CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS WITH CENTRAL ASIA, CHINA AND TIBET

I. INDIA AND CENTRAL ASIA

1. The Zone of Indian Cultural Influence

We have seen that the beginnings of India’s cultural relations with that part of Central Asia which is now known as Eastern Turkestan go back to the second century B.C. The relations had been intensified in course of the next few centuries and the entire Eastern Turkestan from Kashgar up to the frontier of China had grown into a cultural colony of India by the end of the third century A.D. The region that had come under the sphere of Indian influence may be defined as the country bounded by well-known hill ranges on all sides—on the north by the T’ien-shan, on the south by the Kun-lun, on the east by the Nan-shan, and on the west by the Pamirs. These mountains give rise to important rivers which flow towards the Taklamakan Desert, gradually dry up, and ultimately lose themselves in the sands. The Kashgar river rising from the T’ien-shan and the Yarkand river rising from the Pamirs combine together to form the Tarim river. This river, which is known in Indian literature under the name Sītā, flows along the depression south-eastwards into the marshes of Lob-nor. It is along these river basins that thickly populated and prosperous colonies had come into existence from early times, and many of them developed into independent states during the period under consideration.

The colonies that flourished in the southern part of this region were from west to east—Sailadeśa (Chinese Shue-lei, Kie-sha: Kashgar), Chokkuka (Chinese So-kiu, Che-kiu-kia: Yarkand), Khotamine (Chinese Yu-tien, Kiu-sa-tan-na: Khotan, Kustana) and Calmadana (Chinese Che-mo-t’o-na: Shan-shan: Cherchen). The colonies in the north were: Bharuka (Chinese P’o-liu-kia: Uch Turfan), Kuchi (Chinese Kiue-tse: Kucha), Agnideśa (Chinese Yen-ki, Wu-ki Wu-Yi: Karasahr) and Kao-ch’ang (Turfan).
From the Indian frontier there were two distinct approaches to this region. The shorter one was along the upper valley of the Indus and through Gilgit over the Pamirs to Kashgar. Kashgar was the meeting place of two routes, one connecting it with the southern states and the other with the northern states. The two routes again met at Yu-men-kuan on the Chinese frontier. The other route from India, which was a longer one, lay along the Kābul river and, by the passes of the Hindukush, proceeded through Bactria and Tokharistan towards Kashgar. The northern part of Eastern Turkestan was also connected by another route which, starting from the Kābul region, went northwards through Sogdiana and the country of the Western Turks in the region of the Issik-kul, ultimately reaching Bharuka (Uch Turfan).

In some of these states, specially in those of the south, there was a strong Indian element in the population due to systematic immigration from India in the earlier period. Close relations, both cultural and commercial, had been established between India and these states. Indian script had been introduced under two forms: Kharoshthi in the southern states and Brāhmī in the northern countries. Besides, among the upper section of the people, an Indian dialect, akin to the spoken language of North-Western India, was current at least for the first three or four centuries of the Christian era.

The Indian influence was further strengthened through the acceptance of the Buddhist religion by the local people in the south as well as in the north. Buddhism brought to them Indian art, literature, medicine, astronomy and music. The language of culture in many of the states was Sanskrit. Fa-hien bears a clear testimony to this at the end of the fourth century: 'From this point (Lon-nor region), says he, 'travelling westwards, the nation that one passes through are all similar in this respect (i.e. in the practice of the religion of India), and all those who have left the family (i.e. priests and novices) study Indian books and Indian spoken language'. That Sanskrit was the language of culture in the states of Eastern Turkestan is also clearly demonstrated by the discovery of a very large number of Sanskrit Buddhist texts in various part of the country. There are also bilingual texts in Indian script—consisting of Sanskrit texts and their translations in local languages.

2. The Southern States

Amongst the southern states, Khotan was of course the most important, even in this period, in the dissemination of Indian culture, but other states also did not play an insignificant part. It is the
account of Hiuan Tsang which gives a complete picture of the religious life of the people in the various states. The earlier name of Kashgar appears in the Chinese records as Shu-lei which was a transliteration of an Indian name like Śaila (deśa). In later Chinese records the name is given as Kie-sha, probably Khasa, from which the modern name Kashgar is derived. According to the testimony of Hiuan Tsang, the people of Kashgar were sincere believers in Buddhism. In the middle of the seventh century there were some hundreds of Buddhist monasteries there with more than 1000 monks, all followers of the Sarvastivāda school. The Buddhist scriptures, both canonical texts as well as the commentaries, were read by the monks. North of Kashgar, at a place called Tumšuk, ruins of Buddhist monasteries have been unearthed, and they show remains of the Buddhist art of the Gandhāra school.

Chokkuka, which is mentioned in the Chinese records earlier as So-kiu and later as Che-kiu-kia, was almost midway between Kashgar and Khotan. It has been identified with the modern Yarkand region. Buddhism was decadent in this country in the seventh century, probably on account of the growing prosperity of Khotan in this period. Hiuan Tsang tells us that the local people were sincere Buddhists and that they enjoyed good works. Although there were tens of Buddhist monasteries in the capital, they were mostly in ruins. The number of monks was more than 100, and they followed Mahāyāna. But according to the testimony of the pilgrim, it may be believed that in an earlier period the place was a more prosperous centre of Buddhism. He says that, in the south of the country, in a mountain, there were great topes in memory of Indian Arhats who had once lived there. Besides, although the number of Buddhist scholars was insignificant, the pilgrim says that the country possessed numerous canonical texts of Mahāyāna, much more than in any other Buddhist country. This shows that it must have been a very prosperous seat of Mahāyāna Buddhist culture in the earlier period.

