

"Exploring the Legacy: Chinese Monk Translators in Historical Context"

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Abstract

About the seventh century CE, when Europe was still in dark ages, India and China lived an intense political, Intellectual, religious and artistic life. The common bond created between them by Buddhism generated a great current of humanism which spread from Sri Lanka to Japan

Faxian returned Back to China after about eleven years, the rest of his life was dedicated by himself to the translations of the Buddhist texts brought from India. It is said that once Faxian went southward after his arrival in China from India and a local chief requested him not to go southwards because it was chilly winter time, he requested Faxian to wait up to winters are over on this Faxian responded like, 'I have devoted my life to Buddhism and spread and development of Buddhism, this was the reason behind my dangerous journey to India. And now I am going to South to request learnt Indian Buddhist scholar Buddhahadra to assist me in the translations of the texts I have collected from India with great efforts. So don't stop me as my mission and duty towards Lord Buddha and his Dhamma is yet incomplete.' Then in spite of bad weather Faxian travelled to Jiankang and invited Buddhist master from India Buddhahadra to accompany him in translations and editing of various Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese. Along with Buddhahadra he translated 'Mahapariniravanasutta, Mahasamaghika Vinaya, and Samyuktabhidharmahrdaya sastra etc. The Chinese version of Mahapariniravanasutta was widely spread.

Xuanzang was born in a family of scholars in Henan province of China. He came to India without any official permission from the Government of China he was chased by an arrest-warrant by the Chinese Government for violation of the ban of travelling abroad. But to the surprise when he reached back to China he was received with a great honor and was given a grand red carpet reception by the Chinese emperor. He has translated few Taoist texts into Sanskrit at the request of the Bhaskaravarmana, the king of Kamarupa.

The Taoist text he translated is called '**Daodejing**'. No doubt Xuanzang had been disappointed and pained when he saw the ignorance and lack of knowledge about China and Chinese philosophy among the Indians. He probably have translated the Taoist text into Sanskrit to introduce in India the rich philosophy and culture of China. But unfortunately this Sanskrit translation of 'Daodejing' is lost to us.

During the time of Xuanzang the Buddhism was well established in China. He had developed a nice command on the Vijñānavāda i.e. the treatises of epistemology particularly the Mahāyāna-sāmaśrāha i.e. the 'Compendium of Mahāyāna' of Asāṅga which had already been translated into Chinese. At his return to China he too devoted his life in translations of Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese. It will be mentioned here that we have lost original copies of some of those texts but thanks to Xuanzang that now we can restore those from his translations.

Keywords: *Chinese, Sanskrit, Xuanzang, Faxian, Vignānavāda .*

No doubt thousands of Chinese monks and scholars visited India but the three of those are of great importance, they have made records of the places they visited and also translated many important texts of Dhamma which helped in propagation of Dhamma with a greater force. Those three distinguished representatives of all the Chinese visitors are Faxian, Xuanzang and I-Tsing. Faxian is regarded as pioneer of all. Even Xuanzang who is also known as 'Prince of Pilgrims' regarded Faxian as the first Chinese man who have brought back a rich collection of Buddhist texts from India to his homeland China.

¹Of course Faxian visited India to seek original texts of Dhamma, but he ended up making a lot of other contributions to Buddhism in particular and to whole of the world in general. He paid visits to various holy places related with Buddha and also he went to numerous famous Buddhist learning Centers of that time. He was totally dissatisfied on the number of Buddhist texts available in China and the condition of these texts as most of these were either incomplete, were misinterpreted or were in a weathered condition. On seeing such a state of Buddhist texts in available in China Faxian finally decided to take a journey to the west. He started his journey to India with few other companions most of whom died on the way or returned back to their homeland China due to the dangerous, hard and long journey. The journey towards India was not only long but was full of difficulties and dangers. During his journey even Faxian himself burst into tears many times but he never even think of giving up and finally reached India after a long travel. He successfully collected lots of texts associated with Buddhism, bring those to China with him and there get them translated into Chinese. Along with an Indian Buddhist scholar in China Buddhābhadrā; Faxian for the rest of his life worked on the translations of these texts into Chinese. These texts, translated by Buddhābhadrā and Faxian were highly popular among the Chinese Buddhist people especially the 'Sīla-Vinaya' and the works on Mahāyāna. He himself was a follower of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Faxian's contributions to Indology

