

Origin of the Amida Triad (阿弥陀三尊) in Gandhāra

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Origin of the Amida Triad (阿弥陀三尊) in Gandhāra

ガンダーラにおける阿弥陀三尊の起源

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Introductory Remarks

The so-called Amida triad consists of the Buddha Amida (阿弥陀、*āmituó*) that is called in Sanskrit Amitābha (無量光仏) alias Amitāyus (無量寿仏), and the two attendant bodhisattvas : Avalokitasvara/Avalokiteśvara (Oloīśpara, 観音菩薩) and Mahāsthāmaprāpta /Mahāsthānaprāpta(勢至菩薩). Amida seems to have derived from *Amitāha/Amidāha*, the Middle Indic form of the Sanskrit Amitābha (Karashima 2009:121, 123, 126; 2010: 15, 29, 33, 36; 2014: 465).

The identification and origin of the Buddha Amida in Gandhāran art was already described in detail in my two previous and one forthcoming articles (Tanabe 2019; 2020; 2021a). According to these studies of mine, one of the earliest Gandhāran Amida images is preaching Buddha (Fig.1) with both *saṃghāṭī*-covered shoulders and in the attitude of *dharmacakramudrā*, seated on a lotus throne and adorned with double haloes (二重円相光) : a round nimbus and a large mandorla/aureole (*prabhāvalī*, 举身光, 通身光) (Henmi 1935: 289-296; Liebert 1976: 223). Mandorla/aureole is visualization of the *vyāmaprabhā* (丈光相, six feet long rays of light, *éclat large d'une brasse*), one of the Thirty-Two Great Marks (三十二大丈夫相) of the Mahāyāna Buddha according to the eighth volume of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (大智度論) (T. 25. no.1509, 114c; Lamotte 1944: 454; Fujita 1985: 419). Eventually, this type of the Buddha Amida image can be identified as the Buddha Amitābha emitting infinite light. Unfortu-



Fig. 1 Preaching Buddha Amida and bodhisattvas, H: 64. 5 cm, Ancient Orient Museum, Tokyo

nately, this type of the Buddha Amitābha image remains in small numbers (Vogel 1906: pl. XLVIIIb; Foucher 1917: pl.XXV-1; Majumdar 1937: 67-68, pl. IXc; Marshall 1960: pl. 87-fig.122; Brough 1982: 68/473; Salomon/ Schopen 2002: fig.1; Basu 2005:35, fig.36; Tokyo National Museum 2015: pl.22; Tanabe 2019: figs.2, 4 ; 2020: figs.14,15; 2021a: figs.12, 15, 18).

On the other hand, there remain many Gandhāran Amida triads in which central preaching Buddha (Fig.2) is not equipped with double haloes but only with a round nimbus. This second type of the Amida Buddha image is predominant in Gandhāran Amida triads and might be identified as the Buddha Amitāyus emphasizing infinite life (*amitāyus*) rather than infinite light (*amitābha*). Needless to say, this typological classification of Amitābha and Amitāyus images based on mandola/aureole is rather simplified and requires further scrutiny. For instance, the Kharoṣṭhī ‘*amridaha*’ or ‘*amridae*’ inscribed on the so-called Brough’s Amida triad (Fig.3) should be proven to be the dative or locative form of Gāndhārī *amitaha/amidaha/amita’ a*/ of Amitābha (Brough 1982: 66; Salomon/Schopen 2002: 27; Karashima 2009: 121-122; 2014: 465). Anyhow, I would like to temporarily maintain this hypothetical classification until a better and alternative explanation with regard to double haloes will be offered.

According to Seishi Karashima’s investigation, Amitābha preceded Amitāyus. He proposed the following phonological evolution from Amitābha to Amitāyus in Gāndhārī (Karashima 1999:141, note 34; 2009:121-122; 2014: 466; Nattier 2006:190, 197, 阿弥陀=Amitābha=Amida’a).

Amidāha (Amitābha in Sanskrit)→ Amidāhu →Amidā’u →Amidāyu (Amitāyus in Sanskrit)

This phonological chronology corresponds with the aforementioned typological one of the Buddha Amida images based on mandorla/aureole. In my previous articles quoted above, I maintained



Fig. 2 Amida triad, H: 55 cm, Acc. No. PM02772, Peshawar Museum



Fig. 3 Amida triad, H: 24 cm, The State Art Museum of Florida

that the preaching Buddha Amitāyus with a bare right shoulder without mandorla/aureole (Fig.2) seems to have appeared slightly posterior to the one embellished with double haloes (Fig.1). The reason why the Buddha Amitāyus was represented without mandorla/aureole is that the infinite life cannot be visualized by any means because it is invisible notion while the infinite radiance of Amitābha can easily visualized by figurative form of mandorla/aureole. As to coexistence of the two appellations (Amitābha and Amitāyus) of the Buddha Amida, Kotatsu Fujita interestingly opined that there were two groups of Amida worshippers one of whom gave priority to Amitābha while the other to Amitāyus (Fujita 1970: 320-321; 1985: 415; 2007: 280, 289; cf. Nattier 2007a: 190). Thus, my typological classification of the Amida Buddha images does not contradict Fujita's assertion that appears to be valid despite Karashima's opposing argument (Karashima 2010: 31-32; 2014: 468).

Both attendant bodhisattvas are described as the two prominent ones in the Amida's field (*kṣetra*) according to the *Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha* and the earliest two Chinese translations of the *Gāndhārī Sukhāvātīvyūha* (T.12.no.362: 仏説阿弥陀三耶三仏薩樓仏檀過度人道経 (*Āmituó sānyesānfó sàlófótán guòdù réndào jīng* = 大阿弥陀経, *Dà āmituó jīng*); T12.no.361: 仏説無量清浄平等覚経 (*Wúliang qīngjìng Píngděngjué jīng*)).

Mahāsthāmaprāpta/Mahāsthānaprāpta forming the counterpart to Avalokiteśvara has been described, as a rule, as Mahāsthāmaprāpta, not Mahāsthānaprāpta in Buddhist manuscripts (Edgerton 1972: vol. II, 427; Monier-Williams 1964: 802). The reason why I dare to describe Mahāsthānaprāpta/Mahāsthāmaprāpta in the following, is that the name of Mahāsthānaprāpta is the original appellation of this bodhisattva and preceded Mahāsthāmaprāpta according to my study that will be developed in the following chapter two of this article. The original name of Avalokiteśvara is Avalokitasvara or Avalokitaśvara or Avalokitasmara according to Karashima (Karashima 1999: 40-42, 47, 57-62; 2014: 470-474, 476-477).

On the assumption that the central preaching and seated Buddha depicted on both relief panels (Figs.1, 2) is the Buddha Amida, I will attempt to demonstrate that the two bodhisattvas (Fig.4) flanking the preaching and sitting Buddha Amida can be identified as two of the four bodhisattvas : Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthānaprāpta/Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Maitreya and Mañjuśrī. By correctly identifying these four attendant bodhisattvas of the Buddha Amida, I believe that I will be able to clarify the Gandhāran origin of the Amida triad.

Among these four bodhisattvas, Maitreya (Figs. 2, 4) wearing an 8-shaped bowknot and holding a Brahmanic water flask or pot (*kamaṇḍalu/kuṇḍikā*), and Mañjuśrī (Fig.5) holding a book (*pustaka*) or a scroll were already correctly identified by our predecessors so that I do not need to revisit them (de Mallmann 1964: 26-30; Sawoo 1983: 59, figs.1-3; Quagliotti 1990: 105-107, figs.1, 3, 6-8; Miyaji 2008: figs. 2-11, 13-18; Foucher 1917: pl. XXV2; Ingholt 1957: fig. 256). Therefore, in the following I will take up the former two bodhisattvas : Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthānaprāpta/Mahāsthāmaprāpta because these two bodhisattvas are the original attendants of the Buddha Amida in Gandhāran Buddhism and Buddhist art.

In addition, it must be kept in mind that since the three bodhisattvas Avalokitasvara, Mahāsthānaprāpta and Mañjuśrī are purely fictitious, nobody could not, cannot and probably is not able to find concrete literary evidence to support or reject my hypothesis regarding their origins. All that we can do is not beyond reasonable conjecture.

