

Ximing Monastery and International Exchanges*

RU ZHAN 湛如

Peking University

Translated by Luke Gibson

Abstract: It is likely that the assignment of foreign monks to imperial monasteries was more a favour bestowed by the emperor rather than a fixed rule. Ximing Monastery gained renown for its role in accommodating Chinese travellers like Xuanzang and Yijing upon their return from their westward journeys, establishing a tradition that would come to form an important part of this institution's legacy. However, we should bear in mind that there must have been innumerable unnamed foreign monks who did not leave a trace in the annals of history due to the simple fact that they were not translators, scholars, or did not leave behind records of their travels. For instance, we have discovered that a significant number of Japanese monks who sought teachings in China during the mid-Tang Dynasty found long-term accommodation at Ximing Monastery.

Keywords: Ximing Monastery, Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra, state monasteries (*guansi* 官寺)

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1. Introduction

The diplomatic functions, narrowly understood, of Tang Dynasty state monasteries (*guansi* 官寺) have garnered some attention within the academic community. It has been suggested that the reception of foreign Buddhist monks in China was primarily carried out by the various strata of local-level state monasteries. This may have resulted from the fact that local state monasteries were placed under provincial (*zhou* 州) supervision, being larger in scale and possessing sufficient space and financial resources to accommodate foreign monks. Additionally, since state monasteries were instrumental in projecting the country's image abroad, institutions responsible for receiving foreign Buddhist monks were expected to uphold strict discipline, adhere to sound protocols, foster a lively scholarly atmosphere, and house comprehensive scriptural collections. Only by fulfilling these criteria could they meet the academic needs of foreign monks who came to China to study the Dharma and other subjects.¹

Similar to these local-level state monasteries, the great imperial monasteries located in the capital city of Chang'an, such as Ximing 西明 Monastery, also took on diplomatic roles. Besides the reasons mentioned above regarding the monasteries' function as a space of diplomatic contact, the following factors can be considered.

The question of the diplomatic functions of imperial monasteries can first be discussed from the perspective of Buddhist institutional history. Owing to its foreign origin, Buddhism's early transmission period, which took place during the Eastern Han 東漢 (25–220) and Northern Wei 北魏 (386–535) Dynasties, was the work of monastics and lay practitioners originating from Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. As a result, their affairs were handled by the Honglu 鴻臚 Bureau, which, as a matter of tradition, took on diplomatic duties relating to the reception of foreign visitors. Monastic institutions bearing distinctively Chinese characteristics began to take shape around the fourth and fifth centuries, during the Eastern Jin 東晉 (317–420), Northern Wei, and Yao Qin 姚秦

¹ Nie, *Tangdai Fojiao guansi zhidu yanjiu*, 175.

(384–417) Dynasties, a transitional period marked by the division between southern and northern dynasties. The earliest, embryonic forms of monastic officials included the *jiuzhou duweinuo* 九州都維那 (Monastic Administrator of the Nine Provinces) mentioned in the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks] during the Eastern Jin period, the *sengzhu* 僧主 (Monastic Chief) of the Yao Qin period, or the *daorentong* 道人統 (Monastic Superintendent) described in the *Weishu Shi Lao zhi* 魏書釋老志 [Book of Wei: Treatise on Buddhism and Daoism], which continued into the Southern Dynasties 南朝 (420–589). Although they were responsible for managing the monastic communities within their jurisdictions, their relationship with central government offices remains unclear.² In the Northern Dynasties 北朝 (386–581) similarly, there existed a system of monastic officials, including centralised administrative bodies for the management of monastics, such as the *jianfu cao* 監福曹 (Jianfu Bureau) or *zhaoxuan si* 昭玄寺 (Zhaoxuan Office). These institutions persisted until the Sui Dynasty 隋 (581–618) and the early years of the Tang Dynasty 唐 (618–907). However, the academic community has yet to reach a definitive conclusion as to whether these central monastic offices operated independently or were subordinated to other institutions.³

This situation finally began to change in the Tang Dynasty, when we find clear records of monastic officials being placed under the jurisdiction of the Honglu Bureau. In the *Tongdian* 通典 [Com-

² For an accessible overview of the institution of monastic officials during this period, see Xie and Bai, *Zhongguo sengguan zhidu shi*, 10–21; and Xie, *Zhongguo Fojiao sengguan zhidu he shehui shenghuo*, 11–22. Because the first book's section on pre-Tang history was authored by Xie Chongguang alone, its content is identical to the first half of the second book listed above. To save space and avoid repetition, subsequent footnotes will primarily reference the latter book.

³ A concise overview of the monastic official system during the northern dynasties can be found in Xie, *Zhongguo Fojiao sengguan zhidu he shehui shenghuo*, 54–98. However, it should be noted that the book does not discuss the members of the upper echelons, focusing rather on the monastic officials' subordinates.

prehensive Institutions], the Tang Dynasty institutional historian Duyou 杜佑 (735–812) gives the following account:

During the Great Tang Dynasty, the Chongxuan 崇玄 Bureau was reinstated. Initially, each Buddhist monastery and Daoist temple was appointed a supervisor belonging to the Honglu Bureau. During the Zhenguan 貞觀 era (627–649), it was abolished, but during the Kaiyuan 開元 period (713–741), the Chongxuan Bureau was placed under the jurisdiction of the Zongzheng 宗正 Monastery. It was responsible for managing Daoist temples, priests, and nuns, coronation records, and conducting fasting and offering ceremonies. 大唐復置崇玄署。初又每寺觀各置監一人，屬鴻臚。貞觀中省。開元中以崇玄署隸宗正寺，掌觀及道士女冠簿籍齋醮之事。⁴

Records such as these indicate that, by the early Tang Dynasty at the latest, monastic administrative bodies were placed under the authority of the Honglu Bureau. Though the monks from this period were no longer predominantly foreign visitors as they had been during the Han and Wei Dynasties, owing to this strong continuity of institutional practices, Ximing and other great imperial monasteries naturally took on the role of receiving foreign monks.

Be it as it may, several important questions must still be addressed, including the precise nature of Ximing Monastery's function in diplomatic exchanges during the Tang Dynasty, or the way this role may have evolved over different periods. As one of the most prominent monasteries in the city of Chang'an, with close ties to the imperial family, Ximing Monastery took on the important role of hosting both missionary monks from India and Central Asia together with student monks from Japan, Korea, and other places, serving as a vital intermediary in the two-way exchanges between these different regions.

