KĀPIŚI AND GANDHĀRA
ACCORDING TO CHINESE BUDDHIST SOURCES(1)

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The subject to be discussed here exclusively depends on the Buddhist written sources of the 6th–7th centuries which the Chinese monks have edited as the biographies of both Chinese and Indian Buddhist dignitaries including those who had devoted themselves to the pilgrimage of Indian holy places and to the translation of Buddhist texts into Chinese. In such documents thus known to us as Liang-gao-seng-zhuan 梁高僧传 and Tang-gao-seng-zhuan 唐高僧传 edited by Hui-jiang 慧敬 and Dao-xuan 道宣 respectively, can luckily be excavated the evidence of Central Asian countries contemporary with the pilgrims who passed or stayed there, otherwise we have no clue to throwing light to both historico-geographical and archaeological issues.(2)

By the time of the West Jin dynasty 西晋 (265–316), the movements of pilgrims from both India and China had absolutely been weak, but it has widely been called attention that during this period those who have reached China were exclusively of the origins of such countries to the west of the Pamir like Parthia, Samarkand, Yue-zhi, and so on.(3) With the beginning of the

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<td>West Jin</td>
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<td>East Jin</td>
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<td>Qí, Liáng, Chén</td>
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<td>Later Wei, Qí, Zhōu</td>
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Those mentioned in the biographies as foreigners are excluded.

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East Jin (317–420), however, the movements took a new turn: those of such origins decreased, Indians having reached China increased in an astonishing number, and moreover, the Chinese pilgrimage toward India, suddenly accelerated, seems to have been a fashion of the time (see Table).

Other than the above, specific attention should be paid to their itineraries as follows:

- **Fo-tu-cheng 仏図澄 (310)**: Qucha — Ji-bin — Luo-yang 洛陽.
- **Dharmamitra (356-442)**: Ji-bin — Qucha — Dun-huang 敦煌 — Liang-zhou 洛州.
- **Dharmarakṣa (401)**: Central India — Ji-bin — Qucha — Liang-zhou 洛州.
- **Kumārajiva (401)**: Qucha — Sindhu river — Ji-bin — Qucha — Yue-zhi Bei-shan 月氏北山 — Kāshghar — Qucha — Liang-zhou — Chang-an 長安.
- **Buddhayaśas (401)**: Ji-bin — Kāshghar — Liang-zhou — Chang-an.
- **Buddhabhadra (406)**: Nagarpura (India) — Ji-bin — Pamir — Chang-an．
- **Bhimarakṣa (406)**: Ji-bin — Qucha — Chang-an．
- **Fa-xian 法顯 (399–413)**: Chang-an — Nou-tan 燕然 (Xi-ning 西寧) — Dun-huang — Shan-shan 瀛善 — Qucha — Khotan — Tāshkurghan — the Hanging Pass — Uḍḍyāna — Su-he-duo 宿歇多 (Swāt) — Taxila — Peshawar — Jalālābād — Bannu —.
- **Zhi-meng 智猛 (404)**: Chang-an — Liang-zhou — Shan-shan — Qucha — Khotan — Bolor — Sindh river — Ji-bin — Jia-wci-luo-wei 迦維羅衛 (Kapilavastu?) — Pātaliputra —.
- **Dharmavikrama (420)**: China — Turfan — Qucha — Kāshghar — the Hanging Pass — Ji-bin — Sindhunadu river — Yue-zhi — Śrāvasti — South India —.

* Dates of arrival to China, ** Dates of departure from China. Dharmamitra's date shows his life span, while that of Fa-xian is read as the duration of his pilgrimage. Fo-tu-cheng's name and itinerary are difficult to be reconstructed. See Wright, A.F., *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 11–3. 4, 1948, p. 321 f and Pelliot, P., *BEFEO*, 3, 1903, p. 100 and TP, 13, 1912, p. 419.

The biographer, Hui-jiao, tells us that in Ji-bin Dharmavikrama worshipped the Buddha's alms bowl during his stay of a year or more and at last...
he got a copy of the Sanskrit text of the Avalokitesvara-sūtra. In this passage the alms bowl would be highly eloquent for the identification of Ji-bin, if it be taken into consideration that Fa-xian actually saw it in Puruṣapura and even Xuan-zang, about two centuries later, recorded its still remaining plinth which had once supported the bowl. Ji-bin is well known as the Chinese denomination of some area to the south of the Pamir, although having been subjected to change the actual location as the informations regarding it may have increased in China. Hence the historico-geographical problems of Ji-bin has been argued since the last century, and now it seems to have generally been accepted that Ji-bin called by Chinese during the Six Dynasties periods should be no other than Kashmir, or Srinagar and its environs. New solutions by Petech has even consolidated this identification. Such views, however, may be improved with the above evidence for the location of the bowl; Ji-bin was synonymous with Gandhāra at least for Chinese Buddhists of the 4th–5th centuries.

