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# TEXT AND ITS CULTURAL INTERPRETATION

I. Alimov

## GOOD REVIEWS: THREE EARLY COLLECTIONS OF BUDDHIST STORIES\*

These collections of Buddhist stories must be looked at together: they are very close to one another thematically, they continue and supplement one another, and as such they form a distinctive cycle of stories about Guanshiyin (“觀世音”, “Observing the Sounds of the World”, also known as Guanyin, 觀音), a *bodhisattva* of Mahayana Buddhism, the symbol and personification of the great suffering, whose Chinese name is a translation of the Sanskrit “Avalokiteshvara” [1]. In China Guanshiyin became famous since the time of Western Jin, when Kumarajiva (Jumoluoshi, 鳩摩羅什, 344—413) translated the work “Miao fa lian hua jing” (“妙法蓮華經”, “The Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law”, “Saddharma Pundarika Sutra”), and in particular this cult grew since the emergence of the translation of the 25th chapter of “Miao fa lian hua jing” into Chinese in 406 — “Guan shi yin pu sa men pin” (“觀世音菩薩門品”, “Gates of *Bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, Opened for Everyone”), recounting acts and miracles of Avalokiteshvara. By the 5th and 6th centuries the cult of Guanyin had become one of the leading movements in Chinese Buddhism: that was the time when a large number of various images of this *bodhisattva* began floating around and the texts related to the image, including collections of prose with a plot, which we speak about in this section, were being widely spread [2]. Another reason for looking at these three works together has to do with the circumstances of their history and integrity, which we will discuss below.

We should begin by saying that we know two collections titled “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” (“觀世音應驗記”, “Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin”) [3]. Chronologically the earlier work (and the first collection of the kind in China) belongs to a Jin Buddhist hermit (*jushi*, “居士”, “layman”) named Xie Fu (謝敷, ca. 350 — ca. 400); D. E. Gjertson believes that this collection “was written prior to year 399” [4]. Here is what is known about Xie Fu — he spent over ten

years in the mountains of Taipingshan (in Jiangxi Province), knew well many famous Buddhist monks of his time, and said no to offers concerning employment, although a Jin nobleman named Xi Yin (郗愔, 313—384) promised a position of *boshi* (“博士”, “a learned man”) in the court [5]. The collection of Xie Fu has not survived to our time, but some of its material was borrowed by later authors before the text got lost. At least, the author of the second collection of the same name, a Liu-Song dignitary named Fu Liang (傅亮, 374—426) writes the following in the foreword:

These seven stories — from “Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin” written by Xie Qing-xu [6] in one *juan*, [where there were] over ten stories, that [he] passed on to my late father [7]. I used to live in Gui[ji], but during the military unrest [8] I lost this [book]; having returned to that area I began looking for the manuscript, but alas, it did not survive. Seven stories out of it [I] knew by heart, the other ones, however, I could not remember and could not write them down. That is why I put together “Records” out of what I could remember — to the delight of scholarly men, of the same faith [that I am] [9].

It is clear from the cited piece that Fu Liang was a sort of a successor of the Xie Fu's affairs, having restored his collection by memory. However, today there is no way of telling whether Fu Liang reproduced the stories verbatim or he just recounted his own variations on the memorable plots. On top of that, the collection is not signed with the name of Xie Fu, but with his own: “Song *shangshuling* [10] Fu Liang from northern lands, second name Ji-you (季友)” [11]. So it must be admitted that “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” in the version of Xie Fu is irretrievably lost.

The second collection of the same name, as it was already mentioned above, is signed with the name of Fu

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Liang. Being of old and celebrated lineage, Fu Liang — his ancestors were officials serving at the Han court — from early age was notable for his exceptional abilities. As early as 402 he served in the military department, and then he served at the Jin court, where he gained the favour of the future founder of the Liu-Song dynasty, Liu Yu (劉裕, 363—422). And when Liu Yu declared himself the emperor, Fu Liang was appointed as the head of the Administration of Departments and from then on he was appointed to other high positions. However, in 422 Liu Yu passed away, and the long-term opposition between his two heirs passed into the finishing stage: it was only after Liu Yi-fu (劉義符, 407—423) came to power that he dealt with his brother. When it comes to Fu Liang, who was a part of the court group in support of the murdered brother, a little over a year later he participated in a conspiracy against the new emperor (as a result of which the latter was assassinated) and actively assisted Liu Yi-long (劉義隆, 407—453) in his ascendance to the throne. The latter was the most significant Liu-Song ruler. Fu Liang's participation in numerous intrigues had its effects on him: in 426 he, along with many dignitaries of that tumultuous era, was captured and executed. Being in sympathy with Buddhism, Fu Liang, knew well many famous people of his time, and was considered a celebrated poet and man of letters. The collection of his works is lost — only an insignificant portion of it was preserved as well as “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” [12].

Come to think of it, even this collection remains intact fortuitously. There is a record in the bibliographic section of the Sui Dynasty history (*juan* 33): “Records of Testimonies”, one *juan*, authored by Song *guanglu dafu* Fu Liang”. Apparently, it speaks of this particular work. No other bibliography mentions “Guan shi yin ying yan ji”; this title comes across in the list of books used for putting together the Song anthology “Tai ping guang ji” (“太平廣記”, “The Extensive Records of the Tai-ping Era”), but the anthology itself does not contain any fragments from the collection. Evidently, the text of the collection was lost either during the reign of the Tang Dynasty or a little later. But in 1943 a manuscript titled “Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong” (“觀世音應驗記三種”, “Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Avalokiteshvara”) was discovered at one of the monastery book depositories near Tokyo. Within its content there were seven excerpts from the work of Fu Liang, ten — from “Xu guan shi yin ying yan ji” (“續光(觀)世音應驗記”, “Continuation of Records of Testimonies Concerning Avalokiteshvara”) by Zhang Yan (張炎, the 5th century) and sixty nine excerpts from “Xi guan shi yin ying yan ji” (“繫觀世音應驗記”, “Addition to Records of Testimonies Concerning Avalokiteshvara”, in the original it is also spelled with *guang* “光”) of distant relative of Zhang Yan, Lu Gao (陸杲, 459—532), eighty six pieces altogether. This manuscript dates back to the middle of the Kamakura period (1192—1333), and one of modern Chinese researchers Dong Zhi-qiao (董志翹, born in 1950) believes that, since there are two more early Tang Buddhist stories at the end besides the three aforemen-

tioned texts, it is quite likely that this manuscript came to Japan under the Tang Dynasty, and only then it was copied, and it was the copy that was discovered in 1943 [13]. A summarizing critical text of the manuscript was published by famous Japanese Buddhologist Makita Tairyō (牧田諦亮, 1912—2011) in 1970 [14]. After that there were two critical texts of the three designated collections published in the PRC, and since the Japanese discovery they appear solely together [15].

Thus, in “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” (and in the title of the collection the first syllable of the name Guanshiyin is spelled with the hieroglyph *guang* “光”, and not with *guan* “觀”) of Fu Liang, apart from the afore-cited foreword there are seven excerpts; they “speak of the suffering ones, who address their prayers to Guanshiyin-Avalokiteshvara and of the ones who are heard by the *bodhisattva*” [16]. Here is a typical example of it.

