

Gaochang Buddhism and the Silk Road

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Introduction

Gaochang (高昌, Turpan in Xinjiang), located in the middle of the Silk Road, was one of the centers of civilization in the Western Regions (西域), and at the crossroads between the West and the East during ancient times. Gaochang was adjacent to Yiwu (伊吾, Hami in Xinjiang) to the east and to the nomadic ethnic groups to the north; it extended as far as Shanshan (鄯善, Rouqiang in Xinjiang) to the south and to Yanqi (焉耆, Qarashar in Xinjiang) and Qiuci (龟兹, Kuche in Xinjiang) to the west, as well as to Yili (伊犁) to the northwest. Therefore, Gaochang was not only a major intersection on the Silk Road, but also where multi-ethnic cultures met and combined. Within this context, Buddhism in Gaochang flourished and developed a strong integrative character that combined the Eastern and Western cultures of ancient times.

Cheshi and Early Buddhism In Gaochang

According to the ancient records, the Cheshi (车师, or Gushi, 姑师) people were early inhabitants of the Turpan area, and like those in Yanqi

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and Qiuci, they spoke the Proto-Indo-European language, i.e., the Tocharian language. Given this, the Buddhist culture in Cheshi shared an affinity with that of Qiuci. and the Cheshi (Gushi) people established their own state with Jiaohe City (交河故城) as the capital. However, the population soon dispersed as the result of the wars between the Han Dynasty and Hsiung-Nu over control for the Western Regions. During the reign of Emperor Xuan (西汉宣帝, 92-49 B.C) of the Western Han dynasty, it was recorded in *Hanshu*, “Weisima (卫司马) was dispatched to supervise Shanshan as well as other regimes in the west. Since Gushi was defeated but not extinguished, the remains were split into the Anterior Cheshi (车师前国), the Rear Cheshi (车师后国) and six other regimes along the northern mountains.”¹ From then on, there existed the two Cheshi, Anterior Cheshi (with Jiaohe City as the capital) and Rear Cheshi. In 450, Anterior Cheshi was defeated by Juquwuhui (沮渠无讳), the survivors of the Northern Liang Dynasty. The survivors of Cheshi merged together with the locals, and finally became a part of the Gaochang Kingdom.

Since 67 B.C., the third year of Dijie of Emperor Xuan of the Western Han Dynasty (西汉宣帝地节三年), when the officials and soldiers were sent to Cheshi for cultivation and to set up a garrison², successive groups of the interior soldiers and people started to enter into the Turpan basin to engage in agricultural production and other activities for economic development. In 48 B.C., Wujixiaowei (戊己校尉) was assigned to be in charge of the cultivation and garrison, and Gaochangbi (高昌壁³) gradually became the population center of the interior immigrants. According to one researcher, “In the period of Wei-Jin, Wujixiaowei had broken away from being hosted, and developed gradually into hereditary, long-term and localized administrative systems.”⁴ Even more, there is some evidence in-

1 *Hanshu*, Chapt 95. (《汉书》卷95)

2 *Hanshu*, Chapt 94. (《汉书》卷94下)

3 The Gaochang Ancient city in Turpan.

4 Wang Su (王素), *Gaochang Shi Gao* (《高昌史稿: 统治编》), Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She (文物出版社), 1998, p.104.

dicating that the interior immigrants, who immigrated into Gaochang for various causes,⁵ had been highly restricted for two centuries since the Han Dynasty until the Wei and Jin Dynasties. Excavated in Loulan, the records of “Gaochang soldiers” (高昌士兵)⁶ on the wooden scripts of Wei and Jin Dynasty are powerful proof of this.

Due to the successive wars at the end of the Western Jin Dynasty (西晋) and the frequent alternation of various Liang (凉) regimes in the Hexi (河西) area, many people sought shelter in Gaochang from the central region and Hexi area, and thus the interior immigrants gradually came to scale in Turpan. In 327 A.D., the Former Liang (前凉) set up Gaochang Jun (高昌郡), “Zhang Gui (张轨), Lv Guang (吕光) and Juqumengxun (沮渠蒙逊) governed Hexi in succession, and all of them ordered Taishou (太守, the prefecture chiefs) to be in charge of (Gaochang).”⁷ Hence, the institutional and cultural administration in Gaochang was in accordance with that of the inland. On the other hand, however, the above regimes appointed the Gaochang people as its administrators, “under such circumstances of

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- 5 Wang Zhilai (王治来) thinks there were six kinds of Han immigrants to the Western Regions, such as envoys, soldiers, merchants, Tun Ken Zhe (屯垦者, military cultivator) and exiles. See Wang Zhilai, "The Han people's immigration to the western frontier in the history" (《历史上汉族人向西北边疆的迁徙》), *Xi Bei Shi Di* (《西北史地》), 1997(1). Ge Jianxiong (葛剑雄) thinks there were three types of Han immigrants such as envoys, exile soldiers and princess' retinues, and the cultivator of soldiers belonging to the floating population who rotate at regular intervals. See Ge Jianxiong ed. *The Immigration History of China* (《中国移民史》) Vol.2, Fu Zhou: Fujian Renmin Chubanshe (福建人民出版社), 1997, pp.179-180. Jia Congjiang (贾丛江) thinks there were four kinds of Han immigrants such as envoys and soldiers, Han princess' retinues, the common people and the cultivator of soldiers with their family, personal attendant. See Jia Congjiang, "Some Questions about the Han People in the Western Regions of the Western Han Dynasty" (《关于西汉时期西域汉人的几个问题》), *The Western Regions Studies* (《西域研究》), 2004(4).
- 6 Lin Meicun (林梅村) ed. *Unearthed Texts from Loulan and Niya* (《楼兰尼雅出土文书》), Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She (文物出版社), 1985, p.28.
- 7 *Wei Shu*, Chapter 101. (《魏书》卷 101)

