

Faxian had been living in Chang'an. Deploring the mutilated and imperfect state of the collection of the Books of Discipline....he [decided to] go to India and seek for the disciplinary Rules....

[Faxian and his companions began to cross the] desert [before them], in which there are many evil demons and hot winds. [Travellers] who encounter them perish all to a man. There is not a bird to be seen in the air above, nor an animal on the ground below. Though you look all round most earnestly to find where you can cross, you know not where to make your choice, the only mark and indication being the dry bones of the dead [left upon the sand].....

Yu-teen [Khotan] is a pleasant and prosperous kingdom, with a numerous and flourishing population. The inhabitants all profess our Law, and join together in its religious music for their enjoyment. ...

The lord of the country lodged Faxian and the others comfortably, and supplied their wants, in a monastery called Gomati, of the Mahayana school. Attached to it there are three thousand monks, who are called to their meals by the sound of a bell....

The monks [in northern India] asked Faxian if it could be known when the Law of Buddha first went to the east. He replied, 'When I asked the people of those countries about it, they all said that it had been handed down by their fathers from of old that, after the setting up of the image of Maitreya Bodhisattva, there were sramans of India who crossed this river, carrying with them sutras and Books of Discipline.'

-Original written by Faxian or other Chinese Buddhist scribe, ca. 414, translated into English by James Legge in 1886 and modernized by Daniel C. Waugh in 1999, "A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms Being an Account by the Chinese Monk Fa-Hien of His Travels in India and Ceylon (A.D. 399-414) in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline" (Original written in ca. 414, translated in 1886 and 1999) excerpt.