

The Poem on Obtaining Sūtras

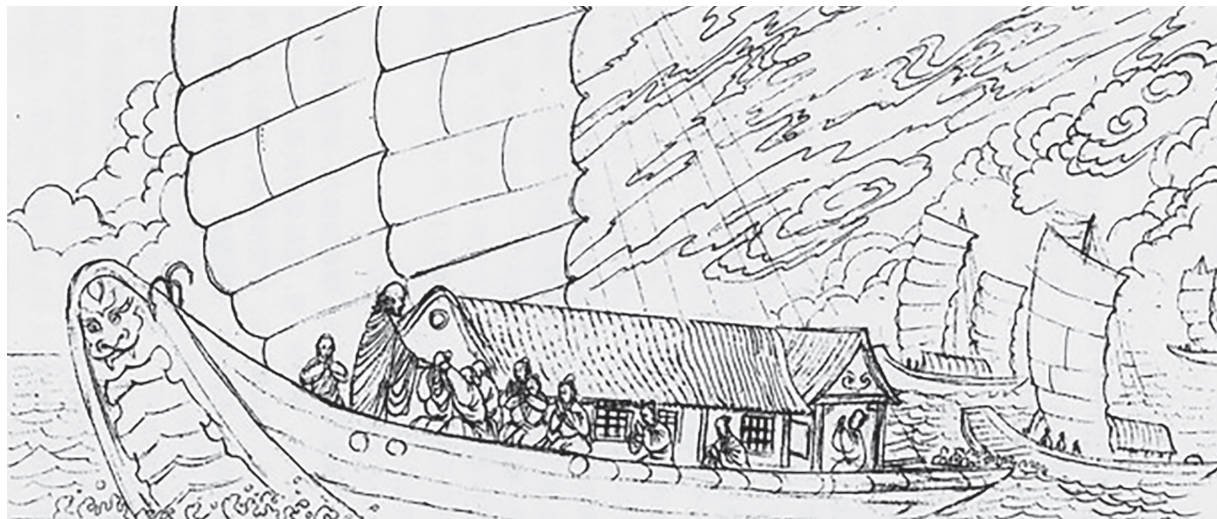
取經詩

A Dharma Talk by Bhikshuni Jin Xiang at the Buddha Hall of the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas on May 28, 2024

Chinese Translated by Min Zhang

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張敏 中譯



The Poem on Obtaining Sūtras from the Western Regions

西域取經詩 作者：義淨法師

*In the Jin, Liú Sòng, Qí, Liáng and Táng Dynasties,
Eminent monks left Cháng'ān to seek the Dharma.
Hundreds departed, less than ten returned.
The hardships of these pioneers, the later generations would
never know—
Far away was the destination, blue sky and bitter cold, their
only companions.
Sands cover the sun, exhaustion befell the seekers.
If we, the descendants, didn't know what happened back then,
We would take for granted the acquisition of the Buddhist
sūtras.*

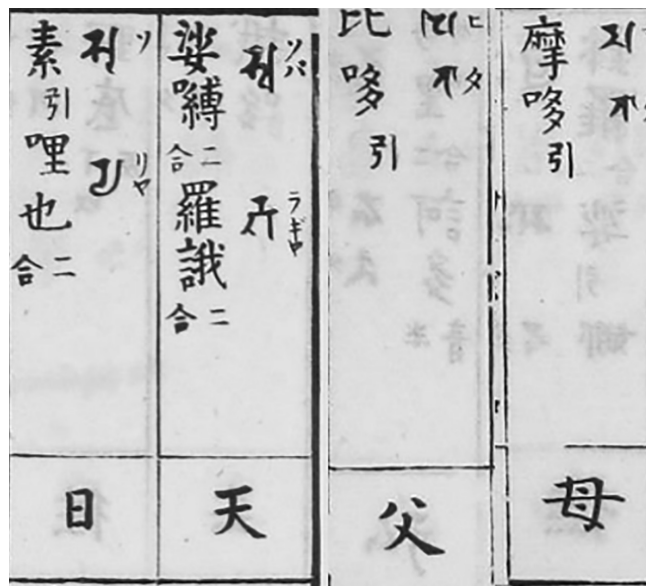
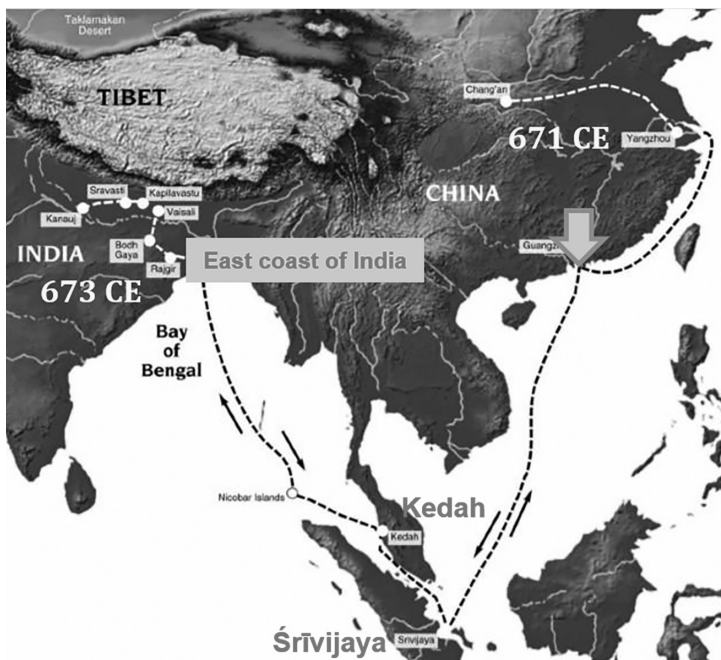
—By Dharma Master Yijing

