



Harṣa and China:¹ The Six Diplomatic Missions in the Early 7th Century

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Abstract

Harṣavardhana (hereinafter referred to as Harṣa), or Śīlāditya (戒王), 590–647, was one of the most famous emperors in Indian history. He built the powerful Harṣa Empire, reigned for more than 40 years, pursued a liberal religious policy and promoted art and literature. Furthermore, he made a huge contribution to cultural communication between India and China. With Harṣa and Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty sending envoys to each other's countries, the most important and the most trustworthy Sino-Indian official history was composed. When Xuan Zang (earlier spelt Hsuan-tsang) travelled in India, it was in Harṣa's flourishing age and Xuan Zang's meeting with Harṣa opened up six diplomatic missions between Harṣa and Tang Taizong, of which the final one was led by Wang Xuance and Jiang Shiren, which happened to coincide with Harṣa's death. This paper uses Chinese historical records, Buddhist material, inscriptions and so on to investigate the diplomatic missions sent by both Harṣa and Taizong by comparing the envoys' schedules and achievements so as to examine the detailed characteristics and the gradual and constant progress in Sino-Indian communication and exchange during Harṣa's time.

Keywords: Harṣavardhana, or Śīlāditya, Tang Taizong, Sino-Indian communication and exchange in the early 7th century.

Harṣa (590–647) was one of the most famous emperors in Indian history, and a very important personage in the history of communication between India and China. The

Buddhist monk Xuan Zang (earlier spelt Hsuan-tsang) of the Tang Dynasty, who arrived in India round the year 628, met with Harṣa for the first time at the end of 640 (Yang 1988). Xuan Zang spent nearly half a year with Harṣa, beginning with Harṣa's forcible invitation to him and including their first meeting, the assembly held at the capital city Kanyākubja or Kannauj,¹ the merit-making donation at Prayāga and the reluctant farewell. The meeting between Xuan Zang and Harṣa finally facilitated Sino-Indian official communication,² and drew these two countries into an eight-year diplomatic 'honeymoon'. Harṣa, the famous emperor of ancient India, was henceforth closely linked with Tang Taizong (唐太宗), a famous emperor of ancient China.

Harṣa built a powerful empire, reigned for more than 40 years, pursued a liberal religious policy and promoted art and literature. He left six pieces of inscriptions, and his name was mentioned many times in other kings' inscriptions and in later works of Sanskrit literature theory as Harṣa was also among the most outstanding playwrights in the history of Sanskrit drama. There are three plays written under his name: *Nāgānanda*, *Priyadarśikā* and *Ratnāvalī*. He was also the sole protagonist in Bāṇa's biographical novel *Harṣacarita*. All of this made Harṣa the only emperor in ancient Indian history who was richly represented in historical materials.

Tang Taizong's reign, from 626 to 649, was at the pinnacle of the Tang Dynasty in terms of wealth, power and splendour, as well as in the entire history of ancient China. By killing his own brothers, Taizong ascended the throne, and by fighting many battles against neighbouring countries, he centralized his power and solidified his kingdom. Taizong was also well-known for his good taste in calligraphy as he was a huge fan of the famous Chinese calligrapher Wang Xizhi (王羲之) and was also applauded for his literary talent as he left scores of poems in the collected works of Tang Dynasty.

From 641 to 648, six diplomatic missions were exchanged between Harṣa and Tang Taizong. Both of them sent three missions each, on average once in 16 months, which was rather frequent. It is a pity that no Indian material has been found till now concerning these diplomatic missions, neither in literary works nor in public inscriptions.³ Such an important series of historical exchanges between India and China were recorded only in Chinese material, including in the official history such as *Jiu Tang Shu* (唐书) or *Old History of the Tang Dynasty*⁴ and *Xin Tang Shu* (唐书) or *New History of Tang Dynasty*,⁵ Buddhist records such as *Da Tang Xi Yu Ji* (大唐西域记) (hereinafter referred to as *Xi Yu Ji*), or *Journey to the West in the Great Tang Dynasty*⁶ and *Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* (法苑珠林) and some rare Chinese inscriptions.

There were some early scholars who fleetingly mentioned diplomatic missions between Harṣa and Tang Taizong. French scholar Sylvain Lévi collected and translated (from Chinese to French) many historical records in *Jiu Tang Shu*, *Xin Tang Shu* and *Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* concerning Wang Xuance's three missions to India (two of Taizong's missions and one in Gaozong's reign) in his article 'Les Missions de Wang-Hiuen Ts'e dans l'Inde' (in French) in 1900, which was translated back to Chinese by Feng Chengjun in 1927 (Feng 1927) and translated from French to English

by S. P. Chatterjee in 1967 (Chatterjee 1967).⁷ Lévi was among the pioneer Western Indologists and Sinologists who paid attention to Wang Xuance. All the materials that Lévi used were Chinese originals, which were translated back to Chinese and were replenished afterwards. Feng Chengjun (冯承钧) was the first Chinese scholar to pay attention to this topic; he wrote the article 'Wang Xuance's Achievements' in 1932 as an updated and revised version of previous works to provide more relevant Chinese material concerning Tang Taizong's 2nd and 3rd missions (Feng 1932);⁸ Douglas E. Mills studied and translated the inscriptions on the Buddha's footprint stone in 1960 (Mills 1960)⁹ Sun Xiushen (孙修身) provided more detailed facts in his monograph, but he confused some of his materials with others (Sun 1998); D. Devahuti contributed several paragraphs to the missions in her book, but again with the dates and other details of the missions quite garbled;¹⁰ Shankar Goyal inherited some of Devahuti's mistakes and added some more misunderstandings of his own;¹¹ Tansen Sen wrote an article 'In Search of Longevity and Good Karma: Chinese Diplomatic Missions to Middle India in the Seventh Century' (Sen 2001: 1–28), in which he mainly discussed Xuan Zang's contribution to the Indo-China diplomatic missions, Taizong's desire for longevity and Wang Xuance's devotion to Buddhism. He later devoted several pages in his book *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade: The Realignment of Sino-Indian Relations, 600–1400* sketching the missions, which are progressive contributions apart from his taking Xuan Zang's motive as conspiracy and taking Sino-Indian official communications as the result of the rise of Tibet (Sen 2003: 16–25),¹² both of which seem to me to be far from the truth. It is valuable that he translated many related paragraphs of Chinese historical records, but it is regrettable that he misinterpreted some Chinese material and overlooked some details.¹³

The present article, based on the academic achievements of previous scholars and their increasingly expanded collections of related material, attempts to provide a systematic and detailed overview of the historical facts of the six diplomatic missions. Chinese materials are sometimes in great chaos, and even Chinese historians cannot be exempted from misunderstandings. Sorting out relevant Chinese material or providing a precise translation was only the first step. A more advanced step will be interpreting this material in a way that demonstrates historical facts, revising the material, rearranging it and making it as accurate as possible so that it is less liable to misunderstanding. Some of the problems or mistakes in the old translations are mentioned in my endnotes concerning Devahuti, Goyal or Sen's works. It is much easier to provide new translations directly from the Chinese materials than to fragmentarily point out every slight mistake in their translations. All English translations of the Chinese materials that appear in this article were translated directly from Chinese by me, in my endeavour to be more inclusive and more accurate.

In view of the large number of diplomatic visits and events encompassed in the account that follows, before the detailed narrative begins it may be helpful to provide a summary chart of the chronology of the six reciprocal visits (Table 1).

