

The Statecraft Philosophy in Liang Qichao's Buddhist Thought

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Abstract: Contemporary Chinese society is experiencing significant upheaval due to the cultural ramifications of Western influence. In response, Liang Qichao and other progressive intellectuals have sought to cultivate the enlightenment of a new populace, aiming for both salvation and survival by identifying a robust ideological foundation capable of addressing global challenges. This paper systematically compiles and organises the pertinent literature on Liang Qichao's Buddhist thought, drawing upon prior scholarly research to provide a comprehensive analysis. The objective is to construct a more cohesive theoretical framework that examines various dimensions, including the historical context of Buddhism's emergence, the comparative study of Buddhist and Western theory, and the ideal kernel of the Internal Sage and External King through the lens of integrating the three religious cultures.

1. Introduction

Liang Qichao represents a pivotal figure in the historical trajectory of modern China. While he was both a politician and a revolutionary, he also distinguished himself as a remarkable scholar who significantly impacted the academic landscape. As a multifaceted personality in Chinese history, Liang Qichao's seemingly "fickle" demeanour belied a steadfast patriotic commitment. He adeptly fused his patriotic zeal and political aspirations with his scholarly pursuits, thereby developing his interpretation of Buddhism and drawing upon the works of his predecessors. The thorough examination of Liang Qichao's Buddhist philosophy within mainland academia remains incomplete, particularly regarding the comparative analysis of his Buddhist insights alongside Western thought. This paper elucidates Liang Qichao's Buddhist philosophy through three primary dimensions: the contextual background of the development of his Buddhist thought, the comparative exploration of Buddhism and Western intellectual traditions, and the ideal kernel of the inner sage and the external king within the framework of the integration of the three religions.

2. Contextual Framework for the Development of Liang's Governance Buddhism

Modern Chinese society has faced serious internal and external problems since the foreign affairs movement, the Western political system, and the ideological and cultural influence on the Chinese

mainland have deepened. In this stormy time, people with insight sought ways to save the world, remove the ills, and revitalise the Qing dynasty. Gong Zizhen, Wei Yuan, and other representatives of modern literary scholars created a revival of the wind of the contemporary scriptures, wanting to use small words to express the intentions of the world. However, the fiasco of the Reformist Movement announced the decline of the revival of modern scripture, and modern intellectuals turned to seek new theories of salvation, so most of these modern literary scholars also became the promoters of the rise of modern Buddhism. The emergence of Buddhism in the late Qing and early Republican periods is an essential cultural phenomenon in modern China. Intellectuals such as Kang Youwei, Tan Sitong, and Zhang Taiyan, after a series of pondering and pondering, have directed their attention to the teachings of Buddhism to carry out a kind of transformation of Buddhism from the worldly to the worldly by the transformation of the earthly, and to construct new learning of the "neither Chinese nor Western, i.e., Chinese or Western."^[1] Purpose is to transform Buddhism from dropping out of world to governance, construct new learning, and save the Chinese nation from the survival crisis.

However, influenced by Japanese and Western cultural paradigms, Liang, often characterised by his "fickleness," authored *The Theory of Protecting the Teaching of Confucius but Not Respecting Confucius* to publicly signal his departure from the notion of safeguarding Confucian teachings and his opposition to establishing Confucianism as the state religion. He expressed profound dissatisfaction with Kang Youwei's elevation of Confucius to a mythological status.^[2] It is noteworthy that despite Liang Qichao's renunciation of the preservation of religion, the Confucian tenets centred on the traditional idea of the Internal Sage and External King remained deeply ingrained in his consciousness, continuing to serve as a vital theoretical foundation for the subsequent evolution of Buddhist thought.

