**上海外国语大学 2020 –2021学年第一学期**

**期末考试试卷**

课程名称 中国文化概要

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**Please write an essay about 500-800 words in English, explaining a cultural phenomenon in China. A comparative perspective is encouraged.**

**Crossings Between Chinese Culture and Buddhism**

Over the course of time and circumstances, Buddhism has undergone many changes in the process of adapting to Chinese culture. For almost these two thousand years of Buddhism existence in China, Buddhism has significantly influenced various aspects of Chinese culture.

Architecture; countless and majestic temples, monasteries, cave mansions and special pagodas have embellished the face of Chinese architecture. This is especially noticeable in the example of temple pagodas, which to this day are one of the most famous monuments of Chinese architecture. The multi-tiered pagodas, with their various layouts, further transform the architecture of China. The architecture of the pagodas is special, it cannot be confused with others, each tier represents one of the Buddhist celestial myths. These numerous temples, caves and pagodas for centuries of existence on Chinese soil were and remain Buddhist values ​​and a valuable part of Chinese architecture.

Art; round sculpture and mythological subjects still existed long before the advent of Buddhism in China, but with the advent of Buddhism, Chinese sculptural iconography became most widespread. It was with the advent of Indo-Buddhist sculpture in China that the methods of sculpting a lion appeared. And to this day, on the walls of Chinese temples and monasteries, you can see special sculptural icons and images, which is Chinese, and at the same time, Indo-Buddhist in nature.

Painting; in the 10-13th centuries, during the Song era, the Chan Buddhism sect played a key role. The main idea of ​​the sect is to know the Buddha everywhere and in everything; for example: in the whisper of leaves, in the silence of the mountains, in the flow of water, in the voices of birds, and in the sounds of the wind, and this concept of Buddha inspired many masters of painting. The masters strove to convey the boundless and great beauty of nature. And the process of creating a painting was very mysterious; the masters meditated for a long time and in silence tried to unravel the essence and innermost beauty of nature. Meditation had a huge impact on the masters of the Song School.

In addition, the literature, language and writing of the Chinese language has been greatly influenced by Buddhism. Thanks to the ancient Buddhist Sanskrit, scholars to this day make many discoveries of Chinese phonetics. Along with the emergence of Buddhism, new terms and phrases were introduced into the Chinese language, and accordingly new genres, various fictional prose appeared, and played a huge role in the emergence of classical novels and short stories of Buddhist myths. And such types of art as woodcut and book printing appeared precisely in Buddhist monasteries. They also had their own libraries, which played a vital role in the development of world science and culture. Through the tireless efforts of the monks, over the centuries many Buddhist sutras have been passed down, copied and preserved to this day.

It is impossible not to notice the enormous contribution of Buddhism to the organization of the Chinese calendar, they studied mathematics and astronomy, and the ideas of metempsychosis helped in the study of plants and animals. And Indo-Buddhist ideas such as pacification, internal engineering, and compassion have greatly influenced Chinese medicine. And, of course, the role of philosophy has a place to be, practical meditations, yoga and the concept of heaven and hell… etc. were widely perceived. The ideas of the Chan Buddhist sect further influenced philosophy, this can be seen in the writings of Zhu Xi and in the concepts of neo-Confucianism.

There is a close connection between Chinese history and Buddhism. For example, the emergence of tea drinking in China, there are many legends about the appearance of tea, but the fact is that, during prostration and meditation, which took a long time, Buddhists should not fall asleep, while they had to remain motionless, and tea helped them stay awake.

The word "Buddhism" in China implies the development and numerous discoveries in the fields of science, philosophy, architecture and art. But, not only influenced the Chinese culture, but also in this process of adaptation, Buddhism also underwent various transformations. Chinese culture and Buddhism harmonizing and complementing each other have created a special appearance of Buddhism, which is characteristic only of Chinese Buddhism.

Despite it’s full of bumps and holes, throughout the 2000 years of existence of Buddhism, only Buddhism has gained immense popularity among world religions in China. To this day, it occupies an important position in Chinese culture.