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Spread of Buddhism

VINAYA: FROM INDIA TO CHINA

Ann Heirman (Ghent)

1. INTRODUCTION

On his death-bed, the Buddha advised his disciples to rely on the monastic discipline he had expounded.¹ Consequently, the title *dāshi* 大師, Great Master, originally reserved for the Buddha himself, was transferred to the list of precepts (*prātimokṣa*) for monks (*bhikṣu*) and nuns (*bhikṣuṇī*). The *prātimokṣa* became their *dāshi*.² Monastic discipline is thus clearly one of the essential strongholds of Buddhism, the protectors of which are in the first place the monks and nuns.³ This central position of monastic discipline does not imply that all monasteries applied exactly the same rules. From the beginning of the spread of monastic Buddhism, different rules or different interpretations of the rules started to emerge, and various schools (*nīkāya*) arose. These schools were defined on the basis of their disciplinary texts (*vinaya*).⁴

When Buddhism entered China in the first century AD, it was the monks of the northern Buddhist schools who formed the first Buddhist

¹ *Dīgha* II, p. 154; *Chang ahan jing*, T.1.1.26a27-28. See also Waldschmidt 1950-51, Part 3, pp. 386-387, for Sanskrit, Tibetan, Pāli, and Chinese (*Mūlasarvāstivāda-vinaya*) sources.

² Later, the term was also used for *bodhisattvas* and eminent monks (Forte 1994, pp. 1022-1023).

³ See, for instance, a recent study on the tasks and functions of the *saṅgha* according to the early Buddhist texts: Freiburger 2000 (particularly pp. 33-48).

⁴ The core of monastic discipline is a list of precepts (*prātimokṣa*) and a set of formal procedures (*karmavācānā*). These precepts are introduced and commented upon in the chapters for monks and nuns (*bhikṣu-* and *bhikṣuṇī-vibhaṅgas*). The procedures are explained in detail in the so-called *skandhakas* or *vastus* (chapters). The *bhikṣu-* and *bhikṣuṇī-vibhaṅgas* and the *skandhakas* or *vastus* together constitute the full *vinayas*. Besides this, the term *vinaya* is also used for all texts related to monastic discipline. The *vinayas* of the different schools coincide to a large extent, both regarding the number and the topic of the precepts. This similarity undoubtedly points to a common basis. In essence the various schools thus coincide. Many differences, however, appear in the interpretation of the rules, the mitigating circumstances and the exceptions that were allowed. When the *vinayas*, for instance, all equally say that 'a wrong woman' cannot be ordained, the interpretation of 'a wrong woman' differs: depending on the *vinaya*, it is either a woman thief, an adulteress, or a bad wife (see Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 152-157). See also note 177.

communities referring to their respective *vinaya* traditions. Later, when the sea route between India and China became more popular, the monks of the southern part of the Indian subcontinent also started to exert some influence. The first *vinaya* texts were most probably introduced orally and in a foreign language, for the use of the foreign monks. When, in the third and the fourth centuries, later generations of immigrants lost contact with their original languages and more and more Chinese entered the monasteries, the need for translations of disciplinary texts became urgent. By the end of the fifth century, the most important *vinaya* translations were finished, and were available in Buddhist monasteries all over the country. More than two centuries later, one more *vinaya* was introduced to China, the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, translated at the beginning of the eighth century. Curiously enough this was exactly the same time as another *vinaya*, the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, was imposed on the whole of China. From that time on until today, the latter *vinaya* has been followed in all Chinese monasteries.

The following paper aims to trace the history of the Chinese *vinaya* texts from their introduction to the firm establishment of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*. It covers a period that goes from the fall of the Han 漢 dynasty to the days following Empress Wu Zetian's 武則天 reign (690–705). When in 220 AD the Han dynasty came to an end, the country broke up in three kingdoms, the Wei 魏, the Shuhan 蜀漢 and the Wu 吳. They were temporarily brought together again by the Western Jin 西晉 dynasty (280–316). This was a rather weak dynasty, unable to defend itself against the many attacks of foreign northern troops. Consequently, the Chinese had to withdraw to the south of China. This was the start of the so-called north-south division of China that would last until 589. In the north, many foreign kingdoms arose, the most important of which was the Northern Wei 北魏 dynasty (386–535) that occupied a large part of Northern China. The Northern Wei controlled major cities such as Chang'an 長安 (modern Xi'an 西安) and Luoyang 洛陽. In the south, several Chinese dynasties succeeded one another: the Eastern Jin 東晉 (316–420), the Liu Song 劉宋 (420–479), the Qi 齊 (479–502), the Liang 梁 (502–557), and the Chen 陳 (557–589). The capital was Jiankang (modern Nanjing). The country was re-united by the Sui dynasty in 589. The dynasty did not last long, however, and in 618 a general called Li Yuan started the Tang dynasty. This dynasty lasted until 906, but was temporarily interrupted by the Zhou 周 dynasty (690–705), founded by Wu Zetian, a former concubine of two Tang emperors. It is in between the fall of the Han

and the re-establishment of the Tang, that the history of the Chinese *vinaya* texts was decided.

2. THE EARLIEST VINAYA TEXTS

Around the first century AD,⁵ Buddhist monks and lay followers started to enter China along the merchant land routes from India to China, and small Buddhist communities arose. The first monks all were foreigners.⁶ They most probably transmitted the disciplinary text orally.⁷ This was still the case in the Central Asian countries when the monk Faxian 法顯 travelled through the region in the beginning of the fifth century.⁸

2.1. Disciplinary Rules for Monks

According to the Official History of the Sui 隋 dynasty,⁹ the first Chinese monk was ordained in the Huangchu period (220–226) of the Wei kingdom. Many buddhologists,¹⁰ however, consider Yan Fotiao 嚴佛調 (*var.* Futiao; 浮 or 弗 – 調), a collaborator of An Shigao 安世高 at the end of the second century, to be the first known Chinese monk. Once the Buddhist community began to attract more and more Chinese speaking followers, it seems logical that the need for Chinese translations of the disciplinary texts grew. An additional reason for these translations might have been that later generations of foreign Buddhist families lost contact with their original languages and more and more needed to rely

⁵ See Zürcher 1972, vol. 1, pp. 18–23.

⁶ Zürcher 1972, vol. 1, pp. 23–24; Ch'en 1973, pp. 43–44; Zürcher 1990, p. 163. In all probability, also the monks in the first known Buddhist community in China were foreigners. It is the community of Pengcheng, a flourishing commercial centre situated on the main route from Luoyang to the south, in the northern Jiangsu province. It was mentioned for the first time in 65 AD (*Hou Hanshu* 42, vol. 5, pp. 1428–1429). The community seems to have been quite prosperous, and succeeded in attracting a number of Chinese lay followers. See Zürcher 1972, vol. 1, pp. 26–27; Rhie 1999, pp. 15–18.

⁷ Zürcher 1972, vol. 1, p. 55; Salomon 1999, pp. 165–166; Boucher 2000a, p. 60.

⁸ See note 43.

⁹ *Suishu* 35, vol. 4, p. 1097.

¹⁰ See Zürcher, 1972, vol. 1, p. 34; vol. 2, p. 331, note 86; Ch'en 1973, pp. 45–46; Tsukamoto 1985, vol. 1, pp. 64–65, 79, 93–97. A. Forte (1995, p. 66), however, sees him as a layman.

on Chinese texts. According to the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳¹¹ (Biographies of Eminent Monks), compiled by Huijiao 慧皎 ca. 530 AD,¹² the first *vinaya* text translated into Chinese is a text called *Sengqijixin* 僧祇戒心 (The Heart of Precepts of the Mahāsāṃghikas). The *Gaoseng zhuan* tells us that the translation was done by Dharmakāla, a native of Central India, who arrived in Luoyang around 250 AD.¹³ Still, since no text by this title is mentioned in the earliest extant catalogue, the *Chu sanzang jiji* 出三藏記集 (Collection of Records concerning the Tripiṭaka) compiled by Sengyou 僧祐 between 510 and 518,¹⁴ it is not certain that Dharmakāla indeed translated such a text. Only in relatively late catalogues,¹⁵ do we find references to it. The title of the translation, *Sengqijixin*, probably refers to a *prātimokṣa* of the Mahāsāṃghika school.¹⁶ The text is not extant. Huijiao also claims that Dharmakāla, who was able to recite all the *vinayas*, introduced the first ordination tradition to China with the help of Indian monks.¹⁷ In all probability, the Indian monks were needed in order to obtain a sufficient number of ordained participants necessary to hold a legally valid ordination ceremony.¹⁸ For various reasons, it is not possible to determine which ordination ceremony or which school Dharmakāla might have introduced. First of all, we do not know to which school Dharmakāla himself belonged. Instead, he is said to have been acquainted with all the *vinayas*. In addition, the school affiliation of the Indian monks is not mentioned, and, finally, we have no reference to the basic legal text used at the ordination ritual.

¹¹ Huijiao, T.2059.50.325a3–4.

¹² Wright 1954, p. 400.

¹³ Also in the chapter on Buddhism and Daoism of the *Weishu*, a history of the Northern Wei dynasty, compiled by Wei Shou in 551–554, Dharmakāla is said to have translated a *prātimokṣa* (*Weishu* 114, vol. 8, p. 3029).

¹⁴ Dates of compilation of the catalogues: Mizuno 1995, pp. 187–206.

¹⁵ Fajing et al., T.2146.55.140b8 (AD 594); Daoxuan, T.2149.55.226c12–26 (AD 664); Jingmai, T.2151.55.351a21–b1 (AD 627–649); Zhisheng, T.2154.55.486c3–24, 648b22–23 (AD 730): the text is reported as lost; Yuanzhao, T.2157.55.783c20–784a13 (AD 800): the text is lost.

¹⁶ Shih 1968, p. 19 n. 68; Hirakawa 1970, p. 202.

¹⁷ Huijiao, T.2059.50.325a4–5. These Indian monks might already have been present in China, as the biographies of Dharmakāla in Jingmai, T.2151.55.351a28–29, in Zhisheng, T.2154.55.486c23, and in Yuanzhao, T.2157.55.784a12, seem to suggest by using the expression 集梵僧, 'he assembled Indian monks'.

¹⁸ A minimum quorum of ten monks is needed (for references to the relevant *vinaya* passages, see Heirman, 2001, p. 294 n. 87).