⁴ *Tongdian*, *SKQS* vol. 603: 306d.

2. Translators of Buddhist Scriptures at Ximing Monastery

Contrary to what has been previously believed, it does not appear that foreign Buddhist monks visiting the capital during the early Tang Dynasty were assigned to reside in monasteries according to clearly delineated regulations. Based on the records found in the *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳 [Biographies of Eminent Monks Compiled during the Song Dynasty], a rough sequential overview of visiting monks and their places of residency can be given as follows:

| Dharma name | Date of arrival in China or residence | Place of residence |
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| Vajrabodhi (Jin'gangzhi 金剛智) | <i>jiwei</i> 己未 year of Kaiyuan era (719) | Ci'en 慈恩 Monastery, Jianfu 薦福 Monastery ⁵ |
| Zhahui 智慧 | Second year of Zhenyuan 貞元 era (786) | living with relatives ⁶ |
| Buddhatrāta (Fotuoduoluo 佛陀多羅, aka Juejiu 覺救) | c. Sixth year of Yonghui 永徽 era (655) | Baima 白馬 Monastery in Luoyang 洛陽 ⁷ |

⁵ 'Jin'gangzhi zhuan' 金剛智傳 [Biography of Vajrabodhi], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 1.711b17–18: 'He reached Guangfu during the Jiwei year of Kaiyuan and was invited by imperial decree to reside at Ci'en monastery. Later, he relocated to Jianfu Monastery' (開元己未歲達於廣府, 勅迎就慈恩寺, 尋徙薦福寺). The translation centre at Jianfu Monastery, built in 706, was also where Yijing carried out his translation work.

⁶ 'Tang Luoqing Zhahui zhuan' 唐洛京智慧傳 [Biography of Zhahui of Tang Dynasty Luoyang], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 1.716b13–15: 'He reached the capital in the second year of Zhenyuan and met a fellow countryman, the righteous *shence* 神策 imperial general Luo Haoxin 羅好心, the son of uncle Hui 慧. Having greeted each other with both sadness and joy, he was invited to stay at [the general's] home where he was looked after' (貞元二年始屆京輦, 見鄉親神策軍正將羅好心, 即慧舅氏之子也. 悲喜相慰, 將至家中, 延留供養).

⁷ 'Juejiu zhuan' 覺救傳 [Biography of Juejiu], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.717c7–8: 'Buddhatrāta, meaning "Saved by the Buddha", hailed from the region of Kashmir in northern India. Taking with him Buddhist scriptures written on palm leaves, he vowed to spread Buddhism to China. He stayed

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| Atikūṭa (Adijuduo 阿地瞿多, aka Wujigao 無極高) | Third year of Yonghui era (649) | Cimen 慈門 Monastery ⁸ |
| Xuanjue 玄覺 | c. 660–664 | Yuhua 玉華 Monastery ⁹ |
| Pramiti (Banlamidi 般刺蜜帝, aka Jiliang 極量) | Shenlong era (705–707) | Zhizhi 制止 Training Hall in Guangzhou 廣州 ¹⁰ |
| Śikṣānanda (Shichanantuo 實叉難陀) | First year of Zhengsheng 證聖 era (695), second year of Jinglong 景龍 (708) | Da Biankong 大遍空 Monastery, Da Jianfu 大薦福 Monastery ¹¹ |

at Baima Monastery in Luoyang’ (釋佛陀多羅, 華言覺救, 北天竺罽賓人也。齋多羅夾, 誓化支那, 止洛陽白馬寺)。

⁸ ‘Wujigao zhuan’ 無極高傳 [Biography of Atikūṭa], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.718b20–22: ‘In the first month of the third year of Yonghui, in the year of *renzi* 王子, he came from western India to Chang’an, bringing Sanskrit scriptures with him. He was invited by imperial decree to reside at Ci’en Monastery’ (永徽三年壬子歲正月, 自西印度齋梵夾來屆長安, 勅令慈門寺安置)。

⁹ ‘Tang Yuhua si Xuanjue zhuan’ 唐玉華寺玄覺傳 [Biography of Xuanjue of Tang Dynasty Yuhua Monastery], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.716c17–24: ‘Xuanjue [...] was devoted to the study of the Mahāyāna, delving into the scriptures and treatises under the guidance of the *tripiṭaka* master Xuanzang. He also participated in the translation work at Yuhua, namely, the translation of the *Da bore jing* 大般若經 [Skt. *Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra*; Great Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra], after which he was invited to take part in the translation of the *Baoji jing* 寶積經 [Skt. *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra*; Heap of Jewels Sūtra]. The later years of Xuanjue’s life remain unknown’ (釋玄覺[...]學慕大乘, 從玄奘三藏研核經論。亦於玉華宮參預翻譯, 及《大般若經》向就, 同請翻《寶積經》。[...]覺後莫測終焉)。

¹⁰ *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.718c4–7: ‘Jiliang came from Central India. His name in Sanskrit is Pramiti, meaning “Highest Measure”. He set out on a spiritual journey, helping sentient beings at every opportunity. An itinerant teacher who travelled far and wide, he eventually made his way to China, where he took up residence at the Zhizhi Training Hall in Guangzhou’ (釋極量, 中印度人也, 梵名般刺蜜帝, 此言極量。懷道觀方, 隨緣濟物。展轉游化, 漸達支那, 乃於廣州制止道場駐錫)。

¹¹ Śikṣānanda visited the capital twice, residing at different monasteries on each occasion. See ‘Tang Luoqing Dabiankong si Shichanantuo zhuan’ 唐洛京

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| Divākara (Dipoheluo 地婆訶羅, aka Rizhao 日照) | from the fourth year of Yifeng 儀鳳 era (679) to around the end of Chuigong 垂拱 (688) | Guangfu 廣福 Monastery? ¹² |
| Devaprajña (Tiyunbore 提雲般若, aka Tianzhi 天智) | First year of Yongchang 永昌 era (689) | Eastern Weiguo 東魏國 Monastery |