ⁱⁱIndia is one of the most diverse places on earth and several attempts to examine the history and culture of this country are made at various times. The rich religious and cultural heritage of India has been highlighted with the help of Indology. Also the diversity and great history of India has been noticed and highlighted by Indologists only. Indology also helps in recognition of great works of Indian literature and has helped in being appreciated for such rich literature, history and culture from the rest of the world. However Indology appeared as a field of recognition during the British rule but Indian culture, traditions, literature and religion were being studied deeply even centuries before by many great scholars. These scholars were not only Indian but there were many foreign scholars too who perhaps unknowingly worked a lot for Indology. Peoples from far off places and belonging from various cultures and religions get themselves absorbed into the studies of diversities of culture and religion of India. Amongst these many Turks, Arabs, Afghans, started to enquire and make assessments about India and even before these the Greeks, Chinese and Romans too took a great Interest in the study of India and Indian culture.

ⁱⁱⁱThe earliest records of India are found in the works of Megasthenes who was not Indian but a Greek historian, but it would be injustice if we may ignore him of being an Indologist.

After Megasthenes there was a Chinese scholar no less important. He was a monk and a translator at the same time. His name was Faxian. He has written a lot about India in his travel account. He has recorded his travels in India in a book titled 'A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms'. In this travel account he has written about many aspects of Indian society like, the culture, the religion, the economic system, the customs, social behavior, the climate and geography of the places he visited in India. Thus he has made a great contribution to the history and archaeology of India. As he has mentioned exact locations of many archaeological sites and it helped a lot in locating them for the excavations and more places are identified with the help of the records provided by him in his travel accounts. Thus we cannot forget the contributions of Faxian as an Indologist.

Faxian's account provides us following information about India:

(a) Information about Administration and Political conditions of India:

However Faxian didn't made any specific records about the political situations of India, he didn't even mentioned the name of the king in whose reign he had visited India but from other contemporary sources of history we came to know that he had visited during the reign of Chandragupta 2nd and in his dominion Faxian had lived for about five years. From the records of Faxian we can conclude that the government during the Gupta period was liberal, the burden of taxes was not huge, the crime rate was low and the punishments were only

in the form of fines. But those offenders who repeated the crimes were given somewhat harder punishments like their right hands were cut off. Death penalty was absent or rarely seen. Land revenue was the chief source of income of the state. The movement of the people inside the kingdom was free from any kind of travelling taxes. The government officials were paid by king and the burden of their salaries was not upon the masses. The religious places of all the religions were free from taxes. The highways were safe to travel and many rest houses were built on the highways out of the donations made by the rich people and the kings. Hospitals were also built to provide free treatment for poor and needy. The records of Faxian say that the Guptas were incredible rulers, their governance was benevolent, they maintained peace and harmony among their subjects and their kingdom was happy and prosperous. The royalty worked for the welfare of the subjects.

: **(b) Information about the Social conditions of India** Faxian writes that prosperity and contentment was there in the lives of people. They possessed high moral values. People were teetotalers and vegetarianism was in practice, most of the population even avoided onion and garlic. Only one section of society practiced eating the flesh of animals, fishes and birds, they also used to consume alcohol, onions and garlic were a part of their diet. This section of the society lived outside the city and were called 'Chandalas' they were 'untouchables' they also practiced hunting and fishing.

The trend of donations was in vogue. Many people made donations for the constructions of monasteries, viharas, charity-hospitals and rest houses for travelers. This all shows that the society was happy, prosperous, peaceful and having high moral values.

(c) Information about Religious conditions of India: Faxian gives a valuable information about the religious conditions of India at the times of his visit. He writes that Hinduism and Buddhism were popular religions at that time. Buddhism was found as a popular religion in regions like Mathura and Bengal. The Hinduism was much popular in Madhyadesa. There were various Buddhist monasteries even in Madhyadesa and the government officials respected the Buddhist monks. There was the presence of religious tolerance.

He further writes that the king was the follower of Hinduism and worshipped lord Vishnu but he was equally tolerant to all other religions too. Followers of Buddhism and Hinduism lived peacefully together in the society.

(d) Information about the city of Pataliputra: Faxian studied Sanskrit in the city of Pataliputra and stayed there for about three years. He writes that at the city of Pataliputra there were separate sanghas of both the schools of

Buddhism. In those sanghas education was provided to the students from all over India and even few foreign scholars were also found there.

