

# The Principles and Strategies of the Translation and Edition of Chinese Buddhist Classics under the Background of the “Belt and Road”: Take *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* as an Example

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## Abstract

With the support of the “going out” strategy of Chinese culture and the “Belt and Road” Initiative, Chinese culture is moving towards the world along the Silk Road. Buddhist thought and culture constitute an important part of Chinese culture, and Chinese Buddhist classics serve as an important carrier of Chinese culture in international communication. Due to the large number and vast content of Chinese Buddhist classics, the selective translation and edition of them become an important practice to promote the spread of Chinese culture. This paper takes *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* translated and compiled by Master Le Du as an example to analyze and study the general principles and strategies of Chinese Buddhist classics’ translation and edition under the background of the “Belt and Road”, hoping to provide a reference for strengthening the translation of Chinese Buddhist classics, improving the international communication efficiency of Chinese culture, and promoting Chinese culture to better go to the world and help the construction of the “Belt and Road”.

## Keywords

Buddhism, Translation and Edition, “Belt and Road”, International Communication, “Going out” of Chinese Culture

## 1. Introduction

The third Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation was held in Beijing from October 17 to 18, 2023, which became the most solemn event to com-

memorate the 10th anniversary of the “Belt and Road” Initiative. Since ancient times, Buddhism has become an important part of the ancient Silk Road. Buddhism was introduced into China in the Han Dynasty. Since then, early Buddhist classics were translated into Chinese from Indian and Central Asian languages, which promoted the formation of the ideological system of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism in China. Buddhist thought was also fully integrated into the Chinese culture’s genes (Wei, 2018) and became an indispensable part of Chinese culture.

The Silk Road once played the role of connecting people in East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and other countries and regions closely. (Geng, 2021) Nowadays, with the deepening of the “Belt and Road” Initiative, Chinese culture is accelerating its global spread, and Buddhism will play a greater role in promoting cultural exchanges and mutual learning among countries and regions along the Belt and Road.

A large number of Chinese Buddhist classics were translated into foreign languages, which became an important carrier in spreading Chinese traditional culture to the world. (Wang, 2021) There are 65 countries and regions along the Belt and Road, and many countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia believe in Buddhism. The common beliefs and cultural customs make it relatively easy to establish a dialogue and exchange mechanism between Chinese culture and Buddhism. (Geng, 2021) But there are also many countries along the Belt and Road, such as Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt and other African countries, which are of the same origin with Islamic culture and closely related to Arab culture. (Si, 2023) Influenced by geography, culture, customs, beliefs and other factors, the spread of Chinese Buddhist classics with Confucianism and Buddhism as the cultural foundation needs to consider how to resonate with foreign civilizations and how to convey high-quality Chinese culture through high-quality translation.

Therefore, summarizing the translation and edition principles and strategies of Chinese Buddhist classics will provide reference and guidance for future translation work, which is undoubtedly of great significance to promoting Chinese culture to better spread around the world and help the construction of the Belt and Road.

## 2. Literature Review

In the 17th century, the translation and introduction of Chinese native religion classics in the West began. In the 19th century, with the formation of comparative religion studies, the Western world began to realize the importance of Buddhism as one of the sources of Chinese thought, and then Western scholars began to translate Chinese Buddhist classics. (Chang, 2022) In 1831, Karl Friedrich Neumann, a German Orientalist, published his English translation of *Annotations on the Essentials of the Rules and Etiquette of Sramanera* in the United Kingdom, which is considered to be the beginning of the spread of Chinese

Buddhist classics overseas. (Xu & Liu, 2023) In the 1860s, Protestant missionaries became the main translators and introducers of Chinese Buddhist classics, and the scale translation of Chinese Buddhist classics began to rise. Including Protestants Neumann, Samuel Beal, Joseph Edkins, Timothy Richard and James Legge, the number of their translated texts accounted for more than 60% of the overall Chinese Buddhist classics. Generally speaking, in the view of Western translators, the contents of Buddhist scriptures are complicated, “lexically repetitive, meaningless, with a large number of names, in lack of literary characteristics” (Watters, 1882). Therefore, missionaries tend to translate full passages of short texts or abridged passages of long texts.

