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# Avalokitesvara in the Earliest Version of the Larger Sukhavativyuha-sutra



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# 『大阿弥陀経』における「観音」

肖　越

**要　旨**

本論は、〈無量寿経〉最古訳である『大阿弥陀経』における観音（蓋樓亘）という用語を含む三つの段落の原初形態の成立について検討をするものである。次の四章からなる。

第一には、〈無量寿経〉諸本と『観無量寿仏経』における観音を含む用例頻度を確認した結果、『観無量寿仏経』において観音の用例は 25 回ほど使用されていることに対して『大阿弥陀経』にはわずか 3 回しか使用されていないことを確認した。従って、『大阿弥陀経』のタイトルは、観音に関連があるとは考え難い。

第二には、『大阿弥陀経』にける「観音」の光明を讃嘆する段落の成立については、『大阿弥陀経』の用例にみられる特殊な用語群（「最尊」「智慧」「光明」「頂中光明」、「菩薩阿羅漢」）を通じて、ほかの諸本に対応する箇所との比較を行った。『大阿弥陀経』の観音の光明に関する段落は、『大阿弥陀経』の法蔵菩薩説話段の表現によく類似していることを確認した。『大阿弥陀経』の特異な法蔵菩薩説話段は漢訳者により意図的に修訂されたものであることは明らかなので、『大阿弥陀経』における観音の光明を巡る段落も同じように『大阿弥陀経』の原典にあったことではなく、漢訳者によって修訂された内容であると考える。『大阿弥陀経』の原典の内容は、現存の梵本に対応する箇所の内容と類似しており、おそらく『大阿弥陀経』の漢訳者は、観音菩薩（極楽の菩薩も同様）は阿弥陀仏と同じような光明を持っていることを強調するためにこの段落を修訂したのではないかと考える。

第三には、観音の現世救済については、「初期無量寿経」の『大阿弥陀経』『平等覚経』の 2 本しか存在しない。Paul Harrison 氏は、この段落が中国で成立したものであるという仮説を示したが、本論ではその裏付けと、『大阿弥陀経』の翻訳者がこの段落を意図的に挿入した目的の究明をこころみた。即ち、世間で菩薩行を精進する善男子、善女人は、恐怖などの災いがあった際、観音に救済されることを強調し、観音の現世での救済を求めるために人々の現世での作善を勧めている。

第四には、『大阿弥陀経』における阿闍世王太子の授記の成立を取り入れながら、阿弥陀仏の涅槃と観音の成仏の成立を検討した。即ち、阿弥陀仏の涅槃と観音の成仏はインド系の原典にはあったが、『大阿弥陀経』の原典にあったとは考え難いことを指摘した。

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**Avalokiteśvara in the Earliest Version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra***

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# Avalokiteśvara in the Earliest Version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*

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## Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the formation of the earliest version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*-sūtra, the *Dà āmítuó jīng* 大阿彌陀經（T362, *siglum* 大阿), on the basis of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in this version. It is well-known that Pure Land Buddhism[1] addresses the method of rebirth in Amitābha Buddha's Land (*Sukhāvatī*). Accordingly, Amitābha Buddha is the undisputed focus in Pure Land Buddhism. In marked contrast with the features of this bodhisattva in the *Dà āmítuó jīng,* Avalokiteśvara has become one of the the most prominent bodisattavas in Amitābha's Land, along with Mahāsthāmaprāpta, (Ch. 大勢至 *Dà shìzhì*) in the *Guān wúliàngshòu fó jīng*

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[1] Regarding why Amitābha's Land is labelled as *Jingtu* 淨土 (the 'Pure Land') and why Amitābha's religion is labelled as Pure Land Buddhism —淨土教— see XIAO 2012a, and 2016a.

觀無量壽佛經（T365, hereafter *Guānjīn,* or *siglum* 觀經 ), another significant Buddhist canon regarded as one of three Pure Land sutras.[2] More specifically, two clues relating to the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara can help us understand the original form of the early Pure Land sūtras.

First, the internal clue appears within the two sūtras — the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* — addressing Amitābha's vows in detail. In the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, only in the two oldest versions, the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the *Wúliàng qīngjìng píngděngjué jīng* 無量清淨平等覺經（T361, hereafter the *Píngděngjué jīng*, *siglum* 清淨), does the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara appear as the successor of Amitābha Buddha. But this content unexpectedly disappears in all versions of the Later Recension. By contrast, in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* sūtra, another sūtra addressing Amitābha's vows in detail, whose formation period is considered later than the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*,[3] Avalokiteśvara appears as the successor, and this characteristic does not present any differences compared to the extant four versions of

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[2] The phrase of Three Pure Land sūtras — the translation of the 浄土三部経— were first found in the *Sencyaku hongan nenbutsusyū* 選択本願念仏集 (also abbreviated as *Sencyakusyū* 選択集) by Hōnen 法然 (1133–1212), who is the founder of Japanese *Jōdo shū* 浄土宗. The contexts in the *Sencyakusyū* read: 初正明往生浄土之教者，謂三経一論是也。三経者：一、無量寿経；二、観無量寿経；三、阿弥陀経也。一論者：天親往生論是也。或指此三経号浄土三部経也。（中略）是也今者唯是弥陀三部，故名浄土三部経也。弥陀三部者，是浄土正依経也。

[3] It is commonly believed that the Amitābha's vows in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍrīka-sūtra* are derived from the system of forty-eight vows in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*. And yet, according to my recent papers, it is unlikely that this hypothesis is correct. In my recent paper, I argued that no evidence can establish that the vows in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* are a revision of a version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* on the basis of the problem of women's rebirth in *Sukhāvatī*. On the contrary, much evidence indicates that the *Dà āmítuó jīng* has been largerly compiled based on the translator's ideas while it was translated into Chinese. And the vows quoted in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* is probably formed before in the vows in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* (see XIAO 2014a and 2016b).

this sūtra.[4]

Secondly, the external clue appears between the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and the *Guānjīng*, in all the versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha,* Avalokiteśvara does not have a direct connection with rebirth in Amitābha Buddha's Land. But in the *Guānjīng*, Avalokiteśvara appears 26 times with the name of *Guānshìyīn* 觀世音, and this bodhisattva always appears with direct connection to rebirth in Amitābha Buddha's Land.