1 Origin of Avalokiteśvara Image in Gandhāra

Regarding the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, several articles and monographs have been published but its origin is not clarified at all (de Mallmann 1948; Chandra 1988; Karashima 1999: 2014; Nattier 2007a, b; Boucher 2008; Yamada 2001; Miyaji 2001; Bautze-Picron 2004; Xiao 2016). According to Karashima, the original etymology of Avalokiteśvara is *avalokita-smara* (looked-recollection) denoting ‘the one who observes remembering and recollecting (念)’ or *avalokita-svara* (looked-sound or voice) meaning ‘the one who observes sounds (音)’ (Karashima 1999: 47-61; 2014: 470-477).

By phonological investigation he clarified phonetic changes of Avalokiteśvara in the two articles published in 1999, 2009, and another in 2014 as follows:

Olokitaspara/Olokitaśpara → Avalokita-smara / Avalokita-svara (Avalokita-śpara) → Avalokitaśvara → Avalokiteśvara

Additionally, he remarked that the name of Avalokiteśvara is supposed to have appeared for the first time around 6th century CE (Karashima 1999: 47; 2014: 472). Therefore, in the following, I will avoid this appellation as much as possible because it is not original name.

The Sanskrit word *svara* originally means sound but is supposed to signify also *smara*, that is,



Fig. 4 Amida triad, H: 55 cm, The Heras Institute, Mumbai



Fig. 5 Mañjuśrī, detail of a complex stele, PM 03110, Peshawar Museum

recollection, according to Karashima (1999: 59-60; 2014: 476-477). He surmised that as it is almost impossible for human being to observe sounds, Avalokitasvara means ‘a man who observes (his own) recollection or remembrance’.

Karashima mentioned that as *smara* /svara (recollection, 念) is a mental action or consciousness of mind, it is not easy to recognize it. However, he further added that as the cliché that the Buddha Śākyamuni sees the minds of sentient beings is attested in Pali and Sanskrit sūtras, it might be possible to see and recognize the consciousness and mental action of man’s mind from outside (Karashima 1999: 60-61; 2014: 477). In the chapter fourteen of the *Buddhacarita* is described about the Buddha Śākyamuni’s *smara* after the Enlightenment as follows:

Then for seven days, free from discomfort of body, he sat, looking into his own mind, his eyes never winking (Johnston 1984: 214, underline mine; Kajiyama et al. 1985: 167).

However, Karashima admitted that he was not convinced whether its original meaning was ‘the one who sees (one’s) recollection’. In my opinion, his philological reconstruction is somewhat perplexing, not to say impossible. It is unbelievable that a bodhisattva with such a difficult notion was created only by religious thoughts of Gandhāran monks, regardless of Avalokitasvara or Avalokitasmara. Karashima himself confessed that such a name could not be created even by profound thinking of monks nor by their philosophical investigation so that Gandhāran Buddhism might have adopted a local deity and sanskritized its name as Avalokitasvara or Avalokitasmara (Karashima 2003: 30; 2014: 480).

In case the name of Avalokitasvara or Avalokitasmara was not of Buddhist origin, did a local deity that Karashima expected to have existed in Gandhāra, belong to Kushan Zoroastrianism? A Japanese scholar Kazuhiko Hayashi pointed out the relationship between Zoroastrian three gods (Sraoša, Mithra and Rašnu) and the Amid triad and maintained that the origin of Avalokiteśvara can be sought in Sraoša, because the function of Sraoša is to listen to voices of gods and people and corresponds precisely to that of Avalokiteśvara to listen to suffering voices of sentient beings (Hayashi 1986: 97-98).

It is true that in the Rabatak inscription from North Afghanistan are mentioned three Zoroastrian psychopomps (yazatas) : Srošardo (Sraoša), Narasao and Miuro (Mithra) (Sims-Williams / Cribb 1995/6: 79; Sims-Williams 2004: 56). Sraoša and Mithra together with Rašnu function as judge of the dead at Cinvat Bridge and Sraoša is supposed to protect the soul of the Kushan king Kanishka I (127-151) in his afterlife (Gnoli 2009: 142, 153; Tanabe 2017: 23-24). Etymologically, Sraoša is undoubtedly derived from old Iranian √srav/šruš (listen to, hear) that corresponds to the Sanskrit √śru (listen to, hear) (Kreyenbroek 1985:7). However, Sraoša was worshipped, first of all, as guardian god of the soul of the dead among the Kushans, not as benevolent listener to voices of sentient beings (Gnoli 2009: 142, 150, 151, 153; *Encyclopaedia Iranica* online 2014: SRAOŠA). Therefore, it is

quite doubtful that the etymological function of Sraoša (listening) was taken very seriously by the Kushans in Gandhāra. What is more, Sraoša was assimilated into an Indian god Skanda, Kārttikeya and Kumāra and syncretized with Mahāsenā, Viśhākha in the Rabatak inscription, and struck anthropomorphically as Skando-Komaro on the gold coin issued by the Kushan king Huvishka (152-190) (Rosenfield 1967: 79, 99-100; Carter 2006: 354-355; Gnoli 2009:150-151).

On the other hand, the original function of Avalokiteśvara, that is, *Avalokitasvara* is not listening to voices but ‘looking upon, viewing, beholding, seeing, noticing, observing voices as Karashima already clarified (Karashima 1999: 52, 59-61; 2014: 470-472, 474-477) . Therefore, it is not acceptable to seek the origin of Avalokiteśvara into the function of Sraoša, because they might partly resemble each other but have no direct relation between them. In passing, I would like to draw attention to the fact that all the views proposed by Iranologists who have attempted to relate the Amida triad (Amitābha-infinite light and Amitāyus=infinite life) to Zoroastrian gods (Ahura Mazda and Zurvan akarna) and notions (infinite light and infinite time) are beyond doubt beside the mark as Kotatsu Fujita already perfectly condemned because their comparative method does not prove anything but simple and partial resemblance between them (Fujita 1970: 262-278; 2007: 256-258; as regards mistaken Zoroastrian influence on the Buddha Amida, recently, Imoto 2009: 13-16 ; Mori 2010).

Therefore, we should attempt to find the origin of Avalokiteśvara in the evolution of Gandhāran Buddhism, especially in Gandhāran Buddhist triads such as the ‘complex stele’ of the Ancient Orient Museum (Figs.1-4). On this ‘complex stele’ twelve nimbate bodhisattvas with the same handsome face and wearing the same kind of headdress are depicted sitting on a lotus throne after emerging from a lotus flower as is described in the Chinese translations of the Gāndhārī *Sukhāvātīvyūha/Amitābhavyūha* (T.12. no. 362. 303c, 304b, 305a; Karashima 2000:102; 2001:137; 2009:123).

First, I will investigate the pensive and meditative bodhisattva (Fig.6) seated to the proper left of the preaching Buddha depicted on the ‘complex stele’ (Fig.1) of the Ancient Orient Museum, following Karashima’s conclusion that the original meaning of Avalokiteśvara is Avalokitasmara/ Avalokitasvara, a being looking upon or observing own or others’ recollection (Karashima 1999: 40, 60, 61; 2014: 477, 479).

Posture of recollection or remembering can be best visualized by pensive attitude of contemplation or meditation not only in ancient times but also nowadays. Therefore, the posture of looking upon or observing the action of mind (念) leads us to remind of the pensive and meditative



Fig. 6 Pensive bodhisattva, detail of Fig.1

seated bodhisattva (Fig.6) depicted on this stele. The posture of this bodhisattva is that of profound meditation and reflection (*pratimukhaṃ smṛtimupasthāpya*), having placed mindfulness in front of him, or having made himself conscious of the thought (繫念思惟) on the preaching by the central Buddha Amida (cf. the *Catuṣpariṣat-sūtra*, the *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra* and the *Mahāvastu*, Senart 1880, p. 268, *pratimukhaṃ smṛtimupasthāpaitvā*, Jones 1952: 252, set up mindfulness before his face). According to Yuichi Kajiyama, such a seated bodhisattva in pensive and meditative attitude may be making deep meditation or contemplation (憶念) on the Buddha Amida or innumerable celestial Buddhas, as '*pratyutpanna-buddha-sammukha-avasthita-samādhi* (般舟三昧)' suggests (Kajiyama 1992: 294). In my opinion, the aim of pensive bodhisattva's contemplation seems to be intended for the preaching of the Buddha Amida at the center.

