

Buddhization of Chinese Culture: A Historical Overview

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Abstract:

The complicated tapestry of cultural exchange between India and China has been twisted over millennia, characterized by a dynamic interplay of ideas, practices, and artistic expressions. This spectacle, often referred to as the "Buddhization of Chinese Culture," summarized the profound influence that Indian philosophical thought, religious practices, and artistic traditions have exerted on Chinese society. The historical overview of this cultural exchange is not merely a version of one of the impacts of the civilizations over another one. It is a complex novelette of mutual adaptation, negotiation, and transformation that has shaped both cultures in remarkable ways. This is an ability to understand this Buddhization process which requires a multifaceted approach that considers historical contexts, socio-political dynamics, and the transnational flow of ideas.

The basic foundations of Indian Buddhist cultural influence in China can be traced back to the early centuries of the Common Era i.e. 206 BCE to 220 CE (China), particularly with the spread of Buddhism. As one of the most significant cultural exports from India, Buddhism served as a conduit for various Indian Buddhist philosophies, artistic styles, and even linguistic elements to permeate Chinese society. A trade route better known as Silk Route, is a network connecting the East and West not only for the exchange of goods furthermore for the transmission of cultural and religious ideas too. Consequently, it has interconnected the permission to Indian Buddhist monks, scholars, and traders to travel to China. These lead to bringing with them their beliefs, texts, and artistic traditions. This tradition has had an impact in China which leads to the translation of the Buddhist scriptures into Chinese language particularly from the period of Han dynasty (206BCE-220CE). Therefore, the era of the Han dynasty marked a climactic moment in this cultural exchange, laying the groundwork for the eventual integration of Indian Buddhist thought into Chinese intellectual and spiritual life.

Keywords: Buddhization, Silk Route, Historical transmission, Buddhist transmission, Ancient Asia, Chinese Buddhist Canon, original enlightenment, Buddhist scholasticism, Knowledge transmission, cultural assimilation, Religious diplomacy

Introduction

Buddhization concerns the approach for establishing the importance to Buddhism in character, culture, diaspora, cuisines, values and structure. It connotes the spread and acclimatization of Indian culture. Historically, the terminology defines the expansion of Indian culture beyond India particularly in Far East Asian countries. It can be historical, legal, administrative or corporate. There is evidence of the Buddhization of Chinese culture in different areas including religion, art, literature, and philosophy. In the realm of religion as well as in spirituality, the integration of the teaching of Buddhism into Chinese society, Chinese people led to the emergence of distinct schools of thought for such Chan Buddhism) popularly known as Zen practices in Japan). This intertwined Buddhist meditative practices with Chinese philosophical concepts. Such practices impacted a unique mark on the spiritual landscape of Chinese society in the contemporary times.

Before the arrival of Buddhism to China, Chinese historians also frolicked with cyclical views of history. The famous Chinese historians, Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-87 BCE) commented 'In the movements of heaven' divided into three phases as 1) a period of thirty years constitutes a minor transformation, 2) a period of one hundred years, a mid-range transformation, and 3) a period of five hundred years, a great

transformation. These three great transformations constitute an era as well as these eras were the formation of a complete cycle. These complete cycles or eras are marked by the rise and fall of dynasties, centered descending into moral corruption; it loses the mandate of Heaven, paving the way for new ideas. As Buddhism spread throughout China, it brought with it a profusion of Buddhist cultural elements, including art forms, architectural styles, and literary traditions. The adoption of Buddhist iconography in Chinese Buddhist art is particularly noteworthy, as it showcases the blending of aesthetic sensibilities. The depiction of deities, the construction of stupas, and the establishment of monastic communities all bear the hallmark of Buddhist influence. Furthermore, the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese not only facilitated the spread of religious doctrine but also enriched the Chinese language, introducing new vocabulary, loanwords, and literary styles that would have lasting impacts on Chinese literature.