In 1893, Dai-setz Teitaro Suzuki left a deep impression on the participants of the World Religion Conference, “triggering the popularity of Buddhism in the United States in half a century later” (Zhong, 2009). In 1897, Suzuki studied in the United States to compile Zen classics, and the translation of Zen classics became a major feature of the English translation of Chinese Buddhist classics in the 20th century. The translation of Chinese Buddhist scriptures also has new features compared with the translation activities in the middle and late 19th century. “Buddhists gradually replaced missionaries as the main body of the translating of Chinese Buddhist scriptures; and there are many kinds of the English translation of Chinese Zen classics; organized and planned Chinese Buddhist scripture translation projects emerged” (Xu & Liu, 2023). Among them, the Buddhist Text Translation Society (BTTS), founded by the late Master Xuan Hua in the early 1970s in City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, promoted English translation of Buddhist scriptures to form a strong organization and a good scale. (Wei, 2009)

So far, the translation and dissemination of Chinese Buddhist scriptures abroad has reached a certain scale, but the research on the English translation of Chinese Buddhist scriptures is still in a relatively weak state. In addition to the systematic review and research on the translation and introduction of classics such as *Altar Sutra* and *Diamond Sutra*, the value and translation of more classics in the history of translation need to be further explored, and the value and methods of Chinese Buddhist classics to help the external dissemination of Chinese culture need to be further revealed. (Xu & Liu, 2023)

Master Le Du has done a good demonstration. Master Le Du (1923-2011) is known as the pioneer of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism in North America. He is proficient in English, and thus one of his important works in North America is to translate Chinese Buddhist classics into English. *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories of Old Hanshan* (hereinafter referred to as *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories*) is compiled by the disciples of Hanshan Deqing, one of the four famous monks in the late Ming Dynasty. It is a fusion work of Chinese Zen and Pure Land. *Pure Land of the Patriarchs (Dharma Talks of Master Hanshan)* is the fruit of careful selecting and recompiling by Master Le Du on the basis of the original text of *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories*. And then, *Pure Land of*

*the Patriarchs* became a popular Buddhist guidebook. Taking the compilation work of Master Le Du's work *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* as an analysis and research example so as to explore the general principles and strategies of the compilation of Chinese Buddhist classics will improve the quality and efficiency of the translation of Chinese Buddhist classics, will increase the influence of Chinese culture in international communication, will help Chinese culture "going out", and will promote intercultural exchanges and mutual learning of civilization.

### 3. The Compilation Principles of Chinese Buddhist Classics

The history of Buddhist scripture translation is inseparable from the history of Buddhism's spread in China. It is through translation that exotic Buddhism takes root and bears fruit in Chinese culture. (Jiang, 2021) Translation is not a pure language behavior, but is closely related to the cultural environment in which the language exists. Compilation is not a simple conversion between languages but is an adjustment and rewriting of content and form according to the target language context and the audience's acceptance psychology. The first volume of *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories* has more than 540 pieces, most of which are difficult and arduous, which makes people dazzled and dizzy during the reading process; however, after careful selection and compilation by Master Le Du, *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* became a popular, concise and clear Buddhist primer, which greatly promotes the spread of Buddhist culture.

Through careful investigation and exploration of the text of *Pure Land of the Patriarchs*, the author believes that the compilation of Chinese Buddhist classics should take into account two aspects: on the one hand, considering the audience's understanding and acceptance ability; on the other hand, reflecting the cultural tradition of the source language. The specific principles are as follows:

#### 3.1. Following the Reading Habits of the Target Language

Dharma talks are Master Hanshan's enlightenment to different people, with more than 170 pieces. Many of them are repetitive and do not conform to the reading habits of English readers.

Master Le Du selected the best content, and then reorganized and reduced the relevant content to one part with a new title, thus forming a new section. For example, the section *Zen and Pure Land* and the section *The Important Dharma of Pure Land* are self-contained chapters, and they can even be extracted from the original collection as separate articles. These chapters are often selected by Master Le Du from one or several enlightenments. The section of *Zen and Pure Land* is selected from two enlightenments, "Dharma Talk—Enlightenment to Upasaka in Buddhist Chanting Society" and "Dharma Talks—Enlightenment to Liu Cunchi".

The master also cut the original paragraphs, and a large paragraph is often divided into several small English paragraphs and rearranged. After the change,

the writing is more simple and clear, which conforms to the reading habits of English readers. Throughout the language characteristics of the book *Pure Land of the Patriarchs*, the text is concise and lively, without any messy trace. In the arrangement of the chapters, each part is clear.