This paper will focus on the characteristics of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara in the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the *Píngděngjué jīng*, in order to approach the original form of the two earliest versions of this sūtra. On the other hand, the *Guānjīng* does have some relationship with the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, which have not been discussed before.

## 1. The names in the versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*

The seven extant versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* are divided into two categories depending on the number of the vows in each version. The two earliest versions, both with twenty-four vows, are classified as the "Early Recension".[5] The remaining three Chinese translations, as well as the Sanskrit version and a Tibetan translation, are classified as the "Later Recension".

Avalokiteśvara bodhisattva[6] appears in all versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* under various names. The following is a comparative table of

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[4] Four versions exist at present; two Chinese translations, a Sanskrit version and a Tibetan translation. The two Chinese translations are: 1) *Dàshèng bēi fēntuólì jīng* 大乘悲分陀利經 (T3 No.158), translated in *Qín* dynasty (fl. c. 384-417), unknown translator; 2) *Bēihuá jīng* 悲華經 (T3, No.157), attributed to *Dharmakṣema*, *Tānwúchēn* 曇無讖 (fl. c.419). In this paper I will use, for convenience, the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* as a generic reference to this sūtra, because the context of each version regarding the purpose of this paper, *Guānyīn*, is extremely similar in meaning.

the names of Amitābha Buddha and this bodhisattva, *Guānyīn*, which appear in the versions of the Larger & the Smaller *Sukhāvatīvyūha* and the *Guānjīng*.

**Table 1**

| Versions of *LSukh* | Amitābha's Name | *Guanyin's* Name |
|---|---|---|
| 大阿 | 阿彌陀（175 times） | 蓋樓亘（3 times） |
| 清淨 | 無量清淨[7]（234 times），<br>阿彌陀（9 times） | 盧樓亘（5 times） |
| 無量 | 無量壽（33 times） | 觀世音（2 times） |
| 如來 | 無量壽（35 times） | 觀自在（1 times） |
| 莊嚴 | 無量壽（39 times） | 觀自在（3 times） |
| Sanskrit Version | Amitābha/ Amitāyus | Avalokiteśvara（2 times） |

[5] Although the phrase "Early Recension" was used as early as IKEMOTO's research in 1958, all of the research undertaken before FUJITA considered that the oldest version of Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* is not the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, but the *Píngděngjué jīng*. The oldest version of Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* was not recognized as the *Dà āmítuó jīng* until FUJITA published his research in 1970. For convenience, I would like to follow the previous study of FUJITA. By no means do the original texts of the two versions of the Early Recension also have twenty-four vows as we find in the present form, because it was revised and created by their Chinese translators.

[6] This bodhisattva possesses several different names in Chinese translations, such as *Guāng shì yīn* 光世音; *Guān zìzài* 觀自在; *Jiàn yīnshēng* 見音聲 etc. a preliminary survey on *Avalokiteśvara* in early Buddhist translations, see NATTIER 2007; and TANAKA 2013, pp.529-538. In this paper I will use, for convenience, *Guānyīn*, the most popular name as known in Chinese, as a generic reference to the name of the bodhisattva Avolokiteśevara.

[7] Regarding why Amitābha's name was revised as *Wúliàng qīngjìng* 無量清淨, see XIAO 2012a and 2016a.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 觀経 | 阿彌陀（13）<br>/無量壽（20） | 觀世音[8]（25 times）<br>大勢至（23 times） |
| Smaller *Sukh*<br>by Kumārajīva | 阿彌陀（16） | N/A |
| Smaller Sukh<br>by *Xuánzàng* 玄奘 | 無量壽/（23）<br>無量光 | N/A |

From the table above, we can understand the following two points.

(1) In all versions of the larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the bodhisattva *Guānyīn* plays a minor role in contrast to Amitābha Buddha. This bodhisattva seldom

[8] It is worth noting that this bodhisattva's name also apears in the titles of the *Guānjīng*. In addition to *Guānwúliàngshòu fó jīng*, there are two more tiles highlighted in this sūtra, which they are read: 爾時阿難，即從座起，前白佛言："世尊！當何名此經？ 此法之要，當云何受持？" 佛告阿難："此經名《觀極樂國土無量壽佛觀世音菩薩大勢至菩薩》，亦名《淨除業障生諸佛前》。汝等受持，無令忘失！行此三昧者，現身得見無量壽佛及二大士。若善男子及善女人，但聞佛名、二菩薩名，除無量劫生死之罪，何況憶念！若念佛者，當知此人即是人中芬陀利花，觀世音菩薩、大勢至菩薩為其勝友，當坐道場，生諸佛家（T12, p.346b05-14). An English translation by INAGAKI is as follows: "Then Ānanda rose from his seat, stepped forward, and said to the Buddha, 'World-Honored One, what should we call this sutra and how should we receive and retain the essentials of its teaching?' The Buddha answered, 'Ānanda, this sutra is called the Visualization of the Land of Utmost Bliss of the Buddha Amitāyus, and of the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. It is also called the Purification and Elimination of Karmic Hindrances for Attaining Birth in the Presence of All the Buddhas. …… If good men or women simply hear the Name of this Buddha or the names of those two bodhisattvas, the evil karma which they have committed during innumerable kalpas of samsara will be extinguished. And so, how much more merit will they acquire if they concentrate on them! You should know that all who are mindful of that Buddha are like white lotus flowers among humankind; the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta become their good friends. They will sit in the place of Enlightenment and be born into the family of the Buddhas.'" (INAGAKI 1995, pp.117-118). Reading the term 善男子，善女人, see XIAO 2016a.

