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Dīrghanakḥaparīṣcchā sūtra 長爪梵志請問經

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I. Introduction

The *Dirghanakḥaparīṣcchā* is a sūtra translated into Chinese (under the title *Chang zhua fan zhi qing wen jing* 長爪梵志請問經) by Yijing 義淨 (635–713) in the first year of the Jiushi 久視 era (700) during the reign of Empress Wu Zetian of the Tang Dynasty. With the recent rediscovery of a *Dirghanakḥaparīṣcchā sūtra* manuscript in Tibet's Potala Palace, a critical variorum edition bringing together Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese versions of this sūtra has been published,¹ and this has sparked renewed interest in this text. In this paper, I wish to discuss manuscript copies of Chinese translations of this text in old Japanese canons.

One part of the text that is important for the purposes of comparison is the appellation of the translator. The Second Goryeo Tripiṭaka,² which formed the critical basis for the Taishō Canon, describes the translation as “

¹ Bhiksuni Vinita (Vinita Tseng). *A Unique Collection of Twenty Sutras in a Sanskrit Manuscript from the Potala. Vol.1/1-2, Editions and Translation*. Vienna, Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2010. *Sanskrit Texts from the Tibetan Autonomous Region* No. 7/1-2, 2vols., pp.408-846 (11. *Dirghanakḥaparīṣcchāsūtra*, pp.355-390).

² There is some controversy concerning the term “Second Goryeo version”, which is an English translation of 高麗再雕本, or literally “Goryeo Re-engraved Edition”. Specifically, Tomofusa Uesugi (a research fellow at the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies who is also part of a project supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology) is a proponent of the notion that Second Goryeo edition is not based on the First Goryeo edition but rather directly based on the Kaibao Canon (open ICPBS seminar on May 21, 2011). If this is the case, the “Second Goryeo version” should more appropriately be referred to as the “New Goryeo version”.

大唐三藏法師義淨奉制譯” (“Translated for the Throne by Tripiṭaka Master Yijing of the Great Tang Dynasty”). The Song, Yuan, and Ming versions each provide a nearly identical ascription (唐三藏法師義淨奉制譯), merely leaving off the “Great” before “Tang”. In contrast, several versions in old Japanese manuscript versions (Kongō-ji 金剛寺, Kōshō-ji 興聖寺, and Saihō-ji 西方寺) ascribe the translation as follows: “大周聖母帝代三藏沙門義淨譯” (“Translated by Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa Yijing during the Reign of the Holy Maternal Empress of the Da Zhou Dynasty”). The differences in designation before the translator’s name give us clear reason to speculate that the latter texts are part of a lineage different from the printed canons. Moreover, we can surmise that the texts were copied from a manuscript (i.e. parent text) brought to Japan from Tang-era China during or not long after the reign of Wu Zetian. The evidence above tells us that there are texts extant in old manuscript collections in Japan that draw directly upon the textual traditions of Chang’an Buddhism.

2. The translation of the *Dīrghanakhaṇḍikā sūtra* into Chinese

According to the ninth fascicle of the *Kaiyuan-lu* 開元錄, Yijing finished translating this work on the 23rd day of the 12th month of the year 700 (久視 1) at Dafuxian-si 大福先寺, a monastery in the “Eastern Capital” (Luoyang).³ It was around this time that Yijing translated the 12 fascicles of the *Genben-sapoduo-bu lushe* 根本薩婆多部律攝 (**Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Saṃgraha*). In the ninth month of 701 (大足 1) he went on to translate seven fascicles from seven texts, including *Foshuo mile xiasheng chengfo jing* 佛說彌勒下生成佛經 (one fascicle), *Zhuangyan wang duoluoni zhou jing* 莊嚴王陀羅尼呪經 (one fascicle), *Shanye jing* 善夜經 (one fascicle), *Dacheng liuzhuan zhuyou jing* 大乘流轉諸有經 (one fascicle), *Miaose wang yinyuan jing* 妙色王因緣經 (one fascicle), *Wuchang jing* 無常

³ Taishō Vol. 55, p.567c.