大遍空寺實叉難陀傳 [Biography of Śikṣānanda of Dabiankong Monastery in Tang Dynasty Luoyang], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.718c18–719a10: ‘Śikṣānanda [...] arrived at the capital along with the [Avatamsaka] sūtra on the first year of Zhengsheng, where he began translation at Dabiankong Monastery, located in the imperial palace of the Eastern Gate. [...] On the fourth year of Chang’an, Śikṣānanda asked the Empress to be allowed to return to his home country to take care of his aging mother. Only after sending a second letter was he finally given permission to return to Khotan, escorted by the imperial censor Shi Huosi 史霍嗣. When Emperor Hedi 和帝 (i.e., Zhongzong 中宗) ascended to the throne, a decree requested him to return. He arrived at the capital on the second year of Jinglong [...]. He was assigned residence at Dajianfu Monastery’ (釋實叉難陀[...]又與經夾同臻帝闕, 以證聖元年乙未, 於東都大內大遍空寺翻譯。[...]長安四年, 又以母氏衰老思歸慰覲。表書再上, 方俞, 勅御史霍嗣光送至于闐。暨和帝龍興有勅再徵。景龍二年達於京輦。[...]勅於大薦福寺安置)。

¹² ‘Zhou Xijing Guangfu si Rizhao zhuan’ 周西京廣福寺日照傳 [Biography of Rizhao of Guangfu Monastery in Zhou Chang’an], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.719a18–26: ‘The name Divākara means “Illumination of the Sun” in Chinese. He visited this land during the reign of Emperor Taihuang 天皇 (i.e., Gaozong 高宗). On the fifth month of the fourth year of Yifeng, he asked permission to translate the scriptures he had brought with him. Following the example set by Xuanzang, he was assigned to one of the halls of a great monastery. On the last year of Chuigong 垂拱 era, in the East Taiyuan and West Taiyuan Monasteries located in the two capitals (later renamed Dafuxian Monastery and West Chongfu Monastery respectively), he translated a total of eighteen texts, including the *Dasheng xianshi jing* 大乘顯識經 [Skt. **Bhadrapālasreṣṭhipariṣṭhā*; Questions of Bhadrāpāla the Merchant], *Dasheng wuyun lun* 大乘五蘊論 [Skt. *Pañcaskandhaka Prakaraṇa*; Treatise on the Five Aggregates], etc’ (釋地婆訶羅, 華言日照。[...]以天皇時來游此國, 儀鳳四年五月表請翻度所齎經夾, 仍准玄奘例, 於一大寺別院安置。[...]至天后垂拱末, 於兩京東西太原寺(西太原寺後改西崇福

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| Zhihui 慧智 | Second year of Changshou 長壽 era (693) | Foshouji 佛授記 Monastery in Dongdu 東都 (Luoyang) ¹³ |
| Zhiyan 智嚴 | Second year of Shenlong era (706) | Feng'en 奉恩 Monastery ¹⁴ |
| Ratnacinta (Baosiwei 寶 思惟) | Second year of Changshou era (693) | Tiangong 天宮 Monastery in Luoyang ¹⁵ |

寺。東太原寺後改大福先寺)及西京廣福寺譯《大乘顯識經》《大乘五蘊論》等凡一十八部)。For research on Divākara, see Forte, 'Divākara (613–688), 'un Monaco nella Cina dei T'ang'; *idem*, 'Remarks on Chinese Sources on Divākara (613–688)'.

¹³ *Song gaoseng zhuan* (Second fascicle, 'Zhou Luoqing Foshouji si Zhihui zhuan' 周洛京佛授記寺慧智傳 [Biography of Zhihui of Foshouji Monastery in Zhou Luoyang]). *T* no. 2061, 50, 719b14–22: 'Zhihui [...], on the second year of Changshou, in the year of *guisi* 癸巳, translated the *Guanshiyin song* 觀世音頌 [Hymn to Avalokiteśvara] in one fascicle at Foshouji Monastery in Luoyang. Nothing is known about his life after that'. (釋慧智[...]後至長壽二年癸巳, 智於東都佛授記寺自譯《觀世音頌》一卷, 不詳所終。) For research on Zhihui, see Forte, 'Hui-chih (fl. 676–703 A.D.), a Brahmin Born in China', 105–34.

¹⁴ 'Tang jingshi Feng'en si Zhiyan zhuan' 唐京師奉恩寺智嚴傳 [Biography of Zhiyan of Feng'en Monastery in the Tang Capital], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2061, 50: 3.720a2–7: 'Zhiyan, whose family name was Yuchi 尉遲, was originally a hostage prince from Khotan. [...] On the fifth month of the second year of Shenlong, he requested that his residence be converted into a monastery, which was granted by imperial decree. The inscription board indicates that it was named Feng'en [Monastery]' (釋智嚴, 姓尉遲氏, 本于闐國質子也。[...] 神龍二年五月奏乞以所居宅為寺, 勅允, 題榜曰奉恩是也)。

¹⁵ 'Tang Luoqing Tianzhu si Baosiwei zhuan' 唐洛京天竺寺寶思惟傳 [Biography of Ratnacinta of Tianzhu Monastery in Tang Dynasty Luoyang], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, *T* no. 2061, 50: 3.720a14–20: 'Ratnacinta, which means "Jewel Thought" in Chinese [...] arrived at Luoyang on the second year of Changshou during the reign of the Empress. By imperial decree, he received accommodation at 'Tiangong Monastery' (釋阿彌真那, 華言寶思惟。[...] 以天后長壽二年屆於洛都, 勅於天宮寺安置)。For research on Ratnacinta, see Forte, 'The Activities in China of the Tantric Master Manicintana'.

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| Bodhiruci (Putiliuzhi 菩提流志) | Second year of Yongchun 永淳 era (683) | Fuxian 福先 Monastery in Dongluo 東洛 (Luoyang) ¹⁶ |
| Muniśrī (Mounishili 牟尼室利, aka Jimo 寂默) | Sixteenth year of Zhenyuan era (800) | Da Xingshan 大興善 Monastery in Chang'an 長安 ¹⁷ |
| Shi Bore 釋般若 | Fifth year of Yuanhe 元和 era (810) | Liquan 醴泉 Monastery ¹⁸ |

¹⁶ ‘Tang Luoijing Changshou si Putiliuzhi zhuan’ 唐洛京長壽寺菩提流志傳 [Biography of Bodhiruci of Changshou Monastery in Tang Dynasty Luoyang], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 3.720b3–12: ‘Bodhiruci [...]. Upon hearing about his great reputation, extolling his greatness of character, Emperor Gaozong sent envoys on the second year of Yongdun to invite him [to the capital]. The Empress bestowed even greater favours upon him, having him reside at Fuxian Monastery in Luoyang’ (釋菩提流志. [...] 高宗大帝, 聞其遠譽, 挹彼高風, 永淳二年遣使迎接, 天后復加鄭重, 令住東洛福先寺). For research on Ratnacinta, see Forte, ‘The South Indian Monk Bodhiruci: Biographical Evidence’.

