This is the eleventh issue of *East Asian History* in the series previously entitled *Papers on Far Eastern History*. The journal is published twice a year.
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159  Appendix: The George Ernest Morrison Lectures in Ethnology
Cover calligraphy  Yan Zhenqing 颜真卿, Tang calligrapher and statesman

Cover picture  G. E. Morrison with his two ‘adopted’ children, sons of his head servant, photographed in 1905 in the front courtyard of his house at 98 Wang-fu-ching Ta-chieh, Peking
In the past, the general view of China has often been that of a country which existed for many centuries without change, free from all influence from foreign ideas. However, the study of China has shown that nothing could be further from the truth than this idea. In the long course of its history, China has undergone many foreign influences and continues to experience them even today. These influences have manifested themselves in many different fields. In that of religion, one can name six foreign faiths, all of which entered China during the first millennium of our era: Buddhism, Mazdaism, Manichaeism, Nestorianism, Islam, and Judaism. Of all these foreign religions, none has been more successful than Buddhism. There is no doubt that Buddhism existed already in China in the first century AD. During its almost 2,000-year-long history there, Buddhism exerted a great influence on many different aspects of Chinese life. In the view of one of the leading scholars in the field of Chinese Buddhism, Paul Demiéville, Buddhism dominated Chinese philosophical thought from the fourth to the tenth century. During that period, it is in Buddhism that the key to all creative thought is to be found, whether such thought was inspired by Buddhist ideas, or, on the contrary, directed against them.¹ Not less important, perhaps, is the contribution Buddhism has made to Chinese art. The cave-temples of Yün-kang and Lung-men are a lasting testimony to the great period of Chinese Buddhist sculpture. In many other fields, too, the influence of Buddhism has been of great significance for Chinese culture. In order to understand the role played by Buddhism in China is necessary first to understand how Buddhism came there.

Buddhism is the oldest of the three universal religions. It arose more than four centuries before Christianity, and more than ten before Islam. These three religions have some very important characteristics in common. They all go back to a founder whose life and actions were piously recorded by his followers. In the second place, all are universal religions. Their message is directed to everybody, without distinction of race or social status. Finally,
they all possess sacred scriptures which contain their fundamental teachings. There is, however, a great difference between these religions in the way in which they spread from their original homeland to other countries and peoples. The propagation of Christianity and Islam was often associated with military conquest or commercial expansion. The spread of Buddhism, on the contrary, was mainly due to individual missionaries who were without any support from worldly powers. The main concern of these missionaries was to bring the message of the Buddha, as laid down in the sacred writings, to other peoples in order to deliver them from the sufferings of samsāra, or transmigration. These sacred scriptures of the Buddhists are very voluminous. They do not consist of a single volume like the Bible or the Koran. Both the Christians and the Moslems soon codified their scriptures into a canon. In Buddhism, however, only some of the older schools have established, in the course of time, a collection of texts with the status of a canon, and from only one of them, the school of the Sthaviras, the elders, has a complete canon been preserved. This collection contains, in its latest edition, no less than forty volumes.2 However, the later Buddhism schools never arrived at establishing a well defined canon.

As I have already mentioned, Buddhism is the oldest of the universal religions. Never before in the history of mankind had it been so expressly stated that a doctrine was to be taught to everybody capable of understanding it. According to the Buddhist tradition, as soon as the Buddha had obtained a small number of followers he addressed them with the following words:

Monks, I have been delivered from all bonds both divine and human. Monks, you are delivered from all bonds both divine and human. Monks, you must lead the religious life for the advantage of many people, for the happiness of many people, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit, the advantage and the happiness of Gods and men. Let not two go together. Monks, teach the doctrine which is good at the beginning, good at the middle, good at the end, in the spirit and in the letter. Proclaim the pure conduct, complete in its entirety and purified. There are human beings who by nature have few passions. Through not hearing the doctrines they will perish. They will be the ones who will understand the doctrine.3