[9] There is difference between the counterpart in the *Wúliàngshòu zhuāngyán jīng* 無量壽莊嚴經（T363, hereafter *Zhuāngyán jīng*, *siglum*: 莊嚴）which was translated in Song dynasty. The contexts read:【莊嚴 Z1】"爾時，世尊說此偈已，會中有觀自在菩薩，即從

asks questions[9] and has no relationship to the matter of rebirth in *Sukhāvatī*. But, in the *Guānjīng*, *Guānyīn* plays a very crucial role with another bodhisattva, namely Mahāsthāmaprāpta (well-known as 大勢至).

(2) Though in the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the name of *Guānyīn* shows a slight difference in Chinese, this crucial detail can help us to determine one of the most significant problems in Buddhist studies: that is, what is the original form of the contexts surrounding this bodhisattva in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*? Regarding the origin of the name of *Guānyīn* in the *Dà āmítuó jīng,* 蓋樓亘, KARASHIMA suggests two possibilities: (1) it is impossible to infer the original Indic-language of 蓋樓亘 and 盧樓亘;[10] and: (2) the characters of "薩樓佛檀" in the title of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, 佛說阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經, derived from an inaccurate transcription of 蓋樓亘 (*Guānyīn*) by person(s) unknown (see KARASHIMA 2010). According to the table above, *Guānyīn*'s name, 蓋樓亘, only appears three times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Thus, this casts much doubt on KARASHIMA's theory,[11] which asserts that *Guānyīn*'s name was consciously compiled into the title of the original text of this version, though we cannot confirm the meaning of the "薩樓佛檀" at present.

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座起合掌向佛, 而作是言："世尊！以何因緣, 無量壽佛於其面門, 放無量光照諸佛刹？……" (T12, p.324a18–23) (At that time, the World-Honored having spoken the verse, a bodhisattva named Avalokiteśvara in the assembly rose from his seat with his palms together and said to the Buddha: "World-Honored One, for what reason does the Buddha Amitāyus's emit measureless light from his head illuminating (measureless) Buddha-lands?"

[10] See KARASHIMA 2013, p. 543

[11] As a matter of fact, many examples akin to the 薩樓佛檀 and 蓋樓亘, such as 頂中光明 in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* has been revised to 頂中光明 in the *Píngděngjué jīng* (see below).

## 2. The names in the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*

Regarding this bodhisattva's name in the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, NATTIER undertook a survey of the names of 蓋樓亘/盧樓亘 based on the assumptions that: (1) the *Dà āmítuó jīng* presents the earliest form of Pure Land sūtra formed in India, and: (2) this version is the work by Lokakṣema (*Zhīlóu jiāchèn* 支婁迦讖).[12] According to my recent research on the formation of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, this version is a typical revision by the translator based on his notion in order to highlight the cultivation of the bodhisattva perfection. Especially, the formation of the vows and the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils",[13] both of which are most significant, have not been discussed in HARRISON (1998), KARASHIMA (1999) and NATTIER's research. How can one understand that the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is the version representing the original form of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*? Accordingly, it is necessary to reconsider this problem from a different perspective.

The bodhisattva *Guānyīn* appears three times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Only the first context in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* has a counterpart in all other versions, and the remaining two examples do not have counterparts in any versions of the Later Recension, including the three Chinese translations — the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* 無量壽經 (T360, *siglum* 無量); the *Wúliàngshòu rúlái huì* 無量壽如來會 (T310.5, hereafter the *Rúlái huì*, *siglum* 如來); and the *Zhuāngyán*

[12] NATTIER follows HARRISON's suggestion on this point, and KARASHIMA also strongly supports this view of the authorship of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. It is true that, in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, some features demonstrate the characteristics of Lokakṣema; however, some features demonstrating the Zhī Qiān's characteristics also appear in this version, which NATTIER avoided discussing. Undoubtedly, some of Lokakṣema's characteristics may appear in the Zhī Qiān's translations. Yet it is impossible to consider that any typical characteristics of Zhī Qiān appear in the Lokakṣema's transaltion. The paragraphs on the "Five-Evils" are a typical example, whose compiler or writer must be the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

[13] Regarding some evidence on the formation of some vows see XIAO 2014a,b.

*jīng*–and the Sanskrit version and the Tibetan translation.[14] In other words, *Guānyīn* plays two roles in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the *Píngděngjué jīng*–an object of refuge for ordinary people and the eventual successor of Amitābha, but these features do not appear in any of the versions of the Later Recension. Because of the great significance of these passages, I would like to discuss each of them in detail below.

This first paragraph containing this bodhisattva in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is as follows. Although this paragraph has a counterpart in other versions, there are some crucial details that have not been given enough attention.

