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Projecting India in Chinese Medieval Buddhist sources: a case of Sinization?

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ABSTRACT

Following the 'Call for Proposals' suggestive 'multi-layered contextualization approach,' this article will revisit the concept of Sinization of Buddhism from a more general and theoretical viewpoint. Having approached the concept from a more theoretical point of view, the Sinization paradigm as a hermeneutical tool to understand processes and developments in Chinese Buddhism will then be tested against some specific cases of practice-related discourses in Buddhist circles of the early Tang period.

The term monocultural is meaningless, because there never has been such a society. All cultures are the result of a mishmash, borrowings, mixtures that have occurred, though at different rates, ever since the beginning of time. Because of the way it is formed, each society is multicultural and over the centuries has arrived at its own original synthesis.
 (Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Race and History*)

Introduction

In the year 1937, the Chinese Republican intellectual and public figure Hu Shih (Hu Shi) 胡適 (1891–1962),[1] published an article with the provocative title 'The Indianization of China: A Case Study in Cultural Borrowing.'[2] In this article Hu almost aggressively 'blames' Buddhism for having infiltrated and tainted original and autochthonous Chinese culture and society. In a rather simplistic way, he suggests that a takeover of China had taken place in which the 'target' or potential agent of acceptance, the 'Chinese people,' had no choice:

It was as a popular religion of the poor and the lowly that Buddhism first came to stay in China. As such, Mahāyāna Buddhism came *in toto*, and was accepted by the Chinese believers almost *in toto*. It was not for the masses to choose and reject. A great religion of powerful popular appeal came and was accepted. That was all. Indeed, in their religious enthusiasm, the Chinese people soon came to look to India as 'the land of the Buddha,' and even as 'the Western Heaven'[3] from which nothing but the great truths could come. Everything that came from the 'Western Heaven' must have a reason and commanded

acceptance. Buddhism, or that whole movement of cultural invasion which went by the name of Buddhism, was bodily taken over by China on the high waves of fervor and fanaticism.[4]

Apart from being historically wrong in assuming that the early conversions to Buddhism were mass movement-like, we can learn at least one thing from his approach when analyzing it critically: -*ization*s are, probably in all cases, often tainted by ideological and/or political motivation.[5] The lesson I draw from this example is – again, and not for the first time – that it is necessary to theoretically and conceptually look at the key terms and concepts before we can, if at all, apply and use them in a meaningful way; that is, to better understand our source material and the historical religious and societal developments and processes which this material reflects.[6] If here Indianization[7] obviously is a problematic concept, so is its counter-term, Sinicization.[8]

What is sketched almost as a colonial process by Hu Shi is echoed in the title of the first major Western study of the introduction of Buddhism into China, Erik Zürcher's (1928–2008) magisterial *The Buddhist Conquest of China*, first published in the year 1959. However, one has to be careful to not read too much into the potentially aggressive term 'conquest' in the title: differing from Hu Shi, it is not India and Indian culture which infiltrates China but Buddhism. Being the extraordinary and circumspect scholar he was,[9] Zürcher is, of course, at best provocative-ironic in his use of the word 'conquest':[10] he relativizes the 'occupational' thrust of the main title by the subtitle 'the Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in early medieval China.' By doing so – and elaborating on this in his introductory remarks – Zürcher acknowledges both the passive and active aspects of the historical transmission process: the tradition spread from somewhere through some agency, and it was adapted by some agency.

We still may carry away from Zürcher's title two caveats for the subsequent reflections about the hermeneutical and analytic value of the term Sinicization: the problem of reification (Buddhism as an 'agent': 'Buddhist conquest') and essentialism (China or Chinese culture being, almost timelessly, uniform)[11] – although I do, of course, not blame Zürcher of any of these two 'vices.'[12]

The first full-fledged book dedicated to the phenomenon of Sinicization of Buddhism is Kenneth Ch'en's (1907–1993) *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*, published in 1973. Ch'en carefully attempts to avoid the impression of essentialism by focusing on individual cases of transformation, but he still runs into the trap of both reification and essentialism when writing sentences like the following:

> While Indian ideas were gaining ground, the Chinese were also fashioning changes in the Indian ideas and practices, so that Buddhism became more and more Chinese. I call this process the Sinicization of Buddhism in China.[13]

What do we really mean by Sinicization (or Sinization, or Sinification)[14] – translated as *zhongguohua* 中國化 in the Chinese translation of my title, but, sometimes, and ideologically more loaded, also called *hanhua* 漢化?[15] A simplistic and neutral answer – if such an answer is possible at all – is that it is the process of transforming something originally different (Indian), in our case the religion we call Buddhism,[16] into something Chinese.[17] This 'something Chinese,' in the view of scholars accepting the feasibility of the Sinicization concept (see below), is marked by a couple of features which are supposed to represent essential Chinese-ness.

From the strict standpoint of word formation, a noun derived from another noun or adjective by the compound suffix *-ization* (German: *-isierung*, French: *-isation*, etc.) denotes a process with a result that changes something into X, implying that the previous situation or stage A was either missing X or that X is overriding a previously existing situation or stage Y of A resulting in a fundamentally different B (e.g. privatization: changing public property or processes into private, corporate ones; canalization: constructing a system of sewage where this did not exist before). Consequently, Sinicization of Buddhism would either mean that Buddhism is changed, that some agent is changing or transforming it into Chinese while before it had been something else, most assumedly Indian (or something else?).

This 'model' of cultural transformation – again the question of agency: who transformed what into what? always has to be kept in mind – or rather adaptation implies, at some point at least, a (semi-)final 'product,'[18] Chinese Buddhism – a Buddhism which is different from Indian, Central Asian (Khotanese, Kučean-Tocharian, etc.), or Tibetan Buddhism. There is also the question of determining a specific point or period (see below) in (historical) time when Chinese Buddhism is or becomes Chinese – is it more Chinese during the Tang 唐 (618–907) or during the Song 宋 (960–1279) dynasty? Does Buddhism then become again less Chinese through the 'infiltration' of Tibetan Buddhism under the Mongols/Yuan 元 (1271–1368), and once more under the Manchu/Qing 清 (1644–1911)?

Interestingly, there is more talk about the Sinicization of Chinese Buddhism than about, for instance, the Japanization of Japanese Buddhism inherited from China (or Korea).[19] Why do we not talk (more often) of a Buddhisization of Daoism? Why not speak of Tibeticization of Buddhism – of similar *-(c)ization*s?[20] Why is the Sinicization of Buddhism[21] such an issue when similar *-(c)ization*s are not (so much) in other historical-cultural contexts?

The whole situation becomes even more complex if we take into account the uneasiness of some Buddhologists or/and Religious Studies scholars to accept the reification of religious traditions as *-ism*s (Buddhism, Hinduism, etc.). Can an *-ism* be *-isized*? As Robert Gimello has pointed out, going down this line would mean that 'Buddhism's alleged "sinicization" is bootless since "Buddhism" is simply the sum of all "Buddhisms," including the many Chinese varieties.'[22]

The terminological confusion increases with the realization that another cultural transfer process is named by the same term, Sinicization: it denotes the becoming Chinese of another culture or ethnicity which comes in contact with China, either by conquering China or parts of its territory – a similar but still different case since the Sinicization of Buddhism as the distribution of political power is exactly the opposite – or by importing its culture.[23] The term is applied in the case of the nomadic or semi-nomadic conquerors of China (Xiongnu 匈奴, Xianbei 鮮卑, Mongols, etc.) in the past as the process of adopting Chinese customs, institutions, administrative structures and culture (language, scriptures, literary conventions, rites), as, for instance, in case of the Manchu/Qing.[24] Another 'mode' of Sinicization is, as stated above, the influence of China and her culture on the wider East Asian sphere, what could be called 'Sinitic,'[25] and, more recently, even beyond (in diaspora situations);[26] its direction of influence is outward bound – and is therefore in sync with the theory of the Indianization of Southeast Asia,[27] another *-ization* which has not escaped critical assessment. And to

make things even more complex – and hence complicated – Richard Madsen recently suggested to distinguish between 'Sinicization from above' for the modern (one is tempted to ask: why only modern?) policy of the Chinese government to 'change into Chinese' (*zhongguohua*) the religions in the PRC,[28] while the 'Sinicization from below' is supposed to mean 'what Western scholars – social scientists or 'theologians – might call indigenization, localization, or enculturation.'[29] Beyond the fact that this distinction, more or less upheld in the other contributions in the volume edited by Madsen, is driven by an ideological agenda and that it is historically naïve to assume that earlier religious assimilation processes are from 'below,' it does a bad service to the credibility and usability of the Sinicization paradigm since it plays with both reification of religions and essentialization when it talks about an 'authentic' religion in opposition to an official 'selective' approach of making religions 'Chinese.'

A problematic impact of the Sinicization 'model' is that it has led to a periodization of the history of Chinese Buddhism which is, to say the least, problematic, as it reflects an underlying teleological agenda:[30] put in an extreme and slightly polemic way,[31] the assumed development either goes from pure (Indian) Buddhism to a bastardized version of Buddhism in China, or – the other way around – from a barbarian religion to a full Chinese religion, particularly in the form of Chan or the full integration of Buddhism into the Chinese religious system (the harmonizing emic concept of *sanjiao-heyi* 三教合一, 'the three teachings are united as one'). Such models of gradual integration of Buddhism into the Chinese cultural fold – explicitly called Sinicization or not – have been developed by such influential scholars like Arthur F. Wright, Kenneth Ch'en, or (I am inclined to say: even) Erik Zürcher.[32]

In the whole thicket of terminology, in the tension between a pseudo-specific Chineseness and a generalized Buddhism, we may ask ourselves if it does not make sense to drop the term Sinicization and introduce, for instance, the culturally more neutral term hybridization – stripped of its ideological post-colonial undertones which are, in my opinion, not necessary for its application to pre-modern processes (unless an overt ideological agenda is brought to the interpretation of history) – for the process of change that marks the developmental phases of Chinese Buddhism.[33] As Andreas Ackermann points out, hybridization may be characterized by different aspects or modes ('metaphors'), of which he singles out (but also subdivides) borrowing, mixing and translation (the latter in a broader sense as defined by anthropologists);[34] these clearly are involved in the traceable development and change of Buddhism in a Chinese context. The advantage of using hybridization is that it is a culturally open and neutral term which can be used to label a whole variety of cultural 'blends' without implying or suggesting a final essentialist 'product' (Chinese Buddhism vs. some other Buddhism).

There is, of course, no question that Chinese Buddhism – at pretty much any time in history – was distinctive. But what do we call the changes in Chinese Buddhism which happened after an assumed Sinicization? Does Chinese Buddhism then become even more or less Chinese? How do we address the regional developments and changes, some of them, like the so-called Northern and Southern Schools of Chan, occurring at a time when the contact with India (and Central Asia) was still strong?