Following this, Liang Qichao redirected his scholarly pursuits towards studying Buddhism, integrating Western philosophical concepts alongside insights from psychology, ethics, and political science. This synthesis allowed him to reconfigure Buddhist culture, traditionally anchored in Eastern thought, into a distinctive interpretation of Buddhism-grounded governance. A collection of articles authored by Liang during this period, including "On the Relationship between Buddhism and Group Governance" and "On the Strengths and Weaknesses of Religionists and Philosophers," systematically articulated his multifaceted perspectives on Buddhism. Significant fluctuations marked Liang Qichao's life, and his study of Buddhism and its inner transcendence was deeply intertwined with his tumultuous life experiences. Consequently, despite his later years being characterised by a focus on physical and mental cultivation and academic inquiry into Buddhism, it is evident that once a prominent Confucian scholar, Liang perpetually sought a deeper governance Philosophy through his relentless exploration of Buddhism. Overall, Liang Qichao cultivated a distinctive interpretation of Buddhism, building upon the foundations laid by his predecessors, and transformed traditional Buddhist thought into a Following this, Liang Qichao redirected his scholarly pursuits towards the study of Buddhism, integrating Western philosophical concepts alongside insights from psychology, ethics, and political science. This synthesis allowed him to reconfigure Buddhist culture, traditionally anchored in Eastern thought, into a distinctive interpretation of Buddhism-grounded governance. A collection of articles authored by Liang during this period, including "On the Relationship between Buddhism and Group Governance" and "On the Strengths and Weaknesses of Religionists and Philosophers," systematically articulated his multifaceted perspectives on Buddhism. Significant fluctuations marked Liang Qichao's life, and his study of Buddhism and its inner transcendence was deeply intertwined with his tumultuous life experiences. Consequently, despite his later years being characterised by a focus on the physical and mental cultivation and academic inquiry into Buddhism, it is evident that Liang, once a prominent Confucian scholar, perpetually sought a more profound philosophy of governance through his relentless

exploration of Buddhism that embodies the ideal of "the Internal Sage and External King" while harmonising Eastern and Western elements.

3. Liang's Comparative Exploration of Governability Between Buddhism and Western Intellectual Traditions

3.1 The Intersection of Buddhism and Western Psychological Thought

Liang Qichao posits that a life devoid of interest constitutes a form of spiritual famine. Material scarcity necessitates sourcing resources from the West, while spiritual deprivation represents the "primary concern of learning." He advocates for a return to the East to seek foundational materials, emphasising the importance of cultural primacy in forming a third cultural paradigm.

"The primary essence of the East is the absolute freedom of spiritual existence."^[3] Pursuing this spiritual autonomy and perfecting personality ought to be realised through the concept of "Anatman"^[4] articulated in Buddhism. Inspired by Japanese scholarship, Liang Qichao studied Buddhist Consciousness-Only Schools (Vijñāna-vāda) through the lens of Western psychological frameworks. He emphasised that the concept referred to as dharma in Buddhism aligns with psychological principles, which are articulated through the foundational tenets of The Consciousness-Only School, asserting that all dharmas are fundamentally consciousness (Vijñāna) and that there exists no authentic domain beyond the realm of consciousness." Simply put, there is no 'self' body apart from 'consciousness,' yet 'consciousness' is no more than a state."^[5] Numerous Buddhist scriptures elucidate a singular truth: that all dharmas within the universe do not exist autonomously but are constructed by "consciousness" and that there is no object in the world that exists independently of the mind and consciousness. Consequently, all phenomena within the universe are merely manifestations of the mind and consciousness's continuous flow. The mind and consciousness are characterised by change and impermanence (anitya), implying that all phenomena are subject to change and impermanence. What is commonly referred to as "self (ātman)" represents the state of a unified entity created through the interconnection of various consciousnesses. The entity composed of consciousness is the "self"^[5], thus the mind and consciousness are without a self, and all phenomena are likewise without a self.

Liang Qichao further referenced the Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣa-sāstra's comprehensive categorisation of the five aggregates (Pancaskandha) into form and formlessness. Form corresponds to an aggregate of form while formlessness corresponds to the aggregates of feeling and perception, while the remaining four aggregates—feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness—are classified as formless aggregates." Using the terminology of Western philosophers, one could tenuously assert that the first aggregate is matter, while the latter four aggregates pertain to the mind."^[6] Indeed, he also perceives this analogy as somewhat crude; thus, he proposes an alternative classification from the perspective of the Buddhist concept of the five aggregates without self. The elements of form, feeling, perception, impulse, and consciousness are all that I possess; they are the objects of my observation and understanding. Thus, they constitute what is "mine." However, the subject that perceives the four aggregates of form, feeling, perception, and volition, which gives rise to "consciousness," is the self. The five aggregates are manifestations of psychological processes, referred to as "five aggregates are empty of own nature." Consequently, he draws upon classical texts to elucidate the profound meaning of this Buddhist doctrine, explaining why they do not exist as objective, independent entities but as insubstantial psychological processes. Ultimately, he concludes that the five aggregates are characterised by impermanence (anitya) and no self (anatman).^[7] Liang Qichao recognised the similarities between Western psychology and traditional Buddhist philosophy. He employed Western psychological frameworks to interpret and analyse traditional Buddhist concepts, elucidating his perspective on "anatman" through some arguments. These include five

aggregates empty of their own nature; all phenomena are nothing but consciousness, and only consciousness and no external objects. This approach further advanced the development of a philosophy of governance.

