

Buddhist Exchanges between Ancient Pakistan and China

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Abstract

There is a long history of Buddhist communication between ancient China and ancient Pakistan (the region where Pakistan is located now). From the 1st to 7th century AD, three waves of Buddhist Communication between the two regions emerged, with a large scale of eastward spread of Buddhism and westward pilgrimage. A two-way traffic of communication was formed when Chinese Buddhism travelled backward to ancient Pakistan. The history of friendly exchanges between China and Pakistan thus can be dated back 2000 years earlier. This interaction along the “Silk Road” has great implications for the “Belt and Road” initiative and the communication between China and Pakistan.

Keywords: Eastward Spread of Buddhism, Westward Pilgrimage, Backward Flow, Two-Way Traffic.

1. Introduction

The construction of “China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” has strengthened all-weather friendship between the two countries and people-to-people ties. It is generally believed that the friendly bond between China and Pakistan began in 1951 when they officially established diplomatic relations. This view has greatly shortened the history of China-Pakistan communication, which is not helpful for the development of all-round cooperation by seeking common historical ground and to some extent weakens the link between the two peoples.

The friendly exchanges between China and Pakistan can be traced back to the period when Buddhism was first introduced to China. Ancient Pakistan occupies an important position in the development and dissemination of Buddhism and has a profound influence on Chinese Buddhism. There were frequent and close Buddhist exchanges between ancient China and ancient Pakistan, a fact that was scarcely explored. Previous studies mainly focused on Buddhism, communications from the perspective of political science and generally referred to ancient India, ignoring the fact of the geographical location of ancient Pakistan.

Therefore, Buddhist interactions between ancient Pakistan and China were thus covered up by the term “Sino-Indian Buddhist Exchanges”.

Buddhism spread along the Silk Road, which was hence called “the Buddha Road”. In the context of “the Belt and Road Initiative”, it is of great historical and practical significance of reexamining the Buddhist exchanges between the two peoples. To explore the mutual learning between the two civilisations on the ancient Silk Road is conducive to enriching the new “Silk Road” spirit and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

This study analyses three large-scale waves of Buddhist interactions between ancient Pakistan and China from a geographical perspective. Buddhism has an oral tradition. In history, it was developed and disseminated mainly by monks preaching, searching for and translating scriptures. From the 1st to 7th century AD, there was an endless stream of Pakistani monks coming to China and Chinese monks going to ancient Pakistan. Chinese monks digested, promoted Buddhism, and spread these new developments back to Pakistan. Three culminations of Buddhist exchanges emerged from the two regions.

2. The First Wave of China-Pakistan Buddhist Exchanges

Buddhist exchanges between China and Pakistan began in the Kushan Empire (30-375 AD) in the 1st century AD. Kushan Empire is mostly an ancient Pakistan kingdom whose capital was once in Peshawar (Capital city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province) and later in Taxila (near Islamabad). It became the centre of Buddhism dissemination due to geographical advantages, historical reasons and political support. By that time, the Silk Road had been established, with the trade routes in the western regions unblocked and the maritime trade routes greatly expanded, making possible the spread of Buddhism both by land and sea. As the hub of the Silk Road, Kushan Empire was ready to spread Buddhism to other parts of the world. The historical reason is that Brahmanism eradicated Buddhism in Middle India in the 2nd century BC, forcing Buddhism to move northward. In North India, Buddhism was preserved without being affected. Gradually, North India (the region where ancient Pakistan was located) became the main source of Buddhism. The political support from Kushan rulers served as the third reason to make the religion flourish and spread eastward along the road. Consequently, in

the 1st and 2nd centuries AD, the first wave of communication between ancient Pakistan and China appeared.

During the period of Kushan Empire, Gandhara was not only a gathering place of eminent monks, scriptures and teachings, but also a centre for cultural exchanges between the East and the West. Gandhara, also known as “Jia tuoluo”, “Qian tuoluo”, “Qian tuowei”, “Qian tuo” or “Gan tuowei” in Chinese, was an ancient region comprised of Kabul, Peshawar, Swat, and Taxila regions what are now northwestern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.