**2.1 The first paragraph is as follows:**

【大阿（A1）】其一菩薩名蓋樓亘，其一菩薩名摩訶那鉢。光明、智慧最第二，頂中光明各焰照他方千須彌山佛國中常大明。其諸菩薩頂中光明各照千億萬里，諸阿羅漢頂中光明，各照七丈。（T12, p.308b15–19）

One of the bodhisattvas is called Avalokiteśvara；the other is called Mahāstāmaprāpta. Both of them are foremost in sublime light and wisdom. Each of them illuminates brilliance from his head lighting up the Buddha Lands of the other quarters as many as Mount Sumeru, where an effulgence of light constantly fills these Lands. The light from the head of each bodhisattva illuminates ten million kotis of *Li*. The brilliance shining from the head of each Arhat illuminates seven *zhangs*.

The counterpart of the contexts above in the *Píngděngjué jīng* is as follows:

【清淨（P1）】其一菩薩名盧樓亘，其一菩薩名摩訶那，光明、智慧最第一。其兩菩薩項中光明，各焰照他方千須彌山佛國常大明。其諸菩薩項中光明各照千億萬里，諸阿羅漢項中光明各照七丈。（T12, p.290a21–26）

Its counterpart in the Sanskrit version reads:

【Sk.1】tasmin khalu punar ānanda buddhakṣetre ye śrāvakās te

[14] Even though these two examples separately hold a counterpart in the *Píngděngjué jīng*, of course, they are just the copies of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

vyāmaprabhā ye bodhisattvās te yojanakoṭīśatasahasraprabhāḥ sthāpayitvā dvau bodhisattvau yayoḥ prabhayā sā lokadhātuḥ satatasamitaṃ nityāvabhāsasphuṭā | atha khalv āyuṣmān ānando bhagavantam etad avocat | kiṃ nāmadheyau bhagavaṃs tau satpuruṣau bodhisattvau mahāsattvau| bhagavān āha | ekas tayor ānanda avalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo mahāsattvo dvitīyo mahāstāmaprāpto nāma | ita evānanda buddhakṣetrāc cyutvā tatropapannau ‖.[15]

Its counterpart in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* reads as follows:

【無量 W1】阿難白佛：“彼二菩薩其號云何？”佛言：“一名觀世音，二名大勢至。是二菩薩於此國土修菩薩行，命終轉化生彼佛國。”[16] (T12, p. 273b24-27)

In light of the comparisons above, although the contexts above have a counterpart in other versions, their contents show a slight difference which can be divided into two categories. The first group is the contexts in the two earliest versions; the second group includes the ones in the remaining later versions of the sūtra.

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[15] See Fujita 2011, p.59. An English translation equivalent with this passage by Gómez is as follows: “Furthermore, Ananda, the disciples in this buddha-field have a halo of light one fathom wide, the bodhisattvas have a halo of light a hundred thousand million leagues wide — except for two bodhisattvas, whose halos of light constantly fill the whole world system with eternal splendor. Then the venerable Ananda said this to the Blessed One: “What are the names, Blessed One, of these two noble beings, the bodhisattvas mahasattvas?” The Blessed One said: “One of them, Ananda, is Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva mahasattva. The other is called Sthamaprapta. Departing from this, our buddha-field, Ananda, they were reborn in the Land of Bliss (See Gómez 1996, pp.97-98).

[16] An English translation by Inagaki is as follows: “Ānanda asked, “What are the names of those two bodhisattvas?” The Buddha replied, “One is called Avalokiteśvara and the other, Mahāsthāmaprāpta. They had both performed Bodhisattva practices in this world, and, at the end of their lives, were born by transformation in that Buddha-land (see Inagaki 1995, p.60). The counterpart of these contexts in the *Rúlái huì* reads:【如來 R1】佛告阿難。汝今諦聽。彼二菩薩。一名觀自在。二名大勢至。阿難。此二菩薩從娑婆世界捨壽量已往生彼國 (T12, p.98b26-28). The counterpart in the *Zhuāngyán jīng* (Z1) cf. note 9 of this paper.

The contexts in the two earliest versions –A1 and P1– possess the following characteristics: (i) They correspond well to each other, and: (ii) Although A1 and P1 correspond to their counterparts in later versions, they show a slight difference between them and the later versions. Apart from this bodhisattva's name, which has been revised to 盧樓亘 in the *Píngděngjué jīng* and has been discussed by scholars,[17] some crucial information, however, has been neglected up till now.

Firstly, four key words, 光明、頂中光明、智慧、最第一, appearing in A1 should attract our attention. The term *guāngmīng* 光明 appears over one hundred times as one of the special terms[18] in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Even though the term *guāngmīng* also appears in the counterparts of the Later Recension, they are just gathered in a short passage. The words 頂中光明, the one combined with *guāngmīng*, repeatedly appear 52 times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, but all of them have been revised to 項中光明 (49 times) in the *Píngděngjué jīng*. It is of interest that characters 頂 and 項 are quite similar so that 頂 could have easily been miswritten as 項. Yet it is hard to consider 項中光明 of the *Píngděngjué jīng* are derived from an accidental miswriting in that 項中光明 appears 49 times in the *Píngděngjué jīng*. Therefore, only one possibility comes to mind, namely that the words 頂中光明 in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* were purposely revised as 項中光明 by the translator of the *Píngděngjué jīng*.

[17] See NATTIER 2007; and TANAKA 2013.

[18] This term has been followed in the *Píngděngjué jīng* (103 timers), many examples akin to this term appear in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* such as *zhāijiè* 齋戒 "ascetic precepts"; *zìrán* 自然 "nature" etc. The term *zhāijiè* appears 11 times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng,* and almost all of them have been followed in the *Píngděngjué jīng*. And this term does not have a Sanskrit term in the Sanskrit version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (see XIAO 2011), a detailed research on the precepts in early Pure Land sutras is in perparation.