3.2 Buddhism and Kantian Philosophy

After millennia of adaptation since it arrived in China, Buddhist thought has developed a more defined and rigorous logical system, serving as a conduit between Chinese and Western intellectual traditions. In this social context of spiritual famine, Liang Qichao identified parallels between Buddhism and Kantian philosophy, employing Buddhist concepts to elucidate Kantian ideas. This approach facilitated the integration of Chinese and Western cultures and fostered the dissemination of Western philosophical thought within China.

From an epistemological perspective, Liang Qichao posited that Kant, in his effort to clarify the function of "wisdom," distinguished between phenomena and essence from an ontological standpoint. Consequently, Liang Qichao employed grammatical analogies derived from Buddhist scriptures to classify wisdom into three distinct functions: the function of audio-visual, the function of investigation, and the function of inference, which align with Kant's notions of sensibility, understanding, and reason. Furthermore, in the audio-visual context, Liang Qichao utilised translations of Buddhist texts to draw parallels with two pivotal concepts in Kant's philosophy: space, characterised as horizontal, and time, described as vertical. Kant's assertions regarding space and time are framed as innate intuitions imbued with perception, embodying both "empirical reality" and "conceptual innateness," neither the phenomenal relationship between things nor the way of existence of the noumenon. By highlighting the parallels between Kant's philosophy and Buddhist scripture, Liang Qichao adeptly employed Buddhist concepts to elucidate Kant's philosophical tenets, facilitating a more accessible understanding of complex Western philosophy for the Chinese populace.

3.3 Buddhism and Western Ethical Thought

From the standpoint of moral philosophy, Liang Qichao exhibited a pronounced nationalistic and statist orientation. However, while he underscored the importance of collective governance and communal learning, he equally emphasised the interplay between individual freedom and societal freedom and the relationship between public virtue and private morality. Initially, he established a connection between indigenous Buddhist thought and Western liberalism; on one hand, the political concepts of Western liberalism were imbued with Buddhist influences, while on the other hand, the Buddhist notion of "thusness (bhūta-tathatā)" was interpreted as the domain of freedom within Western philosophical discourse on a metaphysical level. According to Liang Qichao, the Buddhist idea of "thusness" corresponds to Kant's notion of the authentic self, which refers to one's essence, also namely "noumenon." In contrast, the concept of "ignorance (avidyā)" is analogous to Kant's "phenomenal self," which lacks true freedom. The notion of "ignorance" aligns with Kant's "Appearance," devoid of autonomy. Alaya is called store consciousness in The Consciousness-Only School (Vijñāna-vāda) teachings. This alaya is constituted by storer, that which is stored and appropriated store. The storer harbours all dharmas' stored seeds, developed through habituation and manifest activity by perfuming seeds. These new seeds are embedded within this consciousness, so they transform into storer, while this consciousness transforms into that which is stored. "The Buddha articulated that since beginningless, there exist two types of seeds: thusness and ignorance, both residing within the ocean of original nature and consciousness store perfuming one another; the ordinary individual perfumes thusness with ignorance, resulting in delusion within consciousness, whereas the learner in the path perfumes with thusness, thereby wisdom attained as the transformation of the consciousnesses." Liang Qichao employed this analogy to elucidate Kant's distinction between

essence and appearance. However, he concurrently recognized a divergence between what Buddhism designates as "thusness" and Kant's concept of the "authentic self," which refers to Noumenon. Liang Qichao's juxtaposition of "thusness" with the "authentic self" characterized by freedom was primarily influenced by Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith which posits "one mind opening two approaches" as its central theme, where "one mind" signifies "thusness". He critiqued Kant's notion of the "authentic self" while endorsing the Buddhist interpretation of "thusness." In Buddhism, thusness is a universal attribute shared by all beings, contrasting with Kant's view, which posits that the authentic self is an individual possession. "Therefore, the Buddha says that if there is one sentient being who does not become a Buddha, then I cannot become a Buddha, for they are one entity, and this is more profoundly clear in its meaning of universal salvation." According to Liang Qichao, Kant's authentic self represents a personal ego, emphasising individual freedom, and lacks a connection to the great self (pōmatman). In contrast, the Buddhist "thusness" embodies a great self that achieves universal salvation, representing the freedom of the collective.