經 (one fascicle), and *Ba wuxia youxia jing* 八無暇有暇經 (one fascicle), but before that, Yijing was commissioned by Wu Zetian to write the “Introduction to the Da Zhou New Reproduction of the Sacred Texts of the Tripiṭaka” 大周新翻三藏聖教序.⁴ This introduction was added to the *Ruding buding yin jing* 入定不定印經, which was translated on the fifth day of the fifth month of 700 C.E. (久視 1). This was seven months before he translated the *Ārghanakḥaparīṣcchā sūtra*. Surprisingly, however, in this fifth month he translated only one fascicle of the *Ruding buding yin jing*. Furthermore, Yijing was not the first to translate this work. The first translation was produced by Gautama Prajñāruci (ca. 541) of the Northern Wei Dynasty, and titled *Bubiding rudingru yin jing* 不必定入定入印經.⁵ There seems to be no obvious reason why particular emphasis was placed on this text. One plausible explanation is that it was used in conjunction with the official change of the era designation. In the fifth month of that year, the third year of the Shengli 聖曆 era (700) became the first year of the Jiushi 久視 era (also 700). There are in fact records of slightly unusual developments in Shengli 3, which are recorded in various texts in the Japanese manuscript versions of the *Dazhou-lu* 大周錄 catalogue,⁶ where

⁴ Included at the beginning of *Ruding buding yin jing* Taishō Vol. 15, p.706a. Cf. 御製大藏經序跋集 (昭和法寶綜目錄 Vol. 3, No. 77, p. 1425).

⁵ In Taishō Vol. 15 (No. 645).

⁶ The full title of this work is the *Dazhou kanding zhongjing mulu* 大周刊定衆經目錄. It states that on the 26th day of the 10th month of the first year of the 天冊萬歲 era “佛授記寺大德僧明佺” were brought together, but most Japanese manuscripts of the *Da Zhou Catalogue* make mention of “聖曆三年奉行”. It is probable that the administration began a program to spread Buddhist texts in this year. The creation of the “Introduction to the Da Zhou New Reproduction of the Sacred Texts of the Tripiṭaka” was likely a part of that, hence the request to Yijing for a new translation. The following are several examples from old Japanese manuscripts: the phrase “無爲道經一部二卷 聖曆三年奉行” in Fascicle 7 the Saihō-ji version of the *Da Zhou Catalogue* (copied in 弘安 4 = 1282), the phrase “救護身命濟人病苦厄經一卷 聖曆三年奉行” in Fascicle 9 of the same, the phrase “師子月佛本生一卷 九紙 聖曆三年奉行

they are referred to as the “聖曆三年奉行” (“Shengli Three Official Services”). The Japanese manuscripts give indications that a variety of official religious policies—particularly policies involving the promotion of Buddhism—were implemented at this time, the reasons for which I will not go into here.

3. Different appellations for the names of translators in old Japanese manuscript versions

For our purposes here, “old Japanese manuscript versions” refer to Buddhist texts copied during the years spanning from the Nara period to the Heian and Kamakura periods, as well as manuscript copies thereof. More specifically, I use it to denote manuscripts whose parent texts were brought from continental Asia or the Korean Peninsula, in addition to copies of *those* texts. There is a tendency for manuscripts to accrue more scribal errors with the passage of time, which is the result of repeated transcriptions, but it does not necessarily follow that the presence of copy errors is evidence of an early form of a text.

One must be careful in deciding which manuscripts meet these criteria, because present among the Buddhist manuscripts copied from the Late Heian to Kamakura periods are those for which the Kaibao Canon (created in the latter part of the 10th century) or later xylograph canons such as the Southern Song and Goryeo were used as copy texts.

We are currently aware of at least eight manuscript versions of the translated *Dirghanakḥaparipṛcchā sūtra* among old Buddhist manuscript collections in Japan.⁷ The versions are from the following collections: the Shōgōzō Repository, Kongō-ji,⁸ Kōshō-ji,⁹ Nanatsu-dera, Ishiyama-dera,

“ in Fascicle 1 of the Kongō-ji version of the *Da Zhou Catalogue*, etc.

⁷ *A Concordance of Eight Buddhist Manuscript Canons Extant in Japan* 日本現存八種一切經對照目録, International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies Academic Frontier Project, 2006.

Saihō-ji, Natori shingū-ji, and the Matsuo-sha Collection at Myōren-ji. Of these, versions from just three collections are taken up here: those from Kongō-ji, Kōshō-ji, and Saihō-ji.¹⁰ A comparison of the text titles and translator appellations with the printed versions reveals an interesting phenomenon. The following are from the three Japanese manuscript texts copied in the Kamakura period:

Kongō-ji 金剛寺 version: 長爪梵志請問經 大周聖母帝代三藏沙門義淨譯
Photograph 1

Kōshō-ji 興聖寺 version: 長爪梵志請問經 大周聖母帝代三藏沙門義淨譯
Photograph 2

Saihō-ji 西方寺 version: 長爪梵志請問經 大周聖母帝代三藏沙門義淨譯
Photograph 3

Let us now turn our attention to the three printed versions:

First Goryeo version 高麗初雕版 :¹¹ 長爪梵志請問經 三藏法師義淨奉制
譯

Second Goryeo version 高麗再雕版 :¹² 長爪梵志請問經 大唐三藏法師義

⁸ Toshinori Ochiai (Principle Investigator), *Kongō-ji Issai-kyō no Sōgō-teki Kenkyū to Kongō-ji Shōgyō no Kiso-teki Kenkyū* (“General research on the Kongō-ji Manuscript Canon and a basic survey of the Kongō-ji Sacred Texts”, Research Report in two volumes for a Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research [A] for the 2003-2006 Academic Years, March, 2007.