The Buddhization of Chinese culture is not merely a historical phenomenon; it is a dynamic process that continues to evolve in contemporary times. In the modern era, the resurgence of interest in Buddhism, yoga, and Buddhist philosophy has led to a renewed engagement with Buddhist culture in China. This contemporary Buddhist influence is evident in the growing popularity of Buddhist cuisine, the practice of yoga, and the interest in Buddhist spirituality among Chinese citizens. Such cultural exchanges are facilitated by globalization, which has created new avenues for cross-cultural dialogues and interactions. However, the narrative of Buddhist influence on Chinese culture is not without its complexities and contradictions. As with any cultural exchange, the process of Buddhization has also been met with resistance and adaptation. The Chinese appropriation of Buddhist cultural elements often involved reinterpretation and modification, resulting in unique expressions that reflect the local context. This important scenario or circumstances raises important questions about cultural identity, ownership, and the dynamics of power in cross-cultural exchanges. The interplay between assimilation and resistance is a critical aspect of understanding the Buddhization of Chinese culture, as it highlights the agency of both cultures in shaping their identities.

Routes: Silk Route & Sea Route

There were several routes the Silk Road Route (Northern), the Central route via the Xiàng xióng or Zhang Zhung 象雄 (Tibet), the southern route via Burma and Thailand, and the sea route. The silk route was popular from ancient times. Various monks travelled in the Silk areas from South Asia to Central Asia to China. Most of the travellers were proficient in Chinese as well as Sanskrit or other Indic languages. The Silk route played a critical role in spreading Buddhism and it is a vast network for trading which connects the East, and West. Apart from trading, it was hypercritical in facilitating the travel of monks and the transmission of manuscripts and Buddhist relics. The Silk Road Route (Northern), Indo-European chariot peoples have penetrated as far as the borders of China. The area of the Silk Road, which is mainly arid today, was a succession of robust and thriving Indo-Greek Kingdoms. The reason this is more significant than the Sea route is that the great capitals of China were in the north, closer to the Silk Road. A Chinese silk dragon coat has been recovered from the grave of a chieftain buried in France in c.600 BCE. Furthermore, Chinese records recount that one emperor worshipped golden Buddha statues in c.200 BCE, far earlier than any statues that we actually have. Correspondingly, the earliest Buddhist temples we have from China were along the Silk route and near it in China. Thus, the Silk Route symbolizes overland connectivity and cultural blending across Asia and Europe, the Sea Route reflects maritime expansion, global trade, and imperial ambition. Both routes were instrumental in shaping the ancient and medieval world, influencing global history in profound ways. Their legacy continues in modern trade and international relations, exemplified by contemporary initiatives like China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Language Interactions

In ancient times, when Indian Buddhist monks travelled to China to stimulate Buddhism, learning the Chinese language was taken initiative during the first to seventh centuries CE. The functions and translations of the language from Sanskrit to Chinese vice-versa employed several techniques and were dependent on collaboration with local scholars and interpreters. Buddhist monks associated with Chinese Buddhist monks or literati who had sound knowledge of Sanskrit or prakrit language. These made up a translation team with the Chinese Buddhist monks whilst Indian Buddhist monks explained the meaning of the terminology and the Chinese collaborator rendering it into proper literacy. Ancient Indian Buddhist monks relied on interpreters and these interpreters usually had a notion about the languages as such Sanskrit or Pāli and Chinese. Those who were proficient in these languages were also from the central Asian monks as well as laypersons demonstrated as linguistic bridges. Many Indian Buddhist monks spent many years in China, especially for the setup of the monastic institution where gradually they picked up spoken and written Chinese language. In China, it was the custom to know the language before the interaction with patrons, emperors, and lay followers. Thus, Indian Buddhist monks actively studied Chinese language as well as the Confucian classics to learn about the customs and the easier way to communicate Buddhist ideas. And also, Indian Buddhist monks perhaps learned the language from the local monks to grasp Chinese Characters and grammar. Consequently, success in transmitting Buddhism depended heavenly on their ability to communicate with Chinese monks and adapt Buddhist teachings to local language and culture.

