INTRODUCTION

China's Encounter and Predicament with the Indic World

Cross-cultural relations between ancient India and China were unique and multifaceted.[1] Separated by physical barriers, the two regions developed their distinct cultural traditions, belief systems, political organizations, and views regarding their place in the wider world. The cultural attainments of these two civilizations gradually spread to and influenced various neighboring societies. While religious elements and political ideas originating in India permeated into Southeast Asian kingdoms and the oasis states of Central Asia, Korea and Japan in East Asia prospered through their interactions with the Chinese civilization. Indeed, in the early first millennium C.E., when a Buddhist nexus was established between India and China, the two countries had not only achieved a high level of social, political, and cultural sophistication, they also fostered spheres of influence over other regional cultures of Asia.

The transmission of Buddhist doctrines from one complex society to another was an arduous process, the intricacy of which exemplifies the unique nature of Sino-Indian intercourse. In order to introduce the teachings of the Buddha to the potential Chinese adherents, the transmitters had to take into account major linguistic differences, a totally distinct array of allegories, and a contrasting set of social values and eschatological views shaped by Confucian ideas on filial piety. The success of their endeavor is evident from the chapters that follow.

The establishment of Buddhism in China triggered a profusion of religious exchanges between India and China, and, at the same time, stimulated the trading relations between the two countries.

Xinru Liu has proposed that Sino-Indian exchanges during the first six centuries of the first millennium were founded upon an interdependent network of long-distance trade and the transmission of Buddhist doctrines.[2] This interdependent network, a detailed explanation of which is given later in the book, not only sustained the growth of premodern Sino-Indian relations, but also had a tremendous impact on the intermediary states. In fact, by the seventh century, most of Asia, China, India, and their respective spheres of influence, were fully integrated into this network of religious and commercial intercourse between India and China.

The present study starts from this acclaimed peak of Sino-Indian relations in the seventh century and closes with the apogee-making voyages of the Ming (1368–1644) naval fleet under the command of Admiral Zheng He (1371–1433) to the Indian ports in the early fifteenth century. Although the significance of Sino-Indian exchanges during the seventh and in the early fifteenth centuries is widely acknowledged, the profound developments that had gradually transformed the fundamental nature of the bilateral relations in the interim eight centuries have been neglected. There are, in fact, serious gaps in the understanding of Sino-Indian interchange from the seventh to the fifteenth centuries. The Tang period (618–907), for example, is trumpeted as the "Golden Age" of premodern exchanges between India and China without any critical examination. No attempt has been made to either examine the changing nature of Buddhist intercourse between India and China during the Tang dynasty or explain the ramifications of these changes on the relations between the two countries. What is more, the interregnum between the tenth and fifteenth centuries is purported to be a period of "decline" and thus found irrelevant to Sino-Indian exchanges.

By focusing on the changes in Buddhist and commercial interactions between India and China, this book contends that Sino-Indian relations witnessed a significant restructuring between the seventh and the fifteenth centuries. While in the first millennium the sacred Buddhist sites in India were the pivot of Sino-Indian interactions, the lucrative markets of China and the expanding intercontinental commerce emerged as the main stimuli for the bilateral relations since the early eleventh century. In other words, the relations between India and China during the period examined in this study were realigned from Buddhist-dominated to trade-centered exchanges. The chapters that follow analyze the origins,

course, and implications of this momentous transformation of Sino-Indian relations.

Initial Encounters between India and China

The initial encounter between India and China stemmed from military exigencies and was subsequently fostered by itinerant merchants. Zhang Qian (167?–114 B.C.E.), who was sent to Bactria in Central Asia in 138 B.C.E. by the Former Han court (202 B.C.E.–23 C.E.) to forge an alliance against the nomadic Xiongnu empire, on his return reported to the Han court about the existence of a trade route linking southwestern China to India.[3] The *Shiji* (Records of the Grand Historian), the first Chinese dynastic history that was compiled some two centuries before Buddhist doctrines penetrated into Chinese society, narrates the ensuing plan by the Han officials to locate and monopolize this route to India.[4] The aim of the Han court was to establish an alternate route to Central Asia through India. The Han emissaries sent to southwestern China, however, failed in their endeavor, we are told, because of the resistance from local tribes in the region. Nonetheless, in the next two centuries, especially after the collapse of the Xiongnu confederation in 55 B.C.E. and the subsequent expansion of the Han empire into the Pamir regions, the interactions between the Han court and northern India grew at a rapid pace.