Khotan was much larger as a state than any other country on the southern route. Its eastern frontier almost reached the Cherchen area and included many important cities like Pi-mo and Ni-jang (Niya). It was thus not only powerful but also prosperous. It, therefore, played a very preponderating role in the spread of Indian culture along the southern route. The communication between Kashmir and Khotan was very brisk in ancient times. We have seen that the road from Kashmir to Khotan, although difficult, was not long. It passed along the upper valley of the Sīndhu river up to Darel, and then, proceeding north-westward along the Yasin valley, it went over hills and valleys up to Tashkurghan. From Tashkurghan to Khotan it was a
westward journey over the Bolor Tagh. This was the route followed by the first Chinese traveller Fa-hien towards the end of the fourth century. His example was followed by many Chinese travellers of later times.

A correct picture of Khotan can be had from the important Chinese records of the period—such as those of Fa-hien, Sông-yun, Hiuan Tsang, etc. They say that in point of culture, Khotan belonged more to India than to China. Indian script was in use by the people; Sanskrit was cultivated and Buddhist canons in Sanskrit were studied by the local monks. Sanskrit medical texts were probably in use in the region, as fragments of them have been discovered in old sites of Khotan.

Khotan was a great centre of Buddhism and Buddhist studies. The form of Buddhism prevalent was both Hinayāna of the Sarvāstivāda school and Mahāyāna. The people of the country as well as the rulers were devout followers of Buddhism. Fa-hien tells us that the kings of Khotan were lavish in their expenditure on the Buddhist church. In the days of Hiuan Tsang, in the capital itself there were more than 100 monasteries with above 5000 monks. In the time of Fa-hien there were about 14 principal monasteries among which the Gomati-vihāra was the largest. This monastery alone accommodated 3000 monks. Fa-hien says about the monastery: ‘At the sound of a gong, three thousand priests assemble to eat. When they enter the refectory, their demeanour is grave and ceremonious; they sit down in regular order; they all keep silence, they make no clatter with their bowls, etc., and for the attendants to serve more food, they do not call out to them, but only make signs with their hands’. About the next largest monastery called the ‘King’s New Monastery’. Fa-hien says that it was 250 feet in height, richly carved and overlaid with gold and silver with a splendidly decorated hall of the Buddha. The building of the monastery, we are told, took eight years.

Religious procession of the type of Yātrā was known in Khotan and the priests of the Gomati-vihāra were the principal organisers of such annual functions. Fa-hien has left a full description of this Yātrā:

‘At a distance of 3 or 4 li from the city, a four-wheeled image car is made over thirty feet in height, looking like a movable hall of the Buddha, and adorned with the seven preciosities, with streaming pennants and embroidered canopies. The immense Buddha is placed in the middle of the car with two attendant Bodhisattvas and Devas following behind. These are all beautifully carved in gold and silver and are suspended in the air. When the images are one hundred
paces from the city gate, the king takes off his cap of state and puts on new clothes; walking barefoot and holding flowers and incense in his hands with attendants on each side, he proceeds out of the gate. On meeting the images, he bows his head down to the ground, scatters the flowers and burns the incense. When the images enter the city, the queen and court ladies who are on the top of the gate, scatter far and wide all kinds of flowers which flutter down and thus the splendour of decoration is complete. The cars are all different, each monastery has a day for its procession, beginning on the first of the fourth moon and lasting until the fourteenth when the processions end and the king and queen go back to the palace.

There were a number of other monasteries within the kingdom of Khotan which enjoyed a great prestige in the Buddhist world of Central Asia. Hiuan Tsang mentions a famous monastery on the Gośriṅga mountain in the immediate vicinity of the capital; another called Ti-kia-p’o-fo-na to the south-west of the capital, Sha-mo-no monastery to the west, Mo-she monastery to its south-east, Pi-mo (Bhīma) and monasteries of the city of Ni-jang on the eastern frontier of the country. The discovery of a large number of archaeological sites in the region of Khotan amply confirms the description given by Hiuan Tsang of the Buddhist institutions. The principal sites so far explored are Yōtkan, Rawak, Dandān-ūilik and Niya. Fragments of manuscripts, images, and paintings clearly demonstrate that all these sites were once flourishing centres of Indian Buddhist culture. The Buddhist sculpture in this region faithfully represents the Gandhāra school.

Two other ancient states on the southern route to China and mentioned by Hiuan Tsang were Che-mo-t’o-na and Na-fo-p’o. The Sanskrit form of the name of Che-mo-t’o-na was Chalmdana and the country has been located in the modern Cherchen area. Na-fa-p’o, the new name of ancient Lou-lan, was evidently an Indian name beginning with Na-. Watters would restore it as Navabhāga. Before the time of Hiuan Tsang the region was known as Lou-lan of which the original name occurs in the Kharoshthī documents as Kroraina. This has been identified with later Chinese Shan-shan and modern Lob-nor region. We have not much evidence on the condition of Buddhism and Indian culture in these regions excepting the relics of Buddhist art discovered in the old sites of Endere and Miran. As the sphere of Indian cultural influence went far beyond up to Tun-huang along this route it may be presumed that these two places also contained Indian settlements and Buddhist establishments.
3. *The Northern States*

In the northern part of Eastern Turkestan, along the route proceeding from Kashgar eastwards to the Chinese frontiers, the three countries Bharuka, Kuchirāja and Agnideśa represented a homogeneous type of culture, whereas Kao-ch'ang (Turfan) was mostly a Chinese outpost. Of the first three kingdoms Kuchi was the most important and played the same role as Khotan in the dissemination of Indian culture along the northern route. The local people of the three kingdoms were predominantly an Indo-European speaking people. Their language represents an unknown branch of the Indo-European having more affinities with the Kentum group. It has been variously called by modern scholars, by some as Tokharian and by others more precisely as Kuchean and Agnean. These were, however, dialects of the same language and one was spoken in Kuchi and the other in Agnideśa. The existence of these dialects has been demonstrated by Buddhist documents discovered in these regions. Although no such documents have been found in the region of Bharuka, the testimony of Hsuan Tsang would have us believe that the language of that region was a dialect of Kuchean. While speaking of Bharuka, Hsuan Tsang says: 'In general characteristics this country and its people resembled Kuchih and its people, but the spoken language differed a little.'