Similarly, *Gailouxuan* 蓋樓亘, the name of the *Guānyīn* in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, was purposely revised as *Elouxuan* 盧樓亘.

Secondly, the term *zhìhuì* 智慧 "wisdom" which is the most significant item of the Six Perfections (Ch. 六波羅蜜) appears 43 times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. It is worth noting that these four key words also appear among the special 129 characters[19] found in the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, which is crucial thought difficult to understand and in complete contrast to the ones in the later versions.[20] Accordingly, the context of P1 contains critical information that can help us to determine the original form of its counterpart in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, A1. Although P1 corresponds closely to A1, it is hard to consider that P1 is the one which is authentic rather than a copy of A1 in that the special 129 characters do not exist in the *Píngděngjué jīng*. The following table indicates the corresponding relationship between the terms in the 129 special characters of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the context A1.

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[19] The 129 characters read:【大阿】我欲求佛為菩薩道，令我後作佛時，於八方、上下諸無央數佛中，最尊、智慧勇猛、頭中光明如佛光明，所焰照無極；所居國土，自然七寶極自軟好；令我後作佛時，教授名字，皆聞八方、上下無央數佛國，莫不聞知我名字者；諸無央數天人民、及蜎飛蠕動之類諸來生我國者，悉皆令作菩薩、阿羅漢無央數都勝諸佛國。如是者寧可得不？(T12, pp.300c-301a). An English translation see Xiao 2014a, p. 60.

[20] According to my research, the greatest difference in the Dharmākara Story between the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the remaining versions is that the doctrine of "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection" and "Perfection of Wisdom" are deliberately highlighted in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Instead of being derived from early Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is commonly believed by scholars, it is a typical feature representing the translator's own Mahāyāna ideas which are extended from Dharmākara's cultivation to everyone who desires to be reborn in the Pure Land. Because "wisdom" is the most significant item in the Six Perfections, it is highlighted together with the doctrine of the "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection". For a discussion in detail regarding the formation of the Dharmākara story, on the basis of wisdom doctrine of the, see Xiao 2015. A discussion in detail regarding 善 and 惡 in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*,, see Xiao 2016a.

Table 2

| 129 characters | 最尊 | 智慧勇猛 | 頭中光明、焰照無極 | 悉皆令作菩薩、阿羅漢無央數 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1 | 最第一 | 智慧 | 光明、頂中光明各焰照 | 其諸菩薩頂中光明各照千億萬里，諸阿羅漢頂中光明 |

In summary, even though A1 has a counterpart in other versions, it shows a slight difference between what we find in the versions of the Later Recension (W1, R1, Z1 and Sk.1). P1 is not the one which is truthfully translated from the original Indian text of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, but rather a copy of A1. The original form of A1 is probably the same as Sk.1 in the Sanskrit versions. The translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* purposely revised A1 in order to deliberately highlight the importance of the doctrine of the wisdom "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection" and "Perfection of Wisdom" (cf. note 28 of this paper) which abound in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

**2.2 The second paragraph regarding *Guānyīn***

The short passage below regarding *Guānyīn* follows A1. This short passage addresses an object of refuge for ordinary people. The passage is as follows.

> 【大阿 A2】佛言：「世間人民，若善男子、善女人，若有急恐怖縣官事者，但自歸命是蓋樓亘菩薩、摩訶那鉢菩薩所，無不得解脫者。(T12, p. 308b19–22)
> The Buddha said, "If the people of this world, good men or good women, find themselves in trouble and are frightened in dealings with local officials, they should simply take refuge in this bodhisattva Avalokasvara and in the bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and they will all be saved (NATTIER 2007, p.198).

The counterpart in the *Píngděngjué jīng* is as follows:

> 【平等 P2】佛言："其世間人民 —— 善男子、善女人 —— 若有一急恐怖、遭縣官事者，但自歸命是盧樓亘菩薩，無所不得解脫者也。
> (T12, p.290a26–28)

The short passages (A2 and P2) above are not found in any of the later versions of the sūtra. According to HARRISON, the passage A2 above may be an interpolation introduced in China.[21] Even though I agree with HARRISON's conjecture, the following crucial points should have attracted more attention. Firstly, if the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is accepted as a genuine Lokakṣema translation, in part,[22] which parts are attributed to Lokakṣema, and which parts are the genuine Lokakṣema translation? Secondly, if A2 is an interpolation introduced in China as suggested by HARRISON, it is difficult to believe that the editor only interpolated A2. After all, the placement A2 is where it follows A1. Accordingly, "who did it and why did he interpolate A2" are the crucial questions for solving this problem. Thirdly, in fact, the three special terms in A2 can help us understand the background of the formation of A2. They are: (i) 世間人民; (ii)

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[21] HARRISON pointed out: "If T362 is accepted as a genuine Lokakṣema translation, either in whole or in part, then this would have a significant bearing on the chronology of several aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The relevant passage in T362 is to be found at 308b11-23 (cf. T361, 290a14-28; at this point the two texts clearly different recensions of the same translation), and asserts, when describing the two great bodhisattvas of Amitābha's realm, that people in this world who find themselves in dire strait and in terror of officials (*xianguan* 縣官) need only take personal refuge (*ziguiming* 自歸命) in *Avalokiteśvara* and *Mahāsthāmaprāpta* to be set free. If this does come from the hand of Lokakṣema, then it is indeed the earliest evidence for the cult of bodhisattvas, in the terms understood in this paper. It is curious, however, that this particular claim does not appear in the Sanskrit text of the Longer *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, or in the later Chinese translations attributed to Saṅghavarman and Bodhiruci, which raises the possibility that it could be a Chinese interpolation. There are several passages in T361 and T362 which are clearly to be explained in this way" (HARRISON 2000, p.172, note 24).

