

## **Soft power in documentation of Buddhist scriptures and culture**

**Hemant Parmar**

**Ven Dr. Sumedh Thero**

Sumedh Bhoomi Buddha Vihar, Dr Ambedkar Park, Jhansipura, Lalitpur-284403 India,  
vensumedh12@gmail.com

Due to various reasons, India can claim legitimacy to promote Buddhist diplomacy. One such reason is the fact that the Buddhist faith originated in India whereas the other fact is that India has numerous sites of importance to the Buddhist faith, such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Nalanda.

religious texts were written in many different languages and scripts but memorizing, reciting and copying the texts were of high value. Even after the development of printing, Buddhists preferred to keep to their original practices with these texts. Buddhist texts were initially passed on orally by monks, but were later written down and composed as manuscripts in various Indo-Aryan languages which were then translated into other local languages as Buddhism spread. They can be categorized in a number of ways. Soft power is *soft*—it does not rely on hard instruments of power like a military tank. Its influence is soft—one feels it subtly or surreptitiously as one feels attracted to certain music or food. Soft power takes a long time to produce intended results, but it is an effective instrument for accomplishing goals. One of the major elements of soft power, which is applicable perhaps to all cases, is non-violence.

As a faith, Buddhism undoubtedly has been successful in its propagation. The natural questions that follow are: Historically how did this happen? Does an ancient religion still have vitality in a modern world? Monks and pilgrims visiting India influenced Buddhism's evolution. Foremost among these were Chinese monks Faxian (337-422 CE) and Xuanzang (602-64 CE), who took home with them Buddhist documents, relics, and insights into Buddhism's practice in India. Xuanzang initiated official exchanges between King Harshavardhana (590–647 CE) and Tang China and promoted Buddhist and diplomatic exchanges between the two courts. Thus, Buddhist scriptures and culture spread to other parts of the world as soft power in documentation.

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