# INTERTWINED IMMERSION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINESE BUDDHIST MASTER COSTUMES AS AN EXAMPLE

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Cultural pluralism and diversity give rise to debates on conflicts and inclusiveness. Scholars largely investigate how people manage their culture of origin within their host culture, and how the host culture helps them adapt to the changes they experience within their new environment. However, both cultures can merge peacefully and the involved cultures can flourish as a result. The evolvement of jiasha, the attire of Chinese Buddhist masters, illustrates intertwined immersion, in which traditional Chinese (domestic) and Buddhist (imported) cultures show their openness, tolerance, and acceptance to foreign cultures. Finally, while maintaining the significance of Indian Buddhist clothing, jiasha has adopted Chinese dress style, incorporating local cultural and environmental characteristics. This manifests great respect for both traditional Chinese and Buddhist cultures, harmoniously achieving this hybrid product that mutually rejuvenates and enriches native and foreign cultures.

ulture reflects a system, a "software of the mind" (Aggarwal and Zhan 2017, 1), of a group of people who share the experiences, history, beliefs, ideas, values, world views, arts, symbols, artefacts, gestures, myths, perception, preferences, process of decision making, habits, hierarchies, norms and customs which affect behaviour and lifestyle. These specific, consistent and cohesive elements are transmitted down to succeeding generations (Faulkner et al. 2006), and enable individuals to maintain a collective "cultural self" (Jahoda 2012, 296) by which to differentiate themselves from other groups. Religious dress is an important part of material culture.

While there are interactions between different cultures, conflicts and clashes inevitably arise. In particular, cultural shock (Oberg 1960) occurs, resulting in a shock within a foreign or unfamiliar cultural environment due to language barriers, distant beliefs and values, exotic ways of living or strange behaviour. In order to eliminate this shock, people require psychological and emotional adjustments and changes in their lifestyle (Fitzpatrick 2017) because such uneasi-

ness, irritability and helplessness produce fear and misunderstanding (Kathirvel and Febiula 2016), resulting in more severe contradictions within society. Moreover, reverse culture shock (Meintel 1973) exists when disorientation arises after returning to one's home country, due to a loss of identity and a feeling of incompatibility (Kreminski, Barry, and Platow 2018).

Cultural adaptation is necessary for minorities (for example, immigrants), in order for them to cultivate their new lives within a new territory (van de Vijver 2018). Acculturation discusses how this adaptation carries out in a long-term (Berry et al. 2006, Dimitrova and Aydinli-Karakulak 2016), interactive (Güngör and Bornstein 2009) process for cultural, psychological, social, economical and political accommodation (Berry 2005).

There are four outcomes of acculturation: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalisation (Dimitrova et al. 2014). Assimilation refers to the replacement of the culture of origin by that of the host community; whereas integration means to retain the culture of origin while borrowing from the host culture. These two outcomes represent total or partial acceptance of the values of the host society (Jaffe, Kushnirovich, and Tsimerman 2018), wherein people willingly become insiders of the host country, to avoid becoming stigmatised others (Greer and Jewkes 2005) who fail to adjust to psychological and social norms. In contrast, separation is a harsh condition in which the culture of origin is maintained and others are resisted, and marginalisation refers to the abandonment of both the origin and host cultures. People who adopt these last two strategies will become outsiders in the community: as a result, they will suffer from being either isolated or self-isolated, and probably also suffer discrimination. Such social exclusion directly and negatively impacts their personal and social well-being and development.

In fact, origin and host cultures interact continuously, resulting in mutual influences and the formation of an acculturating group (Berry 1997); notwithstanding, different extents of changes relate to both cultures. Such intercultural communication sometimes generates transculturation which is a painful type of socialisation, one which Cubans experienced their culture of origin was uprooted when they encountered a strong invisible force exerted by an imported culture (Ortiz 1995). Nevertheless, harmonious and inclusive outputs can be accomplished through "cultural dialogue" (Ciptandi et al. 2018, 253), which may be manifested in forms of attire.

Religion plays a vital role in acculturation (Sevim, Hall, and Abu-Rayya 2016), through which religious identity is established (Güngör, Fleischmann, and Phalet 2011). Changes in dress code unveil how the identity presents itself (Gray and Rose 2012), and indicate the process of religious socialisation (Güngör et al. 2013). Since costume is an outward reflection of cultures, religions and ideology (Hua 2008), the evolution of religious apparel exhibits the cultural dynamic of an exotic religion. For instance, changes in clothing for Buddhist monks or nuns (kāṣāya in Sanskrit, jiasha in Chinese) tell how Buddhism (as an imported religion) can become immersed into Chinese culture, and also articulate the inclusiveness of traditional Chinese culture.