Although the people of Kuchi and of its two neighbours, Bharuka and Agnideśa, spoke an Aryan language, still Sanskrit was adopted by the learned along with Buddhism. Plenty of fragments of Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts and bilingual texts in Sanskrit with its Kuchean and Agnean translations have been discovered in the region of Kucha and Karasahr. From these documents we can know that the names of the three kingdoms were spelt in Sanskrit as Bharuka, Kuchi, and Agni. The first was known in Chinese documents as either Ku-mo or P'o-liu-kia, Kuchi as Kiue-tse, Kiu-che, Kiu-yi, and the last as Wu-ki, Wu-yi, Yen-ki, A-k'i-ni. There is no doubt about the modern identifications of these places respectively with Uch-Turfan, Kucha and Karasahr.

As already said, of the three kingdoms, it was Kuchi which played the most important part in the history of Ser-Indian culture. Politically it was a very powerful state, often engaged in war with China for the preservation of its independence. The people of the country, the most refined and advanced in many ways, were instrumental in introducing many elements of Buddhist culture in China.

The people of Kucha had adopted Buddhism very early. According to the Chinese accounts there were nearly 10,000 stūpas and
temples in Kuchi in the beginning of the fourth century. The following quotation from the History of the First Tsin Dynasty will give a clear idea of the state of Buddhism in Kucha and of the influence of Indian culture on it in the fourth and fifth centuries:

'The kingdom of Kucha possessed numerous monasteries. Their decoration is magnificent. The royal palace also had standing images of Buddha as in a monastery. There is a convent named Ta-mu which had 170 monks. The convent named Che-li on the northern hill had 50 monks. The new convent of the king named Kien-mu had 60. The convent of the king of Wen-su had 70. These four convents were under the direction of Buddhavāmin. The monks of these convents change their residence every three months. Before completing five years after ordination they are not permitted to stay in the King's convent even for a night. This convent has 90 monks. There is a young monk there named Kiin-kiin (? mo) lo (Kumāra-jīva) who has great capacity and knowledge and has studied Mahā-yāna. Buddhavāmin is his teacher, but he has changed as Budhavāmin belongs to the Āgama school (Iīnayāna).

'The convent of A-li has 180 nuns, that of Lium-jo-kan has 50, and that of A-li-po has 30. These three convents are also under the direction of Buddhavāmin. The nuns receive regular Sikshāpadas; the rule in the foreign countries is that the nuns are not allowed to govern themselves. The nuns in these three convents are generally the daughters or wives of kings and princes (of countries) to the east of Pamirs. They come from long distances to these monasteries for the sake of the law. They regulate their practices. They have a very severe rule. They change their residence once in every three months. Excepting the three chief nuns they do not go out. They observe five hundred prescriptions of the law.'

Kumāra-jīva, referred to in the passage, was a great figure of the fourth century and stands as a great symbol of Indo-Kuchean cultural relations. His father, Kumāra-yāna was an Indian noble and had migrated to Kucha where he rose to the position of Rājaguru royal preceptor. He married Jīvā, the sister of the king of Kucha, and Kumārājīva was their issue. Kumāra-jīva also had another brother, Pushyadeva. After the birth of Pushyadeva, Jivā embraced the Buddhist faith and became a nun. Kumārajīva was then only seven years of age, but he was a boy of extraordinary intelligence. He was under the supervision of his mother and was initiated to Buddhist studies at Kucha. After two years his mother realised the need of taking him to India for further studies. At the age of nine, Kumārajīva accompanied his mother on the arduous journey to India.
and ultimately reached Kashmir. He was placed under various teachers of repute in Kashmir and had a thorough training in the Buddhist as well as in Brahmanical lore.

After his return to Kucha, Kumārajīva was soon recognised as the most competent teacher in the whole of Central Asia, and students flocked to him from various parts of the country. His reputation spread very far and soon reached the capital of China. He had various invitations from China to proceed to the capital, but refused to do so. Ultimately war broke out between China and Kucha. Kucha was reduced to subjection, and Kumārajīva was taken to China as a prisoner (A.D. 383). He died in China in 413. His life in China was one of intense intellectual and religious activities. He was a great scholar of Buddhist philosophy and was the first to introduce and interpret the Mādhyamika philosophy along with the works of Nāgārjuna and Aryadeva. He translated into Chinese a very large number of works from Sanskrit and they are considered classics in Chinese literature. In short the great personality of Kumārajīva was responsible for winning a high prestige for Indian culture not only in all the Central Asian states but also in China.

Kucha continued to be an important centre of Indian culture even after Kumārajīva’s time. Hiuan Tsang visited the country in the beginning of the seventh century on his way to India, and he says that there were more than 100 monasteries in the country with above 500 monks of the Sarvāstivāda school. He further says that the monks studied the religious texts in the language of India, and that they were extremely punctilious in observing the rules of their code of discipline. Hiuan Tsang also gives description of some of the principal monasteries of Kucha and the splendour of the local Buddhist art. While speaking of two monasteries called Chao-hu-li in the neighbourhood of the city he says: ‘The images of Buddha in these monasteries were beautiful almost beyond human skill’. ‘Outside the west gate of the capital were two standing images of Buddha ninety feet high, on each side of the highway. These images marked the place where the great quinquennial Buddhist assemblies were held, and at which the annual autumn religious meetings of clergy and laity occurred. The latter meetings lasted for some tens of days, and were attended by ecclesiastics from all parts of the country. While these convocations were sitting, the king and all his subjects made holiday, abstaining from work, keeping fast, and hearing religious discourses. All the monasteries made processions with their images of Buddha, adorning these with pearls and silk embroideries. The images were borne on vehicles’. About another monastery called A-she-li-yi (Āścharyavihāra) which was probably the largest in Kucha the pilgrim says: ‘This had spacious halls and artistic images of the Buddha; its brethren were grave seniors of long perseverance.'
in seeking for moral perfection and of great learning and of intellectual abilities: the monastery was a place of resort for men of eminence from distant lands who were hospitably entertained by the king and officials and people’.