The first texts on legal procedures (*karmavācānā* texts) translated into Chinese are, according to some catalogues,¹⁹ two Dharmaguptaka texts: the *Tanwude Libu Za Jiemo* 曇無德律部雜羯磨 (T.1432, *Karmavācānā* of the Dharmaguptaka School), translated in 252 AD by the Sogdian Kang Sengkai 康僧鎧 (Samghavarman)²⁰ and the *Jiemo* 羯磨 (T.1433, *Karmavācānā*), translated in 254 AD by the Parthian Tandi 曇帝 (?Dharmasatya).²¹ Also Huijiao, in his *Gaoseng zhuan*,²² refers to an early Dharmaguptaka *karmavācānā* text, translated by Tandi. Of Kang Sengkai, Huijiao²³ says that he has translated four texts. Since he only gives the name of one, non-*vinaya*, work, it is not certain that he thought a *karmavācānā* to be among the texts translated by Kang Sengkai. It is further remarkable that the earliest extant catalogue, the *Chu sanzang jiji*, does not mention either of these early *karmavācānā* translations. They are only recorded in later catalogues. Moreover, A. Hirakawa²⁴ provides extensive evidence that the two texts should be considered as a later redaction based on the Chinese *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T.1428. The similarity of the Chinese terminology indeed indicates that these *karmavācānā* texts were probably compiled after the translation of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* in the early fifth century. Still, some differences in the chapters on the *śīmā*²⁵ and the ordination reveal that the *karmavācānā* texts are not collections of procedures merely borrowed from T.1428, but further developments of the same Dharmaguptaka tradition.²⁶

The above does not necessarily imply that there never were such early *vinaya* translations. Many early Buddhist masters were convinced of their existence, and claimed that the first legal ordinations in China

¹⁹ T.1432: Zhisheng, T.2154.55.486c29–487a7, 619b7–8, 668a23–24, 719b21–22 (AD 730); Yuanzhao, T.2157.55.784a17–24, 952b15–16, 1007c19–20, 1042c15 (AD 800). T.1433: Fajing et al., T.2146.55.140b13 (AD 594); Yancong et al., T.2147.55.155b18 (AD 602); Jingtai et al., T.2148.55.188a17–18 (AD 664); Daoxuan, T.2149.55.227a5–11, 300b15–16, 324b9–10 (AD 664); Jingmai, T.2151.55.351b5–7 (AD 627–649); Mingquan et al., T.2153.55.432b20–22 (AD 695); Zhisheng, T.2154.55.487a8–13, 619b9–10, 719b23–24 (AD 730); Yuanzhao, T.2157.55.784a25–b1, 952b17–18, 1042c16–17 (AD 800).

²⁰ Lamotte 1958, p. 595; Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 122.

²¹ Lamotte 1958, p. 595; Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 123.

²² Huijiao, T.2059.50.325a8–9.

²³ Huijiao, T.2059.50.325a6–8.

²⁴ Hirakawa, 1970, pp. 202–218, 252–253.

²⁵ In order to have a legally valid procedure, any formal act has to be carried out within a well delimited district (*śīmā*) by a harmonious order (a *saṃgrahasāṅgha*, i.e., an entire and unanimous order). See Kieffer-Pülz 1992, pp. 27–28. See also the notes 175–177.

²⁶ See Heirman 2002b, pp. 402–407.

were based on the legal procedures of the Dharmaguptaka school as described in the *karmavācānā* texts.²⁷ As we will see further, this is probably one of the reasons why the Dharmaguptaka ordination eventually was accepted as the only true one in China. But even if Chinese *vinaya* texts were available around the middle of the third century, they cannot have been widespread²⁸ since about one hundred years later, monks such as Dao'an 道安 (312–385), pointed to the many difficulties in governing the Buddhist monasteries due to the lack of such texts. In order to temporarily rectify this situation, Dao'an even made some rules of his own.²⁹ Besides this, he tried to encourage the translation of *vinaya* texts. Dao'an himself is sometimes said to have translated a *Binaiye* 鼻奈耶 (*Vinaya*) that was based on the *Sarvāstivādinaya*.³⁰ He further suggested inviting the famous translator Kumārajīva³¹ (343–413) to China. The latter finally arrived in Chang'an sixteen years after Dao'an's death.

2.2. Disciplinary Rules for Nuns

Also for women, the lack of *vinaya* texts in the first period of Buddhism in China constituted a serious problem. Just like their male counterparts, women could not rely on any rules to start a monastic community. In addition, since, as far as we know, nuns never crossed the mountains from India to China, no foreign community of nuns existed in China in

²⁷ See Heirman 2002b, pp. 410–416.

²⁸ According to E. Zürcher (1990, pp. 169–182), it is mainly the way how early Buddhism spread in China that caused this defective transmission of *vinaya* texts. The spread of Buddhism was not a case of “contact expansion”, but the result of “a long-distance transmission”. The northwest of China was initially only a transit zone, with no firm establishments. Therefore, monks in more eastern and southern centres easily lost their feed-back, and transmission of texts often failed, certainly after the Chinese in the beginning of the fourth century lost control of the northern part of China.

²⁹ See Huijiao, T.2059.50.353b23–27, translated by Link 1958, pp. 35–36. For a discussion, see T'ang 1996, vol. 1, pp. 212–217; Zürcher 1972, vol. 1, pp. 187–189; Ch'en 1973, pp. 99–100; Tsukamoto 1985, vol. 2, pp. 699–702 (who also points to some rules established by the monks Zhi Dun 支遁, a contemporary of Dao'an, and Huiyuan 慧遠, Dao'an's most famous disciple); Kuo, 1994, pp. 26–28; Yifa, 2002, pp. 8–19 (including the rules of Dao'an's contemporaries and of Huiyuan).

³⁰ See Daoxuan, T.2149.55.300b3–4 and 324a17–18; Dao'an translated a *Binaiye* together with Zhu Fonian. In all probability, this refers to a text translated in 383 by Zhu Fonian, with a preface of Dao'an (= T.1464) (cf. Yuyama 1979, pp. 7–8). On some other *vinaya* translations (no longer extant) made at the end of the fourth century, see Wang 1994, p. 167.

³¹ Kumārajīva was born in Kucha (Kuča), in Central Asia. At an early age, he entered the monastic order. In 401, he arrived in Chang'an where he distinguished himself as an outstanding translator of both Sarvāstivāda and Mahāyāna texts.

the first centuries AD. According to the *Chu sanzang jiji*,³² the first *vinaya* text for nuns translated into Chinese was the *Biquni Jie* 比丘尼戒 (*Bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣa*), a *prātimokṣa* text translated by Dharmarakṣa in the second half of the third century AD. Sengyou adds, however, that the text is lost. Still, since Sengyou mentions this work, A. Hirakawa is of the opinion that it must have existed.³³

According to the *Biquni zhuan* 比丘尼傳³⁴ (Biographies of Bhikṣuṇīs), the first Chinese nun was Zhu Jingjian 竺淨檢 (ca. 292–361)³⁵ When in the beginning of the fourth century, she wanted to become a nun, she was told that in China the rules for nuns were not complete, but that in foreign countries these rules existed. Yet, according to the *Biquni zhuan*, in the middle of the fourth century Zhu Jingjian and four other women were ordained before the *bhikṣusamgha* (“community of monks”) on the basis of a *karmavācānā* and of a *prātimokṣa* of the Mahāsāṃghika school. There is, however, no evidence of the spread of these Mahāsāṃghika works, as pointed out by Z. Tsukamoto.³⁶ Also after Zhu Jingjian's ordination the search for *vinaya* rules clearly continued. This search is described in three short comments in the *Chu sanzang jiji*.³⁷ These narrate in detail the translation into Chinese of a *bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣa* at the end of 379 AD or in the beginning of 380 AD. The text had been obtained in Kucha (Kuča) by the monk Sengchun 僧純, and has been translated by Tanmochi 曇摩持 (?Dharmaji)³⁸ and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念. According to A. Hirakawa,³⁹ it is beyond doubt that this no longer extant work once existed.⁴⁰ The above comments also mention

³² Sengyou, T.2145.55.14c28.

³³ Hirakawa 1970, p. 234. On the earliest *bhikṣuṇīprātimokṣas*, see also Nishimoto 1928; Heirman 2000b, pp. 9–16.

³⁴ T.2063, a collection of biographies of Buddhist nuns compiled by Baochang 寶唱 between 516 and 519. It has been translated by Tsai 1994. See also De Rauw 2005.

³⁵ Baochang, T.2063.50.934c2–935a5.

³⁶ Tsukamoto 1985, vol. 1, p. 424.

³⁷ Sengyou, T.2145.55.81b21–24, 81b25–c17 and 81c18–82a17. These passages have been translated and annotated in Tsukamoto 1985, vol. 1, pp. 636–641, note 17.

³⁸ Tsukamoto 1985, vol. 1, p. 426.

³⁹ Hirakawa 1970, pp. 234–235.

⁴⁰ See also Sengyou, T.2145.55.10a26–29: an “Indic” (胡, cf. Boucher 2000b) text obtained by Sengchun in Kuča at the time of Emperor Jianwen (fl. 371–372 AD) of the (Eastern) Jin and brought by him to Guanzhong 關中 (i.e., the present-day Shenxi), where he had it translated by Zhu Fonian, Tanmochi and Huichang. This text is further mentioned in the following catalogues: Fajing et al., T.2146.55.140b11; Daoxuan, T.2149.55.250a15–18; Jingmai, T.2151.55.358a24–26; Zhisheng, T.2154.55.510c3 and 648c6–7; Yuanzhao et al., T.2157.55.807b9 and 984c7–8.

that, an apocryphal tradition of five hundred precepts for *bhikṣuṇīs* compiled by the monk Mili 覓歷, had existed, but was lost.

Finally, a complete set of rules for nuns became available when in the beginning of the fifth century, four *vinaya* were translated into Chinese.

2.3. Faxian Goes to India

As seen above, in the fourth century, there was not yet a Chinese translation of an entire *vinaya* text. This deficiency prompted the monk Faxian 法顯 to undertake a trip from Chang'an to India in 399. His travel account tells us that his main purpose was to obtain an original version of the *vinaya*.⁴¹ This was not an easy task, since, according to Faxian, in the countries of "Northern Indian",⁴² *vinaya* texts were transmitted only orally.⁴³ Consequently, Faxian had to go further south to what he calls "Central India",⁴⁴ where, in Pāṭaliputra⁴⁵ (modern Patna), he succeeded in copying the *vinaya* of the Mahāsāṃghika school. He was also able to obtain extracts⁴⁶ of the *Sarvāstivāda vinaya*. Faxian remarks that the latter *vinaya* was the *vinaya* used by the Chinese at that time, but that it was, in China, transmitted only orally.⁴⁷ On his journey further to the south, he received a copy of the *Mahīśāsaka vinaya* in Sri Lanka.⁴⁸ After a long and perilous journey at sea, he finally sailed back to China in 414. Although his ship totally lost its directions, it eventually managed to reach the present-day province of Shandong. From there, Faxian travelled south to Jiankang, where the Buddhist master Buddhahadra translated several of the texts that he had obtained, including the *Mahāsāṃghika vinaya*.⁴⁹

⁴¹ *Caoseng Faxian zhuan*, T.2085.51.857a6-8, 864b17, 864c1-3.

⁴² *Bei Tianzhu zhu guo* 北天竺諸國 (Faxian, T.2085.51.864b17).

⁴³ Faxian, T.2085.51.864b17-18.

⁴⁴ *Zhong Tianzhu* 中天竺 (Huijiao, T.2059.50.338a17; Faxian, T.2085.51.864b18-19).

⁴⁵ In a Mahāyāna monastery, called the Devarāja monastery (Roth 1970, pp. ii-iii).