*Shramana* Bo Fa-qiao (帛法橋) was from Zhongshan [17]. Diligent and industrious, purpose-driven, [he] constantly recited *sutras*, but since his very birth [he had] a weak voice, and [Fa-qiao] was always discontent, always irritated.

— Can't *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin make it happen that a person achieves anything he hopes for in this life? — [Fa-qiao] told other monks. — From this day on I will devote myself to prayers! And in case there is no more hope left for an answer, and there are too many sins of my past incarnations, isn't it then better to forfeit this life and be reborn?

He finished speaking, and retired into himself, ceased eating and spent all the time in sincere prayers and supplications. Three or four days passed, and [Fa-qiao] grew rather emaciated. Brethren approached him and began persuading him:

— The strength of one's voice is preordained, how is it possible to change it in this incarnation? And a Buddhist monk needs to love his body and follow the teaching. Why are you harming yourself?!

Nonetheless, [Fa-qiao] was a man of strong character and, having become even more resolute internally, he said thus:

— I have made my mind long ago. Do not bother me anymore.

On day 5 or 6 [Fa-qiao] became even thinner, he could hardly breathe. Monks were concerned for him, thinking that [Fa-qiao's] life was coming to an end. [He], however, closed his eyes, folded his arms on his chest, but have not drawn back from his decision, not one jot.

In the morning of the seventh day, at dawn, [Fa-qiao] suddenly opened his eyes — with much joy.

— I was given my answer! — [he] told the brethren.

He asked for water, made ablutions, read three *gathas* — and the voice [of Fa-qiao] sounded louder and louder, was carried over two-three *li* around. Frightened and perplexed, girls from a nearby village came running to see what is this strange sound heard from the monastery — that was the voice of Master [Fa-qiao]! Since then [he] could recite five hundred thousand words in a row — his voice sounded like a bell. Not a trace remained from his

emaciation. Thus, it became clear to everybody that [Fa-qiao] grasped the very essence of the teaching.

At the end [of the reign] of Shi Hu [18] [he] was still alive. He passed away when he was over ninety years old. In former times monks venerated him. Zhu Seng-fu (竺僧扶) is a *goyin* of Fa-qiao [19].

All other fragments are more or less similar plot narratives and they are also, understandably, linked to Guanyin and those miracles, which the *bodhisattva* reveals to true believers. It must also be noted that characters of these stories are Buddhist monks, including rather famous ones, such as Bo Fa-qiao and Zhu Fa-yi (竺法義, ?—380), whose biographies can be found in “Gao seng zhuan” (高僧傳, “Biographies of Worthy Monks”) of Hui-jiao (*juan* 13 and *juan* 4 respectively), as well as Zhu Chang-shu (竺長舒, the 3rd century) and Zhi Dao-shan (支道山, the 4th century) [20]. Among characters there are also some common secular people, who address their prayers to Guanshiyin in their trying hour and are delivered from their misfortunes. The time-frame of the collection is the 3rd and 4th centuries, from the Jin era name of Yuan-kang (291—299) to the era name of Yong-he (345—356). The text is satiated with borrowed Buddhist vocabulary in Chinese translation: *shamen* (*shramana*, “沙門”, “monk”), *ji* (“偈”, *gatha*, religious poem or verse), *heshang* (spelled as “和上”, which is different from the later and more usual spelling of “和尚”, “monk”), *shami* (*shramanera*, “沙彌”, “novice monk”), etc. Additionally, there are specific turns of speech in the text, which were characteristic for the language of the time in history.

When it comes to “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” (“續觀世音應驗記”, “Continuation of Records of Testimonies Concerning Avalokiteshvara”, where the hieroglyph of *guan* “觀” is also replaced with *guang* “光” in the original) of Zhang Yan (張演, the 5th century), this collection is the direct sequel to the Fu Liang's work, which is specified in the author's foreword:

Here are ten stories. [I], Yan, was trained from childhood at home, and this was how [I] adopted the faith in the Great Vehicle and began bowing down before each of [its] divine oddities, taking [such cases] close to my heart and secretly collecting and recording them, without revealing them to the world. Having read the records of Master Fu, [I] realized how much [they] are in keeping with [my] thoughts, and here it is — I collected what I had heard in order to add to the work and tell those, who believes the same [21].

The collection is signed thus — “Song *taizi zhongshe* Zhang Yan from the District of Wujun, Also Known as Jing-hong (景弘)”. Not much is known about Zhang Yan: he belongs to the clan of Zhangs from Wu (today it is the neighbourhood of the city of Suzhou in the Zhejiang province), one of the four oldest clans of these land, dating back to Zhang Liang (張良, 250—186 BC) a famous strategist, commander and politician, who was at the very foundation of the Han dynasty; Zhang Yan's father was an official named Zhang

Mao-du (張茂度, 376—442), who held the office of the head of the district at the time of his death, it was his second year in the office. Zhang Yan and his younger brother Zhang Jing (張鏡, the 5th century) were quite famous in their time, but according to the history of the Liu-Song dynasty (*juan* 53) both of them died prematurely (Zhang Yan has no individual official biography, but both he and his brother are mentioned in the biography of their father). Zhang Yan held the office of *taizi zhongshe* (an official from the immediate retinue of the heir to the throne), his literary works enjoyed popularity, but, as far as I can tell, nothing but “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” survived to our day.

In accordance with expectations of Fu Liang, he found a likeminded person in Zhang Yan — “a scholarly man of the same faith with him”, who absorbed the teaching of Buddha from his very childhood thanks to his upbringing at home. In turn Zhang Yan found inspiration in the collection of Fu Liang, having been convinced that cases of divine help and intervention, so important to him, should not necessarily be kept for his own use, but rather they may be also shared with other intelligent people disposed to Buddhism.

The fate of the Zhang Yan's collection repeats the fate of “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” described above: not listed in bibliographies, was lost earlier, all ten fragments have survived — as part of the manuscript discovered in Japan. Among characters of “Xu guan shi yin ying yan ji” there is also room for Buddhist monks — Hui-jian (惠簡, the 4th century, should not be confused with Hui-jian (慧簡), who was a translator of *sutras* and lived in the 5th century), Dao-tai (道泰, the 4th century, who also should not be confused with Dao-tai of the 5th century, a translator-monk), Seng-rong (僧融, the 4th century, who appears in two fragments) and Shi Tan-yi (釋曇翼, the 4th century), whose biography is included into “Gao seng zhuan” (*juan* 5) [22]. A fragment where a Buddhist monk plays the role of a “demon fighter” draws quite some attention.

There was a detached outbuilding of three rooms in size in Jingzhou [23], to the east of the business hall — from of old a soul of a dead man, *gui*, struck fear into people there, and by the time of Wang-jianwu [24] there was nobody who dared to stay there. And it was only Hui-jian, a friend of Wang, a brave and intelligent man, who could lodge there. Two rooms [he] accommodated for *sutras* and the statue [of Buddha], and he lived in the third room.

Seven days passed. At night [Hui-jian] was giving himself to vigil; then all of a sudden he saw a man — all dressed in black, eyeless, [he] came out of the wall, came up to [Hui-]jian and spit on him. [Hui-]jian never batted an eyelash, keeping his calm and making no sound, but only repeating the name of Guanshiyin at the back of his mind. Some time passed and the *gui* said to the monk:

— I heard that you, sir, are very strong-spirited, and so I came to test you. You have not even flinched. What is the point to pester [you] any longer?

