A Study on the Buddha’s Names (Amituo/Wuliang qingjing) in the Early Recension of the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*  

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Abstract  

This study focuses on the genesis and characteristics of the names of the Buddha, Āmītūo 阿彌陀 and Wúliàng qīngjìng 無量清淨, in the two oldest versions of the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra, the Dà āmītūo jīng 大阿彌陀經 (T. 362) and the Wúliàng qīngjìng píngdìngjiāe jīng 無量清淨平等覺經 (T. 361). The study includes three parts. First of all, a discussion on the problem of the original form of the Buddha’s name, Āmītūo 阿彌陀, in the Dà āmītūo jīng; especially on the meaning of this Buddha’s name and its characteristics showing in this sūtra. Secondly, focusing on the reasons why the name of the Buddha was changed to Wúliàng qīngjìng 無量清淨 in the Wúliàng qīngjìng píngdìngjiāe jīng and giving concrete evidence that qīngjìng 清淨 is similar in meaning to ānlè 安樂 in Chinese traditional culture. Finally, a discussion on the influence of the Buddha’s name, Wúliàng qīngjìng, to the early Chinese Pure Land Buddhism. (Keywords: 1. Amituo 阿彌陀; 2. Wuliang qingjing 無量清淨; 3. the Da amituo jing 大阿彌陀經; 4. the Pingdengjue jing 平等覺經; 5. jingtu 淨土)

Introduction  

The names of the Buddha, known in Sanskrit as Amitābha ‘limitless light’ or Amitāyus ‘limitless life’, and in Chinese as Āmītūo-fó ¹¹ 阿彌陀佛 or
Wúliàngshòu-fó 無量壽佛 or Wúliàng qìngjìng 無量清淨, are something of a paradox in the Pure Land Buddhist scene. One thinks one knows him very well. For nearly one thousand and five hundred years or more, millions of people have spent their lives devoted to the thought of being reborn in Amida’s ② realm, Sukhāvatī, by reciting his name, ③ in Chinese, Nāmō Āmituō-fō 南無阿彌陀佛 (in Japanese as Namu Amida-butsu). This has been distinguished as the easy practice way, ④ as it aims at rebirth in the Pure Land, Sukhāvatī, or in Chinese jǐngtǔ 淨土, by simply chanting Amida’s name, a practical method which can be followed by anyone who desires to be reborn in Sukhāvatī. This practice is considered to have derived from another Pure Land sūtra, the Guānwúliàngshòu-fō-jīng 觀無量壽佛經 (T. 365), which it introduces the easiest practical way of overcoming Samsara by reciting his name, so-called niànfo 念佛, to rebirth to Amituo’s realm. Since no Sanskrit counterpart of this sūtra has yet been found, the real evolution of this practice is not fully understood. ⑤ For these reasons, the Buddha’s name has exerted a strong fascination upon Buddhists and scholars.

The more easily to reach an advanced stage and the more difficult it is to be understood, the more highly it is regarded with fascination. Both educated lay Buddhists and ordained monks have spared no effort in promoting the thought of rebirth in Amida’s realm, the so-called Pure Land, by the power of Amida Buddha’s original vows. On the other hand, scholars are inclined to be devoted to discovering the origin of Pure Land thought by comparing and analyzing the different versions of the texts preserved in various languages and manuscripts. At present, chanting the Buddha’s name, Nāmō āmituō-fō, is one of the basic practices in almost all Chinese Buddhists scene, as well as followers in other East Asian countries. Moreover, this is the only praxis for followers of Japanese Pure Land Buddhism (Jōdoshū and Jōdoshinshū). Since many scholars have discussed this topic, it might seem unnecessary to discuss it further.
Yet the fact is that we knew very little about Amida’s name until recently, through the work of a few scholars, and more work remains to be done. This study aims to make some progress towards this goal: first, through a brief introduction to the versions of the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra in chronological order and their authorship; and secondly, by examining the origin of the Amida Buddha’s name found in the Fó shuo āmītuō sānyēsānfō sàlōufōtān guòdū réndào jīng (佛說阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經 (T. 362, hereafter the Dà āmītuō jīng), Amituo, and its characteristics. Thirdly, focusing on the reasons why the name of the Buddha has been changed to Wúliàng qīngjīng 無量清淨 in the Wúliàng qīngjīng píngdēng jué jīng (T. 361, hereafter the Pingdeng jue jing). Finally, a discussion on the influence of the Buddha’s name, Wuliang qingjing 無量清淨, in the early Chinese Pure Land Buddhist scene.

Two Recessions and Their Chronological Order

Two Major Recensions of the Larger Sukhāvatī-vyūha-sūtra

One of the pivotal problems is to understand correctly the relationships among the seven extant versions, Chinese, Sanskrit, and Tibetan. Some Japanese scholars have made it possible for us to distinguish two major recensions in the transmission of this text. Depending on their characteristics, the seven versions can be divided into two recensions: the Early Recension includes the Da amituo jing and the Pingdeng jue jing, and the Later Recension includes the remaining texts of the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra (hereafter LSukh).

The Chronological Order and Their Translators

The next important problem is the chronological order in each recensions and their translators. Although their chronological sequence and their
authorship have been stated clearly in Taishō Tripiṭaka⁹ on the basis of the Kāiyuán shìjiào lù 開元釋教錄, attributed to Zhìshēng 智昇 (T. 55; 486c), this problem is not so simple. In fact, it presents a gargantuan academic task, and that is certainly not what I propose here. Instead of discussing this theme in detail, I would like to give a brief introduction to this important problem. The following arrangement is based on their probable chronologi-
cal order, and is reproduced from Harrison, Hartmann and Matsuda 2002: 179—180.

(1) “T. 362, Fó shūo āmituó sānyésānfó sàlōufótán guòdū réndào jìng (佛說阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經, attributed to the Wu Dynasty translator Zhì Qiān 支謙 (fl. c. 220-257) , but almost certain-
ly by the Han Dynasty translator Zhī Lóujīāchēn 支婁迦讖 or Lokakṣema (fl. c. 170-190 C. E.)¹⁰. Siglum: 謹 or the Da amituo jìng.

(2) T. 361, Fó shūo wúliàng qīngjǐng pǐngdēngjué jìng 佛說無量清淨平等覺經, attributed to Lokakṣema, but in all probability a revised edition of No. 1 (T.362) made by Zhi Qian, and therefore dating from the period 220-250 C. E. Siglum: 覺 or the Pingdeng jue jìng.

(3) T. 360, Fó shūo wùliàngshòu jìng 佛說無量壽經, attributed to Wei Dynasty (220-265) translator Kāng Sēngkāi 康僧铠 or Saṃghava-
rman, but most probably the joint work of Buddhahadra (359-429) and Bǎoyún 寶雲 and therefore dating from 421.¹¹ Siglum: 壽 or Wuliang shou jìng.

(4) T. 310.5, Wúliàngshòu rúlái huì 無量壽如來會 (part of the Chinese Mahāratnakūṭasūtra), produced during the period 706-713 by Bod-
hiruci (fl. 693-713). Siglum: 善 or Rulai hui.