Notable Indian Buddhist Scholars

Many prominent Indian Buddhist monks played critical roles in translating Buddhist texts into Chinese language as well as the monumental compilation of Buddhist scriptures. This underwent extensive translation efforts for over several centuries. It approximated under the range of 1400 texts during the early periods of Buddhist transmission. The very early translation efforts started during the Han dynasty 漢朝 (206BCE-220CE). A notable scholar played an important role in cultural exchange between India and China. They became highly influential figures in Chinese history.

Kāśyapa Mātāṅga (?-73CE) and Dharmaratna (?-?)

He was also known by different names such as Jia Yemoteng 迦葉摩騰 or Jia Shemoteng 迦攝摩騰, Zhu Yemoteng 竺葉摩騰 Zhu Shemoteng 竺攝摩騰. He was not only respected as a translator but also as a spiritual pioneer who helped bridge between Indian and Chinese religious thoughts. Kāśyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmaratna Zhu Fālán 竺法蘭, these both Indian Buddhist monks travelled from India to China in 67 CE. on the request of an invitation by the Emperor Ming 明帝(Han dynasty 漢朝) at luòyáng 洛陽. Traditionally, they were the first transmission of Buddhism in China. These two monks had translated the manuscript Sutra in Forty-two Sections Si shi er zhang jing 四十二章經. Their translation work helped lay the groundwork for the spread of Mahāyāna school of Buddhism in East Asia. And also, the White Horse Temple Báimǎ Sì 白馬寺 in luòyáng were considered the first Buddhist temple in China. According to the Iwanami dictionary, the name given Dharmaratna and Lancaster's Catalogue mentioned Dharmarakṣa, abbreviated as falan 法蘭 (竺法蘭), said to be tonsured at a young age and to have quickly become deeply versed on Buddhist literature. He had translated the si shi er zhang jing 四十二章經, the Buddha-carita-saṃgrāha (Sutra of the Collection of the Past Activities of the Buddha) Fo ben xing ji jing 佛本行集經. Simultaneously, Kāśyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmaratna had done the translation texts in China

particularly at luòyáng which were lost in later centuries and only the sutra of the forty two sections remained today. And some of other original Buddhist scriptures were lost such as the Sutra of Dharmic-Sea Repertory 法海藏經, Sutra of the Buddha's Deeds in His Reincarnations 佛本行經, Sutra of Terminating Knots in the Ten Holy Terras 十地斷結經, Sutra of the Buddha's Reincarnated Manifestations 佛本生經, and Compilation of the Divergent Versions of the Two Hundred and Sixty Precepts 二百六十戒合異.

Dharmaratna was also known as Zhu Fālán竺法蘭 and was active in the first century CE during the Eastern Han dynasty in China. He was an Indian Buddhist monk and played a foundational role in the introduction of Buddhism in China, along with Kāśyapa Mātāṅga. He was honored as one of the pioneers of Chinese Buddhism. Along with Kāśyapa Mātāṅga, he helped plant the roots of Buddhism to grow to become a major force in Chinese religion, philosophy, and culture.

Kumārajīva (344 CE-413CE)

In Chinese history, Kumārajīva Jiūmóluóshí 鳩摩羅什 was one of the most influential Buddhist monks and translators. His father Kumārāyana was Kashmiri and mother jīva, a princess of Karashahr. He was a child prodigy, raised in a Buddhist environment. He was born in Kucha and later went to India and mastered the Sanskrit texts. He had gained deep knowledge in both Buddhist philosophy and languages in India. In his early age, he studied first Hīnayāna Buddhism and later moved toward the Mahāyāna teachings. He was well known for his profound understanding of Buddhist philosophy and also he was fluent in Sanskrit and Chinese languages. The uniqueness in his translations was elegant, readable which had marked the lasting impact on Chinese Buddhism. He was brought to Chang' an (Modern Xi'an) by the order of the ruler Yao xing 姚興 (394CE–416CE) of the later Qin dynasty. He stayed at the building of the Cǎotáng Sì 草堂寺 temple (monastery) and translated various Buddhist texts. Kumārajīva's chief assistants in translation was Huiguan 慧觀, later died in 424 CE. Kumārajīva as an excellent translator of Buddhist scriptures, besides that he also had his own theoretical works particularly the Dhammapada, his translation activities in the Garden of Ease gave him a large number of students, which later, led a large team of scholars and monks to translate various Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese language. Later, the four chief disciples of Kumārajīva named Daosheng 道生 (the Indian Buddhajīva), Sengzhao 僧肇, Daorong 道融, and Sengrui 僧叡 became in China. He was noted for the number of his translations and commentaries. His translation works were identified in some of the eight hundred monasteries. His major translation work included Saddharmapūṇḍarīka Sūtra (Lotus Sutra) – 妙法蓮華經; Vimalakīrti Nirdeśa Sūtra – 維摩詰所說經; Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines – 小品般若經; Amitābha Sūtra – 佛說阿彌陀經; Madhyamaka texts, especially works attributed to Nāgārjuna.