[22] Even HARRISON, according to NATTIER (2007, p.190), and KARASHIMA (2010, p.2), who strongly suggested that the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is simply the work of Lokakṣema, do not consider that the whole version of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is a genuine Lokakṣema translation, such as the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils". According to my research, it is hard to believe that these crucial paragraphs were interpolate later by a person who was not the translator of this version (on the formation of these crucial paragraphs see XIAO 2012a and 2016a.

善男子、善女人；(iii) 解脫.

Regarding these terms, 世間人民 "the people of this world" appears four times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, two of them are in the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils".[23] The words 善男子、善女人 "good men or good women" appear seven times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, two of which are in the 6th and the 7th vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*,[24] the most significant vows relating to rebirth in Amitābha's realm. The 6th vow has no counterpart in any other version. Even though the 7th vow corresponds to the 18th vow of the *Píngděngjué jīng* and the Sanskrit version,[25] it is clear that this vow has been purposely revised by the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.[26] The term 解脫 "emancipation" appears 15 times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, and it repeatedly appears in the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils", which do not have a counterpart in the Sanskrit version. Furthermore, the term 解脫 is a synonym of *guòdù réndào* 過度人道 "cultivation of the bodhisattva path in the present world", a part of the title of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* which corresponds to the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils". Therefore, if

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[23] One is in the paragraph regarding the third evils which reads: 其三惡者：諸世間人民寄生相因，共依居天地之間，處年壽命無能幾歲（T12, p314b06–07); the other is in the passage where it follows the one regarding the fifth evil, it reads: 世間人民不肯為善欲作眾惡，敢欲犯此諸惡事者，皆悉自然當具更歷入惡道中（T12, p.315b08–10）.

[24] The 6th vow reads: 第六願：使某作佛時，令八方、上下無央數佛國，諸天人民，若善男子、善女人，欲來生我國，用我故益作善，若分檀布施、遶塔燒香、散花然燈、懸雜繒綵、飯食沙門、起塔作寺，斷愛欲，晝夜不斷絕。齋戒清淨一心念我晝夜一日不斷絕皆令來生我國作菩薩。得是願乃作佛，不得是願終不作佛（T12, p.301b21–26）。The 7th vow reads: 第七願：使某作佛時，令八方、上下無央數佛國，諸天人民，若善男子、善女人，有作菩薩道，奉行六波羅蜜經。若作沙門，不毀經戒，斷愛欲，齋戒清淨，一心念欲生我國，晝夜不斷絕。若其人壽欲終時，我即與諸菩薩、阿羅漢，共飛行迎之，即來生我國；則作阿惟越致菩薩，智慧勇猛。得是願乃作佛，不得是願終不作佛（T12, p. 301b27–c05）. Regarding the formation of these two vows cf. Xiao 2011, and 2016, c. A discussion reading 善男子，善女人，see Xiao 2016a.

[25] Cf. Ōta 2005, pp. 54–55.

[26] Cf. Xiao 2014b, a detailed discussion in English regarding the formation of these three vows（the 5-7）see Xiao 2016, c.

this passage has been interpolated in China such as HARRISON's suggestion (2000, p.172, note 24), it must be the work of the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng,* who interpolated this passage with the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils".[27] Accordingly, there is something of paradox regarding this question. On the other hand, the placement of this passage is just in the paragraph where it mention the bodhisattva of *Sukhāvatī*. According to my research, the words *zuò púsàdào* 作菩薩道 "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection" plays an important role in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Instead of being derived from early Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is commonly believed by scholars, it is a typical feature representing the translator's own Mahāyāna ideas which are extended from Dharmākara's cultivation to everyone who desires to be reborn in the Pure Land.[28] Furthermore, 解脫 and 過度人道 are the words which

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[27] It is worth note that HARRISON does not consider the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils" to be the work of Lokakṣema, but rather an addition draw from another source, suggested by NATTIER (see NATTER 2007). As I mentioned above, it is hard to believe that the paragraphs on "Five-Evils" to be interpolated by an unknown person different with the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* (SUEKI 1984; a detailed discussion on this problem see XIAO 2012a and 2014a).

[28] See XIAO 2015. Apart from the terms discussed above, I also found that some special terms (see XIAO 2012) relating to "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection", which may help us to better understand the formation of this version, exist in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. These special terms have the following features: (1) All of them frequently appear in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and almost are relating to the items of the Six Perfections, but they unexpectedly disappeared in subsequent ones, especially in the extant Sanskrit version. (2) Not only these terms, but their synonyms and antonyms repeatedly appear in this version, and they do not have a counterpart in the extant Sanskrit version. (3) These terms also repeatedly appear in the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils", which were almost certainly created by the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng;* (4) Many of them have a close relationship with "Cultivation the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection". (5) Many of them appear in the same contexts or paragraphs and do not have a counterpart in the Sanskrit version. And (6) Almost all of these terms have not been discussed by scholars. A detailed study based on this point is in preparation. Some of these are summarized in the following table:

indicate the eventual purpose, "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection." Similarly, 世間人民、善男子善女人 are the subject of "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection", who are the salvific targets of the bodhisattva *Guānyīn* by his bodhisattva practice.

**2.3 The third paragraph regarding *Guānyīn* in the *Dà āmītuō jīng***

The last contexts regarding *Guānyīn* in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, which addresses the eventual successor of Amitābha, only appear in the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*.