Sinicization is a view on Chinese Buddhism from the modern perspective of a historian – it is an etic view that neglects the possible, but not easily retrievable, perception of the contemporary Chinese at a specific point in time and space: did

Chinese perceive Chinese Buddhism as Indian or as Chinese or as something else? The answer to this question certainly depends on the (emic) viewpoint. Surely, some Chinese saw it, at least, as an alien and foreign element when they brandished Buddhism as a foreign or barbarian creed or as a system of thought, attacks which had to be countered by Chinese Buddhists.[35] What is often overseen is that we see in these anti-Buddhist discourses and their rhetorical *topoi* a faint precursor (Barbarianization?) of Hu Shi's Indianization theory – while Buddhist apologists, quite naturally, did and could not claim that Buddhism was Chinese at its root but emphasized the compatibility of Buddhism with Chinese culture.[36]

More recent theories of culture have deconstructed essentialist approaches to culture and rather emphasized the entangled and processual nature of cultural contact, exchange and transfer and suggested to apply models of hybridization and fluid boundaries. The Sinicization discourse was and still is dominated by selecting and essentializing certain features of Chinese culture which are mostly taken from a defined pool of ideas, concepts, or doctrinal interpretations.[37] Some of these are, sometimes in quite an essentialist way, following emic discourses in the already mentioned anti-Buddhist conflicts without really mapping them against a historical-social broader reality and context of both the 'giving' (Indian)[38] and the 'receiving' (Chinese) agencies: the concept of a soul vs. the *anātman* (Ch. *wuwo* 無我) theory of Buddhism; filial piety (*xiao* 孝) and physical integrity vs. the abandoning of family (*chujia* 出家) and self-harming through cutting one's hair and, later, self-immolation; respect for the ruler vs. non-acceptance of public authority; the division of the different Buddhist teachings (*panjiao* 判教;[39] vs.?), or, rather exceptions in midst the array of doctrinal concepts and ideas: the transformation of Avalokiteśvara/Guan(shi)yin 觀(世)音 into a female deity; or Maitreya/Mile 彌勒 into a fat-bellied laughing Buddha.[40] The original nature of an alterity discourse of respective emic source statements or examples is then, often in a rather naïve way, projected and molded into an existing concept of a unified and essentialized Chinese culture.[41]

What is mostly neglected when these concepts and ideas are brought forward as support for the Sinicization of Buddhism is a concrete countercheck against the Indian historical situation which is, admittedly, often difficult or cannot be made at all, partly due to scant and missing material and sources.[42] The counterargument, that in most such cases a historical continuity (transmission, diffusion) between Indian ideas and their Chinese Buddhist counterparts cannot be proved, does not count: the point is not (necessarily) one of diffusion but that these thoughts did exist in the Indian context and are therefore not unique features (German 'Alleinstellungsmerkmale') of Chinese culture or Chinese-ness.

While it is, for instance, true that the *anātman* theory of Buddhist doctrine seems to be quite old and maintained by most Buddhist doctrinal systems, there has been, in fact, an Indian Buddhist school of thought, the Pudgalavādin, or 'those teaching an individual essence'; in the end, this school did not stand its position against the mainstream of Buddhist thinking[43] – but this is not the point here; what is important is that the idea of an individual essence or soul (the Upaniṣadic *ātman*, the Jain *jīva*) was not only well known in other Indian traditions but also in Indian Buddhism – and is, of course, also ubiquitous in Chinese Buddhis sources as the 6110 occurrences of *wuwo* in the digital version of the Buddhist canon show.

In the case of filial piety Gregory Schopen has aptly demonstrated by the examination of epigraphic material from early Buddhist India that the phenomenon of filial piety was indeed widespread among Buddhist monastics.[44]

How Buddhist monastics and rulers in India interacted, is a difficult question to answer. It is true that the extent sources, texts and art historical evidence only represent encounters between very eminent Buddhist individuals like the Buddha or extraordinary and – for instance, in the *Aśokāvadāna*, the hagio-biography of the paradigmatic Buddhist king Aśoka – eminent monks in situations where the ruler venerates the Buddha, objects representing the Buddha (sacred sites, relics, bodhi tree), or a monk and not vice versa. How Indian rulers and monastics interacted on a normal scale is difficult to determine, but there is some indication that Buddhist monks paid respect to the king.[45] And there are, of course, also enough examples of Chinese rulers who paid veneration to Buddhist masters. The question then really is if the claim of exemption to venerate the ruler/emperor is imported from India as a rule which the receiving culture, the Chinese, could not accept, or whether this was a common issue on the Chinese side of religions which claimed such an exemption. Why, for instance, did the Daoists (to my best knowledge) never run into similar problems: does this mean that they always bowed in front of the emperor? And there is, of course, also the question of whether the control which the state held over the Buddhist sangha was completely absent in India – without being able to bring evidence of either side; the answer, in the light of Indian normative statecraft as reflected in certain texts, would rather suggest that Indian rulers were as much eager to control the quasi-extraterritorial communities of monastics as their Chinese counterparts.[46]

I suspect that not only these special 'cases' of acclaimed Sinicization played a role in the distinction between an 'Indian Buddhism' and a specific 'Chinese Buddhism' which, in the end, is the underlying foundation of the concept of Sinicization: Indian Buddhism, at least in an earlier period of research in the second half of the nineteenth and the twentieth century, was identified with the only surviving form of 'Indic' Buddhism, the Theravāda tradition and its textual 'garb,' the Pāli canon, which then, compared with Chinese Buddhism would, of course, suggest a drastic change of Buddhism during its historical development in China. It is then, at the same time, probably the deficiency of Indian sources from other 'schools' of Buddhism which made and makes it difficult to come up with examples which could relativize some of the claims of Sinicization.

What is neglected in the discussion about Sinicization is the materiality of Buddhism, the material culture, which came together with the religion from India via Central Asia to China. This is a bit surprising since it is objects and visibility (symbols) which, according to John Kieschnick, 'provide us [the opportunity] for understanding this curious mechanism of influence [i.e. of shifts in meaning].'[47]

There are plenty of examples which could be discussed here, but I would like focus on the stūpa as a symbol of the Buddha's presence *in absentia* (at least in India) and often as the building in which relics were enshrined.[48] The obvious difference between the Indian type of stūpas and Chinese stūpas or pagodas points towards a Sinicization of this typical form of Buddhist architecture but the history of development and process of the change from an inaccessible mound-shaped structure to a multi-storied accessible tower-like building is far from clear.

As an example of where the Sincization model is not really helpful to understand what happened 'on the way from Magadha to Chang'an,' I would like to discuss one specific example, the comparison of a stūpa which has been identified as the Wild Goose stūpa near Rājagṛha in Central India mentioned in the ninth chapter of Xuanzang's 玄奘 (600 or 602–664; travelled 629–245) *Datang Xiyu ji* 大唐西域記 [Western Regions of the Great Tang, *T* no. 2087] (subsequently called Record) and the pagoda in Chang'an 長安 which bears the same name (Dayan ta 大雁塔)[49] and is supposed to be inspired by its Indian counterpart.[50] The Indian stūpa is very likely to be identified with the Giriyak (Giryek) stūpa on top of a mountain peak northeast of the southern Rājgir range.[51] There is no obvious connection between the two architectural structures. Although the building as we see it today is a reconstruction after the original one built by emperor Gaozong 高宗 (628–683; ruled 649–665/683) in 652 on behalf of Xuanzang collapsed, the description of the original stūpa does not fully correspond to the Indian structure, although Xuanzang's biography, the *Datang Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan* compiled by Huili and Yancong after Xuanzang's death, claims that it was constructed according to the principles of the Western Regions, here more specifically meaning India:

> In the third month of the third year [of the era Yonghui 永徽] (652), the dharma master wanted to build a stone stūpa[52] south of the main gate of the [Da Cien] Monastery to safely store the sūtras and statues brought from the Western Regions, [because he] was afraid [of the fact that] the world is impermanent and that the sūtras would be scattered and lost and also [wanted] to protect [them] from all [kinds of] disaster like fire. The height of the stūpa was thirty *zhang*[53] and displayed the sublime foundation of the great kingdoms[54] as the ancient traces of the Śākya[muni]. [When they] were about to start the construction, the emperor was informed by an official message, and [the emperor] gave order to the palace secretariate drafter Li Yifu (614–666) to tell the dharma master: 'The merit of the master's intention to build the stūpa is immense, [but his majesty] fears that it is will be difficult to finish [it, and therefore] it is [more] suitable to use bricks to build it. [We] also do not want to cause the master trouble, [therefore I] have already ordered that the master should be assisted by [donation of] the robes and belongings of seven deceased of the crown prince's quarters in the palace and the palatial side quarters [which] should be sufficient to finish [the construction].' Thereupon, bricks were used but [the site] was moved to the western [monastic] courtyard. The [length of] each side of the foundation of this [stūpa] was 140 *chi*, it imitated the standard of the Western Regions and did not follow the old style [of Chinese stūpas]. The stūpa had five levels, and together with the wheel[-shaped umbrellas] and the dew-basin [on top] had a height of 180 *chi*. In the center of each floor were relics, sometimes more than a thousand, two thousand, or [even] ten thousand grains. As the highest floor a stone chamber was made. On its southern side were two stelae with the 'Preface to the Sacred Teachings of the Tripiṭaka' and the 'Memorandum [to the Sacred Teachings of the Tripiṭaka]' of the two Holy [Emperors, i.e. Taizong and Gaozong] written by the brush of the duke of He'nan, vice director of department of state of the right Chu Suliang (596–658). 三年春三月, 法師欲於寺端門之陽造石浮圖, 安置西域所將經像, 其意恐人代不常, 經本散失, 兼防火難. 浮圖量高三十丈, 擬顯大國之崇基, 為釋迦之故迹. 將欲營築, 附表聞奏. 勅使中書舍人李義府報法師云: "師所營塔功大, 恐難卒成, 宜用甎造. 亦不願師辛苦, 今已勅大內東宮, 掖庭等七宮亡人衣助師, 足得成辦." 於是用甎, 仍改就西院. 其塔基面各一百四十尺, 倣西域制度, 不循此舊式也. 塔有五級, 并相輪, 露槃, 凡高一百八十尺. 層層中心皆有舍利, 或一千, 二千, 凡一萬餘粒. 上層以石為室. 南面有兩碑, 載二聖《三藏聖教序》, 《記》, 其書即尚書右僕射河南公褚遂良之筆也.[55]

Clearly, with its square basement of ca. 47 m of a height of 4 m, its size (ca. 25 m at the basis and 60 m high) and proportions, the five stories with a stone chamber on top the

stūpa in Chang'an looked at the same time similar and very different compared with its assumed Indian model with an originally stretched cylindrical body of an estimated height of less than 20 m with a drum of less than 10 m on a square base about 4 m height.[56] The original Wild Goose Stūpa in Chang'an very likely rather looked like earlier Chinese models with some innovative elements like the stone chamber on top which does not have, as far as I know, any Indian parallel; nor is there a stūpa completely made of stone as originally planned by Xuanzang (if this detail in the Biography is correct). Is the Dayan ta therefore a sinicized version of its Indian model, and was Xuanzang responsible for the changes or, at least, accepted this 'transformation?' I suggest that it should not be so surprising that the stūpa was built in a more standard Chinese style (quadrangular ground plan of both the foundation and the upper part, accessible stories) with some special features which gave the impression of a more authentic Indian form. The concept of Sinicization does not really help to elucidate this specific case – one could rather make the case for an attempt to construct an exotically looking (Indianized?) version of a stūpa.