He said it — and came back into the wall.

[Hui-]jian got up, made ablutions, bowed down [to the statue of Buddha], recited *sutras* and then went to sleep. All of a sudden he was dreaming of the man from recently, he said thus: “I, unworthy as I am, have lived here since the end of [the rule of] Han, for several hundred years! [I am a man of] strong and direct character, and with many [people I] would not put up, but you, sir, have so advanced in the teaching, that we will get along well together!”

Since then all [temptations] ceased. [Hui-]jian lived there in peace for many years, but nobody else managed to do the same [25].

It is rather fascinating that Hui-jian managed to come to an agreement, so to speak, with a demon exclusively on his own terms — as far as we can tell the *gui* continued to drive away all other lodgers from the dwelling he chose.

Other characters are common laymen, as well as monks who lived under the Jin rule (there are not so many dates in the collection of Zhang Yan, but the time for all fragments takes place over the course of the reign of the Jin dynasty), who believe the teaching of Buddha and wholeheartedly trust the merciful helping hand of *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin in their trying times and who receive the help they ask for because of their unwavering trust. There are also nameless characters — like, for instance, some scholar (*shiren*, “士人”) from the ninth fragment, who was delivered from the confinement thanks to his faith in the intercession of Guanshiyin.

In the years of the era name of Yi-xi [26] one scribe happened to be thrown in a dungeon. He always believed in the Buddhist teaching and at night, not being able to fall asleep, he would surrender himself and his hopes to Guanshiyin. One night it was just before the dawn that [the scribe] nestled down on the floor without taking his clothes off — and then he saw a Buddhist monk right in front of him, a very small and charming-looking one, he was about eight *chi* high, [he] was hovering in the void and smiling slightly [to the scribe]. At that moment [the scribe] woke up — and his chains fell off, having been opened, [now he] could run away. But [the scribe] thought that the gates were heavily guarded and he wouldn't be able to slip away. Additionally he was afraid for the guards to be given a hard time for his escape, so he dismissed the thought [of escaping] and stayed. At that very moment his chains came back on tight as ever. Soon after a natural calamity hit and all that had been captured were released.

This story was shared with Law counsellor Fa-zong [27] by [Mao De-]zu [28].

In the context of the tumultuous time much attention in both of the collections (that of Fu Liang and that of Zhang Yan) is given to such stories, when thanks to his faith in Avalokiteshvara the protagonist manages to evade the unfair capture, incarceration and finally execution. Very often in such stories it happens that Guanshiyin visits believers precisely when they sleep.

The language of “Xu guan shi yin ying yan ji” is closer to colloquial than is that of the Fu Liang's collection; specific Buddhist terminology is not so plentiful —

for instance, in order to designate Buddhist monk usually *daoren* (“道人”, literally “a man of the Way”, originally — “daos”, and later “monk”, including Buddhist monks) is used, it is used for the purpose of designating a Buddhist monk instead of *shamen*; all fragments are finished in regards to the plot and in comparison with “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” they are different in size: short ones are also found whereas in Fu Liang's version all stories are similar in size.

The third collection from the series about Guanshiyin is “Xi guan shi yin ying yan ji”. Although it is also a part of the manuscript discovered in Japan, and as such it shares the fate of the first two pieces, it is a much greater collection: it contains sixty nine plots. The continuity of this work is easily comprehended from the author's foreword, which runs thus:

Lu Gao speaks thus: once there was a Jin prominent scholar by the name of Xie Fu, second name Qing-xu. He recorded over ten testimonies concerning Guanshiyin and passed them on to Fu Yuan, second name Shu-yu (叔玉), the head of the district Anchneg. The house of the Fu family was located in Guiji, and at the time of the riot of Sun En, [the manuscript] got lost. His son (of Fu Yuan — I. A.), the Song *shangshuling* [Fu] Liang, second name Ji-you, kept seven of those [testimonies] in his memory, put them together and recorded them. My great uncle *taizi zhushu* Zhang Yan, second name Jing-xuan (景玄) put together and recorded ten more [testimonies], in order to continue what was recorded by Fu [Liang], — so now there were seventeen altogether, and today [they are] known all over the world. I, Gao, was lucky enough to apprehend the Law left behind by Shakyamuni, come to believe it since my early days, and when [I] read stories of Guanshiyin in *sutras*, [I am] seized with reverent respect. [I] also stumble across stories of him in today's books and in biographies of sages enlightened in the faith — there is no counting to all stories about the divine! — and comprehend how close is the divine... At present, in the first year of the era name of Zhong-xing [29], [I] respectfully put together sixty nine stories in this scroll, so that the work of Xie and Zhang could be [continued], arranged the records following their [records], — so that readers could survey it fully. And if there are wise men, who heard even more, let them amplify my records, and let divine wonders be spread all over the world, increasing our faith. There are detailed [records] here, and there are brief ones, — everything in the same manner that [I] heard and learned, so I would ask men enlightened in the faith to make corrections where needed [30]!

The author of these lines, the Liu-Song official and man of letters Lu Gao (陸杲, 459—532), a strong Buddhist, served at the court of the Qi and Liang Kingdoms: he served in the retinue of the heir to the throne under Qi, in the military department, and he became *huangmen shilang* (an official in the immediate retinue of the emperor) under Liang, and in 506 he was appointed the head of the Censorate. Lu Gao served much in the court and in the provinces. His collection is signed thus: “Qi *situ congshi langzhong* Lu Gao from the dis-

district of Wu, second name Ming-xia 明霞” [31]. It must follow then that one of the highest offices that Lu Gao held in Qi was that of the aide of one of the three highest state officials *situ*, the most immediate adviser of the emperor. Lu Gao had a reputation of being a just, direct and selfless, who was considerate of those under his command and those entrusted to him. In the field of fine arts Lu Gao took his maternal uncle for his role model, the celebrated Qi man of letters, poet and calligrapher Zhang Rong (張融, 444—497), — of the same branch of his genealogic tree as was Zhang Yan, whose work Lu Gao continued with his collection. It is known that Lu Gao did not only left behind “Xi guan shi yin ying yan ji”, but he also did “Sha men zhuan” (“沙門傳”, “Biographies of *Shramans*”) in thirty *juans*, but this work is long lost [32].

“Xi guan shi yin ying yan ji” is listed in bibliographic sections of the old and new histories of the Tang dynasty (*juan* 46 and 59 respectively): in both *juans* it is referred to as “Xi ying yan ji” (“繫應驗記” “Additions to the Records of Testimonies”), one *juan*, and Lu Guo (陸果) is listed as its author, which is apparently a clerical error. This text is not mentioned in any other bibliographic works.

This collection is the only one from the series about Guanshiyin, that was dated precisely — 501. And it was dated by the author himself. Additionally it is the only collection of the series, where the texts within are organized thematically. For this purpose Lu Gao employed quotes (mainly) from the twenty fifth *sutra* dedicated to Guanshiyin — “Miao fa lian hua jing”. The quotes described some or other methods of deliverance when one address his prayers to the *bodhisattva*. He also employed quotes from “Qing guan shi yin hu sa xiao fu du hai tuo luo ni jing” (“請觀世音菩薩消伏毒害陀羅尼經”, “The *Sutra* of *Dharanis* who Call upon *Bodhisattva* Guanshiyin for the Deliverance from Misfortunes”) [33]. Such quotes, brief as they were and referring to the context of a given *sutra*, were placed by Lu Gao after each thematic selection. Altogether there are eleven such groups of stories.