self-governing, it was likely for Gaochang to intensify the control of themselves and the exclusion of the outsiders, which ultimately made Gaochang independent.”⁸ Thereafter, during the period of Beiwei Shizhu (北魏世祖, 424-452 A.D.) when the Liang regimes alternated frequently, KanShuang (阚爽), a local aristocratic leader in Gaochang, empowered himself as Taishou of Gaochang.⁹ Since then, the Han people in Gaochang started to be independent and self-administering.

In 421 A.D., the Western Liang (西凉) was defeated by the Northern Liang (北凉). Around 2000 survivors, led by the brothers Tang He (唐和) and Tang Qi (唐契), found shelter in Yi Wu, and then arrived in Gaochang.¹⁰ In 439 A.D, the Northern Liang was defeated by the Northern Wei (北魏). In 441 A.D., under the pressure of the Northern Wei, Juquwuhui (沮渠无讳), the former Taishou of Jiu Quan (酒泉) in Northern Liang, with his people numbering more than 10,000, occupied Gaochang via Shanshan. He drove out Kan Shuang, defeated the survivors of Western Liang, and established the Cheshi Kingdom in succession. As such, there was an increase in the number of interior immigrants in Gaochang.

In 460 A.D., the first year of Heping in the Northern Wei Dynasty (北魏和平元年), Rouran (柔然) defeated Juqus of Northern Liang, occupied Gaochang and empowered Kanbozhou (阚伯周) as its king. From then on, Gaochang began to have its own king and kingdom,¹¹ which lasted for more than 180 years by the kingdom of Zhang (张氏, 488-496 A.D.), Ma (马氏, 496-501 A.D.) and Qu (鞠氏, 502-640 A.D.) until unification by the Tang Dynasty in 640 A.D. According to incomplete statistics, “70 to 75% of the Gaochang population was composed of the Han people, while the ethnic minorities only made up 25% to 30% of the population. Therefore, given such an ethnic structure, it was concluded that Gaochang was a regime with a majority of Han People that merged with other ethnic

8 Wang Su, *Gaochang Shi Gao*, p.207.

9 *Wei Shu*, Chapter 101.

10 *Wei Shu*, Chapter 43.

11 *Wei Shu*, Chapter 101.

groups.”¹² For this reason alone, Buddhism in Gaochang possessed many characteristics of Han Buddhism, and exerted extensive and far-reaching influence upon its ethnic groups, in terms of both form and content of the Buddhist belief.

It was under such circumstances that Buddhism in Gaochang developed and formed. According to research, Cheshi Buddhism and Gaochang Buddhism “belong to two different systems. From the perspective of the Buddhist language, Buddhism in Cheshi belongs to the Hu (No-Han) language system, whereas Buddhism in Gaochang is of the Han language system. In terms of the direction of Buddhist transmission, Cheshi Buddhism was the result of eastward Buddhist development, yet Gaochang Buddhism mainly belonged to Chinese Buddhism from the east, which was greatly influenced by Qiuci and Yanqi, and thus formed its peculiar features. In terms of sects, Cheshi Buddhism was Hinayana, while Gaochang Buddhism was Mahayana.”¹³ As a small and weak regime, Cheshi was destroyed by Juqun in 450 A.D., but influences of Cheshi Buddhism can still be found in the historical records.

It was mainly in the period of the Former Qin Dynasty (前秦) that Cheshi Buddhism developed eastward and exerted influence along the Silk Road, which was closely related to Mitian (弥赛, or Midi, 弥第), the king of Anterior Cheshi. The following records are found in *Jinshu·Fujian Zaiji* (晋书·苻坚载记下): in 382 A.D., the Seventh year of Taiyuan of Emperor Xiaowu in Eastern Jin (东晋孝武帝太元七年), also the eighteenth year of Jianyuan in Former Qin (前秦建元十八年), “Mitian, king of Anterior Cheshi, and Xiumituo (修密驮), King of Shanshan (鄯善), paid tribute to Fu Jian (苻坚). Fu Jian granted them the court dress and directed

12 Du Doucheng (杜斗城), Zheng Binlin (郑柄林), "The Ethnic Groups and Population Structure in Gaochang Kingdom" (《高昌王国的民族和人口结构》), *Northwest National Research* (《西北民族研究》), 1988(2).