In the city of Pataliputra the palace of King Asoka was still present. About the grand architecture and beauty of this palace Faxian writes that one can't believe it is built by mortals as it seems to have been constructed by gods.

The chariot-processions at the city of Pataliputra also impressed Faxian a lot. He writes every year on the eighth day of second month huge processions on chariots carrying the images of Lord Buddha and various Bhodisattvas were carried out.

(e) Information about other cities of India: He has also written about various other cities of India, like Kapilavastu, Bodh-gaya the place where the Tathagata attained the Bodhi or enlightenment, Sravasti, Kusinagara etc. About these places Faxian writes that these are no more existing as cities but have been transformed into religious sites related to Buddhism.

(f) Information about trade in India: He has written a lot about the ports of India and the trade in India. The trade was of two types i.e. inland trade which means trade inside the country and the international trade. He writes that the trade in India was progressive during the days he visited India he further writes that Indians even used to take sea-voyages for trade with other countries.

According to the writings of Faxian India had great trade relations with Western Asia, South-east Asia, China and even with Europe. The account of Faxian also tells us about few famous ports of India at that time like Sopara, Cambay, Tamaralipti, from the port of Tamaralipti Faxian had left to Sri Lanka from India.

Although the travel account of Faxian is not adequate by itself as it lacks the information about many important facts of the time Faxian had visited India still it gives us some important knowledge about the various important aspects of the society during the Gupta period.

Faxian's contributions to Dalit History

The Indian Dalit History is also grateful to Faxian the scholar monk from China, who had travelled by land route to India and had visited various places in search of the original Buddhist scriptures. He had visited various countries like Bangladesh, Nepal, Srilanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India. Along with the valuable writings on the various aspects of the culture and society at the time of his visit to these places he has also made an important mention of the presence of 'Dalits' in India at that time. He writes about them as the people who lived outside the city and were called 'Chandalas' or untouchables. So from his records we come to the

conclusion that the concept of existence of Dalits was there even during the Gupta period.

Faxian wrote about a caste of the 'wicked' ones known as 'Chandalas'. They were called sinners and were supposed to live in isolation from the rest of the society and whenever they had to enter a city they must alarm the others about their entrance by striking a wooden stick and making noise with that. His writings confirm the origin and existence of untouchability was there in Indian society even before the British period.

Faxian's contributions to the Buddhist Literature

Faxian returned Back to China after about eleven years the rest of his life was dedicated by himself to the translations of the Buddhist texts brought from India. We can't find record of this in any of the English translations of his work 'Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms' but according to Chinese literature Faxian devoted his life in translations and editing of the texts collected by him from India. There is mention of an incident in Chinese literature which shows the devotion of Faxian to the Buddhism and Spread and Development of Buddhism in his homeland China and to the world. It is said that once Faxian went southward after his arrival in China from India and a local chief requested him not to go southwards because it was chilly winter time, he requested Faxian to wait up to winters are over on this Faxian responded like, 'I have devoted my life to Buddhism and spread and development of Buddhism, this was the reason behind my dangerous journey to India. And now I am going to South to request learnt Indian Buddhist scholar Buddhahadra to assist me in the translations of the texts I have collected from India with great efforts. So don't stop me as my mission and duty towards Lord Buddha and his Dhamma is yet incomplete.'

Then in spite of bad weather Faxian travelled to Jiankang and invited Buddhist master from India Buddhahadra to accompany him in translations and editing of various Buddhist texts from Sanskrit to Chinese. Along with Buddhahadra he translated 'Mahapariniranasutta, Mahasamaghika Vinaya, and Samyuktabhidharmahrdaya sastra etc. The Chinese version of Mahapariniranasutta was widely spread.

After the completion of the translations of Sanskrit texts, Faxian started writing his travelogue i.e. 'Record of Buddhist Kingdoms' in which he wrote his travel experiences from all the places he visited during his pilgrimage to India. Faxian along with the learnt scholar monk from India Buddhahadra translated six texts including Mahapariniranasutta, Samyuktabhidharmahrdaya sastra, Vaitulyanirvana sutra, Mahasanghasila etc. The most of the Buddhist scriptures on Sila-Vinaya present in China are result of the pilgrimage of Faxian to India.