### 3.2. Taking the Readers into Account

Master Hanshan was originally a monk under Linji Zen School. Although he advocated the unity of Zen and Pure Land, he still took Zen as the lead, which can be seen from *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories of Old Hanshan*. A large number of Dharma talks are “Enlightenment to Some Zen Meditator and so on”, for example, “Enlightenment to Wushenglu Zen Meditator”, “Enlightenment to Dongwengcheng Zen Meditator”, “Enlightenment to Zhenyu Zen Meditator”, “Enlightenment to Benjinggui Zen Meditator” and so on. However, in the process of translation, according to the characteristics of overseas readers who know little about Buddhist culture and Chinese culture and hope to learn the simple and easy methods of Buddhist practice, Master Le Du adjusted the emphasis of the translation content, omitting many contents of Zen, and choosing a large number of contents related to the Pure Land Dharma Method to emphasize the importance of the practice of the Pure Land.

Taking into account the readers’ understanding, Master Le Du also omits the translation of many specific people and things. For example, the section of *People Should Practice Pure Land* is derived from Dharma Talks of *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories—The Demonstration of the Way to the Pure Land*, but Master Le Du deleted the opening paragraph of “The Ocean Zen Meditator went to Kuangshan Mountain to ask for Buddha and disciplines... Old Hanshan enlightened him and said”, hiding the specific background and people, and only retaining the content of the enlightenment of the Pure Land Dharma Method, which greatly reduces the cultural and information load of the translation and reduces the understanding cost of the readers.

In addition, Master Le Du did not retain all the information of some original texts, but made some simplification, so that the meaning covered by the translation is far less than that of the original text. For example: from the fourth paragraph of *The Demonstration of the Way to the Pure Land* to the fifth paragraph of *People Should Practice Pure Land*, there exists obvious reduction. The original text of the fourth paragraph of *The Demonstration of the Way to the Pure Land* is: “Take the word ‘Amitabha’ as the life root, never forget it, and never stop thinking about it. In the two and six hours, while you are walking, standing, sitting and reclining, while you are picking up the spoon or raising chopsticks, breaking, spinning, bending down or facing upward, moving, being tranquil, being idle or busy, in all times, your are not ignorant or confused, and there are no intruding conditions from outside.” The corresponding content in the fifth paragraph of *People Should Practice Pure Land* is:

...concentrate single mindedly on reciting Ametabha Buddha’s name in

thought after thought twenty-four hours a day, as though your life depended on it. While you are walking, standing, sitting or reclining, whether you are moving or still, at leisure or busy, you must always be of clear mind without any confused thoughts and must not be affected by intruding conditions from outside.

“while you are walking, standing, sitting and reclining, while you are picking up the spoon or raising chopsticks, breaking, spinning, bending down or facing upward, moving, being tranquil, being idle or busy” obviously corresponds to “While you are walking, standing, sitting or reclining, whether you are moving or still, at leisure or busy” translated by Master Le Du. However, as the meaning of “picking up the spoon or raising chopsticks, breaking, spinning, bending down or facing upward” is very complex in expression, Master Le Du omits it in the English translation process and only retains the meaning covered by “walking, standing, sitting or reclining” and “moving or still, at leisure or busy”, which is more concise and almost does not affect the main idea of the passage. There are many similar situations in the book *Pure Land of the Patriarchs*.

### 3.3. Paying Attention to Universality

The fundamental purpose of compiling and translating Chinese Buddhist classics is to promote and spread Buddhist culture overseas, and the universality of its external dissemination should be considered. Therefore, when selecting texts, attention should be paid to selecting classic texts and classic chapters. The many considerations of Master Le Du in compiling and translating classics illustrate this point. From the translation of his published works, most of them are important Chinese Buddhist classics, and most of the authors are famous monks and Zen masters with great influence in modern times, such as Master Xuyun, Master Yingguang, Master Taixu, etc. *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* obviously belongs to this category.

*Pure Land of the Patriarchs* not only introduces the general situation and cultivation methods of Chinese Pure Land Sect and Zen, but also shows the traditional Chinese culture including Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The book contains a large number of Buddhist terms, Buddhist classical passages and Buddhist stories, which contain rich traditional Chinese cultural ideas.

It can be seen from the above that in the process of compiling and translating *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories*, Master Le Du not only enables the target language readers to accurately understand the information that was conveyed but also makes the readers become interested in Chinese culture through the works, which will greatly promote the spread of Buddhist ideas and culture.

