

Abstract

Kumarajiva in China: From war booty to *Rajyaguru*

Dr. B R Deepak, Associate Professor, Centre of Chinese and Southeast Asian Studies

The paper explores civilizational dialogue between India and China by expounding the two most important elements of this interface, the material and spiritual exchanges between the two ancient civilizations, and establishes that Buddhism acted as an umbrella for all spiritual linkages between India and China. It argues that Buddhism being world's earliest missionary religion, it was natural that the missionary zeal would take it to the boundaries beyond India. Equally important for its success was the Chinese response, that resulted in a number of waves of Indian scholar monks going to China and Chinese monks coming to India. The study puts Kumarajiva, as a part of the second wave of the Indian scholar monks travelling to China. It then delves into exploring Kumarajiva's life in Kucha and how he ended up being treated as a war booty twice by Chinese monarchs due to his invaluable political capital; his arrival in Chang'an; initiating the sutra translation work, and his elevation to the highest position of *Rajyaguru* by Yao Xing. The paper concludes that irrespective of breaking *sila* of celibacy twice, Kumarajiva was undoubtedly the brightest of all the scholar monks whether Indian or Chinese.