There are three fragments in the first quote, and here is what it says about them: *she ru da huo, huo bu neng shao* (“設入大火, 火不能燒”: “If he walks in the flame, the fire will not consume him”) [34]. It refers us back to the *sutra* where it says that

he, who keeps the name of *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, even if he walks in the flame, the fire will not consume [him] thanks to the mighty miraculous power of the *bodhisattva* [35].

In other words these three fragments describe cases when people were rescued from the fire with the assistance of Guanshiyin's intervention.

There was a great fire in the city of Wuxing [36], under [Liu-]Song, in the years of the era name of Yuan-jia, and all houses of local population burned down. There was only one reed hut that survived, even though it was in the very centre of the fire. The head of the district Wang Shao-zhi [37], having come to the site of the fire, was very

amazed and sent people to see [whose house was it]. Turned out it was the house of a petty official from the district council. The official did not believe in Buddha that much, but oftentimes he heard how Wang [Shao-zhi] praised Guanshiyin, and in the face of the fire he truly came to believe, from the bottom of his very heart, and thus he was rescued [from the fire] [38].

The second group of quotes is *da shui suo piao* (“大水所漂”, “Great waters will carry”), referring to the text in the *sutra* that says that

If [such person] is carried by great waters, [he] will call on the name [of Guanshiyin], and he will immediately reach shallow waters.

Such group includes six fragments, describing miraculous deliverance from various types of water misfortunes (from storms, from the boat turned over in the river, etc.)

The third group is *luo cha zhi nan* (“羅刹之難” “Misfortunes from *rakshasas*”, *luocha*, Sanskrit term is *rakshasa*, “evil spirit”, “demon”); it refers to the following text in the *sutra*:

...Having gotten into a great sea, the vessel will be carried by the black wind and cast up on the shores of the countries of *rakshasa* demons. If there is only one man out of them who will call upon the name of *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, then all people will be delivered from misfortunes caused by *rakshasas*.

There is only one fragment in this group.

Over one hundred voyagers beyond the Tianxia were going by sea from the country of Shiziguo [39] to Funan [40] and stumbled over evil demons, who intended to wipe out all those who were on the ship, every last one of them. All were frightened and began calling out to Guanshiyin. And there was one *shramana* among them, [a follower] of the Inferior Vehicle [41]. He did not believe in Guanshiyin and he was the only one who did not want to pray. So demons seized that *shramana*, but the *shramana* was quick to learn to proclaim the name of [the *bodhisattva*] from others, and thus they all were delivered [from the misfortune] [42].

The fourth group is *linn dang bei hai* (“臨當被害”. “Finding oneself on the verge of destruction”); it refers to the following text in the *sutra*:

Additionally, if people, having found themselves on the verge of destruction, proclaim the name of *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, all swords and sticks pointed at them will come apart, become useless, and thus [those people] will be delivered.

There are eight stories in this group, and all of them correspond to the claimed thesis, i. e. their characters, thanks to their timely invocation of Guanshiyin or faith in the *bodhisattva*, evade violence, destruction in the confusion of riots and steer clear from being wounded in battles.

Some commoner from Shu [43] made a sandalwood box, placed a golden figurine of Guanshiyin there and [began wearing it] hiding it in the hair on the back of his neck. When Yao Chang [44] attacked Shu, looting it, the commoner was among [the army that resisted Yan Chang]. When the armies came against each other, he was face to face with Chang, and the latter hacked him [with a sword] with his own hand. [The man], however, heard only ringing by his neck, but felt no pain whatsoever. [He] managed to flee [the battlefield] and found shelter in the woods. The rogues [of Yao Chang] went away, and [the man] let his hair down and examined the box: turned out the box was alright. He opened it, pulled out the figurine [of Guanshiyin], examined it and lo, it was scarred! Only then [the man] understood that the ringing sound he heard was coming from the strike against the figurine. He grew very sad: I wish my body had been wounded instead of the divine image! Afterwards, [the man] believed the compassion and miraculous powers of [Guanshiyin] even more and so he advanced in his mastery of the teaching [45].

The fifth group is *jian xi qi shen* (“檢繫其身”, “Chains their bodies”), referring to the following text in the *sutra*:

Or if people, who committed a crime or did not commit one, and on account of that their hands or feet are put in the stocks, will call upon the name of *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, then all [chains] will be broken, fall off and thus [those people] will be delivered.

In other words, stories collected in this group speak of the good riddance from a dungeon, from execution and other such deplorable circumstances, and — as it says in the *sutra* — it has to do with those who are guilty as well as those who were numbered among them. The number of the latter prevails, although in some cases freedom is gained by true criminals.

Gai Hu (蓋護) was a native of Shanyang [46]. Once [he] was thrown into dungeon and must have been executed. [Gai Hu] was wholeheartedly reciting “The *Sutra* of Guanshiyin” — for three days and nights in a row, without giving himself any rest whatsoever. All of a sudden, in the middle of the night [Gai Hu] beheld Guanshiyin, and the glory [of the *bodhisattva*] fell upon him and illumined [him]. At that very moment the fetters were opened, the doors [of the dungeon] opened on their own, and the glory showed [Gai Hu] the way. He got out and followed after the glory — and it was only twenty *li* later that the glory began to fade. Hu stopped, spent the night in the grass, and next morning he went further. That was how he gained deliverance [47].

This is the most numerous group in the collection — it contains twenty two fragments. The theme of the imprisonment and execution was very pressing in China of that era, and Buddhist monks also ran the risk of being falsely accused.

Once a Wei usurper [48] suspected Buddhist monks in scheming a revolt, and several hundred monks were appre-

hended. Among those monks was a superior monk of the monastery. [He was] wound around with a rope from head to toe, and it was decided that he was going to be beheaded first. The superior monk was terrified and so he turned his thoughts to Guanshiyin. During the night [he] felt that the ropes loosened, and at daylight the fetters fell off completely. Having gained deliverance, [the superior monk] took to his heels.

Officials came in the morning and could not find him — then it became clear [to them] that it was divine intervention. It was reported to the usurper, and it became clear that the monks did not rebel. And so [they] were all released [49].

The sixth group is *man zhong yuan zei* (“滿中怨賊”, “Filled with evil criminals”), referring to the following text in the *sutra*:

Let us suppose that the lands of a thousand large countries of three thousand [worlds] are filled with evil criminals, and the head of the merchant caravan leads his merchants with precious treasures, but if any of them raises his voice saying, “My good brothers in faith! Do not be afraid of anything. Single-mindedly, all of you proclaim the name of the *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, and the *bodhisattva* may grant all living creatures fearlessness, and all of you, if you proclaim [his] name, then you will be delivered from these evil criminals!”, and all of merchants, having heard this, proclaim, “Praise Guanshiyin!”, they will be delivered on account of proclaiming the name [of the *bodhisattva*]!

Four fragments are contained in this group — they are stories of being delivered from criminals on the road, being rescued out of their hands and stories of wealth stolen by malefactors being returned. Sometimes these stories are rather peculiar like, for instance, the story of a monk that became invisible.

