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This is an account of the travels in Central Asia and India of the seventh-century Chinese scholar-monk Xuanzang. An epoch-making figure in the history of Chinese Buddhism, the Master had a strong impulse to solve theoretical uncertainties by searching for the missing, untranslated original Sanskrit texts, particularly the *Yogacara-bhumi-sastra*. Violating a government ban on emigration, he slipped out of the empire without official permission. During his sojourn of sixteen years in India, he studied the said sastra and other texts under the tutelage of the Venerable Silabhadra. He visited all the important Buddhist sites and ruins, enjoyed great popularity in India through his learning as an outstanding Buddhist scholar and won the support of the reigning monarchs such as Siladitya and others of India.

Upon his return, he was requested by the Emperor to write a book about the journey for his reference. The *Record* was completed in 646 C.E., the year after his return to the capitol. It was appended some seven hundred years after the time of Xuanzang to include Zheng He's visit to Sri Lanka during the reign of Emperor Chengzu (r. 1403-24) of the Ming dynasty.

The *Record* has been of great value to Western historians and archaeologists, who used it to fill in certain gaps in the history of India and locate the sites of India's former glories. With its exact descriptions of distances and locations of different places, the *Record* served as a guidebook for the excavation and rediscovery of such important ancient sites as the old city of Rajagrha, the Temple of the Deer Park at Sarnath, the grottoes of Ajanta, the ruins of the well-known Nalanda Monastery in Bihar, etc. Thus it is not merely a book to be studied by students of Buddhism, but also a substantial and interesting book of reference, providing rich information about medieval India for the general reader.

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About the Author

The BDK English Tripitaka Series was started by the late Dr. Rev. Yehan Numata, founder of the Bukkyo Dendo Kyokai (BDK) [Society for the Promotion of Buddhism]. The goal of this series is to make available in the English language the Buddhist scriptures and commentaries of the Sino-Japanese edition of the "Taisho Tripitaka." Scholars and specialists from throughout the world have been enlisted to translate the selected texts into English. When completed, the one-hundred eight volumes will comprise the First Series of the BDK English Tripitaka.

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