During the forty-five years which elapsed after the illumination of the Buddha until his Nirvāṇa, he himself untiringly taught the doctrine. When he was at the point of entering into Nirvāṇa, he said to his cherished disciple, Ananda: “O Ananda, I have taught the doctrine without making any distinction between esoteric and exoteric.” With these words the Buddha stressed the fact that the doctrine had been taught by him in its entirety. The Buddha told Ananda that from now on the doctrine itself, the Dharma, was to be the only refuge for the followers of Buddha.4

After the Buddha’s Nirvāṇa, his disciples continued the work of propagating the doctrine. More than a century after the Nirvāṇa of the Buddha, in the middle of the third century BC, Buddhism was actively fostered by King Asoka whose realm occupied almost the entire Indian sub-continent. From a
doctrine known only to a few people in a small region, the present-day Bihar, Buddhism had become one of the major religions of India. Of particular importance for the expansion of Buddhism outside India is the fact that in the third, second, and first centuries BC, north-western India became a more and more important centre of Buddhism. The north-west has always played a significant part in ancient Indian history. From Alexander the Great, foreign invaders have always penetrated India through the passes in north-western India. On the other hand, it was by this same route that Indian culture was able to spread its influence to Central Asia and to China. It is from the north-west, from Kashmir and Afghanistan, that Buddhism penetrated into Central Asia and from there into China. The earliest testimony concerning the existence of Buddhism in China dates from the year 65 AD. It is very likely that Buddhism had already penetrated into China by the first half of the first century AD.

The first Buddhist missionaries did not come from far away India but from countries situated both west and east of the Pamir. The most important centre of Buddhism west of the Pamir was the country of the great Yüeh-chih. From here Buddhism spread east to Parthia and north to Sogdiana. To the east of the Pamir is the Tarim basin, bordered to the north by the Tien-shan and to the south by the K’un-lun ranges. This country, which today is called East Turkestan, or Chinese Turkestan, has been the meeting place of the cultures of India and China. It is for this reason that the great discoverer, Sir Aurel Stein, gave the name Serindia to Chinese Turkestan. In this region existed a series of small states which played a great role in the transmission of Buddhism from India to China. These states are to be found in the northern and the southern parts of the Tarim basin. Through these northern and southern states led the two main routes which connected north-western India and China. The southern route passed, travelling from west to east, through the states of Kashgar, Yarkand, Khotan, Lou-lan, and finally ended at Tun-huang in the extreme north-west of China. The northern route passed through Aksu, Kucha, Karashar, and Turfan and also ended at Tun-huang. It is in the old remains along these routes that very important discoveries have been made between the end of the nineteenth century and World War II. Scholars from Russia, England, Germany, Japan, and France discovered many Buddhist sites. Excavations brought to light the remains of Buddhist buildings in which many pieces of sculpture, wall paintings, and other works of art inspired by Buddhism were found. Above all, and of the greatest importance, were the great quantities of manuscripts found in several places. The great majority of these manuscripts were Buddhist texts written in various languages and different scripts. Many were written in Sanskrit or other Indian languages or in Chinese, but some were written in languages almost entirely or entirely unknown at the time of their discovery: Iranian languages such as Sogdian and Khotanese, and two languages of undetermined affiliation. In 1908 it was shown that these two languages belonged to the Indo-European family. Some scholars thought that they were the languages of the Tokharians who

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are known to us from Greek sources as the inhabitants of ancient Bactria. For this reason these languages were called Tokharian A and Tokharian B, or West Tokharian and East Tokharian. Other scholars, however, have objected to the name Tokharian being given to these languages. They proved that the so-called Tokharian A was the indigenous language of Karashar, of which the old name is Agni; and that Tokharian B was the indigenous language of Kucha. They therefore proposed naming these languages Agnean and Kuchean.