¹⁷ ‘Tang Jingzhao Ci'en si Jimo zhuan’ 唐京兆慈恩寺寂默傳 [Biography of Jimo of Ci'en Monastery in the Tang Capital], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 3.720c19–721a4: ‘On the ninth year of Zhenyuan during the reign of Emperor Dezong 德宗, Muniśrī, meaning “Noble Silence” in Chinese, took up his staff and left Nālandā to travel East. According to his own account, he travelled to this monastery from North India, ordaining and studying the Dharma there. He arrived at Xingshan Monastery in Chang'an in the sixteenth year’ (釋牟尼室利, 華言寂默. [...] 德宗貞元九年發那爛陀寺, 擁錫東來. 自言從北印度往此寺, 出家受戒學法焉. 十六年至長安興善寺).

¹⁸ ‘Tang Liquan si Bore zhuan’ 唐醴泉寺般若傳 [Biography of Bore of Liquan Monastery of the Tang Dynasty], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 3.722a26–b3: ‘Bore hailed from Kashmir. [...] On the fifth year of Yuanhe, in the year of *gengyin* 庚寅, he translated eight fascicles worth of scriptures at Liquan Monastery’ (釋般若, 罽賓國人也 [...] 至元和五年庚寅, [...] 就醴泉寺譯出經八卷).

Daoxuan's 道宣 (596–667) *Xu Gaoseng zhuan* 續高僧傳 [Continued Biographies of Eminent Monks] also mentions Prabhākaramitra (Boluopojialuomiduoluo 波羅頗迦羅蜜多羅; 565–633), another translator monk from the early Tang Dynasty who arrived in the capital in the ninth year of Wude 武德 era (626) and resided at Da Xingshan Monastery.¹⁹

Based on the above, one can conclude that, overall, foreign translator monks who came to China during the Tang Dynasty resided mostly in the great imperial monasteries, including Ci'en, Jianfu, Fuxian, or Foshouji, though this state of affairs was not the result of some explicit rule. We can also mention the case of Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空; 705–774), one of the 'Three Great Masters of the Kaiyuan Era' (*Kaiyuan san dashi* 開元三大士). According to the *Song gaoseng zhuan*, after travelling to India, Amoghavajra returned to the Chinese capital in the fifth year of Tianbao 天寶 era (746), where he was assigned by imperial decree to reside in the Honglu Bureau. He was later granted permission to establish an altar within the palace and perform empowerment ceremonies for the emperor, before eventually relocating to Jingying 淨影 Monastery. In the eighth year of Tianbao (749), he was allowed to return to his homeland, but upon reaching Nanhai 南海 Canton, an imperial decree requested that he remain in China. In the thirteenth year of Tianbao (754), he travelled to Wuwei 武威 at the invitation of General Geshu Han 哥舒翰 (699–757) and resided at Kaiyuan 開元 Monastery. In the fifteenth year of Tianbao era (756), he was ordered to return to the capital, where he stayed at Da Xingshan Monastery.²⁰ From this outline, one notes that upon his initial return from India, Amoghavajra temporarily stayed at Honglu Bureau, before being summoned to the palace's own religious quarters, and later moved to Jingying Monastery, famed for its tradition of doctrinal study. During his stay outside the capital, he

¹⁹ *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 440a18: 'He reached the capital on the twelfth month of that year (the ninth year of Wude), where he was invited by decree to live at Xingshan Monastery' (以其年[武德九年]十二月達京, 勅住興善).

²⁰ 'Bukong zhuan' 不空傳 [Biography of Amoghavajra], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 1.712c10–28. See also Zhou, *Tangdai Mizong*, 64–70.

resided in Kaiyuan Monastery, a state monastery during the reign of Xuanzong 玄宗 (r. 713–756), a fact which matches the description of the basic function of local-level state monasteries given above. Upon his return to Chang'an, he resided at the Da Xingshan Monastery, a great centre for the practice of esoteric Buddhism (Mizong 密宗). From the example of Amoghavajra, it appears that eminent monks residing outside the capital would, whenever available, normally take up residence in state monasteries. For those residing in one of the two capitals, where there was an abundance of great monasteries, there was no prescribed rule mandating their residency in any specific monastery.

Furthermore, we observe that some of the monasteries where these translator monks resided were not particularly prominent at the time. Atikūṭa, for instance, was invited by imperial decree to reside in the comparatively less renowned Cimen Monastery during the third year of Yonghui (649). This monastery, found in the Yanshou 延壽 district of Chang'an, was originally established during the Sui Dynasty by the *xingbu shangshu* 刑部尚書 (Minister of Justice) Li Yuantong 李圓通 (?–604?), Duke of Wan'an 萬安, in the sixth year of Kaihuang 開皇 era (586). In the first year of Shenglong era (705), it was renamed Yide 懿德 Monastery by Emperor Zhongzong 中宗 (656–710) in honour of prince Yide (Li Chongrun 李重潤; 682–701).²¹ Even more remarkable is the case of Zhihui, who resided during the Zhenguan era with relatives serving as officials at the Tang court. In our view, such cases suggest that residence in imperial or other major monasteries in the capital was a favour bestowed by the emperor, not a set rule. Additionally, we can observe that no single monastery, even those with a strong tradition of translation, hosted more than two foreign translator monks. Simply put, there were no specific rules governing the place of residence granted to foreign monks engaged in translation work. Regarding Ximing Monastery, apart from the few instances mentioned below, there is no significant pattern of foreign translator monks being specifically assigned residence there. Some of the most important translators of the Tang Dy-

²¹ *Chang'an zhi*, *SKQS* vol. 587: 143d.

nasty, such as Xuanzang 玄奘 (602–664) and Yijing 義淨 (635–713), did enjoy regular stays at this monastery, but they were not, for the most part, foreign visitors. In other words, one must come to terms with the fact that, ever since its formal establishment in the third year of Xianqing 顯慶 (658), Ximing Monastery's primary role was to accommodate either Chinese monks returning from their travels to India or other native monks engaged in doctrinal study.