## 4. The Compilation and Translation Strategy of Chinese Buddhist Classics

The principles of “following the habits of the target language” and “taking care of the audience” ensure language fluency and audience recognition of the exter-

nal Buddhist texts. The principle of “universality” ensures that the translator has rules to follow in the selection of texts, and the direction of translation is clearer, and the readers can also have an understanding of the important content of the important classics with the greatest efficiency. In the selection of specific translation strategies, *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* adopts specific translation strategies including standardizing terminology, adjusting the style of writing, and retaining the style of writing.

#### 4.1. Standardizing Terminology

Master Le Du not only knows Buddhism well but also has a profound understanding of traditional Chinese culture. This paper has made a simple classification of the term in the first part of *Pure Land of the Patriarchs*, and analyzed the names of Buddhist scriptures, Buddhist figures and Buddhist terms by giving examples.

The Buddhist figures involved in *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* can be roughly divided into two categories: Chinese monks and Indian Buddhist figures (monks, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas). Many names of Chinese monks are expressed in Pinyin, as shown in **Table 1**.

The names of Indian Buddhist figures are rendered through a combination of Sanskrit and English, pure English translation, Sanskrit transliteration, and pinyin annotations, as shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 1.** The English names of several Chinese Monks.

Original Text	Translation
天台宗创始人智顛	Chih I
永明延寿法师	Master Yun-Ming
中峰明本禅师	Master Chung-Feng

**Table 2.** The English translation names of some Indian Buddhist Figures.

Original Text	Translation
善财童子	the youth Sudhana
韦提希夫人	Queen Vaidehi
德云比丘	Cloud of Virtue
马鸣	Asvaghosa
龙树	Nagarjuna
世亲	Vasubandhu
文殊菩萨	Manjusri
普贤菩萨	Samantabhadra
大悲观世音菩萨	the great Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara (Kuan-Yin)
大势至菩萨摩訶萨	Mahasthamaprapta (Ta Shih Chih)



The translation of “the youth Sudhana” and “Queen Vaidehi” combines transliteration from Sanskrit with English, while “Cloud of Virtue” is a pure English paraphrase. “Asvaghosa”, “Nagarjuna”, and “Vasubandhu” are translated based on Sanskrit transliteration. “The great Bodhisattvas Avalokitesvara (Kuan-Yin)” and “Mahasthamaprapta (Ta Shih Chih)” are annotated with Chinese Pinyin alongside the Sanskrit transliteration, reflecting the characteristics of Chinese Buddhism.

The Buddhist terminology mentioned in *Pure Land of the Patriarchs* can be roughly divided into two categories: specific Buddhist terms unique to Chinese Buddhist culture and commonly used concepts and expressions in Buddhism.

For the specific Buddhist terms unique to Chinese Buddhist culture, mainly Zen terminologies, Le Du strives to preserve the cultural imagery as much as possible during translation by employing a combination of paraphrasing, literal translation, and Chinese Pinyin, as shown in **Table 3**.

Loong is a symbol of Chinese culture, while the elephant represents Indian gods. Both the loong and elephant are symbols of power. The term “loong elephant” originated from the most successful meditation practice and later came to describe the patriarchs in Buddhism. Master Le Du chose not to directly translate “loong elephant” as patriarchs but instead adopted a literal translation method to preserve the cultural elements of the source language and maintain the heterogeneous cultural characteristics of the text. This approach enhances the Eastern cultural context within the text and helps Western readers better understand the image of Chinese Buddhism.

An important practicing way of Zen is meditating on hua-t’ou, which are often like “Who is the one reciting the Buddha’s name”, “Who is the one dragging the body”. When translating the noun “hua-t’ou”, Master Le Du opted for a direct transliteration based on pinyin since there is no exact equivalent word in English.

Quietude (Mo Zhao) Zen is a form of Zen practice introduced by Zen monk Zhengjue during Song Dynasty. Different from traditional Zen meditation on hua-t’ou or on Kung-ans (Koans), it involves meditation characterized by sitting quietly and maintaining silence without generating any thoughts within one’s mind. The term “Mo” refers to silence, while “Zhao” means “returning inwardly for self-reflection”, contemplating wisdom akin to that of Buddha’s reflection (Du & Wei, 2007). Therefore, “Mozhao” has both the meaning of silence and contemplation. But when facing Western readers without any Buddhist foundation, the most important thing to translate such kind of noun is to make the target language readers grasp the main characteristics of this way of Zen meditation. Therefore, it is inevitable to simplify the content. And “returning inwardly for self-reflection” is a very complex process. To explain in one noun will make the text lengthy and difficult for readers to understand. Therefore, for the convenience of the text writing and to reduce the difficulty of understanding, Master Le Du simplified the processing. Compared with Zen of Hua-t’ou and Zen of