Building upon this foundation, Liang Qichao elucidated the concept of morality, asserting that "the obligation of morality arises from the autonomy of conscience". Initially, he drew upon Aristotle's assertion that "man is a social animal" to underscore that public morality is the bedrock of communal governance, highlighting a significant deficiency in our society: the lack of public morality. In this context, Liang Qichao further differentiated between private virtue, which pays attention to one's moral uplift without thought of others, and public virtue, which entails altruism towards others and society at large; both dimensions are essential. Finally, he emphasised the key role of public morality in developing new morality and cultivating new citizens: "Knowing that there is public morality, new morality will emerge, and new citizen will emerge." However, Liang Qichao was deeply touched after his trip to the Americas, so he wrote the book "On Private Morality," which emphasised the key of "morality" to the "construction of destruction." He turned his attention to the discussion of private morality. He shifted the target of this new morality, which was the ideal of new citizens, from the public morality of all citizens to the private morality of the Literati and scholar-bureaucrat in the middle class. He advocated for enhancing civic morality through the leadership of these literati and scholars with high moral qualities, thus realising the shift from emphasising "public morality" to respecting "private morality." This further drove the adaptation of Chinese and Western resources, i.e., the Way of the New Learning, and determined the continuation and adjustment of "Academics of the Modern Era" to combine Chinese and Western civilisations to form a "New Learning." This is manifested in the shift from the "interpretation of China by the West" to emphasising the solidity of the Chinese "Way" while focusing on the evolution of scholarship and advocating the balance between the evolution of learning and the constancy of the Way.

3.4 Buddhism and Western Historicism

In his view of history, Liang Qichao was also inspired by the Western trend of historicism, which he interpreted with the help of traditional Buddhism to achieve the goal of helping the people in the world. History is a group's activity, and history's evolution is guided by the collective force of the group, which is the basic concept of Western historicism. Drawing from the insights of Japanese scholars and the legacy of the orthodox Ranke school, Liang Qichao employed the idea of shared karma from Buddhist philosophy to elucidate the trend of historicism and then explored the laws of social and historical operation. The failure of the Westernization Movement and the subsequent Hundred Days Reform prompted contemporary scholars to recognise that singular causal relationships do not dictate societal evolution and functioning. The karma created is the seed, which becomes the fruit of karma called karmic retribution. There is no escaping that karma and retribution correspond to each other; today's events are the karmic retribution of the past, and the karma created

today will become the retribution in the future. Karma is divided into shared karma (created by each individual) and individual karma (created by the individual), ultimately becoming the circumstantial reward and direct retribution. "All these are what the Buddha said is called shared karma, which one person creates, and the seeds are sown in the society so that all the people in the society eat their retribution together." Liang Qichao elucidated that the trajectory of a nation is not an inevitable destiny; somewhat, it is shaped by the shared karmic actions of its populace throughout history, which have led to the karma retribution of today. The current turmoil in China manifests evil karma generated in the past. To mitigate this evil karma, one can only create good karma, not evil karma, which needs the cooperation of each individual. To get good karma, people must develop good actions to be perfumed in the community to achieve the shared karma in the community.

4. Liang's Buddhist Interpretation of "the Internal Sage and External King"

4.1 The Development of Liang's Ideology of the Internal Sage and External King

Liang Qichao's intellectual journey was profoundly intertwined with Buddhism, which held a significant place in his philosophical framework. As a scholar shaped by the imperial examination system, he was steeped in traditional Confucian thought from an early age. His tutelage under Kang Youwei gave him a robust foundation in classical cultural education at The Myriad Trees Academy. Furthermore, as a proponent of Confucian classical learning, Liang Qichao championed the veneration of Confucius and safeguarding religious traditions. Although the "Internal Sage and External King" concept originated with Zhuangzi, Confucianism has predominantly appropriated it. In the modern era, the resurgence of Buddhism and Taoism has posed challenges to Confucianism, prompting Enlightenment thinkers to seek a synthesis of Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist philosophies. The encroachment of Western culture in modern China led to spiritual desolation. Following his travels in Europe and his disillusionment with Western learning post-World War I, Liang Qichao endeavoured to use China's own culture to reshape people's thinking. He recognised the limitations of Hu Shi's Western interpretation of the Internal Sage and External King and the historical cognition of Taoist ideology's detached from the world characteristics. He noted the dissonance between the temporal realities of society and the philosophical ideals. Consequently, he employed Confucianism and Buddhism to reformulate it and integrate the tenets of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism to interpret the Inner Sage and the Outer King by means of Chinese learning, forming a unique theory and doctrine of the Internal Sage and External King.

