

The present volume is the first to appear in the the new series of monographs by the recently established Italian School of East Asian Studies, the Italian counterpart of the École Française d'Extrême-Asie, a section of which is also based in Kyoto, Japan. This first volume represents the works of a number of young Italian scholars connected to the School as well as articles by two other specialists, whose works appear as gestures of support to the volume. Professor Antonino Forte, who is the director of the School, has edited the volume and has also contributed one of the main articles.

*Tang China and Beyond* consists of eight articles as well as a foreword, summaries, a bibliography, and an index. The first contribution is by Kuwayama Shoshin, whose paper is entitled, "How Xuanzang Learned about Nālandā". It is mainly historical in scope, and it centres its discussion around a number of Indian monks from whom Xuanzang could have learned about the Buddhist university Nālandā in the present state of Bihar. Through a scrutiny of the biographies of these monks, which appear in *Xu gaoseng zhuan*, the author ends up with one possible candidate, the *ācārya* Prabhākaramitra, who, Kuwayama contests, not only told Xuanzang about Nālandā, but who also informed him that the version of the *Yogācārabhāmi śāstra* currently known in China was only a small part of the original text. Since Prabhākaramitra apparently is such a good guess, although obviously not the only possibility, the author ought not to have spent time and space on obviously non-essential candidates, but instead limited himself to the plausible. Despite this the article is very informative and also contains a highly useful

presentation of the political situation in Xinjiang at the time of Xuanzang's visit in the 620s.

Next follows the article by Antonino Forte, "Un gioiello della rete di Indra. La lettera che dalla Cina Fazang inviò a Ŭisang in Corea". This lengthy and detailed paper deals with the relationship between the Chinese Huayan master Fazang (643–712) and his Korean colleague and dharma-brother Ŭisang (625–702), based on a study of a letter, said to be the original, presently kept in Tenri University Library in Japan. The author's main thesis is that the letter in question is not just a letter, but actually an empowerment from Fazang to Ŭisang, urging the latter to implement the former's vision and version of Huayan learning in Korea. In conclusion Forte says that the Tenri letter could very well be original or at least a faithful copy of the original written not long after. As is usual of anything Forte writes, this paper is a careful and detailed study containing an abundance of information and references. Despite the many references one feels that he ought to have referred to the large amount of secondary studies on Fazang and Ŭisang in Korean, as well as Steve Odin's excellent translation of Ŭisang's *Hwaŏm ilsung pŏpgye do*.<sup>1</sup>

The third contribution is "The Nine Tripods of Empress Wu" by Riccardo Fracasso. This is a relatively short paper, in which the author treats the circumstances surrounding the casting and installation of nine bronze tripods in the newly rebuilt Golden Hall (Ming Tang) under the reign of Empress Wu in AD 695–7. The highly specialized topic of the paper is closely related to Antonino Forte's own recent study of the Ming Tang.<sup>2</sup>

Next follows Silvio Vita's highly interesting and well written study, "Li Hua and Buddhism". As indicated by the title this paper is an attempt to give a comprehensive view of the celebrated *guwen* scholar Li Hua (*d.* 774) and his relationship with Buddhism. Following a biographical section, the paper goes on to describe the sources we have on Li Hua's writings on Buddhism, and how they reflect the author's own increasing interest in this religion and its representatives. The paper ends with a brief presentation of how Li Hua after his death was transformed from being a sympathizer of Buddhism to a "defender of the Dharma", notably in Buddhist historical works such as the *Fozu zongji*, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Among this material is Kim Chi-gyŏn, "Silla Hwaŏm hak ũi kyebo wa sasang", *Haksu wŏn nonmun chip* 12 (1973), pp. 31–65, "Silla Hwaŏm hak ũi churyu ko", *Sungsan Pak Kil-chin paksa hwaŏp kinyŏm*, Hanguk Pulgyo sasang sa, Iri, 1975, pp. 257–76, Kyu In-hwan, "Ŭisang Hwaŏm kyohak ũi t'uksŏng", *Hanguk Hwaŏm sasang yŏngu*, ed. by Pulgyo munhwa yŏngu, Seoul, 1982–6, pp. 81–106, and Ko Ik-jin, "Silla chungdae Hwaŏm sasang ũi chongae hwa ko yŏnghyang I–II", *Pulgyo Hakbo* 24 (1987), pp. 59–139, *Pulgyo Hakbo* 25 (1988), pp. 107–88. Steve Odin's translation is in his *Process Metaphysics and Hua-yen Buddhism: A Critical Study of Cumulative Penetration vs. Interpenetration*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982, pp. 189–213.