⁴⁶ Extracts (*chao li* 抄律, cf. Nakamura 1985, p. 711), consisting of ca. seven thousand stanzas (Faxian, T.2085.51.864b23-24). According to Sengyou, T.2145.55.12a7 and 13-14, these extracts have not been translated.

⁴⁷ Faxian, T.2085.51.864b23-25.

⁴⁸ Huijiao, T.2059.50.338a24; Faxian, T.2085.51.865c24. For details on this copy, see de Jong 1981, pp. 109-113.

⁴⁹ Huijiao, T.2059.50.338b15-18.

3. THE TRANSLATION OF VINAYA TEXTS: THE NORTHERN SCHOOLS

3.1. The Fifth Century

The first *vinaya* texts entered China via the northern land routes. These texts all belong to the so-called northern tradition, in opposition to the southern, that is, the Pāli Theravāda tradition. At the end of the fourth century, no complete *vinaya* had yet been translated. This situation changed rapidly when in the beginning of the fifth century⁵⁰ four complete *vinayas* were translated into Chinese.⁵¹ The first one was the *Shisong lu* 十誦律 (T.1435, *Vinaya* in Ten Recitations), *Sarvāstivāda vinaya*, translated between 404 and 409 by Punyatāra/Puṇyatara,⁵² Kumārajīva and Dharmaruci, and revised a few years later by Vimalākṣa.⁵³ The translation team worked in Chang'an, at that time the capital of the Yao Qin 姚秦 or Later Qin 後秦 (384-417),⁵⁴ one of the northern

⁵⁰ Since that time, and apart from the four complete *vinayas*, many other *vinaya* texts, such as lists of precepts (*prātimokṣas*) and lists of procedures (*karmavācanās*) have been translated. Among the latter texts also figure some texts of two other schools of which complete *vinayas* do not survive in Chinese. These are the Kāśyapīya school of which a *bhikṣuprātimokṣa* has been translated by Prajñāruci in 543 (*Jietuo jigong* 解脫戒經, *Prātimokṣasūtra*, T.1460), and the Sammatīya school, known through the translation of a commentary on a lost *bhikṣuprātimokṣa* by Paramārtha in 568 (*Li ershi'er minghao lun* 律二十二明了論, Explanatory Commentary on Twenty-two Stanzas of the *Vinaya*, T.1461). For details, see Yuyama 1979.

⁵¹ The fifth century also saw a growing popularity of the so-called *bodhisattva* rules, intended to provide the Chinese Buddhist community with a guide of Mahāyāna moral precepts. The most influential text is the *Fanwang jing* 梵網經 (T.1484), the *Brahmā's Net Sūtra*, that contains a set of fifty-eight precepts. This text has been translated into French by J. J. M. De Groot, *Le code du Mahāyāna en Chine, Son influence sur la vie monacale et sur le monde laïque*, Amsterdam, Johannes Müller 1893. Although the *Fanwang jing* is traditionally said to have been translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by Kumārajīva in 406, it is in fact a text composed in China probably around the middle of the fifth century. The *Fanwang jing* was considered to be a Mahāyāna supplement, and in China until today, the ordination based on the traditional Hīnayāna *vinaya* texts always comes first. This is in accordance with the opinion expressed in texts such as the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, *Stages of the Bodhisattva*, of which two translations (possibly based on two different Indian versions, cf. Groner, 1990b, p. 226) were made in the fifth century. One is the *Pusadishi jing* 菩薩地持經 (T.1581), translated by Tanwuchen 曇無讖 between 414 and 421 (see, in particular, T.1581.30.910b5ff). The other one is the *Pusashanye jing* 菩薩善戒經 (T.1582 and T.1583 (the latter text might in the fact be the tenth scroll of T.1582, cf. Kuo 1994, p. 40)), translated by Guṇavarman in 431 (see, in particular, T.1583.30.1013c24-1014a2). For more details see, among others, Demieville, 1930; Groner 1990a, pp. 251-257; Groner 1990b; Kuo 1994, pp. 37-58.

⁵² Furuoduolu 弗若多羅.

⁵³ See Yuyama 1979, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Gernet 1990, p. 165.

dynasties. According to the *Gaoseng zhuan*,⁵⁵ the Kashmirian monk Punyatṛāta recited the Indian text, while Kumārajīva translated it into Chinese. Kumārajīva was born in Kucha, the son of an Indian father. His mother was related to the Kucha royal family. When the text was not yet finished, Punyatṛāta died. His task was continued by another western monk, Dharmaruci, who is said to have brought with him a copy of the text.⁵⁶ In 406, the Kashmirian monk Vimalākṣa came to Chang'an to meet Kumārajīva. Vimalākṣa had been Kumārajīva's teacher in Kucha. From him, Kumārajīva had learned the *Sarvāstivāda vinaya*. After the death of Kumārajīva, Vimalākṣa left Chang'an and went to the present day province of Anhui 安徽. There, he revised Kumārajīva's translation. Vimalākṣa continued to propagate the *Sarvāstivāda vinaya* and his teaching even reached the southern capital Jiankang 健康.

A second *vinaya* translated into Chinese, was the *Sifen lü* 四分律 (T.1428, *Vinaya* in Four Parts), *Dharmaguptakavinaya*,⁵⁷ translated by Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 between 410 and 412. Buddhayaśas was born in Kashmir (Kāśmīra). After his ordination, he went to Kashgar, where he met his former disciple Kumārajīva. He later moved to Kucha, and then finally travelled to Chang'an where he again encountered Kumārajīva. It was in Chang'an that a translation team led by Buddhayaśas began to translate the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*. Buddhayaśas recited the text by memory, Zhu Fonian,⁵⁸ born in Liangzhou 涼州 in the present-day Gansu 甘肅 province, translated it into Chinese, and the Chinese Daohan 道含 wrote down the translation.⁶⁰

The next *vinaya* that was translated, was the *Mohesengqi lü* 摩訶僧祇律 (T.1425), *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*,⁶¹ translated by Buddhahadra and Faxian 法顯 between 416 and 418 in Jiankang, the capital of the

⁵⁵ See the biographies of Kumārajīva, Punyatṛāta, Dharmaruci and Vimalākṣa (Huijiao, T.2059.50.330a10-333c14, translated by Shih 1968, pp. 60-85). See also the earliest extant catalogue, Sengyou, T.2145.55.20a28-b21.

⁵⁶ Huijiao, T.2059.50.333b6-7.

⁵⁷ For a translation into English of the rules for nuns (T.1428.22.714a2-778b13), see Heirman 2002a.

⁵⁸ See the biographies of Zhu Fonian and of Buddhayaśas (Huijiao, T.2059.50.329a28-b15, 333c15-334b25, translated by Shih 1968, pp. 55-56, 85-90).

⁵⁹ According to Z. Tsukamoto (1985, vol. 2, p. 738), Zhu Fonian was possibly an Indian whose family had lived in China for generations.

⁶⁰ For more details, see Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 24-25.

⁶¹ The rules for nuns (T.1425.22.471a25-476b11 and 514a25-547a28) have been translated into English by Hirakawa, 1982.

⁶² See the biographies of Buddhahadra and Faxian (Huijiao, T.2059.50.334b26-335c14 and 337b19-338b25, translated by Shih 1968, pp. 90-98 and 108-115).

Southern Song 南宋 dynasty.⁶³ The text had been brought back by Faxian from Pāṭaliputra.⁶⁴ Buddhahadra was born in Kapilavastu. After his ordination, he went to Kashmir and then to China, where he visited several cities. In Jiankang, he translated the *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya* together with Faxian.

Finally, according to the *Gaoseng zhuan*,⁶⁵ the *Mishasai bu hexi wufen lü* 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 (T.1421, *Vinaya* in Five Parts of the Mahīśāsakas), *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, has been translated by Buddhajīva,⁶⁶ Zhisheng 智勝, Daosheng 道生 and Huiyan 慧嚴 between 423 and 424.⁶⁷ The translation team worked in Jiankang. Buddhajīva held the text, the Khotanese monk Zhisheng translated it into Chinese, while Daosheng and Huiyan wrote down the translation and revised it. The task of Buddhajīva thus seems to have been to read the basic text aloud. This is in all probability the text that Faxian had obtained in Sri Lanka.⁶⁸

3.2. The Eighth Century

Much later, in the beginning of the eighth century,⁶⁹ the monk Yi-jing 義淨 translated large parts of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya* (*Genben*

⁶³ For more details, see Roth 1970, pp. i-iii; Hirakawa 1982, pp. 4, 9-10.

⁶⁴ Huijiao, T.2059.50.335c9-10, 403b16-18.

⁶⁵ Huijiao, T.2059.50.339a9-10. See also the following catalogues: Sengyou, T.2145.55.21a25-b1 (Buddhajīva, Zhisheng, Daosheng and Huiyan), 111a28-b2 (Buddhajīva and Zhisheng); Fajing et al., T.2146.55.140a14 (Buddhajīva and Zhisheng); Yancong et al., T.2147.55.155b12-13 (Buddhajīva and Zhisheng); Jingtai et al., T.2148.55.188a2-3 (Buddhajīva and Zhisheng).

⁶⁶ See the biography of Buddhajīva (Huijiao, T.2059.50.339a3-13, translated by Shih 1968, pp. 118-119).

⁶⁷ Yuyama 1979, pp. 37-38, places the translation between 422 and 423 and does not mention the monk Zhisheng.

⁶⁸ Cf. Huijiao, T.2059.50.339a5-6, 403b16-18; Sengyou, T.2145.55.21a14-15. See also de Jong 1981, p. 109.

⁶⁹ Around the same time, the Chinese Chan clerics began to develop their own monastic codes mainly aimed at the practical organisation of the monasteries. While continuing to rely on the Indian *vinaya* for ordination and moral guidelines, the Chan monks, in the course of time, developed several sets of rules to govern the monastic community. These codes are commonly called *qinggui* 清規, "pure rules". Although tradition claims that the "pure rules" all merely develop guidelines made by the monk Baizhang (749-814), they contain many elements that can be traced back to earlier Buddhist rules, even non-Chan rules. The earliest extant code is the *Chan yuan qinggui* 禪元清規 (The Pure Rules for the Chan Monastery), compiled in 1103. The most influential set is the *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui* 教修百丈清規 (The Pure Rules of Baizhang Corrected by Imperial Order), compiled ca. 1335. The Chan codes gradually became the standard guidelines for the organisation of all Chinese public monasteries. See Foulk 1987, pp. 62-99; Fritz 1994, pp. 1-111, followed by a partial translation of the *Chixiu Baizhang qinggui*; Yifa 2002, pp. 1-98, followed by a translation of the *Chan yuan qinggui*.

shuoyiqieyou bu pinaiye 根本說一切有部毘奈耶, T.1442–T.1451) into Chinese, as well as other *vinaya* texts belonging to the same school.⁷⁰ The origin of the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra* is still under debate. On the one hand, it contains very old material, while on the other hand, it also includes elements added at a time when all the other *vinayas* already had been finalised and additions to them were no longer allowed. This seems to be the result of the fact that it was the *vinaya* of the Sautrāntikas, a Sarvāstivāda branch that became the dominant one between the fifth and the seventh centuries.⁷¹ Once the domination of the Sautrāntikas was established, they renamed themselves as Mūlasarvāstivādins, that is, the original Sarvāstivādins.⁷² Their *vinaya*, now also finalised, became the prevailing *vinaya* in Northern and Central India, especially in Nālandā, a famous centre of Buddhist studies.⁷³ In this sense, it is not surprising that during his stay in India (671–695), and during the more than ten years that he spent in Nālandā, Yijing was confronted mainly with the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra*.

