Mapping common territory—mapping other territory

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This paper addresses the different functions of the construction of religious, i.e. sacred, space depending on whether such a construction is done in and for its own cultural sphere or whether it is done in and from a cultural context positioned outside the constructed space. This is demonstrated by two case studies of pilgrimage narratives. The first one concentrates on South-Asian culture (Kaśmīr, Nepal) in which two religious traditions (Buddhism, Hinduism) coexisted and constructed sacred space by either the same narratives or by similar but sufficiently different narratives to explain why these places were there and why they were sacred. The other example discusses the approach of culturally different and locally distant Chinese Buddhism towards Buddhist India, where it becomes clear that one of the functions of constructing space by description was to show that the places already known from a textual tradition, the Buddhist one, really existed.

If one is trained as a historian, philologist and religionist in Asian cultures and religions, one of the most intriguing and disturbing facts one has to learn is that that the neat boundaries between culturally, politically and religiously construed entities become fuzzy as soon as one leaves the field of canonically 'fixed' texts and contexts, contexts which more often than not are built on Western and Christo-centric lines. For most Asian cultures, this kind of boundary is not able to cope simultaneously with historical and contemporaneous realities. The problems we have in defining 'Hinduism' (cf. Michaels 1998, 27ff.), for instance, are not least caused by the fact that there is—beside the lack of a generic term in pre-modern culture and languages itself—more confusing pluralism than unity.[1]

Religion has often been counter-defined against a secular sphere by being transcendent, and thus not restricted to space and time. To a modern student of religions, it should be clear, however, that religion is, for the purpose of study at least,

[1] It goes without saying that this does not mean that I believe that Christianity has been and is a uniform religion, but it seems fair to say that Christians tended and still tend to define themselves along a clear narrative of common religious history and a shared space of religious and cultural 'domain' than has been the case in Asia.

and beyond participation in a given belief or faith, only tangible and describable in time and space. And while time, at least since Kant, as a category is accepted as a rather abstract entity which is projected in strings of events called history, space in its concreteness obviously did not undergo the same scrutiny as time, that is, its constructiveness has not been studied, in my view, in a sufficient way. The fact that human societies have to create and negotiate space in the same way as other cultural concepts such as time, beliefs, rituals, and forms of aesthetics seems to deny it its stability and its static 'unchangability'. Appropriating space is a process of ascribing meaning to different places which eventually form a map of structured and hierarchisized sites to which a society as a whole and individuals can socially and religiously refer.

This paper clearly bears in its title a reference to Jonathan Z. Smith's well-known article 'Map is Not Territory'[2] in which he expresses clearly—a standpoint to which I fully ascribe—what religious studies is all about and at the same time demarcates the importance of space filled with meaning for religious traditions:

> Religion is a distinctive mode of human creativity, a creativity which both discovers limits and creates limits for humane existence. What we study when we study religion is the variety of attempts to map, construct and inhabit such positions of power through the use of myths, rituals and experiences of transformation (Smith 1993, 291).

Following Smiths notion of mapping and construction, one could even speak of invention in the sense that places in a cultural context exist only by their having meaning ascribed to them. This paper deals with the interrelation of texts, and specifically narratives, with space and place, presupposing that it is the 'stories' around and about a place which give it its cultural and social meaning. Meaningful places then are able to create mobility in the sense that members of a social, cultural or religious group are motivated to visit these places and participate in the statuses[3] they provide. In a religious context—and eventually even in a self-defined secular environment[4]—this leads to more or less ritualized forms of travel activities called pilgrimage.

I would like to explore two examples of pilgrimage narratives which show that the construction of Sacred Places through the production of text about them is indeed an endeavour which is going beyond cultural and religious frontiers although the forms

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[2] Chapter 13 of Smith 1993 (pp. 289–309) based on his inaugural lecture as a chair of the University of Chicago.

[3] I do not discern here between status in a social sense and religious merit which, seen from a descriptive level, is nothing else than a unit from which religious status is derived either communally or individually.

[4] See, as one of many possible examples, the case of the tomb of Mao Zedong in Beijing, discussed by Rudolf Wagner in Naquin, Yu 1992.

and purposes may differ considerably. The first example is embedded in a purely South Asian context and deals with the way Nepalese Buddhists and Hindus used a kind of common narrative blueprint to provide themselves with a myth of foundation and of self-legitimation, a blueprint that maps common territory. The other example will be the Chinese pilgrims' record on Buddhist India, which mapped foreign territory in order to appropriate it to, and for, Chinese Buddhism.

Time is not an object of direct human experience but must always be processed through and in the mind. In religious discourse time—the time when some soteriologically important events took place—can be made available through different media. A text can describe what happened *in illo tempore*, and a piece of art or a symbol can make these events present or point to them.