Remains of literature and art demonstrate equally well that Kucha had fully adopted Indian culture. Two old sites near Kucha, Kizil and Kumtura, contain remains of old Buddhist cave temples. The sculpture and the frescoes reveal among other influences a preponderating influence of the Gandhāra school. There is evidence of the prevalence of Indian music in ancient Kucha. The country had sent on several occasions musical parties to the Chinese court and a number of musical airs which were introduced by them in China has been identified with Indian rāgas. Some of the names of Kucheans musical notes like shadja, pañchama, vrisha and sahaigrāma had been taken from India. The literary finds, we have seen, consist of Sanskrit texts and their translations in Kucheans. The Sanskrit texts belong to the literature of the Sarvastivāda school.

It has been already said that the kingdom of Agni, situated further to the east, also belonged to the same cultural zone as Kucha. The Sanskrit name Agni is found in the Sanskrit documents discovered from this region. The country has been identified with modern Karasahr. The country of Agni, although not so important as Kucha, still played a considerable role in the history of Ser-Indian culture. Hiuans Tsang gives a fairly clear idea of the Indian influences in Karasahr. The country, we are told, had Indian writing with certain modifications. About the condition of Buddhism in Karasahr the pilgrim says: ‘There are above ten Buddhist monasteries with above 2000 ecclesiastics of all degrees, all adherents of the Sarvastivādin school of the Small Vehicle system. Since as to Sūtra teachings and Vinaya regulations they follow India, it is in its literature that students of these subjects study them thoroughly. They are very strict in the observance of the rules of their order’.

In a place called Sorcuk near Karasahr relics of old Buddhist art affiliated to the Gandhāra school have been found in plenty. Buddhist Sanskrit texts along with translations in local language have also been found in Karasahr area.

Kao-ch’ang, further to the east of Karasahr, was at times recognised as an independent state, but it was generally a Chinese colony. Kao-ch’ang is modern Turfan. A number of old Buddhist sites of the eighth-ninth centuries have been discovered in this region at Idikutsahri, Murtuk, and Bazaklik. The art exhibits various influences, but the influences of Gandhāra school and of even Gupta school on the Buddhist sculpture is not quite insignificant.
The decadence of Indian cultural influence in Central Asia starts from the end of the eighth century. Continual war for supremacy between the Chinese, the Tibetans, the Uigur and the Arabs devastated the once prosperous and populous localities, and the ancient culture, about eight centuries old, became gradually feeble and ultimately disappeared.

The Central Asian states served as the most important agent for the transmission of Indian culture, religion, and art to China. Although there was regular contact between China and India by the sea-route in this period, still the Central Asian routes were in greater use by Indian scholars proceeding to China from North-India. Kashmir played the most important part in the history of relations between India, Central Asia, and China. The Kashmirian scholars were more familiar with the Indian Cultural outposts in Central Asia on account of the presence of a large number of their countrymen there. Besides giving shelter and help to the Indian travellers to China and Chinese travellers to India, the Central Asian states, specially Khotan and Kucha, made distinct contributions of their own in the interpretation of Indian culture in China. Among the translators of Sanskrit texts into Chinese there were many scholars of Central Asia, the most outstanding figures being those of Kumārajiva of Kucha (fourth century) and Sīkṣānanda of Khotan (seventh century).

II. INDIA AND CHINA

1. Indian Scholars in China

There were various routes connecting China with India in this period. We have already spoken about the two Central Asian routes between China and the Western countries including India. The two principal routes in this region, the northern and the southern, met on the Chinese frontier at a place called Yu-men. One of the largest Buddhist establishments in Asia, the ‘Caves of the Thousand Buddhas’, had been founded at a place called Tun-huang not far from Yu-men. It served as the resting place for all Buddhist pilgrims from Persia, Bactria, India, Sogdiana, Khotan, Kucha and other countries on their way to the Chinese capitals, either Lo-yang (Honan) or Ch’ang-ngan (Sian).

Another important overland route from India had also been opened in this period. It was the Tibetan route which was opened after the conversion of Tibet to Buddhism under its first emperor, Srong-btsan-Sgam-po, in the first part of the seventh century. A number of Chinese and Indian monks travelled by this route so long as relations between Tibet and China remained friendly. There was still another overland route, viz. the Assam-Burma route which was
not quite impracticable. It connected Eastern India with Yunnan and the various stages from Pātaliputra onwards were: Champā (Bhagalpur), Kajariā (Rajmahal), Puṇḍravardhana (North-Bengal), Kāmarūpa (Assam), Bhamo, etc. Hiuan-Tsang, while in Kāmarūpa, learnt that South-West China could be reached from there in two months.

The sea route to China had been opened in the earlier period, but it was in more frequent use from the fourth century onwards. This is indicated by the rapid growth of the Indian colonies in Indo-China and Indonesia. The most important of these colonies in this period were Champā (Annam), Kambuṭṭa (Cambodia), and Śrīvijaya (Sumatran). There were, besides, a large number of vassal states here and there owing allegiance either to Cambodia or to Śrīvijaya. In the beginning of the fifth century when Fa-hien returned to China, the sea route was not yet in frequent use by the Chinese travellers, but in the Seventh century, in the days of I-tsing, it was almost in general use by Buddhist monks going to South China from Ceylon and coastal regions of India, and for Chinese monks coming to India. The biggest centre of Buddhist learning in this period, Nālandā, was more easily accessible to the Chinese travelling by this route. From the end of seventh century till about the middle of the eleventh century the sea route came more and more in use than the land routes—the political disruptions in Central Asia from the eighth century being the most important cause.

The period under review is certainly the most important in the history of Sino-Indian Cultural relations. It can, however, be subdivided into three periods: (i) A.D. 300-600 when China was divided into two or three kingdoms—this was the most fecund period in Sino-Indian relationship; (ii) A.D. 600-900 when China was united under one Empire, that of the Sui and the T'ang—this was a period of consummation in cultural relations when Indian culture, along with Buddhism, was firmly established in China and became a part of Chinese civilisation. The end of this period also saw the decadence in the cultural relations; (iii) A.D. 900-1100—the period of decay, in spite of the arrival of a large number of Indian Buddhist scholars in China in this period. Buddhism was already a decadent religion—it was no longer that strong force which bound Indian and China together.

