

佛光大學

110 學年度研究所博士班招生考試試題卷

學系別：佛教學系

科目：英文佛學論文閱讀測驗

用紙第 1 頁共 3 頁

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I. Please read the following text carefully and answer the following four questions I.1-I.4. (50%)

The term *apocrypha* has been used in Western scholarship to refer to Buddhist literature that developed in various parts of Asia in imitation of received texts from the Buddhist homeland of India. Texts included under the rubric of apocrypha share some common characteristics, but they are by no means uniform in their literary style or content. Apocrypha may be characterized collectively as a genre of indigenous religious literature that claimed to be of Indian Buddhist pedigree or affiliation and that came to acquire varying degrees of legitimacy and credence with reference to the corpus of shared scripture. Some apocrypha, especially in East Asian Buddhism, purported to be the BUDDHAVACANA (WORD OF THE BUDDHA) (that is, *sūtra*) or the word of other notable and anonymous exegetes of Indian Buddhism (*śāstra*). Others claimed to convey the insights of enlightened beings from India or of those who received such insights through a proper line of transmission, as in the case of Tibetan “treasure texts” (*gter ma*) that were hidden and discovered by qualified persons. Still others were modeled after canonical narrative literature, as in the case of apocryphal JĀTAKA (birth stories of the Buddha) from Southeast Asia. Thus, what separates apocrypha from other types of indigenous Buddhist literature was their claimed or implied Indian attribution and authorship. The production of apocryphal texts is related to the nature of the Buddhist CANON within each tradition. The Chinese and Tibetan canons remained open in order to allow the introduction of new scriptures that continued to be brought from India over several centuries, a circumstance that no doubt inspired religious innovation and encouraged the creation of new religious texts, such as apocrypha. The Pāli canon of South and Southeast Asia, on the other hand, was fixed at a relatively early stage in its history, making it more difficult to add new materials.

The above general characterization offers a clue as to the function and purpose of apocrypha: They adapted Indian material to the existing local contexts—be they religious, sociocultural, or even political—thereby bridging the conceptual gulf that otherwise might have rendered the assimilation of Buddhism more difficult, if not impossible. The perceived authority inherent in the received texts of the tradition was tacitly recognized and adopted to make the foreign religion more comprehensible to contemporary people in the new lands into which Buddhism was being introduced. Indeed history shows that some apocryphal texts played seminal roles in the development of local Buddhist cultures as they

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became an integral part of the textual tradition both inside and outside the normative canon. But not all apocrypha were purely or even primarily aimed at promoting Buddhist causes. Some Chinese apocrypha, for example, were all about legitimating local religious customs and practices by presenting them in the guise of the teaching of the Buddha. These examples illustrate that the authority of SCRIPTURE spurred literary production beyond the confines of Buddhism proper and provided a form in which a region's popular religious dimensions could be expressed in texts.

Of the known corpus of apocrypha, the most “egregious” case may be East Asian Buddhist apocrypha that assumed the highest order of Indian pedigree, by claiming to be the genuine word of the Buddha himself. Naturally their claims to authenticity did not go unnoticed among either conservative or liberal factions within the Buddhist community. During the medieval period these texts became objects of contempt as well as, contrarily, materials of significant utility and force in the ongoing sinification of Buddhism. Thus Chinese Buddhist apocrypha epitomize the complexity of issues surrounding the history, identity, and function of Buddhist apocrypha as a broader genre of Buddhist literature.

Answer the following questions I.1-I.3 in either Chinese or English.

- I.1. What does the term “apocrypha” mean? (10%)
- I.2. What is the difference between apocrypha and other types of indigenous Buddhist literature, and why? (10%)
- I.3. What are the function and purpose of apocrypha? (10%)
- I.4. Write a 200-300 words of summary in Chinese to include the questions in the following: (20%)
 - a. What is significance of apocrypha?
 - b. What and how is apocrypha important in the study of Buddhism?

II. Translate the following passage into Chinese (25%)

Perhaps the most basic philosophical principle in Buddhist philosophy is the claim that all things are characterized by ANITYA (IMPERMANENCE); that is, all things are subject to change, including birth and death. The initial context for this realization was the FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS, where suffering is caused by desires for and attachments to things that are always changing and passing away. Failure to recognize the ubiquity of impermanence and failure to adjust one's life accordingly lead inevitably to poor judgment and subsequent suffering. That moral context for reflection on change was just the beginning. Later Buddhist philosophers took the basic principle of impermanence as the starting point for a wide variety of

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reflections on the nature of the always changing world. Closely associated with the idea of impermanence was the concept of PRATĪTYASAMUTPĀDA (DEPENDENT ORIGINATION), the Buddhist explanation for how it is that things change. Change is not random; it is caused and conditioned by other surrounding factors. The principle of dependent origination states that all things arise, change, and pass away dependent upon the influence of other things. Nothing, therefore, is self-sufficient; everything depends.

III. Summarize the following passage into 100 words (25%)

The most important evidence—in fact the only evidence—for situating the emergence of the Mahāyāna around the beginning of the common era was not Indian evidence at all, but came from China. Already by the last quarter of the second century C.E. there was a small, seemingly idiosyncratic collection of substantial Mahāyāna sūtras translated into what Erik Zürcher calls "broken Chinese" by an Indoscythian, whose Indian name has been reconstructed as Lokaksema. Although a recent scholar has suggested that these translations may not have been intended for a Chinese audience, but rather for a group of returning Kushan immigrants who were no longer able to read Indian languages, and although there is no Indian evidence that this assortment of texts ever formed a group there, still, the fact that they were available to some sort of Central Asian or Chinese readership by the end of the second century must indicate that they were composed sometime before that. The recent publication of, unfortunately, very small fragments of a Kushan manuscript of one of these texts—the *Astāsāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (*Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*)—also points in the same direction. But the difficult question remains how long before they were translated into "broken Chinese" had these texts been composed, and here the only thing that can be said with some conviction is that, to judge by their contents, the texts known to Lokaksema cannot represent the earliest phase or form of Mahāyāna thought or literature. They seem to presuppose in fact a more or less long development of both style and doctrine, a development that could have easily taken a century or more and, therefore, would throw the earliest phase of this literature back to about the beginning of the common era. The emergence of the Mahāyāna has—mostly as a matter of convention—therefore been placed there. But even apart from the obvious weaknesses inherent in arguments of this kind there is here the tacit equation of a body of literature with a religious movement, an assumption that evidence for the presence of one proves the existence of the other, and this may be a serious misstep.