

***Chonggyowa Yöksaui Gyoch'ajöm, Silkürodü — The Intersection of Religion and History, the Silk Road.*** Edited By Kūmgang Daehakgyo Pulgyomunhwa Yōn'guso (Geumgang Center for Buddhist Studies). Seoul: Minjoksa. 2014. 466 pp. (ISBN: 978-89-98742-41-6 93220)

This book is a collection of essays presented by Korean and Chinese scholars at a conference under the title, “The Intersection of Religion and History, the Silk Road” at Shaanxi Normal University, Xi'an, China in March 2014. This conference was the fruit of the joint research of the Center for Buddhist Studies at Geumgang University in Korea and the Institute for the Western Frontier Region of China at Shaanxi Normal University in China. The book contains an editor's foreword by Han Jeeyeon at Geumgang University, which is followed by two keynote lectures and seventeen essays. The first keynote lecture “The Silk Road and the East Asia,” given by the president of Geumgang University, Jeong Byung-jo, the first man in Korea to cross the entire Silk Road, provides a broad picture of the significance of Buddhism in the Western Regions of East Asia. The second keynote lecture “The Silk Road and the Making of the ‘Silk Road Economic Zone’,” by Zhou Weizhou, a pioneering ethnologist in China, observes the present and the future cultural and economic development of the Silk Road.

The essays are divided into four Parts. Part I, entitled “The Early Silk Road and Propagation of Buddhism,” contains four essays. The first essay, “A Study of Buddhist Monks in Gao Chang (高昌),” by Wang Xin, shows that a number of monks, including Kumârabudhi (鳩摩羅跋提), Fa Chéng (法盛) and Fa Lǎng (法朗), from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century CE in Gao Chang area, which was an important spot in the Silk Road and is now called Turpan, in Xinjiang Province, played a crucial role in the propagation of early Chinese Buddhism. The second essay, “The Compilation and Circulation of Avatamska Sutra and Khotan (于闐),” by Seok Gil-am, examines a possible location for the compilation of the Avatamsaka Sutra, and concludes that Khotan may be this place, although more research is still needed. The third essay, “An Examination of the System of Buddhist Practice Based on Xianjie Jing (賢劫經) in the Early Countries Bordering Western China,” by Han Jeeyeon, suggests that the Xianjie Jing might have been influential in bringing the practice and faith from northwestern India to the countries bordering western China and that the mixture of early Buddhist Schools and Mahāyāna Buddhism had been made in virtue of Xianjie Jing. The fourth essay, “Liangzhou-Pingcheng and Buddhism,” by Wu Hong-lin, explains that Buddhism in Liangzhou (涼州) and Buddhism in Pingcheng (平城), in the era of Northern Wei (北魏), had a close relationship from the perspectives of history of politics and culture.

Part II highlights the process in which Early Buddhism settled in China, from various points of view. First, in her interesting essay “An Examination of the Origin of Korean Buddhist Medicine and the Activities of Buddhist Doctors,” Kim Seong-soon shows how Buddhist

Medicine, which combined the ancient Ayurvedic medicine of India with Chinese traditional medicine, had been handed down across the Silk Road through China to Korea. Secondly, Han Xiang in his essay “The Activities of Middle Asian Translators of Buddhist Scriptures in the Era of the South and North Dynasty of Wei-Qin (魏晉南北朝),” explores the various aspects of the translation of Buddhist Scriptures by scrutinizing the birthplaces, activities, and the translating works of Buddhist monks such as Zhi Qian (支謙), Kumârajva (鳩摩羅什) in the era of the South and North Dynasty. Thirdly, Choi Eun-yeong’s highly valuable essay “The Silk Road, the Route of the Prajñā Faith from India to China,” explores the ‘Prajñā Faith’, a technical term coined by Choi, which was practiced throughout the entire area of the Silk Road, by analyzing the scriptures, including Vajracchedikā-Prajñāpāramitā Sutra (金剛經) and Maha-Prajñā-Pāramitā Sutra (般若心經). Fourthly, Jeong Gwang-hun’s essay “A Comparative Study of Maha-Parinirvāna Sutra (大般涅槃經) No. 3 of Dunhuang Manuscripts and Tripitaka Koreana (高麗大藏經),” examines in detail the philological difference between the manuscript version and the print version of the Sutra, and thereby emphasizes the importance of the Maha-Parinirvāna Sutra No. 3 Manuscript of Dunhuang, which is a collection of Yeongnam University Library.