<sup>2</sup> Antonino Forte, *Mingtang and the Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock*, Serie Orientale Roma, Vol. LIX, and Publications de l'É.F.E.O., Vol. CXLV, Paris, 1988.

With the fifth paper we leave Tang China for Japan, with Takeuchi Rizō's "Documents of Local Administration in the Nara Period: The Household Registers and Tax Registers". This is a study of historical documents from Nara during the eighth and ninth centuries, with a strong leaning towards the social sciences, showing the author's penchant for numbers and figures.

The sixth paper is Rhi Ki-yong's, "Brief Remarks on the Buddha Land Ideology in Silla During the Seventh and Eighth Centuries". It has appeared previously in Japanese, as part of the author's "Shōchōteki hyōgen to shite mitaru shichi-hasseiki Shiragi oyobi Nihon no Bukkokudo shisō".<sup>3</sup> The paper begins its discussion of the supposed prevalence of mountain cults in Silla previous to the advent of Buddhism. Following this is a general presentation of the material on Buddha Lands and statues related to this kind of belief, based on the 13th century collection of folk tales, the *Samguk yusa*. The presentation is good and the argumentation would be quite plausible were it not for the fact that the sole source used, i.e. the *Samguk yusa*, is simply not a reliable historical source. When dealing with Korean Buddhism during the Three Kingdoms Period (57BC–AD 668), one should look to proper archeological evidence before even thinking about consulting the *Samguk yusa*. Needless to say, Rhi's argument for a Buddha Land Ideology in Silla has little foundation.

The seventh instalment is in Italian, "Fonti Letterari sulla Pittura di Fiori e Uccelli durante i Tang" [Literary Evidence on Flowers-and-Birds Painting During the Tang], by Sandra Stefani. It is a survey of primary source material pertaining to paintings of the said topics, in which the author contests that the origin of Bird-and-Flower painting was probably Persian, and that in China the art presumably developed from Central Asian Buddhist paintings prior to the seventh century. In principle the reviewer is ready to go along with the author's main argument; however, he would like to see a little more concrete evidence, especially from Central Asia, where birds and flowers appear frequently as decorations in grave murals (cf. the Astana tombs), or as ornaments on metal vessels and in textile patterns. The paper shows careful and meticulous work and is elaborately annotated.

The eighth and final contribution is also in Italian. It is G. Aurora Testa's "Gli Specchi Tang: Note sulla Cronologia e Tipologia" [Tang Mirrors: Notes on Chronology and Typology]. This is a detailed and original study of some eighty bronze mirrors, covering most of the Tang, from various collections. All the mirrors used come from dated tombs, which makes for historically highly reliable statistical material. The author divides this material into nine categories according to the topic of the decoration, including mirrors with Buddhist and Daoist motifs. These categories are then placed within a historical framework divided into four phases, in which we see a development

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<sup>3</sup> As contained in *Shiragi to Asuka-Hakuhō no Bukkyō bunka*, ed. by Tamura Enchō and Hong Sōn-chang, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kobunkan, 1975, pp. 1–44.

from symmetry towards asymmetry and a growing pre-occupation with pictorial motifs.

The book ends with a section of summaries in Italian and English, a lengthy bibliography of books and articles in the library of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura Scuola di Studi sull'Asia Orientale, and a general index.

*Tang China and Beyond* is an excellent collection of scholarly papers of high quality, and one can only hope that this level will be kept in future publications by the School. On the technical side, however, there is a difficulty. This of course relates to the papers given in Italian only. I for one consider it rather impractical to publish studies on East Asian culture and religions in this language, when the obvious target audience for the publication in question is the international scholarly community. Actually it would have made more sense if the articles had been published in Chinese or Japanese instead of Italian. It appears that the editor has been aware of this problem, since all the papers have brief bilingual summaries in either English or Italian. Still, it is an impediment to an otherwise excellent compilation, and it certainly does not enhance its chances on the world market.

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