Kung-ans (Koans), whose meditations are all about the specific “hua-t’ou” and “Kung-ans (Koans)”, “Mozhao Zen” is meditating on “silence”, namely “Wu” (“no”). And “returning inwardly for self-reflection” is also completed in the state of sitting quietly, so to translate it into: meditating on the single word “Wu” (“no”), to some extent, conveying the external characteristics of “Zhao” (contemplation). Therefore, although the meaning of “Mo Zhao” was not conveyed thoroughly, considering that the target language readers can better accept it, and taking into account the characteristics of low information load of English, such translation has reached the requirements and is very appropriate.

For common concepts and special terms of Buddhism, mainly some highly abstract nouns and some terms with specific meanings, considering the understanding ability of Western readers, Le Du tries to use the most simple and easy-to-understand nouns to explain profound Buddhist concepts, as shown in **Table 4**.

**Table 3.** Translation of buddhist nouns peculiar to Chinese Buddhist Culture.

Original Text	Translation
龙象	Loong elephant
话头	hua-t’ou (wato)
默照	meditating on the single word “Wu” (“no”)
公案	Kung-ans (Koans)
内观	exploring one’s original face
参话头	meditating on a hua-t’ou
念佛是谁	Who is the one reciting the Buddha’s name
禅净双修	dual practice of Pure Land and Zen

**Table 4.** Translation of some buddhist concepts and terms.

Original Text	Translation
空	Emptiness
有	Existence
心	Mind
客尘	Guest dust
以心印心	using Mind to seal Mind
有情众生	Sentient Beings
出家四众	the entire fourfold assembly
心、佛、众生，三无差别	The Mind, Buddhas and Sentient Beings are undifferentiated and equal.
不立文字，教外别传	without a word and outside the Teaching [of the Buddhist Canon]

## 4.2. Adjusting Classical Chinese

*The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories of Old Hanshan* was written in the late Ming Dynasty. Although there are some vernacular pieces in it, it is mainly written in classical Chinese. However, when Master Le Du translated and interpreted this book, it was already in the 1990s and it was aimed at modern readers. Therefore, when compiling and translating, Master Le Du consciously adjusted some tortuous expressions of classical Chinese. For example, in the section of *Zen and Pure Land*, the story of the sixth patriarch Huineng going to see the fifth patriarch Hongren, which is a famous case in the history of Buddhism:

When Hui-Neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen, came to see the Fifth Patriarch, he was asked, “Where do you come from?” Hui-Neng replied, “I come from Ling-Nan (South China).” The Fifth Patriarch asked, “Do the southern barbarians also have the Buddha Nature?” Hui Neng answered, “People distinguish between North and South, but the Buddha Nature has no North and South.”

The corresponding original text in *The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories* is: “So when Lu Zu first arrived there, Huangmei asked where he was from. Lu Zu answered: ‘Ling-Nan’. Huangmei said: ‘Does the southern barbarians also have the Buddha nature?’ Lu Zu answered: ‘People come from north and south, but how can Buddha nature have North or South?’” (Hanshan, 2005) If you do not have an in-depth knowledge of the history of Zen, you may not immediately know who are the two people in the dialogue “Lu Zu” and “Huangmei”, and what does “Ling-Nan” mean. In fact, “Lu Zu” is the sixth patriarch Huineng, and the fifth patriarch Hongren is also called “Huangmei” Hongren, who spread Zen in Huangmei, Hubei Province. “Ling-Nan” was in the south of China, which was still outside the culture at that time and was considered a barbarian land, without Buddha nature and difficult to enlighten. The answer of the Sixth Patriarch answered the question of Buddha nature within Buddhism at that time, namely, “whether everyone has Buddha nature”. If we translate it literally, we must attach this explanation to the end of the text as a commentary. Master Le Du translated Lu Zu directly as “Hui-Neng”, and “Huang Mei” as “Sixth Patriarch of Zen”, which is more in line with the characteristics of an introductory book.