Despite being follower of Mahayana Faxian had brought back China few Hinayana texts too for the comparative study of the two schools of Buddhism. However many other scholars from far and wide have also translated many Buddhist texts into other languages also but they lack a clarity in their translations, this clarity is found in the translations made by Faxian.

Faxian's contributions to the History and Literature of Sri Lanka

^{iv}Faxian had lived in Sri Lanka for about two years. During this time Faxian not only searched for religious books and sacred relics associated with Buddha and Buddhism but also studied and watched the local customs and society of Sri Lanka and made notes on it. Faxian was respected and loved by the natives of Sri Lanka. He was regarded as a messenger of peace. In his respect the places he visited in Sri Lanka are named after him like, The Faxian Hill and Faxian Cave, even a village is named after him to commemorate his visit to Sri Lanka. The records made by Faxian about Sri Lanka have been proved of great importance to the history of the country. His visit proved to be a promoter of tourism to the country. As after reading his travelogue and the facts about Sri Lanka mentioned in it attracted many others to visit the place. Faxian was the first foreign traveler to Srilanka who have been recorded in the history of the country.

He has written a lot about the pilgrim sites of India in his travel account and most of the readers of his account got attracted towards to the pilgrimage to India and thus he has contributed a lot in the pilgrimage as well as in development of tourism sector in India. Not only India but various sites in the countries like Srilanka and Nepal are also mentioned in his travelogue and many people influenced by the writings of Faxian attracted towards these places too. He has contributed a lot to start a new age of pilgrimage and tourism in many Asian Countries. This has also strengthened the bond of friendship among several Asian Countries.

5.1 Xuanzang's Contributions to Buddhist Philosophy and Literature

Xuanzang's travelogue Si-Yu-Ki is the most accepted account about the Central and South Asian Countries. It is the longest and much detailed travel account written by a Chinese Buddhist pilgrim. Although the prime purpose of Xuanzang to visit India was to obtain original Buddhist texts and to get instructions on Buddhism while being in India; but he finished up doing much more. IN his account we can find the records of various aspects of the lands he visited, like the social, political, religious, cultural and geographic aspects. He visited various places in Bengal and preserved records of those places those records made by Xuanzang helped a lot in reconstructing the archaeological history of Bengal.

In his travelogue he gave us information about his journey towards India and about geographic political and religious situations of the places he visited, his writing proves to be a valuable source to trace the history of Asia.

Xuanzang stayed for about five years at Nalanda, the Great site of learning at that time. There he studied Yogacara, Logic, Grammar, Sanskrit etc. He has made a long and detailed account of his travels, he has also mentioned about the communication and synergy between Chinese and Indian Buddhism during the early Tang dynasty. One of his books 'Great Tang Records on the Western Regions' is still a piece of classic Chinese literature. This book contains a lot of information about the people and countries present along the 'Silk Road' during the 7th century A.D. "Journey to West" authored by a Ming Dynasty author Wu Cheng'en was inspired by this Book of Xuanzang only.

Born in China, Xuanzang even as a child developed a great attraction towards religion. He read many Chinese classics and religious books at a very young age. He was much influenced by the travels of Faxian to India. Even at that time too Xuanzang was a well informed traveler as he had travelled almost whole China to seek original Buddhist texts.

A disciple of Xuanzang; Bianji edited the book ' DA TANG XLYU JI' i. e. ' Great Tang Records on the Western Regions' through the dictation of Xuanzang. It took about one full year to complete this work. In this book Bianji has described the travels of Xuanzang. This book is having twelve volumes and contains about 120, 000 Chinese characters. This book describes climate, Geography, types of transportation, local people, various agricultural and other products, the language, political and economic life, various religions, history, customs etc. in almost 110 countries, kingdoms, regions, states and cities Xuanzang had visited while travelling from China to India. Various important descriptions about the countries like Persia, Uzbekistan, Sri Lanka, India and Tajikistan were made in this book. For modern historians and archaeologists this book proves to be valuable and indispensable textual record. This text is a valuable and important document about 7th century Central Asia. This text is an earliest written document which provides us proofs about Buddhist sculptures at Bamiyan in Afghanistan, also it gives knowledge about the Buddhist Culture present in Afghanistan at that time.