At a glance, this pensive and meditative bodhisattva seems to be looking down upon the lotus pond. However, he does not stare at it nor several lotuses in the pond. I suppose that he does not pay any attention to the pond and lotuses but is rather attentively listening to what the central Buddha Amida is preaching (voices and sounds). Needless to say, other twelve bodhisattvas depicted on this stele are also listeners of the Buddha Amida, although each of their attitudes differs from one another. These listeners and their varying attitudes remind us of what is described in the earliest Chinese translation of the original *Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha* (T12. no. 362, p. 305c).

This sūtra says that among the bodhisattvas/arhats (菩薩・阿羅漢) there are those who want only to listen to the sūtra (preached by the Buddha Amida), or those who want only to listen to music, and others who want only to smell fragrance of flowers. On the contrary, there are bodhisattvas / arhats who do not want to listen to the sūtra, music and fragrance of flower (Karashima 2003: 27). Therefore, the pensive and meditative bodhisattva who is a member of the audience of the Buddha Amida can be regarded as the most attentive and enthusiastic listener among them (Lerner 1986:13, figs.3, 4).

Next, I will examine whether we can apply the original etymological meaning of Avalokitasvara/Avalokitasvara proposed by Karashima to this pensive and meditative bodhisattva or not. Avalokitasvara consists of two words: *avalokita* (seen, observed) and *svara* (=smara, contemplation, meditation, 繫念思惟) (Karashima 2014: 477, 480).

Avalokita is divided into two parts: prefix *ava* (below) and past participle *lokita* (looked) derived from the verb $\sqrt{\text{lok}}$ (see, look). Eventually, *Avalokita* might mean originally 'being looked down'. Additionally, *ava* $\sqrt{\text{lok}}$ means 'to look, look upon or at, view, behold, see, notice, observe' (Monier-Williams 1964:103). Consequently, its past participle '*avalokita*' means 'seen, viewed, observed' (Monier-Williams 1964:103; cf. Boucher 2008: 301-303). Accordingly, *avalokitasvara* can mean 'someone's contemplation or meditation observed or looked' in the passive voice or 'someone observed or looked contemplation or meditation' in the active voice. Karashima interpreted *Avalokitasvara* in the active voice as 'one who saw, observed contemplation or meditation' and made an ambig-

uous remark that Avalokitasvara means ‘the one who observes contemplation or meditation, without clarifying whether it is one’s own or that of another (Karashima 2014: 477, 480).

However, such a philological interpretation that Avalokitasvara is the bodhisattva who observes his own contemplation or that of others, is hard to understand. In my opinion, a philological investigation is liable to lead to misunderstanding, and therefore, it is necessary to verify such an interpretation based on phonological analysis by comparing it with figural images of Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara. So as to verify whether Karashima’s interpretation is valid or not, the old view on Avalokiteśvara proposed by Albert Grünwedel in 1900 is worth quoting. It runs as follows:

Das Sanskritwort (Avalokiteśvara) kann aber, nur übersetzt werden « der Herr, welcher angesehen wird oder wurde », und man könnte auf den Gedanken kommen, dass der über seinem Scheitel sitzende kleine Amitābha etwas mit der Bezeichnung, deren eigentlicher Sinn später nicht mehr verstanden worden wäre, zu thun haben könnte; Le mot sanscrit (Avalokiteçvara), ne peut être autrement traduit que par «le maître, qui est regardé ou qui fût regardé » et on pourrait croire que le petit Amitābha assis dans la coiffure, a eu une influence sur cette designation, dont le sens n’a plus été compris plus tard (Grünwedel 1900b:128; 1900c:130).

Grünwedel took ‘avalokita’ in the passive voice and interpreted it as ‘looked by someone’ (angesehen or regardé) and interpreted Avalokiteśvara/Avalokita-īśvara as the ‘lord looked by Amitābha’ who is depicted in a turban crest of the former (de Lubac 1954: 105-106). Grünwedel’s interpretation might be corroborated by a small, transformed seated preaching Buddha Amida (化仏) in the turban crest (Fig.7) of a standing bodhisattva (Fig.8) now housed in the Peshawar Museum (Acc.no.1967) (Foucher 1918: 189, 242, figs.399, 429; de Mallmann 1948: pls. Ia, XXIa; Ingholt 1957:117, 142-143, figs. 242, 326; Takata 1979: 21-22, figs.19-11; Tokyo National Museum 2002: pl.12; Boucher 2008: figs. 2-3; Jongeward 2019:103, pl.72).

However, I cannot accept Grünwedel’s interpretation in all aspects because we have not enough examples of small transformed Amida Buddha seated in turban crest of bodhisattva images from Gandhāra in order to prove that the transformed Buddha Amida was depicted in the turban crest when the image of Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara created in Gandhāra. In addition, as the standing bodhisattva image (Fig.8) with the transformed Amida seated in the crest is dated stylistically from later period of Gandhāran sculpture, it is not likely that the earliest image of Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara had a turban crest containing a transformed Buddha Amida. As far as my knowledge goes, all the so-



Fig. 7 Buddha Amida in turban crest, detail of Fig. 8

called Avalokiteśvara images from Gandhāra with such a transformed Buddha in the turban crest are standing (Figs.8, 9), not sitting (Harle 1974: 128-129, fig.71; Czuma 1985: 198-199, pl.109; Fussman 1987: fig. 3; Miyaji 2007: 61, pl. 26). If Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara is depicted standing and the transformed preaching Buddha Amida in the crest is seated, the relevant Amida Buddha cannot set eyes on the entire body of Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara.

Rejecting Grünwedel's interpretation, I propose that Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara means 'the one whose meditation was seen by someone'. This interpretation can easily be corroborated by a pensive bodhisattva image holding a lotus on the complex stele (Fig. 6) or the Amida triad (Figs.3, 4) (Brough 1982: 69/473; Salomon/ Schopen 2002: fig.1).

From the above investigation it might be concluded that the notion and name of Avalokitasvara /Olokitasvara/Oloīpara/Avalokitaśvara was derived from the pensive image of a bodhisattva (Fig.6) depicted to the proper left side of the Buddha Amida (Figs.1, 3). In other words, the original image of Avalokiteśvara was not visualized and created from the description of the Gāndhārī *Sukhāvatīvyūha/Amitābhavyūha* recension but the relevant Gāndhārī text was written referring to such a ready-made seated image of a pensive bodhisattva as is depicted in the Ancient Orient Museum stele (Figs.1,6). I assume that such a prototype or forerunner of Avalokitaśvara/Avalokiteśvara image went ahead and the text relevant to it followed, not *vice versa*.