晉宋齊梁唐代間
高僧求法離長安
去人成百歸無十
後者安知前者難
路遠碧天唯冷結
沙河遮日力疲殫
後賢如未諳斯旨
往往將經容易看

公元629年，玄奘大師離開中國，沿著戈壁沙漠的絲綢之路北線，歷經兩至三年的艱辛跋涉，終於抵達印度。四十二年後，即公元671年，義淨大師也啟程離開中國。本來有幾位僧人計劃與他同行，但在最後關頭，除了其中一人外，其餘人全數退出，留下義淨大師繼續踏上他的求法旅程。

與之前的朝聖者不同，由於西藏、阿富汗及周邊地區當時政治動盪，大師無法採

Master Xuánzàng玄奘 left China in 629 CE. It took him two-three years to reach India by taking the northern Silk Road in the Gobi Desert. Forty-two years later, Master Yìjìng 義淨 left China in 671 CE. Other monks had planned to join Master Yìjìng, but all but one dropped out at the last moment. Unlike pilgrims before him, the Master could not take the land route to India



Scanned Image from A Thousand Sanskrit Words.
梵語千字文。

across central Asia and the Himalayas because of political turmoil in Tibet, Afghanistan, and the surrounding areas. Instead, he made his way to India by sea, taking a more southerly route. It took him twenty-two days to reach Śrīvijaya (today's Palembang, capital of Sumatra, Indonesia). On his way, he stopped in Malaysia and Indonesia, where he studied Sanskrit for six months.

When he arrived at Tāmraliptī in a northeastern port of India, he stayed at a Buddhist temple and continued the study of Sanskrit for one year before heading to Nalanda University. He and his fellow Chinese monk encountered mountains, woods, and swamps on the way to Nalanda. Halfway to Nalanda, Yijing fell ill and was unable to walk; gradually he was left behind by the group. He was robbed by bandits and stripped naked. He heard the natives would catch people with light skin to offer as a sacrifice to the gods, so he jumped into mud and used leaves to cover his body. Walking slowly, he reached Nalanda where he stayed for ten to eleven years.

At Nalanda, Master Yijing studied Buddhist logic, the *Abhidharmakośa*, monastic discipline (Vinaya), and the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra philosophies. He noted that each of these disciplines has a specific purpose, but that none is absolute by itself. He studied and copied original Sanskrit texts of Buddhist religious writings, and collected some 500,000 Sanskrit stanzas.

On his return, when Master Yijing again arrived at Śrīvijaya in 687 (approximately two years after leaving

取經由中亞及喜馬拉雅山的陸路前往印度。因此，他選擇繞經海路，沿著更南的航線抵達印度。他用了22天抵達室利佛逝（又稱「三佛齊」，今印尼「巨港」，蘇門答臘首府）。途中，他在馬來西亞及印尼停留，並利用六個月時間專心學習梵文。

當義淨大師抵達印度東北部港口塔摩利提時，他在一座寺廟停留一年，繼續深入學習梵文，隨後啟程前往那爛陀大學。在通往那爛陀的旅途中，他與同行的中國僧人經歷了重重困難，穿越群山、森林和沼澤。不幸的是，義淨途中染病，體力不支，逐漸落後於隊伍。他遭遇土匪襲擊，被劫走所有衣物。據聞當地人常以膚色較白的人作為祭祀神明的供品，他便機智地跳入泥潭，用樹葉遮身，艱難地繼續前行。最終，他克服重重險阻，抵達那爛陀大學，並在此修學十至十一年。