Although China was politically divided in the first period, the cultural and religious life of the people was a very active one. The contact with foreign countries, specially with those of Central Asia, was brisk, and Indian Buddhist scholars arrived in China in large numbers through Central Asia. The end of the fourth century is marked by the arrival of the famous Kumārajīva. He worked in
the capital of China, Ch'ang-ngan, till his death in A.D. 413. He was the greatest interpreter of Buddhism and Indian culture in China. He was responsible for starting a new epoch in the translation of Buddhist texts in Chinese. Previous translations of Indian texts were not satisfactory because the translators were not competent. Kumārajiva's acquaintance with various schools of Buddhist philosophy enabled him to render the sense of the texts more clearly and precisely. He had, besides, a great command not only of Sanskrit but also of Chinese. In addition he had a great literary gift. All this made his translations of Buddhist texts attractive and popular, and helped in the correct interpretation of Buddhism. He left behind a very large number of Chinese disciples, some of whom were people of great renown.

Kumārajiva seems to have attracted a large number of Kashmirian scholars, probably his personal friends, to China. Gautama Saṅghabhūtī came to China in A.D. 381 and worked up to 384. Gautama Saṅghadeva came in 384 and was in China till the end of the century. Puṇyatrāta and his pupil Dharmayaśas came about the same time, collaborated and Kumārajiva in the work of translation, and remained in China even after the latter's death. Buddhayaśas came in A.D. 406, collaborated with Kumārajiva till 413, and then went to South China. Guṇavarman, formerly a prince of Kashmir, came to South China in A.D. 431 by the sea route and spent his life there in translating Buddhist texts and propagating Buddhism.

The fifth and sixth centuries saw also a number of Buddhist scholars from other parts of India: Dharmakshema, who came in A.D. 414 and worked till 432. Guṇabhadrā, who came in 435 and worked till 468, Paramārtha, who came in 546 and worked till 569, Vimokshasena and Jinagupta, who came in 557 and worked till 600. There was a host of other scholars, too, who had come to China in the same period. Considerable parts of the Buddhist canon, mostly Sanskrit, were rendered into Chinese through the untiring zeal of these scholars. Interest was also created among the Chinese scholars themselves in the work, and they started to take part in the work either independently or as collaborators.

Some famous Indian Buddhist scholars came to China during the first part of the T'ang period. The first to come was Prabhākaramitra, a noted Professor of Nālandā, who first went to the kingdom of the Turks in Central Asia, and then proceeded to China in A.D. 626. He translated a number of Buddhist texts into Chinese, was highly honoured by the Emperor, and surrounded by a number of admirers. He died in China in 633. Next to come was Bodhiruchi of South India. He was a scholar of great repute in India and was living most probably in the Chālukya court. The Chinese envoy to the Chālukya ruler in 692 invited Bodhiruchi to China. He reached
China by the sea route in 693. A board of translators was officially appointed to help him in translating Buddhist texts into Chinese. He worked incessantly till his death in 727 and left behind 53 large volumes of translations. The great prestige he had won at the Chinese court is shown by the following event. It was on the occasion of his translation of the great Mahāyāna work Ratnakūṭa, which was started in 706 and completed in 713. His Chinese biographers tell us that the Emperor was present when the translation was made and took down notes with his own hand. It was a unique occasion on which all the chief functionaries and the queens and the other women of the palace were present. The board set up to help Bodhiruchi consisted of Indian as well as Chinese scholars.

Three great Indian Buddhist scholars also came to China in this period. They are famous in the history of Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist literature for having introduced a new form of Buddhism which is called Tantrayāna. The three scholars were Subhākara-simha, Vajrabodhi and his disciple Amoghavajra. Subhākarasimha, who claimed descent from Amṛtodana, the uncle of Śākyamuni, was in Nālandā. He came to China in 716 with a collection of manuscripts and remained in China till his death in 735. Vajrabodhi was the son of king Iśānavarman of Central India. He studied Buddhism at Nālandā and Valabhi and then went to South India where he was for some time the teacher of the Pallava king Nārasimha-potavarman. He next went to Ceylon, and came to China in 720, carrying presents from the king of Ceylon to the Emperor of China. He had a great personality and successfully introduced mystic Buddhism among the Chinese. He translated a number of mystic texts and died in China in 732. His disciple Amoghavajra, who was all the time with him, continued the work of the master. He came to Ceylon for a short while to collect new manuscripts, and worked incessantly in China till his death in 774. He has left behind nearly a hundred translations of Buddhist texts in Chinese. Amoghavajra was practically the last great Indian scholar to have come to China. We get a number of names of Indian scholars who went to China between 970 and 1036; they even translated a fairly large number of Sanskrit texts, but they are mostly shadowy figures. They were not interpreters of Indian culture in China like their illustrious predecessors. They represent only an effort to carry on the old tradition before the curtain was finally dropped on this glorious chapter of Indian history.

2. Chinese Scholars in India

The period under survey also saw a large number of Chinese scholars, some of them great personalities, coming to India with a view to establish closer cultural connections between the two countries.
This shows that it was not quite a one-way traffic. The Chinese themselves were taking a real interest in India and Indian culture. It was towards the end of the fourth century that a famous Chinese scholar named Tao-ngaern started impressing his pupils with the need of going to India to get a first-hand knowledge of the country and study the Buddhist religion under Indian teachers. The first among the enterprising monks was Fa-hien. Four other monks—Hui-king, Tao-king, Hui-ying, and Hui-wei—volunteered to accompany him. Another party which had started for India independently joined them on the way. The party consisted of Che-yen, Hui-kien, Seng-shao, Pao-yun, and Seng-king. They started on their journey in A.D. 399. Among these enterprising monks only two, Fa-hien and Pao-yun, succeeded in completing their journey and left accounts of their travels. Both of them came by the Central Asian routes to India, but Fa-hien returned to China by the sea route. Fa-hien spent more than ten years in India, visiting most of the principal Buddhist centres in the North. He studied Buddhism in various places, copied a number of texts with his own hands, and collected a number of other texts. He learnt Sanskrit, and on his return to China translated many of the texts into Chinese. The next Chinese visitor to India was Song-yun, an official envoy of the Empress of the Wei dynasty. He accompanied in 518 a Buddhist monk, Hui-sheng, who was charged by the Empress to offer presents on her behalf of the Buddhist monasteries in Uḍḍiyāna (Swat Valley) and Gandhāra (Peshawar). Song-yun and his party did not visit other parts of India and returned in 522.