The most important characteristics of the seated bodhisattva (Fig.6) on the Ancient Orient Museum stele are his pensive attitude and a lotus held in the left hand. Therefore, it might be concluded that the prototype of Avalokiteśvara is a pensive bodhisattva seated holding a lotus as the attribute in the left hand (*padmapāṇi*). Prototype is here something like a 'potential image' that is ready for accepting a new meaning (compassion, 慈悲) and function (savior, 救済者). However, it is not certain whether this pensive bodhisattva had already such functions as compassion and savior. The



Fig. 8 Avalokiteśvara standing, H: 107 cm, Peshawar Museum

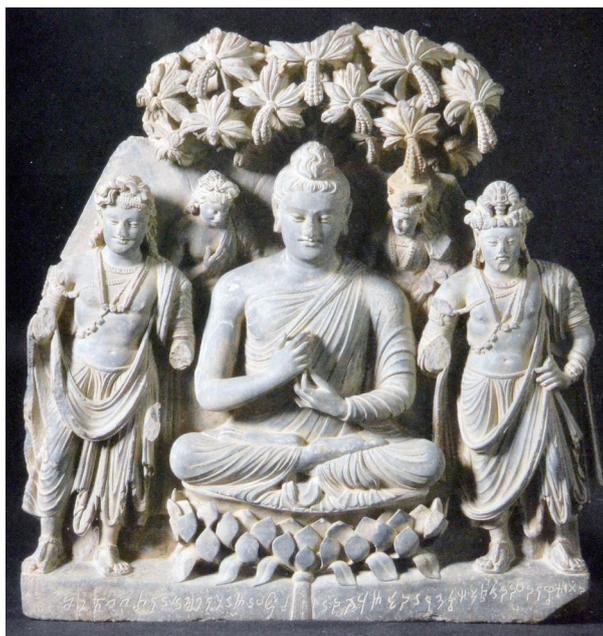


Fig. 9 Amida triad, H: 62 cm, Agon Shu, Kyoto



Fig. 10 Amida preaching in the *Sukhāvātī*, H: 37 cm, Matsuoka Museum of Art, Tokyo

pensive posture was derived from the prince Siddhārtha's attitude depicted in Gandhāran relief panels (Lee 1993: 311-315, figs.1-4). Still more importantly, two pensive bodhisattvas are depicted on a stele (Fig.10) on which a seated Buddha (Amida) is preaching surrounded by twenty bodhisattvas arranged in tiers (Matsuoka Museum of Art 1994: pl.16; Tobu Museum of Art 1998:153, pl.122). In my opinion, this stele depicting the Buddha Amida preaching in the *Sukhāvātī*, as it were, its oldest trial and experimental image, preceded that of the Ancient Orient Museum, and the two relevant pensive bodhisattva (Fig.11) without a lotus in hand are likely precursory of *padmapāṇi*-type bodhisattva image (Tanabe 2021a, b).

As for the lotus, it is not restricted to this sole bodhisattva (Fig.6) depicted on this stele (Fig.1) because the lotus is held also by other five bodhisattvas. Probably, in this stele the lotus symbolizes a miraculous rebirth through lotus flower in *Sukhāvātī* of the Buddha Amida or the respect for him, but has no functional meaning. Therefore, the lotus and '*padmapāṇi*' could be easily replaced by another attribute and bodhisattva, for instance, garland and garland-bearer as is attested to by many bodhisattva images (Fig.12) of Gandhāra (Ingholt 1957: figs. 316, 326 ; Takata1964: 67, fig.1; Miyaji/Yamada 1985: pls. III-1, III-1, VI-1, IX-1, X-1, 2, XIV-5; Kurita1990: figs.154, 164-169;Tokyo National Museum 2015: pl. 22).

Thus, the origin of one of the two bodhisattvas making Gandhāran Amida triad, that is, Avalokiteśvara is definitively clarified.

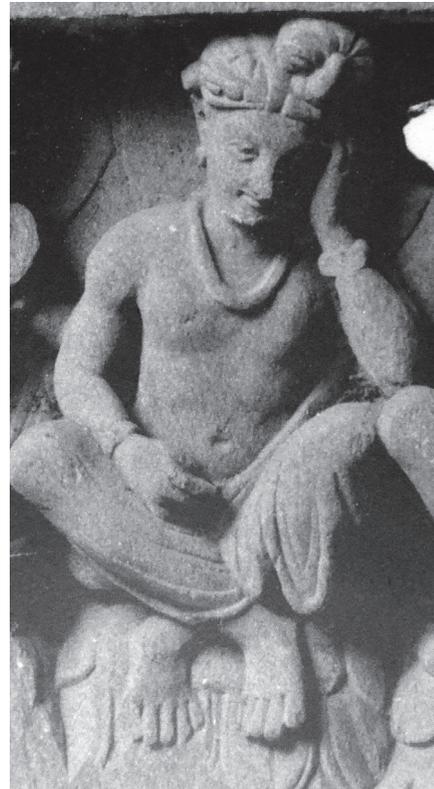


Fig. 11 One of the two pensive bodhisattvas, detail of Fig.10

II Origin of Mahāsthānaprāpta/Mahāsthāmaprāpta image in Gandhāra

A Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Faxian (法顯) reports in the *Records of the Buddhist Kingdoms* (佛国記) that in India, south of Mathurā, Mahāyānists worshipped the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī, but the name of the bodhisattva Mahāsthānaprāpta/Mahāsthāmaprāpta is not mentioned by him (Giles 1923: 23; Nagasawa 1996: 46-47). Probably in India, the bodhisattva Mahāsthānaprāpta/Mahāsthāmaprāpta was almost unknown and scarcely venerated by local Buddhists.

How about Mahāsthānaprāpta/Mahāsthāmaprāpta in Gandhāra?

The Sanskrit word ‘mahāsthāmaprāpta’ means possessor of great power, force or vigor. However, such a meaning appears to be too unnatural and artificial to be suddenly adopted for the name of a bodhisattva who must have been born in a ‘complex stele’ (Fig.1) as is the case with aforementioned Avalokiteśvara. Therefore, we might be allowed to assume that the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta was not original but secondary.

With regard to the origin of this bodhisattva, in 1901 J. Burgess asserted that Mahāsthāmaprāpta or Mahāsthānaprāpta is Maudgalyāna (目犍連), one of the best disciples of the Buddha Śākyamuni who was resurrected and reborn after death in the Amida’s *Sukhāvātī Paradise* (Grünwedel/Burgess 1901: 183). However, such an interesting hypothesis is hardly tenable because the Sanskrit *Sukhāvātīvyūha* and its earliest Chinese translations never mention such a resurrection at all.

In 1948 M.Th. de Mallmann remarked that Mahāsthāmaprāpta is a Zoroastrian war god Verethragana (de Mallmann 1948: 90-95). She compared a Zoroastrian triad : Mithra-Zurvan akarna -Verethragana with the Buddhist triad : Avalokiteśvara -Amitāyus-Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Then, she identified Amitāyus (Infinite Life) with Zurvan akarna (Endless Time), and Sun God Mithra with Avalokiteśvara, and Verethragana with Mahāsthāmaprāpta. However, Zurvan akarna cannot be identified with Amitāyus because Infinite Life is not entirely identical with Endless Time as G. Fussman correctly observes (Zaehner 1955: 219-232; Fujita 1970: 273-278; Fussman 1999: 555, Temps infini (Zurvan akarna) et Vie infinie (Amitāyus) sont des concepts qui ne se recouvrent pas entièrement). Cult of Zurvan akarna is not attested in the Zoroastrian pantheon known to the Kushans, although Mithra (Miuro), Verethragana (Oshlagno) and Ahura Mazda (Oromozdo) are depicted on the reverses of Kushan coins (Rosenfield 1967:81-83,95-96, fig.9, coins 115 -117, 167, 168; Göbl 1984:166-167, 170, 172 ; Shenkar 2014:62, fig.14; Jongeward/Cribb/Donovan 2015: 285, pl.14-387~388).

Worship of Zurvan akarna seems to have been prevalent in later Sasanian period in Iran and also in



Fig. 12 Pensive Avalokiteśvara, H: 68 cm, The State Hermitage Museum

Kapishi (順, Žun) and Sogdiana (Azruvā) from 6th to 7th centuries CE but not attested to by archaeological materials and literary sources of Kushan Gandhāra (Benveniste 1946: 107; Kuwayama 1990: 167-173; Strausberg et al. 2015:133-134, 151, 238-239). What is more, Verethragna was accepted by Buddhists in Gandhāra and assimilated with Vajrapāṇi, guardian of the Buddha Śākyamuni, being depicted quite often on relief panels of the Buddha's Life Story. Therefore, it is hardly tenable to assume that Mahāsthāmaprāpta / Mahāsthāmaprāpta originated from Verethragna.

On the other hand, Lokesh Chandra maintained that Indra was transformed into Mahāsthāmaprāpta while Brahmā into Avalokiteśvara, but such an interpretation is beside the mark (Chandra 1988:11, 28). In Gandhāran Amida triad (Fig.2) Brahmā and Indra are represented together with Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara (Marshall 1960: pl.89, fig.124; Harle 1974: fig.71; Czuma 1985:198, pl.109). It means that Brahmā and Indra were distinctly differentiated from Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Avalokiteśvara in Gandhāra.