In this connection our attention should be directed to Ji-bin and Qucha themselves, which were on the routes followed by pilgrims. During the latter half of the 4th century and the early 5th century Ji-bin was the first and last destination for the Chinese monks who intended to reach India. It would not be too much to say that they had not found their objects of pilgrimage anywhere in India except Ji-bin and the Buddha’s monuments in modern Bihar and environs. Gandhāra, or Ji-bin, designated at least in the Chinese Buddhist world in the 4th-5th centuries, can thus be regarded as the only center of Indian Buddhism in its doctrinal disciplines. In this case the passage through the Karakorum was inevitable to all from China to Gandhara, for whom Qucha might have played a more prominent role than Khotan to the south.

To fix the westernmost limit of the pilgrimage, we can further trace the route followed by Dharmavikrama. He marched westward from Gandhāra, as the biographer says, to cross the Sindhunadu river and arrived in the Yue-zhi country, where he paid his salutation to the usṣṇīsa bone of the Buddha. Although the name Yue-zhi seems to be strange in this context, the very bone he saw there can be regarded as that which Fa-xian and Xuan-zang worshipped in a castle at Hadda. Hence the Yue-zhi country called by Dharmavikrama is safely identified with the Jalālābād district. Chinese monks who came down via the Hanging Pass from north generally stayed in Gandhāra, but some of them dared to go into Jalālābād through the gorges of the Kābul, as we can
follow it in the Fa-xiang’s route which expressly projects westward to Jalalābād from the normal Karakorum-Gandhāra line. This fact also informs that neither Kāpiśi nor the Hindukush was important at least for Buddhist pilgrims, or that they have not been informed of the countries to the west of Jalalābād. This is good for the case of Song-yun 朱雲 who arrived in Gandhāra from north in 519 to see the Hephthalite tegin on behalf of the Chinese Northern Wei emperor.(8) He visited neither Kāpiśi nor farther westward. All historical contexts, surprisingly and completely keeping silent on Kāpiśi and, more attractively, on Bāmiyān, should deserve more due discussion, especially on dating the Grand Buddha images in Bāmiyān.

All circumstance seems to have changed after Song-yun. Being parallel with the disappearance of Chinese pilgrims, the Indians, really very few, who intended to reach China seem to have been obliged to take a new road, discarding the Karakorum road which had been familiar so far. It was really a detour, the Kāpiśi-Hindukush road, which appears for the first time in the biographies of two eminent Indian translators, Jinagupta(9) and Dharmagupta.

Jinagupta was born in Gandhāra in 523 and joined the priesthood under the guidance of Jñānayaṣas at the Great Forest sanghārama 大林寺. After worshipping the sacred places all around India, Jinagupta was initiated into śīla at his age of 27 or in 549. Then he and his master, accompanied with some attendants, departed their native Gandhara for pious propagations to the west direction. The biographer, Dao-xuan, says in his famous Tang-gao-seng-zhuan or the Tang Biographies of High Priests edited in the mid-7th century that they followed the Kāpiśi route to arrive there. After about a year’s pause they continued their arduous journey and passed ‘the West foot of Snowy Mountain’, which I surmise as the Shibar-Bāmiyān road but without a hold of evidence, that was said to be the most precipitous in the world, then arrived in the Hephthalite country where they stayed much longer for the first time after the departure of Kāpiśi. The Hephthalite country is described to have been very extensive in dimension but less populated and, therefore, nothing of foodstaff was produced. Jinagupta dared to put off his monk’s robe and became a layman to do his best for the sake of the Hephthalite rulers. Although he experienced much trouble, he was so lucky with divine protection that he had a miraculous escape from there and safely came to Khotan via Tashkurghan (in the modern Chinese territory), then at last reached Xi-ning after a longer march.

Apparently Jinagupta’s route is through the headquarters of the Hephtha-
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Lites, and his biography is the first and earliest reference to Kāpiśi among the Chinese literary documents of some historical significance. The biographer describes that the king of Kāpiśi paid his solicitude to Jinagupta and appointed him with much reward to a Buddhist director-in-chief of Kāpiśi. This can touch on the fringe of the Kāpiśian attitude to Buddhism in the latter half of the 6th century.

Dharmagupta is said to have been born in Laṭa, or more strictly, modern Baroda in West India, but his date of birth is unknown. His Buddhist career began in Kānyākubja or Kanauj. When his master was invited by the king of Takkadeśa or of the modern Amritsar district, Dharmagupta accompanied him and stayed in Deva-vihāra for four years even after his master’s return to Kanauj. In Takkadeśa he was informed of Mahā-China from merchants said to have come from the Northern Routes. The informations compelled him to start for China. He followed the Kāpiś road, then crossed the ‘West foot of Snowy Mountain’, as his predecessor Jinagupta did so but conspicuous is that Dao-xuan does not tell anything of the Hephthalites in spite of his clear successive mentions of such countries Dharmagupta passed, as Bakhrl, 薄仏羅 Badakhshān, Dharmasthiti, Tāshkurghān 渚羅槃陀, Qucha, Karashahr, Turfan, and Hami. Dharmagupta reached the west capital of the Sui dynasty in 590.

