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# THE ROLE OF EARLY KOREAN BUDDHISM IN THE HISTORY OF EAST ASIA

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The general reader in the areas of the history of Buddhism or East Asian history may be forgiven if he were to underestimate the importance of the Buddhism of the three ancient kingdoms of Korea. There is neither a wealth of material for our imagined reader to draw upon, nor in the material available is the Buddhism of that period given its proper weight. What is more difficult to understand is the comparative slowness of the academic world to recognize the important role which early Korean Buddhism played in the cultural world of its time. It is the purpose of this paper to bring to the attention of the reader three facets of the history of early Korean Buddhism which suggest that in its own period the Buddhism of the ancient states exercised a significant cultural influence on the affairs of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism. These three facets are:

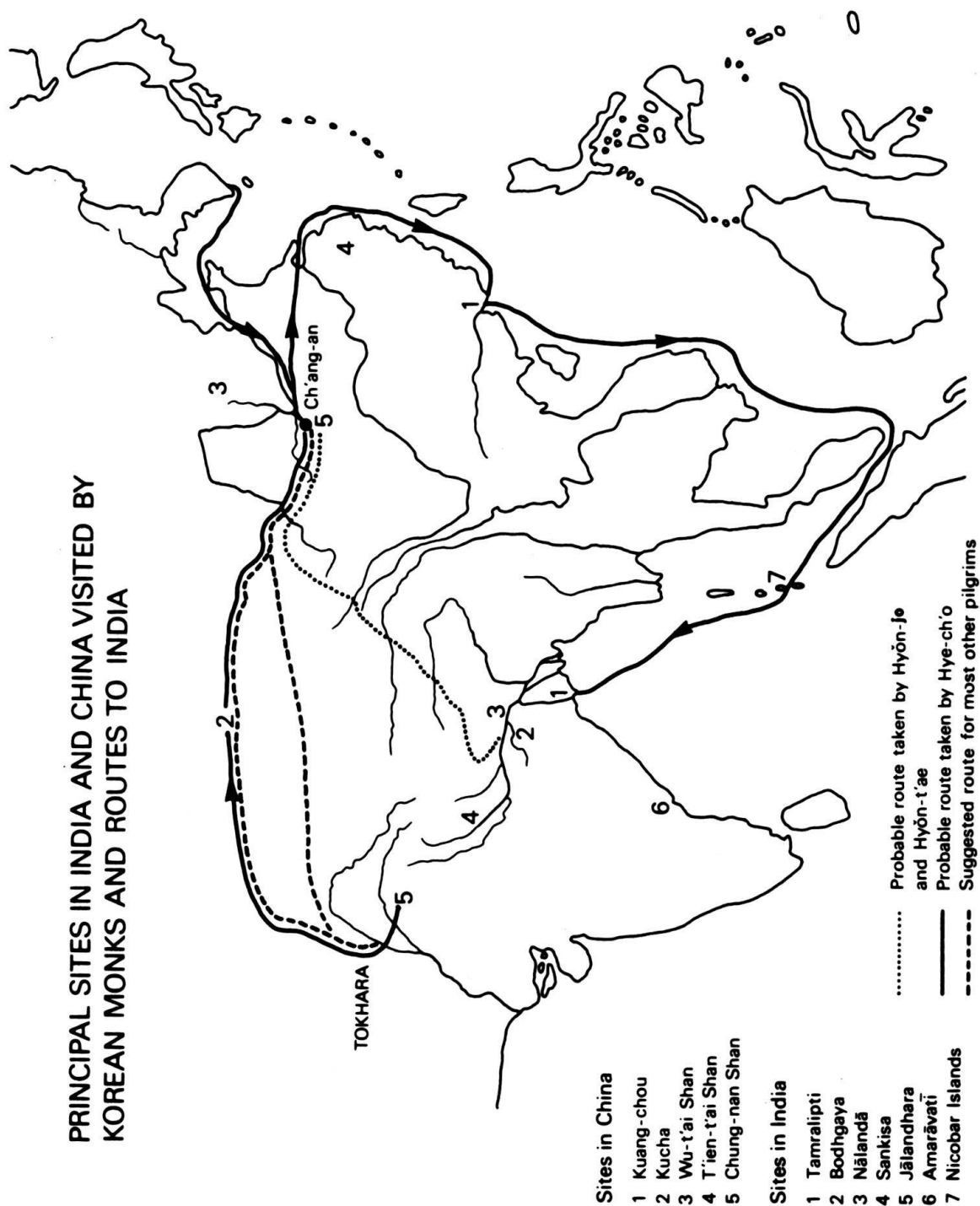
- a) Korean missionaries who participated in the establishment of Buddhism in Japan,
- b) Korean Buddhist pilgrims who journeyed to India,
- c) Korean Buddhists who played an active role in the Buddhist world of China.