The discovery of all these manuscripts opened up new fields of research for linguistic and Buddhist studies. They were also of great consequence—which is our concern here—for the history of Buddhism in China. It was already known from Chinese sources that missionaries had come from the countries west and east of the Pamir, countries collectively called the ‘Western Regions’ by the Chinese. Chinese Buddhists had also travelled to these regions. With these discoveries, however, concrete evidence of the importance of Buddhism in this part of the world has, for the first time, become available. As a result, there is today a plethora of material on the history of Buddhism in Central Asia. It is to be hoped that in the future a scholar will write a comprehensive and up-to-date book on Central Asian Buddhism. At present the most detailed work in this field is a Japanese work published in 1914. Although it contains much information, it is, of course, not up to date, and in the second place, it does not contain a critical examination of the traditions found in the different sources. Few expeditions by Western scholars have been undertaken since World War II but the publication of the material already obtained continues and, if every document is to be studied in detail, will continue for quite some time. However, new material has been brought to light in a number of other areas. Very important results have been obtained by the excavations undertaken by the French in Afghanistan. Also in more recent years, Russian scholars have been very actively digging in the Soviet Republics north of Iran, Afghanistan, and East Turkestan. New discoveries can be expected at almost every moment. Nevertheless, if one takes into account the dates of the documents already obtained from Central Asia, it is not to be expected that much information will be forthcoming from this source concerning the period extending roughly from the beginning of our era to about 400 AD. Most of the documents are of a later date. There are certainly some that go back to this period but they are almost entirely of a secular nature and do not give any information about Buddhism in Central Asia. For this reason we are still forced to rely mainly on Chinese sources.

These sources give much information about the first four centuries, but one must not forget the fact that most of them belong to a later period and the information which they contain has to be sifted critically before it can be used for the reconstruction of the history of Buddhism in Central Asia. One thing, however, is quite obvious. The main source from which Chinese
Buddhism was nourished in the first centuries of its existence was Central Asia. According to a Chinese tradition, in the year 2 BC a Chinese named Ch’in Ching-hsien 伊存 was orally taught Buddhist sūtras by the envoy of the Prince of the Great Yūeh-chih, I Ts’un 存. Modern scholars reject this story as apocryphal. The interesting point in it, however, is the fact that it refers to the explanation of Buddhist sūtras. As already remarked, Buddhism was brought to China by missionaries who came there as individuals. They went to China in the first place with the intention of explaining and preaching the Buddhist sūtras. In the propagation of Buddhism, the main stress was always put on the Buddhist scriptures. Of course, Buddhism contains many more elements than its sacred writings. Buddhism, as a religion, implies an organisation of monks, the building of monasteries and stūpas, the making of sculptures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and the performance of rites and practices. The sacred texts are, however, the condictio sine qua non for the existence of Buddhism. Buddhism in China depended, above all, on a knowledge of the sacred scriptures.

Although it is probably not an historical fact that the envoy of the Prince of the Yūeh-chih was the first to bring the word of the Buddha to China, there is no doubt that in the early period of Chinese Buddhism it was mainly the missionaries from the Western Regions who were responsible for the spread of Buddhism to China. In his studies on Buddhism and the Western Regions, Liang Ch‘i-ch‘ao has brought together information from Chinese biographies of Buddhist monks concerning the origin of the monks who came to China in the first period of Chinese Buddhism up to the end of the period of the three kingdoms in 265 AD. It is evident from his lists that the great majority of foreign monks came from the Western Regions. In the following period, from 265 till the end of the (Liu) Sung dynasty in 479, most of the monks came from Kashmir in north-western India. It is only in the period from 479 till the end of the Sui dynasty in 618 that most are found to have come from the sub-continent as a whole.

Chinese sources do not tell us only about foreign monks who came to China in order to spread the doctrine, but also about Chinese pilgrims who went to the Buddhist countries. Their motives were different: some went there to search for the sacred books; others hoped to be instructed in the sacred doctrine by monks in India; others again wanted to see the sacred places of Buddhism; some, finally, went to foreign countries in order to invite famous teachers to come to China. Of all these motives, the most important seems to have been the first, the desire to obtain the sacred texts. According to the Chinese sources, in the early period the Chinese pilgrims mainly went to the Western Regions. The first Chinese pilgrim whose name is recorded is Chu Shih-hsing 朱士行, who in 260 AD travelled to Khotan in the southern part of the Tarim basin. His example was followed by others. For the period until the middle of the fifth century, Chinese sources already mention many names of pilgrims who undertook long and arduous voyages.
Fa-hsien’s account of his travels was translated into French by Abel Remusat (1836) and into English by Samuel Beal (1869, 1884), James Legge (1886), Herbert A. Giles (1877, 1923), and Li Yung-hsi (1957).