This example may point to a very basic problem with the concept of Sinicization. Not only Erich Zürcher, despite the provocative term 'conquest' in the title of his seminal study, has rightfully emphasized:

> The spread of Buddhism among the gentry was an almost exclusively Chinese affair, in which the foreign missionaries hardly took part. It was accomplished in the course of the fourth century by a restricted number of Chinese monks of great fame and standing, whose name occur again and again in contemporary literature.[57]

If there is any merit in generalizing this statement and including what also happened in the North, one could ask the question: how can something (like Buddhism in China) undergo a process like Sinicization when it was pretty much Chinese from the very beginning?

Is it not the high degree of literacy and cultural and civilizational standing, the number of sources which reflect a conscious engagement with Buddhism's Indianness which then creates the impression that 'Chinese Buddhism' – a reified entity in its complex history and 'landscape' (question mark) – has lost a big chunk of its Indianness in a purposeful transformation by Chinese agents? Is Christianity in its different forms as pure Christian as the traditions claim, and less 'tainted' by the cultures to which it came or was brought? Why is there no scholarly (serious) discourse, for instance, about the 'Germani(ci)zation' (Germanisierung) of Christianity?[58] Why no scholarly discourse on the 'Irani(ci)zation' or 'Persianization' of Islam? Is it the civilizational 'superiority' in one case – China – which projects a more thorough adaptation process (Sini-cization) than in other cases? These are all questions which should be and have to be asked when talking about historical developments and changes in religious contexts in general and in Chinese culture: whether -(c)ization paradigms are the right hermeneutical tools to help answer them.

After this rather lengthy discussion of the paradigm or concept of Sinicization and having asked quite some questions about its hermeneutical value, I would like to focus on a couple of test cases to illustrate my theory that, at least in the first millennium, the so-called Sinicization of Buddhism, the mature acculturation of the originally Indian tradition to a Chinese cultural and social environment, has to be counterbalanced by a look at discourses or developments which clearly constitute attempts of integrating 'India,' the

homeland of Buddhism, in form of an imagined idealized Buddhist 'realm' of orthopraxy[59] into the Chinese context. I am not claiming here, of course, that this is another form of Indianization – although I am sure that Hu Shih would have loved these cases; I just want to point out that what constitutes – 'is' – Chinese Buddhism at a specific point in time (and place) is multilayered and cannot be understood by and under essentialist labels like 'Indian' and 'Chinese' resulting from an essentialist selection of sources.

Bringing India to China (?)

It seems to me that Chinese sources which are concerned directly with India may be good test cases to critically assess (or reassess) the concept of Sinicization, but they are usually sidelined in favour of Chinese sources and ideas and concepts which reflect a 'Chinese' influence or twist. Unfortunately, we only possess from the first millennium about two handful of sources of Chinese – all of them, as far as we know, Buddhist monks with one remarkable exception, the layman and official envoy Wang Xuance 王玄策 (active 648– ca. 665) – who had gone to China, some of them fragmentary, which directly thematize India and, of course, due to the inclination of the authors, Buddhism.

The small number of texts may have contributed to a negligence or marginalization of these sources in scholarly literature discussing Sinicization. In his original PhD dissertation, Robert Sharf calls the case where Chinese directly engaged with 'India' – in form of a direct experience in form of a journey to India or a contact or collaboration with Indian monks – 'rare exceptions,'[60] a statement which certainly is correct but is not really recognizing, as I would claim, the connected and ongoing discourse about India and things (Buddhist) Indian in the early Tang period which reflects a continuous preoccupation with the sacred land of the Buddha. I see a continuity between the earliest known record about India, produced by Dao'an 釋道安 (312–285) in his lost *Xiyu zhi* 西域志 [Memoirs of the Western Region], Faxian's 法顯 (travelled 319–413) *Foguo ji* 佛國記 [Record of the Buddhist Kingdoms], a number of lost travelogues and records in the fifth and sixth centuries, and an increased interest in the Western Regions or India under the Sui and Tang,[61] and would therefore suggest that the 'Indian' discourse among Chinese Buddhists was not as marginal as Sharf assumes. This interest in India as a real destination of religious travelling – exemplified by Yijing's 義淨 (635–713) short biographies of monks going to India, subsequent Buddhist travelers like the Sino-Korean Huichao 惠超 (active 727–773) and Wukong 悟空 (travelled 751–790), and the Chinese inscriptions from the Song period which were found at the place of Enlightenment in Bodhgayā – and as an imagined entity (Daoxuan's *Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦 方志 [Memoirs of Regions of Śākya(muni)]) was much larger than the surviving sources suggest and had a longer duration which ended only with the decline and final disappearance of Buddhism in its motherland and the waning of support for Buddhism in the Song empire towards the end of the eleventh century.

In their 'Introduction' to an edited volume about the Chinese imagination of India, the editors, John Kieschnick and Meir Shahar, make the following statement:

> [And] while the accounts of India by Faxian, Xuanzang, and Yijing remain valuable for understanding India in the medieval period, they were written for a particular Chinese

audience and reflect the way these three talented Chinese pilgrims wanted their trips to be perceived in China. In other words, as sources for literate Chinese to understand India, the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims provided only indirect access to India, tied up with the preconceptions of both the authors and what the authors assumed their Chinese readers wanted to know.[62]

One could unpack several 'preconceptions' about the so-called Chinese pilgrim records in this short quotation, but here I would like to focus on the implications which these preconceptions have on the question or problem of Sinicization. Although it is not expressed literally, the two sentences contain the assumption that the travelogues (pilgrim records) are reflecting a sinicized picture of India, looking at India, as it were, through a Chinese 'looking glass.' Instead of asking the question why the 'travelogues' present India in a specific way and tracing the at times complex net of patterns, tropes and rhetorical tools in the sources, and also the individual motivation and intentionalities of the author, it is assumed that there is another, more unbiased and therefore objective way to present India to a Chinese educated audience. But what would such a Chinese audience want to know? How is the 'preconceived' way of depicting India of these Chinese authors different from, let us say, Megasthenes' 'description' of India, Pausanias' account of Greek temples, Marco Polo's record of what he had 'seen' in Asia, etc? Do we expect from the sources information that we would expect from a modern scholarly cultural history or geography account about a specific region or a Baedeker-like handbook for subsequent travelers? Seen from a modern hermeneutical point of view – no matter which trend or 'turn' one follows – it should be less than surprising that texts are complex structures and have to be analyzed and contextualized accordingly.

With respect to the question of Sinicization and its usability as an analytic tool, one could (and should) ask whether the authors of these records deliberately or unconsciously, represent India or Indian Buddhist 'culture' in a Chinese garb because of an embedded 'instinct' or automatism of Sinicization. What does it contribute to our understanding of a text if we postulate its sinicized or sinicizing nature or tenor? Does such a generalizing statement not sometimes block our view on more subtle contexts and discourse strategies which are more elucidating than generalizations?

Although I will put my focus, for the practical purpose of the length of this article, on Chinese who had been to India – the so-called Chinese Buddhist 'pilgrims' – I am, in principle and practically, not excluding texts or sources (potentially also those which have been lost over time) of Buddhist authors who had not been in India but still wrote about it such as Shi Daoan 釋道安 (312–285) (the lost *Xiyu zhi* 西域志 [Memoirs of the Western Region]) or Daoxuan 道宣 (ca. 569–667) (*Shijia fangzhi* 釋迦方志 [Memoirs of Regions of Śākya(muni)], *T* no. 2088; see below).

If we accept that what shaped early Chinese Buddhism was, beyond the truism that the religion came from India, not much Indian but Chinese, then the question arises how much Indian Chinese Buddhism ever was. This has obvious ramifications on the hermeneutical value of the Sinicization concept. Was there an awareness among (certain) Chinese Buddhists (and non-Buddhists) that Chinese Buddhism was different from Indian Buddhism? The answer is a clear 'yes' for the period of the first millennium CE. Chinese Buddhists were aware that the region of origin of their religious tradition was a Western Region (Xiyu 西域) which they named, more specifically, by various terms like

Shendu 身毒 and Tianzhu 天竺,[63] and finally, introduced by Xuanzang, Yindu 印度.[64] For Chinese Buddhists this region clearly was identified as the homeland of their religion and, in a way and for some Chinese Buddhists more than others, was a 'place of longing' (German: 'Sehnsuchtsort').[65] Chinese Buddhists developed different ways of conceptualizing the real and cultural distance, one being the idea that they were living in a borderland (*biandi* 邊地)[66] while the 'real' Middle Kingdom was Central India or the region of Magadha where the Buddha once lived and preached the dharma, another one was to integrate China into the *oikumene* of Buddhist sacred geography and cosmology.

If the metaphor of conquest implies an agent or agents that infiltrate and finally defeat an invaded territory – be it real of cultural/religious – these agents could be seen, at best, in the Indian and Central Asian 'missionaries' or monks who brought Buddhist texts and – we may assume – practices to China, probably starting in the first century of the Christian era or earlier. Attempts to get the 'right' or 'correct' Indian tradition to China can be seen from an early point onwards in getting Indian texts and translating them, sometimes several times at different times, and in the bringing order into the cacophony of Buddhist texts and teachings (*panjiao* 判教), but also in the collection of 'authentic' information about India.

In my case studies, I will focus on the discourse of certain Buddhist individuals about certain aspects of Buddhist monasticism, the monastery and the right practice (orthopraxy). Surprisingly – or not so much – the longest travelogue, Xuanzang's *Datang Xiyu ji*, does not contain much concrete information about monasteries and monastic traditions. The 'description' of monasteries (Nālandā, Tailāḍhaka/Telhārā) is highly idealized, and his remarks about Buddhist monastic practice are not very specific. This may be due to the fact that Xuanzang took the observation of the precepts and rules of the Vinaya for granted, and his particular interest in the philosophical (Yogācāra) and doctrinal (Abhidharma literature) aspects of Buddhism combined with a strong feeling of veneration for the sacred places of Buddhism, but also the addressed audience at the Tang court drove the content of the Record in a way that almost avoided aspects and issues of monastic life.