在那爛陀寺，義淨大師學習了因明學、《阿毘達磨俱舍論》、戒律（律藏），以及中觀和唯識哲學。他指出這些學科各有其特定的目的，但都不是絕對的。他學習並抄寫了原始的佛教文獻梵文文本，並蒐集了約五十萬首梵文偈頌。

在返國途中，義淨大師於公元687年再次抵達室利佛逝，這距離他離開印度已有兩年。他決定在當地停留，開始翻譯隨行

India), he decided to stay and begin the translation of his collection, hoping to complete it in about ten years. In 689, he found he needed more supplies for copying the Sanskrit manuscripts. He went to the port to send a letter to China requesting paper and ink, which were not available in Śrīvijaya at that time. While he was drafting his message, the ship unexpectedly set sail with him on board...

He returned with four assistants to Śrīvijaya in December, 689 CE, and they remained there until 695 CE, working on the translations. In Śrīvijaya, he studied under the distinguished teacher Śākyakīrti, and wrote an account of Buddhist practices and a report regarding a group of Chinese monks who had traveled to India in search of Buddhism. Master Yijing sent these reports, together with his translations of Buddhist texts, to China with one of his assistants in 692 CE. Master Yijing also produced a detailed geographic account of his travels through India, through the East Indies islands and along the Malay Peninsula and Indonesia. This written account is preserved in *Account of Buddhism Sent from the South Seas*. He also compiled *A Thousand Sanskrit Words* (T54n2133A), which is the earliest existing Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary. Remember that at that time the Sanskrit Romanization did not exist. So what did he use? He used the actual Siddham characters.

Since I started studying Buddhism in America, I relied on translators, so I am extremely grateful for their kindness for keeping my aspirations alive. For example, when in late 1980's I took refuge with the Three Jewels and five precepts at Gold Buddha Monastery in Vancouver, Canada, there were no translations. So I didn't know the true meaning of taking refuge, until I joined the Taking-Refuge ceremony here at the CTTB.

Again, during my ordination in 2002, I was with two of my preceptees who were Vietnamese. Someone thought I was Vietnamese and the certifying acharya-monks started to read the precepts in Vietnamese. I had to speak up to inform them that I didn't understand Vietnamese. Then they switched to English, knowing that the other preceptees also understood English. From this experience, I know how important it is to translate for others. It's a way to nourish their Bodhi mind. Translators, remember that there is great merit in doing the translation work. Amitufo. ❀

帶回的經典，他計劃著在十年內完成這項宏偉的工作。然而，到了公元689年，他發現當地無法提供抄寫梵文經典所必需的充足紙張和墨水。他遂前往港口準備撰寫信件，向中土請求這些物資。

正當他專注於撰寫信件之際，停泊的船隻意外啟航，義淨措手不及，也因此被帶上了船……

同年12月，義淨大師帶著四名助手返回室利佛逝，並在當地停留至公元695年，專注於翻譯佛經。期間，他拜高僧釋迦幾底為師，並跟他學習佛法，並寫了一篇關於佛教實踐的論述，以及記錄了幾位中土僧人為求取佛法前往印度的詳細報告。

公元692年，義淨將這些重要的記錄和所翻譯的經典，託付其中一名助手帶回中國，以廣弘佛法，惠及四眾弟子。

此外，義淨大師還詳細記錄了他在印度、東印度群島、馬來半島和印尼的旅行經歷。這些記錄被編纂成《南海寄歸內法傳》，至今完整保存。他還編纂了《梵語千字文》(T54n2133A)，這是現存最早的梵語-漢文詞典。請記住，當時尚未有梵語羅馬拼音的存在，那麼他用了什麼呢？他使用了真正的悉曇文字。

由於我是在美國開始學習的佛法，我一直依賴翻譯，因此我深深感恩那些翻譯工作者的慈悲，正是他們讓我的道心和修行得以延續。舉例來說，1980年代末，我在加拿大溫哥華的金佛寺皈依三寶並受持五戒時，因為儀規中沒有翻譯，我並不完全了解皈依的真正意義。直到後來在萬佛聖城參加皈依典禮，我才真正體會到其中的深義。

同樣地，2002年受戒時，我和兩位越南裔的戒兄一起。有位法師誤以為我是越南人，於是在傳戒中用越南語宣讀戒條。我不得不開口說明自己聽不懂越南語。之後，傳戒和尚改用英語，因為其他戒兄也聽得懂英語。通過這次經歷，我深刻體會到為他人翻譯的重要性，這是一種滋養他人菩提心的方法。翻譯者們請記住，從事翻譯工作具有無量功德。阿彌陀佛。