Translated by Édouard Chavannes, Mémoire composé à l’époque de la grande dynastie Tang sur les religieux éminents qui allèrent chercher la loi dans les pays d’Occident (Paris, 1894).


When the Chinese first came into contact with Buddhism, Buddhist literature had already reached great proportions. As mentioned before, only some of the older schools had established a canonical collection of their sacred texts. With the rise of the Mahâyâna, the Great Vehicle, Buddhist scriptures increased more and more, in both number and length, though without codification in one or more canonical collections. For the pious Buddhist, every Buddhist text was part of the Word of the Buddha, the Buddhavacanam. Only the learned monks were interested in knowing whether a certain text contradicted the tenets of the school to which he belonged. In some cases they even rejected a text as apocryphal. Needless to say, such doctrinal subtleties were of no concern to Chinese Buddhists in the early period. To them, every Buddhist text, coming from India, the country of the Buddha, was sacred. All texts brought to China were received with great respect.

How did these Buddhist texts arrive in China? They were not always written texts. Some were brought from India and Central Asia by monks who had learned them by heart. One must not forget that in India sacred texts have always been handed down from master to pupil by oral tradition. The holy scriptures of India, the Veda, were transmitted orally for centuries before being committed to writing. Even today it is still possible to find in India pandits who are able to recite these texts from memory. The importance of the oral tradition is due to the fact that only the spoken word of the teacher possesses authority. Another reason is that written texts can be communicated to persons belonging to impure castes, who are not entitled to hear the sacred teachings. This did not apply to Buddhism, which made no distinction between pure and impure castes. Nevertheless, the sanctity of the spoken word among Buddhists, too, was such that for many centuries the sacred texts
were not committed to writing, although writing was certainly practised both by monks and nuns.\textsuperscript{23} Only in the more recent texts of the Mahāyāna schools writing is recommended, but, it seems, only in order to facilitate the committing to memory of the sacred texts.\textsuperscript{24} In one of the most famous Mahāyāna sūtras, the Lotus Sūtra, great merit is promised to those who will write down the text. Immediately after proclaiming the merit of writing, the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra declares: “How much greater will be the mass of merit reaped by those who will preach and recite it, meditate and fix their mind on it.”\textsuperscript{25}

There is no doubt that in later times Buddhist texts were written in India on the leaves of palm trees and, mainly in north-western India, on the bark of birch trees. There is an interesting reference in a Buddhist text to ladies who at night were writing Buddhist texts on birch-bark with the help of ink and a writing-reed, called kalāma after Greek kalamos.\textsuperscript{26} However, from Chinese sources—there are no Indian sources which give any information on this point—one gains the impression that even in the first centuries AD the number of manuscripts available in India was still very limited. Most of the Buddhist manuscripts mentioned in this period by Chinese sources seem to have come from Central Asia. We have already noted that in 260 a Chinese Buddhist, Chu Shih-hsing, went to Khotan to obtain a Buddhist text. It is in the neighbourhood of this same place that the oldest Indian manuscript actually known has been found. This manuscript, written on birch-bark, dates probably from the second century AD.\textsuperscript{27} However, it is not impossible that in the earlier periods some manuscripts had already been brought from India itself to China. For instance, according to Chinese sources (admittedly of much later date) a manuscript was brought by an Indian monk to the Chinese capital, Lo-yang, about the middle of the second century.\textsuperscript{28} Half a century later a biography of the Buddha was translated into Chinese. The manuscript of the text translated is said to have come from Kapilavastu, the capital of the state of the Śākyas, where the father of the Buddha had reigned.\textsuperscript{29} However, during this period the manuscripts generally came from Central Asia. Their number cannot have been very great. According to the sources available only one text, or at most a few, were brought at a time, although some of them were quite voluminous. It is not until the beginning of the fifth century that greater numbers of manuscripts are mentioned. Chih Fa-ling 支法領 brought back from his voyages more than two hundred Mahāyāna sūtras which he most probably had collected in Khotan.\textsuperscript{30} It is only in the sixth century that reference is made to great masses of texts, or bundles, which were brought to China from India itself. They were called ‘bundles’ because they took the form of piles of palm leaves, or of writing material prepared from birch-bark, held together by a string passing through holes, one or sometimes two, pierced in the leaves. Each such bundle might consist of one or more texts, or if the text was very long, then of only part of it. The house of the Indian translator, Bodhiruci, who worked in the first half of the sixth century in Lo-
Chinese sources also make frequent references to the amazing memory of Indian monks who could recite by heart quite voluminous texts. To mention only a few examples: In 383 Samghadeva, a monk from Kashmir, translated from memory a text which, in the Chinese version, contained more than 380,000 characters. Prodigious though his memory was, it appears that he had forgotten a chapter. It was later added from recitation by another monk from Kashmir. In 407 two Indian monks wrote down a text which they translated from memory into Chinese. We know of at least one instance in which the Chinese decided to put the memory of an Indian monk to the test. This was in 410 when Buddhayaśas was invited to learn by heart, in three days, forty pages of the Mahāvyutthāna, the major handbook of the Nālandā school of Buddhism. He was able to recite them without making any mistakes in the weight of a drug or a census figure. After having been tried in this way Buddhayaśas orally translated a text, which in Chinese ran to more than 630,000 characters.