Kanishka I (127-150 AD), the king of Kushan, was a pious adherent and patron of Buddhism. During his reign, the Sarvastivadin prevailed in Gandhara where Vasumitra, Dharmatrata, Parsva were among outstanding monks who were proficient in sutras. Kanishka once summoned Vasumitra, Asvaghosa, Parsva and others to perfect Buddhist sutras. It took them 12 years to finish the work. The gathering had a great impact on the development of Buddhism. Kanishka sent Buddhists abroad to preach the religion, giving impetus to the dissemination of Buddhist culture.

Before Buddhism spread into China, Buddha statues had been introduced into Central China via the coast in the 1st century AD (Wu 1991, Sen 2012), a fact indicating that the enlightenment of Buddhism in China originated from the Kushan Empire. The delivery of the Buddha image can be viewed as the earliest Buddhist exchanges between ancient Pakistan and China since image worship is one of the early beliefs of Buddhism.

In the Eastern Han Dynasty, Buddhism was introduced to China from the Kushan Empire (Wang 2014). According to legend, the golden Buddha statue which appeared in Emperor Ming’s dream is the sign of the emergence of Chinese Buddhism. According to *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms* by the Chinese Monk Faxian, the figure of the Buddha is in Tuoli Kingdom, (a place in Northern Pakistan, Jammu and Kashmir (union territory) and parts of Northeastern Afghanistan). The eighty feet high statue of Maitreya signified the beginning of the eastward spread of Buddhism. After this Buddha statue was established, Buddhist monks embarked on their journey to the East for missions. Faxian inferred that the tall golden Buddha statues in the dream of Ming Emperor was this, Maitreya.

A reliable record on the beginning of Buddhism is related to the Han court (Wu 1991, Zürcher 2007, Sen 2012). Emperor Ming’s brother,

Liu Ying, the king of the Chu, was reported in *History of the Latter Han* (Hou Hanshu) (72: 1082) to recite the subtle words of Huanglao¹ and respectfully perform the gentle sacrifice.

Following the official introduction of Buddhism to China, foreign monks came to preach Buddhism since Chinese believers lacked a deep understanding of the sutras. From the Han Dynasty to the Three Kingdoms period, more than half of the foreign monks who came to China to propagate Buddhism came from Kushan Empire, the region of ancient Pakistan.

When Kushan monks first came to China, they usually took the transliteration of their ethnonym “Zhi” as their surname since Kushan Empire was established by Da Yuezhi. Lokaksema (Zhi Lou Jia Chen, or Zhichen, 支娄迦讖) is the earliest eminent monk who introduced and translated the Classic of Mahayana Buddhism in China. He came to Luoyang in the late Eastern Han Dynasty (around 167 AD). From 178 AD to 189 AD, he translated more than ten Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures such as Mahaprajaparamita-sutra (Daoping Borejing 道行般若经), Bhadrपालasutra (Banzhou 般舟) and Surangama Samadhi Sutra (Shoulengyanjing 首楞严经). His translation exerted a significant influence on Chinese Buddhism. The Prajna (Bore) doctrine was popular with the ruling class and the populace from Han (BC 206-220 AD) to the Southern and Northern Dynasties (386-589 AD).

Zhi Chen, Zhi Liang (Zhichen's disciple), Zhi Qian (Zhiliang's disciple) are known as “Three Zhi” because of their proficiency in Buddhism. Zhi Qian was the first to propose the theory of Buddhist text translation (Chen Fukang 2000). In 223-253 AD, he translated 88 books, including 118 volumes. His notion of “following the original meaning without any embellishment” is the earliest literal translation theory (Luo and Chen 2009).

Zhiyao, another member of Yuezhi clan, came to Luoyang during Emperor Ling's reign in Han Dynasty (around 185 AD), and then successively translated the Sutra on the Completion of Brightness (Cheng Ju Guang Ming Ding Yi Jing, 成具光明定意经) and other Mahayana sutras and Hinayana sutras of 10 fascicles.