13 Chen Shiliang (陈世良), *The Study of the Buddhism in Western Regions* (《西域佛教研究》), Urumuqi: Xinjiang Meishu Sheying Chubanshe (新疆美术摄影出版社), 2008, p.113.

them to walk around the West Hall. Amazed by the magnificence of the construction, the rigorous fortification of the military, they asked to pay tribute to the imperial court ever year. Due to the inconvenience and remoteness of the Western Regions, Fu Jian refused, instead issuing a long-lasting order to pay tribute every three years and granted an audience with the emperor every nine years.” In fact, Mi Tian also introduced Buddhism to the central region in his tribute. In *Chu San Zang Ji Ji* (《出三藏记集》) Chapter. eight, *Mahaprajñā-pāramitā Sūtra*, Preface, the First (《摩诃钵罗若波罗蜜经抄序第一》), “In the eighteenth year of Jianyuan, Midi (弥第), the king of Anterior Cheshi, came to the court, with his highest priest named Kumārabudhi (鸠摩罗跋提), who presented respectively *Mahaprajñā-pāramitā Sūtra*, which consists of 20,000 Sloka (首卢, sūtha) and each Sloka contains 32 characters. Such a measurement was applied by the Hu people (胡人, the westerners in general in middle age of China).” Therefore, at least during the period of 4 A.D., Buddhism became the state religion of Cheshi, with the eminent monk of the regime in charge. The Buddhist Scriptures were probably derived directly from Sanskrit. In *Chu San Zang Ji Ji*, Chapter. Nine (《出三藏记集》卷第九, the 4 Agamas by Vasubhadra, Preface the tenth (《四阿含暮抄序第十》), “there was a foreign sramana named Yin tili (因提丽). He visited the Anterior Cheshi with the *Mahaprajñā-pāramitā Sūtra*, but secretly hid it inside his clothes for fear of being noticed by others. However, Midi, the king of the Anterior Cheshi invited Yintili to teach the main idea of *Mahaprajñā-pāramitā Sūtra*, which later widely spread here.” Accordingly, *Mahaprajñā-pāramitā* is the Mahayana Sutra and Agamas is the Hinayana Sutra, which suggests that both Mahayana and Hinayana were practiced in Cheshi. Consequently, Mi Tian’s great contribution to the spread and development of Buddhism in Cheshi cannot go unnoticed even though the influence of Buddhism in Cheshi was “a flash in the pan.”

Chinese Buddhism In Gaochang

It is unknown exactly when Buddhism was introduced to the Turpan area.¹⁴ Most logically, Buddhism was probably first introduced through Cheshi from the Western Regions. However, the earliest Buddhist sūtra scripture excavated here was the Chinese scripture *Buddhasamghati Sūtra* (《诸佛要集经》) which was found by the Japanese Otani expedition in Tuyuq (吐峪沟). This scripture was written in 296 A.D., and in 292 A.D., was translated in Luoyang by an eminent monk from Yuezhi (月支), named Dharmarakcha (法护). It was later introduced to Gaochang and has been the earliest scripture excavated so far. It can be estimated that Buddhism was introduced to the Turpan area no later than the late 3rd century to early 4th centuries. The scripture of *Foshuoqiny Sūtra* (《佛说七女经》), excavated from the 13th tomb of Astana, belongs to the period of the 16 States (十六国, 304–439), which also produced the above.¹⁵

Gaochang Buddhism during the Wei, Jin, Northern and Southern Dynasties (魏晋南北朝, 220–589) periods was, on one hand, influenced by Indian and Qiuci culture, and on the other hand, was attributed to the westward spread of Chinese Buddhism. Meanwhile, Chinese culture and conventions, localized in Gaochang during the Han and Wei Dynasties, played an enormous role in the formation and development of Gaochang Buddhism.

A great number of Gaochang monks traveled to India and Qiuci in search of Buddhist sutras. A monk named Zhi Meng (智猛) in Northern Liang, for example, went to India and found the Sanskrit *Mahāprīnirvāna Sūtra* (《大涅槃经》). On his return, he stayed in Gaochang for a time and encouraged a 19-year-old eminent monk Fa Sheng (法盛) as well as 19

14 Chen Shiliang speculates that Buddhism was introduced to Cheshi around the 1st century B.C. See Chen Shiliang, *The Study of the Buddhism in Western Regions*, p.116.

15 Unearthed texts from Turpan (《吐鲁番出土文书》), Vol.1, Beijing: Wen Wu Chu Ban She (文物出版社), 1981, pp.218–221.

other disciples to go to India. Fa Sheng wrote one volume of *Pusa toushen e'hu qita yinyuanjin* (《菩萨投身饿虎起塔因缘经》) in the Northern Liang.¹⁶ Fa Lang (法郎), the Gaochang monk, visited Qiuci after Emperor Tai Wu of the Northern Wei Dynasty (北魏武帝) destroyed Buddhism. Fa Sheng got a courteous reception from the king of Qiuci and died there.¹⁷ There was another Gaochang eminent monk Dao Pu (道普), who had tried to travel to all the states in the Western region and worship at all the Buddhist holy sites. It was said that he not only understood thoroughly the Sanskrit text, but also mastered the languages of six states.¹⁸ During the Northern Qi period (北齐, 550-577), a Gaochang monk Fa Hui (法惠) went to Qiuci twice to learn the Dhyana law and became the student of the eminent monk Zhi Yue (直月) in Qiuci. After returning, Fa Hui strenuously spread Mahayana Buddhism in Gaochang with the result of many conversions.¹⁹ In addition, some Indian monks also came to visit Gaochang. In 589 AD, for instance, Dharmagupta (达摩笈多), a samana from South India, stayed in Gaochang for two years. Though not teaching, his visit obviously exerted influence upon the Buddhism in Gaochang. As such, the westward journey for Dharna by the Gaochang monks as well as the eastward arrival of the Indian Samana, introduced a great amount of Sanskrit Buddhist scripture to Gaochang. At the end of the 20th century, the German expedition in Jiaohe and Shengjingkou excavated many Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures such as *Samyuktagama Sûtra* (《杂阿含经》), *Dharmasamgaraha Mahartha Gatha Sûtra* (《法集颂》), *Abhidharma Kocho Sastra Sûtra* (《俱舍论本颂》), *Saddharmapundarika Sûtra* (《妙法莲华经》), *Samyuktagama Sûtra* (《相应阿含》), *Bhikchuni Pratimokcha Sûtra* (《比丘尼戒本》), and *Mahaparinirvana Sûtra* (《大般涅槃经》). Consequently, they spread Buddhist teachings in Gaochang, which amplified the influence of Indian as