By the middle of the fourth century A.D., Buddhism had entered into the states of Koguryŏ (trad. dates: 37 B.C.-668) and Paekche (trad. dates: 18 B.C.-660), only spreading into Silla (trad. dates: 57 B.C.-935) in the fifth century and not receiving official recognition there until the early sixth century. By the middle of the sixth century, Buddhism in all three of the ancient states had reached such a state of development that it had begun to exercise an influence over the spiritual life of areas beyond the Korean peninsula. We pick up our story at this juncture.

## *I Buddhist Missionaries to Japan*

Most writers who consider the subject of Buddhism in Japan make only passing reference to the role of Korean monks in the establishment of the

# PRINCIPAL SITES IN INDIA AND CHINA VISITED BY KOREAN MONKS AND ROUTES TO INDIA



new religion in that country.<sup>1</sup> Typically, these authors will begin by referring to the Buddhist *sūtras*, ritual implements, and Buddhist statues which were gifted to the king of Japan by King Sōng of Paekche (r.524–554) in 552. The impression is left that Korean Buddhism had little else to contribute to the development of Buddhism in Japan. Nothing could be further from the truth. Although all three states did have Buddhist contacts with Japan, it was Paekche which had the earliest and most sustained contact with Japan, and consequently, it was Paekche which had the most significant impact on the development of early Japanese Buddhism.

Joseph Kitagawa, in his discussion of early Japanese history, makes the important point that the arrival of missionaries from the continent did not mark the first contact of Buddhism with the island kingdom. The administrative apparatus of the Japanese government during the sixth century was in the hands of continental expatriates, both Koreans and Chinese. It is a reasonable supposition that at least a few of these men were practising Buddhists.<sup>2</sup> However, it was not until the arrival of missionaries in Japan that the serious propagation of the new religion took place. Paekche reached the zenith of her cultural development during the sixth century under the reign of King Sōng. Concurrent with this internal cultural florescence was the movement to extend Paekche's cultural and political influence beyond the bounds of its state. Because of the significant place which Buddhism had in the culture of Paekche, it is natural that the extension of Paekche's culture to foreign parts meant the evangelization of Buddhism.

Some Japanese sources refer to the receipt of Buddhist statues and ritual implements from King Sōng as early as the year 538, at least fourteen years prior to the date often given for the formal introduction of Buddhism. This would also have been some eight years since the Paekche monk and translator Kyōm-ik had returned from his sojourn in India. If this early record is correct, it is possible that King Sōng wished to share the benefits of this direct knowledge of Buddhism with the Japanese king. In the year 552, the king of Paekche made a similar gift to the king of Japan but this time included a letter which urged in the very strongest terms the adoption of Buddhism as the state religion. The king pointed out that

1 Trevor Ling, *A History of Religion East and West: An Introduction and Interpretation* (London, 1977), p. 239; Richard H. Robinson, «Buddhism in China and Japan,» R.C. Zaehner, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths* (London, 1977), p. 258.

2 Joseph M. Kitagawa, *Religion in Japanese History* (New York, 1966), pp. 23–24.



Buddhism was an abstruse doctrine which not even Confucius had fathomed, that Buddhist invocations were always answered and that it had spread from India, through China to the Korean peninsula. A few months before his death in 554, King Sŏng took even stronger action to spread Buddhism throughout the island kingdom. He sent the scholarly monks Tam-hye and To-sim along with sixteen preaching monks (*pŏpsa*) to Japan specifically for the purpose of implanting Buddhism there.<sup>3</sup>

This policy was continued by his successor King Wi-dŏk (r.?–597) who, in the year of his accession to the throne, sent another nine preaching monks to support the work of the monks already there. Again, in the year 577, King Wi-dŏk sent a large Buddhist delegation to Japan carrying with them a number of *sūtras*. This delegation represented the largest commitment of missionary personnel to date and included specialists in the Buddhist disciplinary codes, masters of *dhyāna* (Chin. *ch'an*) Buddhism, nuns, Buddhist exorcists, and various temple artisans. The latter had been commissioned to construct the Taiben-ō Temple. Sometime after the dispatch of this delegation, another group of temple artisans, workers in wood, stone, and tile, were dispatched to Japan. In 583, at the request of the Japanese monarch, the Paekche monk Il-la crossed over to Japan and in the following year King Wi-dŏk sent to his Japanese counterpart a statue of Buddha and another of Maitrēya. Later, in 588, the king sent a third group of temple artisans, including T'ae Mun, T'ae Yang-mal, and Ko Ko-ja.<sup>4</sup>

Up to this point the surviving records from the period would indicate that Japanese contact with Buddhism was dominated by its relations with the kingdom of Paekche. Perhaps as an attempt to counterbalance the increasing influence of Paekche at the Japanese court, both Silla and Koguryŏ began to take a more serious interest in the spread of Buddhism in Japan. The *Nihon shoki* (Chronicles of Japan) mentions that in 579, when King Chin-p'yŏng (r.578–631) of Silla sent a diplomatic mission to Japan, he included amongst the gifts for the king a Buddhist statue. Koguryŏ's presence in the Buddhist missionary movement was a more serious one. In 584, King P'yŏng-wŏn (r.559–589) sent the monk Hye-p'yŏn to Japan. This monk was responsible for the conversion of three influential women,

3 William George Aston, translator, *Nihongi* (Tokyo, 1896; reprinted Tokyo, 1972), II, 65–66. Kazuo Kasahara, editor, *Nihon shūkyōshi nenpyō* (Tokyo, 1974), p. 8. Kim Yŏng-t'ae and U Chŏng-sang, *Han'guk pulgyo-sa, purok yŏnp'yo* (Seoul, 1976), appendix, p. 20.

