

# Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China: a study of the cross-cultural communication strategies<sup>(1)</sup>

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**Abstract:** This study examines the versions of Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China. Chinese and foreign scholars focused on the time, path and truth or fiction of this issue from the perspective of documentation, history and phonology. As a unique model of foreign religious culture localization, the version research of Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China was ignored. According to this study, the version development of the topic, as communication textual content, is expressive of the gradual maturity and evolution of communication strategies in the process of Buddhism Chinization, localization in China. The universal significance of this study is that the discrimination of Buddhism communication strategies provides reference and guidance for Intercultural Communication Strategy.

**Keywords:** Buddhism, chinization, initial dissemination, intercultural communication

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## I. Modern research achievements on “Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China”

Chinese and foreign scholars have been concerning and studying the exact time and path of Buddhism’s introduction to China. The earliest extant version of this story, “the Emperor Ming Di Dreamed about Buddha in Eastern Han Dynasty”, is attributed to the book *The Theory of Reason and Ignorance*, written in the early years of Three Kingdoms by Mou Zi, who was born in late Eastern Han Dynasty. In addition to the later era including Three Kingdoms, Western Jin, Eastern Jin, Southern, Northern, Sui and Tang Dynasties, there were nine scholars who had provided eleven datable versions with practical basis for verification, as is illustrated in Exhibition I.

Meanwhile, there were too many other doctrines that try to draw wrong conclusions by false analogy to be mentioned. In the history, there seemed to be no other theory of Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China put forward since Tang Dynasty. Until the end of Qing Dynasty and the beginning of Republic of China, when the modern study of Buddhism started, this problem has been an influential subject again due to the adoption of new research methods. Among all the versions, two more famous ones should be mentioned as representatives of these theories. One is “Introduced through the Sea Routes in the Emperor Wu Di Period in Western Han Dynasty” proposed by Mr. Liang Qi-chao and other scholars, and “Indirect Introduction in Eastern Han Dynasty” by professor Ji Xian-lin.

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(1) This paper is a phased achievement of the major project of the National Social Science Foundation, “Study of Buddhist Communion History along the Belt and Road” (Project No.: 19ZDA239). 本文系国家社科基金重大项目“‘一带一路’佛教交流史”(项目编号: 19ZDA239)阶段性成果。

The authenticity of those versions has been the core proposition in the scope of study for both the scholars at home and abroad. European and American sinologists, as well as Chinese Han Buddhism scholars, have conducted this research focusing on various aspects, reviewing different historical materials and adopting research methods. Apart from the thirteen versions mentioned above, there are also legends connecting obviously irrelevant factors together, such as “Fo Tu-cheng notified Emperor Shi Hu to discover the site of the Ashoka Temple”, “Yao Lve’s uncle found a silver plaque containing Buddha bone” and so on. These statements are neither credible nor indicating the exact time of initial dissemination, so they are not included in this article. At present, the academics is more convinced by the version “Buddhism Scriptures Passed by Yi Cun in the Emperor Ai Di Period in Western Han Dynasty”, which is cited from “Records of Three Kingdoms” in *A brief history of Wei Guo*, written personally by Wei Shou. However, the Buddhist scholars recognize the emperor dreaming about Buddha version most, which was raised earliest (in the early years of Three Kingdoms and late Eastern Han Dynasty) but introduced latest among all the theories.

Modern scholars, such as Liang Qi-chao, applied traditional research methods combining with recent archaeological discoveries, in order to trace the path and time of Buddhism’s initial dissemination into China. This investigation method was jointly adopted by the Buddhist historiography, demonstrated in Tang Yong-tong’s argumentation in *The History of Buddhism from Han to Northern Dynasty*, and Du Ji-wen’s research in *The History of Chinese Buddhism*. Another way is to infer the route and time of Buddhism introduction through the phonological phenomena during the translation of Buddhist classics, which is showed in Ji Xian-lin’s study in *Fu Tu and Buddha, Further research on Fu Tu and Buddha*, and Fang Han-wen’s “Saman, Shamans and Sramana: A New Interpretation of Buddhism’s Initial Dissemination into China”<sup>(2)</sup>.

## **II. The study on the emergence and evolution of the doctrines of “Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China”**

Liang Qi-chao and Ji Xian-lin were representatives of modern and contemporary scholars who studied Buddhism in China. Their researches were based on the historical evidence of the path and time of introduction. In fact, the various doctrines of dissemination were put forward in certain historical periods, and they are created not only for academic or documentary purpose, but also with other specific aims. “Most of the legends involve a clear publicity role: telling the story of Buddhism’s successful entry into the palace, the rapid conversion of the Chinese emperors, or stating that Buddhism has already existed in Han Dynasty. All the versions contributed to the prestige of the Sangha.”<sup>(3)</sup> (Xu Li-he 2003) Therefore, the scholars could analyze the background and significance of various doctrines, and summarize important information, such as communication strategies of Buddhism communication, through the study on the existence and evolution instead of academic investigation on the authenticity on Buddhism.

(2) 方汉文Fang Hanwen,《萨满、姜门与沙门:佛教入华时间新释》Saman、xianmen he shamen:fojiao ruhua shijian xinshi[Saman, Shamans and Sramana: A New Interpretation of Buddhism's Initial Dissemination into China],《中国文化研究》Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu[Chinese Culture Study],No.1,(北京Beijing:《中国文化研究》编辑部Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu bianjibu[Editorial Department of Chinese Culture Study],2004),125。

(3) 许理和Erik Zürcher,《佛教征服中国》Fojiao zhengfu zhongguo[The Buddhist Conquest of China],李四龙Li Silong译,(江苏Jiangsu:江苏人民出版社Jiangsu renmin chubanshe[Jiangsu People's Publishing House],2003),23。

*(I) Evolution of the identities of the authors who put forward the doctrine*

Despite of the two doctrines proposed by modern scholars, among the eleven Buddhist-introduction doctrines, six were provided by four Buddhists, and the other five were from three scholars and two Taoist priests (or wizards). The earliest introduction of these doctrines can be traced back to the “Three Emperors and Five Sovereigns” period, while the latest is “Dream about Buddha” in Eastern Han Dynasty, which differs by thousands of years.

Since the doctrine was put forward, no points from Buddhists has been introduced during Eastern Jin Dynasty, and all the theories were from Confucian doctors, scholars, Taoists, and wizards. This may be because that the introduction of Buddhism was too early for the Buddhists to develop the idea of writing their own history; local academic forces, Confucianism and Taoism, had the power of history revision and discourse, which was a hard thing to do for Buddhism at the time; Buddhism had not threatened Confucianism and Taoism at the time. As national cultural authorities, Confucianism and Taoism adopted a more friendly method of using Buddhism to explain and strengthen its own doctrines or actively reconcile the two cultures.

