INTRODUCTION

In view of the extent to which both China and South-east Asia have experienced the cultural influences of India, it would seem that a comparative study — from the point of view of the responses made by the influenced civilizations — has much to commend it. "One has considerable sympathy for the scholar, whether orientalist or historian, who prefers to cultivate his own field without bothering about what is over the fence. Nevertheless I think it is highly desirable that scholars in each discipline should occasionally look over the fence or even try to break it down, so as to restore in the world of the imagination the continuity of the real world, which never ceases to exist however much we compartmentalise our knowledge."¹ These words, coming from a sinologue, may perhaps be construed as an invitation to students of South-east Asia to avail themselves of the vast amount of evidence accumulated by sinology on this matter of common interest: Indianization. And I would make so bold as to suggest that such a comparative study will not be without mutual benefit.

Before such fence-breaking could be attempted on any considerable scale there existed until recently one or two obstacles that had to be removed. The first was the common assumption, fostered by the extreme Indianists, that virtually every aspect of civilization in the Indianized states of South-east Asia had undergone more or less thorough Indianization, that they were in fact Indian cultural colonies. By those standards the impossibility of considering China on the same plane as "Greater India"

seemed absurdly self-evident. The second major obstacle was that Chinese studies had not yet gone so far as to provide adequate comprehensive surveys of the overwhelming mass of accumulated material, which would act as introductions to anyone approaching the inquiry from the South-east Asian side of the fence, and which would also serve as guides to further reading.

Overcoming the first obstacle involved absorbing and recognizing the truth of van Leur’s novel proposition, first enunciated in regard to early Indonesia; but equally applicable to the rest of Indianized South-east Asia: “Hindu [i.e. Indian] cultural influence had to do only with sacral rites and ritual, and also literature and government techniques which had a consecrated magical character.” Social and legal aspects of Indian culture could make little appeal, most of South-east Asian technology was the result of adaptation to contemporary or previous environment, and indeed there were wide fields of human endeavour in which local usage remained supreme. Once this limitation is conceded we begin to see that the Indianization process in South-east Asia and in China can be regarded as cognate, and that therefore comparisons may prove fruitful. Yet anyone at all familiar with oriental civilizations must immediately add that van Leur’s dictum can be interpreted in no narrow spirit, for where is the aspect of life in these traditional cultures that is not in some degree affected by religion and magic?

A few indications which we have of the sort of Indian influences in China which we might regard as secular, but which would certainly not have been so regarded in that place and time, may be alluded to here, since there is insufficient information to follow up their fate in the body of this book. That the Śāstrās, or Indian text-books, played a part in the Indianization process of South-east Asia has

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long been suggested, and sometimes exaggerated, but for China the supposition rests on definite evidence, although the śāstras themselves have long been lost, so that exact knowledge of their contents is lacking. However a list of Brahmanical works (each beginning with the word Po-lo-mên or Brahman), which had been translated into Chinese, is known from their mention in the bibliographical catalogue in the history of the Sui dynasty. These include the Po-lo-mên Thien Wên Ching (Brahman Astronomical Manual), Po-lo-mên SuanFa (Brahman Mathematics), Po-lo-mên Yao Fang (Brahman Pharmaceutics); also a Hsi-Yü Ming I so chi Yao Fang (the Best Prescriptions collected by the most famous Physicians of the Western Countries),¹ the latter probably at least partly of Indian origin. How these came to be modified in China, or whether the loss is partly due to ultimate rejection we do not know.

During the T'ang dynasty the Chinese were certainly influenced by Indian ideas in astronomy and calendrical matters: Yang Ching-fang, a disciple of the Indian missionary Amoghavajra, wrote in 764: "Those who wish to know the positions of the five planets adopt Indian calendrical methods. One can thus predict what Hsiu (heavenly mansion) a planet will be traversing. So we have the three clans of Indian calendar experts, Chiayeh (Kāśyapa), Chhuthan (Gautama), and Chumolo (Kumāra), all of whom held offices in the Bureau of Astronomy."² From this we see how Indian astronomers (or astrologers) were advising at the Chinese capital, at a time when we cannot doubt that they were also present at the courts of South-east Asian rulers. As to the particular clans mentioned, we know that it was a member of the Kāśyapa clan who made the calendar for 665, and one of

the Gautama clan for the years 697 and 698. Gautama Siddhartha was the most famous of all these Indian astronomers, and he wrote a treatise on astrology in 729 containing a translation of an Indian calendar. The Kumāra clan worked in association with the most famous T'ang astronomer I-Hsing (682–727) who closely calculated the magnitude of the sidereal year fraction.¹