4 Kasahara, pp. 8–9; Kim Yŏng-t'ae, appendix, pp. 22–23.

the nuns Zenshin, Zenzō, and Keizen. In 588, Zenshin was among the first group of Japanese Buddhists to go abroad for further study. It is some indication of the development of Buddhism in Paekche that this convert of a Koguryō monk went to the former kingdom to strengthen her grasp of Buddhist doctrine. Of all the monks who arrived in Japan before the year 600, perhaps none was more influential than the Koguryō monk Hye-ja (?-624). He entered Japan in 595 and was given the honour of tutoring the young prince regent, Shōtoku Taishi (572-621). As this prince was responsible for the far-reaching political and cultural changes of the early seventh century, it is certain that the opinions and teaching of Hye-ja must have had a formative influence on the mind of the prince regent.<sup>5</sup>

The last great Paekche priest to enter Japan was Kwal-lūk, who came to that country in the year 602. He was reputed to be a profound student of the Three Doctrine School (San-lun tsung), and brought with him a large number of Buddhist *sūtras*, historical works, books on astronomy, geography, and the occult arts. He established himself at the Genkō Temple and was granted the title of monk administrator (*sōjō*) in 624. The *Nihon shoki* contains an interesting story about this monk. Kwal-lūk intervened to save the lives of several Japanese monks and nuns who had been accused of various offenses. He asked for their pardon on the basis that Buddhism did not have a long history in Japan and therefore there was an insufficient tradition to provide a proper background for their spiritual growth. It was shortly after this incident that Kwal-lūk was raised to the dignity of monk administrator. The last Buddhist cleric to go from Paekche to Japan before the demise of that state was the nun Pōm-myōng, who arrived in 655.<sup>6</sup>

Koguryō continued to have a Buddhist influence on Japan after the beginning of the seventh century. In 603, the same year in which Kwal-lūk

5 Kasahara, p. 9; Kim Yōng-t'ae, appendix, pp. 23-24; *Nihongi*, II, 96.

6 Kasahara, pp. 10-11; Kim Yōng-t'ae, appendix, pp. 25, 30; *Nihongi*, II, 152-153.

The Japanese term *sōjō* is based on the same characters as the Chinese term *seng-cheng*, which was used to describe a clerical administrator who had the oversight of the monks and monasteries in a particular region. The term first occurs in the Eastern Chin Dynasty (317-420) in the early fifth century and was widely used in the late T'ang (618-907) period. See Kenneth K.C. Ch'en, *Buddhism in China* (Princeton, 1964), pp. 254, 256. Edwin Reischauer says that of the three categories of general officers of the Buddhist church in Japan, *sōjō* was the highest rank. See Edwin O. Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary* (New York, 1955), pp. 74-75. He translates the term *sōjō* as bishop which this author feels is an inappropriate usage of a Christian ecclesiastical term. Consequently, we have used the term monk administrator which is suggested by Ch'en.

came to Japan, two monks from Koguryō arrived to serve in the island kingdom, Sŭng-nyung and Ŭn-ch'ong. Later, in 610, two famous artist monks, Tam-jing (579–631) and Pŏp-chŏng, came out to join them. Tam-jing is credited with the creation of the beautiful wall paintings in the Golden Hall (Kintō) of the Hōryū Temple in Nara. The work of these monks was somewhat diminished by the return of Hye-ja to Koguryō in 615 after some twenty years of service in Japan. Scholar monks, however, continued to come to Japan from Koguryō. In 625, Hye-gwan arrived in Japan after a long sojourn in China, during which time he had studied the doctrines of the Three Doctrine School under the Chinese monk, Chi-tsang (549–623). He was joined in 628 by another Koguryō monk, To-dŭng, who likewise had studied the Three Doctrines in T'ang. These monks, in conjunction with the work of the Paekche monk Kwal-lŭk, helped to establish the Three Doctrine School (Jap. Sanron) in Japan. Hye-gwan was granted the title of monk administrator after he had successfully prayed for rain, in response to a request from the Empress Suiko (r.592–628).<sup>7</sup>

Although Silla continued to send Buddhist imagery to Japan in 616 and 623, there was no significant clerical presence from that nation until after the wars for peninsular unification during the middle of the seventh century.<sup>8</sup> The great cultural ties which existed between Japan and Paekche are well illustrated by the numbers of monks and nuns from that kingdom who crossed over to Japan after the defeat of Paekche at the hands of T'ang and Silla. In the year 684, there is a record of some 23 clerics who made the journey, presumably to escape the political situation in the peninsula. The last reference in the historical records to a Paekche monk in Japan is in 688, when To-jang prayed for rain at the request of the Japanese monarch. This would seem to be one further indication of the continued influence of Paekche Buddhism in Japan.<sup>9</sup>

After the peninsular wars, Unified Silla seems to have taken the place which both Paekche and Koguryō held in the life of early Japanese Buddhism. In 687, for example, we read of the dispatch of Silla monks and nuns to Japan and the gifting of statues of Maitrēya and Avalokiteśvara. In 690, we learn that 50 monks from Silla are said to have crossed over to Japan. Whether the exact number of monks is correct or not, this would

7 Kasahara, p. 11; Kim Yŏng-t'ae, appendix, pp. 25–27; Sŏ Kyŏng-bo, *Tongyang pulgyo munhwa-sa* (Seoul, 1971), pp. 182–183.