16 Ming Seng Zhuan Chao (《名僧传钞》), Kai Yuan Shi Jiao Lu (《开元释教录》) Chapter 4.

17 Liang Gao Seng Zhuan, Chapter 15. (《梁高僧传》卷十五)

18 Liang Gao Seng Zhuan, Chapter 2. (《梁高僧传》卷二)

19 Ming Seng Zhuan. (《名僧传》)

well as Qiuci Buddhism, and the evidence of this is the excavation of the scripture text of *Upasaka Sūtra* (dated in 427, 《优婆塞戒》卷第七写本) from the Turpan area, which was translated by the Indian Monk Dharmaracha (昙摩讖).²⁰

Such a phenomenon was proof that Buddhism was reintroduced to Gaochang after its initial popularity in the inner land. As mentioned previously, the Chinese *Buddhasamghati Sūtra* (《诸佛要集经》) scripture dated in 296 A.D. was found in Tuyuq, translated by the Monk Dharmarakcha in Luoyang in 292 and was later introduced to Gaochang. Thereafter, a great amount of Gaochang monks came to the inner land for the Sūtra, such as Fang Lang (法郎) and Seng Zun (僧遵) who were disciples of the eminent monk Fa Jin (法进) in Liangzhou (凉州) in the North Liang Dynasty (北凉). Dao Pu (道普), the eminent monk of Song in the South Dynasty (南朝宋), and Fa Xu (法绪) in the West Shu Dynasty (西蜀), were Gaochang natives as well. Moreover, the Gaochang monk Zhi Cun (智村), who came to Ling Ji temple (灵基寺) in Chang'an during the reign of the Ming Emperor (466-472) of the South Song Dynasty, was the follower of the eminent monk Dao Liang, the author of *An Explanation of the Satyasiddhi-sastra* (《成实论义疏》).²¹ At the end of the North Wei Dynasty, the king of Gaochang dispatched samana Hui Song (慧嵩) to the inner land to study Buddhism. Being proficient in the sastras of Abhidharma and Satyasiddhi, Hui Song was therefore titled Abhidharma Kongzi (毘昙孔子).²² Though Hui Song did not return, more Gaochang eminent monks were attracted to study Buddhism in the inner land, which was undoubtedly one of the results of the influence of Han Buddhism. This kind of influence reached its peak when the eminent monk Xuan Zang (玄奘) arrived.

20 Ikeda On (池田温), *Collections of the Ancient Manuscripts Colophon of China* (《中国古代写本识语集录》), Tokyo: The Institute of Oriental Culture The University of Tokyo (东京大学东洋文化研究所), 1990, p.80.

21 *Liang Gao Seng Zhuan*. (《梁高僧传》)

22 *Xu Gao Seng Zhuan*, Chapter 7. (《续高僧传》卷七)

A large number of Chinese Buddhist scriptures excavated from the Turpan area since the 1900's has proven the influence of Han Buddhism on Gaochang, of which there were 153 (about 2300 in total) Chinese Buddhist manuscripts and printed texts found by the German expedition. Many of them were either translated into Chinese or written by the eminent monks from the inner land from the 4th century to the 7th centuries, and later introduced to Gaochang. According to the research, during the period of the Eastern Jin Dynasty (东晋, 317-420), the Buddhist communities in the Turpan area were closely related to those of the inner land, and inherited Han Buddhism by the way of Dunhuang (敦煌).²³ Since modern times, some Chinese Buddhist Sûtra texts were excavated in the Turpan region, which belong to the period of the Liang regimes in Hexi (河西), such as the *Vimalakirti Sûtra* (《维摩诘经》) copied by Wang Xianggao (王相高) in 393 (the fifth year of Qijia of the Later Liang Dynasty, 后凉麟嘉五年), the *Bhadrakalpika Sûtra* (《贤劫千佛品经》) copied by monk Bao Xian (宝贤) in Gaochang and the *Saddharmapundarika Sûtra* (《正法华经》) copied by Zhang Shi (张施) in 399 (the third year of Shen Xi in North Liang Dynasty, 北凉神玺三年), *Saddharmapundarika Sûtra* (《妙法莲花经·方便品》) copied by Linghu Ji (令狐岌) for sage Dong Bigou (贤者董必狗) in 429, the *Suvarnaprabhasa Sûtra* (《金光明经》) copied for General Suo's wife's Xi family in 430, the *Mahamegha Sûtra* (《大方广等无想大云经》) copied by Liu Juci (刘居祠) in 434 (the third year of Yuan He of the North Liang Dynasty, 北凉缘禾三年), and the *Surangama-samadhi Sûtra* (《佛说首楞严三昧经》) copied by Linghu Liansi (令狐廉嗣) for Upasaka Shi Liangnu (优婆塞史良奴) in 436 (the second year of Tai Yuan, 太缘二年).²⁴

In fact, the expansion of Han Buddhism in Gaochang was a gradual process. In Gaochang County (高昌郡), most of the Buddhist believers

23 Fang Guangchang (方广锜), "A Brief Account of the Buddhist Sutras in Chinese Unearthed from Turpan" (《吐鲁番出土汉文佛典述略》), *The Western Regions Studies*, 1992 (1).