By the end of the first century C.E., when the next dynastic history, the *Han shu* (History of the Han [Dynasty]), was compiled by Ban Gu (32–92), the Chinese had already gathered detailed information about the southern Hindukush region, then dominated by Greek colonies.[5] This area, especially the kingdom of Jibin (around the Gandhāra region),[6] due to its proximity to the nomadic tribes in Central Asia and the Chinese military garrisons in the Pamirs, was of great importance to the Han court. The Chinese desire to establish official contacts and their attempts to gain a military foothold in the region are evident from Ban Gu's record.

After narrating the flora, fauna, and the developed socio-economic system of the kingdom of Jibin, Ban Gu accuses the King Wutoulao (Azilises, fl. first century B.C.E.) of assaulting Chinese envoys (*Hanshi*).[7] After the death of Azilises, his son Azes II became the king and is reported to have dispatched a tributary mission to China.[8] Perhaps as a response to this seemingly friendly gesture, the *Guan duwei* (Commandant-in-chief of the Customs Barrier) Wen Zhong, from his

garrison in western China, responded with an envoy of his own. However, the new king of Jibin, we are told, "also intended to harm" the Chinese emissaries. As a result, Wen Zhong, in alliance with a Greek settler, attacked Jibin and killed Azes II. Matters did not improve even after Wen Zhong installed the Greek ally, named Yinmopu (Hermaeus), as the new ruler of Jibin.[9] In fact, like Azilises and Azes II, Hermaeus, too, was accused of assaulting Chinese envoys visiting his court. The hostilities between the Han court and the Jibin kingdom may have stemmed from the fact that the local rulers were adamantly opposed to the expansionist activities of the Chinese in Central Asia. They may have been especially concerned about the Chinese intervention in the internal affairs of the southern Hindukush region.

Chinese frustration over their diplomatic failure in the southern Hindukush region is expressed in a dialogue between the Han official Du Qin and General Wang Feng that purportedly took place during the reign of Emperor Cheng (r. 32–7 B.C.E.). Offended by the frequent trips of Jibin traders to the Chinese markets, Du Qin complained that the South Asian kingdom had not been dispatching high-ranking officials or nobles as tribute carriers and instead allowing lowly profit-seekers to enter the Chinese capital.[10] Although the Han court failed to establish favorable diplomatic alliance with the rulers in the southern Hindukush region, it is clear from Du Qin's complaint that the commercial contacts between China and northern India had experienced rapid growth in the second half of the first century B.C.E. The rest of South Asia, however, remained relatively obscure to the Chinese. The few sentences devoted to "Shendu" (India, indicating the region south of Gandhāra) in the *Han shu* are repetitions of Zhang Qian's report on the southwestern route connecting India and China.[11] This lack of any new information suggests that the Chinese court had limited, if any, direct contacts with the region south of Gandhāra before the introduction of Buddhism.

Ban Gu and the Chinese emissaries visiting Gandhāra seem to have found it irrelevant, at the beginning of the first millennium, to mention the Buddhist doctrines practiced in the southern Hindukush region or by some of the Central Asian traders frequenting Chinese markets. Nonetheless, the filtration of Buddhist ideas into China seems to have started during the lifetime of Ban Gu. Erik Zürcher, for example, has argued that this process may have started "between the first half of the first century B.C.—the period of the consolida-

tion of the Chinese power in Central Asia—and the middle of the first century A.D., when the existence of Buddhism is attested for the first time in contemporary Chinese sources."[12] Indeed, Fan Ye (398–445), the author of the *Hou Han shu* (History of the Later Han [Dynasty]), associates Prince Ying of Chu, one of the sons of Emperor Guangwu (r. 25–58) and a half-brother of Emperor Ming (r. 58–75), with early Buddhist practices in China. Prince Ying, according to Fan Ye's report, provided feasts to Buddhist monks and laypersons. This episode is usually dated as occurring between 52–70, when the prince was residing at Pengcheng (present-day Xuzhou, Jiangsu province).[13]

Although archeological sources have yet to validate the presence of Buddhist institutions in China during the first century, recent discoveries of Buddhist imagery testify to the growing knowledge and interest in certain aspects of the doctrine among the Chinese from at least the mid-second century C.E. Since Wu Hung and Marylin Rhie have analyzed this evidence in detail,[14] it suffices here to list some of the main discoveries and discuss their implications for the evolving Chinese perception on and the attraction toward the Buddhist world of India.