8 Kasahara, p. 11; *Nihongi*, II, 246.

9 Kasahara, p. 17; Kim Yŏng-t'ae, appendix, p. 33.

appear to indicate that up to the year 700, the Korean peninsula continued to play an important part in the growth of Japanese Buddhism.<sup>10</sup>

## *II Korean Buddhist Pilgrims to India*

The travels of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims to India to view the sacred sites of the faith and to study the philosophy of Buddhism in its homeland are generally well known. What is less well known is the fact that there were a number of Korean pilgrims who made the arduous journey from the peninsula to the Indian subcontinent. We are familiar with names such as Fa-hsien, Hsüan-tsang (596–664), and I-ching (635–713), but how many have heard of Kyöm-ik (6th c.), Hyön-jo (7th c.) or Hye-ch'o (704–787)? Like their Chinese counterparts, these Korean monks had a significant role in the Buddhist affairs of their time.

The first Korean monk known to have made the journey to India was the Paekche monk, Kyöm-ik, who was in India during the early years of the reign of King Söng. He studied at Sankisa under the Indian scholar, Paedalt'a, and returned to Paekche sometime around the year 530. He brought back with him a large number of *sūtras* which the king commanded him to translate. He worked with a staff of 28 monks who produced 72 *chüan* of translated material and a further 36 *chüan* of commentaries on the *sūtras*.<sup>11</sup>

The next monk who is alleged to have made the trip to the subcontinent was Ŭi-sin, a Silla monk and founder of the Pöpchu Temple. If Ŭi-sin did in fact make the trip, it would have been during the late sixth century. There is no corroborating evidence for the claim.<sup>12</sup>

In the middle of the seventh century, the great Silla monk Hyön-jo went out to India. I-ching in the *Ta-T'ang hsi-yü ch'iu-fa kao-seng ch'uan* (Biographies of Eminent Monks of the T'ang Who Sought the Dharma in the Western Regions) states that he was Chinese, but Kak-hun (13th c.) in the *Haedong kosŭng chŏn* (Lives of Eminent Korean Monks) says clearly that he was a man of Silla. It is possible that Hyön-jo may have been either a long term resident of T'ang or have been born of Silla parents residing there. On his first journey, he was accompanied by two disciples,

10 Kim Yöng-t'ae, appendix, pp. 33–34.

11 Kim Tük-hwang, *Han'guk chonggyo-sa* (Seoul, 1970), pp. 103–104.

12 Sö, p. 184.

Hyōn-gak and Hye-ryun. He took a circuitous route via Central Asia and Tibet, eventually entering the subcontinent in the northwest at Jālandara, where he studied for four years. From there he travelled to Bodhgayā where he studied for three years at the Mahābodhi Vihāra, going from there to Nālandā University where he studied for a further three years. He returned to the T'ang capital but was hardly settled in before he was ordered back to India on a special mission for the Emperor Kao-tsung (r.649–683). Following the completion of this duty, he went back to Nālandā University and afterwards to the great South Indian Buddhist academic centre, Amarāvātī, where he died. He was accompanied to Amarāvātī by his student Hye-ryun who spent ten years at the Cincā Vihāra and later moved to the Gandhārachanda, a school for monks from Central Asia. Hye-ryun is sometimes known by his Indian name, Prajñāvarman. Hyōn-jo's other student, Hyōn-gak, died at Nālandā University at the age of 40 along with another Silla monk, Ku-bon.<sup>13</sup>

The middle of the seventh century was a very active period for travellers from Silla to India. We hear of at least three more monks who set out at this time. The first is Chol-lyun who settled in for a long period of study at Nālandā University and died there at the age of 70. He is known by his Indian name, Āryavarman. The second monk of interest to us is Hye-ōp who travelled to India via Central Asia, first settling in at the Bodhi Temple. He later travelled to Nālandā and is said to have died there at the same time as Chol-lyun.<sup>14</sup> Hyōn-t'ae was another Silla monk who made the pilgrimage to India. Rather than taking the long route through Central Asia, he traversed the more arduous diplomatic short cut through Tibet and Nepal. He studied at the Mahābodhi Vihāra for a while and then started on the return journey to T'ang. On the way, in T'u-yü-hun he met a Chinese monk who urged him to go back to India, which he did. Following this

13 I-ching, *Ta-T'ang hsi-yü ch'iu-fa kao-seng ch'uan* in the *Taishō Tripitaka*, vol. 51, item 2066, p. 1; Kak-hun, *Lives of Eminent Korean Monks: The Haedong kosŭng chŏn*, Peter H. Lee, translator (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 89–90, 92–94.