There was the famous term used “Tongue-unconsumed” shé bù làn 舌不爛, it was referred to Kumārajīva's tongue that after his body was cremated after his death, his tongue was said to have remained unconsumed by the flames. This was a miraculous scene as it symbolized the remarkable power and naturalness of his speech, teaching and translations of Buddhist scriptures. Thus, his tongue represented his ability to convey profound teachings accurately and eloquently.

Bodhidharma

Bodhidharma putidamo 菩提達磨 said to be a south Indian possibly Tamil monk. The original name was Bodhitara púti dá mó 菩提多羅. He was the third son of a king in the Pallava dynasty in India. He had travelled to China around the fifth or sixth century CE (around 520CE) to propagate the essence of

Mahāyāna Buddhism. He emphasized the practice of Meditation i.e. dhyāna/ Chan with the help of ritual or textual sources. Bodhidharma went to Southern China on the request of the emperor Wu liang for the good merits of building temples and to support Buddhism over there. Therefore, Bodhidharma crossed the Yangze river 長江 from Nanjing 南京 on his rush-leaf boat or the snapped-off reed Zhé lú 折蘆. This had given information that Bodhidharma came to China via sea route during the sixth century CE. When he arrived exactly at Guang dong 廣東 bringing (it is said) that sacred begging-bowl or the alms known as pātra bō duō 鉢多 or bō duō luó 鉢多羅. After meeting the emperor Wu of Liang dynasty, he went to loyang in Northern China of the emperor Wei of the northern dynasty. Thereafter, he went to shaolin monastery 少林寺, a hill on the sung shan 嵩山 where Bodhidharma setup his infra 少林寺. He sat with his face facing towards the wall for nine years in the Shaolin temple situated at Dēngfēng shì county 登封市, Henan Province. His silent meditation for nine years, received the title of wall gazing Brahman Bì guān póluómén 壁觀婆羅門 even though he was a akṣatriya. From there onwards, he was known as Damo 達 in China. And also, Bodhidharma was known by the name as Pierced-ear monks 穿耳僧 or the ear-pierced guest 穿耳客.

Bodhidharma was the 28th Patriarch as well as the founder of Chan school of thought Chánzōng 禪宗 in China. This school is based on Intuition or Mysticism. The methods were to sit in dhyāna 坐禪, i.e. abstract meditation, fixed abstraction, contemplation. Normally, the methods of mysticism as found in sutra 1) dhyānas as tathāgata dhyāna; and 2) traditional dhyāna known to be as the intuition method brought to China by him. This is called as Zūshī chán 祖師禪 meaning "ancestors" or "patriarchs". This refers to meditation or meditative states. In the context of Chan or Zen Buddhism, it signifies a school of Buddhism that emphasizes direct experience and insight, often through meditation, rather than reliance on scriptures or rituals. The dhyāna 禪門 or the intuition school personally propagated by Bodhidharma from mind to mind as an esoteric teachings.