As exceptions to this general observation, two cases of foreign translator monks who resided in Ximing Monastery should be noted. The first instance is Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏; 637–735), one of the 'Three Great Masters of the Kaiyuan Era', who initially stayed at Xingfu 興福 Monastery upon his arrival in Chang'an in either the fourth or fifteenth year of Kaiyuan (716 or 727),²² but later relocated to Ximing Monastery, where he translated tantric scriptures in the Bodhi Hall 菩提院.²³ Another example is the translator of the *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing* 佛頂尊勝陀羅尼經 [Skt. *Uṣṇīṣavijayadhāraṇī Sūtra*; Sūtra of the Buddha-Crown Victory Dhāraṇī], Buddhapālita (Fotuoboli 佛陀波利; d.u.), who also resided in Ximing Monastery, collaborating with a Chinese monk fluent in Sanskrit to produce a new Chinese translation of this text.²⁴

²² Regarding the question of the date of Śubhākarasiṃha's arrival to China, see Zhou, *Tangdai Mizong*, 28.

²³ 'Shanwuwei zhuan' 善無畏傳 [Biography of Śubhākarasiṃha], *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.715b7–9: 'He arrived at Chang'an during the fourth year of Kaiyuan, in the year of *bingchen* 丙辰, bringing with him Sanskrit scriptures. He was granted residence at Xingfu Monastery by imperial decree. He was questioned on many occasions by Daoxuan, who resided at Ximing Monastery, and enjoyed extraordinary support. On the fifth year, in the year of *dingsi* 丁巳, he was appointed by imperial decree to carry out translation at the Bodhi Hall' (開元四年丙辰齋梵夾始屆長安, 勅於興福寺南院安置, 續[道]宣住西明寺, 問勞重迭, 錫貺異常. 至五年丁巳, 奉詔於菩提院翻譯).

²⁴ See the preface to the *Foding zunsheng tuoluoni jing*, T no. 967, 19: 349c2–3: 'Having acquired the Sanskrit text, he came to Ximing Monastery. There, he met a Chinese monk fluent in Sanskrit named Shunzhen 順貞, with whom he collaborated to translate the text' (其僧得梵本將向西明寺, 訪得善解梵語漢僧順貞,

3. Ximing Monastery and Visiting Monks Seeking the Dharma in China

While Ximing Monastery did not play a significant role in receiving foreign translator monks, this should not lead us to overlook this monastic institution's major role in welcoming numerous foreign monks visiting China to study the Dharma. Not long after it was first established, Ximing monastery hosted the famous Korean scholar monk Wōnch'uk (613–696), which I have discussed elsewhere.²⁵ Here, I will limit myself to briefly introducing his relationship to Ximing Monastery. Based on Song Fu's 宋復 'Dazhou Ximing si gu da de Yuance fashi fo shelita ming bing xu' 大周西明寺故大德圓測法師佛舍利塔銘並序 [Inscription and Preface of the Stūpa of the Relics of the Late Venerable Wōnch'uk, the Ximing Monastery Dharma Master of the Great Zhou (Tang) Dynasty], we can sketch a basic outline of his life. Wōnch'uk was born in Silla 新羅 in 613 and ordained at the age of three. In the first year of Zhenguan (627), he arrived in Chang'an, where he focused on the study of Yogācāra philosophy. By the nineteenth year of Zhenguan (645), at the age of thirty-three, he had already studied treatises on *Abhidharma*, the *Chengshi lun* 成實論 [Skt. *Satyasiddhi Śāstra*; Treatise on the Establishing of Truth], the *Jushe* 俱舍 [Skt. *Abhidharmakośa*; Treasury of Abhidharma], and the *A'bidamo da piposha lun* 阿毘達磨大毘婆沙論 [Skt. *Abhidharma Mahāvibhāṣā*; Great Commentary on Abhidharma], together with ancient and modern commentaries. Despite his extensive knowledge of those texts and the great reputation he had acquired, he chose to continue his studies under the guidance

奏共翻譯). See also *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2061, 50: 2.718a8.9: 'Overjoyed at having obtained the sūtra, he made his way to Ximing Monastery, where he met a Chinese monk fluent in Sanskrit named Shunzhen, working with him to translate the text' (波利得經彌復忻喜, 乃向西明寺, 訪得善梵語僧順貞, 奏乞重翻).

²⁵ See the section entitled 'Cien xi yu Ximing si zhi zheng' 慈恩系與西明系之爭 [The Dispute between the Ci'en and Ximing Lineages] in Zhan, *Ximingsi dongxia*.

of Xuanzang upon the master's return to the capital. In the third year of Xianqing 顯慶 era (658), when the construction of Ximing Monastery had just been completed, Wōnch'uk joined Xuanzang as one of the 'Fifty Great Ones' (*wushi dade* 五十大德) who came to reside at the newly built monastery. Rather than accompanying Xuanzang to Yuhua 玉華 Monastery for translation work, he stayed at Ximing Monastery to teach Yogācāra, elucidating this philosophy through his own writings. After the passing of Xuanzang, he resided at Yunji 雲際 Monastery on Mount Zhongnan 終南 from the first year of Zongzhang 總章 era (668) to the first year of Yifeng (676). Thereafter, the monastic community of Ximing Monastery invited him back to lecture on the *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯識論 [Discourse on Establishing Consciousness-only]. Upon his return to Ximing Monastery, he actively participated in translation projects from 676 to 695, serving on three separate occasions as the 'verifier of meaning' (*zhengyi* 證義) at the translation centre hosting Divākara, Devaprajña, and Śikṣānanda. In the first year of Wansui Tongtian 萬歲通天 era (696), Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 690–704) summoned him to the Eastern Capital to translate and lecture on the new *Huayan jing* 華嚴經 [Skt. *Avatamsaka Sūtra*; Garland Sūtra], where he then passed away in Foshouji Monastery before completing his work at the age of eighty-four.²⁶ One can note that Wōnch'uk's most productive years were those spent at Ximing Monastery. Moreover, though Xuanzang played a crucial role in Wōnch'uk's intellectual development, his achievements were as much the result of his early learning and his dedicated efforts during his time at the monastery after Xuanzang's passing. In contrast with the consistent criticism levelled by Xuanzang's followers against the old Yogācāra propounded by Paramārtha (Zhendi 真諦; 499–569), Wōnch'uk demonstrated a more balanced approach, carefully considering and choosing what to accept and what to discard in his predecessors' works.²⁷

²⁶ 'Dazhou Ximing si gu dade Yuance fashi fo sheli ta ming bingxu', *B* no. 170, 31: 594b13–595a10.