There was one monk in Yizhou [50], [who] had been living in the mountains since long ago. Once upon a time, some criminals came out of nowhere. [The monk] wanted to run, but [the path for his retreat] was cut off so he would not get away, and so [he] came back to his dwelling place, sat down and called upon Guanshiyin from the bottom of his heart. The criminals saw that [the monk] was in the hut, but having come in they did not see anybody: he was gone! — and so they started saying to one another, “It must have been a spirit, [he is] capable of destroying us all!” and they were broke into a run. And the monk was unharmed [51].

The seventh group is *she yu qiu nan* (“設欲求男”, “If [she] wants to have a son”), referring to the following text in the *sutra*:

If any woman wants to have a son and worships the *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, making an offering to him, then [she] will give birth to a happy, virtuous and wise son.

There is only one fragment in this group, and it completely corresponds the theme: a woman dreaming of giving birth to a son announces in front of monk brethren

that if she gives birth in four months and eight days, then (and only then!) Guanshiyin will show his divine power. This is exactly what happened. Perhaps, this case may point to the first signs of the later development of the Guanshiyin cult, when in the mind of the Chinese people this deity “changed” its gender and became a childgiving deity.

The eighth group is *shi qi dao jing* (“示其道徑”, “Will show the way”). From here on Lu Gao begins to employ quotes from “Qing guan shi yin pu sa xiao fu du hai tuo luo ni jing” for the purpose of designating the thematic direction of group fragments. In this case the full sentence from the *sutra* will sound thus:

If you walk along a wild plain and suddenly find yourself lost, say this *dharani* and the *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, wholeheartedly merciful, having taken the image of a man, will show the way [52].

There are five fragments in the group. They speak of people who lost their way (as a rule, it takes place as a result of one's escape from outnumbering enemy) and of fortunate finding of the right path after invoking Guanshiyin. One of the stories is very appealing: although it is short, but the *bodhisattva* helps the protagonist twice.

Bi Lan (畢覽) was a native of Dongping [53]. From an early age [he] reverently believed in the Law of Buddha. [Bi Lan] was a commander under Murong Chui [54], and in the course of the northern march the army was defeated. Only [Bi Lan] retreated on horseback. Robbers were catching up on him, and in all sincerity Lan invoked Guanshiyin and unexpectedly was delivered. [He] went deep into the mountains and lost his way, but he remembered that [the *bodhisattva*] had already given him divine help and he implored [him] again. In the night [Bi Lan] met a monk with a staff and rings in his hand, [the monk] showed him the way, and [Bi Lan] found his way back and came back with no worry [55].

The ninth group is *jie huan ben tu* (“接還本土”, “Will reunite with one's native land”); it refers to the following text in the *sutra*:

If some man finds himself facing a great trouble, if he lost his country and [native] land, wife and children, property and fortune and met the hateful [56], then [let him] proclaim the name of Guanshiyin and recite this *dharani*, giving himself no rest and thinking of nothing else, and when seven days pass, the Great Compassionate one will either take on a heavenly image or an image of a mighty enchanting prince and will reunite [such man] with his native land and will grant him serenity [57].

Under such long and confusing wording there are only four fragments different in their plots: two are devoted to relatives' reunion and are rather long, one speaks of returning to one's motherland and contains a large *gatha*, whereas the fourth piece accounts for one's miraculous deliverance.

Chi Jin-gang (池金罡) was a native of Pingyuan [58]. From an early age [he] lived his life in the service of Buddha and as such he advanced quite some. When [Chi] turned eighteen he was deceived and hacked to death. His body was thrown into an empty grave, and the grave was over one *zhang* deep. However, following the departure of the criminals, [Chi] woke up and returned to life. [He] rejected the pain from his wound and left only [thoughts] of Guanshiyin in his heart — and soon he saw a hand that was over one *zhang* long, which stretched out to him and took him out [of the grave]. [Chi] crawled to his house, [and everyone] admired this miraculous incident [59].

The tenth group is *yu da e bing* (“遇大惡病”, “Faced with a frightful disease”), referring to the following text in the *sutra*:

Residents of this country were faced with a frightful disease. The best physicians employed their best skills but could not help. And so [people] were trusting only in the compassionate mercy of the Heavenly Grandson. Together they began praying for the deliverance from unhealthy burdens, and they were delivered from their sufferings [60].

There are three fragments in this group; all three strictly correspond to the aforementioned theme, they speak of the miraculous healing made possible with the help of the *bodhisattva*, people were healed of various diseases including deafness and blindness.

And finally the last eleventh, group is entitled thus — *e shou bu wei* (“惡獸怖畏”, “Fear of a malicious creature”), which is said thus in the *sutra*:

Let us suppose a man puts to sea for the sake of earning his keep or he runs into a tiger, a wolf, a lion or a poisonous creature... [then he] must proclaim the name of *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin three times, recite this *dharani*, and he will be thus delivered [from his misfortune] [61].

There are only two fragments in this collection, and they both speak of Guanshiyin's protection when believers run into “malicious creatures”.

Monk Fa-ling (法領) was a native of Xianyuan, which is located in Shangdang [62]. His secular name was Dong (董), and his name was Liang (良). Once, when he was returning from Henei [63] to Xiangyuan, [he] was caught in the thunderstorm — darkness fell and malicious tigers and wolves roared. [Fa-ling] was extremely frightened, there was no escape, and [he] called upon Guanshiyin from the bottom of his heart. Soon enough the downpour ceased and, having continued on his journey, [Fa-ling] saw a human dwelling place. Having come in, he asked if he could stay overnight and the owners welcomed him cordially. In the morning, when [Fa-ling] woke up, he found out that he was sleeping on a flat rock, surrounded by a dense forest. That incident helped [Fa-ling] advance even further in the teaching, and soon [he] was tonsured. He lived under the Song era name of Yuan-jia [64].

The vocabulary of the Lu Gao's collection is rather simple, but the text employs rich Buddhist terminology.

However, just as the works of Fu Liang and Zhang Yan, it is almost deprived of any means of artistic expressiveness since the compiler pursued his purely pragmatic object, that of registering strange incidents related to the name of Guanshiyin, without paying much attention to any specific descriptions [65]. The range of characters in the Lu Gao's collection is rather broad and at the same time it is rather traditional too: with rare exceptions it either involves Buddhist monks (Shi Fa-zhi, 釋法智, Shi Fa-li, 釋法力, Shi Dao-jiong, 釋道罔, etc.) or believing laymen that are advanced in the path of the Buddhist teaching in one way or another. The timeline covered mostly revolves around the reign of the Qing, Wei, Liang and Liu-Song dynasties. Thus, the collection of Lu Gao stands before us as the richest of the afore-examined collections of stories concerning divine interventions by the *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin if / when they believe in him. This is a thematically organized collection of works with a plot, and it sends the reader back to particular fragments of Buddhist works, and the stories collected by Lu Gao serve as illustrations to those works. To some degree they may be examined as additional material of sorts that will be a great help for believers studying the indicated *sutras*; they are object lessons called to convince those who doubt the power of the Buddhist teaching and strengthen those who follow the path of Buddha. In words of Lu Xun (魯迅, 1881—1936) it falls under “books that support the teaching of Buddha” [66]. Particularly important is the fact that these stories are not just translations of something that happened in the lives of some foreigners, but rather they are the records of events that took place on the Chinese soil and with the Chinese; in other words these are the testimonies of Chinese Buddhism of the common people. This is exactly why they are so precious for Chinese prose with a plot and for Chinese literary process at large.