“Dream about Buddha” is a representative of the theories at the time, cited from *the Theory of Reason and Ignorance* (Eastern Han Dynasty), has been well recognized by Buddhism scholars. Mou Zi was the author of this Buddhist introduction doctrine and a Confucian scholar who had studied of Buddhism thoroughly. He indicated that local Confucianism was the first audience of Buddhism’s introduction into China. (Buddhists in India regarded other doctrines as theories that depart from the purpose of Buddhism. According to this, Confucianism is one of them, even Confucianism is “Brahmanism in China” at that time in terms of its status.) When the emperor died in the sixth year of the Dong Ping period of Eastern Han Dynasty (189 AD), the world fell into chaos. This was when Mou Zi escaped to Vietnam with his mother, and returned to their hometown Cang Wu (now Wu Zhou, Guang Xi Province) to get married at the age of twenty-six. Because “the world is disturbing, and it is the wrong time to express oneself,” he insisted on not being in the government, and devoted himself to studying Buddhism and *Lao Zi*. Many people(non-Buddhist) thought that believing in Buddhism is against the domestic cultural authority, so Mou Zi wrote *the Theory of Reason and Ignorance* to respond to the various arguments and misunderstanding. In the book, Mou Zi mentioned the initial dissemination:

In ancient times, Emperor Xiaoming Di dreamed of a magical person, with the sun glowing on his body, flying in front of the hall, and the emperor admired such a person very much. The next day, the emperor asked the ministers, “Which god is this?” A knowledgeable man named Fu Yi said, “I heard that in Tian Zhu, there is a person who reaches the realm of unity with the Tao called Buddha. They fly in the sky, and they will glow, so they are probably God.” At this time, the emperor understood, he sent twelve people including the messenger Zhang Ye, the chief of the guards Qin Jing, and an incomer of sinologist Wang Zun to write forty-two Buddhist scriptures in Central Asia. The scriptures were hidden in the fourteenth Lantai Stone Room. At that time, the emperor also built a Buddhist temple outside South Yong Men in Luoyang City, painted a lot of crowds on the wall, circling the tower three times, and also built Buddha statues on the Qingliangtai of the South Palace and Kaiyang City Gate. When the Emperor Ming was still alive, he was about to build his own tomb, so he named it after “Xian Jie”, which means expressing one’s own moral principle, and built a Buddha statue there.<sup>(4)</sup>

(4) 牟子Mou Zi, 《牟子理惑论》Mou Zi lihuo lun[Master Mou’s Treatise Dispelling Doubts],僧祐Sengyou编:《弘明集》Hongming Ji[The Anthology of Hong Ming],(北京Beijing:中华书局Zhonghua Shuju[China Publishing House],2011),47。

There have always been different opinions on the authenticity of *the Theory of Reason and Ignorance*. Scholars such as Liang Qi-chao in modern times considered it to be a fake book<sup>(5)</sup>, while Tang Yong-tong and others thought that this book was a real one<sup>(6)</sup>, and it was indeed a work of late Han Dynasty.

Mou Zi's life reveals a typical process of Chinese Confucian scholars learning about Buddhism: he studied Confucianism in the early years and laid a solid academic and theoretical foundation for further study; then, he found that it is the wrong time to express oneself, so he escaped the career path of a Confucian scholar, or lived alone, even pretending to be a fool due to political and situational reasons; in the end, he volunteered to be a monk, or took a Taoist monk practice. Since then, Buddhism had become a refuge or a spiritual harbour away from politics for Chinese Confucian scholars, frustrated officials, and even several emperors (in the legend), regardless of whether they were genuinely interested in Buddhism or pretended to be. Mou Zi is also a model of a communication object who was transformed into a subject. He accepted Buddhism out of his own academic thinking and logical judgment, instead of superstition. *Theory of Reason and Ignorance* states,

“At that time, the Emperor Ling Di died, and the whole society was chaotic. Only Jiaozhou was safer. Foreigners studying immortality without food from the north have all gone there. Then, there were many scholars, and Mou Zi usually used the contents of the Five Classics to ask them. Even Taoist wizards did not dare to answer his, and there was a large academic gap between Mou Zi and them. Although Mu Zi was actively studying Buddhism and learning Lao Zi, he still believed that the Buddha was much more sacred than the four masters(Yao, Shun, Zhou Gong and Confucius).”

Mou Zi's practice of explaining Buddhism through Confucianism and Taoism from his own experience was conducive to the spread of Buddhism. It is this transformation that allows Buddhism to be known by more people in a short time like a virus. *Theory of Reason and Ignorance* explains Mou Zi's conversion process:

“Many people in the world often criticize Buddhism, believing that it has betrayed the Chinese classics. I wanted to argue with them, but this is against the teachings; I wanted to keep silent, but I couldn't. So, I wrote a book to quote the words of the sage saint to correctly answer everyone's confusion, and named it *Mou Zi's Theory of Reason and Ignorance*.”

To find a balance between trying to justify and keeping silent, Mou Zi completed such a conversion.

From the Northern and Southern Dynasties to the Sui and Tang Dynasties, almost all the doctrines of Buddhism introduction were put forward by Buddhist monks, Taoism wizards, or scholars who are familiar with Buddhism (mentioned by Professor Xu Li-he as "scholar Buddhism"<sup>(7)</sup>). Buddhism has expanded dramatically during

(5) 梁启超Liang Qichao,《佛教之初输入》附录三《牟子理惑论辨伪》Fojiao zhi chushuru, fulu 3, Mouzi lihun lun [The Initial Dissemination of Buddhism, Appendix III, Mou Zi's Theory of Perplexity and Falsification],《梁启超中国佛学研究史》Liang Qichao Zhongguo fojiao yanjiu shi [The History of Chinese Buddhism Studies], (吉林Jilin:吉林出版集团股份有限公司Jilin chubun jituan gufen youxian gongsi [Jilin Publish Group], 2017), 29。

(6) 汤用彤Tang Yongtong,《汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史》Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi [The History of Buddhism from Han to Northern Dynasty], (北京Beijing:商务印书馆Shangwu yinshu guan [The Commercial Press], 2017), 61。

(7) 许理和Erik Zürcher,《佛教征服中国》Fojiao zhengfu zhongguo [The Buddhist Conquest of China], 李四龙Li Silong译, (江苏Jiangsu:江苏人民出版社Jiangsu renmin chubanshe [Jiangsu People's Publishing House], 2003), 6。

this period, not only starting actively writing its own history, but also consciously incorporating communication strategies into these Buddhist or historical works. Obviously, these doctrines are contrary to the simpler features of the those before Eastern Jin Dynasty:

- (1) they began to compete for the traditional discourse power of Confucianism and Taoism. They generally refused that Lao Zi had educated the surrounding minorities, and brought forward the time when Buddhism was introduced to China or the Chinese people heard of Buddhism ahead of the Lao Zi and Confucius periods, varying from “Three Emperors and Five Sovereigns “ period, Western Zhou Dynasty, Emperor Qin Shi-huang period, and Spring and Autumn;
- (2) they not only incorporated the Chinese ruling class into the Buddhist doctrine, but also added some plot such as “Buddhism first met difficulties and then was accepted”. Emperors or kings either bowed down directly, or showed contempt or resistance in the beginning and then believed and accepted Buddhism after receiving miracles or warnings;
- (3) they integrated the consciousness of competition with Confucianism and Taoism, which appeared to be letting Confucian officials (even Confucian founder Confucius and a royal family member Liu Xiang) praise Buddhism, or solving problems that Taoist wizards (such as Taoist master Dong-fang Shuo) could not solve. This seemed to have become a typical ceremony for Buddhism to spread in China.

