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**How Buddhism Became Chinese**

A reflection on the (Ahitā) Thera Sutta (A 5.88)  
by Piya Tan ©2008 (2<sup>nd</sup> rev), 2009 (3<sup>rd</sup> rev)

*Even famous teachers can have wrong views and mislead others.* (A 5.88)

**The (Ahitāya) Thera Sutta** (A 5.88) is a vital warning that grounding in right view is imperative especially when we are presenting or representing the Buddha Dharma. The more people respect us, or listen to us, or turn to us for spiritual help, and the more we have the means of mass-propagating our Buddhist views, the more carefully we have to ascertain rightness and moral consequences of our efforts. The point is that status, learning, seniority, fame, wealth, and resources, advantageous as they may be in Buddhist work, are not sufficient standards for truth.

While it is true that whatever we express are merely our own opinions, we must have the moral responsibility at least to ensure that such opinions or facts reflect the true Dharma. Much as we have the freedom to publicize the teachings of a particular teacher or group, we must accept the fact that this may not be the only view of the true Dharma. The final test of what we propagate must be Dharma-based. The true teachings always stand above the teacher.<sup>1</sup>

After the Buddha's time, especially as Buddhism grows beyond India, such standards are not always possible, for various reasons. At first, Buddhism appears to change the culture, but in due course it is the culture that changes Buddhism, often turning it into a system vastly different, even contrary to the Dharma of the Buddha. Here we will examine how such a process occurs, and what can we learn from it. The growth of Buddhism in China is a case in point.

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**Preface**

One of the ubiquitous problems in the history of Chinese Buddhism is the question: In what sense did the early Chinese Buddhists understand the Indian texts which they and their collaborators so assiduously and laboriously translated?...It is, of course, a truism that concepts as well as currency become worn out and must be replaced from time to time; that ideals no less than coins lose their new mintage; and that all of these are subjected under unusual stress to inflations and devaluations.

(Arthur E Link, "Shyh Daw-an's Preface to Saṅgharakṣa's Yogācārabhūmisūtra and the problem of Buddho-Taoist terminology in early Chinese Buddhism," 1957: 1)

This book was unplanned; I was inspired and guided by the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas right from beginning to end. Never before have I learned so much, so profoundly, in so short a time about Buddhism in China and the Chinese Buddhist mind than in these two months I spent working on this book. As the book grew I noticed my desire to know grew progressively, like turning the pages of a magical, colourful and pictured fairy-tale book, only this is about my, our, Buddhist and cultural roots.

It all began with my translating of **the (Ahitā) Thera Sutta** (A 5.88) in the Sutta Discovery volume 40a, sutta 16 (SD 40a.16). It is a very short text, about two and a half A4 pages long, and the crux of the sutta is that *even great and famous teachers can have wrong views and mislead others*. It was my habit, having translated the sutta, to write an introduction and provide explanations or examples as necessary. For this short sutta, I thought a couple of examples of how some ancient Chinese monks propounded

<sup>1</sup> See (Ahitāya) Thera S (A 5.88/3:114-116) = SD 40.16.

wrong views or views different from early Buddhism (such as Daoyuan and his Daoist bent, or Dahui Zonggao and his *gōng'àn*), and his followers and the public simply accepted them *ad hominem*.

When I looked up one name, I found an interesting network of history behind it, and one name led to another, and to interesting explanations about what really happened, and so on. So a two-week project grew into a two-month long research, which was really a joy to do. Then I had to ensure their Chinese spellings and pronunciations, their traditional characters and simplified forms (if any), are all fully given (and so the Glossary came into being).

Over the years, I have collected a modest number of books on Buddhism in China, partly for an earlier project on a “History of Buddhism” (2001, rev 2004). So much progress has been made in the study of Buddhism in China, especially on Sòng-dynasty Buddhism over the last decade. There is now a prodigious number of papers on Chinese Buddhism available, and I attempted to read as many of them as I can find. Here I am grateful from the magnanimous scholars who took time off to answer my queries and respond to my requests (via email), such as Brian Black (SOAS), Robert Buswell, Jr (UCLA), Dan Lusthaus (Boston University), Joseph Walser (Tufts University) and Albert Welter (University of Winnipeg).

Grateful thanks also go to my voluntary “research assistants,” Heiny Tan and Elvina Melissa (of the National University of Singapore) for helping me in locating sources and resources. And love to my deeply patient wife, Ratna, who assisted me with the Chinese spellings and proof-reading. Both of us are gratefully amazed at the number of good free online Chinese software that easily give pinyin forms, convert pinyin into Chinese and vice versa, read Chinese words, etc, all of which are very helpful to our work.

At the time of writing, the newspapers carried troubling reports of local monks queuing up to buy four-digit lotteries, going to court over huge sums of money, and one of the best known of them now facing criminal charges over mismanagement of public funds. This research has shown me that the roots of such weaknesses lie deep in history, but there are powerful hints how all this can change. But we must have the spiritual will to change for the better.

In this connection, I must state that this is *not* an academic paper, although it tries to maintain some kind of academic order. It is very biased, even polemical, in parts—it is a very Dharma-biased book that expresses much *agony* at the vicissitudes my Buddhist ancestors faced and my current fellow Buddhists are facing, and the *profound joy* to know about such rich history at our roots. One common point this book has with academic writings is that they both express *the various authors’ opinions*, but here I have also tried my best to give a digest of the best learned opinions (in my view) there are on Chinese Buddhism.

In many places I have also expressed my own opinions (often reflective of what I see in the Buddhist trends of my own times), and I suspect some readers may accuse me of superimposing my own contemporary biases upon the past. I’m not sure how any critical writer can *not* in some way avoid this, unless they are uncritical, but more importantly, because this is a *critical reappraisal* of Chinese Buddhism, and a *strategic study*, so that we do not repeat past mistakes. We need to learn, in a wholesome manner, from our ancestors.

Also, I hope, like Taixu and Yinshun before me (as my incomparable inspirations), that those with vision and charisma may learn something useful and inspiring here to make good things happen to the Buddhism of their times.

I especially hope that young Buddhists will carefully study this book, look up the related references, and wisely discuss the implications of “how Buddhism became Chinese,” and what vision they should share and direction to take so that the pains and passions of Buddhist history have not been in vain.

The future of a joyfully liberating Buddhism is now.

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# 1 Buddhist growth in China

The arrival of Buddhism in China and Chinese responses

## 1.1 FOUR STAGES OF GROWTH

**1.1.1** As Buddhism grew after the Buddha and beyond India, it profoundly changed cultures and was in turn fundamentally changed by those very same cultures. Even today, Buddhism continues to grow on a more global scale, and is undergoing further significant changes. As an interesting example of this historical process, we shall briefly examine how Buddhism arose and changed in China. We shall especially discuss how such changes occurred because of the prominence of *persons*, usually a great Chinese master (such as Dàoshēng) [2.2.4], or even a powerful political figure (such as the empress Wǔ Zétiān) [5.2.2], and how Buddhism, as a religion, reinvents itself to grow or, at least, survive. Such Buddhist continuities and changes in China further profoundly influenced the Buddhist traditions of east Asia right down to modern times.

**Dan Lusthaus**, in his 1998 entry on “Buddhist philosophy, Chinese” in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,<sup>2</sup> divides the development of Chinese Buddhism roughly into four periods:

- (1) 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries: Early introduction of Indian and Central Asian Buddhism;
- (2) 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries: Formative development of Chinese versions of Indian and Central Asian schools;
- (3) 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> centuries: The emergence of distinctively Chinese Buddhist schools; and
- (4) 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards: The continuance of Chinese Buddhism into the present day.

**1.1.2** The first Buddhists in China were neither Indians nor missionaries: they were Central Asian and Iranian traders who were Buddhists, and who made no particular effort to proselytize the local people. The first missionaries began trickling in during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE onwards, and were probably Buddhist monks from Parthia<sup>3</sup> and other parts of Central Asia, and later monks and nuns came both by land and by sea from India and Sri Lanka, either invited by the merchants living in China or underwent the perilous journeys themselves.

Shortly before the Common Era, when Buddhism began to enter China from India and Central Asia, Confucianism<sup>4</sup> had enjoyed supremacy for over a century, and the teachings of Lǎozǐ<sup>5</sup> and of Zhuāngzi 莊

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/G002SECT2> & also biblio below.

<sup>3</sup> **Parthia** was roughly what is today the NE part of Iran, straddling north of the Persian Gulf and southeast of the Caspian sea. **Zhang Qian**, who visited the neighbouring countries of **Bactria** and **Sogdiana** in 126 BC, made the first known Chinese report on Parthia, which he called Ānxī (安息, **Arsacid**, the name of the Parthian dynasty). Parthians played a significant role in the **Silk Road transmission of Buddhism** from Central Asia to China. **An Shigao** [2.2.1], a Parthian nobleman turned Buddhist missionary, went to the Chinese capital Luòyáng in 148, where he established temples and was the first to translate Buddhist scriptures into Chinese.

<sup>4</sup> The teachings of **Confucius** (Kǒng Fūzǐ 孔夫子, or Kǒngzǐ 孔子, 551-479 BCE). His teachings of social ethics emphasized personal and governmental morality, correctness of social relationships, justice and sincerity.

<sup>5</sup> **Lǎozǐ** 老子 (Lao-tzu, also Lao-tse, Lao-tze), ancient Chinese philosopher and a central figure in Daoism. Lǎozǐ lit means “Old Master” and is an honorific. There are three main forms: (1) **philosophical Daoism** (*dàojiā* 道家), based on the *Dàodéjīng* 道德經 and the *Zhuāngzǐ* 莊子; (2) **religious Daoism** (*Dàojiào* 道教), a family of organized Daoist traditions, and (3) **folk Daoism** (Kohn 2000: xi, xxix). (Scholars now generally use *Dàojiā* and *Dàojiào*, this latter comprising the last two.) In the latter, he is revered as a god. According to Chinese tradition, Lǎozǐ lived in the 6th cent BCE. Historians variously contend that he was a synthesis of multiple historical figures, that he is a mythical figure, or that he actually lived in the 4th cent BCE, concurrent with the Hundred Schools of Thought and Warring States Period. The Daoist classic, *Dàodéjīng*, originally known simply as the *Lǎozǐ*, is attributed to him. Daoist thought focuses on “non-action” (*wúwéi* 無為), spontaneity, transformation and emptiness. An emphasis is placed on the link between people and nature. See Kohn 2000:14.

子<sup>6</sup> (as part of the Huánglǎo Daoist 黃老道 tradition) were established in both the philosophical and religious spheres. Daoism (*dàojiāo* 道教) was essentially humanistic, idealizing harmony between man and nature, idealized in the *xiān* (僊, 仙, 仝) or immortal. Confucianism,<sup>7</sup> on the other hand, preaches a social ethics of harmonious human relationships centering around family and state, but strongly hierarchical and patriarchal, with the ideal man as *jūnzi* 君子, the noble man or true gentleman.

**1.1.3** The Chinese of those times who favoured Buddhism, generally viewed it as an offshoot of the native Huánglǎo Daoist tradition, a form of Daoism rooted in texts and practices attributed to the Yellow Emperor (Huángdì 黃帝, 2600 BCE) and Lǎozǐ 老子 (500-300 BCE) [2.2]. Others, less accommodating of this “foreign” intrusion from the “barbaric” western countries, viewed Buddhism as a dangerous challenge to the social and ethical Chinese civil order. This remark by a Sòng literato, **Ōuyáng Xiū** 歐陽修 (1007-1072) is typical of the official Confucian view of Buddhism in Neo-Confucian circles:

When kingly rule ceased, and rites and righteousness were neglected, Buddhism came to China. It is clear that Buddhism took advantage of this time of decay and neglect to come and plague us. This was how the illness was first contracted. And if we will but remedy this decay, revive what has fallen into disuse, and restore once again to the land kingly rule in its brilliance and rites and righteousness to their fullness, then although Buddhism continues to exist, it will have no hold upon our people. (Quoted by de Bary, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 1960 1:387)

For several centuries these two attitudes fashioned the Chinese understanding of Buddhism. **Buswell** gives us a good idea of how the Chinese, especially the Daoists, first viewed the newly arrived Buddhism:

The earliest interest of the Chinese in Buddhism in fact derived from the spiritual technologies brought by early Buddhist missionaries. In the same way that modern Westerners often view Buddhism as a type of self-help psychology, second-century Taoists saw in Buddhism a form of internal alchemy. Taoist thaumaturges were always on the lookout for new methods of prolonging the life-span (*ch'ang-shou*) [*chángshòu* 長壽] and Buddhist meditative methods such as contemplation of the breath (*ānāpānasmṛti*) seemed to share many affinities with their own practices.<sup>8</sup> (Buswell 1987: 326)

The situation remained unchanged even as more and more missionaries arrived (mostly from Central Asia) bringing new texts, concepts, rituals, meditative disciplines and other practices. Buddhists and Daoists mutually borrowed ideas, terminology, disciplines, cosmologies, institutional structures, literary genres and soteric models from each other. This exchange sometimes was so profound that even today it can be very difficult to determine whose original idea it was. Meanwhile, polemical and political attacks from hostile Chinese quarters (especially the Confucianists) forced Buddhists to respond with apologia after apologia, and ultimately to revise Buddhism into something the Chinese would find more attractive and acceptable.