The absence of information about Buddhist monasticism in Xuanzang's Record does by no means reflect a disinterest in this topic in Chinese Buddhist discourse of the early Tang. Another influential Buddhist individual in the early Tang period, the very productive Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667), wrote two texts which overtly deal with India and monasticism or monasteries. One is the *Zhong Tianzhu Shewei guo Qihuan si tujing* 中天竺舍衛國祇洹寺圖經 [Illustrated Sūtra[67] of the Jetavana-Monastery in the Kingdom of Śrāvasti in Central India, *T* no. 1899].[68] Interestingly, the choice of the monastery, Jetavana, as an idealized Buddhist monastery is the same as in some Indic Vinaya texts, not necessarily in the Dharmaguptakavinaya propagated by Daoxuan but, for example, in the Theravāda Vinaya or in the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya.[69]

The other text is the Shijia fangzhi, a compilation which discusses Buddhist cosmology and India's position in it. Janine Nicol has convincingly demonstrated in her Ph.D. dissertation that Daoxuan's *Shijia fangzhi* is, in its essence, a reaction to Xuanzang's Record.[70] While using the bulk of information about India in the *Shijia fangzhi* from Xuanzang's Record, Daoxuan has tried in a subtle way, according to Nicol, to include and position China in the sacred geography of Buddhism, thus finding a remedy for the Chinese borderland syndrome which was, in a way, augmented by

Xuanzang's Record which, despite the *captationes benevolentiae* to the Chinese emperor Taizong,[71] projected an India with a potential to challenge the civilizationally superior position of the Tang empire.

While all this is convincing and true, the story does not end there. In a central passage of Yijing's (635–713, travelled 675–685) anthology of 'dharma searching eminent monks,' the *Datang Xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan* 大唐西域求法高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks Searching for the Dharma in the Western Regions of the Great Tang, *T* no. 2066] (abbreviated as Biographies),[72] the Chinese monk seems to react to Daoxuan's claim that India and the sacred Buddhist places can be visualized and therefore be projected in the correct and authentic, therefore authoritative, way onto Chinese soil:

> [When I] formerly was in the capital [I] saw a man drawing the model of Jetavanavihāra, [but it] was completely based on empty phantasy. According to [my] comprehensive and different information [I] briefly outline [Indian monasteries] as [they really] are. 曾憶在京見人畫出祇洹寺樣, 咸是憑虛. 為廣異聞, 略陳梗概云爾.[73]

To contextualize this sentence, it is important to point out that it is inserted in an extensive 'description' of Nālandā and its institutional functioning as an ideal (idealized) Indian monastery.[74] I suggest that this is a direct reaction to Daoxuan's claim and propagation of 'his' envisioned Jetavanavihāra as the ideal Buddhist monastery. Yijing does not criticize Daoxuan directly, whose legacy as a Buddhist Vinaya master and polymath could hardly be questioned, but uses the intermediary figure of 'a man drawing a model.'

> Although [I] have explained the arrangement of the monastery[75] [I] fear that it is in the end still misleading, and therefore [I] painted this map and hope that this will [let it] appear before [one's] eyes without diversion. If this can cause the erection of [monasteries] according to this plan, [then this] will indeed [create a] China [with a] Rājagṛha, [and] then [monasteries] will be built without difference [to Indian monasteries]. 雖復言陳寺樣, 終恐在事還迷, 為此畫出其圖, 冀令目擊無滯. 如能奏請依樣造之, 即王舍支那, 理成無別耳.[76]

It is important to note that Yijing does not oppose the idea that Buddhist India can be projected (copied or imitated) in China, on the contrary: his reference to Rājagṛha probably bears more connotational and suggestive meaning than it looks at first glimpse. It is the closest ancient city to Nālandā where major episodes of the extended biography of the Buddha happened, including the important First Council after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. On the one hand, Rājagṛha is mentioned because it complements Nālandāmahāvihāra in the same way as city of Śrāvastī, the capital of the capital of the kingdom of Kosala, does complement Jetavanavihāra. Furthermore, Rājagṛha was the capital of the central kingdom of Magadha at the time of the Buddha where the Buddha was supported by the most powerful kings of his time, the Magadhan kings Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru.

The concrete model for such implicitly suggested building of monasteries would have been the map (*tu* 圖) of Nālandā drawn, according to the passage above, by Yijing himself. Unfortunately, this map is lost, but we can assume that it would have corrected some of the features of Daoxuan's 'description' – and, in fact, his map[77] – of the Jetavanavihāra.

The importance of Rājagṛha and Yijing's wish to transform China in a Buddhist realm which is on par with India is also emphasized in the last two lines of the poem with which Yijing finishes his *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳 [Record of the Inner Dharma Sent Back from the Southern Sea, abbreviated as Record]:[78]

> [I] really hope that Vulture Peak (Gṛdhrakūṭa) is like [Mount] Shaoshi [and] that Rājagṛha equals the 'Divine Land' (i.e. China). 實望齊鷲峯於少室, 並王舍於神州 ![79]

Referring to Rājagṛha and the Vulture Peak as representing India could be a suggestion to the Chinese ruler, at this time the notorious empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (624–705, ruled as empress of the Zhou 周 dynasty 690–705), to support Buddhism. This assumption becomes more plausible not only in the light of the empress's policy who had assumed independent rulership in 690, less than two years before Yijing 'sent back' both his texts, the Biographies and the Record, from Southeast Asian Śrī Vijaya to China. Wu Zetian is well known for having used Buddhist symbolism as a means of legitimization for her own rule.[80] Yijing obviously appeals to this self-legitimizing appetite of the empress by suggesting transforming China into an image or mirror of Buddhist India which included the construction of authentic monasteries after the model of Nālandā. Shaoshi shan 少室 山 as a match with the Vulture Peak on which the Buddha is supposed to have delivered most of his sermons, including the Mahāmeghasūtra (see below), certainly is not randomly chosen in this case: Shaoshi shan is a mountain near Luoyang, the city which Wu Zetian had chosen as her capital; the mountain is the location of the famous Shaolin si 少林寺 which enjoyed the support of emperor Taizong 太宗 (598–649, r. 626–649) and of the empress.[81] The parallelism of Shaoshi shan with Vulture peak/Jiufeng 鷲峯 in the poem seems to indicate the same correlation for Zhina 支那 or Shenzhou 神州 with Rājagṛha/Wangshe 王舍.

In the year 690, a group of monks presented a copy of the *Mahāmegha sūtra/Dayun jing* 大雲經 with a commentary to Wu Zetian, which enabled the empress to identify herself with a female ruler figure in the sūtra prophesized by the Buddha and claimed to be a wheel-turning world ruler (*cakravartin*).[82] It is very likely that Yijing had heard about these developments at the court in China: there must have been busy traffic of Buddhist monks from the kingdom of Śrī Vijaya, where Yijing had returned after a brief accidental visit to Guangzhou in 689, and China. Towards the end of the Record, Yijing explicitly addresses the '*bhadanta*s of the Great Zhou' (義淨敬白大周諸大德).[83] Yijing may have used his connections to subtly suggest to the empress, via the influential group of monks and his Record, to create an India in China. This would have been in accordance with the commentary which explained away the fact that according to the Buddha's prophecy in the sūtra the female ruler was supposed to rule over a kingdom in South India by assuming that this just means Jambudvīpa as the southern continent in the Buddhist cosmological scheme. It is possible that the empress appreciated the support even though she did not seize the helpful hand given by Yijing: when he finally returned to China in the year 695, he received full support through Wu Zetian.[84]

For Yijing, it obviously is the question of authority and authenticity which is at stake: can someone who has never been to India – like Daoxuan – claim an authentic representation of Indian Buddhism and of Buddhist monasteries? This question is embedded in a socio-political context, the predominance of the Dharmaguptakavinaya tradition linked to Daoxuan and the quest for imperial support. The point is not so much

to 'implant' authentic Indian monasteries in China – after all, Yijing's 'description' of Nālandā in the Biographies does not correspond to what is known from the archaeological remains *in situ*[85] – but about who is supposed to have the major voice in the discourse in certain issues concerning Buddhism in China. The paradigm of Sinicization – and Indianization, as it were – does not help to understand the motifs and intentionality underlying this discourse.

(Re-)establishing Indian monasticism in China (?)

As early as the interest in India as a real and/or imagined region or territory are attempts to get the 'right' Indian Buddhism to China – clearly not a typical process of Sincization. While the earliest graspable evidence of an active quest for an authentic Buddhism from India was one for a Mahāyāna text, Zhu Shixing's 朱士行 search (ca. 260) for the Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prjajñāpāramitā which ended in Khotan because Shixing got hold of a copy,[86] at time it was more orthopraxy which seems to have been an urgent matter for Chinese monastics: Faxian starts his travelogue with his unhappiness about the state and practice of the monastic precepts and the incompleteness of the Vinaya, the monastic code, in China:

> Faxian, [when] formerly residing in Chang'an, deplored the deficiencies of the Vinayapiṭaka [in China]. 法顯昔在長安, 慨律藏殘缺.[87]

While Faxian's 'successor' Xuanzang, according to his Record and his Biography, was mainly interested in Mahāyāna sūtras like the *Large Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*, Abhidharma and Yogācāra texts, and their transmission (translation) to China. That he was not completely disinterested in matters related to orthopraxy or monastic practice in India is shown in a brief note in Yijing's Record about the correct way to wear the *kāṣāya*:

> The edge of the *kāṣāya* hangs down [the breast] straight like the trunk of an elephant, [and] all Indian monks from North to South [wear it] in exactly the same manner. Indeed, because thin silk slips down from the shoulder it caused the proper way to be replaced by the wrong [way]. Later, [when] the Tripiṭaka[-master] of the Tang (i.e. Xuanzang) came [back from India, he] transmitted the style to hang [the edge of the *kāṣāya*] over the shoulder. But even then, there were still many old virtuous [Chinese monks] who had misgivings that the errors of the old chaps are still around everywhere. 裟裟角垂, 正當象鼻. 梵僧縱至, 皆亦雷同. 良為絹 滑墮肩, 遂令正則訛替. 後唐三藏來傳搭肩法, 然而古德嫌者尚多, 黨舊之迷在處皆有.[88]

Xuanzang's 'successor' who left textual witness of his journey to India is Yijing who, like Faxian, went to India to get hold of an authentic Vinaya tradition, the one of the Mūlasarvāstivādin which very likely was the main Vinaya at Nālandā Mahāvihāra and in the heartland of Buddhism, in Magadha.[89] In his Record, Yijing seems to make a similar claim as in the Biographies (see above), that by reading the Record – and by implication then practicing the rules in a correct way – Buddhist India could be emulated in China: 'If [one] reads this [Record], [one] does not have to take the trouble of even a step of one *chi* [distance], and [still] can walk through the Five Indias in a short length' (閱此則不勞尺步, 可踐五天於短階; …).[90]

As we have seen in the last section, Yijing was aware of Daoxuan's status, particularly as a propagator and commentator of the Dharmaguptakavinaya tradition in form of its

Vinaya, the *Sifen lü* 四分律 [Vinaya of Four Sections, *T* nos. 1428–1431][91] in Chinese translation.[92] I suggest that Yijing here and in other passages in the Record engages in an ongoing discourse about a correct and authentic Vinaya tradition in China not only through his translation and attempted propagation of the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya but also in the presentation of the Indian system of Vinaya branches in the Record.[93] Although he could and did not directly criticize Daoxuan and the fact that it was the Vinaya promoted by the famous Vinaya-master, the *Sifen lü*, which then, from the eighth century onwards, was indeed the authoritative Vinaya accepted by Chinese monastics, his misgivings with the predominance of this *nikāya*, or rather the practical application with its deviant practices, become evident if the logic behind Yijing's slightly odd presentation is understood and linked with specific critical remarks made in the Record.