The T’ang period saw the largest number of Chinese pilgrims in India. The first and the foremost was Hiuan Tsang who started on his journey in 629, and after visiting the important countries in Central Asia, ultimately reached India. He visited almost all the principal kingdoms in Northern and Southern India and collected information on such distant parts of the country as Nepal, Ceylon, Further India, etc. He made personal contacts with two powerful rulers of India—king Harsha of Kanauj and his ally king Bhāskara-varman of Kāmarūpa. He passed five years in the University of Nālandā in studying various systems of Buddhist philosophy and establishing personal relation with the great Indian teachers. He returned to China in 645 to publish the most complete account of India ever written in Chinese. His mastery over Indian language and literature also enabled him to give authoritative translations of a very large number of texts of the Buddhist canon.

Hiuan Tsang was followed by an official envoy Wang hiuan-ts’e who was entrusted with four different missions to India between 645 and 664. In 645 he was sent with ambassador Li Yi-piao to king Harsha of Kanauj. This was in return for a mission which king
Harsha had sent to the Chinese Emperor. Wang-Hiu-an-ts'o returned to China in 647 to be sent back to India immediately on a second official mission. On his arrival at the capital, Wang-hiu-an-tse found that Harsha had died and that his minister had usurped the throne. As noted above, the Chinese mission was ill treated by the usurper, and this induced Wang-hiu-an-tse to seek for Nepalese and Tibetan help to fight the usurper, who was ultimately defeated and taken to China as prisoner. Wang-hiu-an-tse came to India for the third time in 657 to bring back home an Indian Yogi who had been sent by an Indian king to the Chinese court to prepare for the Emperor the medicine for longevity. Wang-hiu-an-tse came to India in 664 for the fourth time to take back home a Chinese pilgrim named Huan-chao whom he had previously met in India. Wang-hiu-an-tse wrote a very comprehensive account of India which unfortunately survives only in fragments.

The Chinese texts have preserved the biographies of 60 other Chinese monks who came to India during the second half of the seventh century. Most of them were ordinary pious monks who came to pay homage to the Buddhist holy places and, thus, to acquire merit. The example of Hiuan Tsang had aroused in their hearts a fervent longing to visit India. Most of them came by the sea route and many lived in India for life. One of them, Hiuan-cho, is also mentioned in the official accounts. He came to India about 650 by the Tibet route, visited the holy places in North India, and ultimately settled in Nalanda for the study of Buddhist philosophy. He was met by Wang-Hiu-an-tse in the course of his third visit to India. He went back to China in 664 with the official envoy but was soon sent back to India by the Emperor to collect rare medicines for him. He came back by the Tibet route. On the completion of his mission he tried to go back to China, but it was impossible for him to do so, as all the overland routes had been closed. The Arabs had blocked the Central Asian routes and Tibet had declared war on Chino. He, therefore, stayed in India for the rest of his life.

The last great Chinese pilgrim to come to India was I-tsing. Next to Hiuan Tsang he was the greatest Buddhist scholar in China. He undertook his journey to India in 671. He did not come directly to India, but first went to Sriwijaya (Sumatra), which had become a very important centre of Buddhist learning in this period under the Sailendra kings. He passed a few years there studying Buddhism under competent scholars. The flourishing condition of Buddhism in Sriwijaya is reflected in his famous book Nan-hai-ki-kui-nei-fa-ch'uan, "Record of Buddhist Religion as practised in the South Sea Islands". I-tsing then came to India and stayed in the Nalanda University for ten years till 695. He returned to China with a collection of 400 manuscripts of Buddhist texts.
The last Chinese visitor to India of the T'ang period was Wu-k'ong. He was sent on an official mission in 751 to escort an ambassador who had come from the kingdom of Kapiśa to China. While in Gandhāra he was converted to Buddhism. He then visited the different holy places and passed a number of years in Kashmir in the study of Buddhism. He returned to China in 790.

After a long period of silence, there was a resumption of cultural contact on the Chinese side in the Song period. A number of Chinese monks came to India between 950 and 1039. Their names are preserved in the Chinese Buddhist Encyclopaedias, but we do not know much about them. Their names are also traced in a few Chinese inscriptions discovered at Bodhgayā. A good number of them came on an official mission to offer homage either on behalf of the Emperor or the Empress to the holy places in India, or to make other presents on their behalf to the Buddhist establishments, specially that of Bodhgayā.

3. Indian Culture in China

The activities of the Indian Buddhist scholars who had gone to China, and the Chinese monks who had come to India, between 300 and 1030, were extremely fruitful in the dissemination of Indian culture in China. China for all practical purposes became a cultural colony of India. It was not merely in the field of Buddhist religion and literature but also in all other spheres of cultural life: philosophy, art, sciences, medicine, etc.

The Chinese Buddhist literature, which is mainly a literature translated from Indian sources through the untiring efforts of the Buddhist scholars, both Indian and Chinese, through centuries, constitutes one-third of the ancient Chinese classics. Although an understanding of this literature requires a specialised study, still it had its influence on the development of Chinese literature itself. Some of the great translators like Dharmaraksha and Kumārajīva had used a popular language as the vehicle of their translations as opposed to the high-browed style of the literati. This inspired writers of popular novels in medieval times, and such novels, although condemned by the ancient literati, have been acclaimed as the real literature of ancient China by modern scholars. This popular Chinese literature also borrowed from the Buddhist story books many elements such as the method of delineation of stories, method of circling narration, the Buddhist ethics which had got mixed up with the popular belief, etc.