Table 1: The time of each mission

	Date of Departure	Date of Arrival	Date of Return
Harṣa's 1 st Mission	At the end of 640 or at the beginning of 641	latter half of 641	At the end of 641 or at the beginning of 642
Taizong's 1 st Mission	At the end of 641 or at the beginning of 642	642	642
Harṣa's 2 nd Mission	642	At the end of 642 or at the beginning of 643 (before the 3rd lunar month) ¹⁴	The 3rd lunar month, 643
Taizong's 2 nd Mission	1 lunar month, 643	At the beginning of 644 (the 12th lunar month of Zhen Guan 17)	Later than the 11th day of the 2nd lunar month, 645
Harṣa's 3 rd Mission	At the end of 646 or at the beginning of 647	In the first half of 647	Unknown
Taizong's 3 rd Mission	In the first half of 647	In the latter half of 647	June 16, 648 (the 20th day of the 5th lunar month)

Harṣa's 1st mission to China

According to *Xin Tang Shu*:

When Xuan Zang the Tang Buddha (i.e., Buddhist monk) went to his country, Śīlāditya met him and said, “A saint came into being in your country, and composed *Qin Wang Po Zhen Yue* (秦王破阵乐) or *Cīna-Rāja-Vijaya-Gītā*.¹⁵ Please try to tell me his character.’ Xuan Zang roughly said Taizong was very brave, who suppressed outbreaks of calamity, and incurred submission from peoples of the four directions.¹⁶ Harṣa was happy. He said, “I should face eastward and pay respect to him.” In Zhen Guan¹⁷ 15 (641), (Śīlāditya) calling himself King of Magadha, sent envoys to present credentials (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A:6237; Cf: *Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198: 5307).

The time of Harṣa's 1st mission to China was around the end of 640 or the beginning of 641, after Harṣa's first meeting with Xuan Zang. His envoys arrived in the capital of Tang Dynasty in the latter half of 641.

In return Tang Taizong's envoys arrived in India no later than 642 (see below), Harṣa's 1st mission lasted only for several months. The records concerning Harṣa's 1st mission were rather brief in official history. *Xin Tang Shu* says, ‘(Śīlāditya) calling himself King of Magadha, sent envoys to present credentials’ (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A: 6237). On the basis of the available records, which are at mutual

variance in some details, we can speculate that the content of Harṣa's first meeting was not much, and only contained credentials officially signed by Harṣa, where Harṣa called himself the King of Magadha; no actual tribute was presented.

Tang Taizong's 1st mission to India

Harṣa's envoys arrived in the latter half of Zhen Guan 15 (641). Tang Taizong's envoys in return should have gone in the same year, or no later than 642. According to *Xin Tang Shu*, 'The Emperor (Taizong) ordered Liang Huaijing (梁怀璉) the Yun Ji Wei (云骑尉) to appease¹⁸ them with credentials' (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A:6237-6238; Cf: *Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198:5307). And:

During the years of Zhen Guan (贞观), (Ji Bin) offered good horses as present. Taizong told his ministers, 'When I had just ascended the throne, someone said the emperor would use military forces to conquer peoples of four directions. Wei Zheng (魏徵) was the only one who advised me to employ the way of culture and virtue to stabilize the central area of the Great Tang. If this part were stabilized, then people from distant places would be obedient. Now the whole land under heaven is in peace, and the leaders of the peoples of the four directions come to pay their homage and tribute...' (Taizong) sent He Chu Luo Ba (何处罗拔) the Guo Yi (果毅) etc., to present abundant gifts to this country, along with favoring Tian Zhu (天竺, i.e., India). [He] Chu Luo Ba arrived in Ji Bin, whose king faced to the east and bowed, and sent people to guide Taizong's envoys to Tian Zhu (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A:6240–6241).

From the envoys' governmental posts, the different degrees of Taizong's condescension (another word for 'appease'), and the stated intent of this mission, it is easy to tell that the main purpose of Tang Taizong's 1st mission was to present abundant gifts to Ji Bin, and the secondary task was to appease Tian Zhu (天竺, that is, India).¹⁹

Jiu Tang Shu says, 'Taizong appeased [India] with credentials. Śīlāditya was very surprised and asked his people, "Have envoys from Mo He Zhen Dan (摩诃震) or Mahācīna ever come to our country before?" People answered, "Never ever." Śīlāditya bowed with great respect and accepted the credentials' (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198: 5307).

Xin Tang Shu says, '... Śīlāditya was surprised and asked his people, "Have envoys from Mahācīna ever come to our country before?" People answered, "No." Peoples of Western regions called China Mahācīna.

Śīlāditya then came out to welcome the envoys, bowed with great respect and accepted the credentials, pressed it on the top of his head' (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A:6237–6238).

Tang Taizong's diplomatic condescension to India filled Harṣa with pleasant surprise. And Harṣa's respectful gestures such as 'bowed with great respect and accepted the credentials' and 'pressed it on the top of his head' deeply impressed Taizong's envoys as well as Taizong himself and he consequently promoted official communication between India and China. 'Appeasing Tian Zhu', the by-product of 'presenting abundant gifts to Ji Bin', was therefore upgraded to a prolonged official visit.

Harṣa's 2nd mission to China

When the envoys of Tang Taizong's 1st mission arrived in India with Taizong's credentials, Harṣa immediately sent envoys to China with Liang Huaijing as his 2nd mission. The time of Tang Taizong's 1st mission was no later than 642; therefore the time of Harṣa's 2nd mission should be in the same year 642 (see below). *Xin Tang Shu* says, '(Śīlāditya) again sent envoys to come to the royal court (with Liang Huaijing)' (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A:6238; Cf: *Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198:5307).

The official historical material did not record the details of Harṣa's 2nd mission. However, Harṣa's respectful attitude towards the envoys of Taizong's 1st mission and the credentials enormously pleased the Tang emperor. This not only endowed Harṣa's 2nd mission with great importance, but also prompted Tang Taizong to upgrade the Indo-China interaction to a new level and made him decide to send envoys to formally visit India.

Tang Taizong's 2nd mission to India

Tang Taizong's 2nd mission was the most important Indo-China diplomatic activity during his reign. It lasted for a long time, contained many detailed schedules, and left comparatively plentiful historical material behind.

According to *Fa Yuan Zhu Lin*, 'In the 3rd lunar month of Zhen Guan 17 (643), (Taizong) issued an imperial edict, ordered Li Yibiao (李义表), ... as the ambassador, and Wang Xuance (王玄策), ... as the vice ambassador, to escort the Brahman guests (婆罗门^ṣ, i.e., Harṣa's envoys) back to their country. In the 12th lunar month of this year (i.e., at the beginning of 644), they arrived in Magadha. Then they went on pilgrimage around the hometown of the Buddha, and visited the places that the Buddha had lived or passed by. The holy relics and miracles enlightened their mind and intensified their experiences' (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* vol. 29: 911).

Further, 'Taizong's envoys were ordered to set up a monument in Mo He Pu Ti (摩诃菩提) or Mahābodhi Monastery²⁰ of Magadha. They set it up on the 21st day of the 2nd lunar month, Zhen Guan 19 (645), to the west of the tower, under the bodhi tree. Wei Cai (魏才) engraved the inscription' (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* vol. 29: 908–909).

Tang Taizong's envoys had departed from China in the 3rd lunar month of 643, and arrived in India in the 12th lunar month of the same year (that is, at the beginning of 644). The direct purpose of this mission was 'to escort the Brahman guests (婆罗门^ṣ, i.e., Harṣa's envoys) back to their country,' which would corroborate the time of Harṣa's 2nd mission as having been in 642. The time of the envoys' coming back to China was no earlier than the 21st day of the 2nd lunar month, 645, which meant this mission's time duration was more than one year. The envoys were 22 in number (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* vol. 29: 908). The chief ambassador was Li Yibiao (李义表) (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198: 5307; Cf: *Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A: 6238), an official of the upper level of the subordinate 6th degree. The vice ambassador was Wang Xuance (王玄策) the leader of Huangshui County in

Rong state (融州黄水县□) at that time, or lower level of the subordinate 7th degree (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 49B: 1318–1319; *Xin Tang Shu* vol. 43A: 1108). The envoys also included Wei Cai (魏才) who engraved the inscriptions on the monument of the Mahābodhi Monastery, and Song Fazhi (宋法智) the craftsman. Song Fazhi (宋法智) was good at drawing figures of the Buddha (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* vol. 29: 906–909). Tang Taizong's 2nd mission contained many schedules. As seen above, the official purpose was 'to escort the Brahman guests back to their country' and 'to appease India with abundant (but unspecified) gifts' but it also included other purposes such as 'to fetch sugar-making skills' and 'to make a pilgrimage to the hometown of the Buddha and to visit the places that the Buddha had lived or passed by.' These are described later.

To escort Brahman guests and appease India with abundant gifts

At the beginning of 644, the envoys led by Li Yibiao and Wang Xuance arrived in India.