The matter is different with the aspect of space as it is experienced through almost all of the senses.[5] Although pieces of material culture have, of course, a spatial aspect, they are only able to refer to the sacred topography in which certain events have taken place.[6] In other words: it is highly improbable that a place of worship or a pilgrimage place—as religiously meaningful loci—will be established without being connected, at one certain point or even more often in history, to a certain event represented by a narrative. It can be assumed that this is even true for cases in which we do not know about the (actual or imagined) event or narrative which prompted the existence of the place. As a kind of paradox, however, space, in contrast to time, is tangible and accessible, which obviously leads to the need for religious beings to experience sacred space. It seems to be space which reassures religious human beings of the reality of these events in the somewhat more vaguely structured flow of time.

Sacred space, then, must be marked by at least knowledge about its topographical features—in a narrative—and/or demarcated by visible signs, architectural structures from very elementary ones like a heap of stones or a wooden pole right up to such elaborate markers as churches, temples or pagodas. The link between the narrative—the invitation to imaginatively visualize space—and the concrete place is very often pilgrimage, which stands as the ultimate and most physical from of contact with space.[7]

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[5] It is this very difference between space and time—despite all Kantian assertions on a philosophical level—which seems to be essential to human experience, as time aspects and concepts in languages are mostly expressed in metaphorically used spatial terms.

[6] For a discussion of the difference of religious and 'scientific' ('wissenschaftlich') conceptions of space, see Michaels 1998, 323ff.

[7] While in the past few decades the aspect of process and liminality (Turner 1974) of pilgrimage has been emphasized and led to a great popularity of the subject and a huge amount of popular and semi-popular publications on pilgrimage to sacred places (Santiago di Compostella, Rome, Buddhist pilgrimage places) this paper will rather concentrate on the 'situal' aspect of pilgrimage which refers the phenomenon to the place or places. In this context there is no difference between a

As can be seen in the case of Medieval Christian pilgrimage, the need of founder religions is to go back to the places where it all happened. The narrative of the life of the founder is projected into the landscape and travelling to these places means reassurance of a religious reality and a higher degree of soteriological participation—the generation of merit (*puṇya*) in Indian terms. Pilgrims wanted to be at the places in and around Jerusalem to experience the presence of the significant past.[8]

In the Buddhist context, the very fact that pilgrimages places exist has an even higher degree of authority and plausibility because of the well-known passage in the canonical[9] *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra* where the Buddha recommends visiting the great sites (*mahāsthāna*) of the four major events in his life: his birth, his enlightenment, the first sermon and the *parinirvāṇa*, as well as the places where his relics would be enshrined in *stūpa*-mounds and venerated by laypeople.[10]

Legitimation for the creation of an increasing number of pilgrimage sites was derived from the activities of the Buddhist monarch *kat exochen*, the Maurya-king

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pilgrimage to one specific place and a complete pilgrimage route, where several places are visited, as e.g. in Japanese Buddhist pilgrimages or the Indian cases discussed by Turner. The focus here is not so much on the function of pilgrimage as on the socio-cultural meaning it has to the pilgrims, and this meaning is very much bound to the 'places of memory' visited during the journey.

[8] In this context the distinction between a locative and a utopian religion, made by Jonathan Z. Smith (1993), is not a very helpful hermeneutic tool as both aspects are—as Kippenberg and von Stuckrad (2003, 123) have emphasized—'inseparably interrelated'. And I would go a step further and claim that finally a utopian religion which refers to a map without territory—as diasporic Judaism—is always the exceptional case and a forced one by circumstances. In India the battle between Hindus and Muslims around the Babri Masjid mosque which nationalistic Hindus claim to be the sacred place of Rāma is a good example of the power of concrete territorialization over the pure imagined narrative map of cultural memory.

[9] Canonical here is to be taken in a relative sense and just refers to the fact that this *sūtra* is incorporated in the *Dīrghāgama* of the Sūtrapiṭaka (*Dīghanikāya* of the Pāli-canon).

[10] *catvārā ime bhikṣavaḥ pṛthivīpradeśāḥ śrāddhasya kulaputrasya kuladuhitur vā yāvajjīvam anusmaraṇīyā bhavanti. Katame catvāraḥ? Iha bhagavāñ jātaḥ; iha bhagavān anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbuddhaḥ; iha bhagavatā triparivartaṃ dvādaśākāraṃ dhārmyaṃ dharmacakraṃ pravartitam; iha bhagavān anupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvṛtaḥ. āgamiṣyanti bhikṣavo mamātyayāc caityaparicārakāś caityavandakās ta evaṃ vakṣyanti: 'Iha bhagavāñ jātaḥ; iha bhagavān anuttarāṃ samyaksaṃbodhim abhisaṃbuddhaḥ; iha bhagavatā triparivartaṃ dvādaśākāraṃ dhārmyaṃ dharmacakraṃ pravartitam; iha bhagavān anupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvṛtaḥ.' atrāntarā ye kecit prasannacittā mamāntike kālaṃ kariṣyanti te sarve svargopagā ye kecit sipadhiśeṣā.* 'There are, o monks, four places on earth, which a believing householder's son, a believing householder's daughter should commemorate as long as they live. Which are those four? Here the Venerable One has been born—here the Venerable One has attained the unsurpassable complete enlightenment—here the Venerable One has turned the threefold-turning, twelve-divisioned wheel of the Law—here the Venerable One has gone to the realm of complete *nirvāṇa*. After my (death), o monks, there will come (people) circumambulating (my) *caitya*s, venerating my *caitya*s, saying: "Here the Venerable One has been born—here the Venerable One has attained the unsurpassable complete enlightenment—here the Venerable One has turned the threefold, twelve lawful wheel of the Law—here the Venerable One has gone to the realm of complete *nirvāṇa*. Whoever (of these) fully appeased in reference to me dies there—all those will all go to heaven with a rest (of karmatic substance)' (Waldschmidt 1950–51, 388, 390).

