

**Transmission of Indian
Buddhist Thought In East Asian Historiography:
DHY ĀNABHADRA (CHI-GONG) AND BUDDHISM
IN 14th CENTURY KOREA.**

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Abstract

Cultural exchange is very important aspect of development of civilizations. It is the way to create knowledge and ideas without exchange in the process of the growth of civilizations. Cultural exchange could help sustain native cultures more effectively. In the very process of cultural exchange and expansion, the thoughts and the religion of the Buddha has expanded into entire Central Asia and from there it headed to China and Korea. Finally, it landed in Japan in the 4th century CE. Buddhist Savants from countries like India, Nepal and Tokharistan, Kucha, Sogdiana, Parthia and so on in Central Asia contributed to greater extent to translate Buddhist texts into Chinese. India developed a tradition among the Buddhist monks to visit Central Asian regions and China for religious and missionary purposes. In this context, they rendered invaluable contribution in the development and expansion of Buddhism in China. Among the hundreds of expatriate Indian Buddhist monks in China, there was a monk named Dhyānabhadra (Ch'an Hsien> Zhi Kong or Chi Gong) who visited China (particularly Yunnan and Ta'li) and Korea in the 14th century. His contribution in Yunnan is enormous. At the same time, he also visited Koryo in the 14th century and contributed a lot in Korean Seon tradition. He was the Master of Prajñāpāramitā and Ch'an meditation of higher ability. So, he was very popular highly venerated in both Korea and China. Present context and form of Seon is attributed to Chi Gong. Some Buddhist Savants received great honors in new places they arrives; a few, by virtue of their pre-eminent spiritual and intellectual attainment, achieved such glory that they were worshipped or deified as Bodhidharma was in China, Atisa Dipaī kara ṣṛjī āna in Tibet and Dhyānabhadra in Korea.

Key words:

Chan, Chinese Pilgrims, cultural exchange, Dhyana, esoteric, Hinayana, Koryo, Mahayana, manuscripts, missionary, monks,

Nalanda, pilgrim, Prajñāpāramitā, savants, Seon, Silk-Road, translation, western world, Yunnan.

1

Background

The ideas, thoughts and behavior of civilized parts of the world always made inroads into other less civilized parts of the globe. The society that refused to accept new ideas and institutions of the civilized cultures and stick in their own cultures without any changes in the cultural backwardness usually collapsed.¹ Cultural exchange is so important in the course of development of civilizations that no society can create new knowledge and ideas without exchange with others with long lasting consequences. At the same time, simply tacit acceptance of superior cultures could not help sustain human society. Therefore, adaptation of tenets of other cultures through cultural exchanges could help sustain native cultures more effectively. Such societies effectively contribute in the development of civilizations. The transmission of Indian religious culture particularly Buddhism has been a part of this behavior. Buddhism started cultural exchange with China in the 1st century CE with the travel of missionary monks. The date of first contact of China to Buddhism has been assumed as 2 BCE. The first monks were the Tokharians. Since then a large number of monks from Central Asian region (Parthia, Sogdian, Kuchean), India and Nepal visited China for missionary purposes. Similarly, hundreds of Chinese monks made pilgrimages in India. It has been the main aspect of cultural exchange between India and China. After Buddhism reached ancient Korea, Korean monks started to take interest on the new ideas came from India, which penetrated deep inside the Korean society. Many Korean monks visited China and India for religious or study purposes. Korean monks such as Ānandavarman (A-nan ye-po-mo),² Prajñāvarman (Pen-jō-p'o-mo or Hui-lun-shih)³ and Hye-cho (Skt: Prajñāvikram)⁴ visited India.

¹ For details see: Heo Hung Sik, *Koryoro Olmkin Indo ui Tungpul: Chi Gong Sonhyon*, Seoul: Il Chisa, 1997, pp. 377-379.

² Latika Lahiri, *Chinese Monks in India*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995, p. 17.

³ Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India: Their History and Their Contribution to Indian Culture*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1962, pp. 312-314.

Accordingly, Korean monks had links with China and thereafter to the western world and India. It finally rendered invaluable contribution in the development of Buddhism in Korea since the three Kingdoms period.

In order to understand the historical development of Buddhism in China and other adjoining areas including that of Korea, we must inquire into the historiography of great monks such as Chi Gong (Zhi Kong > Dhyānabhadra) as well as other Indian monks in China and Chinese and Korean monks who went to India for learning Sanskrit language and pursue higher studies, later contributed in the history of Chinese and Korean Buddhism. In addition, more research must be pursued on Buddhism's interaction with the religions in frontier minority areas such as Yunnan or other places in the region.

2

Scholarly Exchange in History: Indian Savants, Historical Silk Road and Exodus of Buddhism to China

The history of expansion of Buddhism in Central Asia is of immense importance in the study of history of Buddhist historiography in Mahāyāna countries such as China, Korea and Japan. The history of Buddhism in Central Asia from Iranian plateau to oasis cities around the Gobi desert goes back to BC centuries. Silk Road civilization during the first millennium opened its doors to cultural and religious inflow from both east and west. It proved to be a fertile land for gaining followers for Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. But among those

⁴ Hye-cho made extensive travel of India and China. He along with other Korean monks such as Korean monks Hyon-cho, Bulkasari, Yilim and Kyunghyong greatly contributed to esoteric Buddhism (Mil kyo). His Indian teacher in China was Shubbakarasirpa (Subhakarāsripada?). According to a Nepalese scholar, He also visited Nepal during his India trip. Harihar Raj Joshi, 'Ven. Hye-cho: A First Korean to Visit Nepal', *Buddhist Himalaya* Vol. V No. 1-2, 1993, pp. 38-40. For further details on Hye-cho's Travel see: Yan Han Sung, 'Soviet and Chinese Turkistan in the Eighth Century', *Korea Journal*, Vol. 9 no. 9, January 1970, pp. ; Yan Han Sung, 'New Facts About Hye-cho's Travel', *Korea Journal*, Vol. 9 no. 12, December 1969, pp. 10-13; Yan Han Sung, 'Eighth Century Asia and Hye-cho's Travel', *Korea Journal*, Vol. 9 no. 9, September 1969, pp. 35-39; and Jan Yun Hua, 'Hye-cho's Memoires: Korean Record on Varanasi and Sarnath', *Korea Journal*, Vol. 9 no. 9, September 1970, pp. 28-31, Lahiri, *Op Cit.*, pp. 47-48.

religions and faiths Buddhism became more popular among the people of Central Asia and played the role to bring together divergent ethnicity in the region. Therefore, Buddhism became a very important ideology in the entire region for several centuries.

The first step in the transmission of Buddhism into Central Asia was the missionary activity encouraged by Emperor Açoka in the third century BCE. The spread of Buddhism started all the way from northwestern India (Ch: Tien-chu) to modern Pakistan, ancient Afghanistan, Central Asia, Xinjiang (Chinese Turkistan, Sinkiang which is now Xinjiang Uigur Autonomous Region), China, Korea and Japan. By the first century CE, Buddhism was well established in Bactriä and Gändhåra, and patronized by the Kuçåëa Empire, which ruled these areas.⁵ As the Empire's sphere of influence moved eastward along the Silk Road, so did Buddhism. Prof. A. Litvinski says that Buddhism had reached Merv (Turkmeniä) and Pårthiä as early as Achaemenid times. The Mahåvaàsa (the Great Chronicle of Ceylon) describes that Parthian and Alexandrian delegates were in attendance at a Buddhist council held by King Duttha Gamani (108-77 B.C.).⁶ With the extension of Kuçåëa influence, Buddhism further penetrated the realm of the Pårthians and Sassanians.⁷ Pårthian's Buddhist faith was also confirmed by the Chinese records on the missions of the Parthian Buddhist preachers, An-Shih-Kao and An Hsuan during the 2nd century.

By the 7th century, all the small kingdoms of the Tarim region had been entirely won over to Buddhism, which brought with it so much of Indian culture that Sanskrit had become the religious language. As

⁵ The Kuçåëas dominated the areas of Hindu Kush into Kabul, Gändhåra, northern Pakistan and northwestern India. They controlled the trade between India, China, Pårthiä and the Roman Empire. For details on India's cultural influence in central Asia and China etc. see: Priyatosh Banerjee, 'The Spread Of Indian Art And Culture To Central Asia And China',

⁶ Wilhelm Geiger (Eng. tr.), *The Mahavamsa or the Great Chronicle of Ceylon*, New Delhi: Asian Educational services, 1986, XXIX. 29; Also see B. N. Puri, *Buddhism in Central Asia*, Delhi: Motilal Benarsidass, 2000, pp. 92-97.