In an area about 30 miles from Pengcheng survives some of the earliest Buddhist imagery in China. Engraved on the boulders of Mount Kongwang, located to the southwest region of the modern coastal city of Lianyungang in Jiangsu province, are images of the Buddha in standing, seated, and *parinirvāṇa* postures (Fig. 1), representations of the *Jātaka* tales (the birth stories of the Buddha), foreign donor figures, other secular figures wearing foreign dress (usually identified as of Kuṣāṇa style), and the traditional Chinese motif of moon and a toad.[15] These images, which date from the late second century, seem to suggest the presence of foreign followers of Buddhism, either Scythian or Parthian merchants, in the region. In addition, the fact that they are interspersed with local, especially Daoist, motifs indicates the early amalgamation of Buddhist teachings with indigenous ideas.

The mixing of Buddhist ideas with native Chinese beliefs can also be discerned from the Han-period tombs excavated in Sichuan and Gansu provinces, and those found in the southern reaches of the Yangzi River. The relief of a seated Buddha found inside a cave-tomb at Ma Hao in Sichuan province, for example, has been studied extensively and judged to be one of the earliest Chinese Buddhist images.[16] Engraved on the rear lintel of the tomb, the relief of the Buddha is only 37 centimeters in height and dated to the late second to early

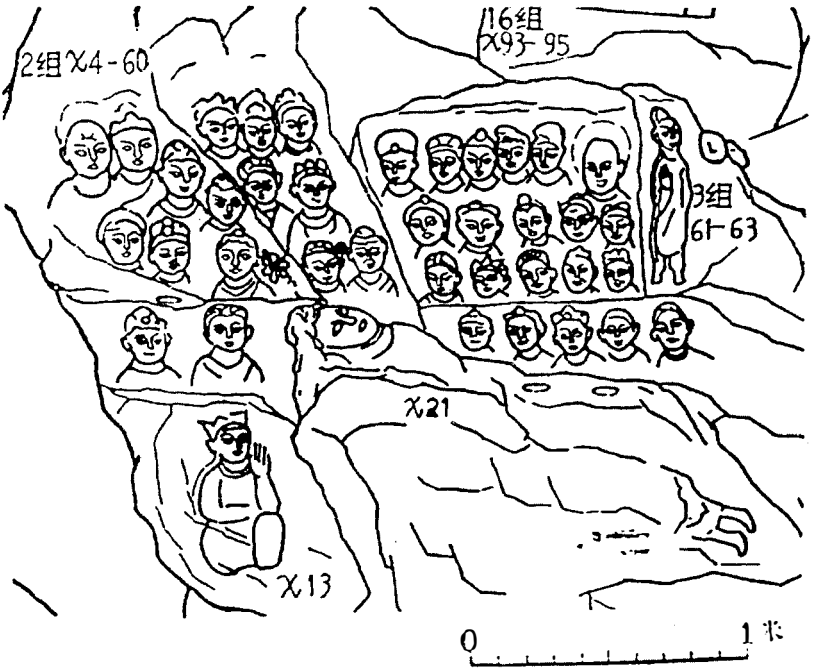

Figure 1. The Buddha in *Parinirvāṇa* Posture, Mount Kongwang

third century. Stylistically, as Marylin Rhie has noted, the image bears strong similarities to Mathurā figures dating from the Kuṣāṇa period. The structure of the cave-tomb, on the other hand, resembles Buddhist caves found in western Central Asia. It seems correct to conclude, as Rhie and others have recommended, that Buddhist influences in this region were transmitted through the Myanmar (or Burma) route that purportedly existed during the time of Zhang Qian.[17]