24 Ikeda On, *Collections of the Ancient Manuscripts Colophon of China*, p.80.

were foreign monks and members of the upper ruling class. Apart from this, the influence of inner land culture played a dominant role in the folklore. In the Gaochang kingdom, especially during the period of Qu's Dynasty (麴氏王朝), Buddhism was not only followed and advocated by the Gaochang king, but also by the common people, and assimilated by the local Han culture. This permeated into the daily life of the local people, as is shown in the funerary texts (随葬衣物疏) of this period. Such Taoist terms as "Qing Long on the Left, Bai Hu on the Right, Zhu Que on the Front, Xuan Wu on the Back" (左青龙、右白虎、前朱雀、后玄武), "Ji Ji Ru Lu Ling" (急急如律令, urgency as orders), and "Jing Yi Wu Dao Da Shen" (敬移五道大神, moving the five great gods) were commonly practiced in Gaochang County; whereas, in the Gaochang Kingdom, such Buddhist terms as "commitment of the five Buddhist disciplines and perfecting the ten virtues" (持佛五戒, 专修十善), "Buddhist disciples" (佛弟子), "the eminent Bhikkhu" (大德比丘) are used to testify that Buddhism had been accepted by the locals and blended with Han culture.

Buddhism in Gaochang not only drew on the essence of Buddhism of India, Qiuci and Han, but also on Han cultural elements introduced from the Han and Wei dynasties. Most of the Buddhist temples in Gaochang were named after certain families, such as Qu temple (麴寺), Ma temple (马寺), Zhang temple (张寺), Kan temple (阚寺), Yin temple (阴寺), Tang temple (唐寺), Li temple (李寺), Han temple (韩寺), Zhu temple (朱寺), Wang temple (王寺), Gao temple (高寺), Jia temple (贾寺), Zhao temple (赵寺), Chen temple (陈寺), Su temple (苏寺), Cui temple (崔寺), Jin temple (靳寺), Pei temple (裴寺), Zhou temple (周寺), Luo temple (罗寺), Dong temple (董寺), Cheng temple (程寺), etc., which reflected the family Buddhist temple construction and the belief of entire families Gaochang. In addition, other temples were named after official titles, such as Fujun temple (抚军寺), Langzhong temple (郎中寺), Huwei temple (虎威寺), Dulangzhong temple (都郎中寺), Wancao temple (绾曹寺), Suwei temple (宿卫寺), Gongzhu temple (公主寺), Taihou temple (太后寺), Dacima temple (大司马寺), and Tiandigong temple (田地公寺). In fact, these temples served the same function since the temples patrons were the repre-

sentatives of the noble families in Gaochang Kingdom. This phenomenon, however, manifested in the correlation of Buddhism and the patriarchal system in the Han and Wei Dynasties. In other words, the assimilation of Buddhism in Gaochang as well as the support of the family inherently boosted the spread and development of the Buddhism, the result of which was characterized by the family features in terms of the “numerous temples and starry monks” (像庙星罗, 僧榄云布).

The concurrence of Buddhism and Taoism occurred among the common people in Gaochang. As mentioned previously, the funerary texts in this period contain various Taoist incantations and some Buddhist terminology; meanwhile, the tomb owners were Buddhist disciples. All these indicate that the adaptation of Buddhism also involved Taoism, profoundly. However, in terms of the protective god, Buddha was irreplaceable compared with other gods in Taoism, which indicated the Han people’s peculiar preference for pragmatism in accepting the exotic culture.

The assimilation of Buddhism in Gaochang also had an effect on the local ethnic minorities, especially in terms of inherited family beliefs. Among Gaochang Buddhist temples, some were also named after the family names of the ethnic minorities, especially the Sogdians, such as An temple (安寺), Shi temple (史寺), Cao temple (曹寺), and Che temple (车寺) set up by the Cheshi (车师人), Shan temple (鄯寺) by the Shanshan (鄯善人), Bai temple (白寺) by the Qiuci (龟兹人), Khan temple (珂寒, 可汗寺) and Teqin temple (提懃, 特勤寺) by the Turks (突厥人), Zhu temple (竺寺) by the Indians (天竺人) and so on, which showed the assimilation of Buddhism among these ethnic minorities in Gaochang.

It is noteworthy that Buddhism exerted profound influence on the locals and developed interactively with Taoism due to the introduction and the general support by the kings of Gaochang Kingdom. Such Buddhist terms as “the eminent Bhikkhu,” “Buddhist disciples,” “commitment of the five Buddhist disciplines and specializing the ten virtues,” as well as such Taoist terms as the “Jing Yi Wu Dao Da Shen” (敬移五道大神, moving the five great gods) and “it could not be stopped for the soul go to the east and west end of the sea” (若欲求海东头, 欲觅海西壁, 不得奄遏留停, 急急如律

令), appeared in the funerary texts, which manifested the fact that the Gaochang people believed in both Buddhism and Taoism. This also demonstrates the combination of these two religious features as characterized by Buddhism in Gaochang.