Jiu Tang Shu says:

Because India was a country far away from China, Taizong appeased it with abundant gifts and asked Li Yibiao (李义表) the Wei Wei Cheng (卫尉丞) to visit India in return. Śīlāditya sent his ministers to welcome Taizong's envoys outside the city, and all the citizens came out of their home to watch, who thronged both sides of the road and burnt incense. Śīlāditya and his ministers faced east, bowed and accepted the credentials (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198: 5307).

The official purpose of Tang Taizong's 2nd mission was to appease India, and it seems to have been fulfilled through this warm welcome by Harṣa and his subjects.

To fetch sugar-making skills

Another purpose of Tang Taizong's 2nd mission was to fetch Indian sugar-making skills to China. According to *Xin Tang Shu*, 'Mo Jie Ta (摩揭它), or Mo Jia Ta (摩伽𩚑; i.e., Magadha), was located in Middle India.... In Zhen Guan 21 (647), (pala tree, see section 'Harṣa's 3rd Mission to China') ... Taizong sent envoys for sugar-making skills. Then Taizong commanded Yangzhou (扬州) people to offer sugarcanes, and let craftsmen follow the Indian ways to make sugar, the product of which was much better even than Indian sugar in both color and taste' (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A:6239).

According to *Xu Gao Seng Zhuan*:

(Harṣa's) envoys were about to return to the west. (Taizong) again commanded Wang Xuance and over twenty people heading for Da Xia (大夏, i.e., Tochari, an ancient kingdom located in Tarim Basin) together with them, and granted thousands of pieces of Chinese silk to be given to the kings and monks there. They arrived at [Mahā]bodhi Monastery to call up sugar-makers and got two craftsmen, together with eight monks, and then found their way to East Xia (东夏). At that time (Wang Xuance etc.) were commanded to go to Yuezhou (越州, an ancient province in China) and to use sugarcanes there to produce sugar. Their tasks were accomplished. There were three monks from [Mahā]bodhi Monastery, who had arrived (at Chang'an) in advance, carried

Buddhist scriptures with them. (Taizong) issued commands that the Capital should offer alms to monks and these monks could occupy the Hong Fu Temple (弘福寺) to translate Buddhist scriptures such as Da Yan (大严) etc.. Before long, Xuan Zang's 2nd letter arrived. (Taizong) said the translation should be suspended for some moments until Xuan Zang arrived (*Xu Gao Seng Zhuan* vol. 4, *The Biography of Xuan Zang*).

From this account we can draw the following inferences:

First, a by-product of Taizong's 2nd mission to India was to gift Da Xia (大夏) Chinese silk. 'Heading for Da Xia (大夏) together with them' means there were not only Brahman guests, but probably also Da Xia guests among these envoys.

Second, Wang Xuance identified and enlisted local workmen with sugar-making skills in the Mahābodhi Monastery in Magadha.

Third, three monks from the Mahābodhi Monastery arrived at Chang'an in advance, earlier than Xuan Zang's own return. Meanwhile, Wang Xuance etc. were commanded to go to Yuezhou for supervising the production of sugar, while Li Yibiao etc. returned after they had set up a monument in the Mahābodhi Monastery.

To visit the Buddha's footprint stone

The envoys led by Li Yibiao and Wang Xuance visited the Buddha's footprint stone in Aśoka Vihāra in Magadha, from which they made a stone-rubbing and carried it back to China. The stone-rubbing task was done before Wang Xuance was sent to Yuezhou.

There is a Buddha's footprint stone in Bhaiṣajyaguru Monastery in Nara, Japan. The inscription on the eastern side (that is, the front) of the stone is about the origin and merit of this stone and runs to 20 lines (translated below line-by-line).²¹

释迦牟尼□足迹□ 'The Buddha śakyamuni's Footprint imprint (L1)

Xi Yu Zhuan (西域传) or *Records of West Regions* says, now in Magadha, in the late Aśoka's vihāra, there is a huge [stone], (L2)

on which stone, there is the Buddha's footprints, one Chi (尺) eight Cun (寸)²² long, and six Cun (寸) wide each, with patterns of *cakra* (wheel), all ten toes being different from each other. When the Buddha (L3)

was about to attain *nirvāṇa*, he went north to Kuṅḍinārā, and facing south towards the capital city, set his feet on this place. Lately, King śāśānka (商迦王) of Karnaśuvarna (金耳) ²³ (L4)

lacked faith in the Dharma (True Law), and intended to ruin the Buddha's holy footprints. He used a chisel to strike the stone, which regained its smoothness right after being struck, and its patterns were as distinct as before. Then he [threw the stone] into [the river], (L5)

but it returned to its original site. Today we made a stone-rubbing of it to spread it in our country. *Guan Fo San Mei [Jing]* (观□佛昧[经], *Buddha-dhyāna-samādhi-[sāgara]-sūtra*, a sūtra about the Buddha's *samādhi*) [says], (L6)

'If people see the Buddha's footprint and respect it in their deep [heart], their innumerable enormous sins would disappear. (L7)

Is it not fortunate that a person could have this kind of edification?²⁴ Again, in Udyāna in north India, two hundred and fifty²⁵ Li (躡)²⁶ to the northeast, (L8) inside a huge mountain, there is a river source called dragon fountain. No matter in spring or in summer, this fountain is always icy, and it is snowing day and night. There was a vicious (L9) dragon, which always caused a flood. The Buddha came to indoctrinate it, and asked the Vajra God to strike the mountain with his thunderbolt (i.e., *vajra*). (L10) The dragon king was frightened and was converted to Buddhism. The Buddha left his footprints on a big stone to the south of the fountain to keep that dragon away from evil thoughts. (L11) These footprints of the Buddha's [both] feet are changing according to one's mind; sometimes it appears light and sometimes deep, sometimes long and sometimes short.²⁷ Now in Kuci (龟兹), forty Li to the north of the capital city, inside a Buddhist prayer room of a monastery, (L12) upon a jadestone, there are also the Buddha's footprints, which glow on fasting days. When religious and secular people come, they all congregate and worship in that room. (L13) *Guan Fo San Mei Jing* says, 'When the Buddha was in this world, when people see the Buddha walking, [and] (L14) they could see the Buddha's mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa (i.e., the primary features of the Buddha) of Qian Fu Lun (千轮相, a kind of wheel pattern, with one center and thousands of spokes, on the Buddha's feet and hands also), their enormous sins accumulated over thousands of *kalpas* were removed. Now, when the Buddha has gone to the other world, those who think about (L15) the Buddha's walking (or conduct), could also remove their enormous sins accumulated over thousands of *kalpas*; and those who do not think about the Buddha's walking, but see the Buddha's relics, and see (L16) the exhibition and parade of the Buddha's statues, in every step, their enormous sins accumulated over thousands of *kalpas* will be removed; and those who see the Buddha's (L17) feet which are perfectly flat so that even a hair cannot be inserted beneath them, which have the wheel pattern with one center and thousands of spokes, which have webs between every toe, which have the pattern of fish scales, (L18) which have the pattern of thunderbolt, and whose footprints possess the pattern of Brahman Kings' head and the appearance of all living creature, they will never be harmed by [evil] things, (L19) and will always be [extraordinarily] blessed.' (L20)

The inscription on the southern side of the Buddha's footprint stone in the same Bhaiṣajyaguru Monastery in Nara is about the source and production of this stone (in 17 lines)²⁸ and contains significant historical details:

‘Wang Xuance, an envoy of the Great Tang, visited the Mṛgadāvā (鹿躑园) in middle India. (L1)

At the site where the Buddha first turned the wheel of dharma, he saw (L2)

the Buddha's footprints, and then made the original stone-rubbing. (L3)

Later, Huang Wen (Shu) Ben Shi (黄书本 𠄎), an envoy of Japan, visited (L4)

the Great Tang. In Pu Guang Temple (普光寺), he obtained (L5)

the stone-rubbing, and copied it for the second time. This version was kept in (L6)

the Ukyo Si Tiao Yi Fang Zen Cloister (𠄎京四条一坊禅院, the first section of the

fourth ward, in the right division of the capital)²⁹. Seeing (L7)

the holy relic by the altar of the Zen Cloister, from which, (L8)

this third stone-rubbing was made. From (L9)

the 15th day, in the seventh month of the fifth year of Tian Ping Sheng Bao (𠄎平胜 𠄎) (753), to (L10)

the 27th day, in all together 13 days, the task was completed. (L11)

Dānapati (the donor) was the prince Zhi Nu (智 王, a title of Japanese king) of the Junior Third Rank (从𠄎位). On (L 12)

the 7th day of the ninth month, the fourth year of Tian Ping Sheng Bao (752), (L13)

the title of the prince was changed to Wen Shi Zhen Ren Zhi Nu (文 𠄎真人智 , i.e., 文 𠄎净 𠄎, 693–770). (L14)

This inscription was written by Yue Tian An Wan (越田安万) the calligrapher.