The Buddhist texts which arrived in China, whether in the form of manuscripts or by oral transmission, had to be translated into Chinese in order to become accessible to the Chinese. This is not as obvious as it seems to be at first. In the history of religions there are many examples of sacred scriptures which, in other countries, continued to be studied in their original language. Sometimes they are recited without being understood, as is the case, for instance, with the Sanskrit texts which are recited in Bali. With regard to Buddhism, it is sufficient to point out that in Ceylon and in South-east Asia the Buddhist scriptures are studied in the first place in Pali, a Middle-Indian language. Probably in Central Asia too the Buddhist scriptures were studied for centuries in their original languages. However, China did not have such close cultural contacts with India as did Central Asia. Moreover, the structure...
of the Chinese language is fundamentally different from that of Sanskrit, a highly developed analytical Indo-European language. For the Central Asian speakers of Indo-European languages it was, of course, much easier than it was for the Chinese to study the Buddhist texts from India in their original languages.

In the past it was assumed that the Buddhist texts from India were all written in Sanskrit. Study of the Chinese translations, especially of the transcription of Indian names, and the linguistic analysis of Indian Buddhist texts have shown that, in India, Buddhist texts were also composed in Middle-Indian languages and in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. The discovery at the beginning of this century of Buddhist texts in non-Indian languages has led to the supposition that Chinese Buddhist texts were sometimes even translated from Central Asian languages. This has recently been affirmed again by van Gulik in his book on Siddham. However, to my knowledge, it has not been proved that any specific Chinese text must necessarily have been translated from a text in a Central Asian language. Although many manuscripts containing Buddhist texts in different languages have been discovered in Central Asia, none of them is older than 500 AD. In the opinion of specialists in these languages, the Tokharian manuscripts date from 500 to 700, the Khotanese documents from the seventh to the tenth centuries, and the Sogdian manuscripts mostly from the ninth and tenth centuries. The Buddhist manuscripts of an earlier period that have been found in Central Asia are written in Sanskrit or other Indian languages. After 500 AD, as we have seen, great numbers of manuscripts came from India to China. It is, of course, possible that an orally transmitted Buddhist literature in Central Asian languages existed already before 500 AD, and that one or more Chinese texts go back to a Central Asian original. The available evidence is not sufficient to warrant such a conclusion.