Part III describes the diverse cultural aspects of the Silk Road in the past. The first essay, “The Yaksha Statues in Xiwangmu Caves in Jingchuan, Gansu Province,” by Hwang Sun-il, shows that the Xiwangmu (which means Queen mother of the West) Caves in Jingchuan (涇川) play a crucial role in connecting Buddhism in India, Southeast Asia, and Northwestern China together, both directly and indirectly. This is followed by the interesting essay “A Comparative Study of the Uses of Musk in Medieval Arabia, Persia and China,” by Yang Dong-yu. The author provides rare information concerning the various uses of musk in the different areas, and explains how musk was used as medicine in East Asia. The third essay, “The Re-illumination of Sogdian Merchants in the Silk Road,” by Heo Nam-gyeol, shows that the Sogdian Merchants, who might be considered the virtual rulers of the Silk Road from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE to the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE, were not only good at commercial activities but also intellectually sensitive to the international trends of nearly all kinds of cultures. When it comes to religion for example, they spread such religions as Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and Nestorian Christianity along the road. And Sogdians such as Kang Meng-xiang (康孟詳) and Kang Seng-hui (康僧會) were among the first generation of translators of Buddhist Scriptures. The fourth essay, by Yun Seon-tae, “A Comparative Study of the Excavated Written Material of Dunhuang · Turpan and the Wooden Tablets · Documents of Ancient Korea,” is not just a simple comparative study, but an attempt to reinterpret the written material and wooden tablets (木簡) as a part of the dynamic transformation that occurred in the process of assimilating both peripheral and central parts of culture.

Finally, Part IV focuses on the Silk Road as a new prospect during the Modern and Contemporary era. First, Wang Chao in his essay “A Consideration of the Trend of Propagation of Regions along the Silk Road,” approaches the background of propagation of new religions from west to east from several perspectives, and observes that whereas propagation of Western religion was active because of its harmony with commerce, the Eastern culture of

China was stagnant because of its settling character of agriculture. Second, Han Zhong-yi in his essay “A Multi-dimensional Study of Modern and Contemporary Sufism in the Silk Road,” gives detailed information about various Islamic Orders on the Silk Road, including Imam-i Rabbani, Chistiyya, Suhrawardiyya, Qadiriyya, Salamiyya, Jahariyah, Khufiya, Naqshbandiyya, and Kubriyyah. Third, Fang Tie in his essay “A Brief Study of the Southwest Silk Road,” describes the conception, history, and present condition of the Southwest Silk Road, and explains the reason why the present conception of the Silk Road happens to omit the Sea routes, by referring to Chinese history books such as *Book of the Later Han* (後漢書), *Book of Geography* (地理志), and *Book of Barbarians* (蠻書). Fourth, Li Da-long, in his essay “The Silk Road: the Driving Force for the Unity of Ethnic Groups and Cultural Development,” gives an analysis of the cause of development of the Silk Road, and claims that the prosperity of the Silk Road is a precondition of the stability of politics and economy in China and the world. Finally, Luo Qun gives a comment on the decades of research on the Silk Road after the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and suggests a new future direction.

This book is the record of the first full-scale joint research on the Silk Road done by Korean and Chinese scholars. Although half of the book focuses exclusively on Buddhism, the other half effectively deals with other interesting and important topics. Without a doubt the value of this well-organized book is immense: it provides not only a highly informative account of the Silk Road as a whole but also insightful suggestions concerning future research. It will be very useful to anyone interested in the Silk Road.

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