²⁷ See Yang, 'Yuance zhi yanjiu: Zhuanji ji qi sixiang tese'.

The influence of Ximing Monastery on Japanese Buddhism was perhaps even greater. As early as the twentieth year of Zhenyuan (804), the founder of the Shingon 真言 school of Japanese Buddhism, Kūkai 空海 (born Saeki no Mao 佐伯眞魚, also known by the religious name Henjō Kongō 遍照金剛; 774–835), travelled to Tang China in pursuit of the Dharma. The following year, he took up residence at Ximing Monastery along with fellow Japanese student Tachibana no Hayanari 橘逸勢 (782–842). He later studied esoteric practices at Qinglong 青龍 Monastery under the guidance of Huiguo 惠果 (746–805), who was a disciple of Amoghavajra.²⁸ Kūkai returned to Japan with a vast collection of scriptures, icons, and implements for tantric practices, laying a solid foundation for the establishment of the Shingon school.²⁹ Tachibana no Hayanari, the other famous Japanese visitor who began living together with Kūkai at Ximing Monastery in 805, was a renowned calligrapher of the Japanese Heian 平安 era (794–1185), known along with Kūkai and Emperor Saga 嵯峨 (786–842) as the ‘Three Brushes’ (*sanbi* 三筆) of that era.³⁰ Although he stayed in Chang’an for only two years before returning to Japan, his activities are well-documented, even appearing in Chinese historical records.³¹

²⁸ *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji*, T no. 2081, 51: 787a1–3.

²⁹ Gao and Li, ‘Lun Riseng Konghai dui Zhongri wenhua jiaoliu de gongxian’.

³⁰ Li, ‘Konghai Juyishi liuxue Chang’an’.

³¹ ‘Dongyi Riben zhuan’ 東夷日本傳 [Chronicles of the Eastern Foreigners of Japan], *Jiu Tangshu* 199.5341: ‘In the twentieth year of Zhenyuan, Japanese envoys came to the Tang court, leaving the student Tachibana no Hayanari and the scholar monk Kūkai [to study in China]. In the first year of Yuanhe, Japan sent an envoy, the honourable magistrate Takashin 高階 to convey the following message: “The students sent previously have achieved some proficiency in their studies and now wish to return to their homeland. I request permission for them to accompany me on my return journey” (貞元二十年, 遣使來朝, 留學生橘逸勢, 學問僧空海. 元和元年, 日本國使判官高階真人上言: 前件學生, 藝業稍成, 願歸本國, 便請與臣同歸). ‘Dongyi Riben zhuan’, *Xin Tangshu* 220.6209: ‘At the end of the Zhenyuan era, the ruler of Japan, Emperor Kanmu 桓武, sent envoys to the Tang court. [Among them], the scholar Tachibana no Hayanari and the Bud-

Another important monk who sought teachings in China was Enchin 圓珍 (born Inaginōbito Hirō 因支首廣雄; 814–891), the fifth patriarch of the Japanese Tendai 天台 school.³² When he arrived in Tang China during the third year of Ninju 仁壽 era (853), Ennin 圓仁 (794–864) had, in the fourteenth year of Jōwa 承和 era (847), already returned to Japan, having spent ten years in China, fulfilling the long-cherished wish of the school's founder, Saichō 最澄 (767–822), for the incorporation of esoteric teachings into the Tendai tradition. Enchin landed in Lianjiang 連江 County, Fuzhou 福州, in the Lingnan 嶺南 region of Tang China and stayed at Kaiyuan Monastery.³³ As mentioned earlier, during their visits to the various regions of China, foreign monks often stayed at state monasteries such as Kaiyuan and the like. At that time, Kaiyuan Monastery was home to the *tripiṭaka* master Prajñātāra (Boredaluo 般若怛羅; d.u.), who came from the great Nālandā Monastery, located in the North Indian kingdom of Magadha. From him, Enchin learned Sanskrit and Tantric practices, collecting a large number of scriptures from Kaiyuan and Dazhong 大中 Monasteries in Fuzhou in preparation for his journey back to Japan. Enchin later visited Kaiyuan Monastery in Taizhou 臺州 and Guoqing 國清 Monastery in Tiantai 天台, where he studied Tiantai writings. In the ninth year of Dazhong 大中 era (855), he travelled to Chang'an and studied esoteric practices under Faquan 法全 (fl. 847–859) and Zhihuilun 智慧輪 (?–876).³⁴

dhist monk Kūkai expressed the wish to stay for the purpose of study' (貞元末, 其王曰桓武, 遣使者朝. 其學子橘免(=逸)勢, 浮屠空海願留肄業).

³² For an accessible overview of the situation regarding Enchin, see 'Shaku Enchin den' 釋圓珍傳 [Biography of Enchin], *Genkō Shakusho*, B no. 173, 32: 3188b25–190a20. An important source on this topic is the *Gyōrekishō* by Enchin. See also Satō, *Rutang seng Yuanzhen: Riben Tiantaizong menpai zhi zu*, 117–19.

³³ Bai and Li, *Xinglichao jiaozhu*, 3.

³⁴ For a study exploring Zhihuilun's identity as a monk originating from China rather than the Western Regions, see Chen, 'A Chinese Monk under a "Barbarian" Mask?' (Chinese version, Chen, 'Huseng mianju xia de Zhongtu sengren').

Śubhākarasiṃha and the other two Great Masters of the Kaiyuan era were the main representatives of Tang Dynasty esoteric Buddhism. Huiguo and Kūkai received Śubhākarasiṃha's *Taizang* 胎藏 teachings through Amoghavajra's transmission. Faquan compiled these teachings into a text which he later lent to Enchin, the *Da Piluzhe'na chengfo shenbian jiachi jing lianbua taizang putichuang biaozi putong zhenyanzang guangda chengjiu yujia* 大毗盧遮那成佛神變加持經蓮華胎藏菩提幢標幟普通真言藏廣大成就瑜伽 [Great Mahāvairocana Enlightenment Transformation and Empowerment Sūtra, Lotus Womb Bodhi Banner Emblem, Universal Mantra Treasury, Vast Accomplishment Yoga].³⁵ Zhihuilun, from whom Enchin learned esoteric practices, was also a disciple of Amoghavajra.³⁶ The connection between Kūkai, Enchin, and Ximing Monastery, whether direct or indirect, centred on the transmission of these tantric texts and lineages. Crucially, having been a centre for the translation of tantric scriptures,³⁷ Ximing Monastery played a pivotal role in the transmission of esoteric Buddhism from China to Japan.