The *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* (佛說觀無量壽佛經) that was written by a Central Asian and translated into Chinese by Kālayāśas in 424 CE, says that Mahāsthāmaprāpta is called 'a bodhisattva who obtained great strength or power (大勢至)' because he flashes over all sentient beings by light of wisdom and make them escape from three bad places of *naraka*, *preta* and *tyryagyoni*, and subsequently make them acquire or he himself acquires infinite power (T.12. no. 365, 344a: 以智慧光, 遍照一切, 令離三途, 得無上力. 是故号此菩薩, 名大勢至). However, this explanation, seemingly not original but later, cannot be accepted because what is written in that Central Asian sūtra is not necessarily applied to Gandhāran Buddhist imagery.

As for the etymology of Mahāsthāmaprāpta, *mahā* means 'great' or 'big', *sthāma*=*sthāman* means 'strength' and 'power', and *prāpta* (pp. of √prāp=gain) means 'obtained, attained to', 'reached at', 'acquired', 'gained'. Therefore, Mahāsthāmaprāpta means 'the one who acquired great strength and power'. Then, Mahāsthāmaprāpta was translated into Chinese 'word for word' as 大勢至, 得勢至 or 得大勢, all of them designating the one who has obtained or reached at great strength, power and influence (Wogihara 1979: 1023).

In my opinion, it seems to be slightly unnatural and unreasonable that a bodhisattva who has such a functional meaning of strength, power and influence suddenly appeared in such a cultic stele as that of the Ancient Orient Museum (Fig.1) or a Mahāyāna sūtra. The *Larger Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* and its earliest Chinese translations do not say that this bodhisattva has such meanings : strength, power and influence (T12. no. 361, 362; Müller 1894: 48, 52; Gomez 1996: 48, 97). I should like to assume that strength, power and influence are not original meanings of Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

If that were the case, what is the original meaning? My intuition tells me that the original meaning is concerned with station, place and seat occupied by the relevant bodhisattva in a 'complex stele' (Fig.1). Precisely, Mahāsthāma originated and evolved from 'high place', 'high seat', 'high station', 'high position', 'lofty rank' and so on. These meanings can be found in the Sanskrit word: mahāsthāna (Monier-Williams 1964: 802). Mahāsthāna has not a functional meaning but simply implies a

place or location where the relevant bodhisattva sits. Therefore, I assume that mahāsthāna is more appropriate than mahāsthāma for the name of the relevant bodhisattva. That is the reason why I dare to hypothesize that Mahāsthānaprāpta was prior to Mahāsthāmaprāpta, that is, the original name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta was Mahāsthānaprāpta occupying a great seat or position.

Although this seems to be my arbitrary and fictitious assumption at a glance, there have been at least four scholars versed in Sanskrit manuscripts who adopted the name of Mahāsthānaprāpta instead of Mahāsthāmaprāpta for this bodhisattva.

First, Eugène Burnouf transcribed the relevant bodhisattva as Mahāsthānaprāpta in the *Introduction à l'histoire du buddhisme indien* published in 1844. In this book Burnouf translated partly the Sanskrit *Sukhāvātīvyūha* manuscripts that had been brought to Paris by B. H. Hodgson from Nepal. He wrote that one of the attendants of the Buddha Amida is Avalokiteśvara and the other Mahāsthānaprāpta (Burnouf 1844/1876: 101, note 2). However, he adopted the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta in his translation of the *Sadharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, le lotus de la bonne loi, brought to Paris by Hodgson (Burnouf 1852: 2).

Second, in 1870 a German missionary Ernest. J. Eitel published the *Hand-book for the Student of Chinese Buddhism* in which he mentioned Mahāsthāma and Mahāsthānaprāpta (Eitel 1870: 89). Probably he adopted the name of Mahāsthānaprāpta from the books written by Burnouf and Stanislas Julien whom he mentioned in the introduction of that book.

Third, A. Grünwedel who described about a triad in the Lahore Museum collection (acc.no.1134) adopted the names of Mahāsthānaprāpta and Padmapāni as the two attendants of the Buddha Amida in the second edition of the *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien* published in 1900 (Grünwedel 1900a: 122, 152, 169, 193, note 86, Nr.63, 83). He also adopted the same name in *Mythologie des Buddhismus in Tibet und der Mongolei* (Grünwedel 1900b: 126, French edition: *Mythologie du Buddhismisme au Tibet et en Mongolie* 1900c:129). He continued to use the name of Mahāsthānaprāpta till 1920 when the second edition of the *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien* was reprinted (Grünwedel 1920: 169). Unfortunately, Grünwedel did not explain why he preferred Mahāsthānaprāpta to Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

Almost contemporarily James Burgess adopted both Mahāsthānaprāpta and Mahāsthāma(prāpta) in the revised and enlarged English translation of Grünwedel's *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*, i.e., *Buddhist Art in India* (Burgess1901:183-185, 193,196, 205). However, he adopted only Mahāsthānaprāpta in his article 'The Gandhara Sculptures' published in the *Journal of Indian Art and Industry*, vol. VIII (Burgess 1898/1900: 38, 83, pl.16-1, 2, fig. 23). He probably followed Eitel's *Hand-book* and Grünwedel's *Buddhistische Kunst in Indien*, second edition.

On the other hand, A.Foucher adopted only the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta in the *L'Art Gréco-Bouddhisque du Gandhāra*, tome II (Foucher 1918: 240, 373) completely ignoring Mahāsthānaprāpta that his predecessors, Burnouf and Grünwedel, adopted. It seems that since Foucher the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta has been prevalent among the Indologists, Buddhologists and historians of Buddhist art of India.

However, in 1980s John Brough and Gerard Fussman exceptionally resumed to adopt the name of Mahāsthānaprāpta. Brough made an assumption that the missing bodhisattva supposed to be depicted to the proper right side of the preaching Buddha Amida in a fragmentary relief panel (Fig.3) from Gandhāra is Mahāsthānaprāpta (Brough 1982: 66). Unfortunately he did not explain the reason why he adopted Mahāsthānaprāpta instead of Mahāsthāmaprāpta. It is quite strange that he ignored the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta because he must have known the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta. He quoted in the article published in 1982 the encyclopaedia *Hobogirin* (法寶義林) and the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka* (悲華經) written by his student Isshi Yamada both of which mention the name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta but not Mahāsthānaprāpta (Hobogirin 1929: 29-30; Yamada 1968: vol. I, 88-90, vol. II, 114-123).

Be that as it may, Brough clarified the existence of the Amida triad in Gandhāra by identifying Avalokiteśvara first on this relief panel, and secondly Amitābha, and thirdly surmising Mahāsthānaprāpta referring to the Kharoṣṭhī inscription in which Olo'ispara (Avalokiteśvara) and Amridaha (Amitābha) are mentioned: *(bu)dhamitrassa olo'ispare danamukhe budhamitrassa amridaha* (cf. Salomon/Schopen 2002: 27, figs.1-5; cf. Tanabe 2007: 295, pl.II-13). His surmise of Mahāsthānaprāpta is based on a quite logical reasoning that Avalokiteśvara's counterpart must be Mahāsthānaprāpta, because the counterpart of Avalokiteśvara is Mahāsthāmaprāpta in Chinese and Japanese Buddhist art.

In 1987, with regard to the so-called Brussels Buddha (Fig.9) Fussman described the bodhisattva standing to the proper right of the preaching Buddha Amida as Mahāsthānaprāpta admitting the appellation by Brough and his above-quoted reasoning (Fussman 1987: 74-76, fig. 3). He also identified the bodhisattva with a transformed small Buddha in turban crest and standing to the proper left of the Buddha as Avalokiteśvara. Although the bodhisattva identified as Mahāsthānaprāpta by Fussman holds a water flask and keeps 8-shaped hair-do just as well as the image of the bodhisattva Maitreya (Fussman 1987: figs.5-7). It seems that he distinguished Mahāsthānaprāpta from Maitreya by the canopy depicted above the triad despite the fact that there is no external and iconographical difference between Maitreya and Mahāsthānaprāpta images (Fussman 1987:75-76; cf. Miyaji 2001: 20). In other words, he seems to accept that Maitreya and Mahāsthānaprāpta share a water-flask and 8-shaped hair-do in Gandhāra.

