

# On the Date of the Spread of Buddhism to the East

By Sei WADA

Buddhism's journey to the East is one of the most important events in the history of East Asia. For it is through it that the peoples of East Asia had their first poignant religious experience, through it that, as a collectivity, the mass of the population became heirs to the doctrines of Paradise and Hell, the idea of rebirth, the concept of cause, effect and retribution, to say nothing of the first contact with a recondite dogma. It is even said that the rise of Taoism, the system that in China unified popular beliefs, took place under Buddhist influence. It was not long before the Buddhism that had made its way to China got, through Korea, as far even as Japan. In all of those countries, the influence it exerted was enormous.

Nonetheless, as to the time and manner of the transmission of Buddhism to China, there is a conflict of theories that has yet to be resolved. The tradition among the Buddhists themselves is, generally, to place the event well back in time, identifying, for example, Lieh-tzu's 列子 'Western Sage' 西方聖者 as a reference or supposing that even Confucius knew of it, or that Buddhism was brought into China during the reign of the First Emperor of Ch'in 秦始皇帝 by a Central Asian monk known to the Chinese as 'Shih-li-fang' 室利房.

Another example is the *Fo-tsu-t'ung-chi* 佛祖統紀 (the Compendious Catalogue of Buddhist Patriarchs), *chüan* 34, the most systematically detailed of the traditional histories of Chinese Buddhism, compiled under the Chao Sung 趙宋 by Chih-p'an 志磐, in which one reads as follows:

In the fourth year (of the reign of the First Emperor of Ch'in, i.e. 243 B.C.), a company of eighteen, headed by Shih-li-fang, a *śramaṇa* from the Western regions, bringing Buddhist scriptures with them, came to make converts. The Emperor, in view of their outlandish manners, gaoled them, but at night there was a golden demon, a rod and six (feet in height), that, breaking down the door, let them out. The Emperor, bowing his head in alarm, expressed his contrition, then, lavishing them with gifts in an elaborate ceremonial, had them escorted out of the domains. [始皇] 四年, 西域沙門室利房等十八人, 齋佛經來化, 帝以其異俗囚之, 夜有丈六金神, 破戶出之, 帝驚, 稽首稱謝, 以厚禮遣出境。

However, it is not until the late thirteenth century that the *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi* took shape, while it is noted that this particular entry is owed to Chu Shih-hsing's 朱士行 *ching-lu* 經錄 (scriptural catalogue). The latter, however, is a late forgery, and in any case, if only on internal evidence, the notice is simply not worthy of credence. In the *Shih-chi* 史記 (Records of the Historian), in a notice under the thirty-third year of the same emperor (214 B.C.), one sees the expression 禁不得祠, interpreted by some<sup>(1)</sup> to signify a prohibition of Buddhism, but it is difficult to accept this without grave reservations. There are two reasons for this. First, Confucius predates Gautama Buddha, it should go without saying. Second, during the reign of the abovementioned First Emperor, Buddhism had not spread even throughout India, to say nothing of the possibility of its reaching China.

Next to consider are the 'golden men' 金人, that is, the gold-bronze statues, alleged to have been erected by the First Emperor of Ch'in, or to have been worshipped by Emperor Wu 武帝 of the Han. The former, being twelve golden men enclosed in a bell casement, made by melting down all of the weapons in the realm at the time of unification, figures that he then placed around the palace of Hsien-yang 咸陽, are hence without question no Buddha-figures. Where the latter is concerned, one reads the following in the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism 釋老志 in the *Wei-shu* 魏書, *chüan* 114:

One notes that the Han Wu (-ti), during the Yüan-shou 元狩 period (i.e., in 121 B.C.), dispatched Huo Ch'ü-ping 霍去病 to chastise the Hsiung-nu 匈奴. He reached Kao-lan 皋蘭 and passed Chü-yen 居延, cutting off heads and taking much booty. King Hun-yeh 昆邪王 killed King Hsiu-ch'u 休屠王 and, at the head of a multitude fifty thousand strong, came to Ch'ü-ping and capitulated to him. Ch'ü-ping acquired a golden man from him. The Emperor, considering him a great god, installed him in his own quarters in the Kan-ch'üan-kung 甘泉宮 (Sweet Spring Palace). The golden man was somewhat more than a rod in height. They did not sacrifice to him, but merely burnt incense and did obeisance before him. This, then, was the modest beginning of the influx of the Way of the Buddha. 案漢武元狩中, 遣霍去病討匈奴, 至皋蘭, 過居延, 斬首大獲, 昆邪王殺休屠王, 將其衆五萬來降, 獲其金人, 帝以爲大神, 列於甘泉宮, 金人率長丈餘, 不祭祀, 但燒香禮拜而已, 此則佛道流通之漸也。及開西域, 遣張騫使大夏, 還傳, 其旁有身毒國, 一名天竺, 始聞浮屠之教。