(5) T. 363, Fó shūo dàshēng wùliàngshòu zhuāngyán jìng 佛說大乘無量
壽莊嚴經, dated 991 and attributed to the Song Dynasty translator Fǎxiǎn 法賢 or Dharmabhadra, otherwise known as Tiānxīzāi 天息
災 (fl. 980-1000). Siglum: 法 or Zhuanyan jìng.”
Nos. 4 and 5 above in our list, *Rulaihui* and *Zhuangyan jing*, are relatively unproblematic. Two problems have been noticed by scholars. First, the chronological sequence and the authorship of the two sūtras in the Early Recension, this has been studied notably by Fujita, Kagawa, Yin-shun, and Harrison. Second, the authorship of the above (3), *Wuliangshou jing*, this has been studied by Fujita and Kagawa.\(^{13}\)

The *Wuliangshou jing* (no. 3 above) was regarded as the standard text in both the Chinese and the Japanese Pure Land Schools.\(^{14}\) In the past, scholars in Europe, North America and Japan have given precedence to the Sanskrit edition.\(^{15}\) Almost all of the scholars consider that the *Wuliangshou jing* was not translated by Kang Sengkai 康僧铠 or Saṅghavarman; it was probably the product of a collaboration between Buddhahadra (359－429) and Baoyun 寶雲.\(^{16}\)

The first two Chinese versions are regarded as more problematic. Fujita, Kagawa, Yinshun, and Harrison have all pointed out that the oldest version is not the *Pingdengjue jing* as given in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, but is should be the *Da amituo jing*. They presented, however, different ideas on the authorship of the two versions. In general, their suggestions on this problem can be distinguished into three categories.

First, Fujita pointed out that oldest version, the *Da amituo jing* (T. 362), was probably by Zhi Qian, and the translation of the *Pingdengjiue jing* (T. 361) was done by Bō Yán 布延 or Bái Yán 白延 of the Wei Dynasty (Fujita 1970: 35－62).

On the other hand, Kagawa’s idea is that *Da amituo jing* was translated by Zhi Loujiachen, or Lokakṣema, the translation of the *Pingdeng jue jing* was probably done by ZhúFāhù 竹法護 or Dharmarakṣa in Tiānshuí 天水 which is in the west of Chângān 長安 in 308 (Kagawa 1993: 30－51).

In addition, Yinshun speculates that the authorship of the *Da amituo jing* is probably by Zhi Loujiachen and the *Pingdeng jue jing* is the work of
Zhi Qian (Yinshun 1986: 759–763). About one decade later, Harrison presented the same suggestion with Yinshun (Harrison 1998: 556–557) and then gave a further discussion setting out the chronological order and authorship of *LSukh* in 1999, and plans to publish a more complete study in the future. Harrison presented the same suggestions as Yinshun’s view that the *Da amituo jing* is probably the work of Zhi Loujiachen and the *Pingdengjue jing* is just a revision, most possibly by Zhi Qian, not only referring to the *Da amituo jing* but also appending some articles here and there. He pointed out: “Zhi Qian is in fact well known for reworking older translations, most notably Lokakṣema’s renditions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrika-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* and the *Śūraṇgama-samādhi-sūtra*, and the *Pingdengjue jing* could well have been the product of this sort of labour (Harrison 1998: 557).”

Even though I have stated that I agree with Harrison’s suggestion in my previous study (2007, 2008), recently I have noticed this is one of the most pivotal problems which deserve more discussion than can be given here. For example, as Nattier suggested, Kagawa argued very well in his study that the term *pingdeng jue* 平等覺 or the *Pingdeng zhengjue* 平等正覺 almost can be seen only in Zhu Fahui’s translations. Furthermore, Harrison’s studies do not include the famous five evils paragraph, but the problem on who made five evils paragraph may be where the rub is to judge the authorship of the two oldest version of *LSukh*. I think this problem deserves more discussion.

**The Names of the Buddha in the Early Recension**

**The Origin of the Buddha’s Name in the Da amituo jing/ Amituo**

The oldest version of the *LSukh* represents the earliest form of *Amida*’s religion presently known to us. The name of *Amida* is first translated as *Amituo 阿彌陀* in both the *Da amituo jing* and Lokakṣema’s other translation *Bōzōu sânmei jing* 般舟三昧經 (T. 418). On the original linguistics of
the *Amituo*, Fujita pointed out that the origin of *Amituo* should be both Amitāyus, “limitless life”, and Amitābha, “limitless light”.

Recently Jan Nattier presented a distinguished study on Amitābha/Amitāyus in the Early Chinese Buddhist translations \(^9\) on the basis of philology studies. It shows that the origin of *Amituo* corresponds to Sanskrit Amitābha, “infinite light”. Nattier’s conclusion corresponds to what Karashima suggested depending on philological considerations in 1999. I agree with Karashima and Nattier’s suggestion that the original meaning of *Amituo*, in the *Da amituo jing*, is measureless light, however, in addition, I observed that there is another characteristic regarding *Amituo* that should be given more attention.

*The Connection of Measureless Light with Wisdom*

In addition to the characteristics of “infinite light”, I also noticed that *Amituo’s* name, measureless light 無量光明, always shows a very close connection with *Zhīhùi* 智慧 “wisdom”, which is probably a pivotal function that should be discussed, \(^{20}\) on the basis of the contexts of the *Da amituo jing*. My discussion includes two stages here. First of all, a consideration on the connection of light with wisdom. Further more, a discussion on the term *zhīhùi yōngmēng* 智慧勇猛 “great powerful wisdom and bravery”.

We can find frequent praising of Amida’s measureless wisdom in the text in connection with his limitless light, the following text is an example:

(讃) 白佛言。我欲求佛為菩薩道。令我後作佛時。於八方上下諸無央數佛中。最尊智慧勇猛。頭中光明如佛光明所煥照無極。所居國土。自然七寶極好。令我後作佛時。教授名字。皆聞八方上下無央數佛國。莫不聞知我名字者。諸無央數天人民。及蜎飛蠕動之類。諸來生我國者。悉皆令作菩薩。阿羅漢無央數皆勝諸佛國。如是者寧可得不。\(^{21}\) (T. 12, No. 362, pp. 300c23–301a2)

This text epitomizes the original vows of the Bodhisattva Dharmākara,
Amituo’s preexistence in the presence of the Lokeśvararāja Buddha. This part is the core of the Dharmākara’s twenty-four²² vows. Three sections from the above are particularly important. Above all, “I have awakened the aspiration for attaining Buddhahood, practicing the Bodhisattva path”. And then, “I will be the most respected and wise one among all of the incalculable Buddhas of the eight quarters, the effulgence from my head, like the Buddha (Lokeśvararāja), will illuminate everywhere in the innumerable Buddha-lands. Further more, “all (sentient beings) in the Buddha-lands of the eight quarters above and below will be able to hear my name and attain rebirth in my land”.²³ In the above text, the Buddha’s measureless effulgence is connected with Buddha’s wisdom, which is probably one of the pivotal characteristics of Amituo, measureless light, in the Da amituo jing. That is to say, the name of Amituo in the Da amituo jing not only means measureless light but means Amituo’s powerful wisdom. In fact, this characteristic can be read of frequently here and there in the Da amituo jing.²⁴ It is probably a primary characteristic of Amituo’s name in the Da amituo jing by means of Amituo’s name, measureless light.

It is interesting that the same function, the connection of measure light and wisdom, appears neither in the corresponding section of the Pingdengjue jing (T. 12, No. 361, p. 280c14—20), nor in all the versions of the Later Recension, especially in Sanskrit version. This is a unique context and is very important to an understanding of the characteristics of the oldest version of the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra. No matter how accordant the two sūtras, it appears that the connection of measureless light and wisdom in the Da amituo jing might not have been fully emphasized in the Pengdeng jue jing. The counterpart of the above context in the Pingdeng jue jing (T. 12, No. 361, pp. 280c14—20) is the best example to verify this suggestion.

The following contexts, which occur only both in the Da amituo jing and in the Pingdeng jue jing, show the connection of Amida’s Name with his
powerful wisdom.