Apart from preaching from the Kushan Empire, ancient China learnt a lot from the Western Regions (a Han Dynasty term for the area

¹ Huanglao refers to the combination of tenets of the Yellow Emperor Huangdi and Laozi, the founder of Daoism.

west of Yumenguan 玉门关, including what is now Xinjiang and parts of Central Asia). The initial spread of Buddhism was carried out by non-Chinese nations, who adopted the relay-like mode of “sending sutras to the East” and “sending images to the East” (Ye 2015). They first imported Buddhism into Xinjiang, China, and then into the Central Plains through the Hexi corridor. Monks of Western Regions played an important role in this process, but its origin is still in the Kushan Empire.

Before the last years of the Eastern Han dynasty, there were only oral instructions of the *Sutra of Buddha (Futu Jing, 浮屠经)* and *Sutra in Forty-Two Sections* by an unnamed translator. By the time of Emperor Huan and Emperor Ling in the late Eastern Han dynasty, foreign monks from ancient India and Western Regions had translated a large number of Buddhist classics with Luoyang as the centre. In the early years of Emperor Huan (147-167 AD), An Shigao, an eminent monk of the Parthia of the Western Regions, translated 35 kinds of sutras, 41 fascicles, such as *Anapanasati Sutta (An Ban Shou Yi Jing, 安般守意经)* *Yin Chi Ru Jing (阴持入经)*, *Five Methods and Four Noble Truths of Abhidharma (阿毗昙五法四谛)*, *Twelve Nidanas (十二因缘)*, *Eight Right Approaches (八正道)* etc. He is the first translator of Hinayana Buddhist sutra and the founder of the Chinese translation of Buddhist scriptures. Some scholars (e.g. Jiang 1929/2013) believes that the history of Buddhism in China began from the time when Zhi Chen and An Shigao came to China.

In the first wave of Buddhist exchanges, China was in a passive position of acceptance, while ancient Pakistan was actively exporting its religion. After its introduction, Buddhism showed no signs of popular appeal, and then the Chinese scholars promoted it together with the thoughts of HuangLao. In the Three Kingdoms period, Buddhism was mainly spread by oral transmission (Xing, 2012), in which monks communicate face-to-face with followers. The sutras were mainly translated by foreign Buddhist monks, or their descendants, assisted by Chinese monks.

3. The Second Wave of China-Pakistan Buddhism Exchanges

The second climax of China-Pakistan Buddhism exchanges was during the 4th to 5th centuries AD. Around 380 ADs, a huge tide of eminent monks swept into China from North India, and the wave lasted to the mid-5th century (Zurcher 1999). It should be noted that ancient North India was mainly located in present-day Pakistan.

The ancient Pakistani monks who preached in China set up translation institutes with support from the rulers. While translating the Buddhist scriptures, they taught Chinese monks, training a large number of Buddhist talents for China. Unfortunately, few of them can be found in historical records.

Buddhacinga (Fotucheng) (232-328 AD) converted to Buddhism in Uddiyana (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) and then came to Luoyang to preach Buddha Dharma in Jin Dynasty. His theory cannot be found in historical record but judging from his numerous disciples such as Dao An, he must be a great master of Buddhism. Zhi Shilun arrived in China and began to translate scriptures during the Liang period (343-403 AD).

From the 4th century to the 6th century AD, there were close exchanges between Gandhara and China. Mahayana Buddhism was practised by the Gandharan Buddhists and among many others, Asanga (Wu Zhu 无著), Vasubandhu (Shi Qin 世亲), Man Ūrhitā (Ru Yi Lun Shi 如意论师) were the famous masters.

Bodhisattva Asanga was a Gandharan monk who practised Hinayana but ended in dissatisfaction. Then he went to central India to learn the classics of Mahayana. Later, he wrote hundreds of Mahayana treatises and taught about a thousand disciples. He converted his brother Bodhisattva Vasubandhu to Mahayana. A large number of scriptures written by him were translated into Chinese, such as《摄大乘论》(Mahayanasamgraha-sastra)《瑜伽师地论》(Yogacharyabhumi Sastrakarika)、《显扬圣教论》(Prakaranasyavaca-sastra)《显扬圣教论颂》(Prakaranaryavaka)《大乘阿毗达磨集论》(Abhidharmasamuccaya) Mahayana-samgraha-sastra, Yogacara-bhumi-sastra, Aryavacaparakarāṇa-sastra.