Since, however, as Dr. K. Shiratori tells us,<sup>(2)</sup> the golden man was the 'august

(1) Toyohashi FUJITA 藤田豊八, *Shina ni okeru Kokuseki no Yurai fu Futokushi to wa nanzo ya 支那に於ける刻石の由來附不得祠とは何ぞや* (The Origin of Stone Carving in China, specially, the appendix entitled what is *pu-te-ssu?*), in *Tōyō Gakuhō* 東洋學報, Vol. 16, No. 2.

(2) Kurakichi SHIRATORI 白鳥庫吉, *Bukkyō Tōden no Densetsu* 佛教東傳の傳説 (Traditions concerning the Eastward Move of Buddhism), in his *Seiki-shi Kenkyū* 西域史研究 (Studies in the History of Central Asia), Vol. 1.

spirit of Grand Unity' 太一之威神, with protruding dragon scales, he too was certainly no Buddha-figure. This is all the truer in that in China, the land of Buddhism's origin, there was still no practice of worshipping Buddha-images. The construction placed on this event by the *Wei-shu* must be labelled an anachronism, one has no other choice. Furthermore, to allege that Chang Ch'ien 張騫 brought back to China rumours he had heard of the 'Buddha's teaching' 浮屠之教 is all the more obviously a wild fabrication in that there is no talk of it either in the *Shih-chi* or in the *Han-shu* 漢書.

## II

In spite of the above, the generally accepted story is the one that alleges that Emperor Ming 明帝 of the Latter Han 後漢, in response to a numinous dream, sent an embassy in quest of the Buddha's teachings. As early as the *Hou Han-shu* 後漢書, *chüan* 118, one reads as follows at the end of the Notice on India 天竺國傳, which constituted one part of the Notice on the 'Western Regions' 西域傳:

In the world it is reported that the Emperor Ming saw in a dream a golden man, tall and large, the top of his head aglow. When he questioned his assembled ministers about this, one of them said, 'The Western Regions have a god, whose name is called "Buddha", his height being a rod and six feet, his colour that of pure gold.' The Emperor thereupon dispatched an embassy to India to inquire into the Way and law of the Buddha. Eventually, in this way his likeness was reproduced in the Middle Realm. 世傳, 明帝夢見金人, 長大, 頂有光明, 以問群臣, 或曰, 西方有神, 名曰佛, 其形長丈六尺而黃金色, 帝於是遣使天竺, 問佛道法, 遂於中國圖畫形像焉。

The above account is filled out by the abovementioned *Fo-tsu t'ung-chi*. At the end of a detailed account of the abovementioned golden man and related subjects, *chüan* 35 has the following to say:

In the seventh year (of Yung-p'ing 永平, i.e., 64 A.D.), the Emperor dreamed of a golden man, a rod and six (feet in height), the nape of his neck bathed in sunlight, flying about the palace courtyard. Though he questioned his assembled ministers, none was able to answer him. The grand astronomer 太史, Fu Yi 傅毅, stepped forward to say, 'Your subject has heard that, in the time of (King) Chao of Chou 周昭 (1052-1002 B.C.), there emerged in the West a wise man whose name was "Buddha".' The Emperor accordingly dispatched eighteen persons, headed by the *chung-lang-chiang* 中郎將 Ts'ai Yin 蔡愔, Ch'in Ching 秦景 and the *po-shih* 博士 Wang Tsun 王遵, whom he ordered into the Western Regions, there to seek out the Way of the Buddha. [永平] 七年, 帝夢金人丈六,