14 Kak-hun, pp. 89, 91.

Peter H. Lee uses Āryavarman as the Sanskrit reconstruction of the characters *a-ri-ya-bal-ma* given in the text as the name of this monk. If this reconstruction is correct, then it would be possible to reconstruct the Korean Buddhist name of this monk as Chol-lyun. The Sanskrit word *ārya* and the Pali word *ariya* mean holiness and were used as titles for certain Buddhist adepts. It is often rendered into Chinese by the character *chōn*. Likewise *varman* may be rendered by the character *ryun*. See Ernest J. Eitel, *Handbook of Chinese Buddhism Being a Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary* (Tokyo, 1904; reprinted San Francisco, 1976), p. 17.



second visit, he went back to T'ang. It is said that during his stay in India, he visited the city of Sankisa. Hyōn-t'ae was known by his Indian name Sarvajña-deva.<sup>15</sup>

According to Kak-hun, Hyōn-yu was the only known monk from Koguryō who made the pilgrimage to India. He studied in T'ang under the *ch'an* master Che, who took his disciple with him when he journeyed to the subcontinent. Due to the Tibetan incursions in Central Asia at that time, communications between India and T'ang worsened and the Korean monks found that they were unable to return home. I-ching adds a further note that Hyōn-yu is supposed to have gone on from India to Ceylon, presumably after the death of his master.<sup>16</sup>

In another work, the *Nan-hai chi-kuei nei-fa ch'uan* (A Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms in the Southern Archipelago), a record of Buddhism in Southeast Asia, I-ching notes that there were two monks from Silla who attempted to enter India in the late seventh century via the sea route. They died en route to India in northern Sumatra. Their names have not been preserved.<sup>17</sup>

The last Korean monk of any significance to make the journey was Hye-ch'o who lived throughout the eighth century. He first went abroad to study as a young man and settled in at Ch'ang-an. From there he travelled to Kuang-chou to study under the masters of esoteric Buddhism, Vajrabodhi and Amogha. They were so impressed by this young Korean monk that they urged him to go to India to deepen his knowledge of Buddhism. He did so, travelling to India by sea, stopping off at or passing through the Nicobar Islands and entering India at Tāmralipti, modern Calcutta. He did a pilgrimage to all the major Buddhist sacred sites, made a wide tour of the Indian subcontinent, and returned to T'ang via the land route through Central Asia in 727. Once back in Ch'ang-an, he began to translate an esoteric Buddhist *sūtra* with Vajrabodhi, and continued this work after his master's death with the master's chief disciple, Amogha. The latter's will claimed that Hye-ch'o was one of his six principal disciples. Hye-ch'o has left a record of his travels, the *Wang Och'ōnch'ukkuk chōn* (A Record of a Journey to the Five Kingdoms of India). This record shows that Hye-ch'o claims to have visited Sarnath, Kuśinagara, Rājagriha, Gayā,

15 Kak-hun, pp. 97–98.

16 I-ching, p. 8; Kak-hun, pp. 94–95.

17 I-ching, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago* (A.D. 671–695), J. Takakusa, translator (Oxford, 1896; reprinted Taipei, 1970), p.XI. Kak-hun also mentions these two monks. See Kak-hun, p. 96.

Vārānaśī (Benares), and Kanauj. In South India, he visited the Chalukya kingdom, in West India, the Valabhī kingdom, and in North India, he stayed in Jālandhara.<sup>18</sup>

The last known monk who is supposed to have gone on an Indian pilgrimage was the ninth century Silla monk, Wŏn-p'yo. He is said to have toured the sacred sites of India and on his way home to have had an experience of the Vairocana Buddha, Simwang, a figure prominent in the doctrines of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>19</sup>

It is interesting to note that although there were Korean travellers to India throughout the sixth to ninth centuries, the majority of journeys took place in the seventh century. This is of particular interest because it was at a time when both Indian and East Asian civilizations were flourishing. One notable development in India at this time was the growth of true universities, the greatest of which was at Nālandā.<sup>20</sup> The presence of these universities and academic centres would have been one more reason for the Korean monks to undertake the arduous journey to India. The routes by which they made the journey were of three types: the overland trade route via Central Asia and north-west India, the diplomatic route via Tibet and Nepal, and the sea route from Kuang-chou to Tāmralipti via Indonesia and Malaysia. Once there these monks studied a wide variety of texts including the disciplinary or *vinaya* texts, a *sūtra* devoted to the cultivation of Buddhist laymen, the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa sūtra*, and such abstruse works as the *Abhidharma-kośa-śāstra*.<sup>21</sup> The travels of these monks take on special significance when we realize that of all the monks whom I-ching mentions in his record of East Asian pilgrims, fully one-sixth were Koreans. Although most of these men died in either India or China, their lives are one indication of the flourishing state of Buddhism in the ancient states of the Korean peninsula.