**1.1.4** In the fifth century, Buddhism began to emerge from its quasi-Daoist label by clarifying definitive differences between Buddhist and Daoist thought. Daoist vocabulary and literary styles were shared

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<sup>6</sup> **Zhuāngzi** 莊子 (c4th cent BCE), an important Chinese philosopher who lived during the Warring States period, corresponding to the Hundred Schools of Thought philosophical peak of Chinese thought. The text, *Zhuāngzi* (same name), purported to be by him, is a composite of writing from various sources (he probably composed only the first seven chapters). His philosophy is mildly sceptical, appealing to naturalness, proposing that our life is limited but the amount of things to know is unlimited. It was foolish, he said, to use the limited to pursue the unlimited. According to him, our language and cognition, generally presuppose a *dào* 道, that is, a “path,” to which each of us is committed by our separate past. Intellectual historians generally attribute a significant amount of Lǎozǐ and Zhuāngzi thought to the development of Chan Buddhism (C Muller: [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?83.xml+id\('b838a-5b50\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?83.xml+id('b838a-5b50))).

<sup>7</sup> *Rújiā* 儒家, *Kǒngjiào* 孔教.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion, see Henri Maspero, *Taoism and Chinese Religion*, tr Frank A Kierman, Jr, Amherst: Univ of Massachusetts Press, 1981: 257-262, 400-412.

and new distinctively Buddhist terminology and genres were developed. Even though Mahāyāna Buddhism was a minority school in India and had few followers in Central Asia, it became the dominant form of Buddhism in China to the extent that the ancient Chinese Buddhists would often disapprovingly, even derisively, label non-Mahāyāna forms of Buddhism as *hīna, yāna* (literally “low or inferior vehicle”).

By **the sixth century**, the Chinese had been introduced to a variety of Buddhist theories and practices representing a wide range of Indian Buddhist schools. As the Chinese struggled to master these doctrines, it became evident that, despite the fact that these schools were all supposed to express the One Dharma (Buddha’s Teaching), their teachings were not homogenous, and were often incompatible, even contradictory.

By the end of the sixth century the most pressing issue facing Chinese Buddhists was how to iron out the disparities amongst the various teachings. Responses to this issue produced **the Chinese Mahāyāna schools**, that is, Buddhist schools that originated in China rather than India. The four Chinese schools are Tiāntái (天台), Huáyán (華嚴), Chán (禪) and Pure Land (Jìngtǔ 淨土). Issues that these schools share in common include Buddha-nature, mind, emptiness, *Tathāgata, garbha*, skillful means (*upāya*), overcoming birth and death (*saṃsāra*), and awakening (*bodhi*).

From the 4th through the 7<sup>th</sup> centuries, Buddhist scholars in China periodically realized that their Buddhist texts and notions were often at variance with their Indian antecedents. They tried to correct the problem either through the introduction of additional translations or by clarifying differences between Buddhist and native Chinese ideas.

By **the 8<sup>th</sup> century**, the Chinese had apparently become satisfied with the types of Buddhism they had developed since, from that moment on they lost interest in Indian commentaries and treatises, and instead turned their attention toward Chinese commentaries on the texts—such as the Lotus Sutra<sup>9</sup> and the Garland Sutra<sup>10</sup>—that had assumed importance for the Chinese Buddhist traditions.

Moreover, even though Buddhist missionaries continued to arrive in China and new translations continued to be produced up to right through **the 13<sup>th</sup> century**, none of the significant developments in Indian Buddhism (such as Buddhist syllogistic logic) from the 7<sup>th</sup> century on had any lasting impact on Chinese Buddhism, and many important texts and thinkers (eg, Dharmakīrti, Candrakīrti, and Śāntarakṣita) remained virtually unknown in East Asia until modern times.<sup>11</sup>

## 1.2 FACTORS FAVOURING BUDDHISM IN ANCIENT CHINA

**1.2.1 Arrival of Buddhism.** Although the “official” introduction of Buddhism into China was said to have occurred during the reign of **emperor Míng of Hàn** (Hàn míng dì 漢明帝 28-75, r 68-75), the second

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<sup>9</sup> Skt *Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra* (*Miàofǎ Liánhuā Jīng* 妙法蓮華經; Jap *Myōhō Renge Kyō*; Kor *Myo beom nyeon hwa gyeong*; Viet *Diệu Pháp Liên Hoa Kinh*) or *Scripture on the White Lotus of the Sublime Dharma*, one of the most popular and influential Mahāyāna sutras in East Asia, and the root text of the Nichiren sects of Japanese Buddhism. It was probably compiled in the 1st century CE in Kashmir, during the 4th Buddhist Council of the newly arisen Mahāyāna movement, over 500 years after the Buddha’s parinirvana. As such, it is not included in the Pali Canon of Theravāda, nor in the Āgamas of Mahāyāna, both of which represent the older Buddhist canons, most if not all of which go back to the Buddha himself. The Lotus Sutra purports to be a discourse delivered by the Buddha himself toward the end of his life.

<sup>10</sup> *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (*Huáyán jīng* 華嚴經; Jap, *Kegon kyō*), or more fully, *Mahā Vaipulya-buddhāvataṃsaka Sūtra* (Skt, “The Great and Vast Buddha Garland Sutra”), one of the most influential texts in East Asian Buddhism. Various tr as *Flower Garland Sutra*, *Flower Adornment Sutra*, *Flowers Ornament Scripture*, or simply *Garland Sutra*. It is a Mahāyāna sutra purportedly expounded by the Buddha after his awakening that directly conveys the content of his vision. There is no complete Skt text of this sutra extant, but portions exist and Zhìyǎn (智儼 602-668), the 2<sup>nd</sup> patriarch of the Huáyán school, left an outline of the Skt text from which Śikṣānanda’s tr was made. Kang-nam Oh (2000:287) discusses how Daoism influenced Huáyán Buddhism and how *dharma, dhātu* (*fǎjiè* 法界) became qualified with the Daoist term and concept *xuán* (玄), “mystery.”

<sup>11</sup> See Kitagawa 1980.



emperor of the Eastern or Later Hàn Dynasty,<sup>12</sup> Buddhism was already known before that.<sup>13</sup> In other words, Buddhism did not arrive wholesale in China, the way, say, Islam of the Turkish mujahidin did in 12<sup>th</sup> century India. Buddhism basically trickled in—“the way most ideologies with staying power latch themselves to the minds and imaginations of a people.”<sup>14</sup> During the reign of Míngdì 明帝 (68-75 CE) Buddhism received a strong boost in China, so that by 200 CE, there were Chinese translations of Buddhist texts.<sup>15</sup>

Beginning from the 1<sup>st</sup> century and the middle of 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE, certain social conditions in China favoured the rise of Buddhism include:<sup>16</sup>

- (1) **Anomie.** China was passing through a period of cultural unrest, as the Hàn dynasty declined. Traditional moral and social structures were weakened. Many people were looking for some satisfactory way of life that would provide some meaning and significance in human existence,
- (2) **Adaptability.** Buddhism met just the needs of the people because, unlike Brahmanism and other Indian religions at that time, it is not rooted in local cults. It was more socially adaptable.
- (3) **Mission.** The Buddhist monks belong to a missionary tradition: Buddhism is India’s (perhaps the world’s) first missionary religion.
- (4) **Indigenization.** The Buddhist monks adapted themselves to the local conditions. It was mainly Mahāyāna Buddhism that grew China. With its emphasis on the Bodhisattva ideal, used various skilful means (eg adjustment of Vinaya rules) to spread Buddhism and gain local support.

**1.2.2 “The First Sutra.”** Let us look at an example of how early textual Buddhism was like. **The Sutra of Forty-two Sections** (*Sìshíèr zhāng jīng* 四十二章經) is the earliest extant Buddhist sutra in Chinese translation, and as such has been called “the First Sutra.”<sup>17</sup> It was translated by two Yuèzhī<sup>18</sup> monks, **Kaśyapa Mataṅga** (Jiāshě Móténg 迦葉摩騰 or 迦叶摩騰) and **Dharma,rakṣa** (Zhúfālán 竺法蘭; also called Gôbharāṇa), in 67. It comprises a brief prologue and 42 short chapters (mostly under 100 Chinese characters), mostly quotations from the Buddha. Most chapters begin with “The Buddha said...” (*fóyán* 佛言), but a few give the context or a question to the Buddha.

It is unclear whether the sutra was translated from a Sanskrit original, but it certainly appears to be an anthology of early canonical quotations. Its simple and natural style shows that it is older than other Mahāyāna texts, and hints at its being based on a Prakrit (Pali?) or Sanskrit text or texts.<sup>19</sup>

The oft repeated phrase, “The Buddha said...” is reminiscent of “The Master said” of the Confucian texts, especially the Analects.<sup>20</sup> The early Buddhist translators probably felt that the teachings presented

<sup>12</sup> The Later Han Dynasty (*Hòu Hàn* 後漢) or Eastern Han Dynasty (*Dōng Hàn* 東漢) 25–220 CE; capital: Luò-yáng 洛陽.

<sup>13</sup> According to the *Wèi shū* 魏書 (“History of the Wei Period”), ch 114, a Chinese court scholar was instructed in a Buddhist scripture by an envoy from Yuèzhī 月支. According to the *Hòuhàn shū* 後漢書 (“History of the Later Han Period”), ch 72, three Buddhist terms, “Buddha,” *upāsaka* (Buddhist lay-followers), and *śramaṇa* (monk), were found in an official document in 65 CE.

<sup>14</sup> Linda Brown Holt 1995:1.

<sup>15</sup> Nakamura 1964:226.

<sup>16</sup> For details, see Piya Tan, “Buddhism in China,” in *History of Buddhism*, 2004 §§1-7. Accessible at [http://pali.house.googlepages.com/HOB3\\_China.pdf](http://pali.house.googlepages.com/HOB3_China.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Cheng Kuan 2005:12, 19-24. For other refs, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Sutra\\_of\\_Forty-Two\\_Sections#cite\\_note-0](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sutra_of_Forty-Two_Sections#cite_note-0).

<sup>18</sup> Yuèzhī 月氏 or 月支, the Chinese name for an ancient Central Asian tribe, prob Caucasoid, originating in Transoxania: see <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yueh-Chih> or <http://buddhism.2be.net/Yueh-Chih>.

<sup>19</sup> For an early modern by a Christian missionary, see Samuel Beal (tr). “The Sutra of Forty-two Sections,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1862: see <http://www.sacred-texts.com/journals/jras/os19-14.htm>. See fn.

<sup>20</sup> *The Analects* (*Lùnyǔ* 論語; lit “discussion on [Confucius’s] words”) are a record of the words and acts Confucius and his disciples. Written during the Spring and Autumn Period through the Warring States Period (c 479-221

in a digest form rather than a lengthy text would be more readily appreciated in a Confucian ambience. Scholars have also noted a similarity between the Buddha described in the Sutra and the Eight Immortals<sup>21</sup> of Daoist mythology, in terms of longevity and supernatural abilities, which would make the translation more accessible to the Daoists.<sup>22</sup>

**1.2.3 The magic of Buddhism.** The Chinese word for country is *guó* 國, which is resolved as 或 surrounded by a closed border 口. By itself the character 或 reads *huò*, meaning “some, someone, or, occasionally, sometimes,” but let us here Chan-like define it as “estate.” Now the character *huò* 或 is made up of a pictogram for a portion of land *yī* 一, with an enclosure *wéi* 口, defended with weapons *gē* 戈. Interestingly, the character *gē* 戈 can further be resolved as *yì* 弋 (“to shoot”) + a stroke *piě* 丿, which is like a hand pulling the bowstring. In short, the Chinese generally regarded their country as an independent and self-sufficient entity, keeping out the non-Chinese, that is, the “barbarians,” *yěmánrén* 野蠻人.