The novelty of the materials that make up the examined collections must be emphasized. It is noteworthy because when the authors of these texts, educated Chinese scribes that they were, addressed the theme of *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin's merciful answers to believers' supplications, they had no way of looking for necessary testimonies in ancient written monuments, as it is traditionally done. They couldn't have done that because there were none at the time. Many of the fragments contained here are records of oral stories passed down by those, who believed in Buddha. On the other hand, it would be unfair to say that Lu Gao did not use any written sources (except Buddhist *sutras*) at all: in several parts of “Xi guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong” there are some mentions that the story similar to the one described was stumbled upon by Lu Gao in the collection titled “Xuan yan ji” (“宣驗記”, “Records of True Testimonies”), but it did not suit Lu Gao since it was worse (*bu ji*, “不及”) than the one he already had [67]. However, there are more references to oral information sources such as, for instance, “I heard from Shi Dao-xian” (釋道僊, the 5th century), or “my, [Lu] Gao, uncle... Zhang Rong and my father's uncle... Zhang Xu (張緒, the 5th century) both heard this story” [68]. The complex written record of miraculous incidents related to Buddhism, begun with the afore-examined collections, formed the proper Chinese foundation for further development of Buddhist plots and motifs for *xiaoshuo*. Continuing with L. N. Men'shikov's observations of Buddhist proverbs taking place on Chinese soil, it may be asserted that when it comes to the prose with a plot Chinese culture took the path of assimilating edifying plots contained in translated *sutras*, adapting them to their own cultural code and then creating new texts based on acquired archetypes [69].

### Notes

1. The syllable *shi* “世” was removed during the reign of Tai-zong of Tang (reigned 627—649), since it was tabooed in accordance with the custom as a part of the highest name (the Emperor's name was Li Shi-min (李世民)).

2. It needs to be noted that sometime around the 8th century Guanshiyin, if I may say so, changed his gender from male (not infrequently earlier images of Guanshiyin depict moustache) to female, which broadened the *bodhisattva*'s functions (a patron goddess of women, motherhood, infants; a childgiver) and led “her” to the first echelons of the pantheon of the common people.

3. The version of the translation of the title “Guan shi yin ying yan ji” into English that was done by D. E. Gjertson sounds thus — “Records of Miracles Concerning Avalokiteshvara” (D. T. Gjertson. “The early Chinese Buddhist miracle tale: a preliminary survey”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* III (1981), p. 292).

4. *Ibid.*, p. 292.

5. There is some data about Xie Fu in *juan* 94 of the history of the Jin Dynasty. Of the latest works on the subject, available historical data about him are examined most thoroughly in the following article: Ji Zhi-chang (紀志昌), “Dong Jin jushi Xie Fu kao” (“東晉居士謝敷考”, “Research concerning Western Jin hermit Xie Fu”), *Hanxue yanjiu* I (2002).

6. Qing-xu, 慶緒 — the second name of Xie Fu.

7. Fu Yuan (傅瑗, the 4th century), a known scholar who served as the head of the military command Ancheng (located at the territory of the modern-day Jiangxi Province).

8. It refers to the uprising of 398, which was led by a *daoshi* from the Way of the Celestial Masters; his name was Sun En (孫恩, ?—402). The uprising included the territory of Guiji as well. In March of 402 Sun En suffered a definitive defeat and committed suicide.

9. “Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong” *yizhu* (“觀世音應驗記三種” 譯注, “Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Avalokiteshvara” with the translation into modern language and footnotes), translated and footnoted by Dong Zhi-qiao (Nanjing, 2002), p. 1.

10. *Shangshuling* — the head of the Department of State Affairs (*Shangshusheng*).

11. *Ibid.*, p. 1. In two stories of his collection known by the name of “Ming xiang ji” (“冥祥記”, “Records of Signs from the Unseen Realm”), which literary man and historiographer Wang Yan (王琰, from 454/455 to 526) indirectly point to below, it becomes clear that Xie Fu was the source of these stories, — for instance: “Subsequently, *shramana* Dao-shan crossed over Yangtze and shared the story in all detail with a layman named Xie Fu” (Wang Yan-xiu, *Predaniia ob uslyshannykh mol'bach* (Legends of Supplications Heeded, *Gan ying zhuan*), as well as: Liu Yi-qing, *Podlimnye sobytiia* (True Happenings, *Xuan yan ji*); Wang Yan, *Vesti iz potustoronnego mira* (News from the Other World, *Ming xiang ji*); Hou Bo, *Dostopamiatnye proisshestiia* (Memorable Incidents, *Jing yi ji*); Tang Lin, *Zagrobnoe vozdaianie* (Retribution Hereafter, *Ming bao ji*), translation from Chinese, introductory article and footnotes by M. E. Ermakov (St. Petersburg, 1998), p. 103). And once again we can't know for sure to what degree Wang Yan preserved the text of the original and whether he was dealing with the written text at all (as opposed to its oral rendering).

12. There is a later Ming reconstruction of collected works of Fu Liang, made by Zhang Pu (張溥, 1602—1641). For more details on Fu Liang see his official biography in the 15th *juan* of “Nan shi” and in the 43rd *juan* of “Jin shu” (or in the appendix to “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*, pp. 226—31), as well as: Zhang Ya-jun (張亞軍), “Beidi Fu shi yu Fu Liang” (“北地傅氏與傅亮”, “The lineage of northern Fu and Fu Liang”), *Nanyang shifan xueyuan xue bao* VIII (2006); in regards to the plotless prose of Fu Liang among his latest works the following can be referred to: Liu Tao (劉濤), “Shilun Fu Liangde sanwen” (“試論傅亮的散文”, “Preliminarily about the Plotless Prose of Fu Liang”), *Yili shifan xueyuan xuebao* I (2008).

13. Dong Zhi-qiao (董志翹), “Instead of an introduction”, “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*, p. 4. Dong Zhi-qiao notes that there are many mistakes and obscure passages in this copy, which perhaps came to be on account of copyists' semiliteracy. Subsequent work of Japanese and Chinese scholars eliminated many of such faults. A brief overview of Japanese works on the subject, published before 1970, can be found in the same source, pp. 4—5.

14. See: M. Tairyō (牧田諦亮), *Rikutyō koitsu “Kanzeon okenki”—no kenkiu* (六朝古逸 “觀世音應驗記” の研究, The Study of “Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin” Lost in Ancient Times) (Kyoto, 1970). The study of this copy of “Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin” was initiated by authoritative Japanese Buddhistologist and Buddhist Tsukamoto Zenryū (塚本善隆, 1989—1980), who published the Chinese text in the foreword of one his magazine publications back in 1954.