I will start with Yijing's well-known remarks about the *nikāya*s in India in the introduction of the Record, and with the controversial statement that there are only four principal *nikāya*s:

> The origin of all branches of the *nikāya*s are different, [but according] to the transmission in the Western Kingdoms, there are generally only four. 諸部流派, 生起不同, 西國相承, 大綱唯四.[94]

Yijing then describes the distribution of these four *nikāya*s in India as the Āryamahāsāṅghikanikāya, the Āryasthaviranikāya, the Āryamūlasarvāstivādanikāya and the Āryasaṃmitīyanikāya with their respective branches (which add up to the 'traditional' 18 'sects') and a short remark about their Tripiṭaka which specifies that only the canon of the Saṃmitīya is considerably (three times) longer than the ones of the other *nikāya*s.

At the very end of his introduction to the Record, Yijing states that:

> Generally, all that is discussed [here] is according to the Mūlasarvāstivādanikāya. The matter in the other *nikāya*s should not be confused with this [*nikāya*]. It resembles the great refuge[95] of the 'Vinaya in Ten Recitations.' The fractions of the Sarvāstivādanikāya are specifically: 1. the Dharmaguptaka, 2. the Mahīśāsaka, and 3. the Kāśyapīya; they all are not practiced in the Five Indias, [but] only here and there in the kingdom of Udyāna, and in Kucha and Khotan. But still the 'Vinaya in Ten Recitations' is not the Mūlasarvāstivādanikāya. 凡此所論, 皆依根本說一切有部, 不可將餘部事見糅於斯. 此與《十誦》大歸相似. 有部所分三部之別, 一法護, 二化地, 三迦攝卑, 此並不行五天, 唯烏長那國. 及龜茲于闐雜有行者. 然《十誦律》亦不是根本有部也.[96]

The last sentence has caused some bewilderment among scholars concerned with the historical relationship between the Sarvāstivāda and the Mūlasarvāstivāda, a discussion I will not have the space and aim to go into here. From the strict inner-textual viewpoint of Yijing's Record, it is obvious that he uses Sarvāstivāda (usually abbreviated as Youbu 有部)[97] and Mūlasarvāstivāda (Genben shuo yiqieyou bu 根本說一切有部 and abbreviated variants) synonymously.[98] The statement that the 'Vinaya in Ten Recitations' is not Mūlasarvāstivādanikāya then makes sense since Yijing had to address the oddity that the Vinaya which he translated himself was clearly not identical with the *Shisong lü* 十誦律 or 'Vinaya in Ten Recitations' (*T* nos. 1435–1437, and *T* no. 1439).[99]

The predominant Vinaya tradition of China, the one of the Dharmaguptaka, is clearly marked as an offspring and subdivision of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda. Its role is further downplayed by its restriction to specific regions which are, except for the extreme

Northwest (Udyāna), all outside of India (see above) and in China where in certain regions the Dharmaguptaka was previously, according to Yijing,[100] in competition with the Mahāsāṅghika and the Sarvāstivāda:

> But in Eastern China, generally most [monastics] practice the Dharmaguptaka, [while] in previous times everywhere in the 'Center [beyond] the Pass' (i.e. the Shaanxi plain) the Mahāsāṅghika was [practiced] beside [the Dharmaguptaka], and in the past in the 'South of the River' (i.e. south of the Yangzi) the Sarvāstivāda flourished. 然東夏大綱, 多行法護. 關中諸處, 僧祇舊兼. 江南嶺表, 有部先盛.[101]

Yijing exhorts his readers that one's own Vinaya tradition has to be upheld and not be mixed with others, but also that the different rules prescribed in the other Vinayas have to be respected.[102] It is local heteropraxy which does not correspond to any Vinaya which is the aim of his harsh criticism. I would like to discuss one example from the Record in more details. The distinction between normative text and practice – and the correspondence of them in India and the discrepancy between them in China – is clearly made in the rather lengthy part about the correct way of making and wearing the monastic robes, the only place in the 'descriptive' four fascicles of the Record where Yijing refers to the Dharmaguptakavinaya:

> Further like the three robes of the saṅgha of the dharma – in the five Indias the strips are stitched, and only in China [they] are [left] open and are not sewed. I myself asked in the kingdoms of the North [of India] at places where the 'Vinaya in Four Sections' is practiced, and [they] all agreed that the strips are stitched and are not left open at all. If [someone] in the Western regions receives a dharma robe from China, [he] first seams [the strips] and then draps [it] over the shoulder. The Vinayas of all *nikāya*s say that [the strips have to] be stitched together. 且如法眾三衣, 五天並皆刺葉, 獨唯東夏開而不縫. 親問北方諸國行《四分律》處, 俱同刺葉, 全無開者. 西方若得神州法服, 縫合乃披. 諸部律文皆云刺合.[103]

The point of controversy here – how to stitch the strips of cloth for the robe in the right way, or in the case of the correct wearing of the *kāṣāya* discussed above – may seem trivial but it should be remembered that the robe was one of the outer and visible distinctive symbols of Buddhist monkhood.[104] It is important to note that what is criticized here is not the Vinaya as such but people who misinterpret or violate its regulations.

Yijing never directly criticizes the most famous Vinaya-master of the time Daoxuan who so successfully propagated the Dharmaguptakavinaya in China. However, it is clear that, when criticizing the way in which the robes are fabricated in China without naming the famous Vinaya master, Yijing refers to a story in the *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu* 道宣律師感通錄 [Vinaya-Master Daoxuan's Record of Miraculous Responses] in which the exact way of stitching the robe which Yijing propagates is ridiculed by Daoxuan:

> And another question: [one] often sees monks coming from the Western Regions, [and] the strips of [their] robes are mostly stitched – why?[105] Answer: Two hundred years after the nirvāṇa of the Buddha, a monk from North India lived together with a heretic. The heretic was jealous of him and clandestinely put a sharp knife into the strips of the robe. Together they went to the king, and the heretic told the king: 'The *śramaṇa*, the son of the Śākya[muni] hides a blade and wants to harm the king.' And because [the knife] was found, [the king] put all bhikṣus in the kingdom to death. At that time, there was an arhat [called] Yaśas [who] gave order to all bhikṣus to sew together [the strips of their robes] as a temporary [measure] against the disastrous killing. And it was only because of this incident

in North India that the temporary [measure] was established as a rule. Nowadays, there also the bhikṣus in the South who sew together [the strips of their robes], and there are those ignorant [monks] who imitate the sewing of the [strips of the robe]. 又問: 比見西域僧來, 多縫衣葉者. 答曰: 此佛滅後將二百年, 北天竺僧與外道同住. 外道嫉之密以利刃內衣葉中. 同往王所, 外道告王: "沙門釋子內藏刀刃, 將欲害王！" 因即撿獲, 由是普誅一國比丘. 時, 有耶舍羅漢, 令諸比丘權且縫合, 為絕命難. 此乃北方因事, 權且立制, 非佛所開. 今有南方比丘, 皆亦縫合. 有無識者亦學縫之.[106]

Through this story it also becomes clear what this discussion is all about: whether or not the two layers of strips of which the robe, particularly the *kāṣāya* or *sànghāti*,[107] is made are stitched together or are allowed to form a pocket-like hollow space between the layers in which items can be concealed. Daoxuan – or his spiritual informant – claims that this is not a rule issued by the Buddha but a custom which goes back to a time 200 years after the nirvāṇa of the Buddha. The reference to the arhat Yaśas reminds one of the second Buddhist council in Vaiśālī in which a Yaśas played a leading role, and this reminiscence may have been triggered on purpose, despite the fact that there is, to my best knowledge, no tradition of this council which places this council 200 years post-nirvāṇa:[108] the way of stitching then would be, like the ten transgressions of the monks of Vaiśālī, another and similar deviation from the norms established by the Buddha. Yijing's counterargument is simple and indirectly is dismissing the story of Daoxuan that this custom was introduced 200 years after the Buddha's nirvāṇa: in India, monks do not know the custom, and all *nikāya*s, including the Dharmaguptaka, and their Vinayas confirm this.

Yijing's real opinion about Daoxuan's status as an authentic Vinaya-master may be concealed somehow in the following general statement at the very end of the Record when he talks about his own studies of the Vinaya as a young monk and puts side to side Fali and Daoxuan:

> For five years [I] meticulously dedicated [myself to the study of] the Vinaya texts – the commentarial texts of the Vinaya-master [Fa]li were on the whole about deep and profound [issues], the exegetical writings of the Vinaya-master [Dao]xuan were simply about the grand instruction. 於是五稔之間, 精求律典. 礪律師之文疏, 頗議幽深; 宣律師之鈔述, 竊談中旨.[109]

Fali 法礪 (569–635) was known as the 'patriarch' of the so-called Xiangbu 相部 Vinaya school, an early proponent of and commentator on the *Sifen lü*.[110] That Yijing mentions him seems logical as at the time when he probably studied the Vinaya, still under the guidance of his own master Shanyu 善遇, Daoxuan had not yet risen to his later prominence, and the commentary of the earlier master obviously still was well-known and studied.[111] What is more of interest here is that Fali's commentary is characterized as discussing the 'deep and profound [points]' while Daoxuan's work is almost ironically denigrated as overdone.[112]

That Daoxuan's authority as a Vinaya-master was not accepted without reservation and criticism in the last decades of the seventh century may also be learnt from an episode reported in Xuanzang's biography, the *Datang Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan* 大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳 (Biography). This episode very likely stems from Yancong 彥悰, the 'editor' of Huili's 慧立 original biography, and probably reflects tensions between the two great masters or their followers which are otherwise hidden behind the respectful tone of the sources:[113] some years after Xuanzang's death and following his own 'strategy' or receiving authentic instructions from India, Daoxuan has a vision (or a visit) of an

Indian deity who tells him about mistakes and errors in his work and instructs him to correct them lest the dharma is transmitted in a corrupt form to future generations.[114] The god then explains to Daoxuan the superiority of Xuanzang.[115] What is interesting here is: (1) that this episode which is, in a way, ridiculing Daoxuan stems from around the year 688 when Yancong finished his editorial work of the Biography and empress Wu Zetian showed increased signs of using Buddhism for her own legitimization attempts;[116] and (2) that the story is inserted quite abruptly and anachronistically between a summary of Xuanzang's greatness and Xuanzang's death. The agenda behind the insertion of this story, clearly denigrating Daoxuan's status, may have been to recommend Xuanzang's Yogācāra school as a fitting Buddhist 'ally' to the empress in her ongoing legitimation attempts. This then may suggest that Yijing had a similar 'plan'; that is, to gain imperial support to establish the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya as the authentic monastic tradition in China – which in the end was not successful.