The question now is, *how did Buddhism, a foreign religion, successfully take root in China, and was the first to do so?* An important answer is proposed by scholars such as **W Pachow**, who noted that

In the initial stage, it [Buddhism] attracted the attention of men of high position like Prince Ying of Ch’u and Moutzu, although neither of them understood the Buddhist doctrine very correctly.<sup>23</sup> This was due to the fact that the Prince was deeply interested in magical arts and the worship of spirits. He believed that Buddhism was a branch of the Taoist cult. Possibly he was influenced by the popular story that the Buddha appeared in a dream of Emperor Ming-ti of the Han dynasty in the form of a golden man.<sup>24</sup> From this we may gauge his knowledge of Buddhism. In the case of Moutzu, he regarded the doctrine of karma, or cause and effect, to be the same as the continuity of the soul.<sup>25</sup> ...

On account of this ignorance, when great Buddhist missionaries like An Shih-kaio, Fu Tu-têng, Kumārajīva, Buddhahadra and others reached China at different intervals, they were thought to be magicians for their unusual ability to interpret the language of birds, to cause the growth of blue lotus from a begging bowl, to predict the arrival of foreign boats from India, to make damp ashes float on the surface of water, and many others surprising magical feats<sup>26</sup> ... although secular learning was not encouraged by the Buddha.<sup>27</sup>

(Pachow, 1980: 87 f; citations updated)

The fact that the Chinese linked the newly-arrived Buddhism with Daoism, made it attractive or accessible to the masses, although for the wrong reasons. Anyway, this is not new, as there is a significant number of people today who still regard Buddhism in the same way, especially in the less urbanized regions. The powerful elite, even the rulers, too, often enough look up to Buddhism for its magical power or as a legitimizing agent [1.2.5]. On the other hand, serendipity, too, had a role in the rise of Buddhism in ancient China [1.2.4].

**1.2.4 Sociopolitical conditions.** Scholars have conjectured that the dramatic fall of the Hân Dynasty in 220 and the ensuing period of social upheaval and political unrest known as **the Three Kingdoms period** (*Sānguó* 三國, 220-280)<sup>28</sup> might have helped the spread of Buddhism. Even then, freshly arrived

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BCE), it is the representative work of Confucianism that even today holds great influence on Chinese and East Asian thought and values.

<sup>21</sup> For refs, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight\\_Immortals](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight_Immortals).

<sup>22</sup> However, the extant version that we have, although very old, was probably compiled during the Three Kingdoms period (220-280). See also Liu & Shao 1992.

<sup>23</sup> Tang Yongtong, *Han Wei Liang-Jin Nanbeichao Fojaoshi*, 1938: 153.

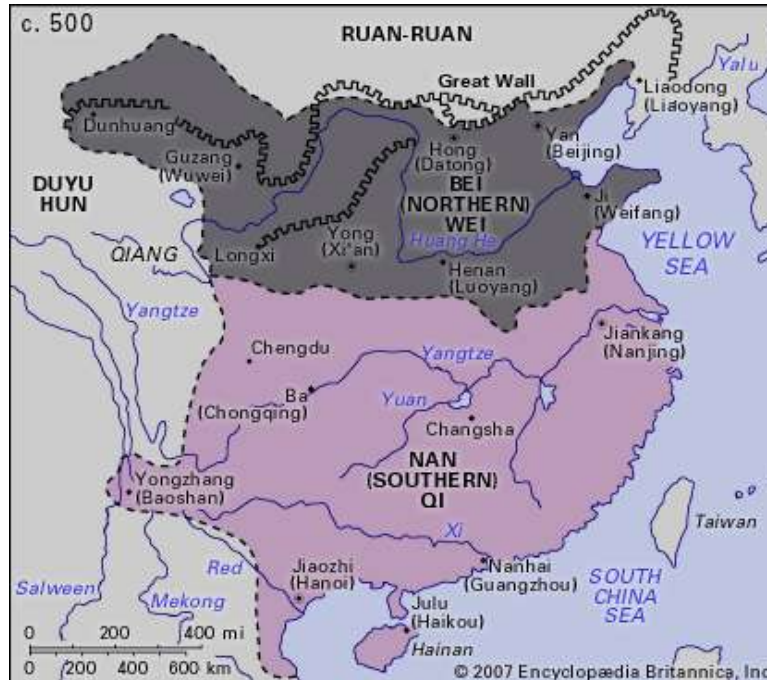
<sup>24</sup> Tang op cit 17.

<sup>25</sup> Tang op cit 73-79, 88.

<sup>26</sup> *Gāosēng zhuàn* (T50.322 ff).

<sup>27</sup> As noted by Pachow, these are wrong practices that the Buddha explicitly admonishes monastics to avoid: see the *sīla* sections of **Brahmajāla S** (D 1.8-27/1:4-12) + SD 25.2 (3).

<sup>28</sup> See [http://www.indopedia.org/Three\\_Kingdoms.html](http://www.indopedia.org/Three_Kingdoms.html).



#### 1.2.4 China during the Six Dynasties period (c 500)

(Reischauer & Fairbank, *East Asia: The Great Tradition*, copyright 1958 & 1960 by Edwin O Reischauer & John K Fairbank, Houghton Mifflin Company.)

They did not propagate or trust the old duo of Confucianism and Daoism as zealously as their southern rivals. Eventually, state support of Buddhism as a common ideology helped to mould a new local populace out of the diversely ethnic peoples, which in turn consolidated these dynasties.

Due to the predominance of the “barbarian” powers in northern China, Buddhism was more easily adopted and grew rapidly in status than in the south. Social upheaval in the north effectively broke down cultural barriers between the elite ruling families and the general populace [5.2]. In the south, however, elite clans and royal families continued to monopolize power. Daoist and Confucian ideologies had long consolidated the political status of elite clans in the south. As such, support of a new religion, especially an alien one, would risk unknown, or even adverse, repercussions.

Furthermore, the clan members who filled the bureaucracy would never support a pro-Buddhist policy. In fact, southern rulers were not in any position to legitimize themselves; some of them were installed

Buddhism had to contend with indigenous Confucianism and Daoism. The nine-grade “controller system,” for example, by which prominent individuals in each local administrative area were given the authority to rank local families and individuals in nine grades according to their potential for government service, consolidated Confucian influence. Daoism, with its mysticism, magic and superstition had a significant hold on the populace and philosophers.<sup>29</sup> [2.7]

The anomie and chaos of the **Sixteen Kingdoms** (Shíliùguó 十六國)<sup>30</sup> and the **Southern and Northern Dynasties** (Nánběicháo 南北朝)<sup>31</sup> further favoured *state support of Buddhism*. Most rulers and people of Wǔhú 五胡<sup>32</sup> and the Northern dynasties originated from over ten distinct ethnic groups including either non-Han Chinese “barbarians,” or Hàn Chinese after generations of “barbarian” influence.

<sup>29</sup> See Nakamura 1964: 236 f.

<sup>30</sup> The Sixteen Kingdoms (or less commonly, the Sixteen States) are a group of short-lived sovereignties in China and neighbouring areas from 304-439 CE after the retreat of the Jin dynasty (晉 265-420) to South China and before the establishment of the Northern dynasties. See [http://www.indopedia.org/Sixteen\\_Kingdoms.html](http://www.indopedia.org/Sixteen_Kingdoms.html).

<sup>31</sup> Nánběicháo, which followed the Sixteen Kingdoms and preceded Sui Dynasty in China and was an age of civil wars and disunity. See [http://www.indopedia.org/Southern\\_and\\_Northern\\_Dynasties.html](http://www.indopedia.org/Southern_and_Northern_Dynasties.html).

<sup>32</sup> Wǔhú or Five Hu is a collective term for non-Chinese tribes during the period from the Han Dynasty to the Northern Dynasties. These nomadic tribes that orig resided outside China, gradually migrated into areas left vacant by years of turmoil btw the Eastern Han Dynasty and the Three Kingdoms. See: [http://www.indopedia.org/Wu\\_Hu.html](http://www.indopedia.org/Wu_Hu.html).



by the clans. It was not until the reign of **emperor Wu of Liang** (Liángwǔdì 梁武帝, 464-549),<sup>33</sup> that there was *state support of Buddhism*.

The rebellion of general Hóu Jǐng 侯景 (d 552)<sup>34</sup> towards the end of emperor Wu's reign, however, weakened the hold of the elite clans, which in turn favoured the spread of Buddhism.<sup>35</sup> In this early period, Buddhism was quite well received in the peasant populace, both in the north and the south. It was, however, not a Buddhist of awakening or spiritual philosophy, but a *popular* Buddhism, that is, one of a magical and funerary kind [5.5.3], and which still clung to the idea that the Buddha was merely one of the Chinese *shén* 神, and the belief in an immortal soul.

**1.2.5 The ruler as Buddha.** After 130 years of foreign rule by various tribes over northern China, the period of the Sixteen Kingdoms (*Shíliù guó* 十六國 304-439),<sup>36</sup> the chieftains of the **Tuòbá** 拓跋 clan of the Xiānbēi 鮮卑 ethnicity were able to unite the northern part of China [1.2.2]. The beginning of their rule seemed to be the same as that of the previous rulers, only that now the semi-civilized chieftains called themselves emperor, made sporadic use of Chinese administration units and agencies, and brutally resettled the peasant population around their capitals to survive economically.

Unlike their forerunners, the Tuòbá rulers had better Chinese advisers so that they were in tune with the people they were ruling. Furthermore, they made sure that their own people spoke Chinese, adopted Chinese names and culture, and even challenged their own aristocracy by depriving them of their powerful offices, thereby strengthening the position of their central government and contributed to the sinicization—hence, unification—of the diverse foreign tribes. Furthermore, the Tuòbá 拓跋 rulers (now called Yuán 元) developed a new system of equitable land distribution (*jūntiánfǎ* 均田法) that was adopted following the Suí 隋 (580-618) and Táng 唐 (690-705) dynasties. The Tuòbá in due course ruled as **the Northern Wei** (*Běi Wèi* 北魏) dynasty (386-534). [2.3.4]

The non-Chinese rulers of the Tuòbá-Wèi Dynasty<sup>37</sup> quickly adopted Buddhism, a non-Chinese faith, as their state religion, an instrument of imperial power, and an open way to heaven. As “foreign rulers with a foreign religion,” they were not constrained by the influence and intrigues of native ideologues, namely, the Confucianists and the Daoists.

Monks served as political advisors, but not all of them were philosophers. The early monks like the Kuchean Fótúchéng 佛圖澄 (232-348) were simply magicians. The Buddhist monks came up with a wildly ingenious idea to resolve the problem that they had to serve lay persons (such as the Tuòbá ruler): the

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<sup>33</sup> **Liángwǔdì**, personal name Xiāoyǎn 蕭衍, the founder of the Liang dynasty (Liáng cháo 梁朝, 502-557), also known as the Southern Liang dynasty (Nánliáng 南梁), the third of Southern dynasties of ancient China. His reign was one of the most stable and prosperous during the Southern Dynasties. He built universities and made the Confucian civil service examinations compulsory for young nobles. He was well read himself, wrote poetry and patronized the arts. He followed Confucian statecraft, but embraced Buddhism and was attracted to many Indian traditions. He banned the sacrifice of animals and abolished capital punishment. He spent a brief period as a monk and was said to have undertaken the five precepts and the Bodhisattva Precepts. As such, he is also remembered as “the Bodhisattva emperor.” Sadly, his failure to stem the corruption of his clan and court, and a lack of dedication to statecraft, brought his reign to an end. When general Hóu Jǐng rebelled, few came to the emperor's aid. Hóu captured the capital Jiànkāng 建康, holding emperor Wǔ and his successor, Jiǎnwén 簡文, under house arrest, plunging the entire Liáng state into anarchy. Some historians believe that Hóu starved emperor Wu to death while under house arrest. For refs, see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor\\_Wu\\_of\\_Liang](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emperor_Wu_of_Liang).