⁷ 'Buddhism and Its Spread Along the Silk Road',
<http://www.globaled.org/curriculum/china/bessay1.htm><http://www.silk-road.com/artl/buddhism.shtml>

Buddhism advanced towards the Tarim basin, Kashgar with Yärkand and Khotän in the west, Tumsuk, Aksu and Kizil in the north, Loulan, Karasahr and Dun huang in the east, and Miran and Cherchen in the south became important centers of Buddhist art and thought. The Buddhist texts were translated from Sanskrit into various local Indo-European dialects such as Tocharian or Kuchean. By 658 CE, Kucha (an oasis city on the northern Silk Road) became the main center of Hinayāna Buddhism. It is impossible to make any general rules about the precise schools of Buddhism that flourished in the Tarim basin, but Chinese pilgrims Fa-hsien and Yuan Chwang (Xuan Zang or Hsuan-chang) appeared to indicate that most of the kingdoms such as Kashgar, Kizil, Karashahr and Kucha on the northern route followed the Hinayāna Vehicle whereas Mahāyāna flourished along the southern route including the kingdoms of Khotän and Yärkand.⁸

Bactria was introduced to Buddhism by the 1st century CE as suggested by the Buddhist settlement discovered at Airtam, 18 kilometers northwest of Termez. For the next few centuries, Kuçäëa/Bactrian Buddhist centers were expanded to Hadda, Bamiyan and Kondukistan. Some Buddhist travelers took this route all the way to China. At this time, the oasis town of Kucha on the mid-point of this route became an important centre of Buddhism.⁹ Initially the Çrävakayāna, was transmitted into Central Asia. Then after, Mahāyāna was introduced in the first century CE. It took different route from Gilgit now known as Kashmir. Thus, Buddhism reached to the city-state of Khotän. From there Mahāyāna Buddhism reached China. Vajrayana Buddhism also transmitted to Khotän from Northwest India. Peoples in Central Asian region adopted Mahāyāna Buddhism. In the first century CE, the Kucheans and Sogdians were influenced by Buddhism. The former particularly contributed in the spread of Buddhism towards China. On the other hand, Tibetans came into contact with the Buddhism of Central Asia. This historical context has been regarded as an important factor in the conversion of entire Tibet into a Buddhist country. Towards the end of the first millennium CE, the Uigur Turks also converted to Buddhism. Finally, in the tenth century, the empire of the Tāi guts (people of northeast of the Täklämäkän desert) expanded to

⁸ *Ibid*,

⁹ 'History of Buddhism in Central Asia', <http://www>.

the eastern end of the Silk Road, and they became the last of the Buddhists of the Silk Road.¹⁰ The end of the first millennium CE marked the decline of Chinese power in Central Asia and growth of Mongolian and Turkic influence. This led to promotion of Islam and decline of Buddhism. Eventually, Buddhism disappeared from Central Asia. With the victory of Genghis Khan in 1227 over the T'ai guts in 1227, Buddhism disappeared from the Silk Road.

After the power of Seleucos Empire of Syria (312-63 BCE) declined in the mid-third century BCE, independent countries emerged by seceding from the Syrian Empire. Among these, three countries later encountered Buddhism. They were the Greek kingdom of Bactriä (255-139 BCE) based around the upper Āmu River and extending into northwestern India; the Iranian kingdom of Pärthiä (Arsakes, 248 BCE - 226 CE) based around the southeastern part of the Caspian Sea; and the Indo-Scythaeen kingdom of Saka.¹¹ When they lost their homeland in Bactriä during the latter half of the second century BCE, they moved the base of their kingdom to the Punjab region. Among the Greek kings who migrated to India, Menandros (a.k.a. Milinda) is particularly noteworthy. According to a Buddhist text entitled *Milindapanhā* (The Questions of King Milinda), the king converted from his Greek religion to become a Buddhist as a result of his dialogues with the Buddhist monk Nāgaseṇa. The power of Greek kings declined during the first century BCE, and the Sakas and Pärthians, Central Asian nomadic tribes, began invading northwest India. Then, in the latter half of the first century CE, the Kuçäëa tribe moved south to invade northwest India. The Kuçäëa tribe was an Iranian nomadic people who first spread into Central Asia. As their power increased, they began expanding their territory and invaded northwest India, eventually pushing deep into the Indian continent and occupying the central part of the Ganges River basin. Buddhism's second step in becoming a world religion occurred during the reign of King Kaniska (assumed date 130 - 55?; or 78 - 103? CE) of the Kuçäëa Empire as the religion was spread into Central Asia. The Kuçäëa Empire also included

¹⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹¹ Kogi Kudara, 'A Rough Sketch of Central Asian Buddhism', *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, Third Series, Number 4, Fall 2002, p. 94.

many different ethnic groups within its territory. King Kaniṅka rose to power in about the first or second century of the Common Era. It seems that he promoted Buddhism not out of belief but because he had to adopt its egalitarian ideals in order to manage the different ethnic groups under his reign.¹² Buddhism flourished in the central Asian countries before it disappeared due to Muslim invasion in the region. Many Buddhist manuscripts, Buddha statues and jars containing fragments of Buddhist scriptures recovered elsewhere in the region attest the popularity of Buddhism in the region.¹³ The Buddhist period in Central Asia remained from 2nd to the 14th centuries. The countries and places related to Buddhism in the region were mainly – West Turkistan (Pārthiā, Kuçäëa Empire and Sogdiāna),¹⁴ East Turkistan (Shulein Khäsgar, Khotän, Kucha, Turfiän, Hämi, Dun-huang etc.), Termez at the southern border of Uzbekistan, Qurgan-tuba in southern Tadjikistan and so on. Even in Buryätiä in Southern Siberia Buddhism entered in the 17th century.¹⁵

The role of Indian monk-scholars cannot be closed without a glance at those who migrated to and settled in China and whose names are

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹³ Nalinaksha Dutt, *et al.*, (eds.), *Gilgit Manuscripts*, 4 Vols, Calcutta: J.C. Sarkhel, vol. 1, 1939; vol. 2, 1941, 1953, and 1954; vol. 3, part 1, 1947; vol. 4, 1959; Jens Brarrvig, (ed.), *Buddhist Manuscripts*, 2 Vols., Manuscripts in the Schoyen Collection, Oslo: Hermès, 2000?002); Nicholas Sims-Williams, 'A Bactrian Buddhist Manuscript', in Jens Brarrvig (ed.), *Buddhist Manuscripts*, vol. 1, pp. 275-277; Richard Salomon, *Ancient Buddhist Scrolls from Gāndhāra: The British Library Kharostī Fragments*, (Seattle: The British Library and University of Washington Press, 1999; Richard Salomon, *A Gandhari Version of the Rhinoceros Sutra, Gandharan Buddhist Texts 1*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000; Fumio Enomoto, 'The Discovery of the Oldest Buddhist Manuscripts', *The Eastern Buddhist* 23-1, 2000, pp. 157- 166; Mark Allon, *Three Gandhri Ekottariyagama Type Sutras, Gandharan Buddhist Texts 2* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001, Kogi Kudara, The Buddhist Culture of the Old Uigur Peoples, *Pacific World*, Third Series, 4 (2002): p. 189,

¹⁴ Sogdiana is also known as samarkand, which is modern Kirghizistan and Kazakhstan.

¹⁵ The Buryats, Kalmycks and the Tyvanians are the three Buddhist nationalities in Russia historically belonging to the common Mongolian spiritual realm and to the Tibetan and Mongolian cultural and religious traditions of the great Central Asian civilization. Tsymjit Vanchikova, 'Buddhism and Buddhist Studies in Russia and Buryatia', <http://www.pnclink.org/annual/annual1999/1999pdf/Vanchikova.pdf>

interwoven with the history of Buddhism in that country. The largest number of them appears in the history of Sino-Indian relationship. It covers roughly a period of five centuries from the third to the eighth century CE, but overflows into later times.

The Buddhist monks of India and China undertook to carry Buddha's teaching as his religion to eradicate sufferings of humankind in China and other nearby areas. The relationship between India and China in terms of transmitting Buddhism was first initiated by the Chinese. Indian monks who went to China in ancient times with the motivation of missionary zeal were the torchbearers of Indian civilization in the region. Chinese have preserved history related to Buddhist activities.¹⁶ The travels of ancient Indian and Chinese monks to each other's country was initiated through overland route through Central Asia to India and sea route starting from the port of Kuang Chou through the East China sea into the Indian ocean.¹⁷ The over-land route was older than the sea route and the sea route became popular with the advancement of science and culture during the T'ang dynasty (CE 618-905). The ancient route passed through Dun-huang and then through the province of Kan-su, Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang. In the seventh and eighth centuries, navigation became a little easier and safer with China's progress in shipbuilding and mariners' compass. I-Ching was the pioneer Chinese monk who first took up sea voyage from China to India.

