

A HITHERTO UNKNOWN VERSION OF THE *SAN FA DU LUN* FOUND IN MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS IN JAPAN

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ABSTRACT

The *San fa du lun* 三法度論 (T. 1506), translated by Saṅghadeva 僧伽提婆, is a kind of Abhidharmic treatise which classifies the essential content of the four *Āgamas* 阿含 into three types of *dharmas* 法. There is also another translation of the same original, i. e. the *Si a han mu chao* 四阿含暮抄 (T. 1505). Daoan 道安 was closely involved in the translation of the latter.

A hitherto unknown version of the *San fa du lun* was found in the old Japanese manuscript collections. The text is different from the traditional woodblock print editions in the following two respects:

- 1) The manuscript version has an independent text titled *San fa du jing ben* 三法度經本 by Vasubhadra in its opening.
- 2) The details concerning the translator of the text differ.

My paper will introduce this new version of the text, make its significance clear, and suggest the possibility that the manuscript version may be closer to the Chinese original.

Key Words: Buddhist manuscripts in Japan, *San fa du lun*, *San fa du jing ben*, Saṅghadeva, Vasubhadra, Saṅghasena.

PAPER

INTRODUCTION

Research on Buddhist manuscript collections in Japan has made steady progress in recent years. This kind of research started with examinations of the texts of the *Anban Shou yi jing* 安般守意經 and the *Shi er men jing* 十二門經 translated by An Shigao 安世高, both of which were newly discovered in the Kongō-ji 金剛寺, a monastery in Osaka Prefecture founded in between 729 and 749.

For many generations, the tendency has been to regard the Buddhist manuscript collections in Japan as sources of secondary value, sources that were valued only for their potential to offer supplementary materials not found in the traditional woodblock printed editions of the Buddhist Canon such as the Koryō edition.

A basic and general survey of the Kongō-ji manuscript collection carried out by Prof. Ochiai, however, suggests that these manuscripts are faithful replicas of the Chinese originals which circulated during the Tang Dynasty. Specifically, some manuscripts in these collections are noticeably different from the printed edition equivalents in terms of content, although they bear exactly the same titles. In these cases, the manuscript versions are more likely to reflect the Chinese originals, for the printed editions often have altered terminology, wording, structure, and so forth.

A project for a systematic and exhaustive investigation of such Buddhist manuscript collections has been underway since 2005 at the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies (Tokyo) under the title “Establishment of the Research Centre for the Buddhist Manuscripts copied in the Nara and Heian Periods”. I have been involved in the project, and in this presentation I shall introduce a hitherto unknown version of the *San fa du lun* 三法度論 (T. 1506) found among the manuscript collections, examine its differences from the printed editions, make its significance clear, and also suggest the clear possibility that the manuscript version may be closer to the Chinese original.

I. The *San fa du lun* and the *Si a han mu chao jie/jing*

First of all, I shall give a brief overview of the text.

The *San fa du lun* 三法度論 is a kind of Abhidharmic treatise that has come down to us only in translation. Its Indian original is said to have been composed by Vasubhadra. The preface to it 三法度序 by Huiyuan 慧遠 (334-417) states that Saṅghadeva 僧伽提婆 translated it into Chinese (presumably in 391 AD) at Lu shan 廬山, following Huiyuan’s suggestion to do so.

This work classifies the essential content of the four *Āgamas* 阿含 into three categories, i. e. three *dharmas* 三法 (*san fa*), each of which is moreover subdivided into three sections called 眞度 (*zhen du*). It is apparent that the title *San fa du* comes from this structure.

There is also another translation of the same original dating to 382 AD., i. e. the *Si a han mu chao jie* 四阿鎗暮抄解 or the *Si a han mu chao jing* 四阿鎗暮抄經. Daoan 道安 (312-385) was closely involved in this translation.

The *Si a han mu chao jie* mentions “the *San fa du* by Vasubhadra” at the end of every section. From this, we know that this translation is also of the same Indian original, despite the divergence of the Chinese title. It seems that Daoan chose a translation for the title more befitting the content as opposed to a word-for-word rendering of the original title.