As it is clear from his travel account (T.2125), for Yijing, disciplinary rules were very important, and he was concerned with the Chinese *vinaya* situation. According to him, many misinterpretations had been handed down,⁷⁴ and it was even getting difficult to understand the *vinaya* because so many men had already handled it. The only way out was to return to the original texts themselves.⁷⁵ Therefore, Yijing was of the opinion that

⁷⁰ Of the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra*, a Tibetan translation as well as many Sanskrit fragments are extant. For details, see Yuyama 1979, pp. 12–33.

⁷¹ Willemen, Dessein & Cox 1998, pp. 125; Heirman 1999, pp. 855–856.

⁷² The fact that the Mūlasarvāstivādins call themselves “mūla”, whether to be interpreted as “the original” (Sarvāstivādins) or as “the root” (of other sects) (cf. Enomoto 2000, pp. 240–249), and the fact that in some texts, the Mūlasarvāstivādins and the Sarvāstivādins are considered as belonging to one and the same tradition, does not imply that there is no difference between the two schools. Although the *Sarvāstivādaśāstra* and the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra* are similar, they also differ in many instances, and therefore the shorter *Sarvāstivādaśāstra* cannot just be a summary of the longer *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra*, as it was claimed in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (T.1509.25.756c3–5; see also Willemen, Dessein & Cox 1998, pp. 88–89; Enomoto 2000, pp. 244–245). On the other hand, the similarities between the two *vinayas* reveal that, to a certain extent, they developed in a parallel way. For more details, see Heirman 1999, pp. 852–866.

⁷³ Wang 1994, pp. 180–183; Kieffer-Pülz 2000, pp. 299–302.

⁷⁴ Yijing, T.2125.54.206a21–22.

⁷⁵ Yijing, T.2125.54.205c20–206a4. Yijing compares the *vinaya* situation with a deep well, the water of which has been spoiled after a river has overflowed. If a thirsty man wishes to drink of the pure water of the well, he can only do so by endangering his life. Yijing adds that this kind of situation would not occur if one only abided by the *vinaya* texts themselves (and not by the later commentaries).

the original disciplinary rules—as one could still find them in India—had to be emphasised. He took the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra* as a basis. By doing so, Yijing never said that the other *vinayas* were less valuable. To Yijing, the only important fact was that one followed one, unspoiled *vinaya*.⁷⁶ His own preference for the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra* seems to rely mainly on two facts. First of all, because of his long stay in Nālandā, he had become an expert of the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra*, and secondly, this Indian *vinaya* had not yet been spoiled by any Chinese commentaries and interpretations. Despite the translation of Yijing, however, the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra* did not become popular in the Chinese monasteries. Instead, as we will see further, it was the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* that with the help of an imperial edict issued by the Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (r. 705–710), conquered the whole of China.⁷⁷

3.3. The Origin of the Northern Vinayas

The above has shown that in China, there were mainly two centres of *vinaya* translation: Chang’an (Xi’an) in the north, and Jiankang (Nanjing) in the south. As for the origin and the original languages of the Indian *vinayas* translated into Chinese, the information is generally rather scarce. Some scholars have tried to gain some more knowledge by analysing the phonetic renderings used in the translations of these texts. A serious difficulty for this kind of study is the cumulative tradition of standard terms that were passed down from translator to translator and that therefore do not testify the linguistic situation of the text in which they

⁷⁶ Yijing underlines that each tradition equally leads to *nirvāna*, but that the precepts of the different schools should not be intermingled (T.2125.54.205b28–c6).

⁷⁷ It is not impossible that the Empress Wu Zetian (r. 690–705) had in mind using the newly arrived *vinaya* to her advantage (personal communication of the late Professor Forte, Napoli). Yijing was indeed closely linked to the imperial court of Wu Zetian, and after his return from India in 695, he resided in the most important dynastic monastery, the Da Fuxian Si 大福先寺 in the capital Luoyang. This monastery had been founded by Wu Zetian, and was a centre of translation and propaganda for the empress. It also had an ordination platform (Forte 1983, p. 695). It is thus not impossible that the empress might have thought to use the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra* for her own purposes, converting China into a Buddhist state (see Forte 1976; 1992, pp. 219–231). But time was not on her side. Although a Mūlasarvāstivāda *karmaṇānā* (set of procedures) and a *vinayabhāṅga* (list of rules and their commentary) for monks had been translated by 703, the translation of the *Mūlasarvāstivādaśāstra* as a whole was finished only after Wu Zetian’s death in 705 (see Yuyama 1979, pp. 12–33; Matsumura 1996, pp. 171–173). Nonetheless, the relation between her imperial court and the use of certain *vinaya* texts, remains an intriguing subject for further research.

appear.⁷⁰ Still, an analysis of the Chinese renderings combined to the study of the extant Indian manuscripts can provide strong clues.⁷⁹

The first *vinaya* translated into Chinese was the one of the Sarvāstivādins, the prominent school in Northwest India and Central Asia.⁸⁰ Although they once used Northwest Prākṛit (i.e., Gāndhārī),⁸¹ by the time that Kumārajīva made his translations, the language used by the Sarvāstivādins was Buddhist Sanskrit.⁸²

Of the Dharmaguptakas, it has been argued that they originally used Gāndhārī, gradually turned to Buddhist Sanskrit, and eventually used Sanskrit.⁸³ Also, the Dharmaguptakas seem to have been prominent in the Gandhāra region.⁸⁴ Therefore, since in the fifth century, Gāndhārī was still in use, it is not impossible that the Indian *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, recited by Buddhayaśas, is related to the Gāndhārī tradition.⁸⁵

The Mahāsāṃghikas are attested mainly in the northern and the central part of the Indian subcontinent.⁸⁶ Since they were active in the Gandhāra region, they presumably once used Gāndhārī.⁸⁷ However, the most prominent language used by the Mahāsāṃghikas, or at least by the Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravādins, a sub-branch of the Mahāsāṃghikas, seems to be a 'language in the transitional state from Prākṛit to Sanskrit'.⁸⁸

As for the Mahīśāsakas, attested in Āndhra Pradesh, in Panjāb and in Pakistan (Uḍḍiyāna),⁸⁹ not a lot is known on the original language of

⁷⁰ Pulleyblank 1983, p. 87.

⁷¹ For more details, see Boucher 1998.

⁷² Kieffer-Pülz 2000, pp. 297–298.

⁷³ Fussman 1989, pp. 441–442; Salomon 1999, p. 171.

⁷⁴ von Hinüber 1989, pp. 353–354; von Simson 2000, pp. 2–4.

⁷⁵ Waldschmidt 1980, pp. 168–169; Chung & Wille 1997, pp. 52–53. M. Nishimura (1997, pp. 260–265), on the other hand, is of the opinion that only two linguistic phases can be discerned in the Dharmaguptaka tradition: 1) Gāndhārī; 2) Buddhist Sanskrit. For further details, see Heirman 2002b, pp. 400–402.

⁷⁶ Salomon 1999, pp. 166–178. Further study, however, is needed to determine how important the position of the Dharmaguptakas exactly was (Allon and Salomon 2000, pp. 271–273; Boucher 2000a, pp. 63–69; Lenz 2003, pp. 17–19).

⁷⁷ A further indication of its Gāndhārī origin, is a reference to the Arapacana syllabary found in the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T.1428.22.639a14. In all probability, this "syllabary was originally formulated in a Gāndhārī-speaking environment and written in the Kharoṣṭhī script" (Salomon 1990, p. 271).

⁷⁸ Kieffer-Pülz 2000, p. 293.

⁷⁹ Salomon 1999, p. 171.

⁸⁰ Roth 1970, pp. lv–lvi. See also von Hinüber 1989, pp. 353–354. On the features of this language see Roth, 1970, pp. lv–lxi; 1980, pp. 81–93.

⁸¹ Kieffer-Pülz 2000, p. 298.

their *vinaya*. Still, at least for the *vinaya* text translated into Chinese, a few scholars have advanced the hypothesis that it was written in Sanskrit. This is based on some preliminary studies of the phonetic renderings, as well as on the fact that the biography of the Kashmirian translator Buddhajīva says that in his youth in Kashmir, he had a Buddhist master belonging to the Mahīśāsaka school.⁹⁰ Since in Kashmir, the prominent Buddhist language was Sanskrit, the latter language is put forward as a not improbable guess.⁹¹ In an article on the texts found by Faxian in Sri Lanka,⁹² however, J. W. de Jong is doubtful about this hypothesis. He points out that the studies on the phonetic renderings certainly do not give a clear picture, and that the origin of one of the translators cannot be proof enough of the language that he used. In that context, he underlines that Buddhayaśas too was from Kashmir. He was one of the translators of the *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, a *vinaya* that most probably was not translated from Sanskrit.

Finally, for the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*, the situation is comparatively clear. The original text was written in Sanskrit, and, as indicated above, at the time of Yijing, it was the prominent *vinaya* in the region of Nalanda.⁹³

4. THE TRANSLATION OF THE THERAVĀDA TRADITION

It is clear that the above mentioned translations all are related to the languages of northern Buddhism, that is, Gāndhārī, Buddhist Sanskrit and Sanskrit. Not one extant *vinaya* is related to the Sinhalese Pāli tradition, despite the fact of quite frequent contact between China and Sri Lanka at a time when the Chinese Buddhist community was eagerly looking for as many Indian texts as possible.

4.1. Contact Sri Lanka—China

As is still the case today, the southern or Theravāda tradition was predominant on the island of Sri Lanka at the time of the Chinese *vinaya* translations. Contrary to the northern tradition, its texts never reached China via the northern land routes. The language of the original texts

⁹⁰ Huijiao, T.2059.50.339a3–4.

⁹¹ Demiéville 1975, p. 293; von Hinüber 1989, p. 354.

⁹² de Jong 1981, pp. 109–112.