However, Fussman abandoned the name of Mahāsthānaprāpta and began to adopt Mahāsthāmaprāpta in the paper 'La place des *Sukhāvātī-vyūha* dans le bouddhisme indien' published in 1999 (Fussman 1999: 546). Furthermore, he adopted Mahāsthāmaprāpta in the *Early Iconography of Avalokiteśvara* published in 2012 (Fussman/Quagliotti 2012: 34).

From the above, it is clear that there are two names as regards the counterpart of Avalokiteśvara: Mahāsthānaprāpta and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Why did this take place in Buddhist sūtras and literature? It is because there were two kinds of Sanskrit manuscript one of which describes the relevant bodhisattva as Mahāsthāmaprāpta while the other as Mahāsthānaprāpta. According to Kotatsu Fujita's 'The

Larger Sukhāvātīvyūha Romanized Text of the Sanskrit Manuscripts from Nepal, Part II, there are known thirty-eight Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, but only one manuscript describes Mahāsthānāprāpta while the remaining thirty-seven describe Mahāsthāmaprāpta, Mahāspamāprāpta and Sthāmaprāpta (Fujita 1993:1063). That only one manuscript was once owned by Ryukoku University in Kyoto but was already missing in 1970 (Fujita 1970: 15). However, it was photographed and published by Taijun Inokuchi (Inokuchi 1986 : 103). I examined the picture of the manuscript (Fig. 13) and found that the name of Mahāsthānāprāpta is clearly written on the second line from the top as Fujita correctly deciphered.

On the other hand, Burnouf, Grünwedel and others seem to have read another manuscript of the *Sukhāvātīvyūha* which was brought to Paris by Hodgson. According to Fujita, that manuscript now housed in the Bibliothèque Nationale describes Mahāsthāmaprāpta not Mahāsthānāprāpta (Fujita 1993: 1063). Unfortunately, I cannot verify whether Fujita’s decipherment is correct or not, due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has interrupted my visit to Paris.

In my opinion, Mahāsthānāprāpta is not a mistake by a writer of the relevant manuscript but it miraculously and exceptionally survived from oblivion for a long time in Nepal. The shapes of the Devanāgarī letter M and N is quite different from one the other, and also in Kharoṣṭhī and Brāhmī. Therefore, I assume that there was once a bodhisattva called Mahāsthānāprāpta in Gandhāra. The discovery of the fragments of the Gilgit-Bamiyan typed *Sukhāvātīvyūha* in the Schøyen Collection dating from the 6th to 7th centuries CE, proved that there existed at least three versions or recensions of this sūtra (Harrison/Hartmann/Matsuda 2002:181). Therefore, Mahāsthānāprāpta might have been written in an unknown Gāndhārī birch bark scrolls of the *Sukhāvātīvyūha* manuscript.

To prove that this name in Gāndhārī and Sanskrit actually existed in Gandhāra I will take two different approaches as follows.

First, I will examine the earliest Chinese translation of this name. Mahāsthānāprāpta is transcribed as *Móhēnàbō* (摩訶那鉢) in Chinese (Nattier 2007b:197-198, note 36). According to Jan Nattier, this transcription derived from Mahānāmaprāpta rather than Mahāsthāmaprāpta because in Chinese translations Mahānāma (Great Name, 大名) was repeatedly translated mistakenly as ‘Great Strength (大力, Mahāsthāma, 摩訶那鉢)’. Therefore, inversely, Mahāsthāma (大力) was transcribed as

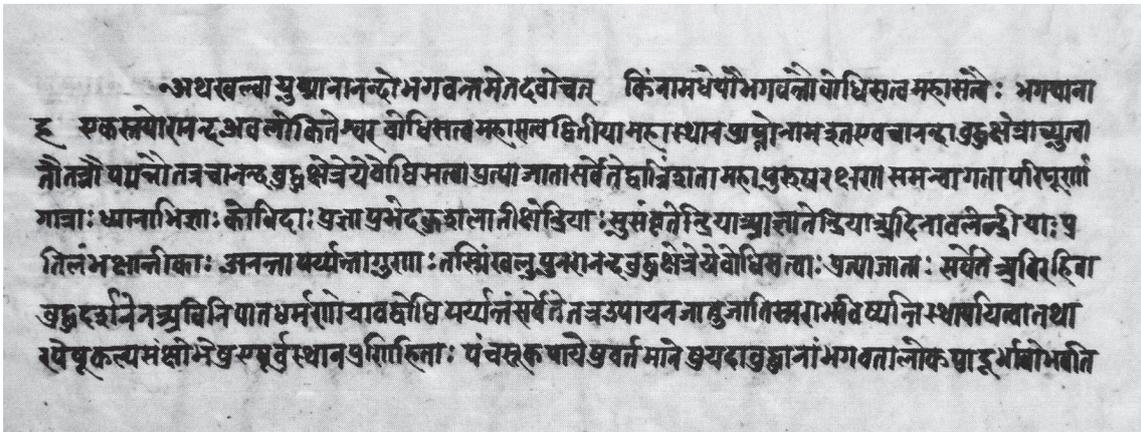


Fig. 13 *Sukhāvātīvyūha* manuscript, 29. 2 x 11cm, Ryukoku University, Kyoto

Mahānāma (大名). This mistake and confusion led Mahāsthāmaprāpta to *Móhēnàbō* (Mahā-nāma-prāpta, 摩訶-那-鉢). This is Nattier's interpretation. Unfortunately, she did not take into consideration the other name of Mahā-(sthā)na-prāpta (摩訶-那-鉢) which can be transcribed as *Móhē-nà-bō* if 'sthā' was abbreviated, and 'na' and 'prāpta' were transcribed as nà (那) and bō (鉢) respectively. Even if Nattier's interpretation was to the point, my assumption that Mahāsthānaprāpta is the original name of Mahāsthāmaprāpta can be still tenable and therefore cannot be rejected because Nattier's assertion does not negate nor exclude the name of Mahāsthānaprāpta.

Second, I will examine the posture of the bodhisattva (Fig.14) seated to the proper right of the preaching Buddha Amida depicted on the complex stele of the Ancient Orient Museum (Fig.1). Undoubtedly, the pensive bodhisattva (Fig.6) sitting on rattan seat with the left foot on lotus stool, holding a lotus in the left hand, with the right foot on the opposite knee (*lalitāsana or mahārājilāsana*), the right hand raised toward the forehead, and the downcast head slightly inclined in an attitude of contemplation, is almost a duplicate of Avalokitaśvara/Oloīśpara/Avalokitaśvara (Fig.3) and also of an independent cultic image of Gandhāran Avalokitaśvara/Avalokiteśvara (Figs.12, 15)(Saunders 1960:128-131, figs.47-49 ; Takata 1964: pl.V, figs.1-4; Matsuoka Museum 1994: pl.9; Tanabe 2007: 295, pl. II-13). Therefore, this pensive bodhisattva can be called literally as 'Avalokitaśvara/ Avalokitaśvara/Oloīśpara'.

On the opposite side to the proper right of the Buddha Amida are seated two bodhisattvas (Fig.1) on rattan seat with the left hand lying on the left thigh, and with crossed legs and both feet supported by lotus stool. It is apparent that this bodhisattva (Fig.14) nearer to the Buddha corresponds to the pensive bodhisattva (Fig.6). As far as the appearance is concerned, these two bodhisattvas are not different at all from other four seated bodhisattvas (Fig.1) on the second register from the top. They wear the same kind of turban, ornaments and clothes, and therefore they are depicted as simple audience of the preaching Buddha Amida. The bodhisattva (Fig.14) depicted beside the Buddha has no iconographical peculiarity with distinguishing attribute. He does not hold a lotus in the left hand and raises the right hand that was broken and lost almost two thousand years ago. He might have held a lotus in the raised right hand. Even so, at a glance, he seems to be nothing more than a seemingly trivial listener from the iconographical view-point. However, he occupies a very important place or position, that is, the proper right side of the Buddha Amida.