As for why new Buddhist doctrines did not occur in China after the Sui and Tang dynasties, we suppose the reason is the localization of Buddhism. Also, it had gradually become the Chinese’s own way of cultural expression. Since then, the Chinese, especially the Buddhists, are no longer enthusiastic about judging the initial introduction, and no longer make up for cultural self-distrust by discussing or fabricating the “history” of Buddhism’s dissemination. Buddhism scholars as well as non- Buddhism ones are more concerned about the origin and basis of Chinese sectarian Buddhism. For example, Shen Hui wrote *Nan Sect’s Theory on Right and Wrong* to discuss the systemic issues of the Chan sect. The new debate over who initiated the Chinese sect is far more realistic and utilitarian than emphasizing the initial introduction.

### (II) Evolution of the nature of the doctrines

Buddhism was in a disadvantaged position before Eastern Jin Dynasty, so it adopted a communication strategy that relied on Confucianism and Taoism. It also tacitly accepted Confucianism opinions, such as the theory that Lao Zi had educated the surrounding minorities. Despite that fact that the theories of Buddhism introduction are exaggerated to some degree, they are based on more objective speculation and hearsay (or that less exaggerated ones). “Buddhism Scriptures Passed by Yi Cun in the Emperor Ai Di Period in Western Han Dynasty” is a complete description of the scene of an academic exchange. Although “Dream about Buddha” mentioned the inspiration of a dream to the emperor, it is still relatively simple and unpretentious. “Introduced in the Yan Zhao Wang Period of Warring States” involved the magic of the monks from the west. *The Compilation of Previous Records*, written by Wang Jia in Eastern Jin Dynasty, states,

In the seventh year of Emperor Yan Zhao Wang (AD 305), India sent came to worship. There was a wizard named Shi Luo, who is 130 years old. They brought the tin and bottles, and said that it had

been five years since they started in their country before reaching the capital of Yan State. He is very good at magic, and put ten layers of floating slaughter on his hand, which was three-feet-high. . . . He blew the floating slaughter on his finger and it flew into the clouds. (8)

The current version of the book was edited by Xiao Qi in Liang Dynasty. This is far before Buddhism was spread throughout China since it was not even in north-western India during Warring States Period, let alone China(9). The work is a collection of ancient Chinese mythical novels including the stories of the ancient generations from Eastern Jin Dynasty, such as the ancient Pao Xi and Shen Nong, among which many of the ancient history are ridiculous and grotesque myths. There are also disloyal legends advocating gods and magic heard from unreliable sources before Wei Guo in Han dynasty, which are not contained in the official history. The mythical legends are contained in the *Compilation of Previous Records*, which indicates the strategy of relying on the identity of wizard in the early transmission of Buddhism to China.

After entering Southern Dynasty, the initial dissemination of Buddhism was regarded as mythology. “Liu Xiang’s Discover of Buddhism Scriptures” implies that people can become immortals through believing in Buddhism and conducting practice of the Dharma as those believing in Taoism do. “Eighteen Saints Brought Buddhism scriptures to China” even adds the plot of the emperor being punished by miracles. These doctrines were fresh, magical, and even horrible to ordinary people. Judging the development level of science and technology at the time, it was indeed a wise communication strategy.

“Liu Xiang Discovered Buddhism Scriptures” compares learning Buddhism with Taoism. This theory was originally from Zong Bing(2011)’s *The Theory of Ming Buddha* in Liu Song period, “Liu Xiang’s *The Biography of the Immortals* stated that Buddhist scriptures recorded 74 people had become immortals.” (10) *A New Account of the Tales of the World* also state *The Biography of the Immortals*, “Liu Xiang’s *The Biography of the Immortals* recorded that, ‘among the hundred schools of thought in history, there were a total of 146 people who passed the examination and became immortals, and Buddhist scriptures involved 74 of them.’”(11) According to this, many scholars believe that the Buddhist scriptures were discovered before Liu Xiang examining the book. Therefore, the Buddhist scriptures had already existed in Han Dynasty before Emperor Cheng Di.

*Biography of the Immortals* is China’s first systematic narrative biography that promotes beliefs in Taoist immortals. But there are controversies around the specific time when the book was finished and the author. Ge Hong first pointed out that the author was Liu Xiang in *Preamble of the Biography of the Immortals* in Eastern Jin Dynasty.(12) However, *Han Shu Yi Wen Zhi* cited Liu Xiang’s works such as “Shuo Yuan”, ”Xin Xu”, and “Biography of the Heroic Women”, instead of *Biography of the Immortals*. In Ming Dynasty, Hu Ying-lin inspected Liu Xiang’s books in Han Dynasty and argued that he had written sixty-seven books including “Shuo Yuan”, “Xin Xu”, “Shi

(8) 汤用彤Tang Yongtong,《汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史》Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi[The History of Buddhism from Han to Northern Ming],(北京Beijing:商务印书馆Shangwu yinshu guan[The Commercial Press],2017),6。

(9) 封立Feng Li,《东晋著名小说家王嘉与〈拾遗记〉》Dongjin zhuming xiaoshuojia wangjia yu shiyiji[The famous Eastern Jin Novelist Wang Jia and The Compilation of Previous Records],《甘肃教育》Gansu Jiaoyu[Gansu Education],No.2,(甘肃Gansu:甘肃教育出版社Gansu jiaoyu chubanshe[Gansu Education Press],2013),2

(10) 宗炳Zong Bing,《明佛论》Mingfo lun[The Theory of Ming Buddha],僧祐Sengyou编:《弘明集》Hongming Ji[The Anthology of Hong Ming],(北京Beijing:中华书局Zhonghua shuju[China Publishing House],2011),161。

(11) 汤用彤Tang Yongtong,《汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史》Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi[The History of Buddhism from Han to Northern Ming],(北京Beijing:商务印书馆Shangwu yinshu guan[The Commercial Press],2017),14。

(12) 葛洪Ge Hong,《神仙传校释》Shenxian zhuan jiaoshi[Notes and Corrections on Biography of the Immortals],胡守为Hu Shouwei校释,(北京Beijing:中华书局Zhonghua shuju[China Publishing House],2010),1。



Shuo” and “Biography of the Heroic Women”. Similarly, *Biography of the Immortals* is excluded. Hu<sup>(13)</sup> believed that “the book was written by people between Three Kingdom and Sui Dynasty, so it is a fake. “ In Song Dynasty, Chen Zhen-sun proposed in *Zhizhai Content Explanation* that the book is not written by Liu Xiang because the text is different from those in the Western Han Dynasty, but the story of Zheng Jiao-fu’s encountering with two women-immortals has been used as allusion in Cao Zhi’s work “the Goddess of the Luo”. This is the proof of the fact that it couldn’t be written in a late dynasty. Other scholars believe that Liu Xiang is the author of *Biography of the Immortals* without doubt. For instance, Lu Xun<sup>(14)</sup> supposed in *A Brief History of Chinese Novels* that most of the existing Han novels are hypocritical, only Liu Xiang’s *Biography of the Immortals* is true.” Liu Xiang (circa 77 to 6 BC) was the fourth-generation grandson of the King Chu Wang, Liu Jiao, brother of the Emperor Han Gao Zu of Han Dynasty. He was also an official, bibliographer, and writer of Western Han Dynasty. The book mainly records the important deeds and the process of becoming immortals of ancient and Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin and Han Dynasties. His work created a precedent for the biography of the immortals and a more complete immortal pedigree. Such a book had a profound impact on the future generations in its idea of novels on the subject of the immortals, the meaningful literary motif, creative thinking, and thought of the immortals. However, the version survived today was collected by the Taoist masterpiece *Tao Collection* that only contains the deeds of 72 Taoist immortals such as Chi Song-zi. The other Buddhist immortals mentioned by *the Theory of the Ming Buddha* and *A New Account of the Tales of the World* are missing.

