he kept his family lifestyle frugal. He lived a simple life and ate very little. He only wore coarse clothes and had never worn any silk clothes, which is not easy for most people to do.

Cultivating himself wisely, kindhearted like a Bodhisattva. He understood the way of cultivation - the key lies in cutting off one's desires and emotional love. He sacrificed himself for others in the same way that a Bodhisattva does.

His farms for charity helped the needy, benevolent policies were widely and expeditiously implemented. He bought farmland for the purpose of feeding the poor, so that they could benefit from it. When he was a Prime Minister, his policies reformed the traditions and brought stability and security to the country.

This loyal and wholesome minister of the Song Dynasty, deserves rebirth in an upper-grade lotus. He was the most prominent prime minister of the Song Dynasty. He must have been reborn in an upper-grade lotus.

Another verse says,

Practicing meritorious deeds

and planting good seeds in past lives,

He is clever and intelligent beyond compare.

When poor his personal integrity never wavered,

When noble he remained incorruptible.

He attended to his mother, filial and sincere, moving Heaven and Earth,

He offered farms for charity, benefiting and transforming others.

His awe-inspiring proper conduct was firm,

If all can emulate him, the country will always be harmonious.

Commentary:

Practicing meritorious deeds and planting good seeds in past lives. He probably had done many good deeds in his past lives. Thus he received good karmic rewards.

He is clever and intelligent beyond compare. He was not like an ordinary person of the times; instead he stood out from the rest.

When poor his personal integrity never wavered. He was an upright gentleman and had strong moral principles even when he was a poor student. The saying goes, "When in poverty, an exemplary person remains steadfast, while a petty person becomes greedy and scheming." He upheld his integrity when he discovered gold during his schooldays; he didn't take any of it even though he was very poor.

「高貴廉潔了宿生」：他做官的時候非常清廉、不貪，大概明白自己前生也是一個修道的人。

「誠孝事母感天地」：他對母親非常的孝順，所以感動天地。

「義田利人化含靈」：他備置義田來利益其他人，這是感動世人的一種行為。

「正氣凜然顯剛直」：他很直，很剛正，有一股正氣，凜然不可侵犯。

「眾生榜樣邦永寧」：人人要是都能像范文正公一樣，國家一定永遠平安。



小啓：本期稿擠，王財貴教授「兒童讀經教育」將於近期續完。

Editor's Note: Due to the limited space in this issue, Professor Cai Gui Wang's speech on "Children's Education Based on Classical Texts" will be continued in following issues.

When noble he remained incorruptible. He probably knew that he had been a cultivator in his past life. Therefore when he became a high government official, he maintained his noble characteristics and remained incorruptible.

He attended to his mother, filial and sincere, moving Heaven and Earth. He was completely filial towards his mother, thus even Heaven and Earth were touched by his story.

He offered farms for charity, benefiting and transforming others. He bought farmland for the use of the needy. People were touched by such good deeds.

His awe-inspiring proper conduct was firm. He had an aura of righteousness, which was unperturbed. He acted with integrity and dignity.

If all can emulate him, the country will always be harmonious. If everyone is as loyal and honest as Fan Zhongyan, the country will always be in peace and harmony.