⁹ Kyoto Prefectural Board of Education (eds.), *Kyōto Komonjo Chōsa Hōkokusho Vol. 13: Kōshō-ji Issai-kyō Chōsa Hōkokusho*, 1998.

¹⁰ Gangoji Institute for Research of Cultural Property (eds.), *Yamato-kōriyama-shi Saihō-ji Shozō Issai-kyō Chōsa Hōkokusho*, Yamato-Koriyama City Board of Education, 1984.

¹¹ See the Database by the Research Institute of Tripikata Koreana

¹² Facsimile reproduction of the Tripiṭata Koreana (Dongguk University edition and Tōyō Butten Kenkyū-kai edition).

淨奉制譯

Song Sixi version 宋思溪版 :¹³ 長爪梵志請問經 唐三藏法師義淨奉制譯

There are slight variances among descriptions of the printed canon versions, but all of them are said to be “translated for the throne” 奉制譯 by Tripiṭaka Master Yijing. In strong contrast, the Japanese manuscript versions are described as “translated by Tripiṭaka Śramaṇa Yijing during the reign of the Holy Maternal Empress of the Da Zhou Dynasty.” Let us examine what this marked difference means. “Holy Maternal Empress” is a clear reference to Wu Zetian, but examples of this honorific used in Buddhist texts are extremely rare. In fact, the only other known example is *Huayan jing zhuanji* 華嚴經傳記 compiled by Fazang 法藏 (643–712).¹⁴ What is more, the critical source for this text was a Japanese manuscript and printed version thereof.

Next, I would like to examine whether it is possible to establish a lineage for the Japanese manuscript versions from the variations in the body of the text itself. The Taishō version is a mere 965 characters long, yet this version has six footnotes that give variants. In the following, let us compare these variants with the First Goryeo version and the Japanese manuscript versions:

1. Taishō version ⑤言 = 云 (Song, Yuan, Ming, and old Song), First Goryeo version and the Japanese manuscript versions = 言.
2. *Do.* ⑥(問) + 曰 (Song, Yuan, Ming, and old Song), First

¹³ Footnote in the Taishō version.

¹⁴ “以垂拱三年十二月二十七日。休甚康體。告門人曰。吾當逝矣。右脇而臥。無疾而終於神都魏國東寺。會葬者數千萬人。聖母聞之。深加悲悼。施絹千匹。以充殯禮。道俗悲慕。如喪所親。” Taishō Vol. 51, p.155a1–5. The copy text for the *Huayan jing zhuanji* was the Tōdai-ji Canon edition copied in 1275. A 1711 printed edition was used for critical reference.

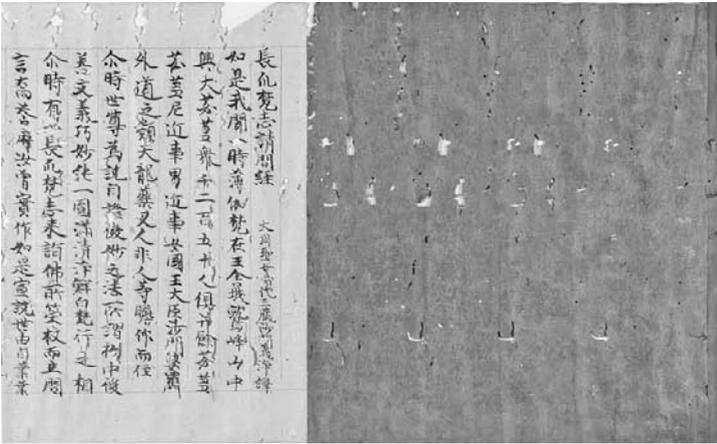
Goryeo = 曰, Kōshō-ji = 口, Kongō-ji = 曰, missing in Saihō-ji.