This inscription was carved by ^^ (illegible, "" for one Chinese character) the engraver. ^consecrate^^people.’

The inscriptions on the eastern side (that is, the front) of the stone is probably excerpted from Wang Xuance's work *Zhong Tian Zhu Guo Xing Ji*, or *Journey to Middle India*, also named as *Xi Yu Zhuan* (西域传) (Sun 1998: 165), or *Records of West Regions*, which was lost, but parts of which were cited in other works.

To engrave inscriptions on the Gṛdhrakūṭa

The envoys led by Li Yibiao arrived at the city of Rājagṛha on the 27th day of the 1st lunar month, Zhen Guan 19 (645):

Then they climbed the Gṛdhrakūṭa Mountain, and gazed into the distance to appreciate the scenery around the top of the mountain. It was more than a thousand years after the Buddha attained his *nirvāṇa*. The holy relics were still standing erect. The places where the Buddha once stepped or sat were all marked by *stūpa* inscriptions. Regarding themselves as low and mean in mind and intelligence, when they suddenly saw the holy relics in person, they were filled with both sorrow and joy and could not help themselves. Therefore they put inscriptions on the mountain to commemorate the journey. May the Great Tang Emperor be as bright as the sun and the moon! May the Buddhist dharma be as firm as this mountain!

The inscriptions they engraved on the Gṛdhrakūṭa Mountain were as follows:

‘大唐出震，膺^㉑龙飞。光宅率土。恩覃
四夷。化高^㉒五，德鬻^㉓轩羲。高悬玉镜
，垂拱无为。[其一。]

‘After the establishment of the Great Tang, the Emperor ascends the throne and the dragon hovers in the sky. He gains fame for his family, leads people on the land, and appeases barbarians³⁰ of four directions. His fortune is greater than that of the ancient emperors and his morality is higher than that of the ancient saints. He wields power in clean and honest ways, and governs the country with ease. (1)

‘道法自然，儒宗随世。

安^㉔礼，移风乐制。发于中土，^㉕同叶
裔。释教降^㉖，运于无际。[其^㉗。]

‘Daoism follows the way of nature, and Confucianism follows the way of the secular world. Ceremony is created for stabilizing high position, and music is created for the transformation of social rules.³¹ These things were born in our homeland and are different from things in other places. Buddhism was born here and holds sway everywhere. (2)

‘神力自在，应化无边。

或涌于地，或降于^㉘。百亿 月，^㉙千大
千。法云共扇，妙理俱^㉚。[其^㉛。]

‘The limitless Super Power has boundless force, sometimes coming out of the earth, sometimes falling from the heaven. In three-thousand great-thousand-world,³² there are hundreds of billions of suns and moons. The cloud of dharma covers all, and the radiant faith convinces all. (3)

‘郁乎^㉜山，奇状增多。^㉝飞香云，^㉞临澄波。灵
圣^㉟所降集，贤懿^㊱所经螭。^㊲圣迹于^㊳峰，^㊴伫遗
趾于岩鰲。[其四。]

‘This mountain has dense forests, and possesses different shapes, with fragrant clouds flying above and clear water flowing below. Holy saints descend here from above, and virtuous sages visit and pass by. Steps of saints are preserved on steep cliffs, and memorial sites stand by the rocks. (4)

‘参差岭嶂，䟽叠岩廊。

铿锵^㊵铎，氛氲异香。嫫华山^㊶神踪，勒贞碑于崇岗。
驰大唐^㊷淳化，齐^㊸地^㊹久长。[其五。]

‘The mountain peaks are rugged and uneven, and the rocks are piled up in different layers like gallery. Precious bells make inspiring sound, and the place is filled with extraordinary fragrance. It is like beholding the divine trace of the Hua Mountain. We engrave this inscription on the mountain. May the Great Tang's civilization last as long as the heaven and earth! (5)’ (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* vol. 29: 911–912).

The flattering and formulaic words were not uncommonly seen in Mainland

China, and there was barely anything new in this inscription. However, it was the very first time that Chinese inscriptions were engraved on the Gṛdhrakūṭa Mountain in India. The original inscription does not exist anymore. Chinese records are the only means through which we can get some notion of the historical fact. It is in this article that this inscription is being translated directly from Chinese to English for the first time.³³

To set up a monument in the Mahābodhi Monastery

On the 21st day of the 2nd lunar month, 645, the envoys led by Li Yibiao set up a monument in the Mahābodhi Monastery.

According to *Fa Yuan Zhu Lin*, ‘Taizong’s envoys were ordered to set up a monument in Mo He Pu Ti (摩訶菩提) or the Mahābodhi Monastery of Magadha. They set it up on the 21st day of the 2nd lunar month, Zhen Guan 19 (645), to the west of the tower, under the bodhi tree. Wei Cai (魏才) ... engraved the inscription.

‘In the past, the Emperors of the Han and the Wei Dynasty exhausted the army, collected tens of thousands of soldiers, which cost huge amounts of money every single day, while the country was still under threat in the north and the east. The Great Tang governs all six regions and his morality is praised by hundreds of kings.

Culture and virtue combine together and the whole world submits to it. Therefore the religious and secular people of Shen Du (身毒, India)³⁴ came to pay their homage. The Emperor, affected by their loyalty, and caring about this distant country, ordered Li Yibiao (李义表), the Chao San Da Fu Xing Wei Wei Si Cheng Shang Hu Jun (朝散大夫行卫尉寺丞□军) as the chief ambassador, and Wang Xuance (王玄策), the former leader of Huangshui County in Rong State (前融州黄水县□), as the vice ambassador, all together 22 envoys, to go on pilgrimage around that country. Then they arrived at the Mahābodhi Monastery. There was a Bodhi tree, beneath which a *vajra* (diamond) seat was preserved, upon which thousands of Buddhas had acquired their ultimate wisdom. The statue of the Buddha was well decorated and looked true to life. The holy *stūpa* was clean and clear, the exquisite craft of which surpassed that of heaven. These had never been seen or recorded in history before. The Emperor’s prestige was known from afar, and his brilliance lit up the dharma tree. He ordered envoys to go and worship this tree. This was a unique feat and an immortal merit. How could it be possible to keep the praise in silence and not carve it on metal and stone! The inscriptions said:

“大唐抚运，膺□寿昌。

化行六□，威稜八荒。

身毒稽颡，道俗来王。

爰发明使，瞻□道场。

金刚□□，千□□居。 𑖀

容相好，弥勒规摹。 灵

塔壮丽，道树扶疏。 历

𑖀朽，神力焉如。”

"The Great Tang was established in accordance with the fortune. The Emperor ascended the throne; may he have longevity and prosperity! His reign covers all six directions³⁵, and his power governs all eight regions. Hindu people pay their homage, and both religious and secular ones keep their head down. The Emperor sent out splendid envoys to visit this holy dharma site, where the *vajra* (diamond) seat had been occupied by thousands of generations of Buddhas, where the statue of the Buddha was handsome and gorgeous, which was built by Maitreya, where the holy *stūpa* was magnificent, and the dharma tree was flourishing. This place survived many *kalpas* and still stood erect. What amazing divine power it was!" (*Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* vol. 29:908–909).

This was the first time that the Chinese envoys set up a monument in the Mahābodhi Monastery. When Wang Xuance was sent on a diplomatic mission to India for the 3rd time,³⁶ he once again set up a monument there in the 5th year of Xian Qing (显庆) of the Emperor Gaozong (高宗), that is, the year 660 (*You Yang Za Zupt.* I vol. 18: 176–177; *Tai Ping Guang Ji* vol. 406: 3277–3278; *Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A:6239).