II. Differences between the Manuscript Version and the Printed Editions

Before looking at differences between them, let me touch briefly on the manuscripts that I have investigated so far. They are the following three:

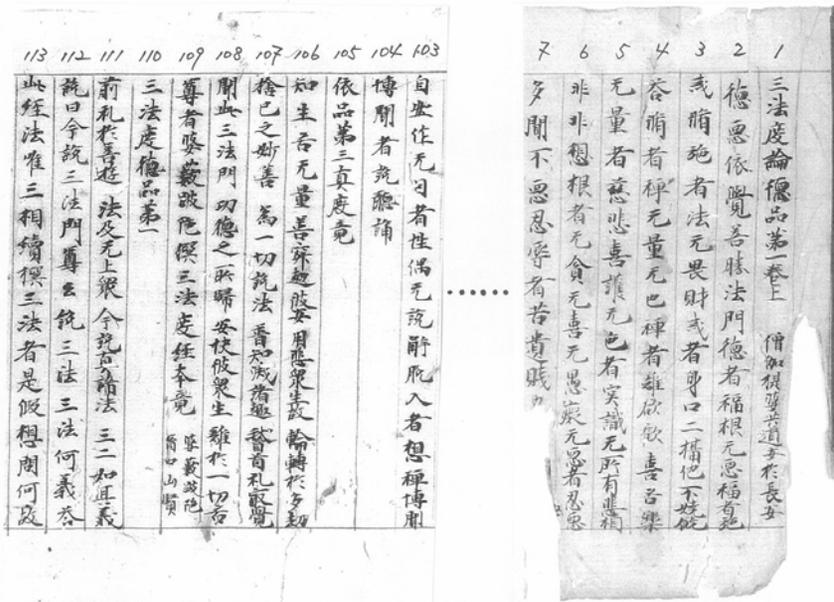
A) the Kongō-ji 金剛寺 Manuscript, copied during the Kamakura Period

B) the Nanatsudera 七寺 Manuscript, copied during the latter half of the Heian Period

C) the Jingo-ji 神護寺 Manuscript, copied during the latter half of the Heian Period

The following photographs are of the opening portions of these three manuscripts. For the sake of comparison, the Taisho edition is also shown below. Arabic numerals show line numbers from the beginning.

Photograph A: The Kongō-ji Manuscript



Photograph B: The Nanatsudera Manuscript



Photograph C: The Jingo-ji Manuscript



The Beginning Portion of the *San fa du lun* in the Taisho Edition
(Vol. 25, p. 15 c)

No.1506 (No.1505)

1 三法度論卷上

2 東晉罽賓三藏瞿曇僧伽提婆譯

3 德品第一

4 知生苦無量 善寂趣彼安
5 用悲衆生故 輪轉於多劫
6 捨己之妙善 爲一切說法
7 普智滅諸趣 稽首禮最覺
8 開此三法門 功德之所歸
9 安快彼衆生 離於一切苦
10 前禮於善逝 法及無上衆
11 今說真諦法 三三如其義

12 說曰。今說三法問尊云說三法。三法何義答
13 此經因法故。唯三相續撰。三法者是假想。
14 問何故三法撰。答此佛經依無量想衆生爲
15 惡世所壞。命以食存。欲求其真。爲彼開想故
16 及善持故。此三法撰。一切世間亦依真想及
17 假想。是以開想故三法撰。問已答三法撰。三
18 法唯願說。答德惡依覺善勝法門者。覺德
19 惡依覺則善勝法門。此三法經本三三品說
20 品各三真度。問可說三品。但於說有答。所
21 以者何。善勝者應前說。是善勝說善勝已。然
22 後說德惡依當覺。覺善勝所向者則不應說。此
23 一切世間樂向善勝。乃至昆蟲亦樂向樂。所
24 以者何。爲食故有所求。善勝者樂妙愛。如
25 是比義說善勝。世間者多樂向樂而背樂因。
26 樂者大涅槃。及無病是多樂。向但背是因。