Liu Xiang was a scholar from the royal family. He became the Guanglu scholar in the Emperor Cheng Di period in Western Han Dynasty, and he was responsible for examining the books of the government, representing the knowledgeable Confucianists and authoritative experts. The fact that the doctrine of Buddhism introduction was put forward by Liu Xiang can not only enhance the reliability due to Liu’s authoritative identity, but also proved its academic nature. When today’s scholars pay attention to the doctrine itself, they will find that its formulation includes a strong and positive dissemination content. *The Biography of the Immortals* describes 146 immortals, of which 74 are involved in the Buddhist scriptures. The fact implies that: First, Liu Xiang, who lived in Western Han Dynasty, has already read the Buddhist scriptures in the library of the government, so the introduction of Buddhism may be earlier than this period of time; Secondly, the Buddhist scriptures was able to record 74 immortals, indicating that the number is estimated to be considerable; Third, the immortals of Buddhism accounted for more than half of the immortals at that time; Fourth, the immortals of Buddhism were equally important as other Chinese immortals.

Through such strong and positive communication contents, we can feel the strong intention of Buddhism to communicate and strategy. First, through learning about Buddhism, the ultimate ideal of the ancient Chinese people, becoming immortals, can be realized, and the quality as well as abilities is as good as those learning Taoism. Secondly, its success rate is obviously higher than the local counterpart Taoism. Then, both the practice of becoming immortal through Buddhism and others such as Taoism has been officially affirmed. Although this affirmation does not come from the official history, Liu Xiang’s “the Biography of the Immortals” had setup the first Chinese immortal pedigree, which is also the official authority of the immortals. Finally, from the part of

(13) 胡应麟Hu Yinglin,《少室山房笔丛·四部正讹下》Shaoshishanfang bicong sibuzhengexia[Articles Written in the Shaoshi Mountain-the Second Part of Si Bu Zheng E],(北京Beijing:中华书局Zhonghua shuju[China Publishing House],1958),417。

(14) 鲁迅Lu Xun,《中国小说的历史的变迁》Zhongguo xiaoshuo de lishi de bianqian[The History of Chinese Novels],《鲁迅全集》第九卷 Lu Xun quanji di jiu juan[No.9 The Articles by Lu Xun],(北京Beijing:人民文学出版社Renmin wenxue chubanshe[People’s Literature Publishing House],1981),305。

Taoist immortals passed down from “the Biography of the Immortals”, the immortals include the great celebrities such as Huang Di and Lao Zi who had great influence in China, whether official or private. Therefore, although the names of Buddhist immortals in *the Biography of the Immortals* kept inaccessible, it is obvious that Buddhist immortals have the same status as the great local people.

Both *the Biography of the Immortals* and *A New Account of the Tales of the World* were written during the Liu Song period in Southern Dynasty. Since Buddhism had first been introduced to China in the Liu Song period, Buddhism achieved extremely successful communication effects by adopting such strategies: pretending to be a Taoist immortal, presenting magics, taking advantage of Taoism belief, and stating that the Chinese could also become immortals through believing in Buddhism.

### (III) *The “two-side prompt” from opinion leaders: From invoking to punishment*

“In the scope of communication, people who are active in interpersonal networks and often provide information, opinions or suggestions and exert personal influence on others are called” opinion leaders.”<sup>(15)</sup> Opinion leaders are often the emperors of a country in the feudal society in China. Buddhism has good historical consciousness and adopted the dissemination strategy of “it will be difficult to establish its own regulations without relying on the country’s emperors”. It also has put the strategy into practice, and quietly integrated this into the theories of “Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China”. “Dream about Buddha” is a typical ritual of that. The emperor dreamed of supernatural phenomena such as gods, and it was interpreted as Buddhism by a knowledgeable person. This ritual is more than useful in China: the emperor must be broad-minded, but he didn’t know why he dreamed about or saw something magical. Then he asked about it, the phenomenon was interpreted by a scholar or official on behalf of the official Buddhism authority, even involved Buddhist thoughts and ideas. This process not only has officially recognized academic authority, but also represents the highest level of secular authority. It is beneficial for Buddhism to spread with the embodiment of the communication strategy of “depending on the kingship” of communication, which is very for this purpose.

“Eighteen Saints Brought Buddhism scriptures” was no longer satisfied with the probation or persuasion of the emperor in the “Dream about Buddha”, and added the “two-side prompt” plot of punishment for disrespecting the Buddha. No matter whether such claims are true or not, the purpose of their dissemination is clear. Therefore, “Eighteen Saints Brought Buddhism scriptures” can be thought to be an enhanced version. The Emperor Ming Di first experienced the miracles in his dream and then actively sought Dharma; while the Emperor Qin Shi-huang sent the monks who travelled thousands of miles to spread the Buddhist thoughts into to prison, which provoked the miracles, and then he was “frightened and shocked, he kowtowed and apologized to them”. Although the miracles appeared at different time, they exerted the same effect on spreading Buddhism.

The record that Qin Shi-huang bowed his head to the Buddha after receiving the warning miracle may be related to the tragic experience of Fei Chang-fang as a monk in Han Dynasty. Emperor Yu-wen Yong of Northern Zhou Dynasty began the anti-Buddhism campaign, which was the second time in the history that the emperor personally launched such a national campaign. During the movement, monks were forced to return to the custom and temple property was forfeited. During Sui and Tang dynasties, the ruler changed the attitude of destroy Buddhism in Northern Zhou Dynasty, and Han Buddhism developed rapidly at that time. Therefore, Fei Chang-

(15) 郭庆光Guo Qinguang, 《传播学概论》Chuanboxue gailun [Introduction to Communication], (北京Beijing: 中国人民大学出版社Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe [China Renmin University Press], 1999), 189。



fang, who experienced anti-Buddha first and “developing Buddhism” later, could genuinely identify the ruler’s attitude towards Buddha well. In fact, such stories of educating the ruler to support Buddha through miracles had already existed, such as *the Stories of the Great Sangha*, written by Hui Jiao. In the book, the article “Buddhist Kang Seng-hui in Wei Wu Jianye Jianchu Temple” states the punishment on the Emperor of Wu Guo, Sun Hao, during Three Kingdoms period.

“Sun Hao told people to put the golden Buddha statue in an unclean place, pour it with human dung, and laugh at the Buddha with the ministers for fun. Then, Sun Hao’s body was swollen suddenly, and his genitals was sore. He shouted very loudly due to the pain. After following the instructions from the maid who respected Buddha, Sun Hao washed the golden statue more than ten times with incense soup, burned incense to confess her guilt, and asked the monk Kang Seng-hui to taught Buddhism thoughts and received the five precepts, then he was cured after ten days.”<sup>(16)</sup>

“Eighteen Saints Brought Buddhism scriptures” reflects the strategy of Buddhism’s spread in China:

- First, it determined at an early stage the communication strategy that the emperors and kings were the main audience;
- Second, it dared to take violent and poisonous measures the audience were as respected as emperors of the countries.