⁹³ For more details, see Kieffer-Pülz 2000, pp. 299–300.

is Pāli, and its followers are predominantly Hinayanists. Although, in the first centuries of the spread of Buddhism in China, Sri Lanka was much less known than many other parts of the Indian subcontinent, the Chinese were certainly aware of the existence of a Sinhalese Buddhist community. Apart from the visit of the monk Faxian to the island (see above), several other contacts between Sri Lanka and China have been recorded, both in Buddhist texts and in secular historical sources. Maybe the most striking example of obvious contact between the Theravāda Sinhalese Buddhist communities and the communities in China is the (second) ordination ceremony of Chinese nuns ca. 433. As seen above, the first Chinese nun Zhu Jingjian was ordained in the presence of the *bhikṣusamgha* only. This goes against one of the fundamental rules (*gurudharma*)⁹⁴ accepted by the first Indian nun Mahāprajāpatī as a condition for the creation of a *bhikṣuṇīsamgha*. One of these rules states that a woman should be ordained first in the presence of a *bhikṣuṇīsamgha* and then in the presence of a *bhikṣusamgha*. Most fifth century Chinese *vinayas* specify that ten nuns are required for the first ceremony in the *bhikṣuṇīsamgha*.⁹⁵ This procedure has assured the proper and uninterrupted transmission of the rules for women from the time of the Buddha onward. In China, however, it is clear that, originally, the rule had not been followed, since at the time of Zhu Jingjian's ordination, there was no Chinese *bhikṣuṇīsamgha*. This situation led to discussion as mentioned in several biographies of the *Biqiuni zhuan*.⁹⁶ It reached its peak in the first half of the fifth century. At that time, in 429, a foreign boat captain named Nanti 難提, brought several Sinhalese nuns to Jiankang, the capital of the Southern Song dynasty.⁹⁷ For the first time, a group of fully ordained foreign nuns was present in China. Yet, their number was not sufficient, a problem that was solved a few years later when a second group of eleven Sinhalese nuns arrived.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ For a discussion of the rules see, among others, Horner 1930, pp. 118–161; Nolot 1991, pp. 397–405; Hüskens 1993, pp. 154–164; Heirman 1997, pp. 34–43; Hüskens 1997b, pp. 345–360; Heirman 1998; Heirman 2002a, part 1, pp. 63–65.

⁹⁵ *Mahāvāsakavinaya*, T.1421.22.187c7–8; *Mahāvāsmṅghikavinaya*, T.1425.22.473c24–26; *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T.1428.22.763b24, 763c28–29. In the *Sarvāstivādinavinaya*, T.1435, the number of nuns is not explicitly mentioned. For more details, see Heirman 2001, pp. 294–295, note 88.

⁹⁶ Baochang, T.2063.50.934c24–25, 937b25–c4, 939c14–21, 941a16–22. See also Huijiao, *Gaoseng zhuan*, T.2059.50.341a28–b7.

⁹⁷ Baochang, T.2063.50.939c12–14. According to Huijiao, T.2059.50.341a29, the group consisted of eight nuns.

⁹⁸ Baochang, T.2063.50.939c21–22, 944c3–5.

Consequently, it became possible to offer the Chinese nuns a second ordination, this time in the presence of an adequate quorum of fully ordained nuns. Afterwards, the discussion on the validity of the Chinese nuns' ordination died out.⁹⁹

Apart from the Sinhalese delegations that made the second ordination of Chinese nuns possible, around the end of the fourth and the beginning of the fifth century also other missions from Sri Lanka to Southern China took place.¹⁰⁰ According to the *Bianzheng lun* 辯正論¹⁰¹ (Essay on the Discernment of Right), the *śramana* Tanmocio 曇摩擧¹⁰² was sent to the court of the Chinese Emperor Xiaowu 孝武 (r. 373–396) by the king of Sri Lanka who was impressed by the emperor's devotion to Buddhism.¹⁰³ He was to present to the Chinese emperor a statue of jade. The Official Histories of the Liang¹⁰⁴ and of the Southern Dynasties,¹⁰⁵ as well as the *Gaoseng zhuan*,¹⁰⁶ further mention that the Sinhalese mission arrived at the Chinese court during the *yixi* period (405–418) of Emperor An's 安 reign.¹⁰⁷ This implies that the journey must have lasted at least ten years. According to E. Zürcher,¹⁰⁸ this is very improbable. He points out that the long period might be the result of a chronological computation by Chinese historians who wanted to account for the fact that the present was destined for the Emperor Xiaowu (who died in 396), but only arrived during the *yixi* period. E. Zürcher argues that this artificial calculation is not necessary since

⁹⁹ The basic text used at the ordination ceremony is not mentioned in any source. It presumably was a Chinese *vinaya*. For a discussion, see Heirman 2001, pp. 289–298.

¹⁰⁰ The northern part of China had less contact with Sri Lanka. Säll, according to the *Weishu* 114, vol. 8, p. 3036, in the beginning of the Tai'an period (455–460), five Sinhalese monks reached the Northern Wei capital. The monks said that they had traversed the countries of the Western Regions, which means that, contrary to the Sinhalese missions that most probably went to the south of China using the sea route, they had come overland.

¹⁰¹ Compiled by the monk Falin (572–640): T.2110.52.502c27–29.

¹⁰² Variant in Huijiao, T.2059.50.410b4: Tanmoyi 曇摩抑. According to E. Zürcher (1972, vol. 1, p. 152), the name might be a rendering of Dharmayukta.

¹⁰³ On this mission, see also Lévi 1900, pp. 414–415; Zürcher 1972, vol. 1, p. 152.

¹⁰⁴ *Liangshu* 54, vol. 3, p. 800.

¹⁰⁵ *Nanshi* 78, vol. 6, p. 1964.

¹⁰⁶ Huijiao, T.2059.50.410b2–5. See also Zhipan, T.2035.49.456c25–26.

¹⁰⁷ According to E. Zürcher (1972, vol. 2, p. 371 n. 375), the oldest but no longer extant source may have been the anonymous *Jin Xiaowu shi Shiziguo xian bai yu xiang ji* 晉孝武世師子國獻白玉像記 (Account of the White Jade Statue Presented [by the King of] Sri Lanka at the Time of the Jin Emperor Xiaowu), a work mentioned in Sengyou's catalogue (T.2145.55.92c2).

¹⁰⁸ Zürcher, 1972, vol. 1, p. 152.

even when the present was destined for Xiaowu, the mission can have started many years after 396, the Sinhalese court having no up-to-date information on the death of the Chinese emperor. Further referring to a note in the Official History of the Jin dynasty¹⁰⁹ that says that in 413, Dashi 大師¹¹⁰ sent a tribute of regional products to the Chinese court, E. Zürcher concludes that the year 413 might be the year that the envoy arrived. The statue of jade, four feet and two inches high, was placed in the Waguan monastery (*Waguan si* 瓦官寺), an important monastery in the capital Jiankang where many prominent monks such as Zhu Sengfu 竺僧敷 (ca. 300–370) and Zhu Fatai 竺法太 (320–387) had resided.¹¹¹ The *Liangshu*¹¹² and the *Nanshi*¹¹³ further mention that besides the jade statue, the envoy also brought ten packages (*zai* 載) of texts. It is not clear which texts these might have been.

The period that saw the most extensive contact between the Chinese and the Sinhalese courts was the period between 428 and 435. Not only did the boat captain Nanti bring several Sinhalese nuns to the Chinese capital Jiankang, the Sinhalese king Mahānāma (reigned 409–431)¹¹⁴ repeatedly sent products and messages to the Chinese Emperor Wen 文 (reigned 424–453) of the Song dynasty.¹¹⁵ According to the entry on Sri Lanka in the Official History of the Song dynasty,¹¹⁶ in the fifth year of the *yuanyā* period of Emperor Wen (428), the Sinhalese king sent a delegation to the Chinese court to pay tribute. Four monks¹¹⁷ offered the emperor two white robes and a statue with an ivory pedestal.¹¹⁸ There was also a letter in which the king asked for an answer to be sent back to him. In the section on Emperor Wen, however, the *Songshu* does not mention any tribute paid by Sri Lanka in the fifth year of *yuanyā*, but it mentions such a tribute in the seventh year (430).¹¹⁹

¹⁰⁹ *Jinshu* 10, vol. 1, p. 264.

¹¹⁰ Probably *Da Shiziguo* 大師 / 獅子國, Sri Lanka.

¹¹¹ See Zürcher, 1972, vol. 1, 147–150; Tsukamoto 1985, vol. 1, pp. 395–396.

¹¹² *Liangshu* 54, vol. 3, p. 800.

¹¹³ *Nanshi* 78, vol. 6, p. 1964.

¹¹⁴ Based on Geiger 1960, p. 224.

¹¹⁵ For details on the maritime relations between Southeast Asia and China, see Zürcher 2002, pp. 30–42.

¹¹⁶ *Songshu* 97, vol. 8, p. 2384.

¹¹⁷ 道人, men who practice the way.

¹¹⁸ This delegation is also mentioned in the *Nanshi* 78, vol. 6, p. 1965. The *Liangshu* 54, vol. 3, p. 800, refers to a delegation in the sixth year of *yuanyā* (429). On this mission, see also Lévi 1900, pp. 412–413.

¹¹⁹ *Songshu* 5, vol. 1, p. 79. Also mentioned in the *Nanshi* 2, vol. 1, p. 41.

Also the Buddhist historian Zhipan 志磐 (fl. 1258–1269) refers in his *Fozu tongji* 佛祖統記¹²⁰ (Record of the Lineage of the Buddha and Patriarchs) to a Sinhalese tribute mission. He places it in the fifth year of *yuanyā* (428). According to Zhipan, the Emperor Wen replied to Mahānāma's letter. He told the Sinhalese king that there were scarcely any Hīnayāna texts in China and asked the king to send him copies. It is not clear whether or not the king ever received such a request and whether or not he answered it, but the fact that Zhipan's text is very late diminishes its credibility on this matter.

The Official Histories of the Song, of the Liang and of the Southern Dynasties,¹²¹ further mention that in the twelfth year of *yuanyā* (435), the Sinhalese again sent an envoy to pay tribute.¹²² The *Liangshu* and the *Nanshi* add that also in 527, a Sinhalese king called *Jiaye* (*Jiashe*) *jiatuo heliye* 伽葉伽羅訶梨邪¹²³ sent tribute to China. The letter addressed to the emperor is an almost exact copy of the former king Mahānāma's letter.¹²⁴

4.2. The Pāli Theravāda Tradition

At the time of the first contact between the Sinhalese and the Chinese communities, there were two leading monasteries in Sri Lanka: the Abhayagirivihāra and the Mahāvihāra. The Abhayagirivihāra was founded by king Vattagāmaṇi Abhaya between 29 and 17 BC. It

¹²⁰ T.2035.49.344b16–18, 456c27–28.

¹²¹ *Songshu* 5, vol. 1, pp. 83; 97, vol. 8, p. 2384; *Liangshu* 54, vol. 3, p. 800; *Nanshi* 2, vol. 1, p. 43; 78, vol. 6, 1965.

¹²² The *Nanchao Song huiyao* (p. 717), *Important Documents of the Southern Dynasty of the Song*, compiled by Zhu Mingyao in the second half of the nineteenth century, refers to the *Nanshi*, and concludes that there must have been three delegations: in 428, in 430 and in 435.

¹²³ *Liangshu* 3, Vol. 1, p. 71; 54, Vol. 3, p. 800; *Nanshi* 7, vol. 1, p. 205; 78, vol. 6, p. 1965 (*Jiaye* (or *jiashe*) *jiatuo heliye* 伽葉伽羅訶梨邪). It is not clear to whom exactly this name refers. In 527, the reigning king in Sri Lanka was King Silākāla (Geiger 1960, p. 225). According to Lévi (1900, p. 424), "*jiashe*" might refer to *Kassapa*, "*jiatuo*" to [Silā]kāla, while the origin of "*heliye*" might be the Sinhalese term *heṇana*, i.e., *śrāmaṇera* or novice. In that case, two names were intermingled, possibly the names of the reigning King Silākāla, who in India indeed became a novice (cf. Culv I, p. 36, 39.45–48), and the name of a son of the former King Upatissa, namely Kassapa, who disputed the legitimacy of Silākāla's kingship. With many thanks to Dr. Siglinde Dietz for the references to the Pāli literature.