Aśoka who divided and distributed the eight portions of the relics into 84,000 *stūpa*s and visited the major pilgrimage places of the events in the life of the Buddha and his disciples. This process eventually even led to the inclusion of China in the Buddhist sacred realm as from an early period, Chinese sources refer to Aśoka *stūpa*s found in the Middle Kingdom (Zürcher 1972, 277ff; Sen 2003, 57ff). Until the Tang 唐 period, the Chinese Buddhists had created their own sacred topography with sacred mountains and a major Buddhist deity living on one of them, Mañjuśrī/Wenshushili 文殊師利 or Wutai-shan 五臺山. This pilgrimage place was even able to attract pilgrims and resident monks from India and other places (cf. Sen 2003, 76ff).

Hinduism had, probably from a very early period on, developed a similar concept of sacred geography as the Buddhist tradition,[11] although the textual and archaeological evidence is scant.[12] These sacred sites were not so much marked by historical events but by ominous places (*tīrtha*) and well-established temples. Sooner or later the Hindus could, however, not resist projecting concrete events, taken from mythology,[13] into a pseudo-historicity and therefore looking for a concrete place where they should have occurred. Brindāban (Vrindāvana) in Muttra (Mathurā) as the place where the god Kṛṣṇa spent his childhood and his youth—as described in the *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* and other texts from the Vaiṣṇava-tradition—is one of the most evident examples. One also finds there Buddhist and Jain sacred topography.[14] At the same time, this example shows that a certain region, place or site is not necessarily restricted to the sacred geography of one religion.

In South Asia, the coexistence of Hindu traditions, Buddhism, and Jainism led to a situation which is often described as synchretic,[15] although this term as a meta-definition, without concrete historical contextualization, does not capture the complex reality of religions and their development.[16] Furthermore, that Buddhism disappeared in India proper does not allow us to study the coexistence and mutual influence of both religious traditions in detail and continuity. The parallel of the

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[11] And so would have the Jains although they never seemed to have been as individually concerned with the vita of Mahāvīra Jina as the Buddhists have been with that of their founder.

[12] There is literal evidence that pre-Buddhist shrine cult with pilgrimage-like visits existed: see, e.g., the shrines of the Licchāvis from Vaiśāli mentioned in the *Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*: see Deeg 2004.

[13] Or often myths invented in order to give the places a narrative location in space.

[14] See the relevant articles in Srinivasan 1989. While it is not clear with which narrative Mathurā was connected as a Jain site, the Buddhist story is about the third patriarch Upagupta and his monastery Urumuṇḍa (cf. Strong 1992), which is reported in the *Divyāvadāna* and by Xuanzang: see Deeg 2007b.

[15] See the contributions in Bechert 1978.

[16] On the term and the difficulties to apply it to religious 'realities', see Werblowsky 1987, and Berner 2001; applied to Buddhism in an anthropological way, see David Gellner's 'For Syncretism: The Position of Buddhism in Nepal and Japan Compared' (chapter 14), in Gellner 2001, 319–35.

interaction between Jainism and Sinhalese Buddhism and the Hindu traditions,[17] however, allows us to assume a similar situation for the case of Buddhism in early and late medieval India. In fact, art historical, archaeological, and even, to a certain extent, textual evidence demonstrate a considerable amount of overlap in the so-called folk-religious spheres.[18]

What seems to characterize the Indian situation is a constant process of borrowing and retrieving from a common pool of 'cultural memory' which clearly can be seen at work in the narratives of the different religious traditions.[19] As these narratives often—if not always—were sooner or later related to some concrete topography, the construction of sacred space frequently was a matter of mapping common space—or in Jonathan Z. Smith's terminology, 'territory'—meaning that a certain site was ascribed a specific narrative, either the same or a different one for the respective religious tradition.

In the first part of this paper, I will discuss two examples of this 'filling' of a common space or territory with Buddhist and Hindu (religious) meaning, the foundation myths of Kaśmīr and of Nepal.[20] In both cases Buddhist and Hindu traditions used a structurally similar narrative[21] in order to explain the religious significance of the place and structure it topographically. They are thus mapping common or shared ground.