15. Sun Chang-wu (孫昌武), a celebrated philologist and expert in Buddhism in ancient times, published his version of the critical text in 1994 in Beijing. Unfortunately, I could not get a hold of this book. Another critical text was published in 2002 in Nanjing (Nankin), which was prepared by Dong Zhi-qiao. It was based on the critical text of Sun Chang-wu, as well as on the photocopy of the copy discovered in 1943, which Dong Zhi-qiao managed to familiarize himself with during his work in Japan from 1992 to 1994. (See: “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*). This publication also includes the translation of the text into modern language, detailed textual comments and rich appendices, and it also eliminates many shortcomings, discovered by Dong Zhi-qiao in the critical text of Sun Chang-wu (primarily of linguistic nature). The following article is devoted to the latter topic: Fang Yi-xin (方一新), “Nanchaoren zhuan sanzong ‘Guan shi yin ying yan ji’ ciyi suoji liuze” (“南朝人撰三種 ‘觀世音應驗記’ 詞義瑣記六則”, “Six small notes on the word semantics in three collections ‘Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin’, put together under Southern dynasties”), *Zhongguo yuwen* II (2001). The publication of Dong Zhi-qiao was preceded by his significant piece of textual nature, dedicated to straightening and specifying of the critical text published in Japan (Dong Zhi-qiao, “‘*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*’ jiaodian juwu. Shang” (“‘觀世音應驗記三種’ 校點舉誤. 上”, “The correction of errors in the critical text of ‘Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin’. Part one”), *Guji zhengli yanjiu xuekan* V (1996); idem, “‘*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*’ jiaodian juwu. Xia” (“‘觀世音應驗記三種’ 校點舉誤. 下”, “The correction of errors in the critical text of ‘Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin’. Part two”), *ibid.* II, (1997). An abridged and augmented version of this article is found in the appendix to the 2002 publication, and it contains 120 corrections to the critical text of the three collections, which was prepared by Sun Chang-wu). Presently the critical text of Dong Zhi-qiao ought to be considered as the most authoritative and complete publication of “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” in Chinese language. See also the review of this work: Yu Jian-hua (于建華), “Guji zhengli jingpin — ping Dong Zhi-qiao xianshengde ‘Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong’ yizhu” (“古籍整理的精品 — 評董志翹先生的 ‘觀世音應驗記三種’ 譯注”, “The pattern of the straightening of the ancient monument — concerning ‘Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin’, translated and interpreted by Dong Zhi-qiao”), *Taishan xueyuan xuebao* V (2009).

16. M. E. Ermakov, *Mir kitaiskogo buddizma (po materialam korotkikh rasskazov IV—VI vv.)* (The World of Chinese Buddhism (Based on the Materials of Short Stories of the 4th — 6th Centuries)). (St. Petersburg, 1994), p. 12.

17. Zhongshan — is a Han county located on the territory of the modern-day Hebei province.

18. Shi Hu (石虎, 295—349) is an Emperor Wu of Later Zhao (reigning from 334 to 349).

19. “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*, p. 7. This is one of the key parts of the biography of Bo Fa-qiao, which was made a part of the 13th *juan* of “*Gao seng zhuan*” of Hui-jiao.

20. The biography of Zhu Fa-yi, translated by M. E. Ermakov can be found in the following book: Hui-jiao, *Zhizneopisaniia dostoinykh monakhov* (Biographies of Worthy Monks, *Gao seng zhuan*), translated from Chinese, researched, commented upon and indexed by M. E. Ermakov (St. Petersburg, 2005), ii, pp. 37—8. The episode from Zhu Fa-yi's life, recorded in the collection of Fu Liang, is presented in this biography in a rather brief form and it references Fu Liang himself:

At the second year of the rule of Xian-an (372), Zhu Fa-yi felt that his life force was in decline. He began hoping in Guanshiyin-Avalokitesvara and then there was a dream, where he saw a man, who cut him open and washed his entrails. Right then and there he felt much better. Fu Liang said, “My late father travelled together with venerable Zhu Fa-yi in those places and heard a story from him about a wonder performed by Guanshiyin-Avalokitesvara. Young and old alike in the family listened [to the story] with much awe” (p. 37. following M. E. Ermakov's translation).

Fu Liang, however, puts it thus:

*Shramana* Zhu Fa-yi devoted himself to the teaching in the mountain cloister. Then he was severely struck with an ailment, which [tormented him] for a long a time — all drugs and potions that were delivered [to Fa-yi] did not bring any relief, and with every day passing [his] sufferings only grew. Then [Fa-yi] ceased all kinds of treatments and began trusting only Guanshiyin. Several days passed thus, and having fallen asleep during the day, [he] dreamt of a Buddhist monk, who came to him to examine his ailment and grant healing. [The monk] cut [him] open, began washing his intestines; it turned that a great deal of defilement amassed there. Having finished with the washing, [the monk] put [intestines] back in and told Fa[-yi]: “The illness is gone!” [Fa-yi] woke up and realized that not a trace of his ailment remained, and [he] became as strong as before. When [Fa-yi] lived on the mountain of Baoshan in Shining, my later father, who was still young at the time, travelled quite a lot with him there, and every time when [Fa-yi] shared the story, he was listened to with much awe. For it says in the *sutra* concerning [Guanshiyin]: “Sometimes it appears in the image of *shramana*, *brahma*”. Precisely as it was the case with the dream of venerable [Fa-yi]! (“*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*, p. 25).

This example shows the correlation between the elite Buddhist tradition in China and that of common people: even Hui-jiao was rather reluctant to use materials of Buddhist *xiaoshuo* when he worked with “Gao seng zhuan”. He considered them to be “secondary, in the highest degree crude and blameworthy” (Hui-jiao (慧皎), *Gao seng zhuan* (高僧傳, Biographies of Worthy Monks), verified and commented upon by Tang Yong-tong, critical text written by Tang Yi-xuan (Beijing, 1992), p. 524), and that is why sometimes in his work he included only brief retelling of data reported in *xiaoshuo*.

21. “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*, p. 28.

22. In the translation of M. E. Ermakov this biography can be found in the book titled Hui-jiao, *Zhizneopisaniia*, pp. 59—61. The episode from Shi Tan-yi's life, cited by Zhang Yan, is absent in “Gao seng zhuan”.

23. Jingzhou — one of the nine ancient districts, was located on the territory of the modern day Hubei province. One way or another about one third of the fragments of “Xu guan shi yin ying yan ji” is related to this district.

24. Wang-jianwu — Jin official Wang Chen (王忱 ?—392), whose official title read as *jianwu jiangjun* (“commander of affirming militancy”), which was where he got his nickname from; he was the head of the Jingzhou prefecture in the era name of Tai-yuan (376—396).

25. “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*, p. 36.

26. 405—418.

27. Fa-zong (法宗, Shi Fa-zong, 釋法宗 the 5th century) — a Buddhist monk and mentor, who had over three thousand disciples; he became famous on account of his knowledge of the *sutra* “Miao fa lian hua jing”, one of the most popular *sutras* of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism.

28. Mao De-zu (毛德祖, 359?—423) — a famous Liu Song commander, who initially served the house of Jin. He was particularly known for his valour and courage. *Ibid.*, p. 53.

29. 501.

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 59—60.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

32. For more details on Lu Gao see his official biographies in *juan* 26 of the history of the Liang dynasty (also given in *ibid.*, pp. 233—4) and in *juan* 48 of “Nan shi”.

33. The *sutra* was made up of one *juan*, under the Eastern Jin it was translated into Chinese by a hermit of Indian heritage named Zhu Nan-ti (竺難提, the 5th century); it included actual *dharanis* (mantra) as well as instructions relating to its use.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

35. Here and on out: *Miao fa lian hua jing* (“妙法蓮華經”, The Lotus *Sutra* of the Wonderful Law), translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva and into modern Chinese by Li Hai-po (Zhengzhou, 2010), pp. 351—2.