(譯) 其彌摩迦菩薩至其然後。自致得作佛。名阿彌陀佛。最尊智慧勇猛光明無比。(T 12, No. 362, p301a) (The bodhisattva Dharmākara later attained the Buddha stage, and was called Amituo Buddha. He is the most worshipful with great powerful wisdom and bravery as well as inimitable light.)

(譯) 其法寶藏菩薩。至其然後。自致得作佛。名無量清淨覺最尊。智慧勇猛光明無比。(T12, No. 361, p381a)

This text explains that Dharmākara attained Buddhahood after a long career of bodhisattva practice; because of his great wisdom and miraculous light, he is the most revered in of all the Buddhas. Here, Amituo’s light is also connected with his wisdom. Although we can also find the characteristics of 智慧 “wisdom” and 光明 “light” in the parallel paragraph in the Pingdengjue jing, these counterparts are apparently derived from the older version, the Da amituo jing. Except for the names of the Buddha and Bodhisattva, one is based on transliteration and the another is a free translation in order to let the Chinese audience understand his characteristics more easily. On the other hand, the connection of light and wisdom has been changed to the connection of qingjing 清淨 “purity” and wisdom in that the Buddha’s name was changed to Wuliang qingjing 無量清淨 “measureless purity”.

Additionally, in the above context, the Bodhisattva Dharmākara is translated as tānmójiā 彌摩迦 in the Da amituo jing, but in the Pingdeng jue jing it has been become fàbāozàng 法寶藏, which is a free translation deriving from Sanskrit Dharmākara. Meanwhile, the Buddha’s name is changed to Wuliang qingjing jue 無量清淨覺. Is this also derived from a certain Sanskrit term? Many scholars, including me, tried to find what is the origin of the term of the Buddha name Wuliang qingjing, however, there is not a certain Sanskrit counterpart has been truly found yet. This is another
thesis I am going to do in this study (see below).

Furthermore, among the twenty-four vows in the Da amituo jing, there are four vows (No. 7, 18, 22, 23)\(^6\) connected with wisdom or light in the Da amituo jing. One of them, the eighteenth vow, is talking only on Amituo’s wisdom; the other three are on the Bodhisattvas and Arhats in Sukhāvati. None of the vows with this feature, however, emphasizing wisdom can be found in the Pingdengjue jing, these are strong evidence for that emphasizing wisdom is one of the most important characteristics in the Da amituo jing.

According to my previous survey, the term 智慧勇猛 frequently occurs in the Da amituo jing, totally seventeen times.\(^7\) This term, 智慧勇猛, is rendered as “wisdom and bravery” (智慧と勇敢さ) in Karashima’s Japanese translation on the basis of its counterpart in the Sanskrit version. However, as a matter of fact, only one time among them has a counterpart in the Sanskrit version, others are probably appended consciously by the author(s) of the Da amituo jing. Thereby it is of suspicious that all the seventeen renderings of this term in the Da amituo jing are based on the Sanskrit term,\(^8\) prajñāvān adhimāirāṃ vyāvāṃ, which possibly only occurs once in the Sanskrit version. The term 智慧勇猛 is probably rather to be considered as one of the special characteristics of the Da amituo jing. Among the four vows, No. 7, 18, 22, 23, mentioned above, three vows, No. 7, 22, 23, include this term to present Bodhisattvas and Arhats in Sukhāvati. All of these lack a counterpart in the other versions of the LSukh. Especially, the seventh\(^9\) vow is the most important vow for rebirth in Sukhāvati in the Da amituo jing.

Instead of expressing braving, the term 智慧勇猛 is most likely intended to consciously stress the importance of the attainment of the wisdom like Buddha’s by the author(s) of the Da amituo jing. The intention to do so is none other than, recognition of wisdom especially for the intention to attain
birth in Sukhāvatī. This suggestion is also proved by the paragraph on the three stages of rebirth. This characteristic is first seen in *Da amituo jing*, and the counterpart in the *Pingdengjue jing* is only a revision. Because this term does not occur in the Sanskrit version and the *Rulaihui* and *Zhuanyanjing*, the counterparts in the *Wuliangshou jing* must be derived from the counterpart either in the *Da amituo jing* or in the *Pingdeng jue jing*.

In sum, the original meaning of *Amituo* is measureless light expressing measureless wisdom. The intention of the *Da amituo jing*’s translator(s) or compiler(s) is/are to emphasize that to be reborn in Sukhāvatī is to attain measureless wisdom like *Amituo* Buddha. And because *Amituo*’s origin is Amitābha “measureless light”, it is not difficult to understand that the author(s) of the *Da amituo jing* probably intended to express measureless wisdom by means of *Amituo*’s name.

However, this connection of measureless light with measureless wisdom in the *Da amituo jing* was changed in the *Pingdeng jue jing* in that the name of the Buddha has been changed to *Wuliang qingjing* 無量清淨 “measureless purity”. What is the origin of the term *Wuliang qingjing* and why was the name of the Buddha changed to *Wuliang qingjing*? This is one of the most significant problems in Pure Land Buddhism. I discuss it below.

**Wuliang qingjing in the Pingdengjue jing**

On the origin of *Wúliàng qīngjing* 無量清淨 “Measureless Purity”, Nattier gave a suggestion in 2007, “The Names of Amitābha/Amitāyus in Early Chinese Buddhist Translations(2).” In the conclusion, Nattier points out that Zhi Qian is the author of the *Pingdeng jue jing*, *Wuliang qingjing* 無量清淨 may be derived from Zhi Qian’s misunderstanding of the Sanskrit term, *Āmītā’aviśā<Āmitābhavyāba*.30 Recently, Karashima addresses that he agrees with Nattier’s suggestion.33

I agree with Nattier’s conclusion that Zhi Qian has a tendency to
misunderstand Sanskrit term *vyūha* to mean the Chinese *qingjin* 清淨, “purity.” When I investigated what Nattier suggests, however, I noticed that she overstates this tendency of Zhi Qian, and consciously overlooks Zhi Qian’s strong Chinese in spite of the fact that she admits that Zhi Qian was a native speaker of Chinese (Nattier 2007, p. 367). Her suggestion must be true depending on two conditions at the same time: first, that there is an original Sanskrit term, *Amitābhavyūha*, in the Sanskrit manuscript of which the *Pingdeng jue jing* is a translation; secondly, that the *Pingdeng jue jing*’s authorship is to be attributed to Zhi Qian as only Zhi Qian has a tendency to misunderstand *vyūha* to mean the Chinese *qingjing*.34)