The closest Yijing comes to reflecting the concept of Sinicization in form of a reproach of such an attempt by Chinese monks in relation to Vinaya-norms and practice are his remarks on the defects of Chinese monks who do not follow the rules of the Vinaya:

> There are those who displayed violations against the standard of the Vinaya but still provide guidance [in it]; or others who allow practice of secular [customs] to become permanent and still call [this] no transgression, or others saying: 'The Buddha was born in a Western kingdom, and those who have left the householder's life [behave] according to the etiquette of the Western kingdoms. We, who are living in the Eastern realm and have left the secular [life], practice the regulations of the Eastern realm. How can [we] give up the elegant clothes of the Divine Continent (i.e. China) and accept the different customs of India? [This] rough evaluation is just for [such] followers [of the dharma]!' 自有現違律檢, 而將為指南, 或可習俗生常, 謂其無過? 或道: 佛生西國, 彼出家者, 依西國之形儀. 我住東川, 離俗者習東川之軌則. 詎能移神州之雅服, 受印度之殊風者? 聊為此徒粗銓衡也.[117]

What is clear is that Yijing's is a reaction to the predominance of a Vinaya tradition which he thinks is in a lot of points not heteropraxy but is in dissonance with what the saṅgha practices in India.

The question in this context could be: what is the thrust of this discourse? It is tempting to read an attempt at Indianization into Yijing's agenda which reacts against a Sinicization of the Chinese Vinaya-lineage and certain monastic 'deviant' and hetero-practic customs originating – at least, in Yijing's view – from it. The question then is, again, what can be gained from a possible statement like 'Yijing reacted on the Sinicization of Chinese monastic practice by suggesting a (Re-)Indianization?' I would say: nothing – unless the context of a wider discursive struggle about authority in monastic matters which did, however, not even scratch at the surface of what was probably the greatest difference between Indian and Chinese Buddhist monasticism: entanglement between religious community and the state in China going far beyond the patronage-pattern persisting – as far as we know – in India which decided over the well-being of Buddhist monastic institutions and the Chinese saṅgha. The claim of practicing a more authentic Buddhism than the other party could be made – and was made – inside of Buddhist discourses both by claiming greater authenticity through following the Buddhist tradition, which in the case of monastic rules was clearly Indian, or by demonstrating that Buddhist practice was compatible with Chinese social and cultural norms. Whether or not the latter can be called Sinicization is not really important to

understand the discourses and their results or consequences – unless one is satisfied with the truism that a change of environment leads to adaptation.

Conclusion

I would argue, that, at least in the longer first millennium of our era, the contact between India and China was strong and continuous enough for a correspondingly strong Indian cultural influences and impetus on Chinese Buddhism. It is, however, doubtful if models of interpretation like Sinicization (or Indianization) are always useful and applicable. The discussed case studies hopefully have showcased that an interpretative template like the Sinicization paradigm does not only not help us to fully grasp ongoing discourses and underlying motivations and patterns but, to a certain extent, prevents such a comprehension.

In the end, looking for Sinicization and its 'embodiments' in the history of Chinese Buddhism is like looking for the proverbial 'nodes on a rush'[118] – for something that is so obvious that its hermeneutic and analytic value is doubtable or, at least, questionable. We may be well advised following the Buddha's well-known simile of the raft (P. *kulla*, Ch. *fa* 筏/栰):[119] whatever the value of Sinicization – and other problematic concepts or paradigms – may be to get to understand Chinese Buddhism and its development, when we have reached the other shore of analyzing the available material and have gained more insight than we had before, we may leave the rafts of our theoretical and methodological tools[120] on the shore and move on. Finally, these hermeneutical tool and concepts are, like the raft, just impermanent and often imperfect auxiliary means 'for the purpose of crossing over, not for the purpose of holding on [to them].'[121]

Notes

1. On Hu and his influence on Western perception of Chinese Buddhism, see Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 319ff., from whose article I have profited and learnt a lot.
2. Hu, 'The Indianization of China.'
3. Hu obviously thinks of Xitian 西天 and wrongly translates it literally as 'Western Heaven' while it is an abbreviation of Xi-Tianzhu 西天竺, 'Western India,' a clear case of overinterpretation.
4. Hu, 'The Indianization of China,' 151.
5. This also becomes evident in one of the first scholarly articles dealing with the Sinicization of Buddhism by Chan, 'Transformation of Buddhism,' when he, with his pro-Confucian approach, detects humanism (*ren* 仁) – for him a typical Confucian ideal – in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism.
6. This hermeneutical necessity has already been made well by Gimello, 'Random Reflections.'
7. There is no indication that Hu was aware of the paradigm of Indianization of Southeast Asia (see below).
8. See also Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, 4; Plassen, 'Some random and very prefatory ruminations.' It is, in fact, very difficult to avoid the concept of Sinicization, as can be seen in the latest history of Buddhism in China by Yü, 'Chinese Buddhism,' who manages to avoid the tricky ground of a teleological sinicizing periodization by choosing a thematic approach, but cannot fully avoid the essentializing tenor when she states at the beginning of her 'Introduction': 'The meeting and interaction between these two civilizations, Indian and Chinese, is one of the most fascinating stories of humankind. In order to understand how Buddhism, a foreign religion, became Chinese, it is necessary to provide some background

information about Buddhism as well as Han religious beliefs and philosophical ideas.' (Yü, 'Chinese Buddhism,' 1) There are exceptions: in his short historical overview and thematic discussion of Buddhism in China in a recently published volume of the series Religionen der Menschheit, Stephan Bumbacher (Bumbacher, 'Buddhismus in China') is able to avoid the Sinicization paradigm and a teleological periodization (I was not able to check the most recent history of Buddhism in China in German: Wagner, *Buddhismus in China*).

9. For an excellent and contextualizing analysis of Zürcher's work on the history of Buddhism see Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 315ff.

10. See S. Teiser's remark in the re-edition of Zürcher's *Buddhist Conquest*: 'The book shows that, contrary to the "Conquest" the title flirts with, the interaction between Indian and Chinese ideas [*sic*] took place in terms that were already Sinicized . . . In place of "conquest" or "Sinification", Zürcher prefers to use notions like "adaptation," "acculturation," "selection," "absorption," "restructuring," "hybridization," and "compartmentalization."' (Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, xiv f.; see also below)

11. See Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, 13f. For a critical review of these two fuzzy sides of the Sinicization 'coin' see Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 355ff. Note that similar criticism has been made recently in relation to the Pan-Asian use of the Chinese writing system and classical Chinese, where Chinese – slightly ironically – is to be replaced by (Literary) Sinitic: see King, 'Cosmopolitan and Vernacular.'

12. Zürcher was well aware that he only dealt with a specific stratum of society, the 'gentry'-elite and a specific region, the Chinese South. His characterization of early Buddhism is worth quoting: '. . . the whole of the North was under the domination of non-Chinese dynasties, some of which strongly stimulated the prosperity of Buddhism within their domain. But it is just because of the close ties between these "barbarian" rulers and Buddhism, that in the North Buddhism, both as a social phenomenon and as a creed, developed forms of its own and went its own ways, resulting in a picture which differs considerably from that presented by the penetration of its beliefs in the gentry society of Central and Southern China. On the other hand, the isolation of Buddhism, which in the South is one of the main reasons for the radical "sinization" [*sic*] of the doctrine, was far less complete in the North. Especially at the Buddhist centre of Chang'an, situated as it was on the Chinese branch of the transcontinental silk-road, this contact with the "West" . . . was very intensive. The result of this situation is that an adequate description of Buddhism in the North cannot be restricted to China alone, but that it must take thoroughly into account all that is known concerning contemporary developments in Central Asia and in North-Western India – with all the thorny problems this entails' (Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 4).

13. Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation*, 5. For a detailed discussion of Ch'en's 'model' of Sinicization see Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 350ff.

14. Used, e.g. by Gregory, Sharf, and also by Chen Jinhua and Ru Zhan in their 'Special Issue Information' for the planned issue 'Localization, Globalization and Glocalization: Paradigm Shifts in the Study of Transmission and Transformation of Buddhism in Asia and Beyond' of the journal *Religions* (https://www.mdpi.com/journal/religions/special_issues/BZ666O9UOP). Scholars have attempted to distinguish, although rather artificially as pointed out by Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 350, n. 198, the two terms. Note that the correspondent French term *sinisation* (or the verb *siniser*) – similar to the German term – is more reductive than the expanded English terms.

15. On the use of these terms in Chinese scholarly and political discourse see Yang, 'Sinicization or Chinafication,' 18ff., without really pointing out the use of the term Sinicization in Western scholarship. Yang suggests to translated *zhongguohua* as a term for the politically motivated process imposed by the Chinese government by the artificial 'Chinafication.'

16. In Sharf's words: '. . . when Buddhism moves from one culture to another – from India to China – what exactly moves?' (Sharf, 'The *Treasure Store Treatise*,' 5).

17. See also in the latest monograph on Sinicization by Barber: '. . . making things Buddhist acceptable to the Chinese cultural elite' (Barber, *Sinicizing Buddhism*, 4), which raises the question which already was addressed by Zürcher: what about the rest of Chinese society?

Where they less Buddhist if they did not belong to the elite? More complex and therefore, as Barber admits, 'more difficult to trace': '. . . the process whereby some phenomena created by Chinese Buddhists answered a need in the general community at a particular time and place and eventually spread coming to be accepted by various levels of society' (Barber, *Sinicizing Buddhism*, 6). While I am not quite sure what exactly Barber has in mind with these processes, the question arises how something already originating from the fold of Chinese culture can be a *-cization*: would this mean that Chinese make themselves more Chinese?

18. The attempts of more sophisticated and hermeneutically oriented scholars to insist on the processive nature of Sinicization may be an instinctive reaction to avoid the notion of such an essentialist final product; see, for instance, Gimello's hesitant 'definition': '. . . the process by which Buddhism in China acquired its particularity and became an integral part of the successive "fabrics" of Chinese civilization' (Gimello, 'Random Reflections,' 84).

19. See, for instance, Kitagawa, 'The Buddhist Transformation'; and *idem*, 'Paradigm Change.' As Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 339ff., points out, this different take on assimilation may have to do with the teleological (self-)interpretation of Japanese Buddhist history as a being the perfection of the transmitted Chinese tradition.

20. E.g. Lankaization, Thai'icization, Khmericization, etc. of Buddhism; or, in the context of Balinese religion, Hinduization of Buddhism. This 'imbalance' of Buddhist Studies discourses has already been addressed by Teiser, *Reinventing the Wheel*, 49; see also Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 356f.

21. Or Sinicization of Christianity or Islam; for Christianity see Zheng 'Introduction.' Zheng, despite the promise in the title of his 'Introduction. Christianity: Towards a Theory of Sinicization' (1ff.), is remarkably void of theoretical-methodological reflection about the key concept of Sinicization; Buddhism is only mentioned in passing-by (4, 20, 30).

22. Gimello, 'Random Reflections,' 66.

23. See Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 350. This 'active' way of Sinicization is reflected in the respective Wikipedia entry which defines it as 'the process by which non-Chinese societies or groups are acculturated or assimilated into Chinese culture, particularly the language, societal norms, culture and ethnic identity of the Han Chinese – the largest ethnic group of China.' https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinicization (accessed June 20, 2024).