In the 4th-5th century AD, Vasubandhu wrote thirty fascicles of Abhidharmakosa-sastra (Jushelun 俱舍论 or Abhidharmakośa 阿毗达摩俱舍论), promoting the doctrine of Sarvastivadin. Many works of Vasubandhu were translated into Chinese such as Trijwika (唯识三十颂), Vijwatikavatti (唯识二十论), Karmasiddhiprakarana (大乘成业论), Pabcaskandhaka-prakarana (大乘五蕴论), Madhyanta-Vibhagabhāṣya (辩中边论), (Mahayanasajgrahabhāṣya (摄大乘论释) and Abhidharmakosa-bhāṣya (阿毗达摩俱舍论).

Because of the oral tradition, the teachings of Buddhism were often misunderstood. The invention of papermaking made it possible to copy and translate Buddhist sutras. Most of the original Buddhist classics in China were rendered from western regions, not directly from ancient

India. After being translated many times, these translations may be distorted and have many errors compared with their original Sanskrit versions, even suffering from losses and additions. In order to eliminate misunderstandings, Chinese monks embarked on a long journey to ancient India for Buddhist scriptures.

The first Chinese monk to seek Buddhist scriptures was Faxian of the Eastern Jin Dynasty. In his time, China had a considerable number of Buddhist scriptures, but lacked complete Vinaya. In 399 AD, Faxian, along with Huijing and other monks went westward to seek Vinaya. He visited about nine kingdoms in ancient Pakistan: Darada Kingdom (Tuoli), Udyana (Wuchang), Suheduo, Gandhara, Takshasila (Zhushashiluo), Fulousha, Luoyi, Bana and Pitu.

Fa Xian and his team first arrived in Tuoli (now the Gilgit District of Pakistan), where they paid a visit to the image of Maitreya Buddha, “the golden Buddha” in the dream of Emperor Ming and found the legendary birthplace from where Buddhism was first introduced into China. Then they reached Oddiyana (now Swat District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province). Xuan Zang recorded it as Udyana in Great Tang Records on the Western Regions. Oddiyana is the farthest north that the Sakyamuni travelled to preach after he became Buddha. Later, Fa Xian and other monks came to Suheduo. The current geographical location of the country has not been agreed in academia. It is probably located in the Hindu Kush Mountains between Swat River and Indus River in the territory of Khyber Pashtun Province.

Fa Xian and his party stayed briefly in Gandhara, and then went to Takshasila (Zhushashiluo, now Taxila) and Fulousha Kingdom (now Peshawar). In Fulousha, they witnessed the world’s first pagoda and the grand celebration of Buddhism. At that time, the kingdom was the Buddhist centre of Northern India. Finding that the Buddhist scriptures were taught orally and there were no manuscripts, Faxian decided to write down the scriptures.

In 403 AD, Faxian and other monks entered Middle-India by way of Luo Yi kingdom (present Laki, Pakistan), BaNa kingdom (present Bannu, Pakistan), and Pitu (Bhera) (historic city of Uch or Uch Sarif, the southern part of Punjab, Pakistan²). Faxian stayed in Middle-India for four years, admiring Buddhist relics, visiting Buddhist monuments, and

² According to SiHe (2011), the country is mainly in north-western Pakistan, partly in the north of the Republic of India.

learning Sanskrit. He copied the *Mahasangha-vinaya*, the series of laws of Sarvastivada and a large number of scriptures, which made a significant contribution to the preservation and circulation of Buddhist classics.

Faxian learned from monks and scholars with an open mind, sorted out oral classics of Buddhism and compiled oral classics of Buddhism. In 411 AD, Faxian departed for home and landed on the Shandong peninsula in 412 AD. He brought back to China a great number of Sanskrit Buddhist texts and then translated them into Chinese. That is the beginning of translating Sanskrit Buddhist texts directly into Chinese.