Furthermore, the more aggressive and cruel the rulers were, the more terrifying the measures were chosen, which meant to counteract one toxin with another.

### **III. The selection of Buddhist communication and cross-cultural communication strategies**

The dissemination strategy of Han Buddhism refers to the guidelines and methodologies formulated by the communication system of Buddhism in order to achieve the goals depending on the development of the society. The evolution of the theories reflects the strategies in different historical periods. “Judging from the cultural perspective, nowadays the world is in a coexistence and common development era for multi-culture.”<sup>(17)</sup> The two problems have become major issues for the soft power of a country: how to interpret your own culture in the process of cross-cultural communication well, and how to gain recognition and development in the exchange and collision of heterogeneous cultures. The dissemination of Buddhism in China is a successful example of cross-cultural communication. Therefore, the study of the theories can lay a solid foundation for the research on cross-cultural communication strategy, which is also of practical significance.

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(16) 释慧皎Shi Huijiao, 《魏吴建业建初寺康僧会》Weiwu jianye jianchusi kangsenghui [Buddhist Kang Seng-hui in Wei Wu Jianye Jianchu Temple], 《梁高僧传》Liang gaoseng zhuan [The Biography of Eminent Monks in Liang Dynasty], (陕西Shanxi: 陕西出版集团Shanxi chuban jituan [Shanxi Publish Group], 2014), 24 °

(17) 李贵森Li Guisen, 《宗教文化的传播与接收》Zongjiao wenhua de chuanbo yu jieshou [The Communication and Acceptance of Religious Cultures], 《现代传播》Xiandai chuanbo [Modern Communication], No. 7, (北京Beijing: 《现代传播》编辑部Xiandai chuanbo bianjibu [Editorial Department of Modern Communication], 2011), 21 °

*(I) Improving the breadth and depth of cross-cultural communication through the “opinion leaders”*

One of the most obvious characteristics of Buddhism communication strategy is “relying on the emperor of the target country”, so the most common mean is to depend on the emperor. There are several examples: Ming Di’s dream about Buddha; the Emperor Wu Di of Han Dynasty worshipping a Buddha statue in the theory of “Buddhism had been Introduced before Wu Di Period in Western Han Dynasty”; Qin Shi Huang met the magic created by Buddha in the “Eighteen Saints Brought Buddhism scriptures”. All the theories reflect that Buddhism transmission had attached great importance to the spread of secular regime leaders.

Ming Di’s practice after dreaming of Buddha is a model of emperors or countries to support Buddhism:

- First, a group of official envoys and academic authorities such as Confucian scholars, who were experts of the five Confucian classics, was dispatched by the emperor to the west to seek Buddhism. What’s more, the head of the royal guard (Yulin Langzhong) was responsible for their security, which indicated the high specifications;
- Second, the Buddhist classic Forty-two Chapters of Scriptures was obtained and carefully preserved, such as “being hidden in the fourteenth room in the Lantai Stone Room (a royal library)”;
- Third, the official funded for the construction of stupas and statues;
- Fourth, the Buddha images were drawn in the royal tomb.

This official support of Buddhism had been imitated by the rulers of successive dynasties, and it had become a tradition for later rulers. *The Theory of Reason and Ignorance* mentions that “ At that time, the country was strong and the people were peaceful. Other countries wanted to learn from us, and the trend of learning about Buddhism started from then.”

This description implied twofold communication effects. First of all, it is ambiguous whether “ the country was strong and the people were peaceful” is the result or the reason for the spread of Buddhism. But this version indicated that it was because the Emperor Ming Di sent officials to the west to seek Buddhism, treat the Buddhist scriptures carefully, “built Buddhist temples”, “draw Buddha images” and “also do this on the royal tomb” that the country prospered. This opinion further strengthened the value of Buddhism dissemination. Secondly, another effect of Buddhism transmission-” *other countries wanted to learn from us, and the trend of learning about Buddhism started from then.*” Buddhism was transmitted through the powerful China to “Yuan Yi “(the other savage tribes in the distance) again. Under the circumstance, China had become an advocator of Buddhism, and Chinese Buddhists as well as rulers were given another mission that they should spread the ideas of Buddhism to more regions and people.

According to various theories of Buddhism communication, the main audiences include emperors, doctors, and scholars. This strategy reflects the emphasis put on the “opinion leaders” in practice. “Mass communication does not directly ‘flow’ to the general audience, but passes through the opinion leaders, which follows the process of ‘mass communication-opinion leaders-the general audience’.”<sup>(18)</sup> In cross-cultural communication, focusing on “opinion leaders” will be more effective because they usually play a role in promoting or hindering the effect of mass communication.

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(18) 郭庆光Guo Qinguang, 《传播学概论》Chuanboxue gailun[Introduction to Communication], (北京Beijing: 中国人民大学出版社Zhongguo renmin daxue chubanshe [China Renmin University Press], 1999), 178 .

It is crucial for cross-cultural communication to give full play to the influence on “opinion leaders”, who can make the content of communication more accessible, more diffuse, and more acceptable, which is the “megaphone” of the mass media organizations. In the modern urban society, they are mainly “single type”, which means that as long as a person is proficient in a particular field or has good reputation in the surroundings, the one can be an “opinion leader” in the area. There are two key points in improving the breadth and depth of cross-cultural communication: sorting out as well as identifying the important “opinion leaders” from the communication audiences and fully exerting their influence.

*(II) Eliminating conflicts and confrontations arising from intercultural communication through interaction with indigenous cultures*

“Cultural Interaction and Transformation Theory” is a new communication theory proposed by scholars of cultural research in recent years. It believes that cultural conflicts and confrontations are inevitable.<sup>(19)</sup> The famous German sociologist Simmel also believes that people of different cultural backgrounds are strangers.<sup>(20)</sup> People always have instinctive suspicion and resistance to strangers and strange cultures, because those from different cultural backgrounds are more or less ethnocentric. They regard their own culture as the centre based on which to evaluate the value of other cultures, and usually consider that their own culture is superior to others.<sup>(21)</sup> One of the characteristics of Buddhism communication strategy is to interact with the Chinese traditional ideology and culture. In the initial period, Buddhism itself was relatively weak, and it could only adopt communication strategies depending on Confucianism and Taoism. “Buddhism Scriptures Passed by Yi Cun” suggests that the official Confucian scholars (doctors) had earliest accepted the Buddhist ideology. In *A brief history of Wei Guo*, the “Record of Western Rong” states the issue as follows,

“In the first year of the Emperor Ai Di period of Han Dynasty (2 BC), the “Fu Tu Scriptures” was passed to Jinglu, a doctor disciple, by Yi Cun, the envoy of India. Those who were called Fuli, were the people. The “Fu Tu Scriptures” contained Lin Pusa, Sangmen, Bowen, Shuwen, Baishuwen, Picchu, Chenmen, which were all names of the disciples.”<sup>(22)</sup>

That Yi Cun taught *Fu Tu Jing* is based on the official history (although *A brief history of Wei Guo* was written privately by Yu Huan, but cited in *the Record of Three Kingdoms*), it has strong credibility. By the end of the first century BC, it was likely that India was affected by the Daxia Buddhist culture and accepted the belief in Buddhism, then passed the ideas to the Chinese.