In the beginning centuries, the Chinese Buddhists faced problems in the translation of Buddhist scriptures with their highly technical terminology. For the popularity of the new faith and salvage the doctrine from vagueness and remove doubts, Buddhist texts had to be made available to the general public. People need to be given correct knowledge of philosophical aspects of Buddhism.¹⁸ As a matter of fact, the Buddhist monk scholars in China paid due attention on the translation and explanation of both the *Sutra* and the *Çästra* texts. In such activities, Chinese and Indian monk scholars in China were much ahead of time.¹⁹ The city of Lo-yang

¹⁶ Lahiri, *Op Cit.*, p. XVIII.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. XIX.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*,

¹⁹ E. Zurcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China* Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1972, pp. 202-204.

became the center of translation. The highly organized team of translators initiated the job of translating Buddhist texts. Mostly Indian, Nepalese,²⁰ Central Asian and Chinese monks were engaged in translation works. The prominent monks whose names still shine as greatest contributors were a Parthian monk An Shih-kaio,²¹ Indo-Scythian monks Dharmarakṣā²² and Lokakṣema, Indo-Kuchean monk Kumārajiva,²³ and Nepalese monk Buddhahadra.²⁴ The contributing monks collaborated with the Chinese counterparts. Until two hundred fifty years after it was first introduced in China in 67 CE, about 1153 Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese.²⁵ Chinese monks particularly Tao-an, Chih Ch'ien and Hui Yuan rendered contribution of immense significance which is equally important in the history of Buddhism in China. They also encouraged fellow Chinese monks to undertake pilgrimage to India for religious and academic reasons. Most of the Chinese pilgrims to India stayed for several years, learnt Sanskrit, studied Buddhist doctrine and collected authentic Buddhist texts to take to China. This has been an important aspect of Chinese Buddhist history.

As missionary activities by the monks from various places took momentum in China, Chinese Buddhists were confused by the introduction

²⁰ Buddhahadra who translated various Buddhist Sutras and Vinaya texts, in the 5th century China was contemporary of Kumārajiva. Buddhist historians have often mistakenly identified him as an Indian monk. But truly, he belonged to the Shakya clan of Kapilvastu, who later went to Maulayantholo Vihara in Kashmir for further training. Upon request of some visiting Chinese monks who came to Maulayantholo Vihara, his *Guru* advised him to go to China. He agreed it and in the long run he rendered invaluable services in the development of Buddhism in China. His effort in translating Buddhist texts into Chinese is praiseworthy. Sukumar Dutt, a renowned Buddhist historian of India also mentioned Buddhahadra as the native of Kapilvastu. Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and ...*, *Op. cit.*, p. 307.

²¹ Bunyiu Nanjio, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Buddhist Translation of the Buddhist Tripitaka – The Sacred Canon of the Buddhists in China and Japan*, Delhi: Classic India Publications, 1989, XII no. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, appendix ii, no 23.

²³ Nanjio, *Op Cit.*, Lewis Lancaster and Park Sung Bae, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989

²⁴ Vijay K. Manandhar, *Nepal China Relations*, New Delhi: Adroit Publishers, 1999, pp. 1-10; Vijay K. Manandhar, 'Buddhahadra: A Nepalese Buddhist Scholar in Ancient China', *The Great Compassion*, Winter 2004, Kathmandu, pp. 10-13.

²⁵ Lahiri, *Op Cit.*, p. XX.

of varied forms of Buddhism of different schools introduced from India and Central Asia. This confusion was also grown due to translation of the texts of Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga and that of Hinayāna School. This confusion finally materialized historical pilgrimages of Chinese monks to India for study and collection of authentic Buddhist texts. Thus, Chinese monks particularly Fa-hsien (400 CE), Sung-yun, Hui-sheng (518 CE), Yuan Chwang (629 CE), I-ching (637 CE), Shan-hsing, and others made historical visits of India. Their motive was to search genuine texts, true doctrine and pay homage to the holy sites.²⁶ Modern researcher have attested the fact that about 180 monks from China visited India and paid homage to the Buddhist shrines there.²⁷

Buddhism was introduced in China through the Silk Road. An Shih-kao, a Parthian missionary monk arrived in China and translated Buddhist scriptures as early as 148 CE. Another Indian Buddhist missionary named Chu-sho-fu arrived in China in 170 CE. It is also said that the second Parthian missionary, An Hsuan, arrived in China in the year 181 CE. This trend of travel of Buddhist monks tended to continue for several centuries. The last Paëdit to go to China probably under a missionary provision was monk Dhyānabhadra. He also visited various places in India, Nepal and Sikkim on the way to Tibet and China. However, no Nepali sources speak about his sojourn in Nepal. The Blue Annals mentioned that Pt. Vāëaratna (8th century) was the last Indian Paëdit in Tibet. However, it is important in the Tibetan Buddhist history that Dhyānabhadra (1226?-1363 CE) was in Tibet in the 14th century. Tibetan sources also failed to notice his presence and activities in Tibet.²⁸

²⁶ The Chinese pilgrims also wrote travel accounts, which are valuable historical sources to contemporary history of India, Nepal, Central Asia and so on. The most popular and important travel accounts are Fa-hsien's *Fo-kuo-chi* (Record of the Buddhist Country), Hsuan-chang's *Ta-T'ang-his-yu-chi* (The Buddhist Record of the Western World of The Great T'ang Dynasty), I-ching's *Nan-hai-chi-kuei-nei-fa-chuan* (A Record of the Religion as Practiced in India and Malay Archipelago) and *Ta T'ang-his-yu-chiu-kao-seng-chuan* (Biographies of Eminent Monks Who Went to the Western world in Search of the Law During the Great T'ang Dynasty).

²⁷ Liang Ch'i-chao, 'Chinese Students Going Abroad 1500 Years Ago and Afterwards (Essay),' Quoted in Lahiri, *Op Cit.*, pp. XXV-XXVI.

²⁸ George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1971, p. 804.

The cultural intercourse of these five centuries actually stemmed from China and put forth two spreading branches. On one hand, stream of Chinese monks came out to India during these centuries, and on the other, a large number of Indian monks emigrated to and settled in China. The object of the former was a twofold one-- to earn spiritual merit by pilgrimage and to study Buddhism in its homeland and collect authentic Buddhist texts. Very few of them settled in India. The Indian monks on the other hand who went out to China were not transients. Moved solely by the desire to promote Buddhism in that country, they made China the land of their adoption, lived, and worked there continuously over long years. Very few are known to have come back from China to India.

The great Buddhist monk scholars and philosophers of the Indian tradition were domesticated through Chinese biographical (Kao-sheng Chuan)²⁹ and historiographical traditions. Those figures played vital roles in Chinese conceptions of the Buddhist tradition and the transmission of religious teachings.

Perhaps most fundamentally, the eminent Indian monks and patriarchs were conceived in China to be the principal architects of Mahāyāna Buddhism as it arose centuries earlier on the Indian subcontinent. However, despite the foundational positions accorded the Indian patriarchs in medieval Chinese Buddhism, modern scholarship has largely overlooked their place in the development of the religion and ignored the ways in which their imagery was shaped in medieval culture in the region.

Buddhism was a common ground of spiritual and intellectual interest between India and China, which was carried on by Buddhist monks for the cause of Buddhism itself. Its history started in the third century. Many Indian monks emigrated to and settled in China. Chinese and Korean

²⁹ There are three biographies of monks in China known as Kao-seng Chuan – Hui Chiao's Kao seng Chuan (The Biographies of Eminent Monks) 531 CE, Tao-hsuan's Hsu Kao-seng Chuan (Further Biographies of Eminent Monks) 645 CE and Tsan-ning's Sung Kao-seng Chuan (Sung Biographies of Eminent Monks). These biographies serve as very good sources of history of Chinese Buddhism. For details on religious biographies in Asia see: Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Sinohara, *Monks and Magicians: religious Biographies in Asia*, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass, 1994,

monks visited India on different occasions to earn spiritual merit and study authentic Buddhism in the country of its origin. Finally, at that time there were, among the Buddhist monks, very clever fellows. Some knew how to choose, among the incongruous practices grouped under the rubric Buddhism, which suited the taste of the Chinese people. Others used the personal favor they enjoyed in the development of the indigenous monarchism, and, in consequence, in the propaganda among the people.³⁰ Very few Chinese monks settled in India. On the other hand, Indian monks who went out to China moved solely by the desire to promote Buddhism there. They lived and worked in China continuously over long years.