For another example, in the section *People Should Practice Pure Land*, there is a sentence directly cited from the Buddhist sutra: “It is taught in the sutras that if you want to purify the Buddha land, you should purify your own mind first” (Hanshan, 2005). There is also a paragraph of the original words of a Zen master: “To be born [in the Pure Land] is definitely to be born, but to return [to the Pure Land] is not really to return”. (Tian Yihuai Zen Master says: birth determines birth, and going is not really going.) In the section of *The Important Dharma of Pure Land*, there are two paragraphs directly cited from the original words of ancient Zen masters: “It has been said that: If your evil karma were not heavy, you would not have been born in the Saha world. If love-attachment is

not severed, you cannot be reborn in the Pure Land” (Hanshan, 2005). These are the words of others quoted by Master Hanshan. When translating, Master Le Du omits the translator and directly carries out a clear English narration, which makes it absolutely unfamiliar.

### 4.3. Preserving Original Writing Style

*The Collection of Sleepwalking Stories* uses many four-character expressions, which makes it sound like a large number of pearls falling on a jade plate and is of a sense of jumping and music. To preserve the writing style of the text, under the differences between Chinese and English and the limitations of English, Master Le Du adopts a long and smooth narration to express the original noisy and confusing jumping sense, and the writing style is concise and flowing. For example, *People Should Practice Pure Land* is an excerpt from *The Demonstration of the Way to the Pure Land*, and there is a passage almost entirely composed of four-character Chinese phrases, and Master Le Du translated them as follows:

Block all distractions from outside and concentrate singlemindedly on reciting Ametabha Buddha’s name in thought after thought twenty-four hours a day, as though your life depended on it. While you are walking, standing, sitting or reclining, whether you are moving or still, at leisure or busy, you must always be of clear mind without any confused thoughts and must not be affected by intruding conditions from outside. If you can practice over a long period of time, never forget Buddha Recitation even in your dreams, reciting gently and continuously, whether asleep or awake, without any distracting thoughts...

The meaning of this passage is: “One should completely eliminate all external distractions and focus on continuous chanting of the Buddha’s name 24 hours a day as the foundation of one’s life. Whether walking, sitting, lying down, moving or busy with tasks, one must always maintain mindfulness and clear thinking without being disturbed by any external distractions. If one can practice for an extended period of time, it is important to remember to recite the Buddha’s name even in dreams and softly chant it while awake, ensuring that no distracting thoughts arise...” Although the translation may not adhere strictly to the original form, it still maintains a nimble and flexible writing style.

Additionally, when writing short Buddhist stories, Master Le Du places special emphasis on vividness and inspiration in storytelling. For instance, the story about Bodhisattva issuing ten vows and the youth Sudhana visiting fifty-three Virtuous Teachers are both instructive tales. In narrating youth Sudhana’s visiting fifty-three Virtuous Teachers, Master Le Du preserves the sense of orality while enhancing its appeal to readers:

The Avatamasaka Sutra includes a well-known episode concerning the youth Sudhana who journeyed to visit fifty-three Virtuous Teachers. The first one he met, the monk Cloud of Virtue, introduced him to the very

important teaching of Pure Land. From there, Sudhana continued his visits until he had covered all fifty-three Teachers, the last of whom was the great Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. The latter also taught him the wonderful Pure Land Dharma method.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis and research of *Pure Land of the Patriarchs*, this paper concludes that the compilation of Chinese Buddhist classics should adhere to the principles of “following the reading habits of the target language”, “taking the readers into account” and “paying attention to universality”. Furthermore, specific compilation strategies such as “standardizing terminology”, “adjusting classical Chinese” and “preserving original writing style” are essential. In particular, considering popular readings’ characteristics, it is necessary to simplify or omit complex content in order to facilitate widespread dissemination. Translation difficulties arise from noun terms in Buddhist texts. Given that most Buddhist terms are pronounced in Sanskrit while Chinese translations often employ pinyin for English equivalents, it is crucial not to confine Chinese translations solely to their source language but also consider how they will be received by target language readers. Therefore, a flexible approach must be adopted that ensures faithfulness, fluency, and conciseness.

In one word, since Chinese culture aims for global recognition, it requires both foreign scholars engaging in translating foreign passages into Chinese as well as domestic scholars contributing to translating Chinese into foreign languages. Under the backdrop of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), translating Chinese Buddhist classics plays a vital role in disseminating and exchanging Chinese culture. Exploring principles and strategies for compiling and translating these classics can refine and showcase China’s spiritual identity and cultural essence while increasing international recognition of Chinese culture among countries along the Belt and Road.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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