The work of translating Buddhist texts into Chinese was first undertaken in the middle of the second century and continued to the middle of the eleventh century. Thereafter only very few texts were translated. The task confronting the translators was extremely difficult. The texts which arrived

\textit{since Tao-an, the term chung-i is regularly used in catalogues to indicate different translations of the same text. Japanese scholars use the term chung-i (jyuluk) in the sense in which it was first used by Tsan-ning. Tsan-nung (loc. cit.) gives the following examples of Central Asian words: Sanskrit \textit{upadhyaya} - Kashgar \textit{hu-shê} 鸭社. Khotan \textit{bo-shang} 和尚; Kubera = \textit{bu} 胡 (Central Asia) Vaśramana. Much has been written on \textit{bo-shang}, cf. Paul Pelliot, \textit{Notes on Marco Polo}, vol.1, (Paris, 1959), pp.211–14. H. W. Bailey interprets it as \textit{*tāṣa}, from north-western Prakrit \textit{*tājaya} (BSAS 13 (1949): 133). However, it has not been found in Khotanese texts. It is, of course, very possible that the Prakrit form reached China via Khotan without having been used in Khotanese. This would explain why it was considered to be a Khotanese word by Chinese scholars of later date, such as Hsüan-ying and Tsan-ning, who knew the correct Sanskrit form but were unable to relate to it the Prakrit form underlying \textit{bo-shang}. Pelliot (loc. cit.) admits the possibility that \textit{hu-shê} really represents a Kashgarian word. Nothing is known about the language of Kashgar apart from the fact that almost certainly it was an Iranian language (H. W. Bailey, BSAS 13 (1950): 65).}
in China belonged to different Buddhist schools. They were composed not only in Sanskrit but also in other Indian languages, languages greatly differing in structure from Chinese. Last, but not least, the Buddhist concepts were foreign to the Chinese mind. Nevertheless, the difficulties were overcome, although not always with complete success.

The number of translations increased rapidly, as appears from a catalogue of Chinese Buddhist texts compiled in 374 by the famous monk, Tao-an 道安. This catalogue has not been preserved, but has been reconstructed from a catalogue published in the beginning of the sixth century. 40 Tao-an's catalogue contained 611 texts, of which 561 were translations, the fifty others being apocryphal texts and commentaries. Tao-an carefully arranged these 561 translations under five heads. One: translations, where the author was known, listed in chronological order; two: translations of which the author was unknown; three: variant versions produced in Kansu; four: variant versions produced in Ch'ang-an; five: variant versions in archaic style. Tao-an's catalogue did not extend beyond the beginning of the fourth century and comprised a period of only little more than a century and a half. He lived in a time of war, when communications between the different parts of China were difficult. Therefore the number of existing translations must certainly have been greater than the 561 mentioned by Tao-an in his catalogue. After Tao-an, the volume of translations increased enormously. 41 It is difficult to know from the later catalogues how many translations were actually made, because these include a great number of lost translations of doubtful authenticity; the number must have been in the thousands. The most recent edition of the Chinese Buddhist Canon, the so-called Taishō edition, published from 1924 to 1934, contains about 1,700 translations. 42 This certainly represents only a part of all the translations which have been made in China. In the passage of centuries many texts have been lost and many manuscripts have yet to be published.

How were these texts translated into Chinese? There were no Sanskrit Chinese dictionaries and no grammars. It is not until after 600 that manuals began to be compiled for students. 43 Even if we find a dictionary mentioned somewhere, it bears little resemblance to dictionaries as we know them. For instance, in 1035 there is a record of a dictionary of Indian words being presented to the Emperor, but this work does not contain anything more than an explanation of Indian sounds and syllables and their mystic meaning. 44

/增訂 Sokka "Sanshōsha kōza shū: Sanshō kōza kōza (Tokyo, 1939), pp.77-84. According to this catalogue, from 67 to 1306, 194 translators translated 1,440 texts in 5,586 chapters. Ono Gemmyō 小野玄妙 enumerates altogether 202 translators in chronological order; cf Bussboso kaisetsu daijiten: "Nichirin kōza kōza" (Tokyo, 1946), pp.120-188. The transla tors see also Nannão Bunyū, A catalogue
the early period of Chinese Buddhism, as we have mentioned already, the Chinese did not go to India and Indians did not come to China. It was mainly men from Central Asia who were responsible for the introduction of Buddhism and for the translations of Indian texts. Living in Central Asia, in countries which were subjected to the influence of Chinese culture, or having settled in the Western Regions of China, they knew enough Chinese to be able to translate Indian texts into Chinese.