I agree with Nattier’s statement insofar as there might be a Sanskrit term *Amitābhavyūha*, but only in the Tibetan version, for the Tibetan version’s Sanskrit title might be speculated to be Ārya-amitābhavyūha-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra depending on its Tibetan title (*Hphags pa ṣog dpag med kyi bkod pa shes bya ba theg pa chen poḥi mdo*).35) Consider the formation of the Tibetan version. The Tibetan version’s Sanskrit title is simply rewritten from the Tibetan title, but we cannot confirm whether the original Sanskrit version’s title was also the same. Moreover, the formation of the Tibetan version was at the beginning of the ninth century (Fujita 1970, p. 22), but the *Pingdeng jue jing* must be no later than 220–250 C.E., and the contexts of the *Pingdeng jue jing* are almost accordant to the *Da amituo jing* and are very different from the Tibetan version. If one must investigate the title of the *Pingdeng jue jing*, 無量清淨平等覺經 *Wuliang qingjing pingdeng jue jing*, it is impossible to think that the title was translated from a Sanskrit or Tibetan title, it is rather an annotation of the *Da amituo jing*’s title, *Fo shuo amituo sanyesafotan guodu rendao jing* 阿彌陀三耶三佛薩樓佛檀過度人道經.39) One reason for my conclusion is that the Chinese term *pingdeng jue* 平等覺 occurs only three times in the *Pingdeng jue jing*, but all of their counterparts in the *Da amituo jing* are similar. One
is in the title of the *Pingdeng jue jing*, which corresponds to *sānyēsānfō sàlōu fōtān gùódūrēndāo* 三耶三佛薩樓佛檀 (過度人道), and the others are in the same paragraph (T12: 298c), in which the counterparts in the *Da amituo jing* are both *sānyēsānfōtān* 三耶三佛檀 (T12: 316b23). Obviously, instead of a translation from a Sanskrit title, the title of the *Pingdeng jue jing* must be a revision of the *Da amituo jing*’s title. Another reason for my conclusion is that the *Pingdeng jue jing* is so consistent with the *Da amituo jing* except for a few places, such as the vows articles, that we have to consider that the *Pingdeng jue jing* must have been compiled under the author’s strong Chinese cultural background. Furthermore, even in the vows articles, a seldom translated part of the *Pingdeng jue jing*, the author’s strong Chinese cultural trace remains. Thereby, the author of the *Pingdeng jue jing* retranslated the vow articles, but he retained the number of the vows articles occurring in the *Da amituo jing*, twenty-four, in order that this number can correspond with Chinese Taoist culture, *ziran* 自然, *wuwei* 無為, and *qingjing* 淨淨, frequently occurring in the *Pingdeng jue jing*.

Regarding the authorship of the *Pingdeng jue jing*, admittedly, it is probably the work of Zhi Qian as was suggested by Yinshun and Harrision, but some problems remain. For example, as Nattier herself admitted (2007: 364, no. 23), Kagawa had a good argument that the term 平等覺 is a typical characterisctic of Dharmarakṣa’s translations (Kagawa1984: 22). But I observed that this term also occurs, only one time, in the *Dà míngdù jing* 大明度經 (T.8, No. 225: 489a), which is attributed to Zhi Qian. So this problem deserves more discussion. I accept Nattier’s contribution to Zhi Qian’s translation—considered apart from the particularity of the *Pingdeng jue jing*. But what if Zhi Qian’s tendency involves the *Pingdeng jue jing*? Or what if *Wuliang qingjing* 無量清淨 as *Amida’s* name cannot be found in the great bulk of Zhi Qian’s translations if there is a Sanskrit term? On a social level a second generation who is born in a foreign country and educated
there has not a strong background on his native language, but why do we ignore that his foreign language is as excellent as the native speakers with whom he is living? Zhi Qian is just this case in that he had an excellent talent in Chinese traditional culture as we read of in the his bulk of translations.

Or consider the meaning of 安樂 and 清淨, what if there is a certain relationship between these two terms, both in terms of Chinese traditional culture and in terms of early Chinese Buddhist translations, even in the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha? First, the following context is in the Huainan-zzi 淮南子:

清淨恬愉人之性也 (purity and happiness is human nature.)
A related pair of Chinese terms, 清淨 and 恬愉, “happiness”, are parallel in structure, but this structure might be formed by two synonyms in accord with Chinese rhythm. Meanwhile, the term 恬愉 is similar in meaning to 安樂, “happiness”, therefore, 清淨 is similar in meaning to 安樂. It is easy to find examples in Chinese literature, in which a parallel structure is formed by two expressions of similar meaning. The following example is in the Zhuangzi 莊子:

夫清淨恬愉，寂寥無為者，天地之平而道德之至也.

There are two parallel structures in the context, 清淨 :: 恬愉 = 寂寥 :: 無為. Because jimo 寂寥 is a synonym of wuwei 無為, “no-ado”, xujing 虛靜, which is similar in meaning to qingjing, is a synonym of tiandan 恬淡 (Tiandan is a synonym of qingjing, see HD7: 520). Secondly, we can find some examples in which the terms 清淨 and 安樂 are used in combination such as 安樂清淨 and 清淨安樂 in the early Chinese Buddhist translations. It is of interest that the following text is in the Pusa bennyuan jing 菩薩本緣經 which is attributed to Zhi Qian:

今得此處清淨安樂 (T12, No. 153, p 55c).
Thirdly, even in the Larger sukhavativyaha, 安樂清淨 also occurs. For example, 清淨之安定 (T. 12: 311c) cf. 清淨定安 (T. 12: 293c) cf. 安樂清淨若此 (T. 12:
274b).

Or consider Nattier’s evidence, *Hōuchū amitūô ji* 後出阿彌陀佛偈 (T. 12. 364b12-17), I cannot agree with what Nattier suggests that this verse was a translation from an Indian text. Even though Nattier refers to Saito’s study, obviously she misunderstands what Saito suggestes that this verse must have been written by someone who was familiar with the *Pingdeng jue jing* in China. I strongly support what Saito suggests. In addition to Saito’s evidence, there is no better evidence of this than the context of ‘誓二十四章’ occurring in the first two sentences. This might be tentatively translated as follows:⑩7

惟念法比丘/乃從世饒王；發願喻諸佛/誓二十四章。(Only thinking about bsiksu Dharmākara, following Lokeśvararāja Buddha; he made twenty-four vows to attain the Buddhahood like the Buddhhas).

Obviously, both the *Da amituo jing* and the *Pingdeng jue jing* are twenty-four vows, as I pointed out above, the vows numbers, twenty-four, must be compiled in China depending on Chinese traditional solar terms, *jieqi* 節氣. Moreover, in the verse there is another important context, as follows:

世界名清淨，得佛號無量。

(The name of his world is *Qingjing*, he attained buddhhood named *Wuliang*.)

As I pointed out in another study (2009), instead of a translation from a Indian text which Nattier suggested, *Qingjing* is an abbreviation of *Wuliang qingjing fo guo* 無量清淨佛國, *Wuliang* is an abbreviation of *Wuliang qingjing* 無量清淨, which is the name of the Buddha occurring in the *Pingdeng jue jing* (also see Saito). Thereby, *Qingjing* and *Wuliang* are paronymous word of *Wuliang qingjing*. Because in addition to *Wuliang qingjing fo guo* 無量清淨佛國, the realm of *Sukhāvati* was also translated as *ānlè 安樂 “at ease and happiness” in the *Pingdeng jue jing*, it is one of the best evidence to verify that the author(s) of *Hochu amituofo ji* and the
Pingdeng jue jing (possibly the same people) thought that anle is similar in meaning to qingjing 清淨.

In addition to above discussion, the following points which I suggested in my previous studies help us make this problem more clearly (see Xiao2008).

(1) The View of Human in the Han

According to Tsukamoto's study, the view of human in the Han Dynasty can be summarized as follows.

Although Confucianism was adopted by the Han government, the doctrines of various masters, zhūzǐ bǎijiā 諸子百家, which flourished in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods almost died out in the Han Dynasty. Alongside Confucianism, Daoism, taught by Lǎozǐ 老子, became a powerful school throughout both Han dynasties. In the early times of the Former Han, emperors, such as Emperor Hui 惠 (r. 194-188 B.C.) and Emperor Wén 文 (r. 179-157 B.C.), worshiped Huángdì 黃帝 and Laozi, so-called Huáng-lǎo 黃老, as supernatural beings and many Fāngshì 方士 “specialists on Taoism” were employed in their governments. It has been said that Emperor Wen's wife was interested in Taoism and not interested in the theories of the Confucians at all. In addition to these examples, Zhāngliáng 張良, the greatest contributor to the Han Dynasty, abdicated his position later in life and became a Taoist. His intention in doing so was to attain the wūwéi 無為 “no-ado” state so as to achieve longevity and to escape death. Another such person is Cāocān 曹参, who was active together with Zhanglang. Chaocan contributed to his government and was appointed prime minister of Qi 齊 by his government. He successfully governed Qi for nine years based on the thought of Huangdì and Laozi, which was taught “If you respect purity, your people shall maintain good order.” In addition to government circles, the thought of Huangdì and Laozi was widely followed.
by intellectuals and ordinary people in the outlying areas. Another example is Liūān 劉安, who was the grandson of the dynasty’s founder, Gāožì 高祖. He was fond of reading, it has been said that Liūān assembled more than one thousand scholars to discuss Chinese culture and Laozì. The Huainanzi ³⁹, attributed to Liūān, was compiled by Liūān with scholars based on the thought of Laozì 老子, wùwèi 無為 “no-ado”, and Zhuāngzì 莊子.

