

Chinese Scholars

By 100 BC, trade routes to western and central Asia through eastern Afghanistan were well established. These opened up communication routes to China which became known as the Silk Route. Many Buddhist missionaries established monasteries on the caravan routes, of which Takshashila was the most important. The proselytising activity of the missionaries was extended further with the advent of the Kushanas. The Kushanas (as they were known in India) were the Chinese tribe, Yeuh-chi, who had been exiled from China because of their raiding parties. The constant tension between the Yeuh-chi and the Chinese emperor Shi Huang Ti resulted in the building of the Great Wall of China, which was an attempt to end the raids. The Kushanas embraced Buddhism and helped in extending Buddhist doctrine to China. By 4th C AD many Indians had settled in central Asia and introduced Indian culture. In AD 379, Buddhism was declared as the state religion of China. Between AD 400 -700, Chinese travellers such as Fa Hsien, Sung Yun, Hsuan Tsang and I Tsing, visited India. They were interested in obtaining the original Buddhist scriptures in Sanskrit and Pali. These travellers also introduced Chinese culture to India. One of the important Chinese visitors to India was the Buddhist pilgrim Hsuan Tsang in 7th C AD.