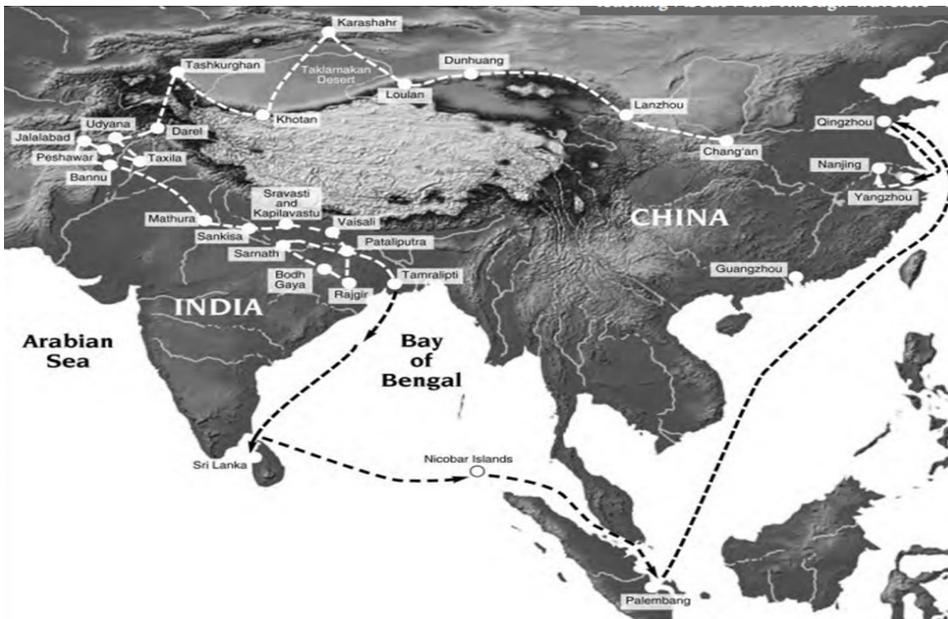


Fig. 1 - Faxian's journey (Map by Willa Davis).

In 414 AD, Faxian compiled *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* (Foguoji) and revised it two years later. The book is a masterpiece of biography and important historical documents and travelogue. It is an important material for the study of mediaeval history of Western Regions and East Asian countries, as well as the history of East Asia's transportation and Buddhism. The book serves as a valuable documentary record of the Gupta Empire which left no other literature in history.

Influenced by Faxian, Fa Yong and 25 fellow monks went west on a pilgrimage for Buddhist scriptures in 420-422 AD. He translated a

volume of Avalokitesvara sutra after returning home by sea. Since then, from Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Tang and Song Dynasties, monks from ancient China and ancient Pakistan took sea routes instead of land.

In the second wave of China-Pakistan Buddhism exchanges, Chinese monks went westward in search of Buddhist doctrines, while the ancient Pakistani monks reached China to impart their theories. The Chinese pilgrims wrote down Buddhist scriptures orally imparted by Pakistani masters, enriching the culture of ancient Pakistan. Therefore, one-way Buddhism transmission gradually evolved into two-way communication. During the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420-589 AD), Buddhism was recognized by the Chinese ruling class and the public. Chinese monks established schools based on different doctrines they had learned. Buddhism developed to a new high and yielded rich fruits.

4. The Third Wave of China-Pakistan Buddhism Exchanges

The third climax of Sino-Pakistan Buddhist exchange occurred in the 6th-7th century A.D. From 581 to 907, as the Northern Maritime Silk Road and the Southern Maritime Silk Road were connected, Buddhist culture reached the Shandong Peninsula and the Yellow Sea coast directly through the sea route. Chinese Buddhism ushered in its heyday, while ancient Pakistani Buddhism was in decline. Chinese Buddhism began to spread backward to ancient Pakistan, and Sino-Pakistani Buddhist exchanges reached another climax.