Ten years after Enchin's arrival in Chang'an, a Japanese monk named Shūei 宗睿 (809–884) also stayed at Ximing Monastery, copying sūtras in the hall set up to host master Ensai 圓載 (806?–877?), who had travelled to Tang China along with Ennin in the third year of Kaicheng 開成 era (838) of Emperor Wenzong 唐文宗 (r. 826–840). However, owing to the negative remarks about him in Enchin's *Gyōrekishō* 行歷抄 [Travel Diary], this figure became the subject of significant controversy. Leaving this question aside, we know that Ensai spent a considerable amount of time at Ximing Monastery. According to Shūei's account, Ensai was already residing

³⁵ Satō, *Rutang seng Yuanzhen*, 117–19.

³⁶ Chen, 'A Chinese Monk under a "Barbarian" Mask?', 189–90. The most significant source regarding the relationship between Enchin and Zhihuilun is the letter written by Enchin to Zhihuilun approximately twenty-five years after his return to his home country in 882, the 'Jō Chierin sanzō sho' 上智慧輪三藏書 [Letter to the *Tripitāka* Master Zhihuilun], *Chishō daishi yobō pennen zōshū*, *BZ* vol. 72: 218a–219b; See also Bai and Li, *Xinglichao jiaozhu*, 88–94.

³⁷ Luo, 'Tang Chang'an Ximing si kao', 78.

at Ximing Monastery in the sixth year of Xiantong 咸通 era (865).³⁸ The *Dasong sengshi lue* 大宋僧史略 [Abbreviated History of Monastics Written in the Song] states that in the eleventh year of Xiantong (870), Ensai still lived in Ximing Monastery and had been bestowed the honour of the Purple Robe (*ziyi* 紫衣) by the imperial court. These records lead us to conclude that Ensai spent at least six years at Ximing Monastery.

Among the Japanese monks associated with Ximing Monastery, Ensai was perhaps the one who resided there the longest. Despite this fact, he has largely been forgotten by academics and believers alike. This is mainly due to the mention in the Tang dynasty historical records of visiting monks of his shameful defrocking during the Huichang 會昌 Persecution (841–845) and his untimely death by drowning on his journey back to Japan, which also resulted in the loss of the extensive collection of scriptures he had brought with him. These elements significantly diminished his potential influence on the development of Japanese Buddhism.

4. The influence of Ximing Monastery on Japanese Culture

The considerable impact of Ximing Monastery on Japanese culture is perhaps most evident in the legend according to which Dōji 道慈 (?–744) modelled Daian 大安 Monastery after Ximing Monastery. Although the authenticity of this story is still a matter of debate, the mere fact that Daian Monastery was believed to have been inspired by Ximing Monastery demonstrates the profound influence of that monastic institution on Japanese Buddhism. It is said that the

³⁸ *Shin shosha shōrai hōmon tō mokuroku*, T no. 2174A, 55: 1111c1–4: ‘From the sixth month to the tenth month of the sixth year of Xiantong 咸通 era of the Great Tang dynasty, at Ximing Monastery on the Right Street of Chang’an City, in the hall of the visiting Japanese student Master Ensai, a request was made to create a catalogue of the various Dharma and miscellaneous works listed above’ (大唐咸通六年從六月迄於十月, 於長安城右街西明寺日本留學僧圓載法師院, 求寫雜法門等目錄, 具如右也).

construction of Ximing Monastery was itself based on the design of the Jetavana Vihāra in India, a fact which can be connected to Xuanzang's visit of that site during his journey to India.³⁹ A diagram of the Jetavana Vihāra was even included by the vinaya master Daoxuan in his *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing* 關中創立戒壇圖經 [Illustrated Scripture on the Ordination Platform Established in Guanzhong].⁴⁰ Although the authenticity of these records still awaits further investigation, the development of this kind of traditional genealogy is itself a remarkable example of the religious transmission linking India, Ximing Monastery in China, and Japan.

It is also worth noting that there are at least four monasteries named after Ximing Monastery in Japan, primarily belonging to the Shingon and Tendai sects. This includes the Ximing (Japanese Saimyō) Monastery located in the Ukyō Ward 右京区 of Kyōto City. This Ximing Monastery is also known as the Byōdōshin'ō 平等心王 Hall, which enjoys a status equivalent to that of the Shingon Daigoji 大覺寺 sect's head monastery. It was founded by Chisen 智泉 (789?–825?), a junior disciple of Kūkai who is listed among the ten great disciples of the Kōbō Daishi. From his return to Japan at the age of thirty-three to his passing away at the age of sixty-two, Kūkai spend thirty years propagating esoteric teachings across Japan, initiating tens of thousands of individuals and producing numerous disciples, Chisen being one of the most prominent figures among them. Following Kūkai's passing, his disciples completed the extensive propagation of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, which not only became its own independent sect, but also deeply influenced other Buddhist schools in Japan. The source of all of these developments can be traced back to Kūkai's studies in Chang'an.

Additionally, there are two other Ximing Monasteries associated with the Buzan 豐山 sect of Shingon Buddhism. One is located in Yonezawa 米澤 City, Yamagata 山形 Prefecture, and the other is found in Mashiko 益子 City, Haga 芳賀 District, Tochigi 栃木 Prefecture. The Ximing Monastery in Yonezawa is most famous for

³⁹ Horiike, 'Nittō ryūgakusō to Chōan Saimyō ji'.