<sup>34</sup> **Hóu Jǐng** was the courtesy name (*zì*) of Wàn Jǐng 萬景, a general for the Chinese states Northern Wèi, Eastern Wèi, and Liáng and, after controlling the Liáng imperial regime for several years, briefly usurped the Liáng throne, establishing a state of Han. He was soon defeated by Liáng Xiāoyì 梁蕭繹 (梁蕭绎), the prince of Xiāng dōng 湘東 (湘东), and then killed by his own associates during flight. He is a reviled figure in Chinese history, renowned for his exceeding cruelty to enemies and civilians.

<sup>35</sup> Once Buddhism became well established in China, rebellions and political changes affected it drastically [7.4], but one interesting exception, the case of Shénhuì [5.2.3].

<sup>36</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixteen\\_Kingdoms](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sixteen_Kingdoms) & <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/History/Division/-shiliuguo.html>.

<sup>37</sup> See <http://www.chinaknowledge.de/History/Division/beiwei.html>.

monk advisor Fǎguǒ 法果 (d 416-423) of Northern Wei created the doctrine that the Tuòbá ruler was *a living incarnation of the Buddha!*<sup>38</sup>

The notion that the ruler was a Bodhisattva or an incarnation of the Buddha was a very inviting idea for those holding the reins of power. Monastics who were close to the centres of worldly power found themselves inexorably, often helplessly, drawn into court intrigues of legitimizing the ruler, the most notorious case being that of the empress Wǔ Zétiān [5.2.2.3].

Through pronouncing the ruler as *an incarnation of the Buddha*, he was placed on the same level as a living human, or the ruler upgraded to the Buddha. Perhaps the monastics knew this all along: when they bowed before the ruler, they were bowing before the Buddha (like a Buddha statue or image), with the *arrière pensée* (mental reservation) that he was really a man, after all, but a powerful one capable of chopping off heads!

Still, the fact that the Chinese monastics were capable of buddhifying the ruler attested to the fact that they were willing to humanize the Buddha, or at least their notion of the Buddha. We will see later how such an idea came easily to Chinese Buddhism.<sup>39</sup> [5.2.2.2]. As this chapter is an introduction to our study on how Buddhism became Chinese, let me now discuss a few enduring examples of this transformation. We shall examine two great Bodhisattvas—Guānyīn and Dizàng—who arose in China, and a Buddhist ceremony that started in China—Ullambana—but which still remains an important season of the Chinese religious year.<sup>40</sup>

### 1.3 TWO GREAT BODHISATTVAS

**1.3.1 Mahāyāna Bodhisattvas.** The main stumbling blocks for the rise of Buddhism in ancient China had always been Daoism and Confucianism, which are indigenous to China, and understandably would feel threatened by a new rival in the struggle for followers and scarce resources. The common accusation against Buddhism was that it was an Indian—as such, foreign and barbarian—a religion unworthy of the most civilized centre of the world, the Middle Kingdom, and a dangerous threat to the nation (read, Confucianists and the Daoists), as it would undermine local culture (read, those in power and in control of wealth and resources). The Chinese Buddhists, through the centuries, came up with a simple and effective solution to such social challenges: they made Buddhism Chinese!

One of the most enduring influences of Buddhism on Chinese society was through the production of cosmic or transcendental bodhisattvas, especially Guānyīn 觀音 and Dizàng 地藏 (Kṣīti, garbha). So popular are these two bodhisattvas that they, along with the historical Buddha, in the recent decades, formed their own trinity called “**the Sahā Triad**” (*suōpó sānshèng* 娑婆三聖) [fig 1.3.1].<sup>41</sup> The Sahā Triad



**1.3.1 The Sahā Triad** (*suōpó sānshèng* 娑婆三聖): Shakyamuni Buddha flanked by Dizàng (l) and Guānyīn (r). (Buddhist merchandise store, Yungang, in the Hong Lim Complex, South Bridge Road, Singapore.)

<sup>38</sup> While this political instrument is a one-time belief, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Tibetans adopted this same device, ie the tulku system, on a permanent basis for their rulers, ie, they return in new rebirths as the incarnation of a certain Bodhisattva or deity or guru. See **Rule by Incarnation** = SD 36.7.

<sup>39</sup> For a discussion, see Nakamura 1964:233-246 (ch 21).

<sup>40</sup> See Kitagawa 1980: 98 f.

<sup>41</sup> See Zhiru Ng, “The emergence of the Sahā Triad,” 2000.

was fortuitously popularized through the efforts of image-makers and Buddhist image purveyors, inspired by the devotion of the Ciji charitable organization in Taiwan.<sup>42</sup>

The Chinese Buddhists inherited the Mahāyāna conception of **the bodhi,sattva (Skt)** or *pútísàduō* 菩提薩埵 (or *púsà* 菩薩, for short), that is, a being who is the “essence” (*sattva*) of “awakening” (*bodhi*), rather than the early Indian notion of **the bodhi,satta (P)** as the historical “awakening” (*bodhi*) “being” (*satta*), that is, Siddhārtha Gautama, in his last life up to just before his awakening.<sup>43</sup>

According to the Mahāyāna conception, the bodhisattva is one who has made the aspiration to free sentient beings from samsara (the cycle of death, rebirth and suffering). When the aspiration is done, the mind of awakening (*bodhi,citta*) is said to have arisen. Bodhisattvas take the Bodhisattva vows, which are essentially conditions that prepare and guide him or her on the spiritual path towards Buddhahood. The term can refer either to a human aspirant or to transcendental embodiment or hypostasis of a spiritual quality (such as compassion, wisdom, effort, etc). For example, Avalokiteśvara (Guānyīn 觀音佛)<sup>44</sup> embodies compassion; Mañjuśrī (*Wénshūshīlì púsà* 文殊尸利菩薩),<sup>45</sup> wisdom; Mahā,sthāma,prāpta (*Dàshìzhì púsà* 大勢至菩薩), strength or effort; and Kṣiti,garbha (*Dìzàngwáng púsà* 地藏王菩薩), filial piety. We will first briefly look at Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and then examine the first and the last, Guānyīn and Dìzàngwáng—two of the most Chinese Bodhisattvas—in some detail.

**Mahā,sthāma,prāpta** (*Dàshìzhì púsà* 大勢至菩薩), the bodhisattva of great spiritual effort or the power of wisdom is often depicted in the Pure Land trinity with Amitābha (*Āmítuó fó* 阿彌陀佛) and Avalokiteśvara. In Chinese Buddhism, he is usually portrayed as a woman, looking like Guānyīn. In the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, Mahāsthāmaprāpta speaks of how he gained awakening through samadhi by Buddha recitation, that is, sustained pure mindfulness of the Buddha. In the *Guānwúliángshòu jīng* (觀無量壽經 Amitāyurdhyāna Sūtra), Mahāsthāmaprāpta is represented by the moon while Avalokiteśvara by the sun. Little else is known about him.

### 1.3.2 Guānyīn Bodhisattva

1.3.2.1 GUĀNYĪN'S NAMES. **Guānyīn** 觀音, or more fully, **Guānshìyīn Púsà** 觀世音菩薩, is undeniably the best known and most popular of Buddhist holy beings, with innumerable manifestations, and popular even to New Age enthusiasts.<sup>46</sup> There is a great wealth of information and discussions on Guānyīn, but we shall here limit our study to some introductory comments and the significance of Guānyīn to Chinese Buddhists.

The name **Guānyīn** 觀音, freely translated, means “the one who heeds calls,” that is, anyone at all who seeks succour or solace in Guān-



**1.3.2.1 Avalokiteśvara**  
(masculine form, 13.3 cm = 43 ft  
7 in high), Longmen 龍門, China

<sup>42</sup> See Zhiru Ng, 2000: 99 f.

<sup>43</sup> The Buddha, in his discourses, when recounting his religious experiences as an unawakened ascetic (*tāpasa*), uses the phrase, “before my self-awakening, while I was still only an unawakened Bodhisattva...” (*pubbe va sambodhā anabhisambuddhassa Bodhisattass’eva sato: Bhaya,bherava S* (M 4.3/1:17), *Dvedhā,vitakka S* (M 19.2/1:114), *Mahā Saccaka S* (M 36.12/1:240), *Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S* (M 85.10/2:93), *Saṅgārava S* (M 100.9/2:211), but different contexts. See also S 2:5, 10, 104, 170, 3:27, 4:7, 8, 97, 289, 5:263, 281; A 1:258, 3:240-242 (passim), 4:439; Pm 2:109; Miln 235). The term therefore connotes a being who is “bound for awakening,” ie, a person whose aim it is to become fully awakened. Some of the previous lives of the Buddha as a *bodhisatta* are retold in the Jātakas, although many of these stories are buddhicized Indian folk tales.

<sup>44</sup> See [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?96.xml+id\('b963f-5f4c-9640'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?96.xml+id('b963f-5f4c-9640')).

<sup>45</sup> Also *Wénshūshīlì* 文殊師利, *Mànshūshīlì* 曼殊室利, *Mànshūshīlì* 曼殊尸利, *Mànshūshīlì* 滿殊尸利; or, briefly, *Wénshū* 文殊, *Mànshǒu* 曼首.

<sup>46</sup> See [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guan\\_Yin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guan_Yin) & <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avalokitesvara>.

yīn's name will receive it in an appropriate manner. The fuller name, **Guānshìyīn Púsà** 觀世音菩薩 means "The Bodhisattva who heeds the world's calls." The origin of the Chinese form, *Guānyīn*, is very interesting. It is *not* derived from Avalokiteśvara, as is commonly believed (but we will deal with this later).

The Sanskrit **Avalokiteśvara** is made up of the prefix *ava-* (meaning "down," as from a high vantage point) + *lokita* (past participle of √*LOK*, "to look,"<sup>47</sup> and which functions as an adjective meaning "who looks on") + *īśvara* ("lord, ruler, sovereign, master"). Avalokiteśvara, as such, can be translated as "the Lord who looks down upon the world (with active compassion)."

**Xuánzàng** 玄奘 (c 596/602-664),<sup>48</sup> in his *Records of the Western Regions* (*Dà táng xīyù jì* 大唐西域記),<sup>49</sup> writes that he is convinced that *Avalokiteśvara* is the correct spelling, and transliterates it as *Āfūlúzhī-dīshīfáluó* 阿縛盧枳低濕伐邏, where *Āfūlúzhīdī* 阿縛盧枳低 (*Avalokita*) means *guān* ("heeding, regarding, perceiving") and *shīfáluó* 濕伐邏 or *yīshīfáluó* 伊濕伐邏 (*īśvara*) means *zìzài* 自在 ("lord, sovereign"). As such, he argues, the Chinese form should be *Guānzìzài* 觀自在, and that both *Guānyīn* and *Guanshiyin* were wrong spelling as they were transliterated from *Avalokita,svara* (T51.883b22-24).

Scholars of Buddhism and Sanskrit, however, have noted that *Avalokiteśvara* was a relatively late term. It is likely that *Avalokiteśvara* Bodhisattva arose in response to the popularity of the worship of popular Indian deities such as Śiva as *īśvara*, "almighty God." The Indian Buddhists invoked the Buddha's post-historical immanence—his presence in the Dharma after the Final Nirvana—and evolved a Buddhist *īśvara*, named *Avalokiteśvara*. This was the situation when the great Chinese pilgrims Fāxiān 法顯 (travelled 399-412) and Xuánzàng 玄奘 (travelled 630-645) visited India.<sup>50</sup>

The name *Guānyīn* actually comes from *Avalokita,svara*. Some scholars thought that the Chinese had mistransliterated or mistranslated the word *Avalokiteśvara* as *Avalokita + svara* ("voice, sound"), when it should really be *Avalokita + īśvara*. However, recent research<sup>51</sup> have shown that the original form was **Avalokita,svara**, where the terminal component, *svara*, means "voice, sound." This is the exact equivalent of the Chinese translation *Guānyīn*. The older form *Avalokita,svara* (which appears in Sanskrit fragments of the 5<sup>th</sup> century) was supplanted by a later form *Avalokiteśvara*, which does not occur in Sanskrit before the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Regarding a Bodhisattva as an *īśvara* (Lord God) suggests a strong influence of Śaivism, where the term was usually used in connection with the Hindu notion of a creator-god and cosmic ruler. Attributes of such a god were transferred to the Bodhisattva, but the creator-god and abiding soul aspects were totally rejected.<sup>52</sup>

The older word, *Avalokita,svara*, however, is not without its problems, for it literally translates as "the one who gazes down at the voice" or even "the voice that gazes down." Now the verb form of *avalokita* is *\*avaloketi* or *avalokayati*. The asterisk (\*) means that it is a reconstruction from an older word probably a tatsama (loan-word) from the Pali (or a Prakrit form) *avaloketi*, "he looks at, regards," and overlaps with *oloketi*, "he sees, watches, looks at; looks after, takes care of; pays attention to" and so on. This word is close in meaning to *apaloketi* (with which it is sometimes confused), meaning "he looks at (carefully), gazes at, considers" or "he looks after."<sup>53</sup> The most famous example of this word is found in the description of how the Buddha turns completely around "elephant-like" to gaze at Vesālī (*nāgāpalokitam*

<sup>47</sup> On the possibility of a Skt grammatical anomaly or irregularity here, see Studholme 2002: 55 f.