The Chinese Predicament with the Indic World

It is evident from the early evidence of Buddhism in China that Indic ideas entered through distinct trading channels (Central Asia, Myanmar, and also by the maritime route) and in diverse and assorted fragments. Wu Hung has forcefully argued that the Chinese initially perceived the Buddha as a foreign deity capable of granting immortality to the dead souls. The use of Buddhist images in the Han tombs, he explains, illustrates the Chinese belief in the Buddha as

an immortal being and a symbol of good omen in funerary decoration. Wu Hung contends that the early images of the Buddha found in China had little or no relevance to Buddhist teachings. Rather, in his view, they served to enrich "the representations of Chinese indigenous cults and traditional ideas" and, thus, are "evidence of not Buddhist but of early Taoist art."[18]

No matter what function these images served in the Han tombs, it is clear that the Chinese were initially drawn to the mortuary implications of Buddhism. In the subsequent period, elementary teachings of Buddhism, including that of suffering, *karma* (actions), retribution, and in particular the notion of continuous birth (*saṃsāra*), were transmitted to China through the narration of Buddhist *Jātaka* tales and *Avadāna*s (stories of the Buddha's leading disciples and supporters). The proselytizing of these ideas by itinerant monks and the distribution of apocryphal Buddhist literature that incorporated folk ideas and local beliefs continued to have tremendous impact on the Chinese mortuary tradition.

Indeed, the years between the third and the fifth centuries were extremely crucial for the success of Buddhism in China. Increasing numbers of South and Central Asian monks arrived in China during this period, translation projects intended to render Buddhist teachings into Chinese were established, and Chinese pilgrims started visiting in India in search of Buddhist doctrines and relics. Buddhist teachings of continuous births determined by deeds and actions, the descriptions of torments in purgatory, and the propagation of various means to escape suffering, which were proselytized during these three centuries, exerted a profound impact on Chinese society. The amalgamation of Buddhist ideas with native Chinese views of filial piety and corporeal longevity not only made life after death a complex issue in China, it also captured the imagination of the Chinese people concerning the pains of postmortem punishments as well as the joys of paradise. The paintings of purgatory and paradise drawn on the walls of Buddhist caves, and the use of funerary tablets inscribed with Buddhist mantras are all visual testimonies to the transformation of the Chinese view of an afterlife that redounded from the adoption of Buddhist doctrines.[19]

Also captivating to Chinese audiences were the miraculous and magical feats associated with Indian monks, images, and other sacred objects that started entering China in increasing numbers from about the third century. Indian monks are reported to have exhibited their

thaumaturgical skills through such activities as rainmaking, healing, and the prognostication of fate. The powers of Indian monks were often represented in and propagated through hagiographic literature produced in China. Moreover, the image of Indian monks as wonder-workers seems to have been used to justify the political and social role of Buddhism, as well as asserting the supernatural strength of the foreign doctrine against the contemporary Daoist p iests and local cults.[20]

Information about Indian culture, geography, and languages constantly trickled into China through the translation of Buddhist texts and in the diaries of Chinese monks making pilgrimages to India. Subsequently, India was portrayed to the Chinese public as a mystic land by Buddhist religious sermons and roadside storytelling. Thus, for the majority of Chinese laity, unable to visit India and judge the objectivity of apocryphal texts and religious sermons, the Buddhist world of India was no doubt mystifying. In the words of Erik Zürcher, India had become "a holy country—a center of spiritual authority outside China."[21] By the fifth and sixth centuries, when Buddhist doctrines and the mystical imagery of the Buddhist universe had percolated through every level of Chinese society, India found itself occupying a unique place in the Chinese world order: a foreign kingdom that was culturally and spiritually revered as equal to the Chinese civilization.

India's unique status in the Chinese world order can be discerned, for example, from Li Daoyuan's (d. 527) commentary to the third-century work *Shui jing* (The Water Classic). Based on the Chinese pilgrim Faxian's (337?–422?) notice on Middle India, Li Daoyuan writes:

> From here (i.e., Mathurā) to the south all [the country] is Madhyadeśa (Ch. Zhongguo). Its people are rich. The inhabitants of Madhyadeśa dress and eat like the Middle Kingdom (Ch. Zhongguo=China); therefore they are called Madhyadeśa.[22]

This statement in the context of Chinese discourse on foreign people, where eating habits and manner of clothing were usually associated with the sophistication of a non-Chinese culture, indicates that the information provided by Faxian contributed to the elevated Chinese perception of the Indian society.[23]