The goal of Taoism is to attain the no-ado state, in Chinese wùwèi, and a person who attains this state is called “Sage”, in Chinese Sèngrén 聖人, in the Dàodé jīng 道德經, and is known as “Ultimate Being”, in Chinese Zhìrén 至人 or “Supernatural Being”, in Chinese shēnrén 神人, or “True Being”, in Chinese Zhēnrén 真人.⁴⁰

(2) **What was the Meaning of the Buddha in the Han Dynasty?**

According to the Hòuhàn jì 後漢紀,¹¹ Buddha, in modern Chinese Fó 佛, was written fúlǔ 浮屠 in Chinese at that time. In the Western Regions where is the land of India, there is the Way of Fó, Buddhism. Fó, Buddha, was similar in meaning to jué 覺 “awakened”. It means one who enlightens all of the sentient beings. The most important aspect of his teaching is the thought of compassion, not killing sentient beings, only striving for purity 清淨. The followers of Buddhism were called Sha-men 沙門, “śramaṇa” in Sanskrit, “calming down the mind”. In summary, the intention of the followers was to calm down their minds, wipe off desire, and return to no-ado, wùwèi 無為.¹² That is to say, Buddhism was considered a doctrine of morality, in Chinese Dàodé 道德, and its founder, Buddha, was considered as one who led all living beings to enlightenment and attained the state of wùwèi 無為. All things considered, Buddha and Buddhism were understood through Chinese culture, Taoism.
(3) *Why was the Da amituo jing Revised?*

According to Harrison, “Zhi Qian is in fact well known for reworking older translations, most notably Lokakṣema’s renditions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra* and the *Śūraṇgama-samādhi-sūtra*.”\(^{43}\) Regarding Lokakṣema and Zhi Qian’s biography, which can help us approach the reason the *Da mituo jing* was revised, we can refer to Tsukamoto and Zürcher’s study.\(^{44}\) One of the characteristics of Lokakṣema’s translations is that he was always transliterating Buddhist technical terms instead of translating them into Chinese, and also because of his limited Chinese, it is almost impossible for Chinese people to understand Lokakṣema’s translations. The Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* is akin to this case. Even though one version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*, the *Da amituo jing*, had been translated in advance, of course very few people could understand it. For instance, the name of the Buddha, *Amituo*, is now familiar not only with Buddhists, but also with ordinary Chinese people. However, that might not be this case in Han Dynasty.\(^{45}\) The aim of the *Pingdeng jue jing*’s author is to make more people understand *Amida*’s religion by means of this new version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra*. This is the reason the *Da amituojing* was revised.

Concerning the connection of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra* with Chinese culture, we can refer to FUJITA and KAGAWA’s study. According to Fujita, there is no counterpart to the Chinese term *dàojiào* 道教 in the Sanskrit version. This term is apparently borrowed from Taoism, which used it to express a Buddhist meaning. In addition to this term, some typical Taoist phrases appear here and there in the the *LSukh*, such as *zìrán* 自然, *xūwú* 虚無, *wújì* 無極 and so on. These terms are considered also to derive from the works of Taoism, such as *Laozi* 老子, *Zhuangzi*, and *Huainanzi*. Some of these terms or sentences, which are considered to refer to Taoism, occur only in the two sutras of the Early Recension. So they must derive
from Chinese culture.\footnote{47}

(4) The Origin of the Wuliang qingjing 無量清淨

Another point which I discuss here is why the Buddha’s name, in the Pingdengjuejing, was almost changed to Wuliangqingjing 無量清淨 from Amituo.\footnote{48} Wulingqingjing is found only in Pingdengjuejing as the name of the Buddha in this era,\footnote{49} even though there are seven sūtras, which are connected to the Amida belief, are considered to be translated by Zhi Qian (Hirakawa1969: 85-93, Fujita1970: 141, Asayama1996: 384). Instead of misunderstanding the origin of a Sanskrit term, which was suggested by Nattier,\footnote{50} I suggest that 清淨 is probably derived from the Pingdeng jue jing’s author’s own idea, he consciously changed the Buddha’s name by a Taoist term, so that it could be more easily approved of by his government and accepted by the Chinese people, corresponding to the Taoist thought, wuweiziran 無為自然, which occurs in the Da amituo jing. The following points support this idea:

(a) In Chinese traditional culture, ziranwuwei 自然無為 is similar in meaning to qingjingwuqiu 清靜無求 (pure and non-existent) in Taoism, and is equivalent to nature 自然 (HD7: 138). The following text, found in the Pingdeng jue jing, might be the best evidence to verify this.

(謙) 無量清淨佛國中之都自然之無為，無量清淨佛國，為最快明好，甚樂之無極也。The translation is probably as follows: Everything in the Land of Wuliang qingjing Buddha is nature (and) like no-ado, and is the best one, it is extremely pleasurable to live there.

The above context addresses that all in the Wulaing qingjing Buddha’s Land is nature and pleasure. 自然無為 is similar in meaning to 清淨無為 in Chinese traditional culture,\footnote{53} which first appears in the Da amituo jing. On the other hand, Wuliang qingjing Buddha’s Land is renamed Wuliang qingjing fo guo 無量清淨佛國, and also translated as 安樂. This is because
qingjing is a synonym of anle in Chinese culture, as discussed above.

(b) According to Dao’an’s 道安 (312–385) interpretation of the Prajñāpāramitā, the dharmakāya is the One (the principle of Unity, 一). It is eternally pure 清净. In it) being and non-being are together purified and it is never (touched by) “what has names” 命名 (Daode jing 道德經). Therefore, in observing the rules there is neither rule nor transgression; in practicing mental concentration 定, samādhi) there is neither wisdom nor foolishness. Deeply immersed, it has forgotten all (distinctions), and (in its unity) all “two” and “three” have been brought to rest. As it is brilliant, without any dark (spot), it is said to be “pure” 清浄. It is “the eternal Way” 常道 (Daode jing 道德經) (Zürcher 1972: 192\(^{54}\)).

(c) According to Zürcher, a characteristic of the earliest Chinese versions of the Buddhist scriptures is a kind of “matching of meanings”, geyi 格義, of Buddhist and secular scriptures, such as bodhi = tao 道, arhat = zhēnrén 真人, nirvāṇa = wuwei 無為 (Zürcher 1972: 184\(^{55}\)). Thereby, qingjing 清浄 has two kinds of meaning in the early Chinese translations. One represents the highest stage in the Taoism, wuwei 無為; the other represents the highest stage in the Buddhist practice, nirvāṇa and Buddha’s dharmakāya.

Taking into account all these factors, we may safely reach the conclusion that Wuliang qingjing as Amituo’s name was consciously created by the author of the Pingdeng jue jing. Qingjing is a synonym of anle and is a synonym of zīrāna, wùwèi, and nirvāṇa, which means the highest level in Buddhist practice. This is because the name of the Buddha was changed to Wuliang qingjing in the Pingdeng jue jing.