He lived in Kāpiśi with his six followers for two years. When he arrived there, he first stayed in the King’s sanghārāma with all his followers, but later he removed with only four of them to another sanghārāma located within the capital city or modern Begrām site itself. This may inform us that the King’s sanghārāma seems to have been outside of the city, because Xuan-zang recorded about forty years later that an Earlier King’s sanghārāma on the south bank of a big river, or the Panjshīr, was situated to the north-west of the capital and another Earlier King’s to the south-east of the other. Accordingly the King’s sanghārāma of Dharmagupta may be one of those recorded by Xuan-zang. The only difference between both earlier and later sources is a Chinese letter 早 that probably means Earlier which was added by Xuan-zang. This letter will be so important, if the biographer of Dharmagupta never failed, as to show that the ruler of Kāpiśi was probably dethroned during about forty years which separate Xuan-zang from Dharmagupta.

The most comprehensive accounts on Kāpiśi is of Xuan-zang in the early 7th century. After him we can have much literary evidence for Kāpiśi, as described by the Buddhist pilgrims like Hui-chao 慧超 and Wu-kong 悟空 in Vol. XVIII 1982
the 8th century and as shown in the official Chinese accounts of Western Countries. But before Xuan-zang, the literary documents on Kāpiṣī are so meagre and fragmentary except for those in the Sui-shu 歳書. Presumably such deficiency does not always derive of complete extinction of once existed documents, but is closely related insofar as we discuss here, with the detour of the itineraries followed by Buddhist pilgrims. The alternation of routes in the mid-6th century will also be corroborated by the fact that any accessible written informations on Kāpiṣī and farther cannot be picked up from among any documents before Song-yun. A plausible explanation why such detour happened in the mid-6th century should be avoided for the time being, except saying only that Gandhāran and Taxilan Buddhism had widely and deeply been devastated after Song-yun. Xuan-zang's reference to such areas clearly points out the decline of Buddhism with little Buddhist populations in striking contrast with Buddhist prosperity in Kāpiṣī and Bāmiyān.(10)

Notes

(1) This is a revised and enlarged version of the paper read at the International Seminar of Kushan Studies held at Kabul between 8th–15th November, 1982. To the Afghan colleagues who kindly recommended to read this theme and made it elaborate with many valuable suggestions my thanks are due. This subject is a part of the tedious article in Japanese entitled Kāpiṣī-koku Hen'nen Shiryo Ko or Chinese Documents on the History of Kāpiṣī which appeared in Ars Buddhica (Bukkyo-Geijutsu), Nos. 137 and 139, Tokyo, 1981 and 1982.

(2) The texts of both Biographies which I have used here are of the Taisho-Shinshu-Daizokyo editions. See Vol. 50 of this series.

(3) Those of the Parthian or the Samarkand origins would not always imply that the Buddhism had spread to such parts of Asia in such earlier days.

(4) See Watters, Th., On Yuan-Chuang's Travel in India, London, 1904-05, p. 203. Watters’ version of ‘Yi-gu-jī’ — 依基 to the meaning ‘remains of the buildings’ should be revised. Especially the plural form he made could have been avoided. The Beal’s version of this part is this; ‘Inside the royal city, towards the north-east, is an old foundation (or a ruinous foundation). Formerly this was the precious tower of the pātra of Buddha.’ (Beal, S., Buddhist Records of the Western World, London, 1884, p. 98 f.). Beal translated ‘Tai’ into the meaning ‘Tower’. It is sure that this character sometimes implies it, but ‘plinth’ or ‘pedestal’ is an exact version in this context, because we know the Bowl shown on Gandhāran reliefs: see Rosenfield, J. M., Dynastic Arts of the Kushans, Berkeley and Los Angels, 1967, Fig. 103, and see also pp. 222–23 where Rosenfield refers to the legends of the Bowl.


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(8) Chavannes, E., Voyage de Song-yun dans l'Udyāna et le Gandhāra, BEFEO, 3, 1903, p. 415 f.

(9) Chavannes, E., Jinagupta (528–605 après J.-C.), *T'oung Pao*, serie II, vol. VI, 1905, p. 332, f. n. 1. Here Chavannes restituted the name She-na-jue-duo 閃那竭多 in the form Jinagupta against the view of Nanjo, B. who had solved it as Jñānagupta.

(10) The author is much indebted for the useful information kindly given at the Seminar by Prof. G. Fussman of the fact that rich Kharoshthi inscriptions datable down to the 6th century at the latest were recently found in the Gilgit valleys by Prof. K. Jettmar. The existence of such kind of inscriptions would much help the subject to be criticized here.