Generally, the reports of Chinese monks about Indian history, culture, and society were from the standpoint of pilgrims in their holy land

that tend to emphasize legends over factual details. One example of this trend is Xuanzang's (600?–664) description of King Aśoka's (c. 270–230 B.C.E.) life and deeds. As John Strong has pointed out, Xuanzang, when narrating the details of Aśokan inscriptions misreads, or is misinformed about, the actual text of the edicts and instead highlights the Indian king's contribution to the Buddhist community. Xuanzang, and Faxian before him, writes Strong, "familiar with the Chinese versions of the Aśokan story, conceived the king primarily as a supporter of the Buddhist *saṃgha* (monastic community) and as a great builder of the *stūpas* that marked the sites of their pilgrimage route. For them, the pillars were not edicts at all; they did not seek to proclaim a new royal Dharma but simply commemorated an event in the life of the Buddha or in the history of Buddhism and recorded what had happened at the spot."[24] Even the Chinese diplomat Wang Xuance, who visited India in the seventh century, in his diary, portrayed the Indic world in a manner that would have supported the Buddhist cause in China and enhanced the mystical perception of India among the Chinese.[25]

Indeed, the diaries of Chinese pilgrims not only reinforced a Utopian view of India among the Chinese clergy and laity, but also informed the Chinese rulers about the ideal relationship between the state and the monastic community. The impact of their narrative is apparent in the work of Daoxuan (596–667), one of the leading Chinese monks of the seventh century. Daoxuan passionately argued that India, and not China, should be considered the center of the world. He framed his conclusion with calculations of the distances between geographical determinants, the mountains and seas, and the two countries; and a comparison of the cultural sophistication achieved in India and China. At one point he praised the "divine" language and literature of India, which he noted were created by Brahmā and other gods, and criticized the Chinese writing system for having no legitimate origins and lacking a fixed alphabet.[26]

The portrayal of India as a civilized and sophisticated society was sometimes necessitated by the frequent criticisms leveled against Buddhism by the Daoist and Confucian rivals. The critics castigated that Buddhism, as a foreign doctrine, had no traditional roots in China and was therefore unfit for the Chinese people.[27] One common Confucian argument ran as follows:

> If the Way of the Buddha is so eminently respectable and great, why did not Emperors Yao and Shun, or the Duke of Chou

> (Zhou), or Confucius practice it? In the Seven Classics one sees no mention [of Buddhist teaching]. Since you dote over *[The Book of] Poetry* and *[The Book of] Documents*, and delight in *[The Record of] Rites* and *[The Classic of] Music*, how can you also be attracted by the Way of Buddha and be attached to heterodox practices? How can you pass over the exquisitely wise instructions of the classics and their commentaries? I wouldn't accept [Buddhist doctrines], if I were you![28]

The Chinese critics of Buddhism also contended that the Buddha established his teachings to control the unyielding, violent, greedy, and lustful nature of foreigners and not for the good-natured Chinese.[29] In other words, not only was Buddhism a foreign doctrine, it was meant only for the unruly and immoral people of India. To respond to such criticisms, the Chinese Buddhist clergy produced a vast array of apologetic literature that presented India and Indian society in a favorable light, and, at the same time, tried to trace the antiquity of Buddhism to pre-Confucius and pre-Laozi China. Daoxuan's portrayal of India was no doubt a part of such apologetic literature.

The Chinese clergy had a predicament of their own. They struggled, at the same time they were defending Buddhist doctrines against Confucian and Daoist critics, to find a place for themselves in the imaginary Indic continent known as *Jambudvīpa* (the Island of the Rose-Apple Tree). According to Brahmanical geography, at the center of the universe stood Mount Meru, which was surrounded by seven concentric continents. The central continent, which encircled Mount Meru, was called Jambudvīpa and was divided into nine (sometimes seven) regions separated by mountain ranges. The Buddhists followed a similar view of the cosmos (although according to them there were only four continents surrounding the Mount Meru). It was in Jambudvīpa where the Buddha was born, where ideal Buddhist kings (*cakravartin*) ruled and spread the teachings of the Buddha, and where final salvation could be achieved. In both Brahmanical and Buddhist literature, China was placed at the periphery of Jambudvīpa and the Chinese people were usually designated as *mleccha* (foreigners), a category which included the Central Asian Śaka and Hun tribes. In some Brahmanical texts, the Chinese were even relegated to the ranks of barbarians occupying land unfit for ceremonial purposes.[30]