Bodhidharma did not approve Dàzǔ Huikě 大祖慧可 his successor at first but when Huike cut off his arm in appeal to be received as his disciple, and inherited his mantle and alm-bowl. When Bodhidharma accepted Dàzǔ Huikě and Dàzǔ Huikě became the successor of Bodhidharma. Later on it was passed on to Sengcan 僧璨, Daoxin 道信, Hongren 弘忍, Huinang 慧能, and Shenxiu 神秀. The sect was divided into two latter southern and northern sects. The Southern sect became prominent and spread into Nanyue 南嶽 succeeded by Mazu 馬祖 and Qingyuan 青原 succeeded by Shitou 石頭. Later, during the circa 700 CE, these two schools were separated into two parts: the southern sect under the Hui-nang considered being the “orthodox Intuition school” whereas the northern sect under the Shen-xiu were the “gradual” method of enlightenment.

After the death of Bodhidharma, his body was buried in a place known as Bear's ear mount 熊耳山. The death anniversary of Bodhidharma is called Memorial Day Daruma-ki 達磨忌. On the fifth of October a ceremony is held in honor of Bodhidharma in China.

Dharmakṣema (385-433CE)

According to his biography in the Chū sānzàng jījī meaning collected Records Concerning the Tripitaka 出三藏記集, Dharmakṣema Tánmó-chèn 曇無讖 became a disciple of Dharmayaśas Dámó yē shē 達磨耶舍 at the age of six. Later, he studied with a master known as Baitou 白頭. The master Baitou had given him the copy of the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa sutra.

Dharmakṣema converted this text into Mahāyāna doctrine. In India, Dharmakṣema in his childhood times, was skilled in spells and magic i.e. getting water from stones!. He enjoyed a period of patronage from an unnamed Indian king, but became intrigued when he started to lose favor, and when he was exposed, he

was forced to flee to Kucha. And from Kucha, he went to Guzhang (Guzang) 古箏, China. In 420 CE, Dharmakṣema worked under the patronage of Juqu Mengxun 沮渠蒙遜 (368–433CE) and translated a dozen Buddhist scriptures over several years. And Dharmakṣema realized that Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra was not a complete text. So, he went back to India to find a complete version. Whilst he was there, his mother died. Due to this, he delayed back to Guzhang (Guzang) and on the way back to China, he found the further version of the Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra at Khotan. Thus, he translated this text into a longer version which was known as the “Northern” version of the text. Although, he wanted again back to India to find out more portion of Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa sūtra. However, he had been assassinated en route by the Jugu Mengxun’ men. This was due to the fear that Dharmakṣema would fall into the hand of emperor’s rival Emperor Taiwu 太武帝 (Tuoba Tao 拓拔焷) of the Northern Wei (423-452 CE) as Dharmakṣema’s magical power could then use against Emperor Jugu. In China, Dharmakṣema was known to be a prolific translator of the Buddhist scriptures. His translations were especially given the impact for the introduction of Mahāyāna and the concept of Tathāgatagarbha sūtra to Chinese Buddhism. Some of the major texts which Dharmakṣema translated in 421 CE were Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra 大般涅槃經- One of his most significant translations, ; Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra 金光明經 - An important Mahayana sūtra; Bodhisattva Precepts Sūtra (菩薩戒經) - A text on Bodhisattva precepts; Lalitavistara Sūtra 方廣大莊嚴經 - A text detailing the life of the Buddha; Vajra Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra 金剛般若波羅蜜經 - An important Prajñāpāramitā text; Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra 入楞伽經 – perhaps this translation was attributed to Guṇabhadra and some sources credit Dharmakṣema with an earlier translation; Śūraṅgama Samādhi Sūtra (首楞嚴三昧經) - A Mahāyāna sūtra on meditation; and Mahāmegha Sūtra 大方等無想經 - A Mahāyāna sūtra.