I will start with the textually older narrative, the Kaśmīran foundation legend. Its Hindu version is preserved in the *Nīlamatapurāṇa* and referred to in the medieval Kaśmīran chronicle *Rājātaraṅgiṇī* by Kalhāṇa; the Buddhist version is found in Xuanzang's 玄奘 *Xiyu-ji* 西域記.

The *Nīlamatapurāṇa* is a text belonging to the genre of Mahātmya,[22] describing sacred places and the events linked to them, and it is thus very detailed in its description. For the sake of brevity, I give Aurel Stein's paraphrase of the plot of the main narrative:

> ... the lake called Satīsaras, 'the lake of Satī (Durgā)', occupied the place of Kaśmīr from the beginning of the Kalpa. In the period of the seventh Manu the demon Jalodbhava ('water-

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[17] See Holt 2004 and the relevant chapters in Gombrich, Obeyesekere 1988.

[18] This has already been demonstrated by such early works as Fergusson 1868, and, for the *nāga*s, Vogel 1926. For the impact of folk religion on Buddhism see DeCaroli 2004. In my forthcoming work (forthcoming a) on Buddhist foundation myths, I will try to demonstrate how some of the Hindu and Buddhist *nāga* legends in North Indian areas like Gandhāra, Kaśmīr and Nepal may well go back to a very early Vedic prototype (Indra/Vṛtra).

[19] I have demonstrated this for one example, the legend of the Buddhist *stūpa* of 'Laying down the Bows' and its Jain and Hindu parallels, in Deeg 2004.

[20] For a trans-regional and full discussion of the legends, see Deeg forthcoming a.

[21] I will not enter into a discussion of which tradition has taken over from the other or if there was a common source. This will be discussed at length in Deeg forthcoming a.

[22] On the different aspects of the *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, see Ikari 1994.

born') who resided in this lake, caused great distress to all neighbouring countries by his devastations. The Muni Kaśyapa, the father of all Nāgas, while engaged in a pilgrimage to the Tīrthas in the north of India, heard of the cause of this distress from his son Nīla, the king of the Kaśmīr Nāgas. The sage thereupon promised to punish the evil-doer, and proceeded to the seat of Brahman to implore his and the other gods' help for the purpose. His prayer was granted. The whole host of gods by Brahman's command started for the Satīsaras and took up their position on the lofty peaks of the Naubandhana Tīrtha, above the lake Kramasaras (Kōnsᵃrnāg). The demon who was invincible in his own element, refused to come forth from the lake. Viṣṇu thereupon called upon his brother Balabhadra to drain the lake. This he effected by piercing the mountains with his weapon, the plough-share. When the lake had become dry, Jalodbhava was attacked by Viṣṇu, and after a fierce combat slain with the god's war-disc. Kaśyapa then settled the land of Kaśmīr which had thus been produced. The gods took up their abodes in it as well as the Nāgas, while the various goddesses adorned the land in the shape of rivers. At first men dwelt in it for six months only in the year. This was owing to a curse of Kaśyapa who, angered by the Nāgas, had condemned them to dwell for the other six months together with the Piṣācas. Accordingly men left Kaśmīr for the six months of winter and returned annually in Caitra when the Piśācas withdrew. Ultimately after four Yugas had passed, the Brahman Candradeva through the Nīlanāga's favour acquired a number of rites which freed the country from the Piśācas and excessive cold. Henceforth Kaśmīr became inhabitable throughout the year (Stein 1900, 2: 388).

What is presented as a struggle between threatening forces, the *nāga* Jalodbhava and the cultivating action of the seer (*ṛṣi*), Kaśyapa is transformed in the Buddhist legend, reported by several Indian sources in different versions and by Xuanzang, into an act of Buddhist conversion and cultivation at the same time.[23] Here it is the Buddhist patriarch Madhyantaka who visits the region and subdues the *nāga* and who frees the water in the Kaśmīr valley in order to conquer the land for human population.[24] Both versions of the legend have a clear common agenda, the mapping of a common territory, the central valley of Kaśmīr.[25] As expected for a Purāṇa, a complete descriptive list of *tīrtha*s is embedded in the *Nīlamatapurāṇa* while the Buddhist version, at least as we have it, is missing this list.

Now a similarly structured legend as the one just reported for Kaśmīr is found in the well-known foundation legend of Nepāl found in Buddhist and Hindu forms.[26]

The Buddhist text is the *Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa*,[27] which shows its 'hybridity' already in the title, using the classical Hindu genre-term *purāṇa*. It is preserved in several versions in different lengths. The earliest versions of the text probably were compiled

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[23] See Deeg forthcoming a, chapter 'Kaśmīr'.

[24] For a detailed discussion, see Funayama 1994.

[25] On Kaśmīr's history, see the recent article by Slaje 2005.

[26] Brough (1948) already mentioned the similarity between the Nepalese, Kaśmīran and Khotanese foundation legends.