<sup>48</sup> See [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?73.xml+id\(b7384-5958\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?73.xml+id(b7384-5958)).

<sup>49</sup> T2087.51.867-947. This is the account by Xuánzàng 玄奘 of his 17-year journey to India, where he studied and gathered Buddhist scriptures. Xuánzàng journeyed through over 138 states in Central Asia and India, and the document remains one of our most valuable records of those regions in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. It was written in 646 and presented to the Tang emperor.

<sup>50</sup> On the word *Avalokiteśvara*, see Studholme 2002: 37-59 (ch 3), esp 49, 52-54.

<sup>51</sup> See eg ND Mironov, "Buddhist miscellanea," 1927: 243 & Studholme 2002: 52-59.

<sup>52</sup> Studholme 2002: 30-31, 37-52

<sup>53</sup> CPD sv apa-loketi.



*Vesālim apaloketvā*) as a farewell gesture during his last journey.<sup>54</sup> Having considered all this, we can render Avalokita,svara as “the one who heeds voices (that is, the cries of beings).”

According to Yü Chün-fang, the evolution of Avalokiteśvara’s Chinese name is as follows:

<b>Guānyīn</b> 觀音	(成具光明定意經, tr Zhīyào 支曜, in 179), <sup>55</sup>
<b>Guāngshìyīn</b> 光世音	(正法華經 The True Lotus Sutra ch 23, tr Dharma,rakṣa, in 286), <sup>56</sup>
<b>Guānshìyīn</b> 觀世音	(妙法蓮華經 The Lotus Sutra ch 25 tr Kumāra,jīva, 406, & ch 24 tr Jñāna,gupta-Dharma,gupta, 601-602), <sup>57</sup>
<b>Guānshìzìzài</b> 觀世自在	(妙法蓮華經憂波提舍 tr Bodhi,ruci, 508), <sup>58</sup> and
<b>Guānzìzài</b> 觀自在	(大般若波羅蜜多經 tr Xuánzàng 玄奘, in 663). <sup>59</sup> (Yü 1997:413-422)

Here again we see how an important monk, Xuánzàng, unaware of the historical development of Guānyīn’s name, assumed that the name prevalent in India during his visit there was the right one, or only right one. Despite that, the simplest name—Guānyīn—still survives to this day.<sup>60</sup>

1.3.2.2 REPRESENTATIONS OF GUĀNYĪN. Guānyīn probably first arrived in China with the introduction of Buddhism there in the 1st century CE, and soon after that reached Korea and then Japan. Some Taoist records claim Guānyīn was a Chinese woman who became immortal during Shang Dynasty. Before the Sòng dynasty (960-1279) Guānyīn was depicted in masculine form. Later androgynous images were probably inspired by the Lotus Sutra teaching that Avalokiteśvara has the protean power of assuming any form to relieve the sufferings of others, and also has the power to grant children—as such, she is a symbol of fertility and continuity of the lineage.<sup>61</sup> Because of her great compassion, she is not only re-

<sup>54</sup> **Mahā,parinibbāna S** (D 16.4.1/2:133) = SD 9.

<sup>55</sup> *Chéngjù guāngmíngdìngyì jīng*, “Sutra on Achieving the Brilliant Concentration of Mind,” T630, tr by Zhīyào 支曜: 2nd year of Kuang Ho (Guānghé 光和), Later Han dynasty (Hòu Hàn 後漢) (179) in Luòyáng (洛陽) (2153-398b.9).

<sup>56</sup> *Zhèng fāhuá jīng* (T 263.9.63-133) 27 fasc, by Dharmarakṣa, Western Jin, in 286. See foll n.

<sup>57</sup> Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra, *Miàofǎ liánhuā jīng*, the title used by Kumārajīva’s 鳩摩羅什 tr, 7 fasc, in 406 (T262.9.1c-62b). Also called *Fāhuá jīng* 法華經. *Tiānpǐn miào fǎliánhuā jīng* 添品妙法蓮華經 (“Appended Lotus Sutra”) tr Jñānagupta (Shénājuéduō 闍那崛多) & Dharmagupta (Dámójíduō 達摩笈多): 1st (Mochizuki 6:141) or 2nd year of Rénsòu 仁壽 Suí 隋 dynasty, 601-602 (T2154-548b.22), at Dàxīngshàn sì 大興善寺 in Cháng’ān. This tr generally follows the earlier tr by Kumārajīva; named “appended chapter” (*tiānpǐn* 添品) because it includes the Chapter on Devadatta (*Típódáduō pǐn* 提婆達多品), and an additional parable in the Chapter on Medicinal Herbs (*Yàocǎoyù pǐn* 藥草喻品), which are not in Kumārajīva’s version. Also known as the *Tiānpǐn fāhuá jīng* 添品法華經. The name *Guānshìyīn* also occurs in *Guān wúliángshòufó jīng* 觀無量壽佛經 (T365) & Suraṅgama Sūtra or *Lèngyán jīng* 楞嚴經 (T 945). For the Buddhist Text Translation Society tr, see <http://www.buddhistdoor.com/oldweb/resources/sutras/lotus/sources/lotus25.htm>. See prec n.

<sup>58</sup> *Miàofǎ liánhuá jīng yōubōtíshě* (*Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-upadeśa* or *-śāstra*) (T26.1519, T1520), 2 fasc, tr Bodhiruci (Pútí liúzhī 菩提流支) & Tánlín 曇林. Usu abbrev as *Fāhuá lùn* 法華論, also known as the *Miàofǎ liánhuā jīng lùn* 妙法蓮華經論 and *Liánhuā jīng lùn* 蓮華經論. A short comy on the *Lotus Sūtra* (*Fāhuá jīng* 法華經), attr to Vasubandhu (Shìqīn 世親). The only surviving comy on the *Lotus Sūtra* that is of Indian provenance. This comy does not treat the entire sutra, but focuses on the *Xùpǐn* 序品 preface and the chapters on expedient means *Fāngbiàn pǐn* 方便品 and parables *Pìyù pǐn* 譬喻品.

<sup>59</sup> *Dà bōrě bōluómìduō jīng* (T7.220.5-7) 600 fasc. A collection of 16 sūtras, short and long, which articulate the doctrine of *prajñāpāramitā*. Tr by Xuanzang from 660-663. This massive work, filling 3 entire Taishō vols, includes such well known works as the *Heart Sūtra* 心經 and *Diamond Sūtra* 金剛經, and is one of the most complete collections of *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras available. Xuanzang 玄奘 considered abridging his translation to avoid repetition, but was dissuaded by a dream, and thus tr the *Prajñāpāramitā* corpus *in toto*.

<sup>60</sup> On the relationship of the word *avalokiteśvara* to meditation, see **Mahā Sudassana S** (D 17) @ SD 36.12 (5.3.2.4).

<sup>61</sup> See C K Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*, Berkeley: Univ of California, 1961: 6-11.

garded as the embodiment of compassion, but also the mother-goddess and patron of woman, especially mothers, and of seamen.

By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, Guānyīn was already depicted a very gentle feminine form the representation in China.<sup>62</sup> In our times, Guan Yin is most often represented as a beautiful, white-robed woman, a depiction related to her manifestation *Pāṇḍarā, vāsini*, often associated with the Buddha Amitābha. As such, she is also very popular with the Pure Land Buddhists. On a deeper Dharma level, that is, in the Buddhist scriptures, Guānyīn transcends sexuality, as do all advanced Bodhisattvas.

However, in visual representations Guānyīn is generally depicted as being androgynous (notice the flat bosom but high coiffure). She is often surrounded by *yīn* (feminine)<sup>63</sup> symbols, such as an empty vessel, water, willow branches, and the moon. She is, however, often depicted as standing on the head or back of a dragon which is a *yáng* symbol)—symbolizing the harmonizing of opposites qualities. Such visual presence of femininity makes her at once relevant to Chinese women, especially those who have difficulties on account of their being women. (Reed 1992: 164)<sup>64</sup>

1.3.2.3 GUĀNYĪN'S SOCIAL ROLES. The most significant role that Guānyīn plays in China is arguably that of the liberator of women. In imperial China that was dominated by patriarchal Confucianists, Guānyīn provided a powerful liberation theology for the oppressed women. The traditional Chinese family followed “agnatic primogeniture” or “patrilineal primogeniture,” where inheritance is according to seniority of birth among the children of the patriarch (head of the family), with sons inheriting before brothers, and male-line descendants inheriting before collateral relatives in the male line, and to the total exclusion of females and descendants through females.

In such a patriarchal system, women who marry were expected to be fertile and bear children—more specifically, *sons*. Failure to produce male issues, or worse, not to be able to conceive at all, would severely disadvantage the woman; for example, the husband might take another wife. Furthermore, traditional Chinese society regarded blood of the menses and of childbirth as polluting.<sup>65</sup> We will return to this point in a moment.

Beginning in the Sòng dynasty, the neo-Confucianists expected a woman to show **the threefold submissions and fourfold virtues** (*sāncóng sìdé* 三從四德). **The threefold submissions** (*sāncóng* 三從) a woman must show deference to her father when she is young (*wèi jià cóng fù* 未嫁從父), to her husband when she is married (*jì jià cóng fū* 既嫁從夫), and to her son after her husband has died (*fū sǐ cóng zǐ* 夫死從子). **The four virtues** (*sìdé* 四德) are morality (*dé* 德), comely appearance (*róng* 容), proper speech (*yán* 言), and skill and diligence in work (*gōng* 功).

So oppressive was such a system, that it spawned the Chinese stereotype of the wicked mother-in-law who mistreats or abuses her daughter-in-law, or her son who is simply disinclined to marry while his domineering mother is still alive, probably by way of the psychological defence mechanisms, such as

<sup>62</sup> On the connections of Guanyin with other Chinese deities, Marie-Thérèse de Mallman, *L'Introduction à l'étude d'Avalokiteśvara*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967 & CN Tay, “Kuan-yin: The cult of Half Asia,” *History of Religions* 16,2 1976: 147-177. On the gender shift in Guanyin, see Diana Y Paul, *Women in Buddhism*, 1985: 250-252; John Chamberlayne, “The development of Kuan Yin, the goddess of mercy,” *Numen* 9 Jan 1962: 45-52. For a summary, see Reed 1992: 160 f.

<sup>63</sup> In Chinese philosophy, *yīn* 陰 and *yáng* 陽 are generalized descriptions of the antitheses or mutual correlations in human perceptions of phenomena in the natural world, combining to create a harmonious unity of opposites. The two polarities are also known as *liǎngyí* 兩儀, lit, “two mutually correlated opposites.” *Yīn* includes “shady place, north slope, south bank (river); cloudy, overcast,” qualities characterized as soft, slow, substantial, water, cold, conserving, tranquil, gentle, and corresponds to the night. *Yáng* includes “sunny place, south slope, north bank (river), sunshine,” qualities characterized as hot, fire, restless, hard, dry, excitement, non-substantial, rapidity, and corresponds to the day.

<sup>64</sup> See Yü Chün-fang, “Ambiguity of Avalokiteśvara and the scriptural sources for the cult of Kuan-yin in China,” 1997.

<sup>65</sup> See Emily Ahern, “The power and pollution of Chinese women,” in *Women in Chinese Society*, Stanford: Stanford Univ Press, 1975.

projection and displacement.<sup>66</sup> Understandably, women become fervent devotees of Guānyīn, manifested as the giver of children, especially sons.