24. See Huang, *Reorienting the Manchus*. Huang (3 and 20, n. 4) claims that the term was first used in 1898 for Chinese influence on Japanese Shintō.

25. This is exactly how Zürcher, 'Buddhism in a Pre-modern Bureaucratic Empire,' 34, uses the term: "Buddhism as one basic element in the Sinicization of Korea and Japan."

26. See Katzenstein, *Sinicization and the Rise of China*, 209ff.

27. On the different Indianization theories see Legge, 'The Writing of Southeast Asian History,' 6ff., and Lukas, 'Theories of Indianization.'

28. Madsen, 'Introduction.'

29. Madsen, 'Introduction,' 2. It is not clear who then should have used or is using this 'Sinicization from below' discourse or metaphor if this form of Sinicization is excluded from the scholarly domain.

30. Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China,' 307f., rightly emphasizes Arnold Toynbee's (and, indirectly, also Oswald Spengler's) influence on Arthur F. Wright's periodization model.

31. More elegantly formulated by Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, 10: 'Scholars model the process of assimilation in different ways, depending on whether they are predisposed to highlight fidelity to the Indian tradition (the Buddhist conquest of China) or the overpowering force of sinitic culture (the Chinese transformation of Buddhism).'

32. For a critique of these periodization models see Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, 7, Plassen, 'Some random and very prefatory ruminations,' 1f., and more detailed Palumbo, 'Buddhism in Premodern China.'

33. Already Zürcher used the term in the sense of a sub-category of cultural assimilation: 'Taken as a whole, Chinese Buddhism can be regarded as a classical illustration of the process of

cultural transmission and adaptation, as it shows all degrees and varieties of response, ranging from total absorption of some elements (even to the point of practically losing their Buddhist identity) to total rejection, with all intermediary types of selective adoption, adaptation, hybridization, amalgamation, compartmentalization and restructuring' (Zürcher, 'Buddhism in a Pre-modern Bureaucratic Empire,' 89). Zürcher (100ff.) then elaborates on a slightly different set of 'mechanisms' for the 'formation of Chinese Buddhism': (1) Total absorption; (2) Adoption; (3) Selection and change of emphasis; (4) Restructuring; (5) Compartmentalization; (6) Hybridization; (7) Stimulated development; and (8) Rejection. Accordingly, Zürcher's definition of hybridization is different: 'A complete merger of Buddhist and "native" notions different from "total absorption" in that in a hybrid the Buddhist characteristic inspiration is maintained throughout' (Zürcher, 'Buddhism in a Pre-modern Bureaucratic Empire,' 102). Note the avoidance of essentialist terms and the use of 'native' which Zürcher seems to apply systematically when speaking only of concrete examples of hybridization as, for instance, the frequently used 'Buddho-Daoist hybridization,' however carefully put between quotation marks; see also Teiser in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, xv.

34. See Ackermann, 'Questioning Hybridity.'

35. The early conflicts, debates and discourses are masterly discussed in Zürcher's chapter 5 (Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, 254ff).

36. This is put forward in a nice ironic twist in the earliest Buddhist apologetic text, the *Lihuo lun* 理惑論 [Treatise of Dissolving Doubts], attributed to Mouzi 牟子; as an answer to the question why he does not use Buddhist scriptures but the Chinese classics (the *Shijing* 詩經 and the *Shujing* 書經) in his response Mouzi declares (*Hongming ji, T* no. 2102. 52: 1.5c4–6): 'Because you understand the meaning of the [ancient Chinese] masters, [I] quote their writings. If I explain to you the Buddhist sūtras and talk about the substance of *nirvāṇa*, it is as if one explains the five colors to the blind or plays the five sounds to the deaf.' (吾以子知其意, 故引其事. 若說佛經之語, 談無為之要, 譬對盲者說五色, 為聾者奏五音也.)

37. This 'catalogue' is, more or less, present in most works addressing or discussing Sinicization, e.g. in Ch'en, *The Chinese Transformation*; Zürcher, 'The Impact of Buddhism'; Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification*; Barber, *Sinicizing Buddhism*.

38. I am fully aware that the historical processes, although in most cases not fully and well documented, are more complex and different; Indian and Central Asian influences cannot be ruled out. The dichotomous scheme here is deliberately taken over from the essentialist constructions juxtaposing without differentiation two cultural-civilizational blocks.

39. Taken by Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification*, as one of the defining elements of Sinicization. Strikingly, Gregory uses the term Sinicization in the title of his book but never really theorizes the concept other than making generalized statements such as: 'Indeed, the Sui-T'ang period marks an important shift in the history of Buddhism in China. For it was then that the fully acculturated forms of Chinese Buddhism assumed their mature state, one that was at once authentically Buddhist and uniquely Chinese' (Gregory, *Tsung-mi and the Sinification*, 3), without really defining what an authentic Buddhism and a unique Chineseness really are. Gregory himself points out that 'organizing' the different strands of the Buddha's teaching must have been already existent in early forms of Indian Buddhism, starting with the narratives of the First Council in Rājagṛha shortly after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha.

40. More sophisticated studies are collected in Kieschnick and Shahar, *India in the Chinese Imagination*.

41. S. Teiser has aptly summarized this hermeneutical dilemma: '. . . the concept of cultural conflict . . . presumes a fundamental opposition of difference between two distinct entities, "India," Indian Buddhism," or "Buddhism" on the one side and "China" on the other . . . The model of Sinification, no matter how refined, still relies on a criterion on Chineseness. That is, by defining the subject as a process by which Buddhism was made Chinese, the Sinification paradigm assumes rather than explains what "Chinese" means' (in Zürcher, *Buddhist Conquest*, xxi).

42. Or, seen from the other side and as E. Zürcher has observed: 'Our view of Chinese Buddhism as a historical phenomenon is greatly obscured by the abundance of source material' (Zürcher, 'Perspectives in the Study of Chinese Buddhism,' 161).
43. See Thich Thiên Châu, *The Literature of the Personalists*, and Priestley, *Pudgalavāda Buddhism*.
44. Schopen, 'Filial Piety.'
45. Scharfe, *The State in Indian Tradition*, 100.
46. Ibid., 108f.
47. Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism*, 86 (see also 154f.). Before, Kieschnick clearly debunks the concept of Sinicization as a useful analytic tool: '. . . an overarching concern with the sinicization of Buddhism – how foreign ideas were adapted to Chinese customs and concerns – is too crude to be useful.'
48. Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism*, 38f., briefly discusses the symbolism and function of the stūpa but does discuss the difference in development and shape.
49. See Thilo, *Chang'an*, 248f.; Xiong, *Sui-Tang Chang'an*, 260f. The eponymous narrative of the Indian stūpa is told in Xuanzang's Record, but it is not fully clear why (and in the opinion of some scholars, if at all) this stūpa became the model and namesake of the building constructed in Chang'an.
50. Thilo, *Chang'an*, 249.
51. See Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains*, 151f.; Singh, 'Giriyaka Hilltop Buddhist Monastic Complex.' The identification with the stūpa of the wild goose in Xuanzang's Record originally was made by Alexander Cunningham and is fairly reliable in terms of archaeological situation and the position of the site despite attempts (Singh) to identify it at another site close by.
52. The term *futu* 浮圖 for stūpa here – repeated in *Tang huiyao* 唐會要 48 – may have been used as an antiquarian word – vs. the common *ta* 塔 – to indicate the authenticity of the stūpa as a copy of the Indian original; it is used again in the dream of one of Xuanzang's disciples when a collapsing stūpa (*futu*) predicts the near death of Xuanzang (*Datang Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan, T* no. 2053, 50: 10.276c10). The name of the stūpa, Yan-ta 雁塔, 'Wild Goose Stūpa' is, as far as I can see, only given in the Song historiography *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代通載 (*Fozu lidai tongzai, T* no. 2036, 52: 12.576a28). I think that the name of the stūpa is based on an old tradition which linked the stūpa in the Chinese capital with the Indian stūpa, and that it is not, as Wang, Ju, Wang, 'Xi'an Daying ta mingcheng Suyuan,' suggest, a general term for stūpa during the Tang period.
53. This would result in a height of more than 100m and would be in contradiction to the measures in *chi* given below.
54. I think that *daguo* 大國 in the present context refers to the 16 great kingdoms in Central India at the Buddha's lifetime.
55. *Datang Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan, T* no. 2053, 50: 7.260c15–29.
56. Patil, *The Antiquarian Remains*, 151.
57. Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest*, 8; Teiser in Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest*, xiv. See also Sharf, 'The *Treasure Store Treatise*,' 80f.: 'Strictly speaking, contact occurs between people, not traditions and Buddhism took hold in China primarily through the agency of Chinese, not Indic, peoples . . . It is thus difficult to speak in simple terms of a Chinese encounter with Indian Buddhism. The encounter takes place between Chinese persons and a Buddhism already sinified if only by virtue of being rendered into Chinese.' Similarly, see Sharf, *Coming to Terms*, 2.
58. The only more recent and non-German monograph suggesting such a 'Germanization' of Christianity is, as far as I know, Russell, *The Germanization*, who is full of generalizations and essentialist ideas without really engaging with the primary sources. In a way, this is ideologically contaminated territory by the German racist-theological ('völkisch') discourses about a Germanization of Christianity (in the past and contemporary context) starting in the late nineteenth century with Arthur Bonus (1864–1941) who coined the term and continuing until the end of WWII: see Schäferdiek, 'Germanisierung des Christentums,'

and Radmüller, 'Zur Germanisierung des Christentums.' The case of Germanization of Christianity may, however, remind us of the potential underlying ideological motivation of any *-(ci)zation*, including Sinicization.

59. Robert Sharf has pointed out the influence which certain contemporary Indian concepts and practices (master-disciple transmission, the idea of immanent or bodily sudden awakening, the use of altars or/and maṇḍalas in Buddhist ceremonies) linked to the advent of 'Tantric' Buddhism had on certain Chinese Buddhist circles, including Chan, in the Tang period (Sharf, 'Buddhist Veda').

60. Sharf, 'The *Treasure Store Treatise*,' 81: '. . . the tendency among scholars is to focus on such figures as paradigmatic of the process and enculturation, rather than as the rare exceptions they were.'

61. For a discussion of these lost sources in the wider context of 'descriptions' of India see Deeg, 'When Peregrinus is not Pilgrim,' and *idem*, 'Describing the Own Other.'

62. Kieschnick and Shahar, eds., *India in the Chinese Imagination*, 3f.

63. On the different names of India in Chinese, see Bagchi, 'Ancient Chinese Names of India.'

64. On this innovative term which became the standard name for India in China see Deeg, 'Making Sense of the Other.'

65. See Deeg, 'Wailing for Identity.'

66. On this borderland complex see Forte, 'Hui-chih'; Chen, 'Dongya-fojiao-zhong de 'Biandi-qingjie''; Wang, 'Fojiao de "Zhongxinguan"'; and Deeg, 'Wailing for Identity.'