[27] On the different versions of the *Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa*, see Brinkhaus 1993. On the foundation myth and its possible origin, cp. Von Rospatt 2007.

between the 13th and the 16th century,[28] although it cannot be excluded that the narrative nucleus, the foundation legend, and some other episodes go back to an older strand.

In the chapters of the text, it is first described how the primordial lake in the valley of Kathmandu over whose surface the Buddha-substance in the form of light (*jyotīrūpa*) is hovering is transformed into cultivated land by the intervention of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who arrives from China to cut a gap into the southern mountain rim of the valley and release the water of the lake. Mañjuśrī then has to grant the *nāga* Karkoṭaka, who had lived in the lake, a refuge in the form of a smaller lake. The Buddha-light, identified with the 'Ur-Buddha' (Ādibuddha) in the Tantric versions of the text and in the present Nepalese interpretation, has to be protected and enshrined in a *caitya*, the central sacred site in the valley, the Svayaṃbhū-caitya. This legend has become the master-narrative of the Kathmandu Valley, repeated and alluded to in several literary traditions of the region. In its present form it appears—not only as a consequence of its title, purāṇa—in a Hinduized shape: the fifth chapter (*pariccheda*) is indeed called *Tīrthavarṇana*, 'Description of the Tīrthas', and gives a detailed description of the sacred places in the valley.

The concurrent narrative in the Hindu tradition is found in two texts, the *Nepālamahātmya*, which is claimed to be a part of the voluminous *Skandapurāṇa*, and the *Paśupatipurāṇa*, a text closely related to the foremost Hindu pilgrimage site in the valley, the Paśupatināth Temple.[29] I will here concentrate on the first text, the *Nepālamahātmya*, in which the story of opening up the valley and of releasing the water is presented embedded in a structurally different narrative which, however, still shows features common with the Buddhist legend. The story relates that the demon (*asura*) blocks the opening of the valley and thereby floods it because he is denied the hand of the goddess. The Hindu gods, under the direction of the seer, have to fight against the demon who assumes the form of a giant turtle (*kacchapa*). At the end, Viṣṇu is successful in defeating and killing the demon, and the waters of the river Vāgmatī are released again and order, in the form of the pilgrimage structure of the *tīrtha*s and their respective festivals, is restored.

The juxtaposition of both legends and the specific socio-political context of the Kathmandu Valley, and Nepal as a kingdom, after the conquest by the Gorkhā rulers at the end of the 18th century have obviously led to a peculiar fusion of both narratives, that is to say the Buddhist and the Hindu ones. This is the so-called *Buddhavaṃśāvalī*, the 'Buddhist Chronicle', written in Nepālī and already made known to a Western

[28] On a more general context of literary production in Nepal in the respective period, see Tuladhar-Douglas 2006.

[29] On a detailed study of these two texts, see Brinkhaus 1987.

readership by the English translation of the Nevār paṇḍit Amṛtānanda by Wright (1877). Here the 'author' obviously tried to incorporate and combine both narrative traditions in one harmonized or synoptisized text.[30]

What is common in both the Kaśmīran and Nepalese context—beside the similarities in structure and motives of the narratives[31]—is that the region is appropriated and the places are mapped by the Hindu and Buddhist tradition by means of a master narrative, a foundation legend, in which a clear sacred topography is constructed. This process of appropriation leads to a 'sacred map' of its own and is, at least in part, common to both the Hindu and the Buddhist tradition. In this way the construction of space in a multireligious situation construed enough narrative difference for the respective tradition to keep its own identity but kept the 'real' space open for the participation of more than one tradition.

In the second part of this paper, I would like to present examples in which the presentation of topography in a religious framework transgresses religious, cultural and political boundaries. This is usually the case when religions with a strong consciousness of a topographical centre—usually so-called 'founder-religions'—are transferred into different regions. This kind of situation poses different tasks for those who are mapping culturally foreign but religiously well-known territory. This obviously has been the case with Christianity and its focus on the Holy Land and Jerusalem and Islam with its religious centre Mecca bound into prescribed religious practice, the Hajj. Wherever these religions were spread, they drew their identity to a high degree from the narratives and the topography of these central locations. Other cases are diasporic religions which can, but do not necessarily, refer to a place of origin such as is the case in diasporic Judaism in its relation to Jerusalem[32] and the land of the Torah.

When Buddhism spread to the regions beyond the Central-Gangetic Plain, Madhyadeśa, where the Buddha had preached and lived, there obviously was a need to integrate these regions into the sacred topography of the religion as quickly as possible. This was often done by a narrative of the visit of the Buddha in this region (Śrī Laṅkā, Gandhāra, Mathurā, Khotan) or by the arrival of an eminent Buddhist personality (Śrī Laṅkā, Mathurā, Kaśmīr, Tibet) or a relic (Gandhāra, Śrī Laṅkā).[33]

In the case of Buddhism in China, the situation is slightly different as Buddhism here came to a realm with a well-established cultural and political identity of its

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[30] Like in the gospel-harmonies of the early medieval period in Europe.