項佩日光，飛行殿庭，且問群臣，莫能對，太史傳毅進曰，臣聞周昭之時，西方聖人者出，其名曰佛，帝乃遣中郎將蔡愔秦景博士王遵十八人，使西域，訪求佛道。 In the tenth year (67 A.D.), Ts'ai Yin and his companions, meeting Kāśyapamṛdaṅga 迦葉摩騰 Chu Fa-lan 竺法蘭 (Dharmaratna?) among the Great Yüeh-chih in Middle India 中天竺大月氏, obtained an embroidered image of the Buddha and scriptures in Brahmanical writing to the extent of six hundred thousand words, which they transported on a white horse to Lo-yang. (Kāśyapamṛ)daṅ(ga) and (Chu Fa-)lan, having been granted an audience in their *śramaṇa* garb, were lodged in the Hall of the Great Transmission (sc. of imperial decrees, Hung-lu-ssu 鴻臚寺). 十年，蔡愔等，於中天竺大月氏，遇迦葉摩騰竺法蘭，得佛倚像梵本經六十萬言，載以白馬達雒陽，騰蘭以沙門服謁見，館於鴻臚寺。

In the eleventh year (68 A.D.), it was decreed that in Lo-yang, outside the barring gate (*yung-men* 雍門), to the west of the city wall, a White Horse Monastery (*po-ma-ssu* 白馬寺) be built, where (Kāśyapa)mṛdaṅ(ga) first translated the *Ssu-shih-êrh-chang-ching* 四十二章經 (the Scripture in Forty-Two Chapters), the text of which was then stored in the stone vault on Orchid Terrace (*lan-t'ai* 蘭臺). A Buddha figure was then fashioned by the gate of the Hsi-yang wall and atop the Mausoleum of the Manifest Mean (*hsien-chieh-ling* 顯節陵, which was to be the tomb of Emperor Ming). The Emperor questioned (Kāśyapa)mṛdaṅ(ga), saying, 'Once the Buddha had emerged into the world, how is it that his converting effect did not reach this place (immediately)?' (Kāśyapamṛ)daṅ(ga) said, 'Kapilavastu in India is the place in which all Buddhas of the three ages in the trischilomegachilicocosm make their appearance in the course of ten thousand myriads of days and months. When there are gods and men, dragons and ghosts, who desire it, thither They come to be born and to confer the Way of transforming enlightenment. Elsewhither, though the Buddhas do not go, yet Their glowing marks do reach. In a thousand years and five hundred, all (those places shall) have Sages, who, transmitting the Buddha's vocal teachings, shall go to convert.' The Emperor was greatly pleased. 十一年，敕雒陽城西雍門外，立白馬寺，摩騰始譯四十二章經，藏梵本於蘭臺石室，圖佛像於西陽城門及顯節陵上明帝，帝問摩騰曰，佛出世後，何以化不及此，騰曰，天竺迦毗羅衛國者，三千大千世界百億日月之中，三世諸佛皆於此出，天人龍鬼有願力者，皆來生彼，受化悟道，餘處佛雖不往，然光相及處，千年五百，皆有聖人，傳佛聲教而往化之，帝大悅。

These statements constitute a rather haphazard combination of already existing works, such as the preface to the *Ssu-shih-êrh-chang-ching*, recorded in Seng-yu's 僧祐 *Ch'u-san-tsang-chi-chi* 出三藏記集 (Collected Colophones to Translations of Buddhist Writings), compiled under the Liang 梁; Fei Ch'ang-fang's 費長房 *Li-tai san-pao-chi* 歷代三寶記 (Account of the Three Jewels throughout the Ages), compiled under the Sui 隋; Tao-hsüan's 道宣 *Ta T'ang*

*nei-tien-lu* 大唐内典錄 (Record of the Esoteric Canon of the Great T'ang), compiled under the T'ang 唐; and the abovementioned Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*. In the first place, the Buddha's dates do not extend that far back. In the second, the Great Yüeh-chih are not situated in Central India. The emissaries, for their part, are stated in the preface to the *Ssu-shih-êrh-chang-ching* to have numbered twelve, chief among them being Chang Ch'ien, Ch'in Ching and Wang Tsun. The second of these names is, in all likelihood, an abbreviation of the *po-shih's* disciple Ch'in Ching-hsien 秦景憲, who, as shall also be seen later, is alleged to have received, at the end of the Former Han, oral instruction in the Buddhist scriptures. As for such names as the grand astronomer Fu Yi and the *chung-lang-chiang* Ts'ai Yin, these do not occur in the earliest version. Even the account of Kāśyapamṛdaṅga and Dharmaratna vary enormously from one version to the text. While in this one the two came to China together, according to such sources as the *Li-tai san-pao-chi* and the *Kao-seng-ch'uan* 高僧傳 (Lives of Eminent Monks), Dharmaratna was the second to come, alone and by stealth.<sup>(3)</sup> Also, according to this account, the *Ssu-shih-êrh-chang-ching* and other writings were translated by Kāśyapamṛdaṅga, while other sources have it that it was the work of Dharmaratna. There are still other theories that hold that the said scripture is, if anything, a late forgery.<sup>(4)</sup>