In medicine the Indian theory that a healthy condition of the body results from the four elements of which it consists, earth, water, fire and air, all being in a proper state of equilibrium, was introduced to China, as is shown by the writings of the seventh century T'ang physician Sun Ssu-miao. He wrote that a successful physician must base his knowledge not only on Confucian and Taoist theory but also on Buddhist medical works, for only those would enable one to appreciate the healing power of love and compassion.² A Chinese noble named King-sheng left a work named Che ch' an ping pi yao fa, which he translated in A.D. 455, apparently from Indian sources, which deals with cures for diseases which may result from the practice of meditation. It includes a description of the nervous system and deals with the treatment of nervous and heart diseases which may result from the shock of disturbance during meditation. It was in the T'ang period that emperors seem to have been particularly anxious to secure from India or Central Asia the services of Brahmins reputed as thaumaturges, and able to reduce the effects of old age.³ Finally, it appears that "Indian music came through Kucha to China just before the Sui period, and had a great vogue there in the hands of exponents such as Tshao Miao-Ta, a man of Brahmanical origin".⁴ From these examples it may be concluded that

² Ch'en, op. cit., p. 482.
the recognition that Indian influences were confined to matters of religion and magic has to be construed in a sufficiently wide manner.

I now come to the second obstacle that had to be overcome before a comparative study could be broached, the availability of books making more readily accessible the vast yield of sinological scholarship. And here I gladly acknowledge that but for the chance reading of Professor Arthur F. Wright’s *Buddhism in Chinese History*, Stanford, 1959, I should probably never have recognized that such a study was now ripe to be made. These six lectures proved most stimulating, as did his suggestions for further reading, especially the indispensable article by Paul Demiéville “La Pénétration du Bouddhisme dans la tradition philosophique chinoise”, a brilliant exposition to which Professor Wright himself expresses his indebtedness. For the pre-Indianized civilization of China, especially religious Taoism, the well-known works of Henri Maspero furnished all the material desired. For the history of Chinese Buddhism, a scholarly and comprehensive work, *Buddhism in China*, by Kenneth K. S. Ch’en, appeared in 1964, just as I was realizing that that great stand-by Sir Charles Eliot’s *Hinduism and Buddhism* would no longer meet my need.

In the field of art I was fortunate in having the authoritative and well-illustrated treatise of Sickman and Soper, *The Art and Architecture of China*, second edition, London, 1960. If I say that this has much of the value, if not the refinement of detail, of Ph. Stern’s works on Cham and Khmer art, many readers will at once recognize the great importance that I attach to it. This is not to deny that for more ample material than could possibly be included within the covers of a general survey I have found it necessary to peruse the older publications, and where sculpture is concerned this means the basic works of Oswald Sirén. Here I may mention the
very agreeable surprise that awaited me, both in these art books and in K. Ch’en’s *Buddhism in China*, namely to find that full and unhesitating recognition was accorded to the important part played by the continuing effect of the pre-Indianized Chinese civilization in the development of Chinese Buddhist thought and art. Perhaps this was to be expected in view of the relatively full documentation of this previous civilization; whereas in South-east Asia the continuing activity of the pre- and proto-historic civilization has had to be established often on the strength of very indirect evidence, and in face of entrenched opposition from the extreme Indianists. To find that my task here would be lightened in this vital respect was certainly very encouraging.

In the evolution of Chinese Buddhist art this continuing effect of the pre-Indianized civilization is no doubt most clearly revealed from T’ang to Yüan times in the architecture and architectural decoration of the pagodas, for architecture is less subject to canonical control than is deity sculpture; but this is less of a difficulty here than I found to be the case in Indo-Javanese sculpture, where Indian influences during several centuries were more intense. If I consider here primarily the sculpture, regarding the other two art forms architecture and painting as subsidiary, this is because I have found that the sculptural evidence is more abundant and more accessible, both to see and to illustrate. Since I attached an importance to first hand acquaintance with my subject matter, comparable to what I have had for many years with the sculpture of South-east Asia, as part of this study I made tours of the principal museum collections of Chinese art both in Europe and in America. Much of the finest work in the American collections can be referred to in the illustrations accompanying the above mentioned publication of Sickman and Soper, from which I shall not hesitate to quote whenever it seems advisable to give the reader what will be readily
accepted as an authoritative and disinterested opinion. The sculptures here reproduced are those which seem best to illustrate the main developments, but to a certain extent it has been possible to introduce an element of variety by choosing examples different from those used by Sickman.