To sum up, the official purpose of Tang Taizong's 2nd mission was 'to escort the Brahman guests (i.e., Harṣa's envoys) back to their country', 'to appease India with abundant gifts' and 'to fetch sugar-making skills.' The mission was warmly welcomed by Harṣa and his ministers through 'welcoming outside the city', 'coming out of their home to watch', 'burning incense along the road' and 'facing east to accept the credentials' etc. (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198:5307; *Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A: 6238). After that, envoys of the Great Tang 'went on a pilgrimage around the hometown of the Buddha and visited the Buddha's relics', the detailed schedules of which were 'to visit the Buddha's footprint stone', 'to engrave inscriptions on the Gr̥dhra-kūṭa Mountain' and 'to set up a monument in the Mahābodhi Monastery'.

Harṣa's 3rd mission to China

Right after Tang Taizong's 2nd mission, Harṣa sent his 3rd mission, which arrived in China in the first half of 647.

Xin Tang shu says, '(Śīlāditya) again offered fire pearls, tulips and the Bodhi tree' (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A: 6238; Cf: *Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198: 5307).

And, 'Mo Jie Ta (摩揭它), or Mo Jia Tuo (摩伽陁) (i.e., Magadha), was located in Middle India. ... In Zhen Guan 21 (647), it began to send envoys to form an association with the Son of Heaven and offered [saplings of] pala tree, which was similar to white poplar' (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A: 6239).

In the credentials of Harṣa's 1st mission, he called himself 'the King of Magadha'. Pala tree is the shortened form of *pippala*, which is the same as the Bodhi tree. According to *Xi Yu Ji*, 'the Bodhi tree on the *vajra* (diamond) seat, is Bi Bo Luo (毕钵罗) tree' (*Xi Yu Ji* vol. 8:670). Bi Bo Luo is the transliteration of Sanskrit *pippala*, that is, the Bodhi tree. Therefore, 'Magadha offered *pippala* tree' is in fact the same historical event in which 'Śīlāditya (Harṣa) offered [saplings of] the Bodhi tree', which was mistakenly split in two by Chinese historiographers.

It follows that the envoys of Harṣa's 3rd mission arrived in China in 647.

The Indo-China diplomatic exchanges in this period went rapidly back and forth. The time of the departure of Tang Taizong's 3rd mission would be no earlier than the arrival time of Harṣa's 3rd mission. From the time of the return of Taizong's 3rd mission, that is, June 16, 648, we could speculate that its time of departure must have been the first half of 647 and Harṣa's 3rd mission arrived in China before that time.

Both *Jiu Tang Shu* and *Xin Tang Shu* record that the envoys of Harṣa's 3rd mission carried fire pearls, tulips and the Bodhi tree as tribute. Fire pearls are some kinds of minerals, which are bright and clear and are believed to have the capacity of focusing the sun's rays into one point and starting a fire. According to *Xi Yu Ji*, Kāṣmīra 'produces good horses, tulips, fire pearls and herbs' (*Xi Yu Ji* vol. 3:321), Kulūta (now Kulu in Kangra) 'produces gold, silver, red copper, fire pearls and rain stones' (*Xi Yu Ji* vol. 4: 372). During the period of the Tang Dynasty, fire pearls were mainly seen in China in tributes brought from the south-western countries, and were not very commonly seen in Middle India either. It is obvious that even for Harṣa fire pearl was a precious gift. Tulips are precious flowers and are rarely seen in ancient China. As the gifts that Harṣa offered must be able to survive throughout the long journey, it had to be tulip seed-balls, and not fresh tulip flowers. There are interesting records concerning the carrying abroad of Indian flower seeds.

According to *Ci'en Zhuan* (vol.5), Master Xuan Zang walked three days towards northwest, and arrived at Sindhu River, which was five or six Li (里) wide. Master Xuan Zang rode an elephant to cross the river, and arranged Buddhist texts, the Buddha's statues and fellow travellers crossing by boat. By the time, one person was appointed in the boat to protect Buddhist texts and unusual Indian flower seeds. When the boat was about to reach the middle of the stream, a storm suddenly arose, and rocked the boat until it was almost overturned. The guard was frightened and fell into water. All others ran to his rescue and saved him. But fifty volumes of Buddhist texts and all flower seeds were lost in water, while other stuff survived.

Then the King of Kāpiṅgī was at the city Wu Duo Jia Han Tu (罽迦汉荼). Hearing about Master Xuan Zang's arriving, he welcomed Xuan Zang by the side of the river in person, and said, 'I heard Master lost Buddhist texts in this river. Did you bring flower seeds with you?' Master answered, 'I did.' The king said, 'Storms suddenly arising and overturning boats are all because of this. Since antiquity, everyone who wanted to carry flower seeds across this river has suffered a similar accident' (*Ci'en Zhuan* vol. 5:114–115).

It shows that according to Indian tradition, people should not carry Indian flower seeds abroad. Tulip tubers or seed-balls were a type of flower seeds. Similarly, saplings of the Bodhi tree are also functioning as a type of seed, for that the Bodhi tree is known as easy to be grafted and a sapling would be cultivated into a new Bodhi tree.

Harṣa not only offered rare fire pearls, but also gave seed-balls of tulips and saplings of the Bodhi tree as presents. This indicated that Harṣa made outstanding efforts to promote intercultural communications between India and China.

Tang Taizong's 3rd mission to India

In the first half of 647, Tang Taizong sent his 3rd mission to India, as a return visit of Harṣa's 3rd mission. Harṣa had sent envoys to offer fire pearls, tulips and the Bodhi tree in his 3rd mission. Tang Taizong must have sent his envoys with correspondingly abundant gifts this time, only that it was omitted from historical materials. The 30 or so envoys led by Wang Xuance arrived in four regions of India and received tributes from countries there; after that, and before they arrived in Middle India, 'it was just the time of Śīlāditya 's death, and there was turmoil in the country.' The rebellious subject ArunaĠa usurped the throne, dispatched Indian troops and captured Wang Xuance's companions, and 'robbed all the tributes paid by other countries'. Wang Xuance 'bravely escaped', ran to Tibet (吐蕃) and borrowed a 1,200 good soldiers, and also borrowed 7,000 cavalry from Nepāla (泥婆罗). A country called Zhang Qiu Ba (章求拔; unidentified) also provided troops for his rescue. Hence, ArunaĠa was defeated. On the 20th day of the 5th lunar month (June 16), 648, Wang Xuance returned to Chang'an (the capital city of Tang), and presented the captives at the steps of the imperial palace.

According to *Jiu Tang Shu*, the date of Wang Xuance's coming back to Chang'an and presenting the captives at the steps of the imperial palace was the 20th day of the 5th lunar month, 648 (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 3: 61). According to *Xin Tang Shu*, Wang Xuance was sent out by Tang Taizong in 648 (*Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A: 6238), which should be a reference to this same mission. According to *Zi Zhi Tong Jian* (资治通鉴), on the 20th day of the 5th lunar month, 648, Wang Xuance defeated ArunaĠa, which might also refer broadly to the time of presenting the captives at Chang'an. The envoys were 32 in number.³⁷ The chief ambassador was Wang Xuance (王玄策), whose rank was the upper level of the regular 7th degree. He was promoted to Chao San Da Fu (朝散大夫) (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198:5308; *Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A: 6238) after he returned to the capital, which was the lower level of the subordinate 5th degree.³⁸ The vice ambassador was Jiang Shiren (蒋师仁), whose rank was unknown. There were also 30 imperial bodyguards or cavalymen accompanying the diplomats.

'Borrowing an Army' to defeat Arunaśa

'To borrow troops to defeat A Luo Na Shun (鰲罗那顺, Arunaśa)' was the most splendid moment in Wang Xuance's life, and the most relished part in people's leisure talk.