The Chinese Buddhist classics represent the most comprehensive collection of Buddhist canonical literature in any language. The Pāli literature represents the literature of only one school—the Thera
vāda school. The Tibetan translations represent mainly the literature of the Mūla-Sarvāstivāda school and later mystic schools. But the Chinese translations contain the literature of five Hinayāna schools such as Sarvāstivāda, Mūla-Sarvāstivāda, Mahāsāṅghika, Mahīśāsaka, and Dharmaguptaka, in addition to the entire literature of Mahāyāna including that of its later philosophical schools—Mādhyamika and Yogāchāra. Although the work of translation had started from the first century A.D., the greater bulk of the translation belongs to the period under survey.

The art, which developed in China, through Buddhism, in this period, is still her greatest legacy in this domain. There were three chief centres of Buddhist art in China—Tun-huang, Yun-kang and Long-men. There were, besides, numerous other centres, but they were less important. The relics of Buddhist art at Tun-huang are found in the famous Caves of Thousand Buddhas situated in the hills near Tun-huang in the province of Kansu. A series of over 500 caves, excavated at various times between A.D. 400 and 1000, constitute a sort of museum of Buddhist sculpture and painting of different ages. The early period represents predominantly the art traditions of India, of the Gandhāra school in sculpture and of Ajanṭā and Bāgh in painting. The later periods represent a gradual Chinese adaptation of these foreign traditions culminating in a purely Chinese Buddhist art. The Buddhist caves of Yun-kang and Long-men in North China also present the same features on a smaller scale. These Buddhist caves clearly bear the stamp of Indian artists in the earlier period (400-600), and historical records confirm it. We know definitely that many of the caves were excavated and embellished under the supervision of Indian Buddhists. The Chinese pilgrims like Hiuan Tsang and Wang-Hiuan-tse were particular in bringing from India pieces of Buddhist sculpture and also drawings with a view to supply models to the Chinese artists. The influence of such models is traceable in many Buddhist images in the ancient monasteries of China. Canons of Indian iconography were translated into Chinese for the guidance of the Chinese artists, and Indian principles of aesthetics were adopted in China. So far as Buddhist architecture is concerned, it is believed by many that the pagoda type of temples with superimposed stories was introduced from India. The vestiges of this type of temples are found in many parts of India. In various centres of Buddhism in Central Asia such temples were built in imitation of Indian temples. Temples of this type began to be constructed in China in the fifth and sixth centuries.

Indian music was known and practised in China in the sixth and seventh centuries. It was first introduced in the court by Indian musicians who had settled in Kucha. Later on, Indian orchestral
parties were directly invited to China to give demonstrations of their music. We are told by the Chinese historians that at one time Indian music became so popular among the princes and the nobles that it had to be banned by an official order.

Indian systems of medicine, astronomy, and mathematics were known in China and practised. Although the number of medical texts translated from Sanskrit into Chinese is very few, Indian influence on the Chinese medical system is clearly demonstrated by the occurrence of numerous Indian drugs in the Chinese pharmacopoeia. Numerous fragments of Sanskrit medical texts have been discovered from various parts of Central Asia, and it is very likely that such texts were also carried to China. Medicine being a practical science, it was not so much the translation of texts that was needed as the practical use of new drugs. We know with what craziness some of the Chinese pilgrims were in the habit of collecting rare medicinal herbs in India.

A number of treatises on astronomy and mathematics were translated into Chinese in the sixth and seventh centuries. The Chinese court, since ancient times, was very particular in preparing official calendars for the guidance of state rites, and used to have a permanent astronomical board for this purpose. It was towards the end of the seventh century that the Indian method of calculation was found to be more accurate than the old Chinese method. Hence there was a need for translating Indian astronomical texts. Under the T'ang, three Indian astronomers named Gautama, Kāśyapa and Kumāra were officially appointed on the astronomical boards, and several members of their families prepared official calendars for a number of years.

Thus, the Indian influence on Chinese culture was not a superficial one, merely exerted in the religious sphere by a band of zealous Buddhist missionaries. It went much deeper and created a strong feeling of sympathy and respect in the Chinese mind for India and her culture. It was much more stable than a political conquest and left indelible marks on Chinese life that have not been effaced even after long centuries of isolation of the two countries.

III. INDIA AND TIBET

Tibet emerged as a powerful kingdom in the beginning of the seventh century under its able ruler Sroñ-btsan-Sgam-po. Its earlier history is still shrouded in mist. The Tibetan people are composed of a number of nomadic tribes, called ‘Kiang’ in Chinese history, which were moving about on the western border of China and carrying on continuous wars with her even during the first few centuries of the Christian era. It was probably in this period that they
infiltrated into Tibet proper and founded principalities in various parts of the country. What relations, if any, they had with India during that period is not known, but it is quite likely that they had come in contact with Indian culture in course of their peregrinations in Central Asia. It is difficult to say whether the Kiangs of the Chinese history belonged to the same nomadic race as the Kâmbojas mentioned in Indian literature. A relation between the two is, however, not quite unlikely. Western Tibet, specially Ladakh, had contacts with Kashmir since very early times. It belonged to the Kushâna empire as is proved by the Khalatse inscription of the year 187 of Wima Kadphises. The wide popularity of the story of a mythical king Gesar (Caesar) in different parts of Tibet might be due to a certain amount of Kushâna infiltration in Tibet from the west under Kanishka, who was the only Asiatic ruler to have adopted the title of Caesar (Kaisara).