During this period, the ancient Pakistani monks came to China, not only for preaching the Dharma, but translating scriptures. According to the *Memoirs of Eminent Monks (Continued) Volume II* and the *Kaiyuan Era Catalogue of Buddhist Canons* (Kai Yuan Shi Jiao Lu 开元释教录), during the period of 559-560 ADs in the northern Zhou Dynasty, Gandhara monk Jnanagupta came to Chang'an with Yashas, Postalou and Yaogupta and translated 39 volumes and 2 fascicles including Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (妙法莲华经). Later in Sui Dynasty, he translated 37 volumes, 167 fascicles, and more than 200 fascicles of Sanskrit scriptures, including Sutra of Great Renunciation (佛本行集经).

In 541 AD, Vimoksaprajnars (毗目智仙) from Udyana (now Swat, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) came to China and translated five sutras in five fascicles. In 556-568 AD, Nalen Tirieshe from Udyana translated seven

sutras in fifty-one fascicles into Chinese, including the Great Compassion Sutra.

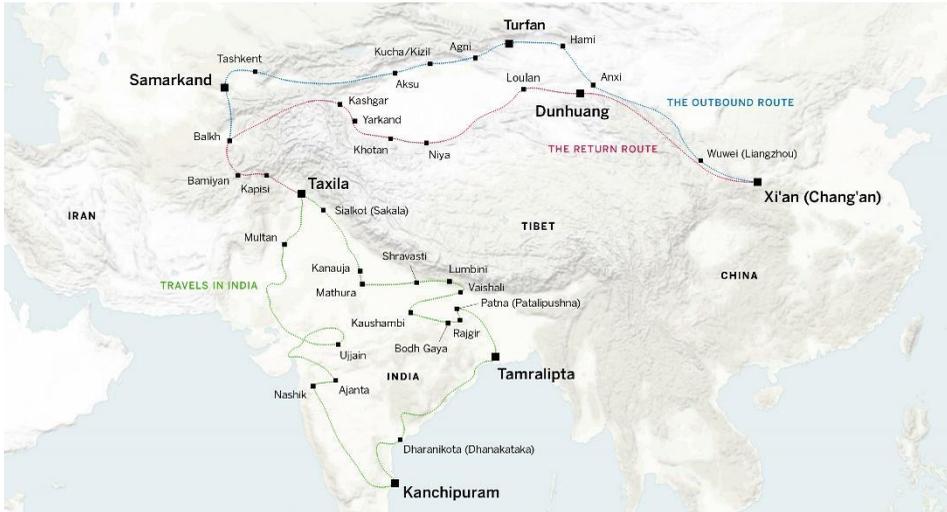


Fig. 2 - Xuanzang's itinerary
(Image source: <https://sogdians.si.edu/sidebars/xuanzang/>)

In the 6th-7th centuries AD, there was an increasing number of Chinese monks seeking Dharma in ancient Pakistan. During the Northern Wei Dynasty, Huisheng and Song Yun went west to acquire scriptures in 516 AD and 518 AD respectively. Song Yun went south through Shemi (present KPK Province) to Uddiyana and Gandhara. Huisheng took a different route to Uddiyana and Gandhara. Song Yun and others brought back more than 100 Mahayana classics, which were later widely spread in China. A Travel Record (*Xingji*) written by Hui Sheng and *Jiaji* written by Song Yun are considered as reference materials to Buddhist scriptures by later generations.

In the third wave of Buddhist exchanges, the most influential pilgrim was Xuan Zang of the Tang Dynasty. After finding a lot of discrepancies in Buddhist scriptures because of multiple interpretations, he decided to learn the teachings of Buddhist and carry back Buddhist manuscripts from ancient Pakistan and India. In India, Harsha Vardhana (589-647 AD) was in power. He promoted Buddhism and his reign witnessed the last heyday of Buddhism in India.

Xuan Zang travelled through about 14 kingdoms in Ancient Pakistan region: Gandhara, Parvata (Bo-fa-duo) Takka (Che-jia), Takshasila (Da-cha-shi-luo), Simhapura (Seng-he-bu-luo) Udyana (Wu-zhang-na), Sindh (Xindu), Pitasila (Biduoshiluo), Avanda (A-fan-cha), Atyanabakela (A-dian-puo-chi-luo), Langala (Lang-jie-luo) Varana (Fa-la-na), Bolor (Bo-lu-luo) and Mulasthanapura (Mao-luo-san-bu-luo). He investigated the current situation, inquired about history, read books from various countries, and recorded everything he heard.