Under Tang and Sung (CE 960-1126) dynasties, a large number of Indian monks settled in China. In the forefront of immigrant monks, there were Kumārajēva (5th century), Paramārtha (6th century) and Bodhibhadra (6th century).³¹ The contributing Indian monks are recorded in various Tripitaka catalogues as the translators of various Buddhist texts.³² Indian monks initiated missionary activities as well as translation work. To these translators, of whom the Indian monks settled in China formed a large section. The great deal of Buddhist literature is available in the translated form in Chinese. The significance of their work is highlighted against the chequered historical background of Buddhism in the 'Celestial Empire' where it gained its first foothold in the first century CE. The emphasis placed by the missionaries on the supply of texts was motivated by proverbial Chinese reverence for the written word, a tradition of Chinese civilization of almost immemorial antiquity.³³

The Chinese monks not satisfied with the incomplete instruction and training they received in China, went at their own risk as far as India, passed there some years in Buddhist monasteries, learnt Sanskrit, chose the texts,

³⁰ Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and...*, *Op Cit.*, p. 300.

³¹ Behind them in the rank and file were many who enjoyed local or regional fame and are mentioned in Chinese dynastic records called *Shu*. Yet a whole host of others unknown to fame were absorbed in the organized industry of translating Sanskrit texts, working singly or jointly with Chinese scholars. *Ibid*, p. 298.

³² Nanjio, *Op Cit.*; Lancaster *et al.*, *Op Cit.*

³³ Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and...*, *Op Cit.*, pp. 298-299.

and then returned, bringing to the monasteries of China both the theoretical doctrine and the practical experiences of asceticism.³⁴

The White Horse monastery in Lo-yang was functioning. It was the resort of monk scholars, translators and writers from different parts of Asia including India. In 266 CE, Dharmarakṣā, a Getian monk, arrived from Dun-huang, settled in the monastery, and died there around 317 at the age of eighty-seven. He made 175 translations of which ninety remain. Besides the Getian monk, an Indian of Khotān, a Parthian, two Chinese monks and two Chinese laymen distinguished themselves by the number and importance of their translations.³⁵ A distinguished figure in the White Horse monastery in the last years of Lo-yang was one whose name has been equated by Wieger to Buddhajai ghā and he is said in the Chin official annals to have been born in India and arrived at Lo-yang in 310, declaring himself to be a centenarian. He seems to have been a Tantric and miracle worker and he died at Lo-yang.³⁶ Many Indian monastic and scholars contributed in the development of Buddhist literature in China. At the same time, they also contributed in Buddhist missionary activities. Kumārajīva, son of a Kashmiri Paëoit, is one of the greatest names to render invaluable contribution in the development and expansion of Buddhism in China. Another monk Buddhābhadrā (Chiao-hsien) who came from Nepal equated to Kumārajīva in Buddhist activities in Chang-an (Si-an), Nanking and other areas in China.³⁷ They translated a considerable number of Buddhist texts into Chinese.³⁸ The development of Buddhism in China has link with the 'Silk road' history and her historical connections with the central Asian region. The earlier monk travelers used the route of China's western border to places such as Dun-huang, Lo-yang, Chang-an, Khotān, or via Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet to China. Specially, under Tang and Sung dynasties, the number of Indian monks settled in China was large. Until 6th century, entire

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 300.

³⁵ Leo Weiger, *A History of Religious Belief and Philosophical Opinions in China*, Eng. tr by E.E. Werner, Peking: Hsien hsien Press, 1927, p. 407, Quoted in Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and...*, *Op Cit.*, p. 301.

³⁶ Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and...*, *Op Cit.*, p. 301.

³⁷ For details see: Manandhar, *Op Cit.*, pp. 1-10; Manandhar, *Loc Cit.*, pp. 10-13.

³⁸ For details on their translation works see: Lancaster, *Op Cit.*, ; Nanjio, *Op Cit.*,

China turned Buddhist, and there developed Chinese form of Buddhism. Consequently, there existed ten traditional Chinese Buddhist schools.³⁹ They were deviated from traditional Indian Buddhism. The movement of Chinese monks for the publication of Chinese Buddhism lasted from Fa-hsien's time to I-tsing arising out of the felt need for knowledge of true Buddhism through close and sustained cultural intercourse with India. But among all Indian monks in China, he who stands highest in prestige not only in that country, but in all the Buddhist world of the Far East, was one who contemned all texts, preached the supreme spiritual efficacy of Dhyāna and was an out-and-out follower of the philosophy of emptiness (*Sunyavada*) initiated in India by Nāgārjuna. Chinese Buddhism, as a Chinese scholar has put it, reached its climax not in the Tien-tai and Hua-yen schools, but in the Dhyāna (*Ch'ān*, *Seon* and *Zen* tradition) school. The founder of this school was Bodhidharma.⁴⁰ The scholarship and learning grew into an essential part of Saī gha life and activity; it went on expanding throughout the region.

3

Nālandā Buddhist Tradition of Tantra and Dhyāna Practices

Nālandā, Vikramsila, Odāntapuri, Jagadalala, Somapura, and other famous Buddhist monasteries in India were very famous educational institutions in medieval India and were very active and influential until their destruction by the Turkish invader at the end of 12th century. Students from Nepal, China, Korea, Japan, Sumatra, Java, Sri Lanka and other countries got admission in those prominent monasteries for higher education. Proficiency in Sanskrit was necessary for admission, as it was the medium of

³⁹ The Chinese Buddhist Schools > <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/history/b3schchn.htm>; S. Dutt, *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, Vol. 1, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1952, Ch. XXIV. The ten schools were - Abhidharma School (Reality School or Kosa School), Satysiddhi School (Cheng-se School), Three Sastra School (San-lun School), The Lotus School (T'ien-t'ai School (absorb the Nirvana school), Avatamsaka School (Hua-yen School > absorb Dasabhumika and Samparigraha-Sastra school), Ch'an School (Intuitive School or Dhyana School), Vinaya School (Lu School), Chen-yien School (Mantra School), Dharmalaksana School or Ch'u-en School or Fa-siang School, and Pure Land School or Sukhavati School or Ching-t'u School.

⁴⁰ Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks*, *Op Cit.*, pp. 307-308.

instruction. All Chinese monks going to India for studying Buddhism had to go to Java and brush up their Sanskrit.⁴¹ Yuan Chwang reports that of the foreign students only 20% managed to pass the stiff examinations. Of the Indian students, only 30% managed to pass and gain admission. Therefore, the standard required was high. Casts, creed and nationality were no barriers in keeping with the Buddhist spirit.

The study of Mahāyāna was compulsory for Buddhists. One could also study the doctrines of eighteen Buddhist sects. One could also study secular subjects like science, medicine, astrology, fine arts, literature etc. The six systems of Hindu philosophy were also taught. One could study Hinayāna form of Buddhism. This included the Theravada, commerce, administration and astronomy. Lectures, debates and discussions were part of the educational curriculum. Yuan Chwang states that 100 lectures were delivered there every day. Nālandā was graced by the presence of India's most brilliant Buddhist luminaries. Some of them were Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Dharmapāla, Çālabhadra, Çāntarakīta, Kamalaçāda, Bhāvāviveka, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti and so on. Besides there were other eminent monks who rendered invaluable services for the cause of Buddhism in foreign country especially Central Asia, China, Tibet and Korea.

Until then they were very famous in all branches of knowledge particularly tantra, Mādhyamika, Dhyāna, Yogacara and so on. In fact, there were several groups of scholars who focused on specific areas of Buddhism. So, Therefore, there were various types of scholars being the experts on special subjects. Nālandā is the best known of ancient India's universities. Nālandā was also the home town of Ven. Sāriputra, We get a comprehensive account of Nālandā university from Yuan Chwang the brilliant Chinese scholar who came there for his studies during the reign of King Harīa-Çilāditya. Back in China, he wrote this famed 'Buddhist Records of the Western World' (Ta-Tang- Si-Yu- Ki).⁴² It has been called the treasure house of accurate information by European Archeologists. I-ching (675-685 CE)

⁴¹ D. Amarasiri Weeraratne, *The Six Buddhist Universities of Ancient India*, www.budsas.org/ebud/ebdha240.htm

⁴² Hsuan-chang, 'Si-yu-ki, Buddhist Records of the Western World', Eng. tr. Samuel Beal, *Chinese accounts of India*, London: Trubner & Co., 1884; Thomas Waters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travel in India*, Vol. 2, 1904, pp. 74-127.

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was another Chinese monk who came to India and studied at Nālandā. He too like Yuan Chwang has left an account of his travels. In this, he gives an account of Nālandā and his stay there.