**The Origin of the Chinese Translation Term Jingtu**

Another important point which has a close connection with Buddha’s name, Wuliang qingjing 無量清淨, is the origin of the Chinese term jingtu 淨
地。Recently, Karashima⁵⁶ presented a different suggestion to what I discussed in another study. On this problem, the following points, which are discussed above and in other studies,⁵⁷ can be summarized as follows:

First of all, as I have discussed in another study, the term jingtu has two meanings, one derived from other Mahāyāna Buddhist sūtras discussed by Hirakawa in advance, and the other from the name of the Buddha, Wuliang qingjing in the Pingdeng jue jing, to indicate Amida’s realm.

Secondly, Amida’s realm is renamed 無量清淨佛國 (土) by means of Wuliang qingjing in order to correspond in meaning to anle 安樂 and ānyāng 安養. Obviously, Wuliang qingjing foguo (tu) 無量清淨佛國土 is derived from the name of the Buddha, Wuliang qingjing 無量清淨, occurring in the Pingdeng jue jing. Therefore, jingtu(=qingjing) is an abbreviation of Wuliang qingjing foguo (tu).

Thirdly, this idea is proved by Houchu Amituo fo ji, and is inherited by Pātīliāzhi 菩提流支 and Tānluān 曇鸞.⁵⁸

**Chanting Amituo’s Name in the LSukh (Nama amituofo)**

The name of the Buddha, Amituo, always shows close relation with either “visualizing the Buddha” (見佛 jianfo) or rebirth in his land, the world of Sukhāvati, in the sūtras of Pure Land Buddhism, especially in the LSukh. The thought of “visualizing the Buddha” is one of the most important developments in the Pure Land School. The most important thing for someone who desires to visualize the Buddha is to hear Amituo, the Buddha’s name. Four kinds of “visualizing the Buddha” have been distinguished by Fujita⁵⁹ (1985: 123), (1) Visualizing the Buddha by rebirth in the world of Sukhāvatī. This kind of visualizing the Buddha is taught both in the Guan wuliangshoufo jing (T. 365) and in the Larger Sukhvativyāha-sūtra. (2) Visualizing the Buddha through his power. This appears both in the Guanwuliang shoufo jing and in the Da amituo jing. (3) Visualizing the
Buddha by means of samādhi. This dharma is taught in the ninth contemplation in the Guanwuliang shoufo jing. (4) Visualizing the Buddha on the point of death. This kind is talked about in almost all of the sūtras of the Pure Land School.

In addition to the above, I observe some traces related to visualizing the Buddha in the two sūtras in the Early Recension, of LSukh. I would like to append it as No. 5: (5) Praising and Chanting Amida’s Name. This can be found in both sūtras of the Early Recension (see below). One may say that all kinds of “visualizing the Buddha” have a close relationship to Amida’s Name.

One of the most important themes in the Pure Land Buddhist studies area is whether the idea of chanting of Amituo’s name, Namo amituofo, is still presented in the Larger Sukhāvatīvyūha-sūtra. Kagawa agrees that Namo amituofo 南無阿彌陀佛 first appears in the Guanwuliangshou-jing 觀無量壽經 (T. 12, No. 365), but I observe that Namo amituofo did exist in the Da amituo jing, for example.

(譯) 佛告阿難。我哀若曹。令悉見阿彌陀佛及諸菩薩阿羅漢所居國土。若欲見之不。阿難即大歡喜長跪叉手言。願皆欲見之。佛言。若起更被袈裟西向拜。當日所沒処。為阿彌陀佛作禮。以頭著地言。南無阿彌陀三耶三佛檀。 (T. 12, 362, p. 316b)

The Buddha said to Ananda, “I commiserate with you and will let you see Sukhāvatī where Amituo Buddha and the Bodhisattvas and Arhats live. Do you want to see that?” Ananda with great gladness immediately knelt down, joined his palms and said, “I want to meet them.” The Buddha said, “Get up and put on your robe and worship facing west toward the setting sun and worship Amituo Buddha. Let your head touch the ground and then say ‘homage to Amituo the perfectly enlightened Buddha’ (Namo amituo sanyesanfotan).”

Although the Namo amtosanyesanfotan which occurs in the above context is
not the same style as chanting Amituo’s name for the sake of rebirth in Sukhāvatī, which occurs in the Guanwuliangshou jing, this is the earliest form of Namo amituo in Chinese Buddhist literature, and probably has a connection to Guanwuliangshou-jing. The following points support my conclusion:

(1) I do not agree with KAGAWA’s suggestion that the above context is to only praise and take refuge in the Buddha are intended (1993: 239). This expression occurs three times in the two sūtras of the Early Recension of the Sukhāvatīvyuha-sūtra. Kagawa’s example is only the third example in the Da amituo jing. We can clearly understand from the above quotation that the purpose of saying Namo amituo is neither to attain meditation nor to praise him, but rather for the purpose of visualizing Amituo. And the following context, some sentences are on how many bodhisattvas should experience rebirth in the Sukhāvatī. That is to say that by saying Namo amituosanyesafotan one expects to be reborn in Sukhāvatī.

(2) Even though many examples of Namo 南無 plus a certain Buddha occure in the early Chinese translations, the Pure Land school only focuses on reciting Amituo, Namo amituofo.

(3) The term Namo amituofo occurs two times in the Guanwuliangshoujing with the aim of rebirth in Sukhāvatī and the style is similar to the Da amituo jing. For instance, the Da amituo jing has 西向拜, 當日沒処 (worship facing the West where the sun sets), which is very similar to the wording in the first contemplation from the Guanwuliangshou-jing, 想于西方……皆見日沒。

(4) Depending on the configuration of the two sūtras as to the concept of nian-fo 念佛, the two sūtras are the same in presenting two kinds of nian-fo, contemplation and chanting.

(5) No Sanskrit version of the Guanwuliangshou-jing has yet been found. (for the formation of this sutra, see Kagawa and Ochiai).
Conclusions

In light of the above investigations, I would like to point out the following conclusions.

I support Karashima and Nattier’s conclusion that the earliest form of Amida’s name which occurs in Lokakṣema’s translation of the *Da amituo jing*, is *Amituo*. In this case it corresponds to Sanskrit Amitābha “Limitless-light.” This characteristic is closely connected with limitless wisdom. The origin of this characteristic is derived from the *Da amituo jing*. Even though this characteristic also ours in the *Pingdengjue jing*, these occurrences are left over from the *Da amituo jing*, of which it is a revision. Recognition of wisdom is one of the important characteristics of the *Da amituo jing*. In the *Pingdengjue jing*, the name of the Buddha has been changed to *Wuliangqingjing*, so that the connection between the characteristics of light and wisdom, seen in the *Da amituo jing*, is obscured in the *Pingdengjue jing* (see Xiao 2008).

Concerning the reason the name of the Buddha has been changed to *Wuliang qingjing* 無量清淨, *qingjing* 清淨 does not have an original counterpart in the Sanskrit version, but rather reflects an attempt to make this name more meaningful for Chinese people. It is probably the invention of the author of the *Pingdengjue jing* based on Chinese culture in order that it can correspond to the Chinese traditional culture appearing the *Pingdengjue jing*.

