

Biographies of Remarkable Monks and Vinaya Translations in view of the Belt and Road Initiative

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The most memorable fact of human history is that of a path-opening to help realize the affinity of mind and the mutual obligation of a common humanity. Such cross-cultural communication took place since the first century and the path was built between China and India by silk road as well as the shipping routes between Sri Lanka and China. The foundation for the interaction between culture and friendship among China, India, Sri Lanka and some Asian countries on the Belt and Road Initiative was laid about 2000 years ago by ancestors with infinite patience and sacrifice. In view of that, this essay seeks to explore some eminent monks who came to India and Sri Lanka to study and Indian masters who originated in Sri Lanka and China. Spread of Buddhist culture in China was further enriched by the arrival of monks - Kumārajīva, Punyatrāta, Vimalākṣa, Buddhajīva, Buddhābhaddra, Faxian, Gunavarman, Sanghavarman, and Yijing - during the Southern and Northern dynasties (420-589 C.E.) until the Tang dynasty (618-907 C.E.). Accordingly, this article mainly focuses on the Chinese Buddhist biographies collectively known as *Gaoseng Zhuan* 《高僧傳》 (*The Buddhist Biographies of Eminent Monks*), compiled by scholar-monk Huijiao's 慧皎 (497-554) around

530 C.E.. It will thus embark upon an overview on monastic biographies, so as to understand how eminent masters disseminated or translated major Indic Vinaya texts into Chinese in view of the “silk road” or “sea route”, after which major Vinaya sects were formed in Chinese Buddhism. Thus, this article provides a brief sketch of the Vinaya texts translation, and concentrates on Buddhist missionaries in China, India and Sri Lanka as recorded in Chinese Buddhist history in view of the Belt and Road Initiative.

Keywords: *eminent monk, biography, Buddhist translation, transmission, the One Belt and Road*