Therefore, Buddhism in Gaochang not only embodied the interaction between western and eastern cultures, but also the Buddhist-centered spiritual life of the various ethnic groups along the Silk Road. Such a widespread exchange and development of Buddhism on the Silk Road was well represented by Buddhism in Gaochang.

Exchange and Integration: Monks and Rulers in Gaochang

The widely spread and consistent development of Buddhism in Cheshi and Gaochang could be attributed to the general support of the rulers. As a matter of fact, the religious life of Gaochang locals was diverse and creative.

As mentioned above, Mi Tian, the king of Anterior Cheshi, supported the development of Buddhism in his regime and anointed Kumârabudhi as the highest priest. He also established the relationship with the inner land through Buddhism. Moreover, he obtained the *Agamas Sûtra* from a foreign sramana named Yintili and introduced it to Cheshi. It was under Mitian's strenuous efforts that a batch of Sanskrit Buddhist Sûtras were brought to the inner land.

The popularity of Buddhism in Gaochang was due to, on one hand, the devout preaching of various monks and on the other hand, the vigorous advocacy of the kings in consecutive generations. For example, Juqu (沮渠), the royal family of the Northern Liang Dynasty (北凉), were pious followers of Buddhism and passionate preachers. In fact, the early development of Buddhism in Gaochang was closely related to the Buddhism of Northern Liang. In the early part of the 20th century, the German expedition excavated the *Tablet of Liang King Juqu Anzhou Merits* (《凉王大沮渠安周功德碑》, dated 445 A.D.) from temple ruins near the "Khan Cas-

tle”(可汗堡) in Ancient Gaochang City (高昌故城). Such words as “one inspiration of goodness can contribute to the fruit of Buddha” (一念之善, 成菩提之果) were inscribed on the tablet. In addition, it narrated the temple’s construction by the descendants of Northern Liang in Gaochang as well as their merits in spreading Buddhism by the Juqu family, honored as “Dharma-Raja” (法王).²⁵ According to the research, this temple “should be the royal family temple, which indicated the great support of the authority to the advancement of Buddhism in Gaochang.”²⁶ Additionally, a batch of Buddhist Manuscripts supported by Juqu Anzhou (沮渠安周), such as the *Vasudhara Sūtra* (《持世经·持世第一》), *Bodhisattva Pitaka Sūtra* (《佛说菩萨藏经》卷一), *Daśabhūmika-vibhāṣā-śāstra* (《十住毗婆沙论》卷七) and *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (《佛华严经》卷第廿八), were excavated from the Turpan area.²⁷ Given such evidence, the popularity of Buddhism in Gaochang was ascribed to the ample support of Juqu Anzhou. In *Gao Seng Zhuan* (《高僧传》卷十三), it was recorded that monk Fa Jin (法进) fed the local starving people with his own flesh during the famine period in Gaochang. The entire population was moved to tears and followed Fa Jin. Thereafter, Juqu Anzhou was touched and invited Fa Jin into the court proclaimed an order to distribute the stored wheat to comfort the famine victims. Fa Jin, however, finally died from his wounds and was cremated in Gaochang. Juqu Anzhou built a three-layer and eight-angle pagoda with the features of temples in the Northern Liang period, as well as a tablet to memorialize this influential monk. In addition, the No. 44 grotto in Tuyok

25 Jia Yingyi (贾应逸), "Tablet of Liang King Juqu Anzhou Merits and Gaochang Buddhism in North Liang" (《<沮渠安周造寺功德碑>与北凉高昌佛教》), *The Western Regions Studies*, 1995 (2).

26 Yao Chongxin (姚崇新), "North Liang King's Family and Buddhism in Gaochang" (《北凉王族与高昌佛教》), *Journal of Xinjiang Normal University (Social Science)*, (《新疆师范大学学报》, 哲学社会科学版, 1996(1)).

27 Ikeda On, translated by Xie Chongguang (谢重光), "Notes on the Three Tablets of Gaochang" (《高昌三碑铭考》), *Journal of Dunhuang Studies* (《敦煌学辑刊》), 1988(1, 2).

also belonged to the Northern Liang period in terms of the shape of the grottoes, the wall drawings inside, the figures, the craftsmanship and that of Buddhism belief.²⁸ These grottoes were most likely built after the occupation of Gaochang by the Juqu.