From the point of view of South-east Asia this comparative study has two main objectives. Firstly, it is proposed to show that many features of the cultural evolution in the Indianized states of South-east Asia may be interpreted on the basis of Chinese analogy, this interpretation often giving support to the conclusions I have previously drawn from the South-east Asian evidence. Such analogy has hitherto been applied to only one or two matters, to the prehistoric cult of Earth by Mus and Coedès, and, perhaps more significantly as suggesting an approach to the whole question of the Indianization process, by Bosch in regard to the effects of pilgrimage. But, unfortunately, as we shall see in the latter part of Chapter 1, this hopeful start was stultified by its author who, instead of following his initiative, immediately ousted it by his preconceived notions. This would have been almost automatically corrected had a more thorough investigation been allowed to proceed, such as I hope to make here. Secondly, where at present evidence is altogether lacking in South-east Asia which would give grounds for deductions on the basis of Chinese analogy, I hope to point to directions in which the Chinese indications suggest that further research might prove rewarding.

Were one to confine one’s reading to the more popular works on Chinese civilization, especially those which avoid considering the development of each aspect of it, one would not be surprised to find oneself fobbed off, where Indianization is concerned, with a trouble-saving explanation in terms of mixture, fusion or hybridization. This is
also what one encounters all too commonly in regard to South-east Asia wherever an author, not entirely blind to the existence of a local factor, shies away from any attempt at more penetrating analysis. Actually, as I shall hope to show, such terms as hybridization or fusion, in the Buddhist art of China, should be confined to the period prior to the T’ang, just as until somewhat before this time so-called Buddhist thought in China was in reality a fusion of Indian and pre-Indianized concepts.

The great merit of the authorities on whom I have relied is that they provide clear and undisguised expositions of the data, which enable the reader to distinguish without difficulty the tendencies that emerge in the course of the evolution. This does not mean that these authorities have always explained cultural phenomena in cultural (rather than temperamental) terms, or in other respects given much attention to what is known of the processes of culture change. Thus, to give an example, one which I fear might even cause a certain misunderstanding, Professor Wright who, in my opinion, speaks so correctly on page 76 of his book of Ch’an and other Chinese schools of Buddhism being movements “which shaped the evolving patterns of Chinese Buddhist thought and behaviour”, can yet on the next page but one say that Ch’an Buddhism can best be understood as a complex “amalgam” of Buddhist and Taoist ideas. A factor which is actively shaping something else cannot possibly be best understood as a mere component of an “amalgam” or mixture.

I would therefore suggest that a clearer comprehension of some of the processes concerned may be a reciprocal contribution which the present study can make to the fuller appreciation of the Chinese cultural evolution. This involves taking account of the work of the anthropologists, perhaps a more unorthodox procedure for scholars concerned with the great primary civilizations
than it is for students of South-east Asia. The latter are becoming increasingly aware of the need to give ear to what the anthropologists have to tell about the primitive peoples who survive on their borders, and it is the anthropologists moreover who actually see change in progress. So before we start our inquiry I think it will be useful here to outline (from my fuller statement in *The Making of Greater India*) the more important of these principles of culture change.

Culture change concerns evolution, and I use the word in the strict sense of meaning "a process of opening out or developing what is contained or implied in something; a manifestation of related events or ideas in a natural or orderly succession" (Webster). Changes resulting from mere imitation of a series of outside influences would not constitute an evolution. Such outside influences on an art or religion are certainly to be expected, but if we are still to speak of an evolution, these various influences, while enriching the art and civilization on which they are brought to bear, will be absorbed and the evolution will pursue its course. Cultural evolution must be distinguished from organic evolution, and failure to do so leads to the formulation of cultural theories that are really misapplied biology. Unlike organic evolution, cultural evolution not only diverges and shows occasional convergences, but there is also borrowing or acculturation. The term "culturalistic fallacy" may be equally applied to a false view of artistic evolution. If we say "an art evolves" or "an art renews itself", and allow ourselves to forget that these can only be used as convenient figures of abstract speech, we are in danger of closing the door to all possibility of understanding the nature of the process to which we thus refer so glibly. Strictly speaking human beings are the actual agents.

For an objective approach it is important that we should appreciate culture change in terms of stimulus and