4.2 Historical Origins of the Internal Sage and External King

The concept of "Internal Sage and External King" finds its roots in Zhuangzi ·The Land under the Heaven, a notion put forward by the Taoist tradition. Zhuangzi's portrayal of the "Internal Sage and External King" is a political ideal that refers to doing nothing, and there is nothing that is not done; also, it is a transcendent spiritual realm realised through such methods as Sit in Meditation, Purify the Heart. This spiritual realm is mindfulness of being one with all things in heaven and earth and being carefree, a state of mind totally free from all constraints. On the whole, Zhuang Zi's The Internal Sage and External King is a kind of thought that emphasises the internal sage but emphasises the external king, and this political ideal reflects Zhuang Zi's concern for the people's livelihood and his active participation in the world. Still, this spiritual realm also has a certain degree of negativity; the ideal of freedom in the Land of Nothingness is impracticable in actual society. Confucianism since the pre-Qin period has produced the idea of the Internal Sage and External King, but it was not until the Song Dynasty that this concept was formally used. In the pre-Qin period, Confucius and Mencius emphasised cultivating inner morality, i.e., the internal sage. In contrast, Xunzi attached more

importance to external social achievements, i.e., the external king. In the Han Dynasty, Dong Zhongshu's unity of heaven and man communicated with the internal sage and the external king; the Song and Ming periods emphasised the internal sage and the lightness of the external king. And up to modern times, there was a trend of thinking about the nation's salvation through the world that emphasised the internal sage and the external king with equal emphasis on both. Although the emphasis varied in different periods, the internal sage and external king as a whole showed a parallel development in the history of Confucianism. However, Liang Qichao did not think there was a fundamental difference between Taoism and Confucianism in their understanding of the internal sage and the external king, and he believed that the connotations of both Confucianism and Taoism about the internal sage and the external king were equally important.

4.3 The Internal Sage and External King of the Three Religions of Integration

Liang Qichao synthesised Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism to articulate a distinctive interpretation of the Internal Sage and External King—Confucianism advocates for the gentleman's path, emphasising self-cultivation to enhance one's moral quality. Thus, Confucianism makes people set an example for the people in the surrounding area, influences a more extensive group of people and society, and becomes a role model for the general public. In *The Philosophy of Confucianism*, Liang Qichao summarises the essence of Confucianism with the phrase "The Sage within and the King without": "The highest goal of learning can be summed up in the phrase 'The Sage within and the King without' in Zhuangzi. The phrase 'Inner Sage and Outer King' of Zhuangzi summarises the highest learning goal. To do the work of self-cultivation, to the extreme, is the Inner Sage; to do the work of peace and security for others, to the extreme, is the Outer King." This Liang Qichao used Confucianism to expound on the study of the inner saint and the outer king through self-cultivation to achieve the fullness of the individual's spirit and then to push themselves in the place of another in practice and corresponding with their governance values. Buddhism has been integrated with Chinese culture for thousands of years since its introduction in the Han Dynasty and has become an important cultural force in the Chinese nation. Hence, the Enlightenment thinkers of that time mostly used Buddhism to define old and Western learning. In this context, Liang Qichao's Buddhist thought has become an important support component of his theoretical doctrines. Mahayana Buddhism emphasises that everyone can become a Buddha and all beings can become Buddhas. This idea of taking across sentient beings universally undoubtedly painted an ideal picture for the social environment of that time, which was characterised by internal and external troubles, storms and dangers, and the danger that everyone was in. Against this painful struggle, society urgently needed to find a place for the soul to rest. Zhuang Zi "has a passion for saving the world"; Liang Qichao thought that Zhuang Zi's words of "the Internal Sage and External King " had similarities with the traditional Buddhist teachings and could be interpreted as the persistence and pursuit of "conforming to the true self without departing from the present state." So further pointed out: "Zhuang Zi's intention of writing the book will be to brighten its darkness and unclog its blockage, and the one in harmony with the true self is also the internal sage. The one who does not leave the present state is the external king."