Jiu Tang Shu says, 'First [Taizong] sent Wang Xuance...on a diplomatic mission to India. Kings of four Tian Zhu (四𤝵竺)³⁹ all sent envoys to pay tributes. It was just at the time of Middle Tian Zhu King Śīlāditya 's death, and there was turmoil in the country. His subject [Di]nafudī⁴⁰ Arunaśa usurped the throne, and dispatched Indian troops to fight against Xuance. Xuance's thirty bodyguards and cavalymen tried to defend but failed, ran out of arrows and were captured. Rebellious troops took away all

the tributes paid by other countries. Wang Xuance bravely escaped, ran to Tibet (吐蕃) and employed a thousand and two hundred good soldiers, together with seven thousand cavalymen from Nepāla (泥婆罗), who followed Xuance back to India. Xuance and the vice ambassador Jiang Shiren (蒋师仁) led the troops of the two countries to re-enter the capital city of Middle India, fought for three days and won the battle. They beheaded three thousand people, while some ten thousand fled into water and drowned. Arunaśa abandoned the city and tried to escape, but [Jiang] Shiren captured him. They obtained twelve thousand men and women, and thirty thousand horses and cows as war trophies. The entire Tian Zhu was in awe. They took Arunaśa as captive and returned' (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198: 5307–5308).

A similar account was found in *Xin Tang Shu* (vol. 221A: 6238).

But what is written in *Jiu Tang Shu* and *Xin Tang Shu*, for example that Wang Xuance borrowed armies to win the battle and he took captives from India to Chang'an, might not be the complete truth. As recorded, Wang Xuance borrowed armies from three countries, and 'called for troops from neighboring countries', but this is far from enough to prove that Wang Xuance had leading or commanding power over the three countries' armies. Nor could it eliminate the possibility that these three countries took advantage of 'turmoil in the country' and invaded Middle India for their own benefit.⁴¹ Anyhow, according to *Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 3, (Zhen Guan 22), it was the Tibetan king who defeated Middle India and the person who took captives was not Wang Xuance but the Tibetan king (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 3: 61). Nepāla was dependent on Tibet. Therefore, most likely this was a war waged by Tibet and Nepāla etc. against India, on the pretext of helping Wang Xuance but in reality to promote their own interest.

Right after Wang Xuance had defeated Arunaśa, ḡrī Kumāra, the king of Kāmarūpa, offered 30,000 horses and cows to reward the army, together with bows, knives, rare treasures including precious necklaces and a map of the country, and he asked for Lao Zi's⁴² statue.⁴³ There are Chinese records about King Kumāra asking for Lao Zi's *Dao De Jing* (道德经) in Taizong's 2nd mission (643–645) and Taizong asked Xuan Zang to translate it into Sanskrit (*Ji Gu Jin Fo Dao Lun Heng* vol. 3). There was no trace concerning whether or not this Sanskrit version of *Dao De Jing* had come into being, and whether or not it was spread to India is also unclear.

Bring an Indian physician to Chang'an

The unexpected acquaintance with the Indian physician Na Luo Er Suo Po Mei (那罗迺娑婆寐) was a far-reaching by-product of this mission,⁴⁴ which most likely affected both Wang Xuance and Tang Taizong.

This Indian physician was proclaimed as being skilled in making life-prolonging drugs, so Emperor Taizong asked him to produce these drugs. According to *Jiu Tang Shu*, 'At that time, [Wang Xuance] obtained a physician called Na Luo Er Suo Po Mei (那罗迺娑婆寐, *Nārāyaṇa-svamin*?) from there (i.e., India), who was reputed to be 200 years old and to have life-prolonging skills. Taizong showed him great

respect, and arranged for him to live in a place named Jin Biao Men (金彪门) and asked him to produce life-prolonging drugs. [Taizong] commanded Cui Dunli (崔敦礼), a high official in Ministry of War (*Xin Tang Shu*, vol. 46, p. 1196), to be in charge of it, and sent envoys all over the world to gather numerous rare herbs and stones. Several months passed and the life-prolonging drugs were at last prepared. [Taizong] took them, but they were ineffective. Taizong then ordered him [the physician] to go back to his own country. Taizong was buried in Zhao Ling (昭陵, a royal cemetery), where a stone figure of ArunaĠa (鰲罗那顺) was sculptured and placed in front of the palace' (*Jiu Tang Shu*, vol. 198: 5307–5308).

According to *Xin Tang Shu*, '...the drugs was not effective. [The physician was] ordered to leave but he didn't make it. Died in Chang'an' (*Xin Tang Shu*, vol. 221A: 6237–6239). Both *Jiu Tang Shu* and *Xin Tang Shu* are evasive about Tang Taizong's death as if the real reason of it was unspeakable. In *Jiu Tang Shu*, it is Tang Taizong who died after taking the drugs, while in *Xin Tang Shu*, it seems that it was the Indian physician who had died, which is absurd since it is recorded that he was still living in Chang'an during the reign of Gaozong (Taizong's son, reigned from 649 to 683). The truth must be hidden somewhere in the lost documents and is hard to recover now. There is nevertheless a possibility that Emperor Taizong's death was related to the drugs that were made by this Indian physician

Conclusion

Harṣa sent out three missions whose activities ranged from presenting credentials to offering treasures. Tang Taizong also sent out three missions on formal and official visits to India whose duties ranged from 'appeasing with credentials' to 'appeasing with abundant gifts' and to prolonged 'pilgrimages around the hometown of the Buddha'. The official position and rank of the envoys varied from low to high,⁴⁵ the number of envoys from small to large, and the schedules of the mission from perfunctory to elaborate.

These interactions between India and China began with non-governmental communication among common people, accompanied by fearless pilgrims searching for the Buddhist Dharma in the western (Indian) regions, and ran to official envoys going to and fro. Indo-China relations seem to have changed in this period from a frozen lake to a roaring river. The period from 641 to 648 was a golden period in the history of Indo-China relations. Tang Taizong's 3rd mission took place just at the time of Harṣa's death, and a year later, in 649, Taizong also passed away. Thereafter though there were a few missions in the reign of Gaozong, Indo-China official contacts had passed their 'honeymoon' and returned to quiescence.

Appendix: Schedules and achievements of each mission

	Main Purposes	Other Purposes
Harṣa's 1 st Mission	Harṣa sent envoys to present credentials, in which Harṣa called himself the King of	Unknown
	Magadha.	
Taizong's 1 st Mission	Taizong sent He Chu Luo Ba (何处罗拔) the Guo Yi (果毅) to present abundant gifts to Ji Bin (Kaṣmīra).	Taizong ordered Liang Huaijing (梁怀璣) the Yun Ji Wei (云骑尉) to appease Tian Zhu (天竺, i.e., India) with credentials.
Harṣa's 2 nd Mission	Harṣa again sent envoys.	Unknown.
Taizong's 2 nd Mission	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To escort the Brahman guests (i.e., Harṣa's envoys) back to their country. 2. To appease India with abundant gifts. 3. Fetch sugar-making skills. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To make a pilgrimage around the hometown of the Buddha and visit the Buddha's relics. 2. To visit the Buddha's footprint stone. 3. To engrave inscriptions on the Gṛdhra-kūṭa Mountain. 4. To set up a monument in the Mahābodhi Monastery. 5. King Kumāra asked for the Sanskrit version of Lao Zi's <i>Dao De Jing</i>.
Harṣa's 3 rd Mission	Harṣa offered fire pearls, tulips and saplings of the bodhi tree.	Unknown.

Taizong's 3 rd Mission	A return visit for Harṣa's 3 rd mission.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Four Tian Zhu (i.e., four divisions of India) paying tributes. 2. Borrow troops from Tibet, Nepāla and Zhang Qiu Ba to defeat ArunaĀa. 3. King Kumāra rewarded the army, offered treasures and a map, asked for Lao Zi's statue. 4. Indian physician Na Luo Er Suo Po Mei (那罗迩娑婆寐), acclaimed for being skilled in making life-prolonging drugs, came to Chang'an with Wang
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End-notes

¹*Kanyākubja* means a place with hunch-backed girls in Sanskrit (*kanyā* means girl, and *kubja* means crooked), while the vowel in '*kanyā*' can sometimes be strengthened or weakened, so it is also spelt as: *kanyakubja*, *kānyakubja* or *kānyākubja*. The new spellings of this place are also diversified including Kanauj, Kannauj, Kanoj, Kinoge, Kinnoge, Kinnauj, Kunnoj, Kunnouj, Kunowj, Canauj, Canowj and Canoje (Monier-Williams 1899: 249).