【大阿 A3】阿彌陀佛至其然後般泥洹者，其蓋樓亘菩薩，便當作佛。總領道智，典主教授，世間及八方、上下所過度諸天人民、蜎飛蠕動之類，皆令得佛泥洹之道。其善福德，當復如大師阿彌陀佛，住止無央數劫無央數劫，不可復計劫，准法大師，爾乃般泥洹。其次摩訶那鉢菩薩，當復作佛。典主智慧，總領教授，所過度福德，當復如大師阿彌陀佛。止住無央數劫，尚復不般泥洹。展轉相承受，經道甚明，國土極善。其法如是，終無有斷

Table 3

| The Special Terms Related to the Six Perfections | The Corresponding Vows in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* | Times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* |
|---|---|---|
| 作善（布施） | The5-6th, the22th, and the 24th vow | 42 times;（布施：8 times，施：24 times） |
| 行菩薩道（奉行六波羅蜜） | The 7th vow | 8 times;（奉行六波羅蜜：2 times） |
| 智慧（愚痴、瞋怒） | The 7th, 18th，22th, and 23th vows;（愚痴、瞋怒：the 11th vow） | 43times;（愚痴、瞋怒：12 times） |
| 戒（経戒、斎戒清浄） | The 5–7th vows | 28 times;（経戒、斎戒清浄：11 times） |
| 一心（坐禅） | The 7th, 10th, 19–20th vows | 19 times；（坐禅：8 times） |
| 化生 | The 2nd vow | 16 times（Not corresponding with those in the versions of the Later Recension） |
| 忍辱（無相嫉憎） | The 12th vow | 4 times（嫉憎：4 times,also in the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils"） |

絕，不可極也。[29]（T12, p.309a14–24）

The counterpart of the texts above in the *Píngděngjué jīng* is as follows:

【平等 P3】佛言：“無量清淨佛至其然後般泥洹者，其盧樓亘菩薩便當作佛，總領道智，典主教授世間八方上下，所過度諸天、人民、蝡飛蠕動之類，皆令得佛泥洹之道。其善福德當得復如大師無量清淨佛，住止無央數劫、無央數劫、不可復計劫、不可復計劫，准法大師，爾乃般泥曰。其次摩訶那鉢菩薩當復作佛，典主智慧，都總教授，所過度福德當復如大師無量清淨佛，止住無央數劫，常復不般泥洹。展轉相承，受經道甚明，國土極善，其法如是，終無有斷絕，不可極也。”（T12, p.291a03–14）

Regarding paragraph A3 above, two possibilities come to mind. This short passage is the genuine translation of the original text of the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, but with the evolution of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, it was deleted in the later versions. Even though this suggestion is commonly believed by scholars, there is another possibility; namely, that this passage was not derived from the original Indian text but rather was an interpolation introduced in China, akin to A2 discussed above. I tend towards the second suggestion. In order to state the problem clearly, we need

[29] A translation by NATTIER is as follows: “The Buddha said, “Right after Amitābha Buddha has attained *parinirvāṇa,* the bodhisattva Avalokasvara will become a Buddha, comprehensive in Dharma-wisdom, a master of the scriptures, one who confers the teachings. As to those whom he ferries across — the gods, humans, and various living beings of the world with its eight directions, zenith, and nadir—he will cause them all to attain the *nirvāṇa* [taught by] the Buddha. His excellent qualities will be like those of the great teacher Amitābha Buddha. He will remain [in the world] for innumerable *kalpas* — innumerable *kalpas*, incalculable *kalpas* —conforming to the Dharma, a great teacher. When he finally attains *parinirvāṇa*, after him the bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāta will then become a Buddha, a master of the scriptures, wise, comprehensive in bestowing the teachings. [The extent of] those he will ferry across and of his own excellent qualities will again be like those of the great teacher Amitābha Buddha. He will remain [in the world] for innumerable *kalpas*, not yet attaining *parinirvāṇa*. As they pass on frpm one to the other the profound wisdom of the Dharma, the land will be supremely excellent. In this way its Dharma will never be cut off, and no limit cannot be placed on it（NATTIER 2007, p. 203）.

to understand why the translator created this passage. There is another short paragraph addressing the predictions to Ajātaśatru, to an eminent audience of Five hundred, in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, which reads as follows:

> 【大阿】佛說阿彌陀佛為菩薩， 求索得是二十四願時， 阿闍世王太子， 與五百長者迦羅越子，各持一金華蓋，俱到佛所，前為作禮佛，以頭面著佛足，皆持金華蓋，前上佛已，悉却坐一面聽經。阿闍世王太子，及五百長者子，聞阿彌陀佛二十四願，皆大歡喜踊躍，心中俱願言：“令我等後作佛時，皆如阿彌陀佛。”佛即知之，告諸比丘僧：”是阿闍世王太子，及五百長者子，却後無數劫，皆當作佛，如阿彌陀佛。”
>
> 佛言：“是阿闍世王太子，及五百長者子，住菩薩道已來無央數劫，皆各供養四百億佛已， 今復來供養我。阿闍世王太子， 及五百長者子， 皆前世迦葉佛時， 為我作弟子， 今皆復會是共相值也。則諸比丘僧，聞佛言皆踊躍，莫不代之歡喜者。”（T12, p.303b02-08）

Of course, there is no counterpart to this in the Sanskrit version. According to FUJITA, it is hard to imagine that these words are derived from the original Indian text of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*.[30] I presented a preliminary analysis on the basis of the term 二十四願,[31] and pointed out that we have reason enough to believe that this short paragraph is also not derived from the original Indian text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* but rather was an interpolation introduced in China. The intention of the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* was none other than to highlight the fact that Ajātaśatru, and an eminent audience of Five hundred, would cultivate the bodhisattva path to perfection like Amitābha Buddha, and that they will attain Buddha-hood, the same as Amitābha.