Xuanzang's travels are also credited of being somewhat responsible for the introduction and spread of Sugar-making technology in India and Medieval China. This fact is important because the sugar plays an important role in Buddhist doctrine, particularly the Mahayana Literature of Chinese Tripitaka. As the Buddha is said to be descendent of the king ' Ikshvaku' and as 'iksu' is the Sanskrit word for sugarcane so in Chinese Buddhism Sugarcane is regarded as connected to

the ancestry of Buddha. In China 'Iksvaku' the ancestor of Buddha is known as King of Sugarcane or Born out of Sugarcane.

The book 'Great Tang Records on the Western Regions' is taken as an important document by the archeologists in India as they have been using it to reconstruct Indian History, the book is of equal importance to the historians of India as well as it helps them to locate various important historical sites. The records of exact locations and distances are made in this book and it has worked as a beacon for the excavation of various archeologically and historically important sites like, the temple at Sarnath, Rajagraha, the Caves of Ajanta, the Nalanda and the Vasu vihar's ruins of archaic Pundra city. This book only inspired the Chinese writer Wu Cheng'en to write the novel 'Journey to the West'. This novel was published in the Ming dynasty. The mention of this novel was also made by Jawaharlal Nehru in 'Discovery of India'. In India Xuanzang is remembered mainly for his records of the West i. e. Si-Yu-Ki. It is thought as the scholar-monk had visited India only to write a travel account. But it is totally wrong to evaluate Xuanzang as a traveler recording the places he visited; instead he was a great scholar who contributed a lot to the world history, geography, archeology, sociology, religion and literature as well.

Although he had left China without permission of the government but on reaching back to the Chinese capital he was received as a national hero. It was only Xuanzang who raised the status of Buddhism in China from that of a foreign religion to a 'state-religion'. He was Master of Tripitaka and is known as Prince of Pilgrims.

^vXuanzang was born in a family of scholars in Henan province of China. No doubt his friends and colleagues in India asked him to stay in India only and never go back but Xuanzang was soil-bound so he decided to go back to his own country. In many of his accounts he has mentioned Confucianism and Taoism and even he has translated few Taoist texts into Sanskrit at the request of the Bhaskaravarmana, the king of Kamarupa.

^{vi}The Buddhist traveler Xuanzang devoted his life to Buddhism and study and translation of Buddhist texts. He translated about 75 Buddhist works into 1335 fascicles of Chinese Buddhist classics. He evolved an Indigenous school of Buddhism in China and founded the Vijnanavada sect in China under the name 'Weishi'. His thinking and theories were also taken abroad by many foreign scholars.

There was a galaxy of eminent Indian scholars like BUDDHABHADRA, KUMARAJIVA, DHARMAKSEMA, BODHIRUCI, PARMARTHA, AMOGHAVAJRA, and many others who worked day and night to present the

Dhamma to the Chinese people so they translated a lot of Buddhist Sanskrit texts into Chinese; these scholars were also supported by the Chinese people as well as by the ruling class of China too.

Xuanzang is a best scholar of Buddhism of all the times. He translated the 'Mahaprajnaparamita' sutra i.e. The Great Sutra of Perfection of Wisdom', the 'Yogacaryabhūmīśāstra' i.e. The Treatise of the Lands of the Masters of Yoga, 'Mahāvibhāṣā' i.e. The Great Exegesis.

^{vii}No doubt Xuanzang was a follower of Mahayana but his aim was to get a perfect knowledge of all the styles represented by various Buddhist schools especially the Sarvastivada school of Buddhism, the knowledge of whom is vital for a good understanding of the Buddhist doctrine. He studied thoroughly various texts of Sarvastivada-Abhidharma with the great teachers in India. He was fully aware that a sound understanding of non-Buddhist systems of philosophy was essential for a deep understanding of Buddhism and also to refute the philosophy of the opponents and to defend the personal philosophical facts. The proof of this way of thinking of Xuanzang is the translation of a Vaisheshika text by him in Chinese. This text was originally written in Sanskrit by Chandramati also known as Matigandha. The name of the text was 'Dasapadārhasāstra' i.e. The Treatise on the ten elements. This was originally written in Sanskrit but unfortunately we have lost this too. We must be grateful to Xuanzang that for us he preserved this valuable treatise in his Chinese translation.