[31] Again I have to refer to Deeg forthcoming a.

[32] The case of Jerusalem is a good example how the relative inaccessibility of the concrete space changes the view of the site and creates a rather transcendent and soteriologically distant 'topos'.

[33] On Buddhist relics in general see Strong 2004. On relics in Śrī Laṅkan Theravāda Buddhism cf. Trainor 1997.

own. The new religion was in a defensive situation as it had to legitimize itself on different levels: religious, social and political.[34] Integration of China within the Buddhist topography was not achieved as easily as was the case in other regions where Buddhism claimed to have brought stability and order to, or even to have 'civilized', the regions into which it spread. As far as I know, there has never been an attempt to develop a legend of a visit by the Buddha to the Middle Kingdom.

China could only claim a form of participation in Buddhist sacred geography, and indeed did so, by claiming that some of the relic-*stūpa*s erected by Aśoka were to be found on Chinese soil and thus that China had thus been included in the inner cosmological realm of Jambudvīpa.[35] This claim, however, was never strong enough to create real Buddhist pilgrimage places in spite of the obvious efforts from the Buddhist side to propagate the Aśoka legend in order to be able to claim some of his 84,000 *stūpa*s to be on or in Chinese soil.[36] It was in the framework of the Mahāyāna pantheon that one of the Chinese Buddhist sacred mountains could claim the presence of a Buddhist saviour, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī on Wutai-shan. Legends around miraculous encounters with the bodhisattva arose, which themselves became the basis of a complex structure of pilgrimage places on the mountain. The mountain became so prominent in the Buddhist world that it obviously was 'exported' into some other regions: the Nepalese *Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa* identifies the 'Five-peaked-mountain', Pañcaśikhaparvata (= Wutai-shan), as the place on which Mañjuśrī is living.[37]

Generally speaking the strategy of Chinese Buddhists to incorporate themselves in Buddhist territory was that of participation in a distant sacred topography, at the beginning this was achieved mainly by means of literary sources and from information gleaned from foreigners. The Chinese were interested in getting access to the *dharma* by authentic sources, and the question of access to the sacred sites remained a secondary one until probably the fourth century when the monk-scholar Shi Daoan 釋道安 (312–385) showed a stronger interest in Buddhist sacred geography.[38] He obviously collected material on Buddhist India, especially on sacred sites in Magadha and on relics in other areas in India like Gandhāra,[39] and produced 'Memoirs of the Western Regions', Xiyu-zhi 西域志, which is, unfortunately, now lost (cf. Zürcher

[34] Cf. Zürcher 1972; on the Daoist-Buddhist controversies, see Deeg 2003.

[35] On the inclusion of China in the Buddhist cosmological view, see Deeg 1999.

[36] On these proto-archaeological attempts, see Zürcher 1972, 277ff, and on Aśoka in China cf. Shinohara 1992, and Deeg forthcoming b.

[37] Although the text is not completely stringent in this respect, stating in several places that Mañjuśrī is living on his mountain in China (Mahācīna), it clearly shows that the importance of Wutai-shan reflected into other regions as well: on this see Deeg forthcoming a.

[38] On Daoan see Zürcher 1972, 184ff, and Tsukamoto 1985, 655ff.

[39] On his preoccupation with the famous 'shadow of the Buddha' in a cave near Nagarahāra (Haḍḍa in the south-east of modern Afghanistan) (cf. Zürcher 1972, 223ff).

1972, 224). This work, however, very likely fired the imagination of Chinese Buddhists who wanted to visit the places described in this work—and maybe in others of which even the names and titles are lost. Shortly after Daoan's death, monks undertook the hard and dangerous journey across the Central-Asian deserts and the high mountain ranges separating China from South Asia. One of these early travellers who mapped well-known yet foreign territory and left us the only travelogue from this early period was Faxian 法顯 (360–ca. 425?),[40] although there were evidently more monks who travelled to India and back. (Deeg 2005)

The most famous of these Chinese traveller-monks was certainly Xuanzang (603?–664) who travelled through Central Asia and India between the years 629 and 645. In the year 646, shortly after his return from India, he submitted to the Tang emperor Taizong 唐太宗 his extensive report on the regions and kingdoms he had travelled through, the *Xiyu-ji* 西域記, 'Records of the Western Regions', a text which is, in its early Western translations,[41] one of the most used—and one is tempted to say: misused—sources for Buddhist India.

The *Xiyu-ji* and the other Buddhist travelogues are certainly mapping foreign territory in so far as they mainly deal with Central Asian and South Asian regions. They are, however, not mapping completely unknown 'territory' as the Buddhist travellers already knew a good deal about a—be it idealized—Buddhist India from the Buddhist texts which had already been translated into Chinese.