### CHINESE BUDDHISM

Buddhism, having stemmed from Indian culture over 2500 years ago through Siddhārtha Gautama (Cheng 2017a), namely the Buddha, has become one of the more prevalent religions in the modern world. It acknowledges the existence of inevitable afflictions and therefore offers methods for overcoming suffering and creating inner happiness (Chawla and Marlatt 2006) through a series of mind training. The three current mainstreams include Southern (for example, in Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia), Northern, and Tibetan Buddhism (Cheng 2017b), which exhibit different features while sharing foundational teachings and practices. Buddhism was introduced to China in the first century CE (Emmanuel 2013), during the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) in about 65 AD, after which it evolved into Northern Buddhism, also called Chinese Buddhism. It then spread to Korea, Japan (He 2006), and Vietnam (Nakamura 1984), where the Mahāyāna tradition is emphasised, focusing on being devoted to prudently serving other people; that is, bodhisattva altruism (Cheng 2018a, b). The basis of this mentality involves four attributes: loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity (Cheng 2015). The aims of loving-kindness and compassion are to bring happiness to people and unconditionally help people overcome tribulation, whilst empathetic joy is intended to bring joy to others, and equanimity is concerned with unselfish egalitarianism. In summary, these characteristics pertain to acceptance, tolerance, equality, non-discrimination, dignity, caring, generosity, and inclusiveness.

In the beginning, Chinese scholars borrowed Taoist (or Daoist) principles to interpret Buddhism (Harvey 2000): this is defined as Geyi Buddhism (Tang 2016). Although it has long ago developed into a religion, Taoism (or Daoism) is a prominent Chinese philosophy founded by Laozi in the late 4th century BCE, which highlights humility, naturalness, simplicity and desire-less-ness. Its fundamental notion is the vin-yang principal which is a novel perspective of dualism that extends beyond antithesis. There are pairs of opposites in the phenomenal world, such as darkness and light, good and bad, white and black, and male and female. However, by illustrating their complementary function (as the yin-yang symbol implies: yin within yang, and yang within yin), Taoism focuses on contextualism and relativism. For instance, there is no absolute good or bad; instead, good and bad are relative and contextual: moreover, there is good in bad and vice versa. The paradoxes are inter-dependent, inseparable, and co-existent. This symbiotic system unites the contradictions and eventually creates a balance. Taoist theory particularly signifies a unity between humanity and nature (Lee and Prebensen 2019), resulting in harmony, inclusiveness and acceptance.

Geyi Buddhism, otherwise known as the "Daoist-Buddhist syncretism movement" (Green 2013, 110), attempted to interpret Buddhist teachings with Chinese philosophy, in particular, Taoism. Such localisation was the rule for nearly 500 years, until the Sui dynasty (589-618 AD). Reviewing this adaptation, Chinese Buddhist elites ultimately advocated understanding and articulating Buddhist teachings directly from Indian resources, in addition to developing various sects to encourage Indian Buddhism such as the Huayan, Tiantai, and Chan schools. Chinese Buddhism has influenced Northern Asia since the Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang dynasties (618-907 AD) (Tang 2016). This process indicates openness, reflection and innovation in traditional Chinese culture. The evolvement of

Chinese Buddhist clothing echoes these attributes, which we will discuss in this work.

## FEATURES OF CHINESE BUDDHIST MASTER COSTUMES

Clothing is a gathering of form, design, colour, accessories and material (Perrot 1981), presenting self-expression (Winterhalter 2011), social and moral identities (Ambrosio 2019), and aesthetics (Watson 2004). This non-verbal but powerful communication (Lennon and Davis 1989a) represents not only political, ideological, cultural and social values, custom, differences, class and norms (Lennon and Davis 1989b, Eicher and Roach-Higgins 1992, Roach-Higgins and Eicher 1992, Miller 2005) but also individual physical, psychological and emotional preferences (Kwon 1987).