Paramārtha (499-569 CE)

Paramārtha Zhēndi 真谛 or Bō luó mò tuó 波羅末陀 was the Indian Buddhist monk from Ujjain, India in 499CE. The original name was known as Kulanātha Jūluó nà tuó 拘羅那陀 in India. He is commonly referred to as 'Trepitaka Paramārtha Zhēndi sānzàng’ 眞諦三藏. He was known as one of the four great translator in Chinese Buddhist History (Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什, Xuan zang 玄奘, and Amoghavajra 不空). He was an influential Indian Buddhist monk, translator and scholar to introduce Yogācāra teachings and tathāgata garbha texts to China in 546CE. This was the period of the Liang dynasty. He was invited by the emperor Wu of liang (464-549CE) and later supported by the Chen dynasty (557-589 CE) after the decline of liang dynasty. Paramārtha had done the numerous translation works from Sanskrit to Chinese languages around 64 into 278 fascicles. The uniqueness of these doctrines were that he highlighted the traditional philosophical concept on “immaculate consciousness” amalavijñāna amoluoshi 阿摩羅識, “original awakening” benjue 本覺 and Buddha nature. Paramārtha had done the major translation texts and later added into Taishō tipitaka (“T” here stands for Taishō volume): Arthavighuṣṭa sūtra 廣義法門經 T97; Vajracchedikā prajñāpāramitā 金剛般若波羅蜜經 T237; Four chapters of the Suvarṇabhāṣottama-sūtra 合部金光明經 T664; Wushangyi jing 無上依經 (Anuttarāśraya-sūtra?) T669; Saṃdhinirmocana-sūtra 解節經 T677; Lü ershier mingliao lun 律二十二明了論 T1461; Fo Apitan jing chujia xiang pin 佛阿毘曇經出家相品 T1482; Niepan jing ben you jin wu jie lun 涅槃經本有今無偈論 T1528; Yijiao jing lun 遺教經論 T1529; Abhidharmakośa-bhāṣya 阿毘達磨俱舍釋論 T1559; Jueding zang lun 決定藏論 T1584; Zhuanshi lun 轉識論 T1587; Triṃśikā (Mahāyāna vijñaptimātratāsiddhi) 大乘唯識論 T1589; Mahāyānasamgraha 攝大乘論 T1593; Mahāyānasamgrahabhāṣya 攝大乘論釋 T1595; Madhyāntavibhāga 中邊分別論 T1599; Foxing lun 佛性論 T1610; Shiba kong lun 十八空論 T1616; San wuxing lun 三無性論 T1617; Xianshi lun 顯識論 T1618; Alambanaparīkṣā 無相思塵論

T1619; Hastavālaprakaraṇa 解捲論 T1620; Rushi lun fan zhinan pin 如實論反質難品 T1633; Suixiang lun jie shiliu di yi 隨相論解十六諦義 T1641; Lokasthānābhidharma-śāstra 立世阿毘曇論 T1644; Si di lun 四諦論 T1647; Ratnāvalī 寶行王正論 T1656; Dasheng qi xin lun 大乘起信論 T1666; Da zong di xuan wen ben lun 大宗地玄文本論 T1669; Samayabhedoparacanacakra 十八部論 T2032; Samayabhedoparacanacakra 部執異論 T2033; Posoupandou fashi zhuan ('Biography of the Dharma Master Vasubandhu') 婆藪槃豆法師傳 T2049; Sāṃkhyakārikā (and commentary) 金七十論 T2137.

Narendrayaśas (517-589 CE)