(19) 王晓朝 Wang Xiaochao, 《文化的互动和转型》Wenhua de hudong he zhuanxing [Cultural Interaction and Transformation], 《冲突与互补基督教哲学在中国》Chongtu yu hubu jidujiao zhexue zai zhongguo [Conflict and Complementary Christian Philosophy in China], (北京 Beijing: 社会科学文献出版社 Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe, 2000), 311。

(20) 刘双 Liu Shuang、于文秀 Yu Wenxiu · 《跨文化传播—拆解文化的围墙》Kua wenhua chuanbo—chaijie wenhua de weiqiang [Intercultural Communication: Breaking Down the Cultural Barriers], (黑龙江 Heilongjiang: 黑龙江人民出版社 Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe [Heilongjiang People's Publishing House], 2000), 46。

(21) 刘双 Liu Shuang、于文秀 Yu Wenxiu · 《跨文化传播—拆解文化的围墙》Kua wenhua chuanbo—chaijie wenhua de weiqiang [Intercultural Communication: Breaking Down the Cultural Barriers], (黑龙江 Heilongjiang: 黑龙江人民出版社 Heilongjiang renmin chubanshe [Heilongjiang People's Publishing House], 2000), 50。

(22) 汤用彤 Tang Yongtong, 《汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史》Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi [The History of Buddhism from Han to Northern Dynasty], (北京 Beijing: 商务印书馆 Shangwu yinshu guan [The Commercial Press], 2017), 41。

This is an official to official transnational academic exchange. In the Qin and Han Dynasties, the “scholar” was an official in charge of books, classics, and historical knowledge, and was supported by the official authorities throughout the country. “Yi Cun” is the envoy of India as well as official representative of a state in the western region. Thus, the initial dissemination of Buddhism to Chinese was completed in the form of the highest academic exchange. In addition, most scholars believe that the academic exchange between the two countries took place in the territory belonging to China in Han Dynasty, which means that it occurred during the process of sending Chinese scholars and officials to the other countries.<sup>(23)</sup> In addition, in the later Buddhist classics, India was thought to be where Buddhist scriptures was exchanged. This exchange is different from previous visits by Han envoys. Maybe, their actions were not described as “seeking” as the later generations did due to Confucian scholars’ self-esteem in Han Dynasty. Since the exchange happened in a foreign country in the Western Region, it was a learning activity rather than communication for Chinese scholars, which naturally indicated the superiority of *Fu Tu Scripture* and Buddhism. This strategy of appropriate processing and revealing potential information must be the best choice for the newly entered and continuously declining Buddhism.

“Confucius Regarding Buddha as a Great Saint” even make Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, praise Buddhism. Similar to “Buddhism had been Introduced before the Emperor Wu Di Period”, the theory is under the suspicion that later scholars adopted the method of secretly changing people or things in the content. It was proposed by the monk Dao-xuan of Tang Dynasty, and he mentioned in his book *Guang Hong Ming Collection · Gui Zheng Part*,

“Confucius heard that there are saints in the West. They didn’t need to govern the country, and the country had no turmoil; they didn’t need to promote their idea, people naturally believe in them; they didn’t need to educate people, and people could understand them. They walk around and no one know their names. According to this statement, Confucius knew that Buddha was the Great Sage, but it was not the right time, so he kept silent and didn’t say it.”<sup>(24)</sup>

Referring to this doctrine, Buddhism was introduced to China during the Spring and Autumn Period. Moreover, Confucius not only had heard of Buddhism, but also praised the ideas of Buddhism.

“Confucius Regarding Buddha as a Great Saint” by Dao-xuan(1983) seems to be quoted from “Lie Zi- the Confucius Part”,

“Confucius was so touched that after a while he said:’ There are saints in the West. They didn’t need to govern the country, and the country had no turmoil; they didn’t need to promote their idea, people naturally believe in them; they didn’t need to educate people, and people could understand them. They walked around and no one know their names.’”

First, most scholars believe that *Lie Zi* was written at a later time in the Wei or Jin dynasties, beyond the period Lie Zi and his students once lived.<sup>(25)</sup> Second, the “western saints” mentioned in the book refers to Lao Zi

(23) 汤用彤 Tang Yongtong, 《汉魏两晋南北朝佛教史》 Hanwei liangjin nanbeichao fojiao shi [The History of Buddhism from Han to Northern Dynasty], (北京Beijing:商务印书馆Shangwu yinshu guan [The Commercial Press], 2017), 42。

(24) 道宣 Dao Xuan, 《广弘明集》 Guang hongming ji [Guang Hong Ming Collection], 《大正藏》第52册 Da zeng zang 52 [No. 52, Taisho Tripitaka], (台湾Taiwan:新文豐Xinwenfeng [New Wenfeng], 1983), 96。

(25) 陈亚琳 Chen Yalin, 《谈〈列子〉为魏晋时伪书》 Tan Liezi wei weijin shi weishu [Argumentation on Lie Zi as a fake book in Wei and Jin Dynasties], 《安徽文学》 Anhui wenhua [Anhui Arts], No. 6, 安徽文学杂志社 Anhui wenxue zazhishe [Anhui literature magazine], 2009), 87。

who went to the west of Hangu Pass. His Taoism ideas of “govern by doing nothing that goes against nature” are the same with “they didn’t need to govern the country, and the country had no turmoil; they didn’t need to promote their idea, people naturally believe in them; they didn’t need to educate people, and people could understand them”. Third, Confucius and Shakyamuni were contemporaries. At that time, Confucianism and Buddhism were initially established, and there was no exchange between China and India. Thus, it is unlikely that Confucius and Shakyamuni knew about each other.

However, Dao Xuan<sup>(26)</sup> turned the “western saints” into “Buddhas are the great saints, which was a clever make-up of disseminating content. First, he cited the classic works of *Lie Zi*, and the nominal author of the book was a famous philosopher, thinker, and representative of the Taoist school during Warring States period. It helps to strengthen the credibility of Buddhism taking advantage of Taoism and from Taoist classics. Second, Dao Xuan not only quoted classics, but also used the words of Confucius. Apparently, the evidence came from oral record from the founder of Confucianism in the Taoist classics. This exquisite packaging of words is an astonishing communication strategy. Thirdly, he had also took the opportunity to elaborate on the concept of Buddhism. In the beginning, Buddhism entered China depending on Taoism and showing magics. Therefore, the purpose of Taoist classic to take advantage of Confucianism to carry forward its own ideas was turned to be Taoism and Confucianism’s praise towards Buddhism. Last but not least, this expression implies a dissemination effect. If the ruler educated the people and conducted the policies according to the Buddhism concepts, he would get the “peaceful”, “confident” and “well-controlled” governance effects. It was clarifying to the ruler that Buddhism transmission is valuable and beneficial in social enlightenment. So, the ruling class tend to accept Buddhism because of the magical warning to those who didn’t believe in Buddhism and the effectiveness of governing the country according to Buddhism.