In identifying religious clothing, various religions reveal specific styles and imply their own intrinsic values, forming religious boundaries (Morin 2013). Dharma clothing, namely, the attire of Buddhist masters, gives religious visibility (Ajala 2017), marks a distinctive community (Robson 2010) and represents "a sign of prudent asceticism" (Kieschnick 2003, 88) in Southern Buddhism, which maintains an awareness of the ancient Indian Buddhist garments. However, the jiasha worn by Chinese Buddhist venerables is not necessarily linked to this symbolism. Instead, it reflects a set of shared cultural concepts that evolved in ancient China.

The formation of the kāṣāya system was completed after the death of the Buddha (Cai and Lu 2011). Indian kāṣāya is present in the form of the sari, which is a long piece of cloth wrapped around the body (Szeto 1992), akin to ancient European costume (Kawakatsu 1956) such as that seen in the Greek style. With odd numbers representing energy in Buddhism (Feng 2004), it is composed of three parts, including a sari half robe covering for the lower body, a robe for the upper body with a bare right shoulder, and an outer robe. All of this symbolises the eradication of greed, hatred and ignorance respectively, and also signals the three views of time: past, present and future (Kieschnick 1999). Each sari has five, seven or nine strips of used cloth, assembled like rice paddies, which im-

plies the thrifty nature of Buddhist doctrine, and it is therefore called the robe of the merit field (Yifa 2002). Buddhist masters in Southeast Asian countries retain this form of kāṣāya; for instance, in Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Thailand, which are mainly tropical regions.

The development of apparel largely depends on cultural and environmental factors (Batten 2010, Harms 1938) such as weather conditions (Kwon 1991). This also applies to religious costume, of which Chinese Buddhist clothing is a vivid example. The Indian sari type of jiasha gradually disappeared in China due to weather and cultural causes. First, the great diversity of topography in China generates tremendous variations in climate from region to region, including subarctic and tropical climates. Winter cold in the north and summer humidity in the south both force adaptation, since the sari is inappropriate for such weather extremes: and thus it faded out. Nevertheless, the sari style has been absorbed as part of the Chinese jiasha in another form of presentation that will be explicated later. Second, the exposing of body parts deviated from Chinese cultural and clothing norms. Exposing a shoulder signifies respect in Indian culture: contrarily, polite in Chinese costume culture is expressed through being fully clothed (Yifa 2002). Indigenous jiasha forms have been evolved since the Northern Wei (386-534 AD) (Yang 1963). Indeed, jiasha combines Indian, Chinese, and Middle Eastern styles (Kuo 1999, Cai and Lu 2010). Finally, the absence of the bare right shoulder began in northern China (Chen 2007) in order to protect body from the cold, in addition to fulfilling cultural requirements. This conversion took place over the Chinese medieval era, with the bareness completely disappearing in the Cao Wei period (220-266 AD) (Fei 2008, Kuo 1999). Chinese Buddhist masters (including monks and nuns) wear trousers and robes with collars and sleeves (Chen 2009). Using this three-tiered attire extends to the present day, aligns with the I-Ching (the Book of Changes which expounds cosmological significance) influence of favourable odd numbers (Griswold 1963).

The casual two-piece clothing worn for daily activities comprises a grey or yellow short or middle-length blouse with long sleeves and a long vertical collar going down the front, and long loose trousers gathered at the ankle. Replacing the traditional blouse buttoned

across to the right arm pit, the centre-buttoned Taixu suit has become more prevalent nowadays (Huang 2010). Ancient Chinese costume reflects the philosophy of Confucianism and Taoism (Cai and Lu 2011): the two pieces of upper and lower garments stand for heaven and earth correspondingly (Liu 2008), which harmoniously interact (Sun 2016) in accordance with Confucian beliefs. Even though there is no coincidence present with Buddhist thought, the style of upper and lower sari could have been imitated until the Tang dynasty, in which robes for the upper and lower body were linked together as one piece (Kuo 1999). This long black robe is called the haiging, which originated in the apparel styles of the Han and Tang dynasties (Feng 2004, Zhao 2003). It is right opening: this form was passed down from the Shang dynasty (Wang 2000), and coincides with the Buddhist custom respecting the right side (Yang 1996). Current jiasha retains a right opening long yellow robe with sleeves and a three-treasure collar signifying the Buddha, dharma (Buddhist teachings) and sangha (a community of Buddhist priests) (Kuo 2001), and a Chinese button knot under the right underarm (Feng 2004, Zhu and Zhao 2017) for ceremonies or events. Additionally, there is another red robe which lacks a right shoulder area (Zhang 2005), which is worn over top of the long robe for the Buddhist priest who moderates rites and ceremonies. This outer red robe retains the Indian kāsāya style in respect to having an empty right shoulder, along with rice paddy pattern, forming a robe of a hundred patches (Kieschnick 1999). This jiasha ensemble performs varying functional purposes while displaying Chinese Buddhist etiquette.