Narendrayaśas Nà lián tí yé shě 那連提耶舍, also perhaps known as “Trepitaka long ears Cháng'ěr Sānzàng 長耳三藏. He was from the Oḍḍiyāna 烏場國 in northern India, and before he came to China, he took a Buddhist pilgrimage around India as well as Sri Lanka. He spent the time at Róurán 柔然 (existed from the mid-4th to the mid-6th centuries. It was controlled much of present-day Mongolia, northern China, and southern Siberia), but in 552 CE, Narendrayaśas moved to China when Róurán were annihilated by the Göktürks or Turkic 突厥. In 556 CE, he arrived in Ye 鄴, where he worked at the Tian pingsi temple 天平寺 from 557-568 CE. Narendrayaśas again picked up the Buddhist dress and wore his monastic robe during the persecution of Buddhism in Northern Zhou. During the Sui dynasty, Narendrayaśas was recalled to translation service from 582 CE to 585 CE., where he stayed and was a resident in Daxing shansi 大興善寺 in Chang'an. Here, he became the most prominent translator and the translation of texts had been brought by Baoxian 寶暹, Daosui 道邃, Sengtān 僧曇 and others (these people left the northern Qi). Narendrayaśas was remembered as one of the key Indian translators of early medieval Chinese Buddhism. One of the most important methods used by him was to link the gap between Indian and Chinese Buddhist traditions, fostering greater understanding of original sources. He contributed to the spread of Mahāyāna doctrines through thoughts and practice in China such as Chinese school of thought named Tian tai 天台 and Huayan 華嚴 by making Indian Mahāyānist philosophy accessible in China. In his translation work, he emphasized the Bodhisattva practices, ethics and meditation in respect to Mahāyāna texts. Narendrayaśas works ascribed in the Taishō named: Pitaputrasamāgama in the Ratnakūṭa 菩提見寶會 T 310(16); Mahākaruṇāpūṇḍarīka-sūtra 大悲經 (T 380); Lianhua mian jing 蓮華面經 (T 386); [Mahāvaiṣṭva-mahā]saṃnipāta-sūtra 大方等大集經 T 397 (four works collected); Sūryagarbha-vaipulya-sūtra 日藏分 T 397(14); Candragarbha-vaipulya-sūtra 月藏分 T 397(15); Tathāgataśrīsayama 須彌藏分 T 397(16); Shifang pusa pin 十方菩薩品 T 397(17); Bai foming jing 百佛名經 (T 444); Śrīgupta-sūtra 德護長者經 (T 545); Jiangu nǚ jing 堅固女經 (T 574); Samādhirāja[candrapradīpa-sūtra] 月燈三昧經 (T 639); Li zhuangyan sanmei jing 力莊嚴三昧經 (T 647); Pradīpadānīya-sūtra 施燈功德經 (T 702); Mañjuśrī-vikrīḍita-sūtra 大莊嚴法門經 (T 818); Mahāmegha-sūtra 大雲輪請雨經 (T 991); Abhidharmahṛdaya 阿毘曇心論經 (T 1551).

The above list is not exhaustive but included some of the important Indian Buddhist monks who travelled to China and significantly impacted the development and spread of Buddhism in the country. The contributions of Indian Buddhist monks ranged from introducing new schools of thought to translating significant documents, teachings, meditation techniques and practices.

Conclusion: A Lasting Cultural Bridge

In conclusion, the Buddhization of Chinese culture presents a rich field of inquiry that encompasses a wide array of influences and interactions. From the introduction of Buddhism and philosophical thought to the integration of culinary practices and artistic expressions, the historical overview of this

phenomenon reveals the depth and breadth of cultural exchanges between India and China. As we delve deeper into this subject, it is crucial to recognize the dynamic nature of cultural interactions and the ongoing relevance of these exchanges in contemporary society. The enduring legacy of Buddhist influence on Chinese culture serves as a testament to the power of cross-cultural dialogue and the transformative potential of cultural exchange in shaping human experiences.

The Buddhization of Chinese culture started journeys for Indian Buddhist monks to China indicate a prominent chapter by adopting the Indian Buddhist philosophical concepts reshaped the Chinese metaphysical thoughts, stimulated cross-cultural scholarship and artistic innovation and the foundation to start the stage for East Asian Buddhism included Korea, Japan and Vietnam.

The Indian Buddhist concepts like Buddha, Dharma, karma, rebirth, dukkha and nirvāṇa were the integrated into Chinese metaphysics as well has led to the development of New Chinese vocabulary to express abstract Indian concept. It also gave an impact to the Confucian and Daoist thoughts. And also the propagation of Chinese Buddhist schools like Chan (Zen) as rooted in Indian Dhyāna, Tian t'ai which is based on the Lotus sutra and Hua yan based on the Avatamsaka school and Pure land which is based on the western paradise. In case of art and architecture, statues of the Buddha influenced the Indian artistic styles initially in Gandhara and Mathura styles as well as the pagodas evolved from the Indian stupas such as the White Horse Temple (built in 68 CE) was the first Buddhist temple in China modeled on Indian monastic architecture.

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