What paragraph A3 addresses is the prediction that *Guānyīn* will attain Buddhahood as the eventual successor of Amitābha Buddha, subsequent to Amitābha entering *nirvāṇa*. Because several terms underlined above also

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[30] See FUJITA 1970, p. 173.

[31] See XIAO 2015, p.24.

appear in the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils", the paragraph A3 also has a connection to the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils".

The first evidence: the term 福德 appears 15 times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, two of them are in A3, and nine of them are in the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils". Accordingly, neither term in the Sanskrit version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* corresponds to this Chinese term. And paragraph A3 above is quite possibly the creation of the editor of the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils", who is the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. On this point, paragraph A3 is also the interpolation introduced in China.

The second evidence: the term 過度 appears ten times including in title of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, 過度人道 which corresponds to the paragraphs on the "Five-Evils". The term 無央數劫 "measureless kalpas" appears nine times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, two times in A3 and one in the paragraph on the predictions to Ajātaśatru above.[32]

Furthermore, even though the two earliest versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* have twenty-four vows, their order and contents are completely different. This phenomenon is rarely seen in the early Mahāyāna sūtras. In contrast to the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, the *Āchūfóguó jīng* 阿閦佛國經[33] (the *Akṣobhya Sūtra*), one of the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras, is another story. The two Chinese versions of this sūtra (T310 and T313) do not show a large difference as we find in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. As I have

[32] A vivid context containing this term in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is as follows:【大阿】佛告阿難："阿彌陀為菩薩時，常奉行是二十四願。分檀布施，不犯道禁，忍辱、精進、一心、智慧；志願常勇猛，不毀經法。求索不懈，每獨棄國捐王，絕去財色，精明求願無所適莫，積功累德，無央數劫，今自致作佛，悉皆得之，不亡其功也。"(T12, p.302b15–20). This idea is not derived from the original text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* but is the creation by the translator based on his notion (see Xiao 2015, p.24).

[33] Two Chinese translations are preserved at present. One is attributed to Lokakṣema (T313) which was translated during the period of 178-189; the other is attributed to 菩提流志 (T310) which was translated during the period of 705 — 713.

repeatedly emphasized in other papers, this characteristic in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* (even the vows of this version) may not reflect the genuine translation from its original text. Meanwhile, much evidence, such as those mentioned above (cf. note 28), indicates that many texts are the revisions and creations of the translator. This was quite probably this case in relation to the context regarding *Guānyīn*.

Finally, regarding the bodhisattva *Guānyīn* as the successor of Amitābha, even though it is true that this had appeared in an Indian Buddhist text, such as the Sanskrit version of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* and all the versions of this sūtra, it does not mean that the idea in A3 above must have its genesis in the genuine translation from the original Indian text. Regarding the chronological order between Amitābha's vows in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* and the vows in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, I have argued that the vows in the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* were formed before the period of the vows in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* on the basis of women's rebirth to Amitābha's realm (see XIAO 2014b). This does not mean that the chronological order of the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* must be earlier than the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.[34] The instanses of *Guānyīn* appearing as the successor of Amitābha in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* are probably this case, which has derived from a different system with the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. A similar example can be found in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, such as the second vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* , the so-called ***nǚrén wǎngshēng*** 女人往生 "Women's Rebirth in *Sukhāvatī*" and ***huàshēng*** 化生 "Rebirth by Transformation on a Lotus Lowers".[35]

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[34] A vivid example, which appears in the *Fǎyuànzhū lín* 法苑珠林 (T53, No. 2122) attributed to 道世 in 659, in Chinese Buddhism is just about the vow of Amitābha in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. The vows of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* (T12, pp.301a23-302b14) have been cited in the *Fǎyuàn zhūlín* (T53, pp. 522a23-533b17), whose formation period is earlier than the forty-eight vows in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* attributed to 佛陀跋陀羅 *Buddhabhadra* and *Bǎoyún* 寶雲 in 421 C.E.

[35] I pointed out that the formation of this term in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is derived from a system different to that of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (see XIAO 2014a, and 2016b).

In summary, A3 regarding *Guānyiīn* is not derived from the original text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* but rather is a different system to that of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. This passage is also likely to be an interpolation by the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

## Conclusion

The following conclusions can be reached based on the above investigation:

Firstly, even though A1 has a counterpart in other versions, it shows a slight difference between what we find in the versions of the Later Recension (W1, R1, Z1 and Sk.1). P1 is not the one which is truthfully translated from the original Indian text of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, but rather a copy of A1. The original form of A1 is probably the same as Sk.1 in the Sanskrit versions. The translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* purposely revised A1 in order to deliberately highlight the importance of the doctrine of the wisdom "Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection" and "Perfection of Wisdom" which abound in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

Secondly, I agree with HARRISON's suggestion that A2 is not derived from the original Indian text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* but rather was an interpolation introduced in China. The intention of the Chinese translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is to highlight that *Guānyīn* is cultivating the bodhisattva path to save people of this word, akin to the bodhisattva Dharmākara.

Thirdly, A3 is not derived from the original text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* but from a system rather different from that of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. This passage is also likely to be an interpolation by the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. In general, A1 is a revision of its original text, while A2 and A3 are interpolations by the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

Finally, owing to space constraints, *Guānyīn* in the *Guānjīng* 觀無量壽佛經 cannot be considered here although I hope to do so in a subsequent paper.

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