In the case of Xuanzang, the writing of his records had a double purpose: it was written for the Chinese emperor and meant to provide a complete description of the Western Regions, adding to the places which Xuanzang had actually visited and to what he had really seen pieces of information collected from hearsay. The completeness of the stereotypical description of the regions in Buddhist India is obviously following the pattern of the geographic sections (*Dili-zhuan* 地理傳) found in the traditional Chinese historiographies from Sima Qian's 司馬遷 *Shiji* 史記, 'Records of the Historian', onwards. Thus pre-Buddhist genres, in Xuanzang's case, were configuring accounts of sacred topography althouth there was also a certain element of reconnaissance activity reflected in the text which was and is read by modern scholars mainly as a religious text. This is seen in the passages where Xuanzang gives concrete data about the physical size, constitution, economic condition, government, population, and customs of a region before he goes into details about the religious institutions and places and the legends and stories connected with them. As two examples for a

[40] On this dating see Deeg 2005, 22ff.

[41] The earliest translation was made into French by Stanislas Julien 1857–58, on which the still mainly used English translation of Samuel Beal (1884) was based. For a complete list of translations into Western languages and into Japanese, see Deeg 2005, 650ff.

Central Asian and a Central Indian region, I give the description of Kuča/Quzhi 屈支 and of Magadha/Mojietuo 摩揭陀:

> The kingdom of Kuča (measures) about 1000 *li*[42] from east to west (and) about 600 *li* from south to north. The great capital of the kingdom has a circumference of seventeen to eighteen *li*. The land is suitable for millet; there is wheat and round-corned rice, and it produces grapes, pomegranates, plenty of pears, apples, peaches and apricots; (from its) soil gold, copper, iron, lead and tin is mined. The seasons are mild and the customs (of the people) are simple. The script is modelled after the Indian but has been changed to a cruder form. Their musical performance on wind and string instruments excels all (the other) kingdoms. (Their) garments are (made) of brocade and simple cloth, (people) cut their hair and wear a piece of cloth on their head. As money they use gold and silver coins and small copper coins. The king is of Kuča origin; his wisdom and (administrative) abilities are restricted (and he) is controlled by a powerful official. It is the custom (of the people) to mark the heads of their new-born children who have come to age with a (piece of) wood in the hope (that their family) spreads widely.[43] There are about 100 monasteries and about 5,000 monks who study the Hīnayāna of the Sarvāstivādin; the teaching of their *sūtra*s and the rules of their monastic code is following the Indian (ones) and what they read and learn are the original (Indian scriptures). They hold the gradual teaching in esteem (but) deliberately eat three kinds of pure (meat).[44] They are pure and devoted, and people compete in making donations (and getting merit).[45]

The kingdom of Magadha has a circumference of about 5000 *li*. In the cities there are (only) a few inhabitants, (while) the townships have a lot of registered households. The soil is fertile and generates good harvests. There is a special kind of rice whose

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[42] *li* 里: Chinese mile, ca. 650 m in the Tang period.

[43] This sentence '其俗生子以木押頭，欲其遍遞也' has been uniformly translated from the first French translation by Stanislas Julien (1857–1858) onwards as meaning that the Kučeans flatten their head with a wooden board, while the second half—欲其遍遞也—has been omitted completely in most translations. The meaning of this custom is certainly debatable: shengzi 生子 in Chinese also can refer to a (male) child who has come to age (ca. 15, 16 years old). What is meant exactly with Xuanzang's description is not clear but it seems to express that the Kučeans marked the heads of the (probably male) children in order to indicate the family or clan affiliation to make sure that it was recognized.

[44] This again emphasizes that the Kučean *saṅgha* was Hīnayāna but with certain Mahāyāna elements doctrinally—the gradual teaching, *jianjiao* 漸教, moving from Hīnayāna to Mahāyāna—but Hīnayānin in practice as the members still ate meat pure in three respects (*sanjing* 三淨): the monks did not see or hear that the animal had been killed for their partaking and had no doubt about it.

[45] The term (yi)gong-jing (以)功競 seems to be a hapax legomenon. Li Rongxi 1996, 22, translates '… and they [the monks—M.D.] compete with one another in their achievement of spiritual cultivation', but it clearly refers to a different subject ren 人 in the second phrase; gong 功 is either to be taken in the sense of *gongyang* 功養, 'to donate', or *gongde* 功德, 'merit'.

T.2087.870a.17ff. (punctuation following Ji Xianlin 1985, 54) 屈支國東西千餘里，南北六百餘里。國大都城周十七八里。宜糜麥，有粳稻，出蒲萄，石榴，多梨，柰，桃，杏。土產黃金，銅，鐵，鉛，錫。氣序和，風俗質。文字取則印度，粗有改變。管絃伎樂，特善諸國。服飾錦褐，斷髮巾帽。貨用金錢，銀錢，小銅錢。王，屈支種也，智謀寡昧，迫於強臣。其俗生子以木押頭，欲其遍遞也。伽藍百餘所，僧徒五千餘人，習學小乘教說一切有部。經教律儀，取則印度，其習讀者，即本文矣。尚拘漸教，食雜三淨。潔清耽翫，人以功競。

grain is very big, with a special taste and a special colour; it is commonly called 'rice for eminent persons'. The land is flat and moist, and the settlements are on plateaus. After the first month of summer and before the second month of autumn the (normally) safe dwellings are (flooded) by the water and one can go around by boats. The customs are simple and pure, and the climate is warm and hot. (People) have esteem for learning and venerate the dharma of the Buddha. There are about fifty monasteries and more than 10,000 monks who are mostly dedicated to the dharma-teaching of the Mahāyāna. There are dozens of *deva*-temples and the heretics are indeed numerous.[46]