In the period of Qu's Gaochang Kingdom, Buddhism flourished through the support of Qu's royal family. Nevertheless, the process of acceptance and support of Buddhism by Qu's royal family went through twists and turns. According to the *Xu Gao Seng Zhuan* (《续高僧传》卷七《释慧嵩传》载):²⁹

Shi Hui Song(慧嵩), a Buddhist disciple with an unclear ethnicity, was a local of Gaochang where King of Juqu's Liang (沮渠凉王) once took refuge, so his clan relatives were familiar with the Chinese writing systems. Hui Song became a monk at an early age. Being intelligent, savvy and responsive, Hui Song had a remarkable power of comprehension of the Sūtra, was well versed in *Samyaktabhidharma Hridaya śāstra* (《杂心》), and displayed much profound wisdom in terms of secular disturbances. People thought highly of Hui Song for his abstruse knowledge and peaceful mind. However, Hui Song's elder brother, an official in the royal government and noted for his elegance and exquisite taste among royal members as well as Confucian scholars, had never read the Buddhist Sūtra. Impressed by Hui Song's intelligence and wisdom, he persuaded Hui Song to resume a secular life. Hui Song replied, "Those little tricks from pedants like you are not worthy of learning at all. Treating them as dregs, I even don't want to talk about them." Song's brother was so frustrated that he took out the

28 Jia Yingyi (贾应逸), "Comparative Study of No.44 Grottoes in Tuyok and North Liang Grottoes in Mogaoku" (《吐峪沟第44窟与莫高窟北凉洞窟比较研究》), *Papers Collections of International Congress on Dunhuang Grottoes in 1987* (《1987年敦煌石窟国际讨论会文集·石窟考古编》), Shen Yang: Liaoning Meishu Chubanshe (辽宁美术出版社), 1990, p.195-197.

29 T. Vol.50 (《大正藏》卷五十), pp.482-483.

Yi Jin (《易》) and asked Song's opinion about the book. In spite of the fact of having never read about the Confucian classics, Song was able to analyze its meaning and present his opinions about the book. Although greatly surprised by Song's extraordinary understanding of the book, Song's brother still didn't believe in the Buddhist doctrine. Hui Song took out one gatha from *Abhidharma Sûtra* (《毗曇》) and invited his brother to interpret. After two months, his brother explained the book poorly and even incorrectly. By summarizing his brother's errors, Hui Song easily led his brother into the realm of Buddhist doctrine. And ever since then, having been greatly enlightened, his brother began to read the Buddhist Sûtra extensively, interpreted the mysteries among them, and thus became an arduous follower of the Buddhist doctrine. At the end of the North Wei Dynasty, with the trend of the promotion of Buddhism, Hui Song and his brother were sent to the North Wei imperial court. At that time, Gao (高氏), the Prime Minister, had a very high opinion of Hui Song and his brother. Later, Hui Song was able to follow Master Zhi You (智游) to study the *Abhidharma Sûtra* (《毗曇》) and *Satyasiddhi-śāstra* (《成实》). Empowered and trusted by the royal court, Hui Song and his brother were in a favorable position to spread Buddhism. As the highest ranking Buddhist leaders, Hui Song and his brother undertook the teaching of the Buddhist Sûtra. Their teachings were so powerful that an increasing number of people converted to Buddhism. Years later, Hui Song and his brother became so knowledgeable that Gaochang requested the Imperial Court to let them return to their homeland. However, Hui Song replied, "my wisdom and knowledge definitely go beyond returning to a remote country." So they returned to Yecheng (邺) and Luoyang (洛), and continued to champion Buddhism. Invited by the king of Gaochang again, Hui Song refused, which made the king so angry as to punish Hui Song's family and his relatives with the death penalty.

As a reflection of Buddhist development in the early period of Qu's Gaochang Kingdom, this record shows that the locals continued the tradi-

tion of Buddhist belief of the North Liang, and the Qu's royal family seemingly did not convert to Buddhism, but instead used it as a tool to communicate with the inner land Dynasty. When they could not persuade Hui Song to return, they killed Hui Song's family. Things did not complete shift until Qu Baomao (鞠宝茂), the sixth king of the Qu Dynasty (555-569).

On *The Qu Bin Temple Construction Tablet*³⁰ set in 575 (the fifteenth year of Yanchang of Qu Qaingu, the seventh king, 第七代王鞠乾固延昌十五年), there was a contract dated January 26 in 556 (the first year of Janchang of Qu Baomao, the sixth king (第六代王鞠宝茂建昌元年十二月二十三日). Qu Bin (鞠斌) made this contract for construction of the temple and offering land in order to let it run in perpetuity, with an emphasis at the end of the contract as following:

If there were any unworthy descendants of Qu and other family members who took advantage of their power to take items from the temple, if the temple chief was morally bad to make the financial situation worse, the blessing of the thousands of years would immediately stop, and the host fast as well as monk offerings would be cut off because of this one. Meanwhile, according to the Sûtra, the troublemakers are supposed to pay 10 kg of gold atoned for his crime, half of which should be handed over to the host and the other half should be given to the temples. Once the punishment was over, the host would continue to pay for his tribute as past. Thanks to the mercy of the monk and followers, the kindness of the king and officials, it has been verified and will continue for the later generations.

In order to guarantee its legal validity, this contract was authorized not only by Qu Baomao (鞠宝茂), the King of Gaochang, but also six other royal members (including Prince Qu Gangu, 鞠乾固) and 33 officials,

30 See Huang Wenbi (黄文弼), *Achaeological Records in Turpan* (《吐鲁番考古记》), Beijing: Academy of Chian (中国科学院), 1954.

which included almost all high-ranking officials of Gaochang Kingdom. This indicated the tremendous impact of Buddhism upon the ruling class, especially the royal families of Qu.