Hence, it was selected as an ideal centre for the pursuit of Buddhist studies by monks. Nālandā University was an expansion and extension of this seminary. King Buddha Gupta (455-467 CE) Jātagāthā Gupta (467-500 CE) Bālāditya (500-525 CE) and Vijra (525) CE made additions and expansions to the buildings. King Bālāditya made a shrine-room a house of worship, which was 300 feet high. His son Vijra built the fifth monastery. King Harīṇa-Çilāditya built the sixth monastery and surrounded the university buildings with high wall. In the 10th century when Yuan Chwang entered the university, there were 10,000 resident students. They came from all parts of India and foreign lands. It was India's leading University. Its chancellorship was reserved for India's foremost Buddhist scholar. When Yuan Chwang visited Nālandā, Çābhadra Mahā Thera held the post. At that time, there were 10,000 students, 1510 teachers, and about 1,500 workers at Nālandā. Students from Tibet, China, Japan, and Korea also attended the program of Nālandā Mahāvihāra.⁴³

Dhyāna was also an important theme of study and practice in Nālandā, and many prominent monks focused on the Dhyāna practices. Ch'an is the Chinese form of Dhyāna, which is a state of meditative absorption. Although not the first form of Buddhism to reach Korea, it was this school of Buddhism, which was eventually to become the main Buddhist tradition in Korea. It became known as Seon. From there, it spread to Japan and became known as Zen. Ch'an, the roots of which are found in the Sattipatthāna Sutta,⁴⁴ the most important sermon on meditation

⁴³ Weeraratne, *Op Cit.*, ; R. Panth (ed.), *Hritage of Nālandā and Its Community*, Vol. VI, Nālandā : Nava Nālandā Mahavihara, 2000, pp. 1268; Dipankar Lama, 'Contribution of Nālandā Pandits to Tibet', in R. Panth (ed.), *Hritage of Nālandā and Its Community*, Vol. VI, Nālandā : Nava Nālandā Mahavihara, 2000, pp. 145-149; Bijayananda Kar, 'Tantric Buddhism in Nālandā With Special reference to its Relation With Orissan Buddhist Culture', R. Panth (ed.), *Op Cit.*, pp. 124-133; Rastrapal Mahathera, 'Nālandā : Its Historical Background', in R. Panth (ed.), *Op Cit.*, pp. 74-83; C.S. Upasak, 'Nālandā Mahavihara: A Centre of Higher Buddhist Education', R. Panth (ed.), *Op Cit.*, pp. 56-61.

⁴⁴ Sattipathhana Sutta

preached by the Buddha himself, emphasized realization by personal effort rather than reliance on study of the scriptures which are externally based and related more to the experiences of others. Eric Zurcher, describes Ch'än thus: ⁴⁵

It holds that the universal 'Buddha nature' is immanent in ourselves and must be realized 'directly', in a mind-to-mind communication between the master and disciple, without relying on canonical texts or rational theorizing. To effect this, all reasoning must be broken down; hence the characteristic use of unconventional means to evoke in the disciple the sudden and 'wordless' experience of Enlightenment: perplexing meditation themes, paradoxes, baffling answers; even yelling and beating are used to let 'the bottom of the tub fall out' and to plunge the practitioner into a state of 'no-mind'. In this state, no distinction is made between the holy and the profane, between the religious career and the simple tasks of everyday life: the Highest Truth is contained in carrying water and chopping firewood.

4

Monk Dhyänabhadra (Chi Gong) from Näländä to Yunnan

The Mahâyäna form of Buddhism, perhaps under the influence of non-Aryan or aboriginal popular cults in the lower strata of society, came to assume a darker and debased form of Tantrism. This might have resulted from a misunderstanding of the symbolic language of the esoteric text of the Tantric school. Magic and sorcery and secret rites and rituals introduced into later Buddhism, particularly in respect of the female deities, no doubt, alienated the people. It was therefore not surprising that people were antagonized by some of the corrupt practices of the Tantric. This unhealthy development, too, must have contributed considerably to the decline of Buddhism. This form of Buddhism was in the ascendant and was studied at the Buddhist universities of Näländä and Vikramçäa until the end of the 12th century CE

⁴⁵ Eric Zurcher, *Beyond the Jade Gate: Buddhism in China, Vietnam and Korea,* *The World of Buddhism*, London: Themes and Hodgson, 1984, pp. 193-211.

The beginning of the 13th century brought evil days both for Buddhism and Hinduism. For the former, however, the blow proved to be more severe. The monasteries of Bihar were despoiled and many of the monks fled to Nepal and Tibet. The lay Buddhists were left without any religious guidance, which made it easier for them to be absorbed in the non-Buddhist community as there was little distinction left between the lives led by the Buddhist and non-Buddhists. Nevertheless, a few isolated groups of Buddhists remained in Orissa, Bengal, Assam and parts of South India.

The widely spread Buddhism in Yunnan consists of Hinayāna, Mahāyāna and Tibetan Buddhism. Among them, Hinayāna Buddhism exists only in Yunnan throughout China. Buddhism prevalent in Yunnan region is categorized as - Southern Buddhism (Pāli Buddhism or Theravāda Buddhism), Han Buddhism (Han Language Classic Buddhism or Mahāyāna Buddhism) and Tibetan Buddhism (Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhism).⁴⁶

Ven. Dhyānabhadra, an Indian Buddhist monk of 14th century is prominent in the sense that he has rendered in valuable contribution in the development of Buddhism in Yunnan (China) and Koryo Kingdom in Korea. Present tradition of Seon Buddhism within the Chogye order in Korea is mostly credited to the Indian monk.⁴⁷

Ven. Dhyānabhadra as a Buddhist monk scholar, practitioner and a missionary has profound impact on historiography of Buddhism especially Dhyāna, Vinaya and esoteric practices in East Asia particularly 14th century Yunnan and Korea. Although there is a controversy on his identity, whether he was an Indian or a Central Asian,⁴⁸ historians concluded that he was an

⁴⁶ For details on Buddhist movement particularly the activities of Mahayana Buddhism among the Lahu and Wa people in Thai, Burma and Yunnan area see: Anthony W. Walker, 'Mahāyāna Buddhism in the Lahu and Wa Mountains of South-western China' Shanker Thapa (ed.), *Selected Essays on History of Buddhism in Asia*, (Forth coming in 2007 in New Delhi).

⁴⁷ For details on history of Korean Buddhist sects and other context of Korea's Buddhist history see: Shanker Thapa, *Buddhist Monasticism in Theory and Practice*, Kathmandu: Walden Book House, 1995.

⁴⁸ Ron Dzwenka views that Dhyānabhadra was a Central Asian Buddhist monk. But there are other Buddhist historians who believe that he was an Indian monk who studied at Nālandā in the 14th century and then after moved to Sri Lanka, Central Asia, Yunnan China and finally, he approached to Korea and contributed in the Korean Buddhism. Ron Dzwenka, 'Zhikong - The Light of

Indian who was educated in the Nālandā tradition of esoteric and Dhyāna practices. He belongs to an Indian princely family who later became a monk. He belonged to a royal family of Magadha, thus he belonged to Magadha.⁴⁹ Not much has been written on the monk. Regarding his pivotal position in Buddhist historiography of Yunnan and Koryo/Chosun Korea, Ven. Dhyānabhadra needed to pay due attention by Buddhist historians. Thus, there is still a good possibility of research on him that will further highlight historical aspects of Buddhism in Korea and China.

Dhyānabhadra spent his youth at Nālandā Vihara as a young Buddhist practitioner. Vinayabhadra (Lu-hsien), the Master of Exposition, was his Guru at Nālandā. He took the five vows (Pañcaśīla) and studied Prajñāpāramitā there. While he asked about the Buddha, multitude of living creatures, the void and the three worlds (Kāma, Rūpa and Arūpa Dhātu) to the Guru at Nālandā, the Master replied that it is not true that they exist or that they do not exist. That is Prajñā (wisdom). Then he advised him to go to Master Samantaprabhāsa (P'u-ming) in Ceylon. He lived on the Mountain Çregiré (Chi-hsiang, the Auspicious). He would teach him the inner meaning of the doctrine of wisdom. As a matter of fact, he departed to Çré Laikā from Nālandā to learn under Master Sāmantabhadra (Pu-Ming) the inner meaning of the doctrine.⁵⁰

Although Nālandā was the most reputed Indian institute of Buddhist learning of that time, he encountered ideological conflicts among Buddhist sects or traditions. Historians are of opinion that, during that time, schism between Northern and Southern Buddhist sects had been a major problem of the Buddhist community. However, he was able to escape the conflict and cultivated his studies at Sri Lanka.⁵¹ He then turned a missionary and made an arduous journey to China and Korea. From Nālandā he went to Sri Lanka. In the year 1300 CE, he traveled throughout India and set out for

Central Asia in East Asia', conference paper presented at the SUNY Geneseo and International Institute of Business Studies, April 2006; Heo Hung Sik, *Op Cit.*,

⁴⁹ Kanai Lal Hazra, *The Rise and Decline of Buddhism in India*, New Delhi:: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal Publishers, 1995, p. 362.