* Qingjing 清淨 “Purity” has two meanings. On the one hand, *qingjing* “purity” represents the ideal characteristic of human beings in the *Huainanzi*. On the other hand, *qingjing* is similar in meaning to *wuwei* 無為. In the early Chinese Buddhist texts, *wuwei* is used to refer to nirvāṇa. So 無量清淨 is most suitable to represent a Buddha, introduced from a foreign culture, who has attained the highest stage for the Chinese people.
Furthermore, in addition to anle, Amida’s realm is also renamed Wuliang qingjing fo guo (tu) as qingjing is similar in meaning to anle.

Pure Land Buddhism in Chinese is jingtu 淨土. The term jingtu 淨土, which is an abbreviation of Wuliang qingjing fo guo (tu), must have been derived from the Buddha’s name, Wulaing qingjing occurring in the Ping-deng jue jing.

The rebirth in Sukhāvatī in the Da amituo jing aims not only at overcoming Samsara, but also at the attainment of a wisdom like the Buddha’s. A trace of this characteristic remained in the ‘three stages paragraphs’ in both the Pingdengjue jing and the Wuliangshou jing.

The instruction to recite the Buddha’s name, Namo amituo, is first found in the Da amituo jing. This is probably the origin of the practice of chanting Amituo’s name in order to attain rebirth in Sukhāvatī, and may have been the source of the Guanwuliangshou-jing.

ABBREVIATIONS

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註

* This is a revision of the paper, “The Names of the Buddha in the Early Recension of the Larger Sukhāvatīvāyuḥa sūtra,” presented to the 13th International Association of Shin Buddhist Studies (IASBS) held at the University of Calgary in Canada on August 3rd—5th, 2007, A Japanese summary was published in the Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies in 2008, Vol. 56(2) pp. 751-754. I thank the community of the Association of Buddhist Studies of Bukkyo University (ABSB) for allowing me to present this for Vol. 15 The Bulletin of the Association of Buddhist Studies Bukkyo University giving me an opportunity to have further discussion including the newest research progress during these two years in this area. I owe a special debt of gratitude to my supervisor, RYUZEN FUKHARA, who gave me so much invaluable guidance for this study. I also appreciate the help of Robert Latta, Andrew Glass, Zuio INAGAKI, and Mitsunobu NAKASONE for their kind help with on my English. Despite the help of these many scholars and professors and friends, no doubt many shortcomings remain. These
are responsibility of the author alone.

1) For convenience, throughout this paper, I show tone marks only for Chinese characters appearing the first time in the paper.

2) For convenience, throughout this paper, I refer to this Buddha by the most popular form in Japanese, Amida, for the general names in the Larger Sukhāvatīyūha-sūtra.

3) Four kinds of niàn-fó 念佛: True reality (實相), visualization (觀像), contemplation of images (觀像), and reciting (稱名) were discussed in the Tiantai school, but in this study I discuss reciting Amituo’s name only when I talk about niàn-fó, so-called chéngmíng niàn-fó 稱名念佛 “reciting the Buddha’s name” which is the most representative Buddhist practical way in Pure Land Buddhism both in China and in Japan.

4) First by Nāgārjuna in Shìzhù pǐpó shā-lún 十住毘沙論 (T.1521), this view was subsequently developed by Tānluán 曼鸞 (476–542). According to Nāgārjuna, there are two ways for Bodhisattvas’ attainment of the stage of Non-retrogression: the normal practice, by one’s own efforts, is called the Difficult Way 難行道. Desiring rebirth in Amituo’s realm based on Amituo’s original Vow Power is called the Easy Way 易行道. See Wǔlièngshòu jīng yǒuǒtǐshēnyuànsǐng ji pòduō pàntōu pàsà zào zhǔ 無量壽經優婆提舍人偈婆薮頭菩薩造 (hereafter Wǔlièngshòu jīng lùnzhù 無量壽經論註, T40, No. 1819).

5) For notable studies on the formation of this sūtra, see KAGAWA 1990 and OCHAI 1999.

6) In the past fifty years notably in this area: Jūshin IKEMOTO 1958; Kokun SONODA 1960; Kōtasu FUJITA 1970 and 2007; Kagawa TAKAO 1984, 1993; Rishō ŌTA: 1990, 2004. In addition to the above scholars, recently Seisi KARASHIMA presented a modern Japanese translation of the Da amituo jīng so that it can be more easily understood than before.

7) In addition to those mentioned in footnote 6, recently some prominent scholars have paid attention to this topic: Karashima, Gómez, Harrison, and Nattier.

8) To my knowledge, the two recensions of the Larger Sukhāvatīyūha-sūtra were suggested as early as in Ikemoto’s studies (1958), but their chronological order could not be understood until 1970, when Fujita’s study was published.

9) In the catalogues, the Larger Sukhāvatīyūha-sūtra’s authorship is mainly indicated as follows: First, memorizing in the catalogue Chū sānzàng jījī 出三藏記集, attributed to Sēngyōu 僧祐 (445–518), Sengyou pointed out that the Da amituo jīng’s authorship is Zhī Qiān 支謙, the authorship of the Pengdeng jīe jīng is Zhūfāhū 竹法護 (T. 55; pp. 6c; 7c). Secondly, in the Zhōngjīng mài lù 真經目錄, it was suggested that the authorship of the Da amituo jīng is that of Zhī Qian, but the Pingdeng jīe jīng is attributed to Bāiyān 白延 (T. 55; p. 119b); and in the later’s three catalogues, Rēnshōu 仁壽 (T. 55; p.
158c) and jingtai 靜泰 (T. 55; p. 191b) and Dào xuān’s 道宣 Dàtāng nèidiǎn lù 大唐內典錄
(T. 55; pp. 289c-290a), are the same as the suggestion in the Zhongjing mulu 真經目錄.
Thirdly, in the Liddài sān bāo jì 历代三寶紀, compiled by Féichángfāng 費長房 in 597,
eight versions of the Larger Sukhāvatīyāha-sūtra are memORIZED in this catalogue, and
the records in the Dàzhōu kǎndīng múlù 大周刊定目錄 are also based on the Liddai
sān bāo jì, but only for three sūtras, the Da amituo jing, the Pingdeng jue jing, and the
Wuliang shou jing (T. 12, No. 360) was it indicated how many papers were used in
each manuscript, the same as indicated in the Zhongjing mulu, so that we can
speculate that these three versions of LSukh were indeed in existence at that time (for
a detailed survey see Yinshun 1981, pp. 759-763).
10) Some of the evidence for this is reviewed in Harrison 1998, pp. 556-557.
11) For a review of the evidence for this, see Fujita 1970, pp. 62-96. Cf. also Gómez 1996,
pp. 126-130.
13) In addition to the above problems, Kagawa also introduced two possibilities as to
the placement of the Song Dynasty’s version, traditionally attributed to Faxian with
thirty-six vows in relation to the scheme of the early and late recensions. Kagawa has
presented two main ideas, as follows: (1) Faxian’s version came into existence after
the two texts comprising the early recension, and before the versions that make up the
Later Recension. Or (2) Faxian’s version is posterior to the forty—eight vows of the
Later Recension (see Kagawa 1984, pp. 49-51).
14) The Rulai hui (T. 310.5) was once regarded as the best version by Zhīxià (智旭 1599
-1655), who was one of the Chinese Pure Land School’s foremost masters during the
Ming Dynasty.
16) Sakaino: 243; Mochizuki: 220; Ono: 100; Tsukamoto: 636; Fujita: 75; Kagawa 1984: 30;
and Harrison 1999 (Fujita 1970, p. 75, No. 1).
17) See Harrison 1998: 556-557. He gave a further discussion presented at the Interna-
tional Association of Buddhist Studies, Lausanne, Switzerland in 1999. Many thanks
to Paul Harrison sending his unpublished paper to me.
19) See Nattier 2006, and a further details, including Wulangqing jing, are given in
Nattier 2007.
20) Xiao first pointed out this function in 2007 and gave a further discussion in 2008.
21) The counterpart in the Pingdeng jue jing is T. 12, No. 361, 280c14-20, but the
context has been changed to 法寶藏比丘說此唱讚世麟王如來至真等正覺已，發意欲求無
上正真道最正覺-----.