⁴⁰ *Guanzhong chuangli jietan tujing*, T no. 1892, 45: 811b10–812b29.

its wooden statue of a seated eleven-faced Kannon dating back to the sixteenth century. The other Ximing Monastery is even older, officially known as Tokkozan Fumonin 獨鈷山普門院 Saimyō Monastery. According to tradition, this monastery was founded by Gyōki 行基 (668–749) in the ninth year of Tempyō 天平 era (737). It later faced destruction on two occasions during times of war, with fires ravaging it during the second year of Daina 大納 (1127) and the sixth year the Shōhei 正平 era (1361). The current buildings mainly date back to the fifteenth century onwards. Although both monasteries are relatively small in scale, their names reflect the admiration for the great Chang'an monastery within the Shingon sect. Besides these, there is another Ximing Monastery belonging to the Tendai sect in Kōra 甲良 Town, Inukami 犬上 District, Shiga 滋賀 Prefecture. Its full name is Kotō Sansan 湖東三山 Saimyō Monastery. This monastery, which was founded by the great monk Sanjō 三修 (active during the first half of the ninth century) in the first year of Jōwa era (834) on the shores of Lake Biwa 琵琶, appears to be unrelated to the Ximing (Western Light) Monastery of Chang'an. According to tradition, it was established following the founder's experience of a bright celestial phenomenon on the western bank of Lake Biwa. Therefore, we suggest that the influence of Ximing Monastery in Japan was primarily felt within the Shingon sect.

Apart from Japan, scholars have also discovered that the story recorded in the tenth fascicle of Daoxuan's *Datang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 [Catalogue of the Inner Canon of the Great Tang Dynasty] can also be found, with further developments, in Dunhuang manuscripts S.4037 and P.2094, composed in Old Uyghur.⁴¹ This indicates that the cultural influence of Ximing Monastery was not limited to the eastward transmission outlined above, but reached into Central Asia as well, another facet of this great monastery's widespread cultural impact.

⁴¹ Shao, 'Siyuan wenhua kongjian yu xiaoshuo chuanguo', 112.

5. Conclusions

Upon reviewing available records, we observe that, unlike local state monasteries falling under provincial supervision, these monasteries, located in regions far removed from any great imperial monasteries, became the most important state-supported institutions in their respective areas. When foreign monks passed through these regions, it was only natural for them to assume the role of hosting these visitors. In the capital city of Chang'an, by contrast, there were numerous large monasteries, boasting countless first-rate institutions, including Hongfu 弘福, Ci'en, Ximing, or Foshouji Monasteries. As a result, foreign monks visiting Chang'an were not hosted at a single institution but lived in various locations. As of now, it appears that while Ximing Monastery did host two important translator monks of the time, its overall role in accommodating foreign translators was not particularly prominent. In fact, no other monastery stands out significantly in this regard. The sources suggest that Ximing Monastery mainly housed native translator monks such as Xuanzang and Yijing, as well as many scholar monks such as Daoshi 道世 (?–683) or Yuanzhao 圓照 (d.u.), a fact which is likely related to the monastery's long-standing tradition and rich collection of scriptures. Nevertheless, Ximing Monastery had a profound influence on the contemporary world around it. This is evident from the fact that many prominent monks from Korea and Japan resided in this monastery, notable examples including Wōnch'uk and Kūkai. These great foreign monks studied various exoteric and esoteric Buddhist doctrines and practices at Ximing Monastery, borrowing from the monastery's vast collection of scriptures and its rich reservoir of cultural knowledge to spread these ideas and Buddhist practices to their respective countries. The existence of Daian Monastery in Japan, which is said to have been modelled after Ximing Monastery, also indicates the formation of a transmission route linking India to China and its eastern and western peripheries. Ximing Monastery was never a cultural cul-de-sac, but acted rather as a catalyst that channelled cultural energies for the further dissemination of Buddhism to other regions.

As an imperial monastery, Ximing Monastery also served as a platform for religious diplomacy. The Tang Dynasty was a remark-

ably open time in Chinese history, attracting envoys and monks from across the South Asian subcontinent, the Southeast Asian island nations, the Japanese archipelago, the Korean Peninsula, and the oases of Central Asia. Upon entering China, these foreign monks often faced certain restrictions. Following the establishment of the state monastery system, foreign monks primarily resided in state monasteries such as Dayun 大雲, Longxing 龍興, or Kaiyuan. These institutions, adorning the various regions of China by their presence, were placed under provincial supervision, housing major local Buddhist figures. This arrangement facilitated the management and regulation of foreign visiting monks. Furthermore, the most cherished destination among those visitors was Chang'an, the great imperial capital of Tang Dynasty China. The pinnacle of the capital's monastic institutions were the great imperial monasteries, including Ximing Monastery. Upon reaching Chang'an, foreign monks made every effort to visit and learn from the great monasteries, paying homage to and studying under renowned masters. They sought solutions to intricate doctrinal questions that had arisen in their home countries, including, for instance, the famous *Tangjue* (Jp. *Tōketsu*) 唐決 or 'Tang Adjudications', the answers given by Chinese masters to questions brought to them by visitors from Japan during that era. They also came to receive initiation from great tantric masters and collect copies of scriptures to take back home.

Based on concrete statistical data, we observe that during the early Tang Dynasty, there were no specific regulations from the imperial court regarding the residence of foreign monks in Chang'an. Some of the most famous Indian and Central Asian propagators of Buddhism stayed in the imperial monasteries of Ci'en, Ximing, and Jianfu. However, there was no significant concentration of foreign monks at Ximing Monastery or any other single monastery. In other words, apart from those specifically assigned by imperial decree, there was no established pattern as to which monastery foreign monks would reside in. We have also noted how some of the most important translator monks even lived in relatively minor institutions, with cases of monks even residing with their relatives for an extended period of time. The situation of Japanese monks initially staying in inns before finding accommodation in monasteries serves as an additional

reminder to exercise greater prudence when discussing the question of the residency of foreign monks.

In conclusion, it is likely that the assignment of foreign monks to imperial monasteries was more a favour bestowed by the emperor rather than a fixed rule. Ximing Monastery gained renown for its role in accommodating Chinese travellers like Xuanzang and Yijing upon their return from their westward journeys, establishing a tradition that would come to form an important part of this institution's legacy. However, we should bear in mind that there must have been innumerable unnamed foreign monks who did not leave a trace in the annals of history due to the simple fact that they were not translators, scholars, or did not leave behind records of their travels. For instance, we have discovered that a significant number of Japanese monks who sought teachings in China during the mid-Tang Dynasty found long-term accommodation at Ximing Monastery.

Bibliography

Abbreviations

- B* *Dazang jing bubian* 大藏經補編. See Secondary Sources, Lan et al., comp.
- BZ* *Dai Nihon Bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書; see Secondary Sources, Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan, comp.
- SKQS* *Yingyin Wenyuange Siku quanshu* 景印文淵閣四庫全書. See Secondary Sources.
- T* *Taishō shinsbū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經. See Secondary Sources, Takakusu and Watanabe, eds.

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