According to Indo-Aryan laterality, the right (man) is superior to the left (woman) (Bureau 1968; Pinault 2002: 248-261). This Indian value judgement was widely adopted by Gandhāran sculptors and can be



Fig. 14 Mahāsthānaprāpta, detail of Fig. 1

easily attested to by relief panels depicting the life story of the Buddha Śākyamuni: Dream of Queen Māyā, Birth of Siddhārtha, Ambapālī's Donation of a Mango Grove and a tutelary pair of Pāñchika and Hārītī. Therefore, the place occupied by that trivial bodhisattva (Fig.14) is the most valuable and honorable position, so to speak, Brahmā's position, a Great Position, that is, *mahāsthāna* in Sanskrit and *mahāṭhāna* in Pali (Harrison/ Luczanits 2012: *mahānapatta*, 76, 84). In other words, although this bodhisattva seems not to be prominent in so far as his outward feature is concerned, he occupies a very important place to enable him rise to a high status, *mahāsthānaprāpta* (*mahāṭhānapatta* in Pali) that means the one who got a Great Position or Rank.

However, this high position has no function of great strength or power but is simply a place (*mahāsthāna*) while *mahāsthāna* clearly signifies a distinct function of great strength. Eventually, as that trivial bodhisattva (Fig.14) occupying the great position is not given a particular function, he has no attribute nor specified headdress or hairstyle. Therefore, the name of *Mahāsthānaprāpta* undoubtedly took place prior to *Mahāsthāmaprāpta* as I already remarked.

My observations collected in the foregoing pages may lead to conclude that this seated bodhisattva (Fig.14) can make a triad with the pensive bodhisattva (Fig.6) if he is given an attribute. However, he is not endowed with any specific attribute in the Ancient Orient Museum stele that is regarded as one of the models or prototypes of Gandhāran Amida triad: (right) *Mahāsthānaprāpta*—(center) the Buddha Amida—(left) *Avalokitasvara/smara* (*Oloīṣpara*).

Why is that stele's triad still a model or prototype of Amida triad and not the earliest or original Gandhāran Amida triad itself? It is because the relevant two bodhisattvas are depicted still as two of the audience of the preaching Buddha Amida and both are undistinguished from other bodhisattvas in appearance. In my opinion, the Amida triad should be composed of relevant three figures more distinctly isolated and separated from the audience. However, the bodhisattva *Mahāsthānaprāpta* without attribute and special headdress attracts little attention. Although the pensive *Avalokitasvara/Oloīṣpara* holding a lotus in the hand (Fig.6) is worth flanking the Buddha Amida, his counterpart (Fig.14) is not worthy of flanking bodhisattva. They make, so to speak, only half of the Amida triad. So, I hesitate to regard the stele of the Ancient Orient Museum as depicting the Amida triad, despite the fact that Kimiaki Tanaka identified as such (Tanaka 2016: 115).

Be that as it may, it is now clear that the fundamental elements making the Gandhāran triads are established. They are ***Mahāsthānaprāpta/Amida/Avalokitasvara***. The important feature of *Mahāsthānaprāpta* is that this bodhisattva can easily be replaced by the other because it has no function and attribute in particular. This image is really 'potential' because *Mahāsthānaprāpta* is not a proper noun as yet but rather a common noun. Then, the position or place of *Mahāsthānaprāpta* is open and admitted to any bodhisattva or disciple of the Buddha Amida. Eventually, it could be often replaced by *Maitreya*, *Mañjuśrī* and even *Avalokitasvara* as is proved by many relief panels of Gandhāra (Miyaji 2008: 125, figs.1, 2, 3, 14-17, table 1; Ali/Qazi 2008:145-158). *Mahāsthānaprāpta* could not become *Mahāsthāmaprāpta* worthy of flanking bodhisattva until he was given an at-

tribute, not to say, his own specified headdress or hairstyle. As is to be proved in the chapter III, Mahāsthānaprāpta slightly transformed himself into Mahāsthāmaprāpta when he was given a water flask, attribute of the bodhisattva Maitreya and probably the functions of wisdom and savior. In response to Mahāsthāmaprāpta's functions, Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara/Oloīśpara might have been given the functions of compassion and saviour.

Lastly I would like to infer that there seems to have been independent cultic images of Mahāsthāmaprāpta in Gandhāra, some of which I will revisit in the next chapter.

III Emergence of the Amida Triad and the Image of Mahāsthāmaprāpta

In the above two chapters, the prototypes of the two bodhisattvas flanking the Buddha Amida are identified so that we can assume that the Amida triad was established in Gandhāra, probably from the middle of the second to third century CE.

The image of the Buddha Amida (**Amitābha**) that was identified by myself in the previous articles is endowed with double haloes, that is, a nimbus and a large mandorla/ aureole surrounding the entire body (Figs.1, 3,7)(cf. supra, Introductory Remarks). On the basis of mandorla/aureole, it is now possible, though to some extent and tentatively, to arrange the Gandhāran **Amitābha** triads in chronological order.

The first precursory phase is assigned to the Ancient Orient Museum stele (Fig.1).

The second phase is assigned to the Indian Museum fragment of the Amitābha triad (Fig.16)(Acc. No. 5095/A23407) from Loriyan Tangai, and that of the Florida Museum of Art fragment of the Amitābha triad (Fig.3).

The third phase is typified by the Amitābha triad of the Indian Museum (Fig.17)(Acc.No.5093, Tokyo National Museum 2015: 60, pl. 21)

The fourth phase is typified by the Amitābha triad of Indian Museum (Fig.18)(Acc. No. 5090/A23485, Burgess 1898/1990: 82-83, figs.22, 23, 25; Marshall 1960: pl.87; Tokyo National Museum 2015: 61, pl. 22)

These four phases are associated with the double-haloed standing Buddha (BODDO) image struck on the reverse of gold coins issued by Kanishka I (127-150) that seem to have been issued at the end of his reign (Cribb 1999/2000: 165-167, 158, pl. I-1-5).

As for other many triads and 'complex steles' on which the central preaching Buddha (**Amitāyus**) lacks mandorla/aureole (Miyaji/Yamada1985: pls. I-XII; Harrison/Luczanits 2012: figs.1-17), I will refrain from making a chronological arrangement of them because it is beyond the scope of this paper and my present competence. Here, I will confine myself to referring to the triadic composition of the Buddha Amida. As is noticed in the chapter II, *mahāsthānaprāpta* is an open place for every bodhisattva and consequently the bodhisattva Mahāsthānaprāpta without attribute and specified

headdress was easily and freely replaced by other bodhisattvas. Eventually, in Gandhāra, the following four types of triad were appeared in addition to the fundamental Buddha Amida (*Amitābha/Amitāyus*) triad: **Mahāsthāmaprāpta/Amida/Avalokitasvara**.

1. Maitreya/Amida/Avalokitasvara
2. Avalokitasvara/Amida/Maitreya
3. Mañjuśrī/Amida/Avalokitasvara
4. Mahāsthāmaprāpta/Amida/Maitreya

In these four groups, two seated bodhisattvas were often replaced by standing ones. The seclusion of two bodhisattvas was done in order to emphasize independence and importance of the two relevant bodhisattvas and change their function from audience of the Buddha Amida to his distinguished flanker.

As for the bodhisattva Mahāsthāmaprāpta, it is extremely difficult to identify. However, those with a water flask in the hand but without Brahmanic 8 shaped hairdo or bowknot might be identified as Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Miyaji/Yamada 1985: 20; Iwamatsu 1994: 220-224; Nounin 2008:12, 18). As Akira Miyaji correctly observed, the attribute of water flask or pot of the bodhisattva Maitreya was diverted to that of Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Miyaji 2016: 50-51). His surmise is based on the description of the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* (佛說觀無量壽佛經) about Mahāsthāmaprāpta to the effect that he wears a precious water flask or pot (宝瓶) on the *uṣṇīṣa* (topknot)(於肉鬘上一宝瓶: T. 12. no. 365. 344a). Although this sūtra is said to have been compiled in Central Asia in the 5th century



Fig. 15 Pensive Avalokitasvara, H: 67cm, Matsuoka Museum of Art, Tokyo



Fig. 16 Amida triad, H: 28 cm, Acc. No. 5095, Indian Museum, Kolkata

CE, information on Gandhāran images of Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Avalokiteśvara was undoubtedly transmitted to Central Asian Buddhist monks before that century. However, the relevant information was not correct but contained a few iconographical mistakes. Contrary to the above description, no Gandhāran bodhisattva image has a water flask/pot on the forehead but hold it in the left hand. What is more, Gandhāran Avalokiteśvara's headdress (Figs.7, 8) does not contain a standing Amida image but a seated one (坐佛)(T12. no. 365. 343c). However, that sūtra wrongly mentions that the crown of Avalokiteśvara contains a standing Buddha image (其天冠中有一立化佛).