Indian kāṣāya, which is still adopted among masters of Southern Buddhism, is saffron-dyed red (Zhou 1990), whereas the colour of Chinese jiasha has changed from time to time. Jiasha was usually black in the Han dynasty (206 BC-220 AD) (Kuo 2001) but purple in the Tang (618-907 AD), which is still popular among Japanese Buddhist monks (Wang 2000). Furthermore, it has been yellow from the time of the Five Dynasties (907-960 AD) until now (Zhang 2001, Kuo 2001), as yellow in Buddhism symbolises its highest set of values: desire-les-sness, humility and renunciation. Red and brown were also present in different regions simultaneously (Kieschnick 1997).

Political influence can sometimes contribute to clothing systems (Corrigan 2008), such as with the impacts of a strong imperial-Buddhist relationship (Walsh 2007) on the development of Chinese jiasha. For example, Wu Zetian (690-705 AD), the only empress in the Tang dynasty, endowed imperial purple silk jiasha to select Buddhist elites, which practice was officially established in the later Tang (Young 2017). The Hongwu Emperor (1328-1398 AD) of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 AD) officially stipulated pale green jiasha for Zen masters and pale red for other monks (Zhao 2003). The current set of jiasha allows for various colours. The inner two-piece is either vellow or light grey. The haiging is usually dark blue or black, and yellow for ritual activities. The outer robe with the missing right shoulder is a brown range (for instance, chocolate, umber and gingerbread) but red (or crimson) with the pattern of rice paddies in moderating ceremonies. This mingles conservative Chinese with Indian clothing systems, representing a product of cultural exchange.

### INTERTWINED IMMERSION

The evolution of Buddhist monk attire demonstrates how Buddhism, as an "alien ideological culture" (Tang 2016, 255) or "imported alien ideological culture" (Tang 2016, 256), has been intelligently immersed into Chinese culture (Poceski 2017), it being the "pre-existing native ideological culture" (Tang 2016, 257) or "indigenous ideological culture" (Tang 2016, 264). Such cultural exchange, newly coined by the term *intertwined immersion*, illuminates Tang's assertion:

"Chinese people did not reject the foreign culture, but rather absorbed and digested the foreign culture as much as possible. This attitude showed the confidence of the nation as well as the values of its own culture." (2016, 292)

Beyond studying conflicts between origin and host cultures, intertwined immersion analyses how local culture can flourish through impact with an imported culture, just as traditional Chinese culture has. Furthermore, it examines how an imported culture can implant itself into the domestic culture, which is what Buddhism did. There are four dimensions that support traditional Chinese culture in

achieving this immersion: heterogeneity, commonality, cultural confidence, and learning and sharing.

First, apart from the Han ethnic majority, China contains numerous ethnic minorities (Chen 2013); for instance, Eurasians, Mongolians, Tibetans, Uyghurs, Manchurians, Koreans, Yao and Miao (Maurer-Fazioa and Hasmath 2015). Subsequently, cultural fusion, adaptation, absorption and assimilation involving agricultural, fishing and nomadic cultures have built a sophisticated hybrid culture in the areas of lifestyle, religion, cuisine, clothing, languages, and so on. Taking clothing as an example, many nomadic tribes wore right-over-left closing garments, which were more suitable for hunting and riding (Zhou 2010), while the Han people wore leftover-right clothing. Later on, as their cultures inclined towards the Han, they also adapted left-over-right closing garments. Additionally, several major dynasties in ancient China were ruled by minority tribes, such as the Tang (618-907 AD), Yuan (1269-1368 AD) and Qing (1644-1911 AD) dynasties. The synergetic dynamics of these century long interactions have formalised heterogeneity within Chinese culture: the Chinese people have become accustomed to living amicably within multicultural contexts.