Women, as such, are in special need of salvation, and such an upliftment is often depicted in miraculous Guānyīn stories, which abound in Chinese literature.<sup>67</sup> The best known of such stories is that of **princess Miàoshàn** 妙善, said to be written by the Northern Sòng (Běi Sòng 北宋) monk Pǔmíng 普明<sup>68</sup> of the Upper India Monastery (Shàng tiānzhú sì, 上天竺寺, near Hángzhōu 杭州) in 1103, inspired by a visitation from a monk who urged him to further his work of salvation through the story of Guānyīn.<sup>69</sup>

Miàoshàn story is a powerful model of the Chinese women's resistance to marriage. "However, for them, the revulsion against marriage is not just an indictment against sexuality per se, but was also caused by the fear of a difficult married life involving over-bearing in-laws, the pain and danger of childbirth, and the folk belief that women who have given birth to children are punished in the underworld for having produced polluting substances." (Ahern 1975: 214).

Women devotees of Guānyīn often formed sororities or sisterhoods (often functioning as Guānyīn temples or "vegetarian halls" *càitáng* 菜堂 or "observance hall" *zhāitáng* 齋堂 for mutual support as a safe-house for unmarried women or those who want to avoid the tribulations of marriage, and which also provided a guarantee that upon their dying, the proper rites are performed for them.<sup>70</sup> Many such sisterhoods are found in Hongkong and the overseas Chinese.<sup>71</sup> Guānyīn's compassionate presence pervades the Chinese community.<sup>72</sup>

1.3.2.4 GUĀNYĪN TEXTS. The power of Avalokiteśvara to show unconditional love is stated in such texts as the Lotus Sutra (fascicle 7 or ch 25) and the Śūraṅgama Sūtra (ch 4). The main and popular Chinese texts which feature Guānyīn include the following:

**THE GUĀNSHĪYĪN SUTRA** (*Guānshīyīn jīng* 觀世音經, T1043.20.34-38) is an alternate version of **the Six Syllable Incantation** (*Liùzì shénzhòu wáng jīng* 六字神呪王經), that is, (Skt) *Ṣaḍ-akṣara, vidyā* or (Tib) *Yi ge drug pa'i rig sngags* [To.575/917]. This is the well known six-syllable mantra—*Om maṇi, padme hūm* 唵嘛呢叭咪吽 ("Homage to the One with the Jewel and the Lotus")—for invoking the hardship-dispelling powers of Avalokiteśvara. The Taishō contains the following Chinese translations of the text:<sup>73</sup>

<sup>66</sup> "Projection" as a defence mechanism is the transferring or attributing of unwanted feelings, thoughts, tendencies or conduct to others, that is, being particularly attentive to those aspects in others which we deny or are uncomfortable with ourselves (eg Tan who is having extramarital affairs accuses his wife of being unfaithful). "Displacement" is the transferring of feelings from one object to a substitute that is not as gratifying but is less anxiety-causing (eg Lim was scolded by his boss at work, and on returning home, take sit out on his wife): see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defense\\_mechanism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defense_mechanism). On the portrayal of a dominant matriarch, see eg Matriarch Jia, *Jiāmǔ* 賈母 in *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Hónglóu mèng* 紅樓夢, attr Cáo Xuěqín 曹雪芹 (mid-8<sup>th</sup> cent Qīng dynasty 清).

<sup>67</sup> See eg Guānshīyīn púsà zhuàn [Biography of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva], author unknown, Taichung, 1985 & Reed 1992: 165-169.

<sup>68</sup> A pupil of Cǐbiàn 慈辯 (abbot from 1090-1108) (*Hángzhōu Shàng tiānzhú jiāng sì zhī* 3.10b 杭州上天竺講寺志): Dudbridge 2004: 50. Pǔmíng is also the name of a temple, Pǔmíng sì 普明寺 (Universal Light Monastery) in Xiùlín 秀林 county (eastern Huālián 花蓮), Taiwan, the first place Zhèngyán [6.4.9] came to as a nun, and which later became the HQ for the global Cǐjì network. The temple is dedicated to the Dìzàng: see Ng Zhiru, 2000: 97.

<sup>69</sup> Dudbridge 2004: 49 f.

<sup>70</sup> See CK Yang 1961: 6-11.

<sup>71</sup> See Marjorie Topley, "Marriage resistance in rural Kuantung," 1975; Andrea Sankar, "The evolution of sisterhood in traditional Chinese society," 1978.

<sup>72</sup> On the Miaoshan myth, see Glenn Dudbridge, *The Legend of Miao-shan*, 2004; see also Chün-fang Yü, *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*, 2001: 293-351. On the Miaoshan legend as the basis for **Guanyin pilgrimage** in China, see Chünfang Yü, "P'u-t'o Shan: Pilgrimage and the Creation of the Chinese Potalaka," 1992: 190-245, repr in Yü, *Kuan-yin*, 2000: 353-406.

<sup>73</sup> This list from Iain Sinclair; source: *Index to the Yogācārabhūmi* by Yokoyama & Takayuki, 1996. [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?51.xml+id\('b516d-5b57-795e-546a-738b-7d93'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?51.xml+id('b516d-5b57-795e-546a-738b-7d93')).

- (1) **The Six-Syllable King of Mantras Sūtra** (*Liùzì zhòu wáng jīng* 六字呪王經, T1044.20.38-39, 1 fascicle), translator unknown, completed 317-420.
- (2) **The Six-Syllable Divine King of Mantras Sūtra** (*Liùzì shénzhòu wáng jīng* 六字神呪王經, T1045.20.39-43, 1 fascicle), translator unknown, completed 502-557.
- (3) **The Guānyīn Bodhisattva Invocation Against Hidden Dangers and Poisons Dharani Mantra Sutra** (*Qǐng guānshīyīn púsà xiāofú dúhài tuólúnízhòu jīng* 請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼呪經, T1043.20.34-38, 1 fasc), abbreviated as *Xiāofú dúhài jīng* 消伏毒害經, *Qǐng guānshīyīn jīn g* 請觀世音經, or *Guānshīyīn jīng* 觀世音經; translated by Nandī (Nántí 難提). Chinese commentary by Zhìyǐ 智顛, *Commentary on the Sound-Contemplator Petitioning Sūtra* (*Qǐng guānyīn jīng shū* 請觀音經疏 T1800); Chinese sub-commentary by Zhìyuán 智圓, *Selected Clarifications of the Commentary on the Sound-Contemplator Petitioning Sūtra* (*Qǐng guānyīn jīngshū chǎnyìchāo* 請觀音經疏闡義鈔 T1801).
- (4) **The Noble Six-syllable Great Radiant King of Dharanis Sutra** (*Shèngliùzì dànmíngwáng tuólúní jīng* 聖六字大明王陀羅尼經 T1047.20.44-48, 1 fasc), translated by Dānapāla (Shīhù 施護), KI (mb) 5.

**THE UNIVERSAL DOOR CHAPTER ON AVALOKITĒSVARA** (*Guānshīyīn púsà pǔmén pǐn* 觀世音菩薩普門品, ch 25 of the *Lotus Sūtra* 法華經 (T 262.9.56c2) which is one of the most important *loci classicus* for the description of Avalokitēsvara. This text explains the meaning of the Bodhisattva's name, and states that Avalokitēsvara is capable of manifesting himself in thirty-three different forms according to the various states of sentient beings. It is popularly referred to as the Guānyīn jīng 觀音經.<sup>74</sup>

**THE SŪTRA OF AVALOKITĒSVARA CUTTING AND REMOVING WRONGS** (*Guānshīyīn zhédāo chūzù jīng* 觀世音折刀除罪經) is also known as

- the Avalokitēsvara Sutra of King Gao (*Gāowáng guānshīyīn jīng* 高王觀世音經),<sup>75</sup>
- the Guānyīn Sutra of King Gao (*Gāowáng guānyīn jīng* 高王觀音經),
- the White-clad Guānyīn Sutra of King Gao (*Gāowáng báiyī guānyīn jīng* 高王白衣觀音經),
- the Sutra of Cutting Off (Evil) (*Zhédāo jīng* 折刀經), or
- the Small Avalokitēsvara Sūtra (*Xiǎo Guānshīyīn jīng* 小觀世音經).<sup>76</sup>

This text is a Chinese indigenous or apocryphal text of the Liang dynasty, in two fascicles. There is no complete copy: only a Dūnhuáng manuscript (Pelliot 3920) and a Turfan manuscript of the Deguchi Jōjun collection are known. The printed text is found in T2898.85.1425b-1426a and the *Xu Zangjing*.<sup>77</sup>

Avalokitēsvara is mentioned in a significant manner in the three basic texts of the Pure Land, the *sān-bùjīng* 三部經, or more specifically, *Jīngtǔ sānbùjīng* 淨土三部經, or simply, *Jīngtǔ sānjīng* 淨土三經, namely:

- (1) *Wúliàngshòu jīng* 無量壽經 (The Sutra of Immeasurable Life) (Skt Sukhāvātī-vyūha Sūtra),<sup>78</sup>
- (2) *Guān wúliàngshòu jīng* 觀無量壽經 (Sūtra of the Meditation on the Buddha of Immeasurable Life) (Skt \*Amitāyur-dhyāna Sūtra),<sup>79</sup> and

<sup>74</sup> From AC Muiller, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?89.xml+id\('b89c0-4e16-97f3-83e9-85a9-666e-9580-54c1'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?89.xml+id('b89c0-4e16-97f3-83e9-85a9-666e-9580-54c1')).

<sup>75</sup> [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?89.xml+id\('b89c0-4e16-97f3-6298-5200-9664-7f6a-7d93'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?89.xml+id('b89c0-4e16-97f3-6298-5200-9664-7f6a-7d93')).

<sup>76</sup> From H Ziegler, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?9a.xml+id\('b9ad8-738b-89c0-4e16-97f3-7d93'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?9a.xml+id('b9ad8-738b-89c0-4e16-97f3-7d93')).

<sup>77</sup> Hongkong: Ying yin Xu zang jing wei yuan hui, 1967-, vol 87, pp 286-287. For a study of the text, see Makita Tairyō's *Gikyō kenkyū*, Kyoto: Kyōto Daigaku Jinbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo, 1976: 272-289.

<sup>78</sup> 2 fasc tr Saṅghavarman (Kāngsēngkǎi 康僧鎧 T360.12.265c-279a); also thought to have been cooperatively tr by Buddhahadra 佛陀跋陀羅 (359-429) of the Eastern Jin dynasty and Bǎoyún 寶雲 (376-449) of the Liú Sòng dynasty. See [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?71.xml+id\('b711-91cf-58fd-7d93'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?71.xml+id('b711-91cf-58fd-7d93')).

<sup>79</sup> 1 fasc tr in 424 by Kālayāsa (Jiāngliángyēsè 薑良耶舍 T12.365.340c-346b), believed to be of Central Asian origin. The catalogue name is *Fóshuō guān wúliàngshòufó jīng* 佛說觀無量壽佛經, and it is also known as the *Wúliàngshò fó jīng* 無量壽佛經, *Guānwúliàngshòufó guān jīng* 無量壽佛觀經, *Wúliàngshòuguān jīng* 無量壽觀經



(3) *Āmítuó jīng* 阿彌陀經 (Amitābha Sūtra, or Cūḷa Sukhāvātī,vyūha).<sup>80</sup>

In these three basic texts, Amitābha (*Āmítuó fó* 阿彌陀佛) appears flanked by Guānyīn and Mahāsthāma,prāpta Bodhisattva (the Bodhisattva “who has attained great spiritual power,” signifying our inherent ability to open our eyes to true reality).