⁵⁰ Arthur Waley, *New Light on Buddhism in Medieval India* (Melanges chinois et Bouddhiques), Vol. 1, 1931- 1932, Juliet 1932, p. 361-362.

⁵¹ For details see: Heo, *Op Cit.*, p. 378.

Ta-li (Dali) in Yunnan taking the most strenuous route via Nepal, Sikkim and Tibet. He also stayed in Dädu (Beijing) and traveled to Kaegyông, the capital of Koryô kingdom in 1326.⁵² He was a Buddhist missionary with such a dedication that inspired him to travel such a far distance to the country of Yunnan and Koryo. He was a dedicated Buddhist who was determined to spread the *Dharma*. He is the last Indian Buddhist missionary to go to China and Korea and devote entire life for the cause of Buddhism.

In fact, it is not historically supported that our monk Dhyānabhadra was not interested in the practice of tantra based on the Siddha lineage of Nālandā and Vikramsila Buddhist monasteries of India or not. However, his knowledge of esoteric Buddhism was quite enough. He was devoted to Dhyāna practices. This has been the Dhyāna tradition of Nālandā Vihara. He became famous as the Ch'an Master in Yunnan as well as in Korea in the 14th century. It was Dhyānabhadra who contributed in the transformation of Buddhism in Korea through the teachings, publicity and practice of the system in the 14th century Korea.

Ven. Dhyānabhadra was no doubt, an Indian monk with higher scholarly motivation, ability and zeal. However, some scholars of Chinese Buddhist historiography mistakenly regarded him as a man from Central Asia. Dhyānabhadra is known by various names. He was known as, Ch'ān-hsien in China. He was synonymously called Çünyädi'saya, Çünyädiçya or Sunyadiya⁵³ (Ch: Chih -k'ung or Zhi Kong <Finger pointing at the Void>). He is popularly known as Chi-Gong in Korean Buddhist historiography. In spite of his prominent position in East Asian Buddhism, not much has been uncovered about him. His activities in Yunnan and Koryo kingdom have been studied to some extent by some scholars.⁵⁴ However, his early life,

⁵² Heo Hung Sik, *Op Cit.*, p. 378

⁵³ Some historians say that he was better called Sunyādiçya instead of Sunyadi'saya. Hazra, *Op Cit.*, p. 362.

⁵⁴ Heo Hung Sik, *Op Cit.*, Waley, *Op. Cit.*, p. 355-376; Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and...*, *Op Cit.*, p. 31; Bernard Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998, p. 31; Anne E. Monius, *Imagining a Place for Buddhism: Literary Culture and Religious Community in Tamil-Speaking South India*, London: Oxford University Press, 2001; Ron Dzwenka, 'Zhikong – The Light of Central Asia in East Asia', conference paper presented at the SUNY Geneseo and

academic pursuit at Nālandā, his travel to Çré Laì kà and contribution in the development of Dhyāna practices in Çré Laì kan Buddhist history is yet to be excavated. After study and practice in Çré Laì kà, he visited Yunnan and thereafter, to Koryo kingdom in Korea.

He was a devout missionary. However, his contribution in the fields of literary activities remained prominent. While in China, Dhyānabhadra translated Nilakaëöha Sutra in which Avalokitesvara appears as the metamorphosis of Lord Siva, the great yogi in Hindu religion, was translated eight times into Chinese from 7th to 14th centuries. The Taisho Tripitaka (T1113a) mentions that Dhyānabhadra has translated the Nilakantha *Sutra* into Chinese. The other translators were Chih-t'ung, Bhāgavaddharma, Bodhiruci and Vajrabodhi Amoghavajra.⁵⁵ The Nilakaëöha Avalokitesvara (Blue-throat Bodhisattva) was popular at Khotān in the first half of the seventh century. The version of the Sutra of Amoghavajra is most popular in China, Japan and Korea to this day. It speaks of Nilakaëöha as the ascetic (*Sidda*), the great ascetic (*Mahasiddha*), the lord of ascetic *Yogins* (*Sidda -yogisvara*). The Nilakaëöha Avalokitesvara was popular at Khotān in the first half of the seventh century. The version of Amoghavajra⁵⁶ is most popular in China, Japan and Korea to this day. It

International Institute of Business Studies, April 2006; Ron Dziwenka, 'Reassessing the Hagiographical Tradition of the Buddhist Monk Ideal: Will Someone Please (Re)Present the "Real" Zhikong?,' Paper presented at the seminar on East Asian studies, 2005?; Patrick Uhlman, 'The Genesis and Promotion of Zhikong as a Cultic Figure in China and Korea,' Paper presented at the seminar on East Asian studies, 2005?; Patrick R. Uhlmann, 'The Cult of Bodhisattva Dharmodgata in Korea during the Period of Mongol Interference', Paper presented at the Association for Asian Studies - University of California, Los Angeles, 2006, <http://www.google.com.hk/search?q=dhyānabhadra&hl=zh-W&lr=&start=10&sa=N>

⁵⁵ Lokesh Chandra, 'Notes on Central Asian Buddhist Iconography', *Dialogue* Volume 3 No. 4 April - June, 2002, also see: http://www.asthabharati.org/Dia_Apr02/notes.htm

⁵⁶ Amoghavajra introduced Tantric teachings of *Yogacara* systems in China along with Subhakarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi. It led to the growth of Tantra school in China. Even *Yogacarabhūmi Śāstra* 35 Vols. was published in Koryo period by the Publication bureau of King Sejo. Similarly, Kaet'ae Sa also published 'Sanskrit Book of Dharani Sutra' During that period the study of 'Vajraprajna *Sutra*' became popular among scholars. The treatise on the Sutra was published in 1378. Those activities proved to be instrumental in

speaks of Nilakaēḍha as the ascetic (*Sidda*), the great ascetic (*Mahasiddha*) and the lord of ascetic yogins (*Sidda-yogesvara*):

An inscription discovered so far in Korea tells us of an Indian monk called Dhyānabhadra who visited Kanchipura⁵⁷ and listened to a discourse on the Avatamsaka Sutra in the 14th century CE. There followed a long interregnum in the history of Buddhism until in the later half of the 19th century the attention of European scholars was drawn to the study of the Buddha and his religion.

He built a Buddhist temple in Yunnan, which is very important in that region. Buddhist monk Dhyānabhadra who completed the founding and construction of Zhengxu Chan Ssu Temple located near Kunming in the province of Yunnan. The temple stele also mention about him and his activities.⁵⁸ This temple is very important in connection to the missionary life of Dhyānabhadra in China. Chaozong, a Buddhist monk from Sichuan started the temple and Ven. Dhyānabhadra completed it. Chaozong first constructed Maījuçré and Vimilakirti Pavilions. The efforts of two Ch'an Masters Chaozong and Zhi Kong (Dhyānabhadra) made it possible to build the temple and publicize Buddhism in Yunnan region.⁵⁹ The temple hall and Buddha statue were started to build in the spring of 1315. The monk

spreading Esoteric Buddhism in the Koryo period and seek salvation of the deceased. Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. II, Delhi: Motilal Banarsi Dass, , pp. 380-386; An Kye Hyon, 'Publication of Buddhist Scriptures in Koryo Period', *Korea Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 1, January 1976, p. 33-41; Benoytosh Bhattacharya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Calcutta: K. L. Mukhopadhyaya, 1968, p. 14; Lahiri, *Op Cit.*, p. 64.

⁵⁷ From the early times, Kanchipuram was a reputed seat of Buddhism. Many Buddhist writers are associated with the Kanchipuram. A celebrity of this place was Dharmapala - the famous teacher of Nālandā . He also belonged to Kanchipuram located in South India. As mentioned in the account of Hsuan Chang, a Javanese poet of 14th Century CE speaks of Buddhist monks residing in monasteries at Kanchipuram. A Korean inscription of 1378 CE also narrates the travels of an Indian monk Dhyānabhadra, who during his visit to Kanchi, heard an illuminated discourse by a local Buddhist preacher. No Buddhist monument could be found in Kanchi but several images of Lord Buddha ranging between 7th to 14th Century CE were found in and around the holy city of Kanchi.

⁵⁸ Stone Inscription of the Construction of Zheng xu Temple on Lion Mountain (1321 C. E.) appendix A; Stone Record of Renovations to Zhengxu Temple Author Unknown 13th year of Cheng Hua (1478 CE). Appendix B.