The following notice in the *Kao-seng-ch'uan* shows that the name 'White Horse Monastery' need not necessarily be owed to the tradition that the Scriptures were first transported to China on the back of a white horse:

*Une tradition rapporte: 'Un roi d'un pays étranger détruisit les monastères: Il n'y eut que le Tchao-t'i-sseu 招提寺 qu'il n'arriva pas à détruire. Une nuit, un cheval blanc, tournant autour du stūpa, hennit tristement. On en avertit immédiatement le roi et celui-ci cessa aussitôt de détruire les monastères. Alors il changea le nom de Tchao-t'i en celui de Po-ma. Dès lors, des monastères prirent souvent ce nom.'* 相傳云,外國國王嘗毀破諸寺,唯招提寺未及毀壞,夜有一白馬,繞塔悲鳴,即以啓王,王即停壞諸寺,因改招提以爲白馬,故諸寺定名,多取則焉。

There is, at the very least, room for supposing that the first White Horse

(3) According to Bunzaburō MATSUMO's 松本文三郎 *Shina Bukkyō Iseki* 支那佛教遺蹟 (Chinese Buddhist Remains), there are absolutely no remains, whether of Kāśyapamṛdaṅga or of Dharmaratna in the White Horse Monastery now situated just beyond the eastern outer wall of Lo-yang. This is no more than an oversight on his part, for there is a gigantic tomb to both of them outside the monastery's western gate. This, however, does not by any means constitute proof of the two men's historical existence.

(4) Daijō TOKIWA 常盤大定, *Shijūni-shō-kyō ni tsukite* 四十二章經につきて (On the Scripture in Forty-Two Chapters), contained in Volume 1 of his *Shina Bukkyō Kenkyū* 支那佛教研究 (Studies in Chinese Buddhism).

Monastery dates not to the Latter Han, but to Tsin 晉 at the earliest.<sup>(5)</sup>

Quite apart from the above, there are inconsistencies and mutual contradictions at every turn, totally depriving the story of credibility. It is for these reasons that, in France, M. Maspero was the first to deny the authenticity of this dream tale,<sup>(6)</sup> while later, in our own country, Mr. Daijō Tokiwa 常盤大定 also repudiated it.<sup>(7)</sup> Then, in general, other scholars have accepted their view, so that now there is no one who regards the said account as fact.

Yet, in the Notice on the Western Regions in the *Hou Han-shu*, the passage quoted at the beginning of the present section is followed by a statement to the effect that, once Prince Ying of Ch'u 楚王英 had acquired faith in the magical arts (sc. of the Buddhists), the number of the worshippers of the said way increased somewhat in the Middle Realm (i.e., in China proper) 楚王英始信其術, 中國因此頗有奉其道者. Elsewhere, in *chüan* 72, one will find the biography of the said Prince Ying, beloved younger brother of Emperor Ming, whose faith in Buddhism is described in the following terms:

Ying, in his youth, loved to play the gallant, constantly entertaining guests. As age advanced, he took ever greater delight in the study of the Yellow (Emperor) and Lao(-tzu), also fasting and sacrificing to the Buddha. When, in the eighth year (65 A.D.), it was decreed that all under Heaven guilty of capital offenses could atone with presents of cloth, Ying dispatched a *lang-chung-ling* 郎中令 to present thirty bolts of yellow and white cloth. Reporting to (the appropriate) minister of state, (the envoy relayed a message, which) said, 'Entrusted (with the charge) of aiding (imperial rule in the) provinces, I am guilty of a positive heap of transgressions and of evil deeds. Overjoyed by this great (act of) grace, I humbly offer this cloth, therewith to atone for my offenses.' When the envoy reported this, there was an imperial reply, saying, 'The Prince of Ch'u recites the recondite words of the Yellow (Emperor) and of Lao (-tzu), he reveres the Buddha's temples of virtue. Fasting and purifying himself for three months, he has made a vow to his god. What can be his doubts, what his uncertainties, that he should have such regrets, such remorse? Let the cloth be returned, therewith to supplement the feasts of the *i-p'u-sai* 伊蒲塞 and *sang-men* 桑門. *I-p'u-sai* is the same as *yu-p'o-sai*

(5) Shōshin ŌTANI 大谷勝眞, *Shina ni okeru Butsuji Zōryū no Kigen ni tsuite* 支那に於ける佛寺造立の起原に就いて (On the First Construction of Buddhist Edifices in China), in *Toyo Gakuho*, Vol. 11, No. 1.