The most popular text invoking Guānyīn, known to practically every Pure Land practitioner and Chinese Buddhist is the **Great Compassion Dharani** (*Dàbēi zhòu* 大悲咒). Also known as the Nīla,kaṅṭha Dhāraṇī (“Dharani of the one with the cloud-grey neck”), it was translated into Chinese by Vajrabodhi (金剛智 *Jīn 'gāngzhì*, worked 719-741, T1112), twice by his disciple Amoghavajra (*Bùkòng jīngāng*, 不空金剛 worked 723-774, T1111, T1113b) and in the 14th century by Dhyāna,bhadra (worked 1326-1363, T1113a). Amoghavajra’s version (T1113b) was written in Siddham script in the Chinese Tripiṭaka (T20.-1113b.498-501). This is the version most widely used today.<sup>81</sup>

**1.3.3 Kṣīti,garbha Bodhisattva**

1.3.3.1 KṢITI,GARBHA’S NAME. **Kṣīti,garbha** (transliterated as *Qīchādībòshā* 乞叉底蘗沙) is one of the four principal bodhisattvas in East Asian Mahāyāna Buddhism. The others are Samantabhadra,<sup>82</sup> Mañjuśrī,<sup>83</sup> and Avalokiteśvara [1.2.6.2]. The name **Dìzàng** 地藏 means “earth-store, earth-treasury, earth-womb.” More fully, he is known as the Earth-store Bodhisattva King of the Great Vow or **Dà-yuàn Dìzàng Púsà** 大願地藏菩薩, or, as Earth-store King Bodhisattva or **Dìzàngwáng púsà** 地藏王菩薩, or more popularly and simply as the Earth-store Bodhisattva or **Dìzàng púsà** 地藏菩薩. He is one of the group of eight Dharani Bodhisattvas (invoked in a protective mantra), and is *the only bodhisattva depicted as a monk*, and he has a nimbus around his shaven head. Such a depiction at once reminds us of Maudgalyāyana, especially that Dìzàng is closely associated with reforming and liberating hell-beings, while Maudgalyāyana, according to Mahāyāna mythology, descends into the underworld to liberate his mother, an erstwhile preta. (It should be noted that in Chinese mythology, the hells and the pretas are not always distinctly separate.) [1.5]

1.3.3.2 DÌZÀNG’S ORIGIN AND APPEARANCE. Dìzàng’s depiction as a monk is traditionally said to be on account of **Kim Kiaokak** (Kor: Kim Gio Gak, *Jīn Qiáojié* 金喬覺), a prince of Silla (the southernmost



**1.3.3 Kṣīti,garbha scroll,**  
Koryo (Korean), late 14<sup>th</sup> cent

, *Shíliù guān jīng* 十六觀經, and abbrev as *Guānjīng* 觀經. See [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xprddb.pl?89.xml+id\('b89c0-7121-91cf-58fd-7d93'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xprddb.pl?89.xml+id('b89c0-7121-91cf-58fd-7d93')).

<sup>80</sup> Also known as, the Small Sutra, *Xiǎo jīng* 小經, *Xiǎo wúliàngshòu jīng* 小無量壽經, and the Four-Sheet Sutra, *Sìzhǐ jīng* 四紙經. 1 fasc tr in 402 by Kumārajīva (Jiūmóluóshé 鳩摩羅什 T366.12.346b-348b). Other Skt names are \*Amitābha-buddha Sūtra, Sukhāvātyamṛta,vyūha, Aparimitāyus Sūtra. For annot tr of Jap version (by Karen Mack), see **Amida Sūtra**, Kyōka Kenkyū (*Journal of Jōdo Shu Edification Studies*) 14 2003, or <http://www.acmuller.net/bud-canon/amidakyo.pdf>. See also [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xprddb.pl?96.-xml+id\('b963f-5f4c-9640-7d93'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xprddb.pl?96.-xml+id('b963f-5f4c-9640-7d93')).

<sup>81</sup> Up to recent times, only the Chinese version was available. Twelve scrolls of **Nīlakaṅṭha Lokeśvara** (lit “Blue-necked Lord of the World” *Qīngjǐng guānzìzài púsà* 青頸觀自在菩薩) texts were found in a Dūnhuáng 敦煌 cave [5.2.4.1]. The *Nīlakaṅṭha* text was tr into Chinese by three masters in the 7th and early 8th century, first by Zhìtōng 智通 twice btw 627-649 (T1057a & T1057b, Nanjio 318), another by Bhagavaddharma between 650-660 (T1059 & T1060, Nanjio 320), and then by Bodhiruci in 709 (T1058, Nanjio 319). For a contemporary interpretation of the dharani as a musical chant, see <http://fo.ncc.com.tw/fo.mp3>.

<sup>82</sup> *Pǔxián púsà* 普賢菩薩. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samantabhadra>.

<sup>83</sup> *Wénshū* 文殊 or *Wénshūshìlì púsà* 文殊師利菩薩. See <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Manjusri>.

of the three kingdoms of ancient Korea) who became a monk under the name of Chijang (Korean, *Jijang*), the Korean equivalent of Dìzàng 地藏. He arrived in China in 653 and died in 728 at the age of 99, after residing at Jiùhuā shān 九華山 (Nine-Glory Mountain),<sup>84</sup> for 75 years. His uncorrupted body is said to have been gilded over and became an object of worship.

However, none of the traditional biographies we have of Chijang, nor any other record before the 11<sup>th</sup> century link him with Dìzàng, except by name.<sup>85</sup> His link with Dìzàng, as such, is very late. Moreover, Jiùhuā shān (Ānhuī 山西 1,341 m) did not attain its cult status until the Míng 明 period when the Wànli 萬曆 emperor Shénzōng 神宗 (1573-1620) added it to the list of other famous Buddhist mountains.<sup>86</sup>

In the pre-Táng grottos in Dūnhuáng and Longmen, Dìzàng is depicted in classical bodhisattva style. After the Táng period, he became increasingly depicted as a monk, carrying rosaries and a *xīzhàng* (錫杖; Skt: *kakkhara*), a monk's alarum staff with its six rings, which he uses to pry open the gates of hell, and he holds a wish-fulfilling jewel (*zhēnduō mōnì* 真多末尼; Skt: *cintā,maṇī*) to light up the darkness.

1.3.3.3 DÌZÀNG'S ROLES. Dìzàng is a bodhisattva who vows to deliver all beings from suffering during the period between Sakyamuni's *parinirvāṇa* and the awakening of Maitreya (Mílè 彌勒). With hints of a feminine origin, he becomes the guardian of the earth. Although he is associated with king Yama as overlord, and with the dead and the hells, his role is that of saviour. Since the 5th century, he has been especially considered by the Chinese to be the deliverer of suffering beings from the hells.

Dìzàng is especially popular in Japan, where he favours children and the wicked. There he is usually depicted as a shaven-headed monk, standing and holding a *khakkhara* in his right hand and a wish-fulfilling gem in his left. He is also the protector of land travellers and his statue is often seen on the roadside. He helps women in labour, and bereaved parents would place stones on his images to seek his aid in relieving the sufferings of their dead (in the task of piling stones on the banks of Vaitaraṇī (P *Vetaraṇī*), the Buddhist river Styx). Some say he is an incarnation of Yama, the lord of the hells. At dawn, he sits immobile on the earth (*dì* 地) and meditates on its store of beings (*zàng* 藏).

Dìzàng's appeal is attested by his other religious roles, such as those of **the Six Dìzàngs** (*Liù dìzàng* 六地藏), that is, manifesting in the each of the six realms—amongst hell-beings, the pretas, animals, the asuras, humans, and the devas—in an appropriate form. There is also the “Life-extending Dìzàng” *Yán-mìng Dìzàng* 延命地藏, who controls length of days; and his two assistants are the supervisors of good and evil, *Zhǎngshàn* 掌善 and *Zhǎng'è* 掌惡. Under another form, as “Victorious Army Dìzàng” *Shèngjūn Dìzàng* 勝軍地藏, he is chiefly associated with the esoteric Tantric cult.

1.3.3.4 TEXTS ON DÌZÀNG. Dìzàng's bodhisattva vows are recorded in **the Dìzàng púsà běnyuàn jīng** 地藏菩薩本願經 (the Sutra on the Fundamental Vows of Earth-store Bodhisattva) (Skt \**Kṣitigarbha-praṇidhāna Sūtra*), translated by Śikṣānanda (Shíchānántuó 實叉難陀 late 7<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>87</sup> The text relates how Kṣitigarbha became a bodhisattva by making great vows to rescue other sentient beings, and how he practised filial piety in his past lives.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>84</sup> One of the 4 sacred mountains of Buddhism, located 40 *li* south-west of Qīngyáng 青陽 in Ānhuī 安徽. Formerly, called Jiǔzǐshān 九子山 (Nine Children Mountain), but was changed by the Tang poet Libái 李白 to Jiùhuá Shān 九華山.

<sup>85</sup> As Sēng Dìzàng 僧地藏, *Song gaoseng zhuan* 宋高僧傳, T2061:50.896a. As Shì Dìzàng 釋地藏, *Song gaoseng zhuan*, T2061:50.709b. As simply Dìzàng 地藏, *Shenseng zhuan* 神僧傳, T2064:50.1000b. See Ng Zhiru 2007: 216-219.

<sup>86</sup> The 4 sacred mountains of Chinese Buddhism are Wútái shān 五臺山/五台山 (Five-terrace (Plateau) Mountain) in Shānxī 山西 3,058 m, Éméi Shān 峨眉山 (Delicate Eye-brow Mountain) in Sīchūān 四川 3,099 m, Jiùhuá Shān (Nine-glory Mountain) in Ānhuī 安徽 1,341 m, and Pǔtúo Shān 普陀山 (Potala(ka) Mountain) in Zhèjiāng 浙江 284 m.

<sup>87</sup> T412.13.777c-790a, 2 fasc (13 chs divided into 3 sections).

<sup>88</sup> See Soothill, *A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*; Yokoyama & Takayuki, *Index to the Yogācārabhūmi*, 1996; AC Muller [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?57.xml+id\('b5730-85cf\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?57.xml+id('b5730-85cf)); see also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ksitigarbha>.

**The Sūtra of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva** or *Dìzàng púsà jīng* 地藏菩薩經 (T85.2909.1455) is a short text was uncovered by Stein (S197) at Dūnhuáng and is currently kept in the British Library. The text advocates and encourages various practices, such as the copying of the sutra itself, the construction of images of Kṣiti,garbha, and the reciting of his name—all of which enable the practitioner to be reborn in the Sukhāvātī (Amitābha’s Pure Land). The text goes on to state that at the moment of death, Kṣiti,garbha appears at the practitioner’s side to welcome him or her to Sukhāvātī. The text is not mentioned in either the *Kāiyuán shìjiào lù* 開元釋教錄 (“Record of Sakyamuni’s Teachings compiled during the Kāiyuán period,” T55.2154) or the *Zhēnyuán xīndìng shìjiào mùlù* 貞元新定釋教目錄 (“The Zhenyan Revised List of Canonical Buddhist Texts,” T55.2157), and, as such, must have been composed sometime after the 9th century.<sup>89</sup>

**The Ten Cakras<sup>90</sup> of Kṣitigarbha Sūtra** or *Dìzàng shílún jīng* 地藏十輪經 (\*Daśa,cakra Kṣiti,garbha Sūtra) or *Scripture of the Ten Wheels*, was translated by Xuánzàng 玄奘 in 651-652 (T411.13.722-776, 10 fascicles). According to Nakamura, this sutra was compiled by monks who spoke Iranian languages. The full title of this text is the *Dàshèng dàjī Dìzàng shílún jīng* 大乘大集地藏十輪經 (The Ten Cakras of Kṣiti,garbha, Mahāyāna Great Collection Sūtra), and another translation (by an unknown translator and listed in the *Běiliáng lù*, 北涼錄 “The Records of Northern Liang,” 397-439) is titled *Dàfāngguāng shílún jīng* 大方廣十輪經 (“The Fabulously Great Tenfold Wheels Sutra,” T410).<sup>91</sup>

**The Ten-day Fast of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva** or *Dìzàng púsà shízhāirì* 地藏菩薩十齋日 (T85.2850.1300a-b, 1 fascicle) is a Chinese indigenous ritual text for the observance of fasting to be in communion with Dìzàng. This text is very similar to that of “**The Mahāyāna Four-day Fast**” *Dàshèng sìzhāirì* 大乘四齋日 (T85.2849.1299c-1300a).

Through the work of the **Cíjì** charitable organization [6.4.9] and its devotion to Dìzàng [1.3.1], the bodhisattva is rising in popularity and found even in home altars.<sup>92</sup>

## 1.4 Ullambana

**1.4.1. Origin and popularity.** One of the best known of Chinese Mahāyāna festivals is the annual **Ullambana** (also Avalambana) or *Yúlán* 盂蘭, or, more fully, *Yúlánpén* 盂蘭盆, from the transliteration as *wūlánpó* 烏藍婆 and *wūlánpóná* 烏藍婆拏. The folk etymology is that the Sanskrit *ullambana* is closely related to *lambana* (“hanging”) or *avalamba* (“hanging down, depending, supporting.” Here, it is interpreted as “hanging upside down,” or “to be in suspense,” referring to extreme suffering in the hells, giving a hint of the departed’s dependence on the living.<sup>93</sup> Some scholars take *pén* 盆 to be a Chinese word that is not a part of the transliteration, but refers to a vessel filled with food offering.