He visited Buddhist relics and learnt from scholarly monks, broadening his vision, and integrating new ingredients into his knowledge. In Gandhara, Xuan Zang paid homage to the old building in which Yasubandhu Bodhisattva prepared the Abhidharmakosa-sastra (Jushelun 阿毗达摩俱舍论 or 俱舍论). Adjacent to Yasubandhu's house was a pavilion where Manorhita composed the Vibhasha Sastra (Piposhalun 毗婆沙论). In Pushkalavati, he worshipped the place where Vasumitra (世友) composed the Abhidharma-prakarana-pada (阿毗达摩品类足论) and the place where Isvara (自在论师) composed the A-pi-da-mo-ming-deng-lun (阿毗达摩明灯论). He visited the city of Da-suo-luo-du-luo, the birthplace of Rishi Panini who composed the Ching- ming-lun. According to Dani (2008), Da-suo-luo-du-luo is located near Lahor in Swabi Tehsil, called Salature in ancient times. It is present in Little Lahore in Swabi District of KPK. In the old town of Sakala (She-jie-luo; Sakala, Sagala or Sangala, the ancient Greek name for the modern city of Sialkot in present day Pakistan), Takka kingdom, he paid visit to the sangharama in which Vasubandhu (Shiqin) Bodhisattva composed the treatise entitled Paramarthasatya Sastra (Sheng-yi-di-lun 胜义谛论).

In Parvata (Bo-fa-duo) he paid homage to the ruin of the sangharama where Jinaputra (Zuishengzi, 最胜子) wrote the Yogacharyabhumi Sastrakarika (瑜伽师地论). It was in this sangharama that Bhadraruchi (贤爱论师) and Gunaprabha (Deguang, 德光), masters of sastras, started their Buddhist life. In the north to capital city of Takshasila (Da-cha-shi-luo, present Taxila), Xuan Zang visited the sangharama in which Kumaralabdhha (Tongshou 童受) composed his treatises.

In Takka kingdom (Che-jia, present Punjab), Xuan Zang stayed for a month to learn from a senior Brahmin, the follower of Bodhisattva Nagajuri (龙树菩萨), who was proficient in Madhyamaka-shastra

(Treatise on the Middle, 中论) and Shatika-shastra (Treatise in One Hundred Verses 百论).

Xuan Zang visited kingdoms practising Mahayana (Great Vehicle). Takshasila (Da-cha-shi-luo, present Taxila), Parvata (Bo-fa-duo) and Simhapura (Seng-he-bu-luo, present Jhelam of Punjab province) pursued the teaching of Mahayana. Udyana (Wu-zhang-na, Khyber- Pakhtunkhwa province) was a kingdom of Mahayana believers. Monks practised the rules of morality. The schools of the Vinaya traditionally known amongst them were Sarvastivadins (说一切有部), the Dharmaguptas (法藏部), the Mahisasakas (化地部), the Kasyapiyas (饮光部), and the Mahasanghikas (大众部).

Xuan Zang went through kingdoms practising Hinayana. In the Sindh kingdom (present day Sindh province), people had faith in the law of Buddha. There were about 10,000 priests studying the Hinayana according to the Sammatiya school (正量部法门). Its dependent kingdoms, Pitasila (Patiala) (Biduoshiluo, present the south of Sindh province), Avanda (A-fan-cha, present the north of Sindh province) and Atyanabakela (A-dian-puo-chi-luo, present mouth of Indus River in Southern Pakistan), deeply revered the three precious objects of worship and believed in the Hinayana according to the Sammatiya school.