67. Or: 'Map and Sūtra of . . ..'

68. A detailed study of the text is Tan, 'Daoxuan's Vision of Jetavana'; see also Ho, 'The Ideal Monastery.'

69. See Deeg, 'Between Normativity and Material Emptiness,' 95ff. and 108.

70. Nicol, 'Daoxuan 道宣 (ca. 596–667) and the Creation of Buddhist Sacred Geography of China.'

71. For an analysis of one example from Xuanzang's Record see Deeg, 'Writing for the Emperor,' 42ff. These *captationes*, often but not necessarily positioned at the beginning of the texts, are worth a dedicated study as they showcase the topical nature of the discourse and individual approaches as well. For example, Yijing in his Record praises the Chinese ruler – in his case Wu Zetian – for exemplary support of Buddhism which does not prevent him, however, from criticizing the practice of Chinese Buddhist monastics.

72. For the Record, I follow the reading and punctuation of Wang, *Datang xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan jiaozhu*.

73. *Datang Xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan, T* no. 2066, 51: 1.6a15–16.

74. For a more detailed and contextual discussion of Yijing's 'description' of Nālandā and Daoxuan's 'description' of Jetavana, see Deeg, 'Between Normativity and Material Emptiness,' 105ff.

75. i.e. Nālandā.

76. *Datang Xiyu qiufa gaoseng zhuan, T* no. 2066, 51: 1.6a20–22.

77. Probably identical with the one contained in another work of Daoxuan, the *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing bing xu* 關中創立戒壇圖經并序 [Illustrated Scripture of the Erection of the Ordination Platform in the Guanzhong(-Era) and Preface] (*T* no. 1892, 45: 1.812a15–16). According to his own remarks, Daoxuan also relied on two textual sources, now lost, the *Shengji ji* 聖跡記 [Record of Sacred Traces], in two fascicles (*juan*) and the *Sigao* 寺誥 [Instructions (On How to Build) a Monastery] by the Sui-monk Lingyu 靈裕 (518–605): see Deeg, 'Between Normativity and Material Emptiness,' 109.

78. For the Record, I follow the reading and punctuation of Wang, *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan jiaozhu*.

79. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 4.234a5–6. On the role and function of poems of the Buddhist traveler monks to evoke feelings of longing to the Buddha's homeland and the homesickness, see Barrett, 'Exploratory Observations on Some Weeping Pilgrims,' and Deeg, 'Wailing for Identity.'

80. See Weinstein, 'Buddhism under the T'ang,' 41ff.

81. See Shahar, *The Shaolin Monastery*, 18.
82. The authoritative study is still Forte, *Political Propaganda and Ideology*; for an overview of the Mahāmeghasūtra 'case' and other Buddhist identifications of Wu Zetian see also Rothschild, *Emperor Wu Zhao and her Pantheon*, 209ff.
83. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 4.233c24. I do not suggest that the title *dade* here refers to the group of *bhadanta/dade* 大德 monks who presented the *Mahāmeghasūtra* commentary to the empress, but they would have been included among the '*bhadanta*s of the Great Zhou.'
84. Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang*, 44. Heirman, '*Vinaya*: From India to China,' 179, note 77, refers to a communication with Antonino Forte in which the late leading scholar of Buddhism under the Tang had expressed the opinion that '[i]t is not impossible that the Empress Wu Zetian … had in mind using the newly arrived *vinaya* (i.e. the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya) to her advantage …'
85. See Deeg, 'Setting the "Records" Straight,' 123ff. (also contains annotated translations of other Chinese 'descriptions' of Nālandā); and idem, 'Between Normativity and Material Emptiness,' 117ff.
86. See Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest*, 61ff.
87. *Gaoseng Faxian zhuan, T* no. 2085, 51: 1.857a6.
88. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 2.215b10–13.
89. Ibid., 1.205b4–5: As far as Magadha is concerned, the four *nikāya*s are fully studied, [but] the Sarvāstivāda-nikāya is the most flourishing (摩揭陀. 則四部通習, 有部最盛). For Yijing's synonymous use of Sarvāstivāda and Mūlasarvāstivāda see below. While I agree with Heirman, '*Vinaya*: From India to China,' 179, that Yijing's propagation of this Vinaya had to do with his studies at Nālandā, I do not think that this also had to do with the fact that this Vinaya 'had not been spoiled by any Chinese commentaries and interpretations.'
90. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 1.206b3–4.
91. *Sifen lü, T* no. 1804.2b.19: 'to establish the "[Vinaya] in Four Sections" as the standard' (*li Sifen wei ben* 立四分為本); see Sokolova, *The Awakening of the Hinterland*, 5. For the *Sifen lü* and its prominence in China see Heirman, 'Can we Trace the Early Dharmaguptakas?,' and for an overview of the different Vinayas see Clarke, 'Vinayas.'
92. For an overview on Daoxuan's Vinaya tradition see Sokolova, *The Awakening of the Hinterland*. For basic information about the Vinayas translated into Chinese see Wang, 'Buddhist Nikāyas,' 169ff.
93. In this context, it is not so surprising that Yijing's translation of the Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya was translated 'exactly the same time as another *vinaya*, the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, was imposed on the whole of China.' (Heirman, '*Vinaya*: From India to China,' 168).
94. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 1.205a.25.
95. The term *dagui* 大歸 obviously denotes the precepts and rules of a complete Vinaya tradition.
96. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 1.206b28–c4.
97. Yiqieyou-bu 一切有部 is only found once (*Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 2.214a18).
98. Wang, 'Buddhist Nikāyas,' 183, opines that Yijing uses the Chinese term without the prefigal *mūla-* for Mūlasarvāstivāda or for both, but this does not really make sense: if the unprefixed term means both *nikāya*s, they are identical.
99. Wang's ('Buddhist Nikāyas,' 183) conclusion that "Yijing seems to be more conscious in differentiating the Sarvāstivādin from the Mūlasarvāstivādin when emphasizing the differences between the *Shisong lü* and the vinaya of the Mūlasarvāstivādins" does not pay attention to the clear distinction which Yijing makes between *nikāya* and Vinaya.
100. It is difficult to decide how widely the different Vinayas were used (ordination and exclusive application of the rules). Chinese Buddhists did not indicate their *nikāya*-affiliation and -identity in texts and inscriptions as it was common, at least in case of epigraphical sources, in India. One gets the impression that the Chinese were, in general, not much concerned about *nikāya*-affiliation before the Dharmaguptaka became the main tradition. For some

examples of monks whose affiliation or interest in specific Vinayas is mentioned in Chinese texts see Wang, 'Buddhist Nikāyas,' 184ff., and Heirman, 'Can we Trace the Early Dharmaguptakas?,' 408ff.

101. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 1.205b26–27. It seems that this passage has triggered Wang, 'Buddhist Nikāyas,' 183, to suggest a historical period in China when these three Vinayas 'played their role.'

102. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 1.205c1–6.

103. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 2.212b12–16.

104. See Kieschnick, 'The Impact of Buddhism,' 87ff.

105. The translation follows the text of the parallels in the *Lüxiang gantong zhuan* and other (later) quotations of the passage which have 何 instead of 者 at the end of the sentence.

106. *Daoxuan lüshi gantong lu, T* no. 2107, 52: 1.441b11–18. The story is repeated in Daoxuan's *Lüxiang gantong zhuan, T* no. 1898, 45: 1.881a21–29.

107. See Griswold, 'Prolegomena to the Study,' 88.

108. The Dharmaguptakavinaya follows the majority of sources by placing the event 100 years after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha: see, e.g. Bareau, *Les premiers conciles bouddhiques*, 31.

109. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 4.233a26–27.

110. See Heirman, 'Can we Trace the Early Dharmaguptakas?,' 411.

111. The biography of Fali is found in Daoxuan's *Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks] under the category *minglü* 明律 [Explainer of the Vinaya] (*Xu Gaoseng zhuan, T* no. 2060, 50: 22.615c4–29).

112. I think that chosen wording is important here. The term *zhongzhi* 中旨 normally is referring to an imperial decree and is unusual in a Buddhist context. It is used once before in the Record in the context of the content of Nāgārjuna's famous Suhṛllekha to the Śātavāhana king (*Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 4.227c.16–17) and refers, in a similar way, to the overall instruction of the Buddha's *dharma*. In my opinion, the parallelism of *youshen* 幽深 and *zhongzhi* on the one hand, and of the adverbial *po* 頗 and *qie* 竊 with its rather negative connotations 'clandestine, secretive, superficial, etc.' leaves no doubt that Yijing here downplays Daoxuan's achievements as a commentator.

113. Dissent between the two monks may go back to the time when Daoxuan was, for a short period, part of Xuanzang's translation team but left it quite abruptly.

114. The deity tells Daoxuan (*Datang Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan, T* no. 2053, 50: 10.277b29–c4): [Your] disciple is the son of the general Weituo (Sanskrit Veda) among the gods, master of ghosts and deities. When the Tathāgata wanted to enter nirvāṇa, [he] gave order to [your] disciple to protect the dharma left on Jambu[dvīpa]; overall, [I] have seen that the master's practice of the precepts is pure and rigorous, that [he] is focusing on the Vinaya, and that people from all directions who have doubts come to consult [you] for solutions; [but] at times there are absurd mistakes in [your] judgement. The master has gradually grown old, his writings are not correct, [and this] then will lead later generations to mistakes; therefore, [I] have come to show the master the Buddha's [original] intentions. (弟子是韋將軍諸天之子, 主領鬼神. 如來欲入涅槃, 勑弟子護持贍部遺法, 比見師戒行清嚴, 留心律部, 四方有疑皆來諮決, 所制輕重, 時有乖錯. 師年壽漸促, 文記不正, 便誤後人, 以是故來示師佛意.)

115. *Datang Da Cien si sanzang fashi zhuan, T* no. 2053, 50: 10.277c11–12: [Xuanzang was] . . . always (i.e. rebirth after rebirth) the most excellent in the kingdom of Cīna of Jambudvīpa . . . (於贍部洲脂那國常為第一 . . .).

116. See Kotyk, 'Chinese State and Buddhist Historical Sources.'

117. *Nanhai jigui neifa zhuan, T* no. 2125, 54: 2.212b.6–11.

118. Latin: *nodum in scirpum quaerere*, German *Binsenwahrheit* (see Röhrich, *Lexikon der sprichwörtlichen Redensarten*, 129, s.v.).

119. See Majjhimanikāya 22, Allagadūpamāsutta, Trencker, *The Majjhima-Nikāya, Vol. I*, 130ff.; translation Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 228f. Chinese parallel in the *Zhong ahan jing, T* no. 26, 1: 54.764b19–c14.

120. In the sense of Zürcher's 'instrument for comparative analysis' (Zürcher, 'Buddhism in a Pre-modern Bureaucratic Empire,' 103).
121. Translation slightly changed from Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 229; original Pāli Trencker, *The Majjhima-Nikāya*, 135: . . . *nitttharaṇathāya no gahaṇatthāya*; Ch: *T* no. 26, 1: 764c.13: 欲令棄捨, 不欲令受.

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Abbreviation

T Taishō shinshū daizōkyō 大正新脩大蔵経. See Bibliography, Secondary Sources, Takakusu and Watanabe, eds.

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