^{viii}Vasubandhu's Trimsika i.e. Thirty Verses is a basic text of Vijñānavāda School. Xuanzang's 'Cheng Wei'shi Lun' is the translation of a commentary on this text.

Xuanzang's travels to India set an epitome of Internationalism and interculturism. For India his visit proved of some additional benefit. His recordings have helped Indian Historians to fill in a good number of blanks. He proved to be a great historical witness of India. One can imagine how hard it would have been for Indian historians if Xuanzang's pilgrimage hadn't taken place or if he hadn't left the immortal account of his travels.

THE WEI-SHIH SCHOOL

Yogacara was the main interest of Xuanzang, along with his disciple K'uei-Chi; he founded 'Wei-shih school' in China. The doctrine of this school was set forth in Xuanzang's treatise on the Establishment of the Doctrine of Consciousness only i.e. 'Ch'eng-wei-shih lun'. It was nothing but the translation of Yogacara texts, the main belief of this philosophy was that the universe is nothing but a representation of the mind.

This school flourished in China under Xuanzang and his disciple K'uei-chi, but it's subtle and minute philosophy and detailed analysis of senses and human mind was much foreign to the Chinese so the school can't flourish much after the death of Xuanzang and his disciple. However in 653 a monk from Japan visited China to study under Xuanzang. His name was Doshō. When he returned back to Japan he introduced the philosophy and theories of the Wei-shih school to Japan. In Japan the Wei-shih school is known by the name 'Hosso School'.

^{ix}Before Xuanzang the translation of Buddhist scriptures was always done most of the times by Indian scholars only and mostly they were not having a strong hold on the Chinese language in addition to this they were assisted by such Chinese scholars who were not fluent at Sanskrit and the texts translated in this way were less or more weak, insipid, unyielding and most of the times these translations were not faithful to the originals. Xuanzang with his profound knowledge and great command over Sanskrit, overcomes all the defects of the earlier translations. He translated the texts into Chinese and at the same time he remained faithful to the meanings of the original words. No doubt his translations are fluent but at the same time they are elegant too.

Contributions of I-Tsing to Buddhist Philosophy and Literature

^xI-Tsing was a Tang dynasty Buddhist monk, his original name was Zhang Wen Ming, he traveled to India via sea route and studied at Nalanda mahāvira for eleven years. There he learnt Sanskrit language and grammar and developed a good hold on it as he was well aware of the fact that most of the original texts associated to Buddhism were available in Sanskrit only. He returned to China along with the copies of more than 500,000 Sanskrit stanzas. Also he translated more than 60 sutras from Sanskrit to Chinese. His translations include Saravanabhava Vinaya, Stories of great Deals, Avdana, Sutra of most honoured king, etc. He is also known for translations works of monastic rules and eleven Buddhist tantras.

His written records about the places he visited have contributed a lot to world history in general and to the history of archaic kingdom of Srivijaya in particular. His records also provide valuable records about many other kingdoms and cities located on the route that connected China to that of Nalanda in India.

He writes about the lifestyle and other important aspects of the Buddhist people living at the places he visited. I-Tsing's record of his stay at Srivijaya is earliest and single solid witness of the existence of Srivijaya at the time I-Tsing visited.

I-Tsing was very much influenced by the two Chinese scholar monks who visited India prior to him, first was Faxian and the other was Xuanzang- the Prince of Pilgrims. He was a great admirer and supporter of both. Under their influence he

too decided to visit India and do some noteworthy for the propagation and development of Buddhism. Traveling by a Persian boat he reached Sumatra after about 22 days. There he spent about six months and studied Sanskrit there. He also learnt the local Malay language.

At Nalanda I-Tsing studied Buddhist logic, Vinaya i.e. monastic discipline, Abhidharmakosa, Madhyamika and Yogacara philosophies. He writes that none of the Buddhist philosophies is absolute within itself these are interrelated and interconnected however each of these philosophies have a specific purpose. While studying at Nalanda he got a strong hold at Sanskrit language and grammar and he copied and collected over 500,000 stanzas related to Buddhism in Sanskrit and got them translated later.

Along with the recordings about various countries he visited he also recorded a lot about India especially the Nalanda Mahavihara where he lived and studied for about eleven years.

He wrote extensively about the Buddhist practices followed by the monks in Indian viharas. He wrote about the food those monks were allowed to consume. Their clothing pattern, their daily routine, about the respect for the elders and behavior towards the strangers.