² Tansen Sen has also mentioned Xuan Zang's important role in the opening of the diplomatic channels between Tang and Kannauj (Sen 2001: 3–6; Sen 2003: 17). Some of Sen's critical analyses concerning Xuan Zang seem to be based on insufficient evidence. For instance, he says, 'With the aim of avoiding legal repercussions on his return, the Chinese monk seems to have made meetings with temporal rulers an essential part of the pilgrimage' (Sen 2001: 4). 'It is possible, however, that Xuan Zang initiated the meetings on his own. He may have thought that the temporal support he received from the foreign rulers would make his travels in India and his return to China, unlike his departure, free of bureaucratic intrusions' (Sen 2003: 17; cf. Sen 2001: 5). The main purpose of Xuan Zang's journey to the West (that is, India) was to learn the Buddhist Dharma and meeting with secular kings was not at all an essential part of his plan. Anyhow, Taizong had absolved Xuanzang's illegal transgression even before he was back to Chang'an. *Da Tang Xi Yu Ji* (hereinafter referred to as *Xi Yu Ji*), or *Journey to the West in the Great Tang Dynasty* (大唐西域记), as written by Xuan Zang after his return under Taizong's command and was finished in one and a half years. Even if Taizong was the target reader of *Xi Yu Ji*, Xuan Zang would not need to fabricate or exaggerate his records for avoiding legal punishment. For further discussion of Harṣa's forcible invitation to Xuan Zang and the content and motive of the conversation between Xuan Zang and Harṣa, see Zhang Yuan 2013: 140-56.

³In the first chapter of Sen's *Buddhism, Diplomacy, and Trade*, there is an account of these diplomatic missions between Tang and Kannauj, but no material other than some Chinese records were used by him (Sen 2003: 16-25).

⁴*Jiu Tang Shu* was composed between 940 and 945 AD in the Wu Dai (五代) period. Wars broke out in North

China in 946 AD, during which a lot of documents were destroyed. Hence *Jiu Tang Shu* was comparably reliable and preserved many valuable historical materials that could not be found in *Xin Tang Shu*.

⁵ *Xin Tang Shu* was composed between 1044 and 1060 AD in Song dynasty. Some of the historical facts in *Xin Tang Shu* are the same as those in *Jiu Tang Shu*, in such cases only materials from *Xin Tang Shu* are cited in this article.

⁶ *Dang Tang Xi Yu Ji* was written under the command of Tang Taizong and finished in 646, narrated by Xuan Zang, the Tang monk and recorded by his disciple Bian Ji (辩机).

⁷ Scholastic translation should be translated directly from the source language (even so there might be many untranslatable notions), and if there is another intermediate language inserted in between, for example, from Chinese to French, and then from French to English, the preciseness will be damaged. For instance, as it is recorded in *Fa Yuan Zhu Lin* (vol. 29: 911), the title of Li Yibiao was by no means ‘in charge of temples’ (Chatterjee 1967: 17) and the purpose of the mission was not ‘to accompany officially a Brahmin, a guest, who was returning to his country’ (Chatterjee 1967: 17), but ‘to escort the Brahman guests (婆罗门, i.e. Harṣa's envoys) back to their country’. Another instance is the inscriptions on the Ġḍhrakūṭa Mountain ‘化高五’ was translated as ‘their transforming act rises higher than three and five,’ which was further annotated as astronomical assemblages (Chatterjee 1967: 26). Here ‘three’ and ‘five’ refer to three emperors and five sovereigns of ancient China. In this case, it would be much easier to provide a new translation directly from Chinese, rather than trying to make amendments to the old ones.

⁸ As Professor Feng has said in his article, ‘Wang Xuanze’s name could not be found in Chinese textbooks or academic researches etc. by that time, but had been very well-known among Western Sinologists’ (Feng 1932: 1), and his article was including Lévi’s materials in 1900, Pelliot’s article (on Xuanzang’s translation of Laozi’s *Dao De Jing*) that published in 1912 and Hirth’s one more relevant record that was published in 1923, together with his own contribution of several more records (Feng 1932: 2). In other words, Feng Chengjun’s ‘Wang Xuanze's Achievements’ is Lévi, Pelliot etc. scholars’ works updated and revised version.

⁹ For details, see section ‘To visit the Buddha's footprint stone’ and the endnotes for this section.

¹⁰ For instance, Devahuti says Tang Taizong's last mission departed from China in April 648 and arrived in India in May 648 (Devahuti 1998: 252; Goyal 2006), which is contradicted by Chinese material and is obviously incorrect, since there was no way for envoys to travel from China to India in one month at that time. Another example is when Devahuti says, ‘At the time the first five chapters of the “*Life*” were being compiled, between A.D. 648-9, Hsuan-tsang apparently knew about Harsha's death, which may have occurred in A.D. 647’ (Devahuti 1998: 252). The first five chapters of *The Life of Hiuen-tsiang ('Life')*, or Ci'en Zhuan were composed in 664 after Xuan Zang's death, not between 648-9, and its paragraph depicting Xuan Zang's dream about Harṣa's death was far from enough to prove Xuan Zang's apparent knowledge of Harṣa's death. Taizong's 3rd mission showed that by the time of 647, neither Xuan Zang nor Taizong knew about Harṣa's death.

¹¹ For instance, Shankar Goyal thinks the date of Harṣa and Xuan Zang's first meeting was 643, which had already been proved wrong by many Chinese scholars; it was the winter of 640 (Goyal 2006: 189). Another example is the way in which he interpreted Harṣa's ‘acquisition of the title “King of Magadha” in 641’ (Goyal 2006: 191).

¹² For details, see endnotes 3, 43 etc.

¹³ For example, Sen translated ‘贞观十五年，自称摩伽王，遣使者书’ in *Xin Tang Shu* as ‘recent proclamation to the throne of Magadha’ (Sen 2001: 7; Sen 2003: 19), which is a complete misunderstanding of the Chinese material. Because of the length of this article, I do not mention other parts in Sen’s translations that need to be further discussed.

¹⁴ Chinese lunar months are roughly one month behind the solar calendar, that is, when it is January this year, it might be the 12th lunar month last year.

¹⁵ This is a song and dance performance in Tang Taizong's royal court, known to be composed by Tang Taizong himself. I discuss the origin, development and spread of this work *Qin Wang Po Zhen Yue* in my article: 秦王破阵乐是否传入及其实——兼论宁梵教授商榷 (‘On Cīna-Rāja-Vijaya-Gīta's Spread to India and Other Issues’ A Discussion with Prof. Max Deeg’, in Chinese), 南亚研究 (South Asian

Studies), General 104, No.2, 2013, pp. 140–56. The communication between India and China is significantly marked by India's one-way export; there are only a few cases concerning intercultural output the other way round. Professor Max Deeg in his article entitled 'Had Xuanzang Really Been in Mathurā?' points out that the dialogue between Harsa and Xuan Zang 'seems to represent a fictional utilization of the Chinese emperor-cult applied by Xuan Zang in the frame work of Indian culture' (Deeg 2007: 35–36). My article argues that it is quite probable that *Qin Wang Po Zhen Yue* (if not the entire performance, at least the song part, with its lyrics altered) was spread to India during the reign of Harsa for it was a very popular performance at that time which borrowed some melody from Indian regions and was also highly enjoyed by non-Chinese people, and that Xuan Zang's detailed records about his meeting with Harsa are mainly based on historical facts.

¹⁶The four directions refer to the eastern, the western, the southern and the northern regions inside or beyond the territory of ancient China.

¹⁷Zhen Guan (贞观) was Emperor Taizong's reign title, spanning from 627 to 649.

¹⁸The Chinese words Wei Wen (慰问) or Wei Fu (慰抚) etc. were used in the context that a person with a higher position came to visit a person with a comparatively lower position or condition to show concern or compassion, for instance, a general to a soldier, a soldier to a captive, a boss to a sick employee, or an emperor to affiliated neighbouring countries that paid tributes.

¹⁹Tian Zhu is the transliteration of the river name Sindhu (信𠵼河) or the Sanskrit word *indu* (that is, moon) and functioned as an ancient appellation of India.

²⁰The Chinese name 'Mo He Pu Ti' (摩诃菩提) is the transliteration of the Sanskrit word '*mahābodhi*', which means 'great enlightenment' (大𠵼).

²¹The original texts of the inscriptions are quoted from Sun (1998:159–60). The inscriptions on Buddha's footprint stone in Nara are engraved in Chinese. Douglas E. Mills translated these inscriptions to English in 1960 (Mills 1960: 231), which is generally speaking a good translation, with a few slight flaws that are open to discussion (see following endnotes). Here is a new English translation from Chinese provided by the author.