18 Kim Taijin, *A Bibliographical Guide to Traditional Korean Sources* (Seoul, 1976), pp. 1–4; Yi Hong-jik, editor, *Kuksa taesajŏn*, 5 vols. (Seoul, 1973), V, 1729; Yi Hŭi-sŭng et al., contributors, *Han'guk inmyŏng taesajŏn* (Seoul, 1976), p. 1025; Yu Hong-nyŏl, *Han'guksa sajŏn* (Seoul, 1975), p. 1208.

19 Yi Un-hŏ, *Pulgyo sajŏn* (Seoul, 1971), pp. 657–658.

20 For a discussion of the Indian universities during this period see Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India* (London, 1962), pp. 29–30, 135, 327, 331–340.

21 Kak-hun, pp. 91–92.

*III Korean Monks in China*

Throughout the ancient period, Korean monks from all of the three ancient states went to China for the purposes of pilgrimage or study. Most people are familiar with the travels of Cha-jang (7th c.) and Ŭi-sang (625–702), two great figures of Silla Buddhism who journeyed to China. The number of Korean monks who did undertake the journey is perhaps best indicated by the diary of the ninth century Japanese monk, Ennin. The reader of this remarkable diary becomes aware that as Ennin travelled about, he met an unusually large number of Sillans, especially Silla monks. As Ennin was present in T'ang during the persecution of the Emperor Wu-tsung (r.840–846), he also witnessed the forced assemblage of foreign monks who were to be deported back to their homelands. It is an interesting fact of Ennin's record that the largest single group of foreign monks came from Silla.<sup>22</sup> Among these many Korean monks resident in China, there were a few who because of some superior talent exercised an influence over the affairs of Chinese Buddhism in their time. One might single out several men for this distinction, but this author would like to draw the reader's attention to four men: Sŭng-nang (5th–6th c.), Sil, In (both 7th c.) and Wŏn-ch'ŭk (613–696). One must surely include Hye-ch'o in this list, but as he has been discussed previously, we shall omit any further discussion of him here.

Sŭng-nang was a monk from Koguryŏ who was supposed to have been born in the Liaotung Peninsula at some time during the latter part of the reign of King Chang-su (r.413–491). He went at an early age to China where he studied the Three Doctrines as they had been developed by Seng-chao (383–414), a notable student of the great linguist and monk, Kumarājīva (344–413). Following his study of these doctrines, he also pursued study of the thought of the Hua-yen School. After some further journeys through China, he is said to have settled in at the Grass Hall (Ts'ao-t'ang) on Chung-shan outside of the T'ang capital. During that period, he came in contact with and taught Chou Yung who in later years wrote the *San-tsung lun*. He eventually left the Grass Hall and found his way to the Hsi-hsia Temple on She-shan where he succeeded the abbot upon the latter's death in the year 500. There is a story that the Emperor Wu of Liang (r.502–549) was so impressed with the erudition of the Koguryŏ monk that he withdrew his support of the Satyasiddhi School

22 *Ennin's Diary*, pp. 324–325.



(Chin. Ch'eng-shih), against which Sŭng-nang had inveighed. The emperor is said to have sent ten monks to study under Sŭng-nang, one of whom was Seng-ch'üan. This student in turn became the master of Fa-lang (507–581) who, as one of the chief proponents of the Three Doctrine School, contributed to the eventual demise of the Satyasiddhi School. In this manner, Sŭng-nang not only contributed to the establishment of the Three Doctrine School in China, but also had a significant role in the contravention of opposing doctrines. In this regard it is interesting to note that scholars consider that the Three Doctrine School was the principal school of Buddhist thought in Koguryŏ.<sup>23</sup>

Two lesser known figures from the Koguryŏ period likewise had an effect on the course of Buddhism in China. When the monk Sil decided to go to China for further study, he took his student In along with him. They entered the state of Ch'en (557–589) in southern China during the last turbulent days of the state. Although they had been given permission to travel freely throughout the empire, they found rather that they were caught in the midst of a civil war. As it was impossible for them to return through northern China to Koguryŏ, they fled to the kingdom of Nan-chao in modern Yünnan. An ancient legend claims that it was the hap- penstance of their seeking refuge in that kingdom which brought Buddhism for the first time to the region.<sup>24</sup>

Wŏn-ch'ük was born in 613 during the reign of King Chin-p'yŏng to a member of the royal house of Silla. At a very early age he was placed in a monastery and is said to have left Silla in 627 at the age of 14 to go to T'ang to study Buddhism more deeply. He was a very remarkable child who possessed extraordinary linguistic ability. It was said that from earliest childhood he was able to remember verbatim anything which was said in his presence. In later years he is said to have spoken Chinese with a flawless accent, and to have had a thorough grasp of Sanskrit. When he first settled in China he stayed at the Yüan-fa Temple in Ch'ang-an where he studied both the *Abhidharma-śāstra* and the *Abhidharma-kośa-śāstra*. In 676, when the Indian monk Śivahara arrived in Ch'ang-an, he brought with him a number of untranslated *sūtras*. Wŏn-ch'ük was one of a team of five monks who participated in the task of rendering them in Chinese. These translation tasks continued throughout the remainder of his life.