36. A regional centre of the district of the same name that was located on the territory of modern-day city Huzhou, Zhejiang province.

37. Wang Shao-zhi (王韶之, 380—435) is a dignitary, historian and erudite person who served at the courts of Jin and Liu-Song. He was well acquainted with Fu Liang; he was the head of Wuxing district on two different occasions — from 423 to 433 and in 435 when he passed away in the service.

38. “*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*” *yizhu*, p. 66.

39. Shiziguo — today it is known as Sri Lanka, with which China had good commercial relationships, starting back in the Eastern Jin times.

40. Funan — Bapnom, an ancient Khmer kingdom that existed between the 1st and 2nd centuries on the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Its territory is that of today's Cambodia, the south of Laos and Vietnam as well as the southeast of Thailand.

41. Inferior Vehicle — *hinayana* (*theravada*), one of the main schools in Buddhism, which denies any other means of salvation but by means of renouncing the world and becoming a monk. *Arhan* is an ideal person in *hinayana*; *arhan* is a hallowed monk, who reached *nirvana* on his own and left this world behind (just as Buddha did), and as such there is no need for him to pray and call for help, since Buddha knows no world. In Mahayana, on the other hand, the ideal person is *bodhisattva* that strives for *nirvana* for the benefit of all who live and consciously does not reach *nirvana* for compassionate purposes — to help all of them; salvation may be attained not only by a monk, but by any layman, who devotes himself to reaching *bodhi* and waking up and becoming Buddha.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

43. Shu is an old name of the lands that today make up the Sichuan province. In the time described they were controlled by the Eastern Jin.

44. Yao Chang (姚萇, 330—393) — the twenty fourth son of the commander of the union of Qiang tribes, Yao Yi-zhong (姚弋仲, 280—352), the founder of the Late Qin kingdom, reigning from 384 to 393.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 86—7.
46. Shanyang is the county located at the territory of the modern day Jiangsu province.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
48. Most likely it refers to Tuoba Gui (拓拔珪, 386—409), who declared himself emperor of Northern Wei (386—534) in 399.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 116.
50. Yizhou is a Han county located at the place where today there is the city of Chongqing, the Sichuan province.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
52. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 187.
53. Dongping was a county located in the area of the modern day of the Dongpingxian county of the Shangdong province.
54. Murong Chui (慕容垂, 326—396) is the founder and first emperor (Chengwu-di, on the throne from 384 to 396) of Later Yan (386—409); he was a Xianbi from the tribe of Murong. In 395 Murong Chui sent his army under the leadership of his sons to conquer the northern lands, all the way to the boundaries of Northern Wei, but the army was defeated by Tuoba Gui, and Murong Chui's sons could hardly escape almost alone.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 175.
56. Meeting the hateful — it is one of the eight so-called sufferings in Buddhism: birth, aging, sickness, death, separation from one's beloved, meeting the hateful, impossibility of finding the desired, inconsistency of five *skandhas* (form, sensation, perception, mental formations, consciousness).
57. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 201.
58. A region, which at the time was located on the territory of the modern-day Shandong.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
60. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 205.
61. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 208.
62. Xiangyuan county was a part of the Jin district of Shangdang, located in the southeastern part of the modern-day Shanxi province.
63. A Jin district located on the territory of the modern-day Qinyangxian county of the Henan province.
64. *Ibid.*, pp. 207—8.
65. In regards to the specifics of these three collections see Dong Zhi-qiao, "'Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong' suzi, suyu lingzha ('觀世音應驗記三種' 俗字, 俗語零札", "Small notes concerning 'vulgar hieroglyphs' and 'vulgar sayings' in 'Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin'", *Suzhou jiaoyu xueyuan xuebao* VI (2002); Fang Yi-xin (方一新), "Nanchaoren zhuan sanzong 'Guan shi yin ying yan ji' ciyi suoji sanzhe" ("南朝人撰三種 '觀世音應驗記' 詞義瑣記六則", "Six small notes on the word semantics in three collections 'Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin', put together under Southern dynasties"), *Zhongguo yuwen* II (2001); Fan Chong-gao (范崇高), "'Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong' ciyu zhaji" ("觀世音應驗記三種' 詞語札記", "Various notes on phrases in 'Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin'"), *Sichuan ligong xuayuan xuebao* I (2004); idem, "'Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong' yinan ciju shiyi" ("觀世音應驗記三種' 疑難詞句試釋", "An attempt at explaining difficult phrases in 'Three Collections of Records of Testimonies Concerning Guanshiyin'"), *Gu hanyu yanjiu* I (2009). A summary index of Buddhist expressions in all three collections can be found in the publication of Dong Zhi-qiao (pp. 269—84), and each expression is commented upon in references to the main text.
66. Lu Xun (魯迅), *Zhongguo xiaoshuo shilüe* (中國小說史略, Essay on the History of Chinese Prose with a Plot) (Beijing, 2006), p. 54. Cf.: "Buddhist *xiaoshuo* does not address the enlightened monasticism, concerned with the religious and philosophical tradition, but rather to the Buddhist flock, to a layman who thirsts for a miracle, for a divine protection and / or for a miraculous deliverance from misfortunes and sicknesses, and who fears the wrath of Buddhist deities" (Ermakov, *Mir kitaiskogo buddizma*, p. 10).
67. Evidently Lu Gao did not identify all the sources that he was using. For comparison purposes in the study of the three collections about Guanshiyin modern Chinese scholars usually use such works as "Fa yuan zhu lin", "Gao seng zhuan", "Ming xiang ji" and several others.
68. "*Guan shi yin ying yan ji sanzong*" *yizhu*, pp. 155, 135—136. And this one story, in accordance with Lu Gao, can be considered "inter-family" (*jiazhong*, "家中"): it concerns his relative, Zhang Chang (張暢, ?—457), who avoided being incarcerated and executed thanks to his call upon *bodhisattva* Guanshiyin, as a result of which the fetters that were chaining him were opened on their own; amazed jailers just reported the miracle to authorities.
69. See: *Sutra sta pritch* (The *Sutra* of One Hundred Parables, *Bai yu jing*), translated from Chinese and commented upon by I. S. Gurevich, introductory article by L. N. Men'shikov (Moscow, 1986), pp. 16—7. As it was fairly noted by Sun Chang-wu, those were parables contained in Buddhist translated works that were more in keeping with Chinese prose with a plot, without really being that much different from it, and that was why they had a much broader distribution (Sun Chang-wu (孫昌武), *Fojiao yu zhongguo wenxue* (佛教與中國文學, Buddhism and Chinese Literature) (Shanghai, 1988), p. 260). More information about Buddhist *xiaoshuo* in Russian language you may find in the monograph M. E. Ermakov that was already mentioned. On the basis of the research of many years the scholar suggests a more precise classification (in comparison with D. Gjertson) of such stories: (i) supplications addressing Guanshiyin-Avalokitesvara (striking examples of which we have already examined above since "pretty much every other plot of the collection of Buddhist *xiaoshuo* is devoted to *bodhisattva*", according to E. M. Ermakov's observation, p. 17); (ii) plot devoted to votive objects (stupas, statues, icons, holy relics, etc.); (iii) "biographies" — which actually are pseudobiographies of Buddhist zealots, which usually include only one or two episodes from their actual lives; (iv) walking through the other world, "visions of the hereafter", which include fragmented descriptions of the judgment beyond the grave and hell.