⁵⁹ See: appendix A.

lecture hall and storehouse were completed in the summer of 1320. The other inscription mentions that –⁶⁰

He (Chaozong) decided to build (a monastery) at this place. Consequently, he became in charge of the financial and administrative management of the building of the temple. He pruned the wild growth to make [the site] beautiful, and worked the rocky, barren ground to make it level. He first constructed pavilions [like] the Guan Yin [and] Maïjuçré [pavilions]. [Though all his works] were not yet completed, the Master returned to the East.

His successor was one who (we) lack records [of, but who] was able to get the Indian monk Zhikong to resume [the temple construction]. He expanded its area and completed [the temple] by increasing it to double the size it had been before.

Dhyānabhadra made remarkable contribution in the development and expansion of Buddhism in the region. As mentioned in the inscription when Master Chaozong returned to west Sichuan, there came from the west an Indian Chan Master Zhikong. He visited this place and rested here. He took no food, and just sat. He opened up to proper realization, and guided and encouraged monks and the laity. All those who admired his teachings and received his trust were converted by him to Buddhism. There were many converts at that place.

Dhyānabhadra was a very reputed Ch'an Master in Yunnan region. He established himself as a monk of eminence. When he was involved with the construction of Zheng xu temple, the Ch'an Master worried about the lack of facilities for monks etc, because of this the eminent monks might scatter from there. Ch'an Master Zhi kong was worried that the lack of quality facilities at the temple might limit the temple's ability to attract and keep qualified monks as his disciples. Consequently, he solicited donations from this circuit's government officials in the area and other prefectures. The donations were received in the form of funds, grain or land.

⁶⁰ See Appendix B

Dhyānabhadra and Buddhism in the 14th Century Korea

Prior to the arrival of Buddhism, the main religious practice in Korea was that of Shamanism which still holds a significant place in Korean life and culture. Shamanism holds that human beings as well as natural forces and inanimate objects all possess spirits, which must be appeased. Even the highly educated and devout Buddhist Koreans have a strong belief in spirits and regularly visit the Shaman for a protective ritual.

It was in Koguryo Kingdom in Korea, where Buddhism was first established. In Silla and Koryo dynasties, euphemisms were usually used for distinguished monks. Silla people held the belief that each household worshipping Buddha enjoys prosperity, generation after generation.⁶¹ The Koryo Dynasty, which gave its name to present day Korea, assumed power in the 10th century. Its era heralded such important events as the creation of the Korean Tripitaka, the most complete collection of the Buddhist scriptures carved by hand in Chinese characters on over 80,000 wood blocks. This era marked important event such as the creation of Korean version of Tripitaka and the birth of the famous monk Chi-nul who stressed a balance between the mind only meditation practice of Seon and the study of the scriptures (Kyo) which is today the main feature of Korean Seon practice. Bojo Chinul (1158-1210 CE) founded the Songgwangsa temple on Mount Chogye, and this temple remained the headquarters of the Chogye sect, which is the main sect of Korean Seon to this day. Buddhism was the dominant system of thought in Korean society from the first half of the sixth century to the latter half of the fourteenth century. Medieval Korean states enforced a policy of protecting but controlling Buddhism. Korean tradition believe on transmigration between six kinds of lives (Yukdo) i.e. heaven, humans, hell, hungry ghosts, shambles and beasts under the principle of cause and effect concomitant in their retribution (*Hetu-phala*) has greatly affected Korean people.⁶²

During the medieval Korea, the concept of Hoguk Pulgyo (Buddhism protecting the state) developed. The concept of protecting the

⁶¹ Nam Dong-shin, 'Buddhism in Medieval Korea', *Korea Journal*, Winter 2003, p. 34

⁶² Nam Dong-shin, *Loc Cit.*, Winter 2003, pp. 32-33.

state through the protection of Buddhism was based on the common belief in salvation through good deeds. There were several deeds that accumulate merit. Buddhism in Korea emphasized spiritual idealism and attached greater emphasis on moral and religious self-cultivation.⁶³ To Koreans of the medieval era, Buddhas were the enlightened persons, something anyone could strive to become through ascetic training, and sacred beings with greater authority than spirits. Sacred beings satisfied people's religious needs more than enlightened persons did.⁶⁴

Koryo Kingdom was organized on Buddhist idealism with the help of a Buddhist monk Toson. The Buddhist ceremonies were made mandatory for all loyal subjects. It made Buddhism a social affair of the people. Thus, Koryo protected Buddhism.⁶⁵ Silla and Koryo people believed that farming principles were of direct relevance in Buddhist faith. Buddhism, originally a product of commercial civilization, suited agricultural societies of both Silla and Koryo. Buddhism promised the people a future of well-being, in return for which it flourished by winning religious devotion and material donations from the population.⁶⁶

From the 14th century, with the assumption to the throne of the Chosun or Yi Dynasty and their adoption of Neo-Confucianism, Buddhism fell into decline. They destroyed all Buddhist temples in the main cities and banished the monks to the mountains.

Master Chi-gong, the Indian monk has been recognized as the incarnation of a Tibetan Lama by the Tibetans. He came to Korea in 1328 CE and died in 1363 CE. After his death in China, his remains were brought back to Korea and enshrined at Hoeamsa temple in the Northern outskirts of Seoul.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 46-54; The objects of Buddhist merit such as Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and temples are called 'fields of blessings' (*Punnakkhetta*) because gaining fortune through the accumulation of good deeds is likened to sowing seeds on a field and harvesting grains from it.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, P. 34

⁶⁵ Kim Seung-tae, 'A Missiological Study of Shamanized Buddhism in Korea,' *Chongshin Theological Journal* 1996, pp. 108

⁶⁶ Nam Dong Shin, *Op Cit.*, p. 35.

⁶⁷ What is Korean Buddhism? (Extensive), <http://www>.

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The temptation of the Buddha by the daughters of Mara is often imitated in the lives of Chan Masters. In the autobiography of the Indian Master Dhyānabhadra who traveled all the way to Korea, similar stories are depicted. We also hear about an experience he had while staying in a Central Asian country.⁶⁸

Many Indian monks in the course of centuries settled in other Buddhist lands of Asia – wherever in fact their wanderings took them: no memory of them survives. Yet a considerable number of these monks found careers for themselves and rose to the fame in countries of their adoption. Some received great honors there; a few, by virtue of their pre-eminent spiritual and intellectual attainment, achieved such glory that they were worshipped or deified as Bodhidharma was in China, Atisa Dipaī kara Çrēī āna in Tibet and Dhyānabhadra in Korea.⁶⁹

The Diamond Mountains (Kumgang-san) are considered within the Buddhist tradition as the place where the Bodhisattva Dharmodgata permanently teaches the Perfection of Wisdom. While texts and material objects evidence cultic practices centered on Dharmodgata in the Diamond Mountains since the late eighth century, they are too fragmentary or elusive to determine the aspects of this cult over a longer period of time. Thus, most scholars so far considered the cult of Dharmodgata merely as a local phenomenon primarily based upon the Avatamsaka (Hua-yen) and Prajñāpāramitā literature.

However, recent scholarship and newly discovered texts enable an evaluation of doctrinal, social, and political aspects connected with the cult of Dharmodgata during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. After Korea's submission to the Mongols, the perception of the Diamond Mountains as being located at the eastern extremity of the Yuan Empire caused a large-scale promotion of the cult of Dharmodgata and the support of temples connected with it. The Yuan court regularly dispatched emissaries to the Diamond Mountains, including Central Asian and Tibetan monks, who promoted a version of the Dharmodgata cult differing from the heretofore-prevalent one. A representative example is monk Dhyānabhadra,

⁶⁸ Faure, *OP. Cit.*, p. 226.

⁶⁹ Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and...*, *Op Cit.*, p. 31.

whose cultic activities and textual production in connection with Dharmodgata reveal Tibetan and Central Asian influences.⁷⁰

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Stone Inscription of the Construction of Zhengxu Temple on Lion Mountain 7th year of Yanyou (1321 C.E.)

The state of Nanzhao favored Buddhism. This situation lasted a long time. But there were 27 tribal groups with vulgar customs. [They] enjoyed killing people and distained death. Although teachers and virtuous persons went to visit the people's homes often to see them, to pull their ears and admonish them, the people persisted in holding fast [to their beliefs], and they were not repentant. They were without the condition to be transformed.

Wu Ding is one such tribal group. The mountains are precipitous and the rivers are dangerous; the people are prosperous and [local] products abound. There is no poetry and books, nor rites and music, to guide their conscience. They are without [Buddhist virtues such as] loving compassion, discipline and meditation to control their licentious nature. Because of this, they fail to control their wanton nature. They are willing to give themselves up for lost. This is indeed a pity!