I-Tsing left India along with the texts and manuscripts he had collected at Nalanda mahavihara. I-Tsing also gave a detailed account of his own travels in which he has given a detail of various places visited by him. His written record still serve as an important source of Information of the culture, history, and religions present in Srivijsaya at the time of his visit.

From Srivijaya after completing the works of translations I-Tsing along with two of his assistants returned to China and at Luoyangin China he was given a red-carpet reception by the Empress Wu. In China he resided at Foshouji monastery and there in Bureau of Translations worked as an assistant translator, this bureau was headed by Siskananda. Later I-Tsing headed his own bureau of translations of Buddhist Literature at Chang'an and Luoyang. Fifty six works were translated by him in 230 fascicles. Under his works were many commantries, Vinaya texts etc. He worked on translations up to the end of his life, he was honored with the title of 'Master of Tripitaka'.

His translations are not only important for Chinese Buddhism only but for the whole Buddhist religion. India's most influential monastic religion was Sarvastivada Vinaya and the translations of this text made by I-Tsing helped to preserve this tradition. He has also made significant translations of Yogacara texts and the texts of Buddhist logic..

I-Tsing's travel records describe various adventurous travels to India and Srivijaya. He made note of the lifestyles and culture of society at that time which is helpful in understanding the history of those Places. However the translations of Buddhist texts made by Xuanzang dominate the translation works of I-Tsing but still if we compare the works of both we can find that I-Tsing was not a little less than Xuanzang in the art of Translation.

I-Tsing's records about India:

^{xi}Unlike Xuanzang, who gave details of Geography, Culture, political system and economic status of 7th century India, I-Tsing's writings mostly revolve around the various practices of Buddhism performed in India, 'The Land of origin of Buddhism'. He concentrates on writing the details about the monasteries and the monks residing there. He writes about the rules and regulations followed by Buddhist monks in the monasteries of India. He provides the detailed document on the lifestyle followed by the monks. He also writes about the working of Nalanda mahavihara. He writes that the expenses of Nalanda mahavihara were met from the revenue that came from two hundred villages which have been donated to the mahavihara for meeting the financial needs of it. He has also written about the architecture of the mahavihara.

His writings and findings are centered to Buddhism only. His records although are not of much importance for historians and archaeologists but these are having a great relevance in the study of Buddhism.

I-Tsing's records about Srivijaya

^{xii}I-Tsing admired the status of Buddhism in Srivijaya. He also praised the Buddhist scholars at Srivijaya. He suggested the future travelers to India to stay and study at Srivijaya before making a Visit to Nalanda in India for higher and advanced studies. He himself had stayed and studied there prior to his visit to Nalanda mahavihara in India.

CONCLUSION:

^{xiii}Faxian's work 'Records of Buddhist Kingdoms' is the record of his travels and pilgrimage. This book also helps us to understand archaic Asian kingdoms in a better way. His travel account promoted Asian Tourism and Culture, it was Faxian who started a new age of Pilgrimage to the west i.e. India. Subsequently the style was followed by other Chinese scholars too and made visits to India later. These visits proved to be of great importance in strengthening the bonds of friendship among various Asian countries.

Among the nations of Asia the scholar-monk Xuanzang has become a semi-deity, a historical monument, a legend, a translator, a great teacher, a Buddhologist, a philosopher, an incredible messenger and an outstanding promoter of culture. His marvelous works have been recognized and praised not only in his homeland China but also in Korea, Vietnam, Japan, India and several other countries of the world. For the generations to come, he has left a really valuable cultural heritage in terms of theory, history and the art of translation, the international trade relations, and the cultural intercourse.

Itsing has produced great works of historic importance, his works are of great significance for the historians all over the world to trace various historic events of that time. His writings on the practices of Buddhism in India and other Asian countries and the records of the other Chinese monks who traveled to India in search of knowledge are an important source to trace history. His travel records provide us details of his adventurous journey to India and Srivijaya. In his travel diaries he even mentions the geographic, social and cultural status of the sites he visited, however his descriptions of any site was much inclined towards the things and practices associated to Buddhism.

ⁱ Deeg, Max, Chinese Buddhist travelers: Faxian, Xuanzang and Yijing, Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History, Oxford University Press.

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