“As an ideology, a culture, if it wants to spread in other countries, it must be good at adapting to the indigenous ideology or cultural tradition of other places.”<sup>(27)</sup> Cultural Interaction theory holds that,

“Cultural adaptation and the localization of foreign cultures are effective ways of cultural fusion. The input and dissemination of a foreign culture must be adapted to the specific conditions of the country in which it is introduced, eliminate the resistance from the country’s inherent traditional culture, and attach itself to the culture of the nation, and then merges with it. Then, it may exist, develop, and work. It is unnecessary that once the culture is introduced, it will have a great impact.”<sup>(28)</sup>

Judging by the audience, the core of cross-cultural communication is de-localization actually. On the one hand, under cultural collisions and conflicts, the audience will consciously summarize the lessons from local and personal experiences as well as social experiences and they will integrate the beneficial part for personal and social development. In order to adapt to the local environment and meet its own needs, the culture should innovate in some conflicting areas. On the other hand, in the cultural exchange and integration, the local culture, which is also the recipient, will be added new value through a distinctive form and content to enrich itself. Interaction with the local culture can help to eliminate conflicts and confrontations, and improve the speed as well as effectiveness of communication.

(26) 道宣 Dao Xuan, 《广弘明集》 Guang hongming ji [Guang Hong Ming Collection], 《大正藏》第52册 Da zeng zang 52 [No. 52, Taisho Tripitaka], (台湾 Taiwan: 新文丰 Xinwenfeng [New Wenfeng], 1983), 96。

(27) 李敬一 Li Jingyi, 《中国传播史论》 Zhongguo chuanbo shilun [The history of Chinese communication], (湖北 Hubei: 武汉大学出版社 Wuhan daxue chubanshe [Wuhan University Press], 2003), 131。

(28) 曹琦 Cao Qi、彭耀 Peng Yao, 《世界三大宗教在中国》 Shijie sanda zongjiao zai zhongguo [A Chinese perspective on world religions], (北京 Beijing: 中国社会科学出版社 Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1985), 23。

(III) *Proposing solutions to current social issues is helpful in cross-cultural communication*

During the Northern and Southern Dynasties, Buddhism began to contend for its own right of discourse. “Introduction by Bo Yi” version was proposed for Confucianism and Taoism apparently. The greatest dissemination value of the statement lies in the temporal advantage of Buddhism introduction in China than its local competitors should the statement be true. Lao Zi is the founder of Taoism, and Confucius is the founder of Confucianism. Both of them are great figures in the same era as the founder of Buddhism, Shakyamuni. It is the possibility that Buddhism had existed in the period before the three generation of Xia, Shang and Zhou that has increased the importance and advantages of Buddhism for the Chinses who respect the proceeding generations. “Be with people and love them” is a Buddhism solution to the current social hotspots, which is proposed by “Shang Hai Jing (the Classic of Mountains and Seas)”. The communication strategy of taking advantage of other works has almost become a model of Buddhist communication. Generally speaking, social progress is often promoted by personal cultivation. Although Buddhism has inherited the essence of Brahmanism, it has created a clear banner outside of the religion to build an equal and free community, which has played a positive role in the stability and development of Indian society.

“Introduction by Bo Yi” is a social solution put forward by Buddhism to Confucianism, and the “Dong-fang Shuo’s Theory on the Ash” not only solved the unanswered problems by Taoism, but also made use of natural phenomena to verify Buddhist theories. This doctrine was cited in *In Search of the Supernatural* by Gan Bao (?-351 AD), an Eastern Jin writer and historian,

“Emperor Wu Di of Han Dynasty sent people to dig the Kunming Pool, which was very deep. But there was black ash inside and no dirt. All the ministers didn’t know what this was, so they asked Dong-fang Shuo. Dong-fang Shuo said: ‘I’m not knowledgeable enough to understand this matter, you can try to ask people from the Western Regions.’ Emperor Wu Di thought Dong-fang Shuo had no idea and didn’t ask other people. Later, in the era of Emperor Ming Di of Han Dynasty, there were a Taoists from the Western Regions to Luoyang. At that time, someone who remembered Dong-fang Shuo’s words asked him about this issue. The Taoist said that the scriptures said that if something destructive happened in the world, the earth was burned. This was the ashes left. Only then did people know that Dong-fang Shuo was right.”<sup>(29)</sup>

When Hui Jiao (497-554 AD) compiled *The Biography of Eminent Monks in Liang Dynasty* of Southern Dynasty, the so-called “Taoist from the Western Regions” in Gan Bao’s book was transformed into Zhu Fa-lan<sup>(30)</sup>. Zhu came to China for preaching together with the officials sent to seek for Buddhism scriptures, which is mentioned in the “Dream about Buddha” version during late Eastern Han Dynasty and early Three Kingdom period. It was included in Volume One of *The Biography of Eminent Monks in Liang Dynasty* recorded in “the Record of Zhu Fa-lan in the White Horse Temple” in Han Dynasty,

“In the past, Emperor Wu Di of Han Dynasty asked people to dig the Kunming Pool and found the black ash. He asked Dong-fang Shuo, but he didn’t know, and said that he could ask the people from

(29) 干宝Gan Bao, 《搜神记》卷十三Shoushenji 13 [No. 13, In Search of the Supernatural], 江绍楹Jiang Shaoying jiaoben校注本, (北京Beijing: 中华书局Zhonghua shuju [China Publishing House], 1979), 163 °

(30) 释慧皎Shi Huijiao, 《汉洛阳白马寺竺法兰》Han Luoyang baimasi zhufalan [The Record of Zhu Fa-lan in the White Horse Temple], 《梁高僧传》卷一Liang gaoseng zhuan 1 [No. 1 The Biography of Eminent Monks in Liang Dynasty], (陕西Shanxi: 陕西出版集团Shanxi chubanshanxi [Shanxi Publish Group], 2014), 4 °



the Western Regions. In the Emperor Ming Di period, when Zhu Ming went to China, people asked him about this, and he said, “When the world was destroyed, there was fire, and this ash was left.”

Modern scholars have different opinions on whether Zhu Fa-lan, a representative of early Buddhist monks to the east, actually existed. Take Liang Qi-chao<sup>(31)</sup> as an instance, he believed this person was fabricated.