Probably, the compiler of the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* could not get correct information about the Gandhāran Mahāsthāmaprāpta image and made the water flask/pot transplant from the left hand to headdress in order to balance the miniature seated Buddha Amida image of Avalokiteśvara's headdress. Therefore, a bodhisattva flanking the Buddha Amida in Gandhāran art can be identified as Mahāsthāmaprāpta (Fig.18) if he has a water flask in the left hand as Christian Luczanits observed, and does not wear a Brahmanic bowknot or 8 shaped chignon (Luczanits in Klimburg-Salter 1995: 268, pl.133; Harrison/Luczanits 2012: 99, fig.12). As Harald Ingholt and Daniel Boucher remarked, it is better not to restrict the water flask/pot to the attribute of Maitreya (Ingholt 1957:131, 135; Boucher 2008: 317-318, notes 53, 54; Harrison/Luczanits 2012: 85). When Maitreya is represented beside the Buddha Śākyamuni, his hairdo seems to be almost a Brahmanic 8 shaped bowknot or a simple chignon (Taxila Museum, Acc.no. W.T.G.3; Miyaji/Yamada 1985: pl. XIII; Higuchi 1984: pl.I-11; Huntington 1984: 166, fig.1; Zwalf 1996: vol. II, 74,76, figs.117, 122; Jansen/Luczanits 2008: 270, 274, Cat.nos.188, 197). The hairdo of Maitreya (Metrago Boudo) struck on the reverse of bronze coins issued by Kanishka I does not feature a bowknot but a simple chignon without tapering tenon (Cribb 1999/2000:177, 187-189, figs. 1-5, pls. 5-6, 11-12). Furthermore, I cannot help assuming it quite strange that only Maitreya has two kinds of hairdo: 8 shaped bowknot and bejewelled hairdo with tapering tenon.

Taking into consideration these observations, the typical bodhisattva image to be identified as Mahāsthāmaprāpta might be the one (Fig.19) housed in the Lahore Museum (Ingholt 1957: 135, fig.289; Bussagli 1984: 215). He has a water flask in the left hand and wears a bejeweled headdress with a tapering tenon. Ingholt identified this as Maitreya on the basis of the 'lunar crescent' below the tenon following the interpretation by Mario Bussagli (Bussagli 1949: 359-366, fig.2; Ingholt 1957:135, fig.129;



Fig. 17 Amida triad, H: 52cm, Acc. No. 5093, Indian Museum, Kolkata

Eschmann 1980: pl.17; Klimburg-Salter 1995: 271, pl.148; cf. Jansen/Luczanits 2008: 251, fig. 2, 274, Cat.no.198). However, it cannot be an exclusive attribute of Maitreya, because ‘lunar crescent’ is nothing but a common ornament of headdress decorating the head of Queen Māyā and laymen (Barthoux 1930: pls.46, 50c, 54c; Rhi 2019: 247-248). Thus, we can regard as ‘Mahāsthāmaprāpta, those bodhisattva images holding a water flask/pot, either seated or standing, that have an ordinary headdress with tapering tenon or without it (Ingholt 1957: figs. 289, 308; Fussman 1987: 75-76, figs. 5-7; Jansen/Luczanits 2008: 244, 272, Cat.No.194). In any case, the position of *mahāsthānaprāpta* was not restricted to the bodhisattva Mahāsthānaprāpta /Mahāsthāmaprāpta but open to Maitreya and Mañjuśrī (Fig. 5), or even to Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara. This is the reason why the pair of Maitreya and Avalokitasvara/Oloīpara/ Avalokitaśvara (Figs. 2, 4, 9, 17, 18), Mañjuśrī and Avalokitasvara/Avalokitaśvara (Fig.20) flanks the Buddha Amida in Gandhāran Amida triads (Rosenfield 1967: fig.92; Miyaji/Yamada 1985: pls.II-XII). Generally speaking, the pair of Maitreya and Avalokitasvara/Oloīpara/avalokitaśvara outnumbers the other pairs.

Concluding Remarks

From the above, it is clarified that the Gandhāran Amida triad evolved from the Buddha Amida’s preaching scene such as that of the Ancient Orient Museum stele (Fig.1). From many bodhisattva images surrounding the Buddha Amida, the two were isolated and elevated to significant position flanking the Buddha Amida. These two bodhisattvas were prototypes or forerunners of Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

The most important contribution of this paper might be the discovery of the ‘occupant of great position’, that is, *mahāsthānaprāpta* that can explain why the two flanking attendants of the Bud-

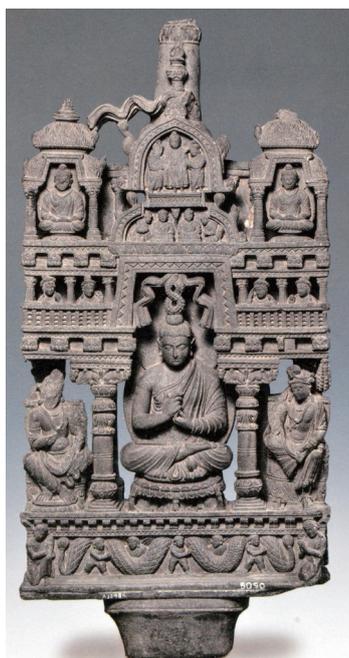


Fig. 18 Amida triad, H: 85 cm, Acc. No. 5090, Indian Museum, Kolkata



Fig. 19 Mahāsthāmaprāpta, total height: 207 cm, Lahore Museum



Fig. 20 Mañjuśrī/Amida/Avalokiteśvara, H: 40 cm, Acc. No. 5092, Indian Museum, Kolkata

dha Amida are not always Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta as in Japanese Amida triads. In Gandhāra, Mahāsthānaprāpta, the precursor of Mahāsthāmaprāpta was often replaced by Maitreya and by Mañjuśrī.

What is more, the existence of the bodhisattva Mahāsthānaprāpta makes us convince that the subject of the so-called ‘complex stele’ is the Preaching of the Buddha Amida and the Buddha Amida’s field (阿弥陀淨土, *Sukhāvātī*). In addition, cultic images of the Buddha Amida, the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara/ Avalokiteśvara/(possibly)Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta were produced undoubtedly in Gandhāra.

Abbreviation

T: *Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō* (大正新脩大藏經) edited by J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe, Tokyo, 1924-1934.

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Sources of the Illustrations

Figs.1, 6,14 : courtesy of the Ancient Orient Museum

Fig. 2: after H. Fujita, *The Gandhara*, 1996, Tokyo: Gyousei, pl.96

Fig. 3: Salomon/Schopen 2002, fig.1

Fig. 4: K. Desai, *Treasures of the Heras Institute*, New Delhi, 1976, fig. 62

Figs. 5, 7, 15: author's photos

Figs. 8,19 : Jansen/Luczanits 2008: Cat Nos. 200, 204, p.244, fig.3

Fig. 9: Miyaji 2007, pl.26

Fig. 10: Ryukoku University Museum 2012, pl. pl.100

Fig. 11: Matsuoka Museum of Art 1994, pl.16

Fig. 12: courtesy of the late Seishi Karashima

Fig. 13: Inokuchi 1986 : Kojukai manuscript (光寿会本) B- 37a

Fig. 16: Vogel 1906: pl. LXVIII-b

Figs. 17, 18: Tokyo National Museum 2015, pls. 21, 22

Fig. 20: Foucher 1917: pl. XXV, 2