¹²⁴ According to E. Zürcher (2002, p. 35, n. 25), it may be that the authentic Liang materials had been lost, and that the compilers of the Official History of the Liang chose to fill the gap by "borrowing" the Song texts.

became a strong rival of the Mahāvihāra, founded during the reign of Devānampiya Tissa (247–207 BC).¹²⁵ With the support of several kings, the Abhayagirivihāra gradually expanded. In his travel account,¹²⁶ the monk Faxian describes the monastery as a very rich place with five thousand monks, receiving the support of the royal house. The Mahāvihāra, according to Faxian, had three thousand monks. He describes it as the second most important monastery, also frequented by the king. He does not tell us about any rivalry between the two monasteries. Not a lot is known about what was particular to the Abhayagirivihāra. Most, if not all their texts have completely disappeared after king Parakkamabāhu I (1153–1186) decided to reunify the three Theravāda groups of Anurādhapura: the Abhayagirivihāra, the Jetavanavihāra¹²⁷ and the Mahāvihāra. The monks of the first two monasteries were re-ordered according to the Mahāvihāra tradition. Consequently, the Mahāvihāra texts gradually became the only ones to survive, while the Abhayagirivihāra viewpoints are only known from a very small number of quotations in non-Abhayagirivihāra Pāli texts.¹²⁸

In fifth and sixth century China, apart from the account of Faxian, no other texts report on the situation of the Sinhalese Buddhist communities. Also on the Pāli Theravāda tradition as a whole, the Chinese had little information since only a few Pāli texts were ever translated into Chinese. Of these, two texts are extant: the *Jietuo daolun* 解脫道論 (T.1648, Treatise on the Path to Liberation) and the *Shan'jian lü piposha* 善見律毘婆沙 (T.1462, “?Good for Seeing” Commentary). In addition, a translation of a Theravāda *vinaya* (*Tapili* 他毘利) by the monk Mahāyāna¹²⁹ is mentioned in the catalogues but is no longer extant. Also the now lost *Wubai bensheng jing* 五百本生經 (Sūtra of the Five Hundred Jātakas), also translated by Mahāyāna was possibly based on a Pāli text.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Geiger 1960, pp. 186, 223; Reat, 1994, pp. 84–92.

¹²⁶ T.2085.51.864c24–865b12.

¹²⁷ In the third century, the Sāgalikas, later called the Jetavanavihāravāsins, split from the Mahāvihāra. The role of this school has remained obscure (Bechert 1993a, p. 11).

¹²⁸ von Hinüber 1996, pp. 22–23. One Pāli text, the *Saddhammopāyana*, the date of which is uncertain, is sometimes attributed to the Abhayagirivihāra tradition because of the title Abhayagirivihāravāsins given to its author (von Hinüber 1996, p. 203).

¹²⁹ This seems to be a surname given to a monk well-versed in Mahāyāna texts. See, for instance, the Indian monk Guṇabhadra (died 466) who was called ‘Mahāyāna’ because of his study of Mahāyāna texts (Huijiao, T.2059.50.344a5–6).

¹³⁰ von Hinüber 1996, p. 57. In addition, the *Youshiwenfo jing* 優婆塞問佛經 (T.1466,

The *Jietuo daolun* or *Vimuttimaggā* is a manual of the Theravāda tradition compiled by a certain Upatissa.¹³¹ The original Pāli text is lost, but the Chinese translation is still extant. It was made by the monk *Samghabhara¹³² 僧伽婆羅 of Funan¹³³ in 515.¹³⁴

The *Shan'jian lü piposha* is a partial translation into Chinese of the Pāli *Samantapāsādikā*, a fourth or fifth century Mahāvihāra commentary on the Pāli *Vinaya*. The translation was made by the monk Samghabhara in 488–489, and shows the influence of many other Chinese traditions.¹³⁵ It seems not to have been widely diffused, since the earliest biography works¹³⁶ do not even mention it once among the works studied by the Buddhist masters.¹³⁷ It is, however, briefly mentioned as an existing *vinaya* text in the additional commentary on the *vinaya* masters in the *Gaoseng*

Questions of Upāli), translated in the fifth century, has sometimes been considered as a text based on a Pāli original. This hypothesis is now rejected by most scholars (for more details, see Heirman, 2004, p. 377).

¹³¹ von Hinüber 1996, pp. 123–126.

¹³² Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 281: the reconstruction of the name is uncertain.

¹³³ Along the Mekong River. In the first centuries AD, Funan had a very important seaport frequented by both Indian and Chinese travellers. Because of the winds, these travellers were often obliged to remain in the port for several months. This stimulated a cultural dialogue, particularly between Funan and India (Taring 1999, Vol. 1, pp. 192–196). See also Kieffer-Pütz 2000, pp. 455–459.

¹³⁴ The Chinese version has been translated by N. R. M. Ebara, Soma Thera and Kheminda Thera under the title *The Path of Freedom by the Arhant Upatissa. Translated into Chinese by the Tipitaka Saṅghapāla of Funan* (Colombo 1961).

¹³⁵ Samghabhara clearly underwent the influence of the Chinese environment he was living in. He (or his disciples, Bapat and Hirakawa 1970, p. liii) adapted the text to the Chinese habits, showing familiarity with the Chinese *vinayas*, particularly with the *Dharmaguptakavinaya* and the *Sarvāstivādinaya*. See Heirman, 2004.

¹³⁶ Huijiao, *Gaoseng zhuan* (T.2059) compiled around AD 530; Daoxuan, *Xu gaoseng zhuan* (T.2060), the final version of which has probably been compiled by Daoxuan's disciples shortly after his death in 667 (Wagner 1995, pp. 78–79); and Zanning, *Song gaoseng zhuan* (T.2061), compiled around 983, and covering the period between Daoxuan's death and the early Song (Dalia 1987, p. 168).

¹³⁷ Still, the work is mentioned in several catalogues: Fei Changfang, T.2034.49.95b18–c17, 119b4; Sengyou, T.2145.55.13b20–23, 82a23–b2; Fajing et al., T.2146.55.140a25; Yancong et al., T.2147.55.155b22–23; Jingtai et al., T.2148.55.188a4–5; Daoxuan, T.2149.55.262b2–29, 300b1–2, 310b9, 324a15–16; Jingmai, T.2151.55.363b21–24; Mingquan et al., T.2153.55.434a13–15, 470b9; Zhisheng, T.2154.55.535c9–10, 619c25–26, 695b5, 719c27–28; Yuanzhao, T.2157.55.833c6–834a7, 953a25–26, 1043b10–11.

The work also figures among the texts preserved in the Ximing monastery (*Ximing si* 西明寺) in Chang'an—where Daoxuan was the abbot—as indicated in the monastery catalogue copied by Daoxuan in his *Datang neidian lu* (T.2149.55.310b9). Cf. Daoxuan's biography, T.2061.50.790b7–791b26, translated into English by Wagner 1995, pp. 255–268; see also Forte 1983, pp. 699–701.

zhuan.¹³⁸ Also, the famous commentator Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) places it among the essential *vinaya* traditions on which he intended to base his *vinaya* commentaries,¹³⁹ along with the *vinaya* texts of the Mahāsāṃghika, the Dharmaguptaka, the Sarvāstivāda, the Mahīśāsaka, the Kāśyāpīya,¹⁴⁰ and the Vātsīputrīya¹⁴¹ schools. As also together with some other basic texts: the *Pinimu jing* 毘尼母經 (?*Vinayamātrkā*, T.1463), a commentary on the *vinaya* of an unknown school translated at the end of the fourth or at the beginning of the fifth century;¹⁴² the *Modeleqie lun* 摩得勒伽論, an abridged version¹⁴³ of *Sapoduo bu pinimodeleqie* 薩婆多毘尼摩得勒伽 (?*Sarvāstivādavinayamātrkā*, T.1441), a commentary on the *Sarvāstivādavinaya* translated by Saṃghavarman in 435;¹⁴⁴ the *Sapoduo lun* 薩婆多論, presumably¹⁴⁵ a reference to the *Sapoduo pinipiposha* 薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 (?*Sarvāstivādavinayavibhāṣā*, T.1440), probably translated after the *Sarvāstivādavinaya* and before 431;¹⁴⁶ the *Pinaiye lu* 毘奈耶律, in all probability a reference to the *Binaiye* 鼻奈耶 (T.1464), a *vinaya* text related to the Sarvāstivāda school, and translated by Zhu Fonian in 383;¹⁴⁷ the *Mingliao lun* 明了論, an abridged version of the *Lü ershi'er mingliao lun* 律二十二明了論 (T.1461, Explanatory Commentary on Twenty-two Stanzas of the Vinaya), a commentary on a lost *prātimokṣa* of the Saṃmitīyas translated by Paramārtha in 568;¹⁴⁸ and the *Wubai wen fa chuyao liyi* 五百問法出要律義 (*Vinaya*

¹³⁸ T.2059.50.403b20.

¹³⁹ See T.1804.40.3b21–27.

¹⁴⁰ A note specifies that only the *prātimokṣa* (i.e., a list of precepts) is available. It has been translated into Chinese by Prajñāruci in 543 (Yuyama 1979, p. 43).

¹⁴¹ A note indicates that no Vātsīputrīya *vinaya* text is actually available.

¹⁴² Demiéville et al., 1978, p. 125; Yuyama 1979, p. 44. According to É. Lamotte (1958, p. 212), this text belongs to the Haimavata school. In the *Biqium zhuan*, a collection of biographies of Chinese nuns compiled by Baochang 516 and 519 (Tsai 1994, p. 108), a *Pinimu jing* is linked to the Sarvāstivāda school (T.2063.50.947b29–c1).

¹⁴³ See Sengyou, T.2145.55.104c24; Fajing et al., T.2146.55.140b1; Yancong et al., T.2147.55.155b25–26; Jingtai et al., T.2148.55.188a7–8; Daoxuan, T.2149.55.258c1, 300b5–6, 310b12, 324a19–20; Jingmai, T.2151.55.362a24–25; Mingquan et al., T.2153.55.433c18–20, 470c13; Zhisheng, T.2154.55.527b30–c1, 619c21–22, 695b2–3, 719c23–24; Yuanzhao, T.2157.55.824b17–18, 953a21–22, 1043b6–7.

¹⁴⁴ Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 123; Yuyama 1979, p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ According to Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 332, the title *Sapoduo lun* refers to the *Sapoduo bu pinimodeleqie*, T.1441. In that case, Daoxuan's enumeration would contain the same text twice. It thus seems more logical that *Sapoduo lun* is a reference to the *Sapoduo pinipiposha*, T.1440, referred to as “*lun*” (論) by the monk Zhishou in his introduction to the text (included in T.1440.23.558c18–559a13).