(6) H. MASPERO, 'Le songe et l'ambassade de l'empereur Ming des Han postérieurs—étude critique des sources', in *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, X. 1 (1910); Shōshin ŌTANI, Meitei Reimu Kenshi-setsu Kō 明帝靈夢遣使説考 (Reflections on the Miraculous Dream and Mission of Emperor Ming), in *Toyo Gakuho*, Vol. 1, No. 2.

(7) Daijō TOKIWA, Kan Mei Guhō-setsu no Kenkyū 漢明求法説の研究 (A Study of the Quest for the Dharma on the Part of Emperor Ming of the Latter Han), contained in his *Shina Bukkyō no Kenkyū*, Vol. 1.

優婆塞 (*upāsaka*), translated into Chinese as *chin-chu* 近住 (dwelling close by). It means that, undertaking ascetic behaviour, he is allowed to approach the dwellings of the Saṃgha. *Sang-men* is the same as *sha-men* 沙門 (*śramaṇa*). The decree was distributed and displayed throughout the realm. 英少好游俠, 交通賓客, 晚節更喜黃老學, 爲浮屠齋戒祭祀. 八年, 詔令天下死罪, 皆入縑贖. 英遣郎中令, 奉黃縑白紬三十匹, 詣國相曰, 托在蕃輔, 過惡累積, 歡喜大恩, 奉送縑帛, 以贖愆罪, 國相以聞. 詔報曰, 梵王誦黃老之微言, 尚浮屠之仁祠, 潔齋三月, 與神爲誓, 何嫌何疑, 當有悔吝, 其還贖, 以助伊蒲塞桑門之盛饌, 伊蒲塞即優婆塞也, 中華翻爲近住, 言受戒行, 堪近僧住也, 桑門即沙門, 因以班示國中.

Since this is quoted from a biography (i.e., Biography of Prince Ying of Ch'u) in a dynastic history (i.e., *Hou Han-shu*), it has generally been regarded as factual. It has also been thought that, since the Prince of Ch'u was a firm believer by the eighth year of Yung-p'ing, Buddhism must have entered the Han territories well before that.

Now, a look back at the conditions of communication of the time in question will reveal that China, under the Former Han, opened up considerable communication with the outside world, and that even Wang Mang 王莽 went to great lengths to conciliate the outlying regions. In his conceit, however, Wang Mang made the mistake of enacting policies that earned him only the resentment of foreign peoples. Emperor Kuang-wu 光武帝 of the Latter Han, on the other hand, occupied as he was with internal order, was extremely wary of foreign contacts, so much so that, when, for instance, the king of Yarkand came with presents and an offer of trade, he was rebuffed, the gate was shut in his face and there was no contact. Thus it was only after the reign of Emperor Ming, during the reigns of his successors, Emperors Chang 章帝 and Ho 和帝, that the gates were reopened, for China had no contact with Central Asia from the reign of the abovementioned Emperor Kuang-wu until the end of that of Emperor Ming, his successor. Hence the entry of Buddhism into China in the early years of the Latter Han is quite impossible. If the event is to be dated to that time at all, it belongs at the borderline between the two Han. As it happens, a bit of written evidence in perfect accord with this assumption has been discovered.

It is the following statement, quoted by the Account of the Eastern Barbarians 東夷傳 in the *San-kuo-chih* 三國志 (Record of the Three Kingdoms) from the Account of the Western Barbarians 西戎傳 in the *Wei-lieh* 魏略:

India also had a divine man whose name was Sha-lü 沙律. In former times, under Emperor Ai 哀帝 of the Han, in the first year of Yüan-shou, the doctor's disciple, Ching Lu 景盧, received oral instruction in the scriptures of the Buddha from I-ts'un 伊存, envoy of the King of the Great Yüeh-chih. The one called *fu-li* 復立 (alt. -*tou* 豆) means that personage (the Buddha) himself. 天竺又有神人, 名沙律. 昔漢哀帝元壽元年, 博士弟子景盧受大月氏王使伊存口受浮屠經, 曰, 復立 (豆) 者其人也.

