On Ancient Japanese Manuscript Copies of the
*Dīrghanakhaṇḍapāripṛcchā sūtra* 長爪梵志請問経

Toshinori Ochiai
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1. Introduction

The *Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā* 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 *Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā 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 Tripitaka,² which formed the critical basis for the Taishō Canon, describes the translation as “

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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”.
The Song, Yuan, and Ming versions each provide a nearly identical ascription (唐三藏法師義淨譯), 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 Tripitaka 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 दीर्घानखपरिप्रच्छा sūtra into Chinese

According to the ninth fascicle of the Kaiyuan-lu 開元録, 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). It was around this time that Yijing translated the 12 fascicles of the गृह्यसूत्र विनय संग्रह (Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya Samgraha). In the ninth month of 701 (大足 1) he went on to translate seven fascicles from seven texts, including 佛説彌勒下生成佛經 (one fascicle), 荘嚴王陀羅尼呪經 (one fascicle), 善夜經 (one fascicle), 大乘流轉諸有經 (one fascicle), 妙色王因縁經 (one fascicle).
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 Tripitaka” 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 *Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā 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

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5 In Taishō Vol. 15 (No. 645).

6 The full title of this work is the *Dazhoukandingzhongjingmulu* 大周刊定眾經目録. It states that on the 26th day of the 10th month of the first year of the 天冊萬歳 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 Tripitaka” 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 “無為道經一部二卷 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 “救護身命済人病苦厄經一卷 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 “聖暦三年奉行” ("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 *Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā sūtra* among old Buddhist manuscript collections in Japan. The versions are from the following collections: the Shōgozō Repository, Kongō-ji, Kōshō-ji, Nanatsu-dera, Ishiyama-dera, Shōgozō Repository, Kongō-ji, Kōshō-ji, Nanatsu-dera, Ishiyama-dera,
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. 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

**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

**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

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

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

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

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11 See the Database by the Research Institute of Tripikata Koreana

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 Tripitaka Master Yijing. In strong contrast, the Japanese manuscript versions are described as “translated by Tripitaka 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). 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

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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.
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Goryeo = 口, Kōshō-ji = 口, Kongō-ji = 口, 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 = 慣.

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 = 達摩離欲, 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 佛説八支近住淨戒經, the content of which is the same as the *Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā sūtra.*
Photograph 1: Kongō-ji 金剛寺 version of the Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā sūtra, beginning of the scroll

Photograph 2: Kōshō-ji 興聖寺 version of the Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā sūtra, beginning of the scroll
Photograph 3: Saihō-ji 西方寺 version of the Dirghanakhaparipṛcchā sūtra, beginning of the scroll

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