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22) As I pointed out in another study, even though the vow articles in the both sūtras in the Early Recension of LSukh are twenty-four, I donot think the original vow articles in the original Sanskrit manuscript of the Da amituo jing and the Pingdeng jue jing were also twenty-four as some of vows in the both sūtras include two or three vows (for a comparative table see Sizudani: 54). For example, notably the No. 17 vow in the Da amituo jing includes three vows that were separated in the No. 7, 8, 9 vows in the Pingdeng jue jing and the Wuliang shou jing. The number twenty-four is a special number in traditional Chinese culture, corresponding to the Chinese solar calendar terms, jieqi 節氣. Twenty-four jieqi stands for a year presenting ziran 自然 “nature,” one of the most important thoughts in the Da amituo jing, discussed below. Obviously, the vow articles which we see at present must be deliberately compiled by someone on the basis of the Chinese twenty-four Solar terms in order that vows number corresponds to the Chinese concept of nature found in the LSukh (see Xiao 2009b, pp. 272-273 = 2009c).

23) My thanks to Andrew Glass for helping me check this translation.

24) In addition to this part and the following parts (T. 12: 301a16-8), which are representative of Bodhisattva Dharmākara, several contexts addressing Amituo’s wisdom and light appear in the Da amituo jing, such as T. 12: 308b15-7 cf. T. 12: 290a21-23; T. 12: 309a12-4 cf. T. 12: 291a1-2. Even though the terms 光明 and 智慧 are both found in the two sūtras of the Early Recension, the counterparts in the Pingdengjue jing are apparently revisions of the Da amituo jin. Thereby the origin of the relationship between light 光明 and wisdom 智慧 is first found in the Da amituo jing.

25) Buddha was called as jāe 観 in Chinese in the Han Dynasty (around A.D 70), evidence reads in Hōuhàn ji 後漢紀, also see Tsukamoto 1979, p. 44).

26) The term 智慧勇猛 appears in the No. 7 vow of the Da amituo jing, but its counterpart, the No. 19 vow and the second part of the No. 7 vow, in the Pingdengjue jing, are completely different with the Da amituo jing (Kagawa 1984, p. 121). The term Zhihui 智慧 in the No. 18 vow in the Da amituo jing has no counterpart in the Pingdeng jue jing. (Kagawa 1984, p. 127). The term Zhihui yongmeng 智慧勇猛 in both No. 22 and No. 23 vow in the Da amituo jing see Kagawa 1984, p. 111 and p. 115).

27) According to my survey of the statistics, the term 智慧勇猛 appears a total of 17 times in the Da amituo jing, and 16 times in the Pingdengjue jing, (Xiao 2007, p. 85) but these 16 cases in the Pingdeng jue jing are almost all revisions of the Da amituo jing. Just three cases are unique in the Pingdengjue jing, and these probably are annotations of the contexts.

28) Karashima’s translation is probably derived from prajñāvān adhimārman viṛyavān in the Sanskrit version (see Karashima 1999, p. 137, footnote 8), which was translated as
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29) The seventh vow in the Da amituo jing reads 我即與諸菩薩阿羅漢共飛行迎之。即來生我國則作阿惟越致菩薩，智慧勇猛。得是願乃作佛，不得是願終不作佛 (T. 12, p. 301 b5-c5). The counterpart in the Pingdeng jue jing (Kagawa 1984, p. 121) reads 諸天人民鸞動之願聞我名字，皆悉願來生我國，不爾者我不作佛 (T. 12, p. 281 b29-c1), in the Wuliang shoujing (the eighteenth vow) reads 設我得佛。十方衆生至心信樂。欲生我國乃至十念。若不生者不取正覺。唯除五逆誹謗正法 (T. 12, p. 268 a26-28).

30) The term 智慧勇猛 only appears two times in the Wuliangshoujing. They are T. 12, pp. 272b18-20, and p. 278c. Also see Xiao 2008.

31) Hirakawa and Fujita tried to discuss this problem in advance, but they did not present a positive suggestion on this problem.


33) See Karashima 2008.

34) Kagarashima further suggested shis. Also see Karashima’s suggestion (2008).


36) Regarding the meaning of the Da amituo jing’s title, in addition to Okayama and Karashima’s suggestions, at least there was another suggestion, the oldest, which was given by the author of the Pingdeng jue jing as the title of the Pingdeng jue jing itself is an annotation of the Da amituo jing’s. This problem deserves a detailed discussion than I would like to do here.

37) As I pointed out in another study (2009b, c), the number of vows in the Da amituo jing must be compiled by someone in order that its number corresponds to the Chinese twenty-four solar terms, so-called jieqi 節氣, which is to express nature.

38) Nattier’s translation is as follows: The monk who only thought about the Dharma.

As I pointed out, here 法比丘 must be an abbreviation of 法寶藏 found in the Pingdeng jue jing.

39) In Huáinānzi reads 清淨恬愉人之性也 “purity and happiness is human’s nature.


41) Attributed to Yuǎnhóng 袁宏 (328-379).


43) See No. 17

44) See TSUKAMOTO 1979, pp. 91-102, English translation 1985; and E. ZÜRCHER 1972, pp. 35-42.
45) I suggest two main reasons that have made the Name of Amituo very famous in China. First, once Zhi Qian revised the Da amituo jing, more people could understand the thoughts of Pure Land Buddhism. Second, Kumarajiva also popularized this practice.

46) Ziran 自然 is used as a typical phrase in Taoism combined with wuwei 無為. According to Mori’s statistics, one can find the term ziran 自然 146 times in the Da amituo jing, 177 times in the Pingdengjue jing, and 56 times in the wuliangshou jing (See Mori 2003, p239).


48) Amituo also can be found nine times in the Pingdengjue jing.

49) In addition to the Pingdengjue jing, wulaingqingjing 老母女六英經 appears only once in the Lao and Laozi 老子, the central tenet of Taoism is qingjingwuwei 清淨無為 (HD5: 1326).

50) See Nattier 2007.

51) Qingjing wuwei 清淨無為 is also written as qingjingshuwei 清淨無為, and in Huangdi 皇帝 and Laozi 老子, the central tenet of Taoism is qingjingwuwei 清淨無為 (HD5: 1326).

52) Also see HD7: 138.

53) The following context is in the Zhuangzi kěyì 莊子/刻意, reads 恬侽寂寞，虛無為、此此転地之平而道德之質也; and in the Zhuangzi tiāndào 天道章子：天道夫虛靜恬淡、寂寞無為者、天地之平而道德之至也. And in the Laozi: reads恬淡為上勝而不美，and here 虛靜 = 寂寞 = 恬淡 = 清淨. And in the Wénzì ziran 文子/自然 reads 至德無為、万物皆容。虚靜之道，天長地久. And in the Huainanzi 淮南子: 清淨恬愉人之性也. tiānyǔ 恬愉 happiness = anle 安樂 occuring in the Pingdeng jue jing as the name fo Amida’s realm. And the character tian 恬 means both calm down and happiness.

54) Also see the Japanese translation of this book (Tanaka 1995, p. 232).

55) Also see the Japanese translation of this book. (Tanaka 1995, p. 222).


57) See Xiao 2009a, b, c.

58) See Xiao 2009.

59) See Kajiyama Yuichi 1992, p298

60) See Xiao 2007, p. 87.