The above is contained within a passage that relates a tradition concerning Buddhist scriptures that allegedly include the story of Lao-tzu's conversion of barbarians, and that also describes Lumbinī, the Buddha's native land. Presumed textual lacunae make the text very hard to understand,<sup>(8)</sup> but, at any rate, if read as we propose, it leads to the possible conclusion that Buddhism came into China in the first year of Yüan-shou during the reign of Emperor Ai of the Former Han. Thus, the Notice on Buddhism and Taoism in the *Wei-shu*, adopting this tradition, says, 'In the first year of Yüan-shou, under Emperor Ai, the doctor's disciple Ch'in Ching-hsien received oral instruction in the Buddhist scriptures from I-ts'un, envoy of the King of the Great Yüeh-chih, but, while the Middle Land (i.e., China) had heard of the scriptures, they were not yet believed in.' 哀帝元壽元年, 博士弟子秦景憲受大月氏王使口授浮屠經, 中土聞之, 未之信了也。 It is thus that M. Chavannes, the eminent French scholar, on this basis, determined the first year of Yüan-shou, during the reign of Emperor Ai of the Han (2 B.C), to have been the year of the introduction of Buddhism into China.<sup>(9)</sup> Our own countryman, Dr. K. Shiratori, himself a specialist in the history of Central Asia, emended this by saying that, while the first year of Yüan-shou was perfectly all right, still it predated the belief in Buddhism on the part of the Great Yüeh-chih, which means that the source of the missionary activity was rather, in all likelihood, the Gandhāra area, known to the Chinese of the time as Chi-pin 罽賓.<sup>(10)</sup> This, the latest theory as to the time of the introduction of Buddhism into China, is now the commonly accepted one.<sup>(11)</sup>

### III

Regretfully, however, and for more than one reason, I for my part find this view unacceptable. The first problem is Prince Ying of Ch'u himself. Shortly after the alleged event, the Prince was put to death for treason. Independently of this, Ch'u, the land of his enfeoffment, refers to P'eng-ch'eng 彭城, the modern Hsü-chou 徐州. If it is true that Buddhism had taken effect in China as far to the east as this seacoast area, then it would have had to

(8) According to Ch'en Tzu-liang 陳子良, as quoted in Fa-lin's 法琳 *Pien-cheng-lun* 辨正論 (Treatise on the Discernment of the Right), Sha-lü was aged and white-haired, constantly instructing men to construct Buddha (stūpas) 沙律年老髮白, 常教人爲浮圖. Sha-lü appears to be Śāriputra, one of the Buddha's most renowned disciples. While the *Lao-tzu hua-hu-ching* 老子化胡經 (the Scripture of Lao-tzu's Conversion of the Barbarians) is said to be the work of the Taoist practitioner Wang Fu 王符, composed during the reign of Emperor Ch'eng of the Eastern Chin 東晉成帝, its origins can be detected as early as in Hsiang K'ai's 襄楷 memorial; in sum, it is a work of considerable age.

(9) Ed. CHAVANNES, Les pays d'Occident d'après le Wei lio, in *T'oung Pao* 通報, Vol. VI (1905), pp. 539-551.

(10) K. SHIRATORI, Bukkyō Tōden no Densetsu, in his *Seiiki-shi Kenkyū*, Vol. I.

(11) An example is Hakuju Ur's 宇井伯壽 *Shina Bukkyō-shi* 支那佛教史 (History of Chinese Buddhism).



be in an even more flourishing state at Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang, which lay between India and the China Sea. However, there is not the least evidence of this, as anyone, surely, must admit. As a means of accounting for the introduction of Buddhism into China, it is surely no less strange to declare that the Prince of Ch'u, though guiltless, felt such remorse as to make offerings of cloth, that Emperor Ming was then motivated by the Prince's Buddhist faith to excuse his (non-existent) guilt and then, over and above that, to encourage him in the faith. This is, after all, just another one of the pious old-wives' tales of which several examples have already been cited. The only difference between this one and the others, surely, is that it has crept into one of the dynastic histories. Dynastic history and all, there was nothing to keep the latter, under the influence of the times, from incorporating such traditions as matters of fact, as not infrequently happened. To cite two cases not quite apposite to this one, in the *San-kuo-chih* is the story that Ch'ung 冲, the pitiful prince of Teng 鄧 in Wei, weighed an elephant (by putting it in a boat, then measuring the distance that the boat had sunk), while in the same source and in the *Hou-Han-shu* is the story of the operation performed by the miracle-working physician Hua T'o 華佗, both retold tales of Indian origin, or reputed as such.<sup>(12)</sup> It is all the more likely that, the time being one in which Buddhism was already flourishing, Fan Yeh 范曄, governor of Hsüan-ch'eng 宣城太守 under the Liu Sung 劉宋 and compiler of the *Hou Han-shu*, should have incorporated into the latter work Buddhist tales current at his time, mistaking them for matters of fact, or so it would seem. Besides, if one takes the account of this prince's Buddhist faith as a groundless tale, then all proof of the introduction of Buddhism into China at the beginning of the Latter Han vanishes.