Translators did not work alone. With very few exceptions, all translations were the result of team-work. Chinese sources provide a great deal of information about the way in which these teams functioned, and these sources have been carefully studied by scholars, mainly Chinese and Japanese. Most useful is an article published four years ago by Tso Sze-bong, bringing together information on translation techniques which can be found in such Chinese works as catalogues of Chinese translations, biographical works, and prefaces to translations. It appears from these sources that already in the early period several persons were engaged in the making of a single translation. One man would hold the Indian text in his hand and read it, or recite it from memory; he was called the main translator, and in many cases only his name has been attached to the translation. A second person was charged with the translation from Sanskrit into Chinese. A third person, finally, wrote it down or ‘received it with the pen’ as the phrase goes in Chinese. The work of translating took place in public. The chief translator not only recited the text but also explained it. His explanations were written down by his disciples, who later compiled commentaries to the text. Sometimes many hundreds or thousands of people were present at these translation centres. Questions would be asked about difficult problems, and the answers of the chief translator were written down. These notes were later consulted for the verification of the translation. It does not seem likely that at these gatherings many people were able to ask questions about the meaning of the text, as Tso Sze-bong seems to imply. For most of them the recitation and explanation of the Indian text by a famous translator must have been a sacred ceremony which they attended with religious devotion. Once the translation was written down, it was again revised and the style polished. Sometimes the meaning of the original was changed during this process. A famous example of stylistic improvement is to be found in the biography of the Chinese monk, Seng-jui, a pupil of the famous translator, Kumārajīva (active about 400 AD). When Kumārajīva was translating the famous Lotus Sūtra, he apparently consulted at the same time an older translation made by Dharmarakṣa. When they arrived at a passage where Dharmarakṣa had translated: “The Gods see the men and the men see the Gods,” Kumārajīva remarked that the translation was correct but the wording too coarse. Then Seng-jui proposed a translation: “The men and the Gods are in mutual relation and see each other.” Kumārajīva gladly accepted this suggestion.

It is obvious that these translations could not have been made without material support. To begin with this was given by lay followers, but soon,
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especially in the north where non-Chinese dynasties reigned, official patronage was extended to the work of translating. After the re-unification of China in 589, Buddhism received great support from the emperors. They also vigorously promoted the work of translating. Official supervisors were appointed to assist the translation centres. At the same time there was also an important change in the methods of translating. It now became entirely the work of specialists, each of whom was made responsible for a particular aspect of the work. Hsüan-tsang, who translated many texts, was assisted by a team of twenty-three specialists, as well as by a number of scribes.\textsuperscript{49} He was one of the very few Chinese who had learnt Sanskrit exceptionally well, and was able to translate texts without the help of foreigners. Hsüan-tsang did not want to be bothered by intruders during his work. He therefore requested the Emperor to allow him to go to a quiet place away from noisy towns and villages, but the Emperor wanted to keep him in the capital, and built a special monastery for him.\textsuperscript{50}

A study of the methods of translation can only indirectly throw light on the quality of the translations. In this respect much work remains to be done by scholars. Only very few Chinese translations have been critically compared with their Indian originals or with other translations from Indian languages; in particular, those in Tibetan. With very few exceptions, no systematic study has been undertaken of the terminology used by each translator, although this would be of great importance in helping to evaluate the translations and decide their attribution, which is often doubtful.\textsuperscript{51} It is at present only possible to make a few general observations. In the beginning, the translators tried to use existing Chinese philosophical and religious terminology, especially Taoist terminology, in order to convey Buddhist concepts. Only gradually was a specific Chinese terminology for Buddhist concepts worked out. At the time of Kumārajīva, special attention began to be paid to the style of the translation, and many of them from that period are very readable, though they do not always strictly adhere to the letter of the original, as we have seen in the passage from the Lotus Sūtra quoted earlier. The translations of Hsüan-tsang are probably the most accurate ever made in China, but Chinese Buddhists have usually preferred Kumārajīva’s translations for the excellent Chinese in which they were written.