3. *Do.* ⑦ 染之 = 邪行 (Song, Yuan, Ming, and old Song), First Goryeo = 染之, three Japanese manuscript versions = 染之.
4. *Do.* ⑧ 驕 = 矯 (Song, Yuan, Ming, and old Song), First Goryeo = 驕, three Japanese manuscript versions = 矯.
5. *Do.* ⑨ [時] — (Song, Yuan, Ming, and old Song), First Goryeo = 時, Kongō-ji and Kōshō-ji = 時, Saihō-ji unclear.
6. *Do.* ⑩ 達磨離欲 = 達摩離染 (Song, Yuan, Ming, and old Song), First Goryeo = 達磨離欲, Kongō-ji and Kōshō-ji = 達磨離欲, Saihō-ji unclear.

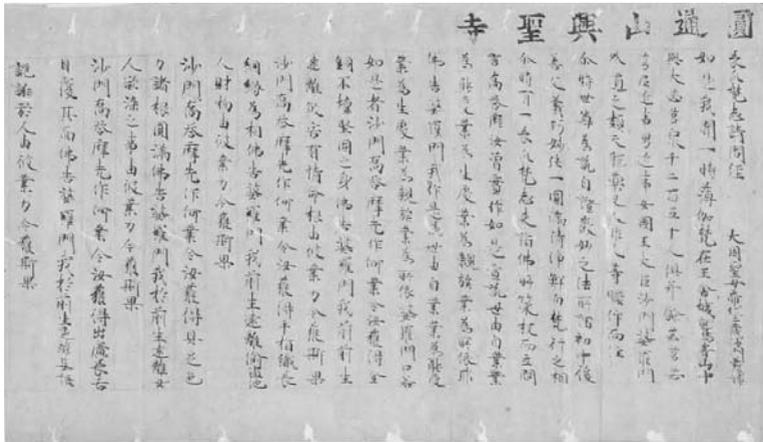
The Japanese manuscripts do contain variations other than the ones shown above, but even when those are taken into account, no clear differences in lineage can be discerned.¹⁵ There are no Zetian characters, which are a major feature of texts from the reign of Wu Zetian, but then again there are no applicable characters in the text to begin with. Given the above, ascertaining clues as to textual lineage from variants in the body text proves difficult. However, the peculiar variants seen in the text titles and translator ascriptions do show that the Japanese manuscript versions represent texts with direct origins in Chang'an Buddhism, including sources from the Tang or Zhou Dynasty of Wu Zetian.

The brief examination above is just another example of how old manuscript collections extant in Japan contain many texts that faithfully transmit early stages of texts, namely stages close to their origins in Chang'an Buddhism.

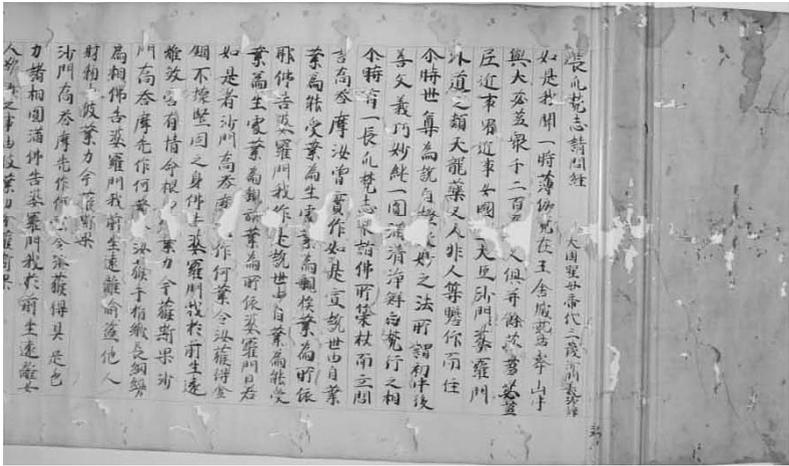
¹⁵ It is also necessary to investigate Dunhuang versions (S.505, S.4253, S.6834, P.2428, 北 6663 [雲 23]), but nearly all of them are missing the beginning passages, which would have made discussion of them here cumbersome. Here I shall just note that S.1306 has a text titled 佛說八支近住淨戒經, the content of which is the same as the *Dirghanakḥaparipṛcchā sūtra*.



Photograph 1: Kongō-ji 金剛寺 version of the *Dirghanakḥaparipṛcchā sūtra*, beginning of the scroll



Photograph 2: Kōshō-ji 興聖寺 version of the *Dirghanakḥaparipṛcchā sūtra*, beginning of the scroll



Photograph 3: Saihō-ji 西方寺 version of the *Dirghanakhaṇḍaparipṛcchā sūtra*, beginning of the scroll

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