All the dharmas in this world are born of karmic harmony, and since they are born of karmic harmony, they are born and extinguished, empty and without self-nature. They do not exist in a real and eternal way, which is "anatman," which means "dharma are devoid of inherent nature." The five aggregates are also created by karmic harmony, and they exist with birth and death, empty and without self-nature. The person made by the harmony of the five aggregates also has no self (anatman), and this is the "selfless person." Only the Buddha nature, which is eternal, unchanging, unborn, and indestructible, is the authentic self. The authentic self is the true meaning of intuition; only with the

"heaven and earth, and I am born with me, and all things are one with me" of the conventional truth(samvṛtisatya) to realise the "authentic self" reality, and only by breaking the egocentrism can we reach the realm of the authentic self, even if we are in the outside world, not away from the outside world, but also to realise the spiritual realm of the inner transcendence. Even if one is in the external world and does not leave external objects, one can recognise the inner transcendence of the spiritual realm. Liang Qichao's way of "the Internal Sage and External King" focuses on the present world, using the spiritual self to fight against the physical self and paying attention to all kinds of things in the present world with the ethereal spirit of leaving the world, so that Liang Qichao has become the so-called "spiritual aristocrat."

Since the "self" is illusory, aggregated, born, and extinguished, an individual should have the spiritual will to give up the physical "self" at any time, to shed blood and sacrifice for the cause of the revolution, to dry up and forget life and death, and to help all beings to get out of the infinite sea of suffering. Liang Qichao used Buddhism to interpret Zhuangzi's "Internal Sage and External King," his focus was on breaking the "inherently existent self abstract (Atma-graha)." This idea of the bodhisattva path of Salvation, which affirms the spiritual ego, denies the physical ego, and gives up one's ego to fulfil the group's more tremendous ego, embodies the transformation of Mahayana Buddhism into the world. This idea of the Bodhisattva Way of Salvation, which affirms the spiritual self, denies the physical self and abandons the small self of the individual to fulfil the great self of the group, reflects his transformation of Mahayana Buddhism into a governance Buddhism. Liang Qichao fused the spiritual character of Confucianism, which is to put oneself in the place of another and actively enter the world through self-cultivation, family regulation, and state governance, as well as bringing peace to all under heaven. In addition, it also fused the ideal pursuit of Taoism, the ideal of free one's mind to enjoy the world, the perfect man has no (thought of) self, and all things are one, etc., to form his unique Buddhist thought of governance and benefit the people through the world. His deconstruction and remodelling of the traditional theory of the internal sage and the external king is an essential embodiment of this Buddhist governance theory.

5. Conclusions

As a pivotal figure in shaping the historical trajectory of modern China, Liang Qichao was the first to articulate the notion of a "Chinese nation." He championed Chinese culture while embracing a cosmopolitan perspective, adeptly assimilating beneficial elements of Western culture. His engagement with traditional Buddhism aimed at a pragmatic and governable transformation, facilitating the enlightenment of a new populace and saving his country so that it may survive. This thesis examines the factors influencing Liang's interpretation of Sutra Buddhism within the historical context, delving into his innovative readings of Buddhist doctrines through the lens of Western psychology and ethics. It juxtaposes Kantian philosophy with Buddhist texts, elucidates Western historicism through the lens of shared karma, and investigates the central tenet of his Buddhist philosophy—"the Internal Sage and External King." Furthermore, it scrutinises the historical backdrop, roots, and evolution of this ideal core of his Buddhist thought. The conclusion posits that Liang's conceptualisation of the internal sage and external king are equally important.

Liang Qichao employed Buddhism as a conduit for synthesising Chinese and Western cultures, utilising Confucianism and Buddhism to elucidate Taoist principles. He enriched Zhuang Zi's idea of "the Internal Sage and External King" with a profound integration of these three traditions, establishing a distinctive Buddhist framework for governance. Through the lenses of governance Buddhism, Liang Qichao offered a pathway for addressing societal darkness, advocating for a regimen of physical and mental cultivation aimed at self-betterment and collective salvation. Although he shifted his scholarly focus in his later years towards exploring physical and mental cultivation, the

foundational ideal of inner saintliness and outer kingliness remained deeply embedded in his philosophical framework, ensuring that Liang Qichao's Buddhist thought consistently resonated with governance significance.

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