The second problem is the attitude of the Chinese people towards the introduction of Buddhism. Even if the Chinese nation were dull-witted, however dull-witted it might be, if one were to assume that Buddhism entered its land under the Former Han, one would surely be entitled to expect a reaction commensurate with the event. Yet, from the Former Han to the Latter Han, no such reaction is to be seen. On the contrary, the influence of Buddhism on the Chinese becomes evident only at the time bestriding the end of the Latter Han and the Three Kingdoms. By the time of the Three Kingdoms, one is confronted by countless stories such as the one that portrays Sun Ch'üan 孫權, founder of the Kingdom of Wu 吳, and his lady as fervent believers, or Chai Jung 笮融 and K'an Tse 闕澤 as temple builders. Similar statements may be made in the realm of scriptural translation, for, if the abovementioned *Ssu-shih-êrh-chang-ching* is in fact a late forgery, then not a single scriptural translation can be dated to the Han. For, after all, such forerunners of scriptural translation into Chinese as An Shih-kao 安世高 (148-171) and Chih Lou-

(12) This is the view of Ch'en Yin-k'o 陳寅恪.

chia-ch'ien 支婁迦讖 (Lokakṣema? 178-189) are men bestriding the period between the end of the Latter Han and era of the Three Kingdom, are they not? It is possible, in spite of this, that Buddhism was already present in China under the Former Han? Granted the gradual penetration of Buddhism among the Chinese themselves, even so there is no way to dispose of the empty gap of over a hundred years beginning with the end of the Former Han.

#### IV

The first solid proof of the presence of Buddhism in China is, to my knowledge, to be found in Chang Heng's 張衡 *Hsi-ching-fu* 西京賦 (Prose Poem on the Western Capital). In that poem, which is included in the *Wen-hsüan* 文選 (Anthology), speaking of persons able to remain emotionally unaffected by the sight of lovely women, the poet says:

*Sie bewegen ihre roten Schuhe auf beschränktem Platze zwischen Schüsseln und Kelchen, sie lassen ihre langen Ärmel hin- und her-flattern. Ihre Schlankheit und Koketterie kommen durch die herrlichen Gewänder besonders zur Geltung. Sie lassen Brauen und Wimpern spielen und werfen verliebte Blicke, von denen einer genügt, den Kommandanten einer Stadt seine Pflicht vergessen zu lassen. Selbst Chan Chi oder ein Asket (śramaṇa) müssen von ihnen bezaubert werden.*<sup>(13)</sup> 振朱屣於盤樽，奮長袖之颯飈，要結修態，麗服颺菁，昭藐流眄，一顧傾城，展季桑門，誰能不營。

Chan Chi 展季, also known as Chan Ch'in 展禽, is none other than Liu-hsia Hui 柳下惠, a disciple of Confucius whose dislike of women was such as to make even the Master comment in amazement. The word *śramaṇa* appears here in the guise of *sang-men* 桑門, encountered above in connection with Prince Ying of Ch'u. The poet's reason for coupling them with Liu-hsia Hui was no doubt their lifelong vow of celibacy. At the time, Buddhists were known to the general population as persons of rigid adherence to moral (i.e., ascetic) conduct. The poet Chang Heng, born in Chien-ch'u 建初 3 (78 A.D.), during the reign of Emperor Chang, and deceased in Yung-ho 永和 4 (139 A.D.), during the reign of Emperor Shun 順帝, was thus a personality belonging to the middle period of the Latter Han. That by this time Buddhism was already in China is no longer a matter of doubt.