According to the *Biography of Eminent Monks in Liang Dynasty*, Zhu Fa-lan originally came from Central India, and had sang tens of thousands of chapters of Buddhist scriptures. He acted as the teacher of the Tianzhu scholars. The Emperor of Eastern Han Dynasty sent Cai Yin to the Western Regions to seek the Buddhist scriptures. In the tenth year of Yongping period (AD 67), Zhu Fan-lan and the eminent monk Jiayemoten came to China together for preaching. They lived in the White Horse Temple in Luoyang, and translated the *Forty-two Chapters of Buddhist scriptures*, which was treasured in the “Fourteenth Room in the Lantai Stone Room” by the Emperor Ming Di of Eastern Han Dynasty.<sup>(32)</sup>

First of all, the “Zhu Fa-lan’s Theory on the Ash” had gone through the concrete process of disseminating the content from “Gan Bao’s Theory on the Taoist from the Western Regions” to “Hui Jiao’s Theory on Zhu Fa-lan”. The concrete process has produced a close relationship between the “Dong-fang Shuo’s Theory on the Ash” and the “Dream about Buddha” nearly 400 years ago. They mutually confirm each other, and improve the objectivity and credibility of the doctrines. Secondly, Emperor Wu Di of Han Dynasty had encountered natural phenomena beyond the level of cognition at that time and consulted Dong-fang Shuo. Dong-fang Shuo (154 BC-93 BC) was a famous Confucian, writer, and naturalist in Western Han Dynasty. Emperor Wu Di invited the scholars all over the country to help him in governance when he became the emperor. Dong-fang Shuo recommended himself, and served as a Changzhao minister and Taizhong doctor. Interestingly, Dong-fang Shuo, who was a Confucian in the beginning, was listed as a Taoist immortal after his death and became a representative figure of Taoists. Therefore, the “Zhu Fa-lan’s Theory on the Ash” concentrated by Hui Jiao includes three different allegations. First, the emperor tended to consult Dong-fang Shuo, a Confucian scholar and polymath, when he encountered unexplainable natural phenomena. Then, Dong-fang Shuo, who became a Taoist immortal later, had no idea and suggested Wu Di to “ask people from the Western Regions”. Second, after more than 100 years, some people remembered the story and asked Zhu Fa-lan who happened to be in China preaching. Zhu successfully answered the questions that the Chinese emperor and the official authority, who represented the intellectuals with dual identities of Confucianism and Taoism, could not solve. Third, the ash was the physical evidence supporting the content of Buddhist classic doctrines.

Judging by the “Zhu Fa-lan’s Theory on the Ash” in the Liang period of Southern Dynasty, it is obvious that Buddhism was more confident at this time. Buddhism’s communication strategy is not satisfied with the display of magics. It excluded the legend and doctrine of Confucianism and Taoism, and began to consciously use the content of Buddhist doctrine to explain natural phenomena. The interpretation used to be considered as magician’s ability, but was used by Taoism in dissemination later. In the second half of Han Dynasty, the scholars of Confucianism who are also magicians developed “Chen Wei Theories” connecting and explaining theology with Confucian classics. It can be seen that in ancient China, when science and technology were insufficiently developed, a

(31) 梁启超Liang Qichao,《又佛教与西域》You fojiao yu xiyu[Another Study about Buddhism and Western Regions],《梁启超中国佛学研究史》Liang Qichao Zhongguo foxue yanjiushi [The History of Chinses Buddhism Studies], (吉林Jilin:吉林出版集团股份有限公司Jilin chubanjituan gufen youxian gongsi [Jilin Publish Group.], 2017), 76 °

(32) 释慧皎Shi Huijiao,《汉洛阳白马寺竺法兰》Han Luoyang baimasi zhufalan [The Record of Zhu Fa-lan in the White Horse Temple],《梁高僧传》卷一Liang gaoseng zhuan 1 [ No.1 The Biography of Eminent Monks in Liang Dynasty], (陕西Shanxi:陕西出版集团Shanxi chubanjituan [Shanxi Publish Group], 2014), 1 °

set of convincing and self-explanatory arguments of natural phenomena can highlight its own advanced nature and become a wise choice for spreading the doctrines among the common people as well as the royal families. Apparently, it has attracted the attention of Buddhist communication subjects. Hui Jiao has not only noticed this method, but also cleverly and successfully applied it to the practice of Buddhist communication.

To sum up, through studying the ancient theories of Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China from the perspective of communication, we can obtain the results ignored in the previous authenticity research. A single theory statically demonstrates the strategy of Buddhist communication at that time, and its evolution can reveal the evolutionary process of the development of Buddhist communication system. Through inductive research on this topic, it is natural for us to make a conclusion that the theory of “Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China” is an active strategy that leads to the action and a profound understanding as well as historical consciousness of the millennium evolution of early Buddhist communication. Researches on this topic are reference for cross-cultural communication strategies that can provide guidance for the course. There are other useful strategies including making use of the “opinion leaders” to increase the breadth and depth, interacting with local cultures to eliminate cross-cultural conflicts and confrontations, and raising current social issues to help obtain the right to speak in cultural communication.

**Exhibition I: Theories of “Buddhism Initial Dissemination in China”**

Era	Theory	Source
Three Emperors and Five Sovereigns	Introduction by Bo Yi during Three Emperors and Five Sovereigns	The Theory of Ming Buddha
Western Zhou	Buddhism had been Introduced before the Emperor Zhao Wang Period in Western Zhou Dynasty	Continuous Biography of Eminent Monks· Record of Qin Wu Zui
Spring and Autumn	Confucius Regarding Buddha as a Great Saint in the Spring and Autumn Period	Guang Hong Ming Collection · Gui Zheng Part
Warring States	Introduced in the Yan Zhao Wang Period of Warring States	The Compilation of previous records
Qin	Eighteen Saints Brought Buddhism scriptures to China in the Emperor Qin Shi Huang Period	The Triratna of the Past Dynasties
Western Han Wu Emperor	Buddhism had been Introduced before the Emperor Wu Di Period in Western Han Dynasty	A New Account of the Tales of the World
Western Han Wu Emperor	Dong-fang Shuo’s Theory on the Ash in the Emperor Wu Di Period in Western Han Dynasty	The Stories of the Great Sanghas
Western Han Wu Emperor	Zhang Qian Went to the Western Regions in the Emperor Wu Di Period in Western Han Dynasty	A History of Wei Guo--Introduction to Buddhism and Taoism
Western Han Wu Emperor	The Xiu Tu golden man in the Emperor Wu Di Period in Western Han Dynasty	Notes on “Shi Ji-the Biography of Xiong Nu”
Western Han Wu Emperor	Introduced through the Sea Routes in the Emperor Wu Di Period in Western Han Dynasty	The initial Introduction of Buddhism
Western Han Cheng Emperor	Liu Xiang’s Record of the Immortals in the Emperor Ai Di Period in Western Han Dynasty	The Theory of the Ming Buddha
Western Han Ai Emperor	Buddhism Scriptures Passed by Yi Cun in the Emperor Ai Di Period in Western Han Dynasty	A brief history of Wei Guo- the record of Western Rong
Eastern Han	The Emperor Ming Di Dreamed about Buddha in Eastern Han Dynasty	The Theory of Reason and Ignorance
Eastern Han	Indirect Introduction in Eastern Han Dynasty	Fu Tu and Buddha · Further research on Fu Tu and Buddha

Source: List systematically by Author

## 中文题目： 佛教初传中国：一种跨文化传播策略研究

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**摘要:** 本文以“佛教初传中国”各学说为研究对象。学界对“佛教初传中国”的研究多以文献学、历史学、音韵学等理论视角考察其初传时间、路径及真伪, 而“佛教初传中国”各学说本身作为一种独特的外来宗教文化本土化传播范本, 其重要研究价值反而被忽略。本研究认为, “佛教初传中国”各学说可视为一种传播文本内容, 其流变过程体现了佛教中国化过程中不断成熟和进化的传播策略。本研究的普遍意义在于通过对佛教传播策略的辨析为跨文化传播策略提供借鉴和指导。

**关键词:** 关键词: 佛教; 中国化; 初传; 跨文化传播