²²Chi (尺) and Cun (寸) were traditional length units that differed in different time periods. In Tang dynasty, 10 Cun equals to one Chi (Tan 1988: 96), and one Chi varied from 29.48cm to 31.04cm (Tan 1988: 103).

²³Today's Rajbadidanga in Murshidabad in West Bengal, India.

²⁴The quotation from the sūtra was translated separately by Mills (Mills 1960: 231–32).

²⁵Mills says 'sixty' (Mills 1960: 231).

²⁶Li was a traditional length unit that differed in different time periods. In Tang dynasty, one Li was equal to 300 steps; one Step (𠵼) was equal to 6 Chi (尺); one Chi varied from 29.48cm to 31.04cm (Tan 1988: 97, 103).

²⁷The understanding of this sentence differed. Mills translated it as, 'According as men's faith is deep or shallow, so they become longer or shorter' (Mills 1960: 231).

²⁸Original texts of the inscriptions are quoted from Sun (1998: 160–61). Douglas E. Mills translated these inscriptions into English in 1960 (Mills 1960: 232–34). Here is a new English translation from Chinese provided by the author. For other details of the inscriptions, Japanese names, their genealogies, and poems related to the Buddha's footprint stone, see Mills (1960).

²⁹Cf. Mills' translation (Mills 1960: 233).

³⁰In ancient China, people from neighbouring countries were called barbarians, especially in official documents.

³¹In ancient China, music and rites were closely related, which symbolized etiquette or social rules.

³²This is the Buddhist notion of cosmology. A thousand 'small-world' forms a 'small-thousand-world's a thousand 'small-thousand-world' forms a 'middle-thousand-world's a thousand 'middle-thousand-world' forms a 'great-thousand-world', that is, the universe. The 'great-thousand-world' is also called 'three-thousand great-thousand-world', for it is formed by a thousand 'small-world' multiplied by a thousand 'small-thousand' multiplied by a thousand 'middle-thousand', that is, three 'thousand' multiplied

together.

³³ Chatterjee translated these poems from French to English (Chatterjee 1967: 26–28) (cf. endnote 9).

³⁴ Shen Du is the transliteration of the river named Sindhu (信𑖀河), which functioned as an ancient appellation of India.

³⁵ Six directions indicate the four directions (east, west, south, north), and the up and the down; here they refer to the whole world or the universe.

³⁶ The time of Wang Xuance's 3rd mission to India was during the reign of Gaozong, in the 6th lunar month (about July), Xian Qing 3 (658). A part of a Chinese inscription called *Da Tang Tian Zhu Shi Zhi Ming* or *Inscription of Great Tang Envoys Sent to India* (大唐𑖀使𑖀铭, in Chinese) was found on a rocky side of a mountain near Jilong County (𑖀隆县), Tibet, in 1990. The inscription recorded the route of Wang Xuance's 3rd mission, as well as Wang Xuance's official title, etc. (See Huo Wei (霍巍), 'A New Discussion on *Inscription of Great Tang Envoys Sent to India*' (in Chinese), *China Tibetology*, 1, 2001, pp. 37–50; Wang Bangwei (王邦维), 'New Evidence on Wang Xuance's Missions to India' (in Chinese), *India and East Asia: Culture and Society*, in N. N. Vohra (ed.), Delhi: Shipra Publications, 2002, pp. 41–46; Guo Shengbo (郭声波), 'Philology Research on *Inscription of Great Tang Envoys Sent to India*' (in Chinese), *China Tibetology*, 3, 2004, pp. 108–18; Liao Zugui (廖祖桂), 'Analysis of Vocabulary in *Inscription of Great Tang Envoys Sent to India*' (in Chinese), *China Tibetology*, 2, 2005, pp. 3–8, etc. Wang Xuance's 3rd mission had little relevance to Harṣa as it took place well after his reign; hence a detailed discussion of this has been omitted from this article.

³⁷ According to *Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A, p. 6238, and *Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198, pp. 5307–5308, it can be known that this mission included one ambassador, one vice ambassador and 30 cavalries, 32 in all.

³⁸ According to other materials such as *Tang Wen Xu Shi* (唐文续拾) vol. 10 'He Di Su Yao Zhuan Wen (和籙粟窖砖文)' and *Da Tang Tian Zhu Shi Zhi Ming* (大唐𑖀使𑖀铭) etc., Wang Xuance's official title or rank had been changed or even demoted after Taizong's death. This present article was focused on Wang Xuance's mission and official duty during Taizong's reign. Therefore his official career in Gaozong's time was omitted here.

³⁹ Tian Zhu (that is, India) was divided into four parts in Chinese records: East Tian Zhu, West Tian Zhu, South Tian Zhu and North Tian Zhu.

⁴⁰ Some scholars deciphered Chinese characters '[帝]那伏帝' as Tirabhukti, a small kingdom in northern Bihar (Sen 2001: 15).

⁴¹ According to Sun Yinggang (孙英刚) of Fudan University, the envoys led by Wang Xuance had a little more than 30 people, who were mostly captured or killed by ArunaĠa's army. Therefore, they did not have the prestige or strength to lead the army of three countries, neither could they afford to escort 12,000 captives and 30,000 cattle back to China. Hence the two sides of the war might not be the envoys of the Great Tang fighting against the Indian rebellious army, but Tibet and Nepāla's invasion of middle India. Tansen Sen thinks that 'ArunaĠa may have attacked the Chinese embassy, ...either because he thought the mission was on its way to reinforce the existing regime in Kanauj, or perhaps he wanted to rob the entourage of the precious gifts it may have been carrying,' and that 'the fabrication of ArunaĠa as an usurper by the Chinese scribes may have been an attempt to represent the Tang as a righteous and paramount empire' (Sen 2003: 22–24; cf. Sen 2001: 15–16) and 'it may have been an opportunity for the Tibetans to show their earnestness in upholding the alliance with the Tang court' (Sen 2001: 25–16). Logically speaking, 30 or more Chinese envoys were quite unlikely to launch an attack on ArunaĠa or to lead a huge army.

⁴² Lao Zi (老子) was the founder of Daoism. The Chinese transliteration Jia Mo Lu (迦/伽没路), is the same country with Jia Mo Lü Bo (迦摩缕波) in *Xi Yu Ji*, which is Kāmarūpa in Sanskrit. Shi Jiu Mo (尸鸠摩) the king of East Tian Zhu is the shortened form for Shi Li Jiu Mo Luo (尸利鸠摩罗), which is Jū Mo Luo (拘摩罗) in *Xi Yu Ji* and Jiu Mo Luo (鸠摩罗) in *Ci'en Zhuan*, means boy or prince (Tong Zi, 童子 in Chinese), ḡṛikumāra in Sanskrit, who was the king of Kāmarūpa. *Xin Tang Shu* once again split the same historical fact in two. In fact, ḡṛikumāra who offered 30,000 horses and cows to reward the army,

together with bows, knives and precious necklaces, was the same person with the king of Kāmarūpa, who offered rare treasures and map, and asked for Lao Zi's statue. (*Jiu Tang Shu* vol. 198, pp.5307–5308. *Xin Tang Shu* vol. 221A, p.6238).

⁴⁴ Tansen Sen thinks the arrival of this Indian physician was not by accident, but one of the main purposes of Taizong's 3rd mission, as Taizong developed a great interest in Buddhist doctrine and life-prolonging drugs during the last period of his life (Sen 2001: 16–18).

⁴⁵ According to Wu Guangxing (吴光兴) of Institute of Chinese Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, envoys would be endowed with very high honorary titles to show the government's attention to this diplomatic mission, while the envoys' real positions were disconnected with their honorary titles. This is similar to Chinese princesses who were married to rulers of regional countries—they were mostly 'promoted' to princesses right before they were sent out. The envoys sent by Tang Taizong ranked about 7th or 6th degree. They were not like Shankar Goyal said, 'most Chinese ambassadors held high titles, both civil and military' (Goyal 2006: 230), but belonged to low ranks and were far away from the central power. According to Professor Wang Bangwei (王邦维) of Peking University, journey to the west was a very difficult and even dangerous task; therefore those powerful officials or men of importance in royal court were far from willing to take it.

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