Second, a commonality shared across Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism is that they are non-monotheistic, because of which they more willingly accept disparate concepts within religious worship; that is, they are more ideologically open. In addition to Laozi and the Buddha, Confucius (551-479 BC) was a great educator and philosopher in ancient China. His way of thought, Confucianism, is humanity-based and focuses on righteousness, appropriateness, harmonious interrelationships, and self-cultivation (Huong, Giao, and Tam 2018, Choi and Woo 2018, Tsai 2005, Chuang and Wang 2018). Its morality and values significantly affect many Asian countries, since it emphasises a complex array of human relations (Kim 2010): familial (parent-child, marital, sibling), generational, friend-ship, and constitutional (Fan 2002). The development of Buddhist monk attire reflects Confucian ethics, although Cai and Lu (2013) is hesitant with this argument.

Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are the core systems of thought in China, and in many Asian countries with Chineseinfluenced cultures such as Vietnam (Vuong et al. 2018). The first two are local developments, and the last is imported. Taoism focuses on a harmonious relationship between human beings and nature, Buddhism on individual inner tranquillity, and Confucianism on social cohesion (Konior 2018). In a nutshell, they connect to humankind and its environment, from individualism to collectivism, and to a mutual nurture between secular and religious worlds.

Likewise, this amalgamation mutually enhances these thought systems. The loving-kindness and compassion of Buddhism strengthens the link between the diverse aspects of human relations articulated in Confucianism. Confucianism and Buddhism both represent self-cultivation, a transition from a self-centred viewpoint to a consideration for all human beings (Arler 2018). Buddhism and Taoism are non-dualism-oriented, whereas the former transcends all dualities to a non-dual enlightenment (Bhikkhu 1994). They also share meditation practices, although the purpose of Buddhist meditation is to cultivate intrinsic serenity, while that of Taoist meditation is to communicate with nature. All are able to achieve physical, psychological and spiritual improvements and self-fulfilment (Cheng 2018c). These three philosophies are furthermore all connected to humanism (related to people), naturalness and environmental friendliness. Such a companionship pulls Buddhism in as a crucial facet of traditional Chinese culture.

Third, cultural confidence plays a vital role in intertwined immersion. This confidence is engendered by prosperity and liberalism; for example in the Tang dynasty (Wang 2016), which took a leading role in economic growth and commercial expansion in premodern times (Deng 2000, Brandt, Ma, and Rawski 2012). Prosperity increases confidence, which accelerates the growth of liberalism. An open door policy in the Tang dynasty allowed foreign trade, which escalated cultural exchange and economic development, resulting in a more liberal culture. Also, diversity and respect for differences are traditional values within Buddhism (Hershock 2013), as well as for Confucianism. Liberalism encourages intertwined immersion.

Lastly, traditional Chinese culture spotlights humble learning and generous sharing. Buddhism was imported early in the Han dynasty, as explained previously, and developed rapidly in the Tang dynasty. Many Indian and Central Asian monks came and taught Buddhist principles in the Tang dynasty, and Japanese and Koreans monks came and learned Buddhism, then spreading it to their homelands across Asia. This transmission continuously vitalises intertwined immersion, making Buddhism an integral part of traditional Chinese and Asian culture.

The Buddhist population in India today is as low as 0.8%: in contrast, that in Japan, Korea, China and Vietnam comprises 36.2%, 22.9%, 18.2% and 16.4% respectively (World Population Review 2019), with even higher percentages in the five top Buddhist countries: Cambodia (96.9%), Thailand (93.2%), (87.9%), Bhutan (74.7%), and Sri Lanka (69.3%). While Buddhism declined in India (Akira 1990), it has blossomed from China to nearby countries through intertwined immersion. This immersion is not a painful but harmonious and peaceful process due to the powerful cultural influences, humility and confidence of both India and China. Its religious passion not only becomes internalised attributes but also affects neighbouring countries (Lee 2015), particularly in North Asia. Such inclusiveness and integration are based on acceptance, openness, generosity and friendliness, resulting in insightful "intercultural capital" (Pöllmann 2013, 1). These allow for dialogues to engage cultural otherness. This form of "intercultural mindset" (Zapata-Barrero 2018, 7) achieves intimate interrelationships between different cultures without ignoring their cultural particularities.

### CONCLUSION

The development of jiasha enunciates how an origin culture (Chinese) can respond to difficulties presented by a host culture (Buddhist). It regards challenges as opportunities to enhance its own culture through a process of intertwined immersion. This immersion sheds light on heterogeneity versus homogeneity, attaining cultural pluralism. It benefits from cultural competence of traditional Chinese culture appertaining to openness, respect, fitness, adjustment, flexibility, engagement, transformation, and transcendence. Jiasha is

a carrier presenting a cross-cultural product and visibly translating culture, values and aesthetics into costume.

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