¹⁴⁶ Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 123; Yuyama 1979, pp. 8–9.

¹⁴⁷ Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 125; Yuyama 1979, pp. 7–8.

¹⁴⁸ Demiéville et al. 1978, p. 125; Yuyama 1979, p. 43.

Commentary on the Five Hundred Questions on the Essentials of the *Dharma*), a no longer extant text that, according to an additional note of Daoxuan, is a compilation on *vinaya* matters ordered by Emperor Wu 武 (r. 502–550) of the Liang 梁 dynasty.

The translator of the *Samantapāsādikā*, Saṃghabhadra, is said to be a foreigner,¹⁴⁹ or a man “of the western regions”.¹⁵⁰ He translated the text in Guangzhou in the Zhulin 竹林 (Veṇuvana) monastery,¹⁵¹ together with the *śramaṇa* Sengyi 僧禪.¹⁵² The Pāli *Samantapāsādikā* is presented as a Mahāvihāra text.¹⁵³ Its Chinese translation, however, shows a probable Abhayagirivihāra connection.¹⁵⁴ This is particularly clear when with respect to the famous *vinaya* discussion between the Mahāvihāra and the Abhayagirivihāra, namely the debate on the nun Mettiyā,¹⁵⁵ Saṃghabhadra adheres to the Abhayagirivihāra viewpoint. Such an Abhayagirivihāra connection is also put forward with respect to the above mentioned *Vimuttimaggā*, which, according to many buddhologists,¹⁵⁶ might be affiliated to the latter monastery. Since, moreover, the most extensive contact between the Chinese and Sinhalese took place

¹⁴⁹ Fei Changfang, T.2034.49.95b19; Daoxuan, T.2149.55.262b3.

¹⁵⁰ Zhisheng, T.2154.55.535c12.

¹⁵¹ It is interesting to note that this is the same monastery where, according to T.2153, a Pāli *vinaya* was translated into Chinese, at around the same period (see note 159).

¹⁵² T.2034.49.95c3: 禪 instead of 禪.

¹⁵³ The introductory verses of the *Samantapāsādikā* state that the work intends to be a Pāli version of already existing Sinhalese commentaries in order “to make the orthodox opinion of the Mahāvihāra internationally accessible” (von Hinüber 1996, p. 103).

¹⁵⁴ See Heirman, 2004.

¹⁵⁵ This debate is the only matter on which we know the viewpoint of the Abhayagirivihāra *Vinaya* (von Hinüber 1996, p. 22). It discusses a statement in the Pāli *Vinaya* that tells us that the nun Mettiyā (Skt. Maitreyā) falsely accused the venerable Dabba Mallaputta (Skt. Dravya Mallaputra, Karashima 2000, p. 233, note 2) of having raped her; a violation of the first *pāṇātika* precept (leading to a definitive exclusion from the Buddhist status of monk or nun). When she later admits to have lied, the Pāli *Vinaya* (Vin, vol. 3, pp. 162.38–163.1); for the *vinayas* that have survived in a Chinese translation, see Heirman 2000a, pp. 31–34) wants her to be expelled. This statement lead to a legal discussion between the Mahāvihāravāsins and the Abhayagirivāsins, as it is clear from a passage in the Pāli *Samantapāsādikā* (Sp, vol. 3, pp. 582.30–584.9), where the question is asked what the actual reason of Mettiyā's expulsion is (see also von Hinüber, 1997, pp. 87–91; Hüsken 1997a, pp. 96–98, 102–105). The Chinese version of the *Samantapāsādikā* (T.1462.24.766c29–767a2) does not refer to the controversy between the Mahāvihāra and the Abhayagirivihāra, but it does point to the legal problem concerning Mettiyā's expulsion. The Chinese text states that she had to be expelled because she herself acknowledged that she had committed a (*pāṇātika*) offence. This explanation corresponds to the Abhayagirivihāra position.

¹⁵⁶ For references, see Norman 1991, pp. 43–44; Skilling 1994, pp. 199–202; von Hinüber 1996, p. 126; Heirman, 2004, pp. 373–376.

during or just after the reign of the Sinhalese king Mahānāma, who was maybe more favourably disposed towards the Abhayagirivihāra than to the Mahāvihāra,¹⁵⁷ it is not impossible that when the Chinese came into contact with the Sinhalese monasteries, these monasteries were mainly connected with the Abhayagirivihāra.

4.3. *The Pāli Vinaya*

As mentioned in Faxian's travel account, it was not easy to obtain *vinaya* texts. Still, he finally succeeded in obtaining three *vinayas*. One of these, the *Mahāsāsakavinaya*, he found in Sri Lanka. Since at that time, *vinaya* matters were a prominent issue for the Sinhalese Theravāda masters, and since Faxian spent two years on the island, it is striking that he never obtained a Pāli *Vinaya* text, nor even mentioned the existence of any *vinaya* discussions. Still, he was well acquainted with both the Abhayagirivihāra and the Mahāvihāra, the two most important Theravāda monasteries. The fact that Faxian did not acquire any Pāli *Vinaya* text in Sri Lanka, does not imply that the Pāli *Vinaya* never reached China. The *Chu sanzang jiji*,¹⁵⁸ the catalogue compiled by Sengyou around 518, mentions that during the reign of Emperor Wu 武 (483–493) of the Qi 齊 dynasty, a certain monk called Mahāyāna translated two texts in Guangzhou: one is entitled *Wubai bensheng jing* 五百本生經 (Sūtra of the Five Hundred *Jātakas*), and the other is a Theravāda *vinaya* text, entitled *Tapili* 他毘利.¹⁵⁹ Sengyou further mentions that the two texts were never presented to the emperor,¹⁶⁰ and were subsequently lost. This explains why the two texts translated by Mahāyāna were never widely known in the Chinese monasteries. A new text had to be presented to the imperial court before it could be diffused. If this presentation did not take place, a text could easily disappear.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Adikaram 1953, p. 93.

¹⁵⁸ Sengyou, T.2145.55.13b16–19.

¹⁵⁹ According to the *Dazhou kanding zhongjing mulu* (T.2153.55.43a10–12), the translation of the *Tapili* took place in the "Bamboo-grove Monastery" (*Zhulin si* 竹林寺, Venuvana Monastery). This information is said to be based on Fei Changfang's catalogue. In the extant version of the latter catalogue (T.2034), however, this information is not included.

¹⁶⁰ The wording 不至京都 ("they did not reach the capital"), indicates that the texts were not refuted by the imperial court, but for some reason never made it to the capital Jiankang.

¹⁶¹ Kuo 2000, pp. 682–687. Some texts, however, did become popular even without

The question remains, however, why the two texts, and especially the Pāli *Vinaya*, never reached the imperial court. Was it because of a lack of interest in this *vinaya*? At the time that the Pāli *Vinaya* was translated, the *Sarvāstivādinaya* was firmly established in the south of China, mainly as a result of the efforts of the monk Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–417).¹⁶² The monasteries no longer felt that there was a lack of disciplinary texts, and this feeling might have prevented the spread of yet another *vinaya*. Still, in the fifth century, there was quite an eclectic interest in *vinaya* traditions, and many masters certainly studied more than one text (see further). Moreover, contrary to the Pāli *Vinaya* itself, the partial translation of the commentary on this *vinaya*, did gain some popularity and attracted the attention of the famous *vinaya* master Daoxuan. So, why not the Pāli *Vinaya*? Could there be any connection with the fact that the text was clearly a Hīnayāna text? This does not seem plausible since also all the other Chinese *vinayas* used for ordination in the Chinese monasteries are of Hīnayāna origin. Yet, at the time that the *vinayas* were translated into Chinese, the Sinhalese monks and nuns were almost exclusively Hīnayāna followers,¹⁶³ while monks and nuns ordained by means of another *vinaya*, were often closer to the Mahāyāna movement.¹⁶⁴ Moreover, the Pāli Hīnayāna tradition as a whole was not very popular despite travellers such as Faxian who visited Sri Lanka. And even Faxian did not bring Theravāda texts with him. Instead, during his stay in Sri Lanka, he obtained copies of the *Dīrghāgama*,¹⁶⁵ of the *Samyuktāgama*,¹⁶⁶ of a "Miscellaneous *piṭaka*"¹⁶⁷ (*zazang* 雜藏), and of the *vinaya* of the Mahāsāsakas.¹⁶⁸ Not one of these

having been approved by the emperor. These are mainly devotionals texts, or texts related to miracles (Kuo 2000, pp. 687, 690ff.). See also Drège 1991, pp. 195–208.

¹⁶² Zürcher 1972, vol. 1, pp. 229–230; Tsukamoto 1985, vol. 2, pp. 889–892.

¹⁶³ Although Sri Lanka was a Theravāda (and thus, traditionally, Hīnayāna) country, some monks also made use of Mahāyāna texts, particularly the monks belonging to the Abhayagirivihāra. See, for instance, Bechert, 1976; 1993a, pp. 12–13; Wang 1994, p. 178; Kieffer-Pülz 2000, p. 300.

¹⁶⁴ Wang 1994, p. 178; Kieffer-Pülz 2000, pp. 303–308.

¹⁶⁵ The manuscript of the *Dīrghāgama* brought back by Faxian was not translated, maybe because in 413 Buddhayaśas and Zhu Fonian already had translated another *Dīrghāgama* manuscript (T.1).

¹⁶⁶ The *Samyuktāgama* translated by the Central Indian monk Gunabhadra between 435 and 443 (T.99) is probably the manuscript brought back by Faxian (de Jong 1981, p. 108).

¹⁶⁷ This text has been translated into Chinese by Faxian himself (T.745) and is possibly a part of a *Kṣudrakapitaka* (de Jong 1981, p. 105).

¹⁶⁸ T.2085.51.865c24–25.

texts can be traced back to a Theravāda origin. So even though Faxian stayed in Sri Lanka for about two years, he seems not to have been interested in the Theravāda texts. Noteworthy also is that in the lists of the important schools, so popular in China from the fourth century onwards, the Theravāda tradition never appears. These lists mostly contain five schools,¹⁶⁹ known for their *vinaya* texts.¹⁷⁰ The Pāli *Vinaya* is never mentioned, and seems not have played any role. It was isolated in Guangzhou, in the south of China. Why did it remain so isolated? Was it because of political events? The *vinaya* was translated during the reign of Emperor Wu (482–493) of the Southern Qi dynasty. It was a quite prosperous period and a time of stability. After the death of Emperor Wu, however, the dynasty quickly went down. Ruthless and incompetent leaders succeeded one another. It was hardly a time to enlarge libraries under imperial sponsorship. This might account for the disappearance of the Pāli *Vinaya*. The chaotic period lasted until a skilful general overthrew the Qi in 502 and started his own dynasty, the Liang dynasty (502–557).¹⁷¹

It seems impossible to point out exactly why the Pāli *Vinaya* remained so unknown. Maybe it was a mixture of bad luck and bad timing, combined with the general lack of interest in the Pāli Hinayāna tradition, and aggravated by the fact that there was no longer a real need for *vinaya* texts. The *vinaya* was lost very soon after its translation. Still, at least the awareness that such a copy ever existed made it to Jiankang, since in 518 Sengyou, who resided in the capital, included the *Tapīli* in his catalogue, but indicated that it was lost.¹⁷²

5. THE ECLECTIC USE OF CHINESE *VINAYAS*

In the above, we have seen how in the course of the fifth century, the Chinese *vinaya* context totally changed. From an imperative need for disciplinary texts, the situation turned into an overwhelming richness. The fifth century saw the translation of all but one of the major *vinayas*, as well as of many additional *vinaya* texts. This, however, also caused

¹⁶⁹ Mostly the Sarvāstivādins, the Dharmaguptakas, the Kāśyapīyas, the Mahāśāsakas, and the Mahāsāṃghikas (see Lamotte 1958, pp. 593–594).