④〔東晉…譯〕十三字=〔晉太始元年僧
伽提婆共羅達譯〕二十一字⑤。〔尊者山賢造，東晉三藏僧伽提婆共羅
達譯〕十七字⑥。中下卷亦同 ⑦唯二惟⑧⑨ ⑩門二問⑪ ⑫覺一⑬⑭ ⑮問二門⑯ ⑰答十〔巴〕⑱ ⑲是二類⑳

I have examined the manuscripts shown in Photographs A and B first-hand and confirmed that they are exactly the same from beginning to end. For Photograph C, however, I was only able to examine a photographic reproduction, contained in *the Photographic Catalogue of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties*, Vol. 7. The photograph is only of 9 lines of the beginning of the text, as seen above, but it is of good enough quality to determine that this portion is also exactly the same as the previous two manuscripts and differs from the printed version. Although we have yet to obtain a photograph of the remaining portion, we may infer that it is the same as well. We can suppose, then, that all of these three are the same version. On the other hand, as the Taisho edition shows, as far as I was able to check, the printed editions such as the Koryō edition belong to the same stemma.

Let us now turn to differences between the manuscript version and the printed editions. The manuscript version is different in the following two respects, although in other respects it does not diverge from the printed editions.

- 1) The manuscript version has an independent text titled “*San fa du jing ben*” 三法度經本 by Vasubhadra in its opening.
- 2) The details concerning the translator of the text differ.

In the next section I shall focus on and examine the first difference of the above two.

III. Examination of Difference 1 and Its Significance

In order to clarify the first difference, I shall at the outset transcribe below on the left the beginning portion of the Nanatsudera Manuscript as shown in Photograph B on page 3, which has comparatively fewer copying errors. On the other hand, the Taisho edition is quoted on the right as representative of the printed editions.

For comparison, verses common to both are arranged at the same height. Arabic numerals show line numbers from the beginning.

Nanatsudera Manuscript

Taisho Edition (T. 1506; Vol. 25, p. 15 c)

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 三法度論德品第一卷上 | 1 | 三法度論卷上僧伽提婆共道安於長安譯 |
| 2 | 德惡依覺善勝法門 德者福根無惡 福者 | 2 | 東晉罽賓三藏瞿曇僧伽提婆譯 |
| 3 | 施戒修 施者法無畏財 戒者身口二攝他不 | 3 | 德品第一 |
| 4 | 燒饒益 修者禪無量無色 禪者離欲觀喜 | | |

[Lines 5 to 112 have been omitted for comparison purposes]

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------|-------------------------------|
| 113 | 博聞 博聞者說聽誦 | | |
| 114 | 依品第三真度竟 | | |
| 115 | 知生苦無量 善寂趣彼安 用悲衆生故 輪轉於多劫 | 4&5 | 知生苦無量 善寂趣彼安 用悲衆生故
輪轉於多劫 |
| 116 | 捨己之妙善 爲一切說法 善知滅諸趣 稽首禮最覺 | 6&7 | 捨己之妙善 爲一切說法 普智滅諸趣
稽首禮最覺 |
| 117 | 開此三法門 功德之所歸 安快彼衆生 離於一切苦 | 8&9 | 開此三法門 功德之所歸 安快彼衆生
離於一切苦 |
| 118 | 尊者婆藪跋陀撰 三法度經本竟 婆藪跋陀 晉曰山賢 | | |
| 119 | 三法度德品第一 | | |
| 120 | 前禮於善逝 法及無上衆 今說真諦法 三三 | 10&11 | 前禮於善逝 法及無上衆 今說真諦
法 三三如其義 |
| 121 | 如其義 說曰今說三法 問尊云說三法 三法何義. . . | 12 | 說曰. 今說三法問尊云說三法. 三
法何義. . . |

One glance is enough to see how very different they are. Surprisingly, there is no agreement between the two before line 114 of the manuscript version. It is only from line 115 on of the manuscript version, i. e. , the verse portion, that we can see any correspondence with the Taisho edition, the former corresponding to lines 4 & 5 onwards of the latter. Apart from lines 118 and 119 of the manuscript version, the two versions are identical in terms of content up to their respective ends.