<sup>89</sup> Kamata Shigeo, *Zhōngguó fójiào shǐ* 中國佛教史 第六卷, 1981.

<sup>90</sup> *Cakra* (P *cakka*) lit means “wheel, circle” but it is used in a fig sense, meaning a state of existence or manifestation (into which beings fall, as in *catvāri devamanuṣyānām cakrāni* (Mvyut 1603; cf A 4.32.1/2:32), “the 4 wheels of gods and humans”: *pratirūpadeśavāsaḥ, satpuruṣāpāśrayaṃ, ātmanaḥ samyakprañidhānam, purve ca katapuññatā* (Mvyut 1604-1607) = *paṭirūpadesavāso sappurisūpassayo attasammāpañidhi pubbe ca katapuññatā* (A 4.32/2:32), ie, living in a suitable place, associating with true individuals, setting the mind (or oneself) on the right course, and having done good in the past (cf Maṅgala S, Sn 260/46 = Kh 5/3).

<sup>91</sup> See Ng, Zhiru 2007: 29-36.

<sup>92</sup> On how the legend of *Dizang’s* incarnation as a Korean prince transformed *Jiūhuā shān* 九華山 into a Dìzàng pilgrimage centre, see *Jiūhuāshān Fójiào shǐ biān wěi huì* 九華山佛教史編委會 (eds), *Jīn Dìzàng yánjiū* 金地藏研究 (Studies on the Golden Dizàng) (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1993), and *Jīn Dìzàng yánjiū xùjí* 金地藏研究續集 (Further Studies on the Golden Dizàng), Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1996. For Dìzàng studies, see William Powell, “Mt Jihua: The Nine-Florate Realm of Dizang Pusa,” *Asian Cultural Studies* 16, 1987: 116-30; Françoise Wang-Toutain, “The Fate of the Venerable Jin Dizang from the Korean Monk to the Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha,” paper presented at the Association of Asian Studies Annual Conference, Chicago, 2001. For a comprehensive study, see Ng, Zhiru 2007.

<sup>93</sup> See [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?50.xml+id\('b5012-61f8'\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?50.xml+id('b5012-61f8')). For a related notion in early Buddhism, see **Tirokuḍḍa S** (Kh 7) = SD 2.7.



The above explanation of *Ullambana's* etymology is rather strained. It is more likely that the term is related to the Pali *ullumpana*,<sup>94</sup> which is the verbal noun of *ullumpati* (v), meaning “he helps, saves, rescue.”<sup>95</sup> It was possible that in the course of Buddhism being mahayanized, the term *ullumbana* was Sanskritized as *ullambana*, or, even more likely (in the Chinese Buddhist translation), it is a mistransliteration of *ullumbana*. Anyway, the term *Ullambana* has stuck, and is applied to the All Souls feast or Ghost Festival, held usually on the 15th of the 7th lunar month, and is known as the *Yúlán jīng* 孟蘭會 or *Yúlánpén jīng* 孟蘭盆會, or *Yúlán zhāi* 孟蘭齋 (“The Ullumbana Observance”), or *Yúlánpén zhāi* 孟蘭盆齋.

The roots of *Ullambana* teaching are attributed to the Buddha's left-hand disciple **Maudgalyāyana** (Mahā Moggallāna), who, according to Chinese Buddhist mythology, is said to have descended into the underworld to relieve his mother's sufferings. The Buddha told him that only the combined effort of “the sangha of the ten directions” (*shífāng zhònghuì* 十方衆會)<sup>96</sup> could alleviate such suffering.

Maudgalyāyana successfully made such an offering, and this became the model for the well known Chinese festival, observed even by Daoists and Confucianists to this day. On this day, masses are read by Buddhist and Daoist priests, and elaborate offerings made to the Buddhist Trinity and king Yama, the lord of the hells, for the purpose of releasing from the hells the souls of those who have died on land or at sea. All kinds of food are offers, and paper garments, etc, burnt as offerings.

**1.4.2 Ullambana texts.** The best known of the *Ullambana* texts is **the Ullambana, pātra Sūtra** (*Yúlán jīng* 孟蘭經 or *Yúlánpén jīng* 孟蘭盆經), which was first translated into Chinese by Dharma, rakṣa (Zhú Fāhù 竺法護) (266-313 or 317).<sup>97</sup> The first mass documented was in 538, during emperor Wùdì of Liang's time. They were later popularized by the south Indian monk Amogha, vajra (732), under the influence of the esoteric Tantric School, *Mizōng* 密宗. They were particularly important during the Táng dynasty, and is still popular in Chinese Buddhism the world over.

It should be noted that this popular belief and ritual of liberating hell-beings are totally alien to early Buddhism, but are a characteristically Chinese innovation in response to Confucian criticism of Buddhism being a foreign religion and lack filial piety. The Chinese Buddhists responded by producing the following texts on filial piety, putting them into the Buddha's own mouth to endorse their gravity:

***Fóshuō fùmǔ'ēn'nán bào jīng***, 佛說父母恩難報經 “The Sutra on the Difficulty of Repaying the Goodness of Parents Spoken by the Buddha” (T16.684);

***Fùmǔ'ēn zhòng jīng***, 父母恩重經 “The Sutra of the Gravity of Parents' Benevolence” (T85.-2887);

***Dà bānnièpán jīng***, 大般涅槃經 “The Great Parinirvana Sutra” (T12.375);

***Dìzàng púsà běnyuàn jīng***, 地藏菩薩本願經 “The Sutra on Dizàng Bodhisattva's Fundamental Vows” (T13.412)

***Fóshuō xiàozǐ jīng***, 佛說孝子經 “The Sutra on Filial Son Spoken by the Buddha” (T16.687)

In the *Ullambana* teachings, we see the assimilation of Confucian filial piety into Buddhist notions of rebirth and cosmology.<sup>98</sup> The Sutra relates how Mahā Maudgalyāyana or Mùlián 目連 (the Buddha's left

<sup>94</sup> DhA 2:107; *ullumpana, sabhāva, saṅghitā*. “established in a state of kindness,” DA 177 = MA 2:204; *ullumpanena cittaṇa kāruṇīyatāṃ paṭicca vadeyya*, “should speak inspired by a merciful mind of compassion,” SA 1:37; *therā...taṃ anukampamānā ullumpanā*, “the elders, being kind, were merciful,” PvA 35.

<sup>95</sup> This vb is more commonly found in the Canon than the noun: *ullumpatu maṃ saṅgho* (“may the sangha rescue me,” V 1:57 = 95 = 2:273 = 274 ≠ 277); *ullumpatu bhavaṃ Gotamo Brahmāṇim pajam* (“may the good Gotama help the people of Brahmā,” D 1:249).

<sup>96</sup> The early Buddhist expression is *cātuddisa saṅgha* (P), “the sangha of the four quarters” (eg V 1:305, 2:147; D 1:145; J 1:93; Pv 2.2.8, 3.2.14; cf Avdś 1.266, 2.109), ie the universal sangha, which is here mahayanized into “the sangha of the ten directions.”

<sup>97</sup> T685.16.779-780, 1 fasc, btw the 2nd year of *Tàishǐ* 泰始 and the 1st year of *Jiàn xīng* 建興, Western Jīn dynasty (266-313).

<sup>98</sup> Interestingly, there are a number of early Indian Buddhist texts, such as **Sigāl'ovāda S** (D 31/3:180-193) = SD 4.1 and **Ādiyā S** (A 5.41/4:45 f) = SD 2.1 that deal with filial piety in a comprehensive context of reciprocal social



hand monk), who, according to the Chinese account, perceiving that his mother has been reborn as a hungry ghost (*èguǐ* 餓鬼, Skt *preta*), asks the Buddha on how to save his unfortunate mother. The Sutra records the Buddha as instructing how a food offering should be made to Sangha “of the ten directions,” headed by the Buddha for the benefit of *pretas*. This is evidently an indigenous Chinese text written to counter Confucianist allegations that Buddhism lacked filial piety. In fact, the practice has become very popular amongst Chinese Buddhists to this day.

## 1.5 EVALUATION

Buddhism was the first foreign religion to be successfully accepted, or rather, assimilated, into Chinese society [1.2.3]. The main contenders against Buddhism were the indigenous systems of Daoism and Confucianism, who charged that Buddhism was a foreign religion, as therefore detrimental to Chinese culture. The status-conscious Confucianists, especially those serving the powers that be, were especially concerned that Buddhism might undermine their position of influence and affluence. The common charge was that Buddhism did not practise filial piety, and that renunciation (abandoning the home life) was an unfilial act, as the renunciant was deemed as being ungrateful to parents’ benevolence.

The early Chinese Buddhists were adept and innovative in their response to such challenges and criticisms. As regards filial piety, they declared that to become a monastic was *the best way that a child could show his gratitude to his or her parents*, promising heavenly rebirth and other blessings. The early Chinese Buddhists went further, and created a powerful and enduring myth of **Mùlián** to celebrate or inculcate filial piety amongst their followers. In doing so, the Chinese *had effectively invented a new religion*, totally foreign to its Indian roots, by putting pretas into the hells, claiming the annual respite of hell-beings, and the idea of an enduring soul.

The Chinese Buddhists, too, were aware of the gender discrimination of women by the patriarchal Confucianists [1.3.2.3]. Here the Chinese psyche invoked the powers of compassion through Avalokiteśvara, who manifested himself in a uniquely androgynous form, expressing the most universal form of unconditional love and salvation known in religious history. To the Chinese religious mind, we can at once obtain succour and solace, for example, simply

by reflecting on sound,	<i>Lèngyán jīng</i> , 楞嚴經 <i>Sūraṅgama Sūtra</i> , (T945), <sup>99</sup>
by visualizing Guānyīn,	<i>Guān wúliàngshòu fó jīng</i> , 觀無量壽佛經 (T 12.365.340c-346b),
by listening to Guānyīn’s name,	<i>Miàofǎ liánhuá jīng</i> , 妙法蓮華經 Lotus Sutra (T263) [1.2.6.2], or
by invoking Guānyīn’s name,	<i>Dàshèng zhuāngyán bǎowáng jīng</i> , 大乘莊嚴寶王經 <i>Karaṇḍa-vyūha Sūtra</i> (T1050).

These prayer methods evolved over time in response to the common and immediate psychological and religious needs of the masses. Such innovative responses kept Buddhism popular and relevant to the times. The hermeneutics of the deeper Buddhist doctrines remain in the minds and mouths of the scholars and specialists, amongst those who have the time and surplus income for them.

All ancient societies had problems dealing with the dead, mainly through ignorance and superstition regarding death and the afterlife, especially in terms of ritual and religious pollution. The Buddhist teachings have profound answers and instructions regarding such matters, and as such were highly effective in introducing innovative ideas and practices regarding the dead and afterlife. The most successful of Chinese Buddhist innovation in this connection was the Ullambana teachings [1.4].

Buddhism as *religiosity*—the appeal to external powers, perceived as superhuman or suprahuman, in solving or resolving personal problems—is often a mirror of its believers and devotees, changing and adapting to their needs and moods. The well-entrenched indigenous Daoist magic and religion, and Con-

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ethics. The essence of what is good in Confucianism can be found more systematically laid out in Sigāl’ovāda S (D 31). It is surprising that the Chinese Buddhists either missed this important text or chose to ignore it.

<sup>99</sup> For Lu Kuan-yu’s tr, see [http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf\\_file/surangama.pdf](http://www.buddhanet.net/pdf_file/surangama.pdf); for Ron Epstein’s website, see <http://online.sfsu.edu/~rone/Buddhism/Shurangama/Shurangama.htm>.

fucian social ethics had a profound influence on Chinese Buddhism, which unable to appreciate or to apprehend the early Buddhist teachings, rich in its mental training, could only go with the flow of popular and powerful notions. The cost was to lose touch with Buddhist *spirituality*, that is, the inner evolution beyond greed, hate and delusion by seeing into true reality beyond the physical body, beyond rituals, and beyond doubt.

Chinese Buddhism up to our times has been essentially characterized by *pragmatic materialism*. We will later examine how status, lineage and rituals, form the core of Chinese Buddhism, especially the Chan [5]. Due to the nature of ancient China, especially its centralized system, Chinese Buddhism has to be *Chinese* first. There are of course those rare beings who put *the Dharma* first, but these true individuals are few and far between, found only far and away from the madding crowd of metropolitan and material Buddhism.

— 080603; 080930; 091212; 100330; 110704; 120820 —