Another important aspect of the Xiyu-ji and other reports, such as those by Faxian, Song Yun 宋雲 or Huisheng 慧生,[47] and Huichao 慧超 (惠超)[48] (and the ones not preserved) are their Chinese Buddhist context. This is, unfortunately, a point which is permanently under-stressed in the use and discussion of these texts but is a vital one for a correct understanding of the reports as pieces of literature in their own right and of their value as historical and descriptive sources.

The Chinese background and experience of Buddhism place the pilgrim records in a specific intentional context which is connected with the propagandistic-apologetic agenda of Chinese Buddhism. It had to defend itself against the attacks of autochthonous Chinese critics that aimed at undermining the credibility of the religion by means of questioning its Indian historical reality. Questions such as whether the Buddha had really lived and whether the events recorded in the Buddhist scriptures had actually taken place as described were raised and the Buddhists had to react. The travelogues of the pilgrims were vital instruments for showing that these places really existed and that there were still traces (Chin. *ji* 跡 or *yiji* 遺跡) of the historicity of the religious narratives. In this context, architectural remains like the *stūpa*s (Faxian: *ta* 塔; Xuanzang: *sudubo* 窣堵波) mentioned over and over again, and more scarcely, but with a higher degree of legitimating power, the relics (*śarīra*, Chin. *sheli* 舍利), by Faxian, Song Yun, Xuanzang,[49] Huichao and Wukong 武空 (traveled in India

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[46] T.2087.910c.7ff. (punctuation following Ji Xianlin 1985: 619ff.) 摩揭陀國周五千餘里，城少居人，邑多編戶。地沃壤，滋稼穡，有異稻種，其粒麁大，香味殊越，光色特甚，彼俗謂之供大人米。土地墊濕，邑居高原。孟夏之後，仲秋之前，平居流水，可以泛舟。風俗淳質，氣序溫暑。崇重志學，遵敬佛法。伽藍五十餘所，僧徒萬有餘人，並多宗習大乘法教。天祠數十，異道寔多。

[47] Song Yun, an official envoy of the Wei-court 魏, and his monastic companion Huisheng traveled through Central Asia and Northwest India (Gandhāra) at the beginning of the 6th century; large portions of Song Yun's report are preserved in the *Luoyang-jialan-ji* 洛陽伽藍記, 'Records of the Monasteries of Luoyang'; cf. Deeg 2007a.

[48] On Huichao (traveled in India before 727) and his travel report on Central India, Northwest India, and Central Asia, see Yang Han-Sung et. al. 1984.

[49] I omit here Yijing's 義淨 'description' of monastic life in India, *Nanhai-jigui-neifa-zhuan* 南海寄歸內法傳, and his collection of short biographies of monks who traveled to India in search of

between 751 and 790) (see Lévi, Chavannes 1895) which marked certain legends and stories in a concrete spatial form, were essential. It is these narratives, so well-known to Chinese Buddhists, which structure the landscape, and mapping them was certainly one important motive for writing the travelogues.

Describing distant foreign regions in Chinese Buddhist travelogues and thereby mapping them served different purposes than in the Hindu-Buddhist context. While the latter texts and contexts gave narrative explanation for why the place had become a Buddhist or Hindu realm in the first place and why the network of pilgrimage places was there, the Chinese texts were meant to show that these places did exist as they were known by name in Buddhist literature. The intention was to show that that they were real and actual places and that this could be demonstrated by the visits of real persons, visits by which one could gain access to spheres of religious merits (*puṇya*). India here was the idealized Buddhist region. The Chinese texts under consideration in this paper supported, corroborated, and—in Xuanzang's case—finalized the 'mental map'[50] of the region which the Chinese were already aware of through the Buddhist texts in translation. The records of the Chinese Buddhist travellers thus share more with the medieval pilgrim records to the Holy Land than with the South Asian Mahātmya-literature shared by Hindus and Buddhists. In this way we can see the diverse functional capacities of the literary construction of place and the dependency of literary function on considerations of historical, linguistic, institutional and typological context which might be found—I would suppose—in most other cultural environments in a similar way as in the ones presented here in this volume.

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the Dharma, *Datang-qiufa-gaoseng-zhuan* 大唐求法高僧傳, as the former is not a travelogue as such and not concerned with Buddhist places, narratives or pilgrimage, and the latter is about the individuals rather than a description of India.

[50] This term is taken from Smith 1986, 25f.

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