It is our holy Yuan dynasty that controls the entire country; opening schools [and] holding in esteem the lofty Buddha Dharma. From royal dignitaries and high officials to the common people, there is no one who does not esteem [the Yuan dynasty]. The foolish followers of the uncouth and barbaric have begun to wholeheartedly receive the wind [of civilization]. [They] are discarding their abnormal ways of thinking, and

⁷⁰ Patrick R. Uhlmann, 'The Cult of Bodhisattva Dharmodgata in Korea During the Period of Mongol Interference' (Research in Progress reporting), University of California, Los Angeles, <http://www.google.com.hk/search?q=dhyanabhadra&hl=zh-TW&lr=&start=10&sa=N>

tending to follow our correct ways, just as all the rivers return to the great ocean, [and as] fish and mollusks revere turtles and dragons.

In 1311, The Sichuan Buddhist monk, Reverent Senior Chaozong, arrived at this place. He looked at this mountain. [It is] so vigorous and powerfully elegant [that] all the other mountains face it. Moreover, [Chaozong] led Great Masters here, such as Yang Shan, Yang Qing, [and] Yang Zheng, as well as Li Jirong and Li Liang, who were [both] patrons. They all ascended up to the top of this mountain.

[Chaozong] sighed in admiration, and said: “Since the beginning and development of creation [of the world], the mountains and rivers have been coming into being. But to express and promote developing their beauty, they have waited for human beings to arrive. Hence, when Blue Pavilion met Wang Xizhi, ‘crystal clear brook and elegant bamboo’ ushered forth. When Red Cliff encountered Su Dongpo, ‘the bright moon and soothing breeze’ was without end. This scenery is like this! Its beauty has been hidden and unappreciated for so long. I do not desire to let down mountain spirit [of this area]. I will establish a Buddhist temple. I consider this [temple as] a place where the all the local people can take refuge. Would all of you help me to weed the grass and select the site to build?”

They all said, “We promise.” So, they broke and leveled the remote and barren ground; cut down and pruned the pomegranate trees [to lighten the] shade. They [split and] hollowed out trunks of trees and made [a conduit for] a water source, and cut stone to construct the temple hermitage to make a residence for the teacher to live in. Local people of the area converged [to the temple] like spokes of a wheel; monks and disciples assembled together.

By means of a gold comb, the Master [Chaozong] scraped away the film on their eyes [that obscured their vision]. [So,] when they climbed the mountain and looked into the distance, they saw in every direction without obstruction; like being able to see something as small as a bird, or a crazy fly in a mountain valley, from the mountaintop. Also, it was like [they were] the Creator in the beginning who began to judge the pure and the corrupt. {They were} able to see the great brightness of the blue sky and white sun, and sigh in wonderment as they marveled at that which had never been seen before.

Each one offered [to donate] his wealth, and everyone aided in the endeavor. Rising up the plank steps built along the cliff, following [a path] along stone steps, and [then] ascending to the south dozens of steps, they

acquired the site for a building, [and there they built] the Manjusri Pavilion. Also, going on foot one hundred paces or more to the south, they acquired the site for the senior abbot's hall, [and there they built] the Vimilakirti Pavilion. [These buildings] are together with the white clouds [which] act as a fence, and the green mountains which act as a natural barrier. Engulfing clouds and mist serve as a means of protection. Birds' song and temple music, like wondrous treasures, secretly come [and assist in] each other's song. To the east you can see a cliff edge, like a lion's head. That's [the reason for] the placard [with this temple's name].

After the Master returned to west Sichuan, there came from the west an Indian Chan Master Zhikong. He visited this place and rested here. He took no food, and just sat. However, the side of his body did not touch the mat. He opened up to proper realization, and guided and encouraged monks and the laity. All those who admired his teaching and received his trust were converted by him. There were many at that place.

The temple hall and Buddha statue were started in the spring of 1315. The monk lecture hall and storehouse were completed in the summer of 1320. Wind [blows through] beams, moon [shines through] windows; mist and fog hang in the air. How majestic! How elegant! The statues and [wall] paintings [of Buddha] are completed. Gold and jade reflect each other, crimson and blue are brilliant and lustrous; [They] brighten people's attentiveness [and] purifying people's minds. It is truly a good model for this present era. [This temple] is a magnificent sight for this area.

Chan Master [Zhikong] also worried about the [temple's] lack of permanent facilities, [and whether, because of this] the eminent monks might scatter like stars. Consequently, he solicited donations from this circuit's government officials. In this area and other prefectures, [what was donated was] either funds or grain. Records were kept even if land was donated, regardless of whether it was productive or not. All [this information] is engraved on the backside of the stone tablet, to pass down for posterity and not be lost.

Alas! At dawn incense, at dusk candles are presented to the Awakened Ruler of this Buddhist monastery. Cloud clappers [and] wind bells awaken people's illusionary dreams. Divine mountains and virtuous assemblies, solemn and dignified as if [they are] alive. Buddha's one important affair was [to teach the meaning of] cause and effect; therefore he appeared in this world. Accordingly, since the time of holding up a flower and breaking into a smile, lamp after lamp the flame continues; leaf after

leaf methods are propagated, [and] the number of those who have obtained the Way cannot be counted. Nevertheless, as for Chan learning in the southwest, [this place is] actually the source of the tradition.

Today, Chaozong started the temple in the beginning, and Zhikong completed it in the end. I see Lion Rock in front of the mountains and forests, and they all do their utmost to make a lion's roar. Without the contribution of the two Chan nobles and the boundless blessings of the dynasty, who could have done this! I only hope for the Wheel of the Law to turn everlasting, [and] wish for the Emperor's Way to flourish forever. [I wish that] whether [one is] a Buddhist or not, everyone comes [here and] lingers in this place of enlightenment.

Appendix B

Stone Record of Renovations to Zhengxu Temple Author Unknown 13th year of Cheng Hua (1478 C.E.)

Wu Ding is one of the Yunnan's most outstanding prefectures. The mountains to the west of the prefecture are the highest, [and they] spread out over ten li. [They have] rare flowers and unusual trees. The fragrance extends [everywhere and] the flora is exuberant. The four seasons come and go on their own accord. The mountains sprawl out like a luxuriant shield. Higher and steeper than all the others, [their] peaks rise one upon another, engulfing all around in front of the temple. [The mountains appear] like [people] holding [something] in their armpits, who are rising up, who are squatting; like a squad of soldiers who are lining up, like [people] who are acting presumptively and leaving, like [people] who are entering and bowing with hands folded. I am not able to count the number of ways to describe these mountains. In addition, as for their peaks, the rocks and cliffs are imposing, [and their] unusual, precipitous shape is like a lion's head. This is how the location of these mountains got its name.

Before this, Sichuan monk Chaozong took a casual glance at this place, and it touched his heart. He ascended to sightsee, and observed the panoramic view of the area. He decided to build [a monastery] at this place. Consequently, he became in charge of the financial and administrative management of the building of the temple. He pruned the wild growth to make [the site] beautiful, and worked the rocky, barren ground to make it

level. He first constructed pavilions [like] the Guan Yin [and] Manjusri [pavilions]. [Though all his works] were not yet completed, the Master returned to the East.

His successor was one who [we] lack records [of, but who] was able to get the Indian monk Zhikong to resume [the temple construction]. He expanded its area and completed [the temple] by increasing it to double the size it had been before. The placard says:

“Zhengxu Chan Temple”, [and is] used to commemorate the great contributions and achievements of the Eminent Masters and disciples in founding and sustaining [it].

Not long afterwards, the Yuan dynasty’s fortunes died, and this whole area met with misfortune by the ravages of war. Yet, only the temple survived, grand and secure for more than eighty years. Moreover, it acquired Chan Master Zhen Yan. His sect had spread from Wu and Yue, [and he] wrote literary works of outstanding reputation.

The Grand Defender Chief Supporter of the Military was concerned about the temple. In 1427, Chief Supporter of the Military paid a visit to the temple in person. Along with Prefecture Interpreter-clerk Li Xian, he donated funds and assembled workmen to extend the front hall as much as three pillars [in length]. Aboriginal Chieftan A Ning sculpted a model figure of Indra as a tall bell tower. At that time, his disciple named Shanji took charge of temple affairs and used up all the money he had to pay for the temple repair project. Fifty stone bases [in length] for columns were provided for two hallways, serving as twenty-six pillars [in length]. A painting of Buddha was hung on the wall of the temple. In addition, Aboriginal Chieftan Jin Dian raised funds to construct two pagodas to the left and right of the temple. It is a pity that the goal was not achieved. He left his work unfinished and died. [His] concubine Shang Sheng exhausted the funds in her treasury, but continued on to realize the goal [of renovations].

(Appendix Courtesy:

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