The Chinese clergy themselves were cognizant of the fact they lived at the periphery of the imagined Indic continent. The geo-

graphical gap between China and the Buddhist pilgrimage sites in India and the fact that the Buddha lived in a distant past outside the Chinese realm made this realization even more agonizing. In fact, Antonino Forte suggests that a majority of Buddhist clergy in China suffered from a "borderland complex."[31] To illustrate the persisting and acute nature of this "borderland complex" among the Chinese Buddhist clergy, Forte points to a dialogue between Xuanzang and his Indian hosts at the Nālandā Monastery. The conversation, which also reflects the Indian perception of China, took place just after the Chinese pilgrim had decided to return to China:

> [The Indian monks said:] "India is the land of Buddha's birth, and though he has left the world, there are still many traces of him. What greater happiness could there be than to visit them in turn, to adore him, and chant his praises? Why then do you wish to leave, having come so far? Moreover, China is a country of *mlecchas*, of unimportant barbarians, who despise the religious and the Faith. That is why Buddha was not born there. The mind of the people is narrow, and their coarseness profound, hence neither saints nor sages go there. The climate is cold and the country rugged—you must think again."
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> The Master of the Law (i.e., Xuanzang) replied, "Buddha established his doctrine so that it might be diffused to all lands. Who would wish to enjoy it alone, and to forget those who are not yet enlightened? Besides, in my country the magistrates are clothed with dignity, and the laws are everywhere respected. The emperor is virtuous and the subjects loyal, parents are loving and sons obedient, humanity and justice are highly esteemed, and old men and sages are held in honour. Moreover, how deep and mysterious is their knowledge; their wisdom equals that of spirits. They have taken the Heavens as their model, and they know how to calculate the movements of the Seven Luminaries; they have invented all kinds of instruments, fixed the seasons of the year, and discovered the hidden properties of the six tones and of music. This is why they have been able to tame or to drive away all wild animals, to subdue the demons and spirits to their will, and to calm the contrary influences of the Yin and the Yang, thus procuring peace and happiness for all beings. . . . How then can you say that Buddha did not go to my country because of its insignificance?"[32]

This dialogue is significant because it is, as Forte explains, "a perfect expression of a feeling of uneasiness and a state of dilemma which could only be solved by showing that China, too, was a sacred land of Buddhism, that is, by overcoming the 'borderland complex.'"[33] Confronted with the problem of a borderland complex, the Buddhist clergy in China made an earnest effort to transform China into a legitimate Buddhist center. The aim was to dispel the borderland complex by recreating a Buddhist world within China. Chapter 2 of the present study will demonstrate how, by the seventh and eighth centuries, the Chinese clergy seem to have successfully accomplished their goal.

Issues and Objectives

It is commonly accepted that Sino-Indian interactions peaked during the Tang period and declined rapidly thereafter. The pilgrimages of Chinese monks to India and the flourishing Buddhist doctrines and the translation activity of Indian monks in China during the seventh and eighth centuries are used to embellish the intensity of Sino-Indian relations during the Tang period. The ninth century, on the other hand, is propounded as a period of the decline of Buddhism in India and China. In the next two centuries, trade and commerce between the two countries is postulated to have also diminished.[34] This model of premodern Sino-Indian relations not only fails to do justice to the intricacies of exchanges between India and China during the Tang period, it also neglects the thriving state of Buddhism in eastern India in the ninth and tenth centuries and in China under the Song dynasty (960–1279). Nor does it explain the profusion of Sino-Indian exchanges in the eleventh and twelfth centuries or the explosion of trade between the two regions during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The primary objective of the present study is to rectify this outdated model of premodern Sino-Indian relations.