23 Kim Tong-hwa, «Koguryŏ sidae ūi pulgyo sasang,» *Asea yŏn'gu*, 2.1: 1–46 (June 1959); Kim Tŭk-hwang, pp. 100–101; Sŏ, p. 182.

24 Kim Tŭk-hwang, pp. 101–102.

Until his death, he was reckoned as a notable translator. When the Khotanese monk Śikṣānanda arrived in Ch'ang-an in 695 with a version of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, Wŏn-ch'ŭk was one of those responsible for its translation into Chinese. Although he may have returned on occasion to Silla, he resided for most of his life in China passing away there in 696 at the age of 83 at the Fu-yüan-chi Temple.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout his life, Wŏn-ch'ŭk was in contention with the chief disciple of Hsüan-tsang, K'uei-chi (632–682). This was the outcome of a curious incident involving the two monks which was still being related two hundred years later when Ennin visited T'ang. It was said that while Hsüan-tsang was explaining to his chief disciple the abstruse meaning of a treatise which he had just composed, the *Wei-shih lun*, Wŏn-ch'ŭk had secreted himself in the same room and was absorbing the content of the lecture. After Hsüan-tsang had finished his explanation, Wŏn-ch'ŭk hurried over to the Hsi-ming Temple and gave an exposition of the topic as if it were his own. It was said that for that reason Hsüan-tsang wrote a yet more abstruse treatise, the *Yü-chia lun*. From that time forward, K'uei-chi, Wŏn-ch'ŭk and their disciples were locked in state of confrontation.<sup>26</sup>

#### *IV Concluding Remarks*

In the preceding pages the author has attempted to show that there are several reasons why a reappraisal of the importance of early Korean Buddhism is necessary. We have seen that Korean Buddhists took a leading part not only in the propagation of Buddhism in Japan, but also in the establishment of a particular sect, the Three Doctrine School. Korean artists and artisans, especially those from Paekche, helped to formulate the artistic and architectural traditions of early Buddhist Japan. They had a role not only in the education of the Japanese Buddhist clergy, but also in the training of members of the aristocracy, such as the prince regent, Shōtoku Taishi. Monks from Korea had considerable prestige, one example of which was the ability to approach the throne with a memorial, as did Kwal-lŭk when he petitioned the Empress Suiko. Even after the demise of the state of Paekche, monks who came originally from that nation were held in high esteem, as seen by the Japanese monarch's request to

25 Yi Hong-jik, III, 1006; Yi Un-hŏ, p. 656.

26 Reischauer, *Ennin's Diary*, p. 272.

To-jang to pray for rain. Rather than being an insignificant bridge for Buddhism to spill over into Japan, the ancient states of Korea were active participants in the establishment of Buddhism in that country for over 150 years.

We have seen that Korean monks were well represented amongst those East Asian pilgrims who journeyed to India to pay their respects at the sacred sites of Buddhism and to study in the land of that religion's birth. Their numbers are of particular interest in view of the far smaller size of the Korean states when compared with China, and in view of the fact that there are no Japanese monks known to have completed the journey.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, these men upon their return to either China or Korea were held in great esteem, sometimes as translators, and at least in the case of Hyōn-jo, as an imperial envoy. That Korean monks were held in great esteem in China is also indicated by the fact that they took active and leading parts in the establishment of particular sects of Buddhism, were notable translators, and assisted in the propagation of Buddhism to areas to which it had not spread.

These facts would indicate to us that early Korean Buddhism, between the fifth to ninth centuries, exercised a considerable degree of influence on the Buddhist affairs of its time. Contrary to the impression received in most general works, the Korean states, not Japan, were the most important non-Chinese members of the East Asian Buddhist world.

27 Takakusa in his introduction to I-ching's *Nan-hai ch'uan* says that an imperial prince of Japan attempted to go to India in the year 881 but died on the way near modern Singapore. There were no other Japanese monks who were known to have attempted the trip. See I-ching, *A Record of the Buddhist Religion*, p. XLV.

## GLOSSARY

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| a-ri-ya-bal-ma                   | 阿離那跋摩       |
| Asea yŏn'gu                      | 亞細亞研究       |
| Cha-jang                         | 慈藏          |
| Chang-su                         | 長壽          |
| Che                              | 哲           |
|                                  | 晉           |
| Chin-p'yŏng                      | 真平          |
| Chi-ts'ang                       | 吉藏          |
| Chol-lyun                        | 尊輪          |
| chon                             | 尊           |
| Chou Yung                        | 周顒          |
| Chung-shan                       | 鍾山          |
| ch'an                            | 禪           |
| Ch'ang-an                        | 長安          |
| Ch'en                            | 陳           |
| Ch'eng-shih                      | 成實          |
|                                  | 卷           |
| Ennin                            | 圓仁          |
| Fa-hsien                         | 法顯          |
| Fa-lang                          | 法朗          |
| Fu-yüan-chi                      | 佛授記         |
| Genkō                            | 元興          |
| Haedong kosŭng chŏn              | 海東高僧傳       |
| Han'guk chonggyo-sa              | 韓國宗教史       |
| Han'guk inmyŏng taesajŏn         | 韓國人名大事典     |
| Han'guk pulgyo-sa, purok yŏnp'yo | 韓國佛教史, 附錄年表 |
| Han'guksa sajŏn                  | 韓國史辭典       |
| Hōryū                            | 法隆          |
| Hsi-hsia                         | 棲霞          |
| Hsi-ming                         | 西明          |
| Hsüan-tsang                      | 玄奘          |
| Hua-yen                          | 華嚴          |
| Hye-ch'a                         | 惠慈          |
| Hye-ch'o                         | 惠超          |
| Hye-gwan                         | 惠灌          |
| Hye-ŏp                           | 惠業          |
| Hye-p'yŏn                        | 惠便          |