In the Notice on the Western Regions in the *Hou Han-shu*, following the abovementioned references to the dream of Emperor Ming and to the religious faith of Prince Ying of Ch'u, one reads, 'Thereafter, Emperor Huan 桓帝,

(13) This historical source, hitherto not widely known, was brought to my attention by Chōhachi ITANO 板野長八, professor at Hokkaidō University 北海道大學, to whom I hereby express my gratitude. The above translation is quoted from Erwin von Zach, *Die chinesische Anthologie*, 1.16.

being found of the spirits, frequently sacrificed to the Buddha and Lao-tzu. Among the people there were some worshippers, who later became increasingly important.' 後桓帝好神，數祀浮圖老子，百姓稍有奉者，後遂轉盛。It is thus an indisputable matter of fact. In the same source (*chüan* 60 b), in the Biography of Hsiang K'ai 襄楷傳, one reads of the memorial submitted by Hsiang K'ai in Yen-hsi 延熹 9 (166 A.D.), wherein he remonstrated with Emperor Huan to the following effect:

I have also heard that in the Palace there have been erected shrines to the Yellow (Emperor, to) Lao(-tzu and to the) Buddha. Their way is pure and empty (of *parti pris*), holding *asamskrita* in high esteem, loving the giving of life and abhorring the taking of it, reducing cupidity and banishing extravagance. Now Your Majesty's lust are not banished, the death penalty and others are in excess of reason. Having thus violated their way, can you possibly reap its good fortune? Some say that Lao-tzu went into the barbarians' midst, there to become the Buddha. The Buddha would not spend three nights under the same mulberry bush, not wishing to produce obligations or attachments (that might prove to be of) long (duration)—the extreme of strict purity. The gods of heaven presented him with lovely maidens, but the Buddha, saying 'These are but bags of flesh containing blood!', would not even look at them. Such being his adherence to the one, this is the way in which he was able to achieve the way. Now Your Majesty's attractive maidens and seductive women are the extreme of all the loveliness under Heaven; Your sweet-meats are rich and your beverages delicious, exhausting all the flavours under Heaven. How, then, can You hope to be like the Yellow (Emperor or) Lao(-tzu)? 又聞宮中立黃老浮屠之祠。此道清虛，貴尚無爲，好生惡殺，省慾去奢。今陛下嗜慾不去，殺罰過理，既乖其道，豈獲其祚哉。或言，老子入夷狄爲浮屠。浮屠不三宿桑下，不欲久生恩愛，精之至也。天神遺以好女，浮屠曰，此但革囊盛血，遂不眄之，其守一如此，乃能成道。今陛下嬌女豔婦，極天下之麗，甘肥飲美，單天下之味，奈何欲如黃老乎。

There is clear evidence of the flourishing state of Buddhism. Thus, the overwhelming likelihood is that Buddhism spread to the east after the reigns of Emperors Chang and Ho, about the time that Pan Ch'ao 班超 settled affairs in Central Asia and there was vigorous East-West contact, certainly not that it came into China about the time of Emperor Ai or the Former Han. The notice quoted from the *Wei-lüeh* is too vague, by no means an authority on which to place any reliance.

It is said that Buddhism flourished among the Great Yüeh-chih after the reign of King Kaniška. Where the years of his reign are concerned, the dominant view used to be that he acceded to the throne in 78, but this view has been overtaken more recently by two others, one that places the event in

128, the other in 144.<sup>(14)</sup> Under the Yüeh-chih in the abovementioned Notice on the Western Regions in the *Hou Han-shu*, one encounters Kujula Kadphises and his son, Vema Kadphises, under the respective names Ch'iu-chiu-ch'üeh 丘就卻 and Yen-kao-chen 閼膏珍, but Kaniška is not there. This accords well with the supposition that by this time China was at the end of the Han or already into the Three Kingdoms. While the Buddhism of the Great Yüeh-chih was, generally speaking, of the Mahāyāna, the very first scriptures translated on Chinese soil by An Shih-kao 安世高, such texts as the *Ānāpānasmṛti* and the *Ta-hsiao shih-erh-men* 大小十二門 (a work on the twelvefold chain) and the *A-p'i-t'an wu-fa* 阿毘曇五法 (a work on Abhidharma), exclusively to the Hīnayāna. It is only when one comes to Lokakṣema (支) 婁迦識 that Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the *Śūraṅgamasamādhi* and *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhi*, are translated into Chinese—scarcely a coincidence, in our opinion.

(14) Naoshirō Tsuji 辻直四郎, *Mātorichēta-saku Ippyaku-gojussan no Shinshuppan ni tsuite* マートリチエータ作一百五十讃の新出版について (On a New Publication of Mātṛceta's Hymn in 150 Verses), in *Tōyō Gakuhō*, Vol. 33, Nos. 3 & 4, p. 157.