Chapter 1 addresses the issue of the intricacy of Sino-Indian relations during the Tang period. By examining the diplomatic missions exchanged between the Indian kingdoms and the Tang court, it demonstrates that both Buddhist doctrines and contemporary military concerns played a significant role in dictating the nature of Sino-Indian exchanges. While in the seventh century court-to-court interactions between the two countries were centered on Buddhist and otherworldly activities, exchanges in the eighth century indicate

a shared concern for restraining the expansion of Tibetan forces into Central Asia. Thus, the chapter will argue that the exchanges between India and China during the Tang dynasty were multifaceted, complex, and both spiritual and worldly in nature.

The question of a borderland complex and the Chinese response to it during the Tang dynasty is explored in Chapter 2. The Chinese clergy, as the chapter will demonstrate, employed various Buddhist paraphernalia and manipulated Buddhist texts and prophecies in order to transform China into a legitimate part of the Buddhist world. The focus of this chapter will be on the veneration of the remains of the Buddha, the unveiling of Mount Wutai as the abode of bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, and Empress Wu's (r. 690–705) attempt to portray herself as a righteous ruler of the Buddhist realm. The discussion of these issues will demonstrate that the intense Sino-Indian exchanges during the Tang period were accompanied by the transformation of China into a sacred Buddhist land. Consequently, Buddhist clergy from neighboring kingdoms and from the leading monasteries in India frequented China either in search of doctrines or to make pilgrimages at sacred Buddhist sites. While the recognition of China as a legitimate Buddhist center abated the borderland complex among the Chinese clergy, it also prompted the growth of indigenous schools and practices, thereby diminishing the need for spiritual input from India. Thus, the second chapter will argue that the Tang period must not only be perceived for the apparent intensity in Sino-Indian exchanges, but should also be recognized as a period when China's spiritual attraction toward India began to unravel.

Chapter 3 will refute the notion of the decline of Buddhism in India and China and its presumed impact on Sino-Indian exchanges after the Tang period. It will provide empirical evidence demonstrating the endurance of Buddhist doctrines in India and China and the continued interactions between the monastic communities of the two regions. In fact, the data from the Song period suggests that the count of Buddhist monks travelling between India and China in the tenth and eleventh centuries may have even surpassed the exchanges during the Tang period. Similarly, Indian texts translated under the Song dynasty outnumbered those completed under the preceding dynasties. The most pertinent issue of Sino-Indian interactions during the Song period, it will be argued, was not the decay of Buddhism or the collapse of Buddhist exchanges between the two regions.

Rather, the failure of new Buddhist doctrines from India to have any discernable impact on Chinese clergy despite the unprecedented exchanges and volume of translation seems to be more poignant. By examining the patterns, problems, and inefficacy of Buddhist translations in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the third chapter will suggest that the shift in the doctrinal interest of the Chinese clergy toward indigenous practices and schools rendered new teachings from India obsolete. As a result, it will be proposed that the process of transmission of cultural elements from India to China through the translation and dissemination of Buddhist texts diminished.

Since bilateral trade was considered to be one of the important segments of Sino-Indian relations intimately linked to Buddhism, Chapters 4 and 5 explore the impact of the diminished role of Buddhism on the pattern of commercial ties between India and China. By illustrating the changing makeup of traders involved in Sino-Indian trade, the shifts in trade routes, the growing prevalence of non-religious and bulk goods, and the increased emphasis on commercial profit in bilateral interactions, the two chapters will argue that Sino-Indian commercial exchanges took on a trajectory of their own. Chapter 4 will explain the internal changes in China and India and the establishment of Islamic commercial networks that prompted the expansion of bilateral trade, stimulated the development of maritime trade, and transformed the nature of commodities traded between the two regions. Chapter 5, on the other hand, will demonstrate how Sino-Indian trading relations between the seventh and thirteenth centuries were gradually restructured from Buddhist-dominated exchanges to a large-scale and market-centered interaction. Thus, in the fourteenth century, when Buddhist doctrines had ceased to play any role, mercantile concerns emerged as the most important stimulus to Sino-Indian exchanges. However, while trade-centered exchanges between India and China remained intensive through to the mid-fifteenth century, the spiritual bond that defined Sino-Indian relations in the first millennium had essentially dissipated. No longer was India the source for the sinified Buddhist schools and doctrines of Ming China. Nor did a predominately Brahmanical South India and the Islamic north retain potent Buddhist institutions that could attempt a resurrection of the past interactions.