The early accounts of Tibet are mixed up with legends. The most reliable of them says that one thousand years after the Nirvâna of the Buddha there was the first king in Tibet called Gñah-khri-btsan-po. Twenty-six generations after him there was the king Khri Thothori-snan-btsan. In his time the law of the Buddha first reached Tibet. Fifth in descent from him was king Srong-btsan-Sgam-po, with whom all the great works of civilization in Tibet started. The legends connect the first mythical ruler Gñah-khri-btsan-po with the dynasty of king Prasenajit of India. This is evidently a later Buddhist invention. For all practical purposes we may believe that Tibet came in contact with India under king Thothori, who lived four generations before Srong-btsan and may be placed about A.D. 500. Buddhism might have made its way in certain parts of Tibet in this period, especially from Kashmir and Nepal. Srong-btsan was born in 569 and was on the throne from A.D. 622 to 650. He not only founded the first Tibetan empire by bringing together all the tribes, but was also responsible for many outstanding improvements. Tibet had no writing. So the emperor sent the son of Anu of the Thoûmi tribe (Thoûmi Sambhota) with 16 others to India in order to study the art of writing. On the completion of his study, Thoûmi Sambhota devised an alphabet for the Tibetan language consisting of 30 consonants and 4 vowels, based on the Indian writing, but adapted to the needs of the Tibetan language. Thoûmi also composed works on grammar which were highly honoured by the king. Buddhism was propagated in the capital, and monasteries were built at Lhasa and other places. The next important act of king Srong-btsan was to establish relations with Nepal and China. He married the daughter of king Amsuvarman of Nepal and also a Chinese imperial princess, and thus established matrimonial relations with the two neighbouring countries. Both the queens were Buddhists, and it was they who
patronised the spread of Buddhism in Tibet. The Buddhist church of Tibet in later times came to regard king Srong-btsan as the incarnation of Avalokiteśvara and his two queens as two Tārā, one the Green Tārā and the other the White Tārā. King Srong-btsan is also credited with great political reforms based on the fundamental principles of Buddhism. During the reign of Srong-btsan, Tibet played a very important part in the relations between India and China not only by opening a shorter route connecting the two countries but also by offering facilities to the Buddhist travellers.

The period immediately following the death of Srong-btsan is dark, and very little is known about the progress of Buddhism and Indian culture in Tibet. It is with the rise of king Khri-srong-lde-btsan (755-797) that we again hear of great activities in this direction. We are told by the most reliable account, in which legend does not play any part, that the king Khri-srong invited a great teacher named 'Lotus-born' (Padmasambhava) and Kamalaśīla and other Siddhas along with Vairochanarakshita, Nagendrarakshita of Khon etc.—in all seven men—who translated the teachings of the law. We are further told that during his reign Buddhism was firmly established in Tibet, and that other Paññītas, along with masters of translations, also translated the teachings of the Law. King Khri-srong is regarded by all sources as an incarnation of Manjuśrī. He became the most enthusiastic patron of Buddhism and adopted it as the state religion. His invitation to Padmasambhava and Kamalaśīla from India is told in other accounts with a good deal of supernatural colouring. The fact is that the new king wanted to patronise Buddhism and to suppress the old Bon religion which was the strength of the recalcitrant nobility. He found in Padmasambhava and Kamalaśīla very capable teachers to help him in that direction. The first systematic translation of the Buddhist canon started at this time. The seven teachers who helped the Indian scholars are known from other sources, too. They were Manjuśrī of Ba, Devendra and Tsan, Kumudika of Tan, Nagendra of Khon, Vairochana of Pa-k’or, Rin chen-chog of Ma, and Katana of Lan. They were the first seven Tibetan monks of the Sarvāstivāda school to be ordained by Padmasambhava. This shows that in spite of the great activities of Thoṇīmi Sambhota and the two Buddhist queens of king Srong-btsan in the earlier period, the progress of Buddhism, just before this period, was not very great, and Buddhism became an established religion in Tibet only under Khri-srong. The foundation of the famous monastery of Bsam-yas, modelled after the Mahāvihāra of Odantapurī, is placed in this period.

The immediate successors of Khri-srong were quite friendly towards Buddhism, but their reign is not characterised by any great
event in the history of Tibetan Buddhism. It was king Khri Ralpa-can (804-816) who was the next zealous patron of the new religion. In his time a great effort was made to continue the work of translation of the Buddhist texts. A number of Indian scholars of repute had come to Tibet in this period and helped in the work of translation. The Tibetan sources mention the following names: Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, Silendrabodhi, and Bodhimitra. Among the Tibetan scholars there were personalities of note: Ratnarakshita, Dharmaśila, Jñānasena, Jayarakshita, Manjuśrīvarman, Ratnendraśila and others.

Ral-pa-can was succeeded by the notorious gLandar-ma (836-842) who carried on a vehement persecution of Buddhism in collaboration with the Bon priests and nobles. Buddhism practically disappeared as a result of this persecution except probably in the western part of the country, and for about two centuries no special Buddhist activities are heard of in Tibet. It was in the middle of the eleventh century that Buddhism was again restored in Tibet through the efforts of the great Indian teacher Atiśa Dīpaṅkara. Atiśa was born about A.D. 980 in a royal family of Bengal, but he joined the Buddhist church at a very early age. He studied under great scholars in the Mahāvihāra of Vikramaśila. He was invited to Tibet several times, but at first turned down the invitation. He travelled in various countries, and we are told even went to Suvarnadvīpa, to study under famous teachers of that land. It was after his return from that land that he accepted the Tibetan invitation, though he was then 59 years of age. He started on his journey through Nepal accompanied by a number of his disciples, both Indian and Tibetan. He entered Tibet from the west and started his Tibetan campaign from the great establishment of Tholing. He then moved from province to province, converting people everywhere. In the course of his travels he visited the provinces of U, Tsang, and Kham. Dīpaṅkara lived in Tibet for the rest of his life and died at the age of 73 (c. A.D. 1053). This time the cultural conquest of Tibet was final. Buddhism was not to be ousted again through the caprices of its nobles and rulers.

The subsequent period saw the arrival of Indian scholars in various parts of Tibet in a continuous flow. Tibetan scholars are found in the great monasteries of Eastern India, specially in the Mahāvihāras of Vikramaśila, Odantapuri, Jagaddala, etc., and also in the great monasteries of Nepal, devoted to the study of Buddhist literature and engaged in its translation.
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