What we should focus on here is the sentence in line 118, 尊者婆藪跋陀撰三法度經本竟, which means “the *San fa du jing ben* composed by Bhadanta Vasubhadra finishes [here]”. This does not appear in the Taisho edition and other printed editions. This sentence is of crucial import, for it clearly specifies that only the text before line 118 was composed by Vasubhadra. In other words, this sentence makes clear that all other text is *not* his work.

In order to look at this matter in more detail, let us have a look at the relationship between the *San fa du jing ben* and the *San fa du lun*. Taking the sentence in the manuscript version line 2 德惡慧覺善勝法門 as an example, it runs like this:

問, 已答三法撰. 三法唯願說. 答, 德惡依覺善勝法門. 若覺德惡依則善勝法門....

As underlined, the sentence is quoted in the form of an answer to a question raised. Almost all of the sentences of the *San fa du jing ben* are quoted and commented on in the same style. That is, the *San fa du lun* includes all of the *San fa du jing ben* by way of commentary.

Just who then is doing the commenting? The preface 三法度序 by Huiyuan states that Sanghasena 僧伽先 composed the exegesis on the *mūla* text and fathomed its meanings (演散本文以廣其義). From this, we can determine that Vasubhadra composed the *San fa du jing ben*, and that Sanghasena composed the *San fa du lun* as a commentary on the former. No distinction of this kind is seen in any traditional printed editions. The distinction between these two works had not been recognised before our manuscript version was discovered.

By means of attachment of Vasubhadra’s independent work *San fa du jing ben* in its opening, the newly found manuscript version allows us to clearly distinguish between these two works by different authors, and in that respect it is of much importance as a source in terms of philological study.

IV. A Brief Survey of Difference 2

The second difference is this; while most of the printed editions (except the Koryō edition) mention that Sanghadeva translated with Huiyuan 慧遠, our manuscript version states that Sanghadeva translated with Daoan at Chang’an (僧伽提婆共道安於長安譯), as shown in line 1 in each of the three manuscript photographs.

This problem cannot be discussed here but it will be addressed in my forthcoming paper contained in *Journal of Buddhist Studies* 佛教學, Vol. 49 (in print). Here I will simply state my conclusion, which is that the ascription to “Daoan” as the Chinese co-translator in the manuscript version is unreliable and presumably incorrect, and traceable to the fact that Daoan was involved in translating this work, but his translation is unrelated to the one we are concerned with here.

V. The Original Structure

The question that we should consider next is this: which more faithfully preserves the original structure of this text as translated by Saṅghadeva, the manuscript version or the printed version?

If we take into account the statement in the preface 三法度序 to the effect that Saṅghasena commented on the concise work of Vasubhadra, it is more likely that the manuscript version retains the original form, for it makes each work clearly distinguishable.

If we assume that one version was compiled by editing another, there arise two possibilities.

The first possibility is that the printed version resulted from the manuscript version through a deletion of the *San fa du jing ben*, the beginning portion, with just the verse portion left intact. This process of editing would be comparatively easier, and therefore seems more plausible.

The second possibility is just the opposite. It would be almost impossible, however, to accurately extract only Vasubhadra’s work from the printed version (i.e., the *San fa du lun* with no distinction between the works) unless the editor was perfectly familiar with its Indian original as well. If we allow for this possibility, then surely only Saṅghadeva would have been capable of performing such a difficult task. This possibility would also mean that both the manuscript version and the printed version already *co-existed* at the time of Saṅghadeva.

Whichever possibility is assumed, one can safely conclude that the textual form of the manuscript version can ultimately be ascribed to Saṅghadeva himself. That means that the manuscript version may preserve the original form of the Saṅghadeva’s translation, or otherwise a form translated and partially edited by Saṅghadeva himself.

Our new manuscript version is of much textual value for Buddhist philology not only in terms of making a clear distinction between Vasubhadra’s and Saṅghasena’s works but also of being closer to the Chinese original.