¹⁷⁰ Wang 1994, pp. 172–173. See also note 177.

¹⁷¹ For a detailed overview of the events of the Southern Qi, see Bielenstein 1996, pp. 169–189.

¹⁷² See note 158.

some problems. When strictly interpreted, all *vinayas* state that only a harmonious *samgha* (*samagrasamghā*) can perform legal procedures, such as ordinations. The terms *samagra* and *samgha* imply that all monks and nuns who are present in the legal district (*śīmā*)¹⁷³ have to attend the ceremony; that there has to be unity in legal procedures and unity in the recitation of the precepts, this is unity in the recitation of the *prātimokṣa* at the *poṣadha*¹⁷⁴ ceremony;¹⁷⁵ and that there have to be enough monks or nuns in order to carry out a formal act in a legally valid way.¹⁷⁶ This kind of *samgha* is only possible within one and the same school (*nikāya*), defined by a common *vinaya*.¹⁷⁷ The disciplinary texts clearly leave no place for eclecticism. Still, several cases show that in fifth century China, this does not seem to have been an issue. At least for the translator of the Pāli *Samantapāsādikā*, there was no problem to borrow freely from various sources.¹⁷⁸ Even more significant is that at the nuns' ordination ceremony in ca. 433, the participants probably did not belong to the same *vinaya* traditions. Although it is not said on which *vinaya* text the ceremony was based, it most probably relied on one of the *vinayas* translated into Chinese.¹⁷⁹ The Sinhalese nuns, on the other hand, in all probability belonged to the Theravāda school. In any case, it is clear that the obligatory presence of ten fully ordained nuns in order to perform a legally valid ordination ceremony received all the

¹⁷³ In order to have a legally valid procedure, any formal act has to be carried out within a well delimited district (*śīmā*). See note 25.

¹⁷⁴ A ceremony held every fortnight and attended by all monks/nuns of the district (*śīmā*), so that the unity of the order is reaffirmed. At this ceremony, the *prātimokṣa* (list of precepts) is recited.

¹⁷⁵ Pāli *vinaya*, vol. 3, p. 173.8–9 (see also the definition of “not to live in the community” (*asaṃvāsa*) in Vin, vol. 3: 28.20–22); *Mahāśāsakavinaya*, T.1421.22.20c6–7; *Mahāsāṃghikavinaya*, T.1425.22.282c23–25; *Dharmaguptakavinaya*, T.1428.22.595a15–16; *Sarvāstivādivinaya*, T.1435.23.266c18–24. See also Hu-von Hinüber 1994, pp. 219–226; Ticken 2000, pp. 2–3, 10–11, 13, 26–27, who points out that “unanimous” is the prominent meaning of “*samagra*”; Heirman 2002a, part 2, p. 327, nn. 290–292.

¹⁷⁶ Depending on the legal procedure, there should be four, five, ten or twenty fully ordained participants (see Heirman 2002a, part 2, p. 315 n. 228).

¹⁷⁷ Schools (*nikāya*) are defined by the recognition of a common *vinaya*, and thus of a common *prātimokṣa*. See Bechert 1993b, p. 54: “As a rule, monks belonging to different *Nikāyas* do not conduct joint *Sanghakarmas* [formal acts]. Though they may not always dispute the validity of each other's ordination, they do not recognise it as beyond dispute either. If there were doubts about the validity, the *Sanghakarma* would be questionable. If the validity of ordinations is called into question, the legitimacy of the *Sangha* is endangered.”

¹⁷⁸ See note 135.

¹⁷⁹ Before the ceremony could take place, the Sinhalese nuns had to learn Chinese (T.2059.50.341b6).

attention, to the expense of the *vinaya* tradition of the participants.¹⁸⁰ As for the later ordinations of the Chinese monks and nuns, the *vinayas* do not seem to be mutually exclusive. The south usually preferred the *Sarvāstivāda* *vinaya*, while in the north the *Mahāsāṃghika* *vinaya* prevailed, followed by the *Dharmaguptaka* *vinaya*.¹⁸¹ The latter *vinaya* gradually gained in importance until, in the north, it became the most influential one by the time the northern monk Daoxuan 道宣 (596–667) wrote his commentaries. The south still mainly followed the *Sarvāstivāda* *vinaya*.

From the seventh century onwards, more and more protest was raised against the use of different *vinayas* in China. In his *Further Biographies of Eminent Monks* (*Xu gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳), the monk Daoxuan regrets that even though the first ordinations [in China] were based on the Dharmaguptaka school, one followed [in the south] the Sarvāstivāda school.¹⁸² Also Yijing argues against the eclectic use of *vinaya* rules and stated that for a Buddhist community it is important to strictly observe only one *vinaya*.¹⁸³ The idea of the exclusive use of one *vinaya* in the Chinese monasteries was not only based on Buddhist motives, but political reasons also played an important part. When after a long period of fragmentation of the Chinese territory (317–589), the first emperor of the Sui dynasty (r. 589–605) came to power, he was bidding for the favour of the Buddhist community in his struggle to make the country one. At the same time, he also wanted to control the community and its ordinations.¹⁸⁴ The rulers of the early Tang, although less favourable towards Buddhism than the Sui rulers, continued this policy of control.¹⁸⁵ In this context, a unification of the ordination procedures would have been helpful to the court. It is therefore not surprising that when the very active *vinaya* master Dao'an 道安 (654–717), who seemed

¹⁸⁰ See Heirman 2001, pp. 293–298.

¹⁸¹ See Heirman 2002b, pp. 402–424.

¹⁸² Daoxuan, T.2060.50.620b6. See also Daoxuan's *Sifen lü shanfan buque xingshi chao* (T.1804.40.2b19–20): one *vinaya* (*Dharmaguptaka* *vinaya*) is the basis, but, if needed, other *vinayas* can be consulted.

¹⁸³ See note 76.

¹⁸⁴ The search for unification of the Chinese empire and the control of the Chinese Buddhist monks are closely intermingled (see Wright 1957, pp. 93–104; Weinstein 1973, p. 283). Monks were required to obtain official ordination certificates, and disciplinary rules were promoted. See also Wright (1959, p. 68): “It was no accident that the Sui founder chose a Vinaya master as official head of the Buddhist communities of the realm... [his words] expressed his wish that this specialist in the monastic rules should take full responsibility for controlling and disciplining the clergy of the whole realm.”

¹⁸⁵ Weinstein 1973 and 1987.

to have a good contacts with the Emperor Zhongzong, invoked the help of the imperial court to impose the *Dharmaguptaka* *vinaya* all over the country, his request was granted.¹⁸⁶ It was most probably addressed to Zhongzong when the emperor was fully in power between 705 and 710.¹⁸⁷ After the imperial edict was issued, also the south of China used the *Dharmaguptaka* *vinaya*.

6. CONCLUSION

The first period of Chinese Buddhism saw an intensive search for disciplinary rules, parallel to the growth of the Buddhist community. This search reached its peak in the beginning of the fifth century when, in a relatively short period, four complete *vinayas* were translated into Chinese. Once these *vinayas* were transmitted in China, the Buddhist community gradually became conscious of the advantages of using only one *vinaya*. This was to be the *Dharmaguptaka* *vinaya*. The main reason for this choice seems to have been the firm belief among its defenders that the Dharmaguptaka school was the first to introduce an ordination to China. To follow this school thus assured the Buddhist community of a proper transmission of the ordination since the time of the Buddha. Political reasons also played their role. The fact of having only one ordination tradition probably simplified state control. In the beginning of the eighth century, around the same time that the monk Yijing translated the *Mūlasarvāstivāda* *vinaya* in the hope to purify the Buddhist discipline in China by, as it were, starting all over again, the *Dharmaguptaka* *vinaya* was installed by imperial decree as the only right one in China. From that time until today, it has remained the only *vinaya* active in China. Two major supplements, however, have been added: first, the *bodhisattva* rules as a Mahāyāna supplement,¹⁸⁸ and later, the so-called “pure rules of Baizhang” that offer a set of rules for the practical organisation of the Chinese Buddhist monasteries.¹⁸⁹ These typical Chinese sets of rules, however, have to remain for now the subject of a different study. Together with the *vinaya* tradition translated from Indian texts, they form the core of the Chinese Buddhist disciplinary rules.

¹⁸⁶ T.2061.50.793c26–27. See also T'ang 1996, vol. 2, pp. 828–829.

¹⁸⁷ See Heirman 2002b, p. 414.

¹⁸⁸ See note 51.

¹⁸⁹ See note 69.

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EARLY BUDDHISM IN CHINA: DAOIST REACTIONS

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1. INTRODUCTION

There seems to be a general agreement among scholars that Buddhism entered China by way of the "Silk Road", through western merchants as intermediaries. The "official" China, however, only late became aware of the trade between its own territory and the West—it was Zhang Qian 張騫 who reported to Han Emperor Wu 漢武帝 (r. 140–87 BC) that on his mission to the west (140–134 BC) he had seen in Bactria products of Sichuan which had been brought there by way of India.¹ Trade between China and the West, especially the silk trade, by then, had already had a history of at least several hundred years. Chinese silk was found, together with the remnants of another Asian product, the domestic chicken, in the tomb of a Celtic prince in Heuneburg, southern Germany, dated to the fifth century BC.² Silk was also found in somewhat later layers of the Kerameikos in Athens.³

The Greek historian Herodotus in ca. 430 BC described with some precision the northern route of the Silk Road from its western "terminal" Cherson (extreme western part of the Crimean peninsula) to the land of the Argypapai in Central Asia, situated some 3,000 km south-east of Cherson (probably in the Ili valley west of the Ferghana valley). From here it was the Issedones or the Seres as they were called on the southern route of the Silk Road who, assisted by Scythian interpreters, took over and controlled the trade well into Chinese territory. In 97 AD a Chinese expedition, led by Gan Ying 甘英, was even sent to Da Qin 大秦 (the Roman Empire). Having reached Taozhi 條支 (Characene and Susiana) next to the Persian Gulf, however, he

¹ *Hanshu*, *Xiyu zhuan* 漢書西域傳, translated by A. Wylie in the *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vols. III (1874), pp. 401–452, V (1876), pp. 41–80, and X (1881), pp. 20–73, and XI (1882), pp. 83–115.

² Champion et al. 1994, p. 287; Spindler 1996, p. 71.

³ Haussig 1983, p. 16.

⁴ Herodotus, *History*, as summarised in Haussig 1983, pp. 17–19.