Xuan Zang experienced a mixture of Mahayana, Hinayana, and heavenly faith in the following kingdoms. Langala (Lang-jie-luo, present Baluchistan Province) was a kingdom of Buddhist believers and heretics. There were perhaps 6000 priests, who studied the teaching of both the Hinayana and Mahayana. In Varana (Fa-la-na, present KPK province of Pakistan), people had faith in Buddhism and Devas. In Bolor (Bo-lu-luo, present Baltistan), monks showed no great zeal for Buddhist learning and had multiple doctrines. In Takka kingdom (Che-jia, present Punjab) and its dependency Mulasthanapura (Mao-luo-san-bu-luo, Present Multan, Punjab), more people believed in heavenly spirits than Buddhism.

Xuan Zang digested the theories of each school and integrated them into his learning. Meanwhile, he communicated Chinese Buddhist insights. During his itinerary, Xuan Zang composed Huizonglun (会宗论) and Poejianlun (破恶见论, Treatise For Breaking Evil Views) in Sanskrit, recording the hybrid of Buddhism from two cultures.

Xuan Zang returned to China in 645 AD, bringing back 657 volumes of scriptures. He translated 74 Buddhist scriptures that ran into 1335 fascicles. *Buddhist Records of Western Region*, dictated by Xuan Zang and compiled by his disciple Bianji, recorded the geography,

customs, religious beliefs, and products of the countries along the way. The book, as a common cultural heritage of China and Pakistan, enriches Chinese culture and serves as an important historical record of ancient history, geography, and archaeology of Pakistan.

According to *Memoirs of Eminent Monks (continued)*, Xuan Zang translated the Chinese version of Mahayana sraddhotpada sastra back into Sanskrit, which marks the first backflow from China to ancient Pakistan and India. According to *Memoirs of Song Eminent Monks*, Zhi zhe in the Sui and Tang Dynasties interpreted the Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Fahuajing) better than Bodhisattva Nagajuri, therefore Indian monks insisted his perspectives translated into Sanskrit for many times. In the Tang Dynasty, Dao Xuan's doctrines were widely spread in ancient Pakistan and India. In the Tang Dynasty, the Zen master Yongjia Xuanjue's *Verse of Right Approaches* (Zheng-dao-ge) was introduced to India. Zen is typical indigenous Chinese Buddhism. Since then, China began to export Buddhist culture to ancient Pakistan and India and the Buddhist exchanges between China and Pakistan ushered in a historic turning point.

Since the Song Dynasty, the spread of Buddhism gradually declined and Buddhist exchanges between the two countries decreased but never deceased. During this period, a small number of monks did exchange visits. Padmasambhava (Lotus-born), who was born in ancient Pakistan's Udyana (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province), came to Tibet in the middle of the 8th century to spread esoteric Buddhism (Mizong) teachings. He established Tibetan Buddhism and became the founder of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet. In the Song Dynasty, Ji Ye passed through Gansu and Xinjiang to Peshawar in Pakistan to acquire scriptures.

5. Conclusions

The ancient Pakistan region had in-depth and close exchanges with China in Buddhist scriptures and teachings. A large scale of eastward spread of Buddhism from ancient Pakistan and westward pilgrimage from China occurred from the 1st to 7th century AD. Chinese Buddhism once travelled backward to ancient Pakistan to enrich Buddhist doctrines.

Buddhist exchanges between China and Pakistan contributed to multiple dialogues between the two cultures in history and have narrowed the gap between the two peoples in contemporary times. Buddhist exchanges promoted communication between the two different cultures by influencing the belief and behaviour of adherents. Introduced to China,

Buddhism had a profound influence on Chinese philosophy, culture, art, literature, music and many other aspects of life. Chinese monks spread Chinese culture and integrated different Buddhist thoughts during their visits in ancient Pakistan. Buddhist exchanges bring the two countries closer. Currently China and Pakistan enjoy close friendship with centuries-old history as the basis for their mutual trust and common understanding.

Buddhist exchanges along the Silk Road have profound legacies among which “One Belt and One Road Initiative” is the most prominent. The religious interaction can be regarded as epitome of the spirit of “Belt and Road Initiative”, that is, “exchange will replace estrangement, mutual learning will replace clashes, and coexistence will replace a sense of superiority”.

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