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Hye-ryun                         | 惠輪          |
| Hyön-gak                         | 玄恪          |
| Hyön-jo                          | 玄照          |
| Hyön-t'ae                        | 玄太          |
| Hyön-yu                          | 玄遊          |
| Il-la                            | 日羅          |
| In                               | 印           |
| I-ching                          | 義淨          |
| Kak-hun                          | 覺訓          |
| Kao-tsung                        | 高宗          |
| Kasahara Kazuo                   | 笠原 一男       |
| Keizen                           | 惠善          |
| Kim Tong-hwa                     | 金東華         |
| Kim Tūk-hwang                    | 金得槐         |
| Kim Yöng-t'ae                    | 金煥泰         |
| Kintō                            | 金堂          |
| «Koguryō sidae ūi pulgyo sasang» | 高句麗時代의 佛敎思想 |
| Ko Ko-ja                         | 賈古子         |
| Ku-bon                           | 求本          |
| Kuang-chou                       | 廣州          |
| Kuksa taesajōn                   | 國史大辭典       |
| Kwal-lūk                         | 薩勒          |
| Kyōm-ik                          | 謙益          |
| K'uei-chi                        | 窺基          |
| Liang                            | 梁           |
| Nan-chao                         | 南詔          |
| Nan-hai chi-kuei nei-fa ch'uan   | 南海寄歸內法傳     |
|                                  | 奈良          |
| Nihon shūkyoshi nenpyō           | 日本宗敎史年表     |
| Nihon shoki                      | 日本書記        |
|                                  | 百濟          |
| Paedalt'a                        | 倍達多         |
| Pōm-myōng                        | 法名          |
| Pōp-chōng                        | 法定          |
| Pōpchu                           | 法住          |
| pōpsa                            | 法師          |
| Pulgyo sajōn                     | 量丑 什 仵      |
| P'yōng-wōn                       | 平原          |
| ryun                             | 輪           |

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| San-lun tsung                            | 三輪宗       |
| San-tsung lun                            | 三宗論       |
| Seng-chao                                | 僧肇        |
| Seng-ch'üan                              | 僧詮        |
| She-shan                                 | 攝山        |
| Shōtoku Taishi                           | 聖德太子      |
| Sil                                      | 實羅        |
| Simwang                                  | 心王        |
| sōjō                                     | 僧正        |
| Sō Kyōng-bo                              | 徐京保       |
| Sōng                                     | 聖         |
| Suiko                                    | 推古        |
| Sūng-nang                                | 僧朗        |
| Sūng-nyung                               | 僧隆        |
| Taiben-ō                                 | 大別王       |
| Tam-hye                                  | 曇惠        |
| Tam-jing                                 | 曇徽        |
| Ta-T'ang hsi-yü ch'iu-fa kao-seng ch'uan | 大唐西域求法高僧傳 |
| To-dŭng                                  | 道登        |
| To-jang                                  | 道藏        |
| Tongyang pulgyo munhwa-sa                | 東洋佛教文化史   |
| To-sim                                   | 道心        |
| T'ae Mun                                 | 太文        |
| T'ae Yang-mal                            | 太良末       |
| T'ang                                    | 唐         |
| Ts'ao-t'ang                              | 草堂        |
| T'u-yü-hun                               | 吐谷渾       |
| U Chōng-sang                             | 禹貞相       |
| Ŭi-sang                                  | 義湘        |
| Ŭi-sin                                   | 義信        |
| Un-ch'ong                                | 雲聰        |
| Wang Och'ōnch'ukkuk chōn                 | 往五天竺國傳    |
| Wei-shih lun                             | 唯識論       |
| Wi-dōk                                   | 威德        |
| Wōn-ch'ŭk                                | 圓測        |
| Wōn-p'yo                                 | 元表        |
| Wu                                       | 武         |
| Wu-tai-shan                              | 五台山       |

Wu-tsung

武宗

Yi Hong-jik

李弘植

Yi Hŭi-sŭng

李熙昇

Yi Un-hŏ

이운희

Yüan-fa

元法

*Yü-chia lun*

瑜伽論

Yu Hong-nyŏl

柳洪烈

Zenshin

善信

Zenzō

禪藏