The Chinese translations vary greatly in quality. It is not always easy to understand their meaning, and in many cases it is clear that the translation only very imperfectly represents the original. Nevertheless, the value of these translations is considerable. Of the immense Buddhist literature which once existed in India, only a small part has been preserved in its original form. If one wants to study Buddhist literature, it is absolutely necessary to consult the translations. Only in two languages, Tibetan and Chinese, does there exist a great number of Buddhist texts translated from Indian originals. The Chinese Buddhist Canon contains many texts which were not translated into Tibetan. Although the Chinese translations are never as literal and precise as the Tibetan ones, for which a uniform terminology was soon created, the former possess nevertheless one important advantage over the latter. Chinese

\textsuperscript{49} T 2053, 253c 19–254a 6; Tso Sze-bong, “Lun Ch'ung-ko fo-chiao i-ch'ang chih i-ching fang-shih yu ch'eng-hsu,” pp. 257–8.

\textsuperscript{50} T 2053, 253c 1–8.

translations, almost all of them, date from the second to the eleventh centuries, while in Tibet the task of translating did not begin before the eighth century. Apart from their intrinsic value for the history of Buddhism in China, the Chinese translations therefore are also of great importance for the study of Indian Buddhism, particularly for the period before the eighth century. By studying them it is possible to learn of the existence of many Indian texts, of which no original has been preserved. The date of translation gives us the *terminus ante quem* of their composition. Finally, the contents and the form of the lost Indian originals, though not, of course, the exact wording, can be reconstructed from the Chinese versions. In the course of centuries many Indian Buddhist texts were gradually added to, and this process of expansion can in several cases be studied by means of successive Chinese translations. For these reasons, no student of Buddhism, even if he is interested only in Indian Buddhism, can neglect the enormous corpus of Chinese translations.

In India, by far the greater part of the texts which existed only in manuscript form were lost. Although after the middle of the eleventh century Buddhism declined in China, this did not happen there. Already at the end of the sixth century Chinese monks were anxious lest the Buddhist doctrine might disappear, for they had learned from Indian texts that three periods in the history of the Buddhist doctrine could be expected: the first, the period of the true doctrine, the *Saddharma*; the second, the period of the counterfeit doctrine; and the third, the period of the end of the doctrine, in Chinese *mō-fa* 末法. Texts relating to this theory were translated in the sixth century, but greater poignancy was given to their fears that the final period of the doctrine now confronted them by the fact that in 574 the faith was suffering persecution in Northern Chou, one of the kingdoms ruling in northern China. Although this persecution continued for only a few years, it seems to have made a deep impression. In order to ensure the preservation of the texts of the scriptures for the future, when, after the disappearance of the doctrine, Buddhism would again revive, it was decided to engrave them on stone. At the end of the sixth century, in a number of different parts of China, this task was begun. The most important of these undertakings was due to a monk named Ching-wan 靜婉, who, early in the seventh century, conceived the idea of engraving the entire Buddhist Canon. He pursued this work until his death in 639, after which it was continued by five generations of his disciples. Only then was the work interrupted. However, in the eleventh century it was taken up again, and many new texts were added to those already engraved. This Mountain of the Stone *Sūtras*, as it is called in Chinese, is famous. Situated forty miles south-west of Peking, it was thoroughly studied by a group of Japanese scholars in 1934. Even here, though, where a larger number of texts was engraved than anywhere else in China, still only a part of the entire Buddhist Canon is preserved.

It is a fortunate circumstance that the Buddhists did not have to rely on texts engraved in stone for the transmission of their Canon. With the growth of printing, a technique which the Buddhists had made a substantial con-

55. According to a newspaper article (Canberra Times, 16 Feb. 1967) a scroll, printed from twelve wooden blocks, was found in the stonework of a South Korean pagoda built in 751. The scroll contains a text translated no later than 704.


Chinese Buddhism is the product of the meeting of the cultures of India and China. The interrelation of these two great cultures constitutes one of the most fascinating chapters in the history of mankind. Without the untiring efforts of so many Buddhist believers in India, Central Asia, and China, it would not have been possible to bring the word of the Buddha to China, to translate it into Chinese, and to spread it by writing and printing. We are deeply conscious of our debt to these men who were prompted by no other motive than the desire to speed the spread of the doctrine of the Buddha.

J. W. de Jong