In addition, the inscription of the *Prajñā-pāramitā* (《佛说仁王般若波罗密经》) excavated from Tuyok by the Japanese Otani expedition team, recorded that “in 593 AD, August 15th, the King of Gaochang wore a white gown,” when the 7th King of Gaochang Kingdom was Qu Qiang (麴乾固). In the beginning of the 20th century, Albert Grünwedel and Albert von Le Coq from Germany and Marc Aurel Stein from Great Britain found the various Buddhist Sūtra manuscripts dedicated by Qu Qiang, which indicated that the royal families of Gaochang had converted to Buddhism and supported it no later than Qu Baomao.

The reverence of the royal families of King Qu to Buddhism reached its peak in the period of Qu Wentai (麴文泰), who was the grandchild of Qu Qiang and the 9th Gaochang king. When Monk Xuan Zang (玄奘) passed by Yi Wu on his way to the West for the Buddhist Sūtra, he was overwhelmingly welcomed by King Wen Tai, which was vividly described in *Da Ci En Si San Zang Fa Shi Zhuan* (《大慈恩寺三藏法师传》) as follows:

The king (Qu Wentai, 麴文泰) of Gaochang set another tent for Monk Xuan Zang to preach so that the empress dowager, officers in different ranks and military generals could listen respectively. Whenever Xuan Zang started to preach on the holy seat, the king bent and knelt so that Xuan Zang could climb upon his back to reach the seat.

After Monk Xuan Zang finished his preaching, the King immediately dispatched for a little novice monk to wait on him. Thirty suits of clothes for preaching were tailored for the master; in addition, facecloths, gloves, shoes and socks were prepared due to the severe weather in the Western Regions. Expenses included 5 kg of gold and 3,000 silver coins, together with 500 Pi (疋), Juan (绢, silk fabric), 30 horses and 25 attendants, to cover the fees of 20 years journey. The Gaochang king also dispatched Huan Xin (欢信) to accompany Xuan Zang to the official residence of Yabghu Khan (叶护可汗). In addition,

the King wrote 24 letters to another 24 states, attached with one Pi (氍) Daling (大绫, silk fabric) to each letter as the token. He also sent 500 Pi (氍) Linshao (绫绢, silk fabric) and two carriages of fruit to Yabghu Khan with the letter, which said that the master was his brother and was going to Brahman country for the Buddhism Sûtra and should be highly appreciated. In addition, Qu Wentai begged Yabghu Khan to order the western states to escort the master with the fine carrier horses (Ulaqs).

On the day of Xuan Zang's departure, the Gaochang king, together with the monks, ministers, and all the people, accompanied him to the east gate of the city where the King embraced the master weeping, all of Gaochang peoples were immersed in such great sorrow. The King asked others to go back first, instead, he rode on his horse, together with other monks, to see the Master off more than tens of miles before coming back.³¹

It was the various Gaochang kings' committed belief and vigorous promotion of Buddhism that contributed to the great development of Buddhism in Gaochang. According to conservative statistics, there were more than 300 Buddhist temples around Gaochang city and 3000 monks and nuns.³² In addition, there are numerous lists of names of Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as offering papers among the excavated texts from Turpan, which are also strong evidence of Gaochang Buddhism.

In terms of the contribution of cultural exchange Buddhism in Gaochang along the Silk Road, Wu Zhen (吴震) summarizes, "Buddhism, after being introduced into China, was assimilated as Chinese Buddhism, which exerted significant influence on Japan and North Korea as well as the Western Regions. Due to the historical factors, the spread of Buddhism in the

31 Hui Li (慧立), Yan Cong (彦棕), *Da Tang Ci En Si Sang Zang Fa Shi Zhuan* (《大唐慈恩寺三藏法师传》), Beijing: Zhong Hua Shu Ju (中华书局), 2000, pp.21-23.

32 Wu Zhen (吴震), *The Position of Temple Economy in Gaochang Society* (《寺院经济在高昌社会中的地位》), *Xinjiang Wen Wu* (《新疆文物》), 1990(4).

Western Regions were impeded and not able to develop in later generations. Even so, Buddhism in Gaochang played a positive role in the spread of Buddhism to the west.”³³ As such, the bidirectional influence of the Buddhism in Gaochang was achieved in the process of the eastward spread of Buddhism as well as its westward transmission, which has resulted in its unique and significant position in the history of cultural interaction between the east and the west in the ancient period.

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〈Abstract〉

Gaochang Buddhism and the Silk Road

Wang Xin

At the crossroads between the West and the East in ancient times, one point along the Silk Road was Gaochang (the Turpan basin in Xinjiang) which played an important role in cultural exchange and the spread of Buddhism. The bidirectional influence of Buddhism in Gaochang was achieved as Buddhism spread eastward, and through its westward transmission which resulted in Gaochang's unique and significant position in the history of cultural interaction.

Keywords: Gaochang, Buddhism, Silk road

〈국문초록〉

高昌의 佛敎와 실크로드

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高昌은 교통의 중심지로서 고대 세계에서 실크로드를 통한 동양과 서양 사이의 문화 교류에 중요한 역할을 담당하였는데, 이는 특히 佛敎의 전파에서 두드러진다. 이러한 고창 불교의 양방향성 영향력은 불교가 동방으로 전파만이 아닌, 서양으로도 전파되는 과정을 통해 이루어졌다. 이는 문화 교류의 역사 속에서 이 지역의 특수하고 중요한 위치를 나타내고 있다.

주제어: 高昌, 佛敎, 실크로드

