

The Problem of the Authorship of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitodeśa*: A Re-examination

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Abstract

This paper accounts for why Chinese Buddhists believe that Nāgārjuna is the author of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitodeśa*, the commentary on the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. It refutes past theories on the authorship of the text which proceed from the perspective of Indian Buddhism, and proposes a new theory which ascribes the authorship to Sengrui's editorship that reflects the intellectual situation of Chinese Buddhism of the early fifth century. The authorship issue is actually of a historical event rather than a personal identity. For this new theory, the paper investigates the intellectual activities of Kumārajīva and Sengrui, the translation process, and compares terminological differences and textual variations between the old and new translations of the *Sūtra* and accompanied doctrinal explanations in the commentary.

Keywords: *Mahāprajñāpāramitodeśa*, *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, Kumārajīva, Sengrui, Nāgārjuna, translation of Buddhist scriptures.

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- II. Kumārajīva (344-413)
- III. The Translation Process
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- VII. Sengrui as Editor of the Text
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This paper is an attempt to resolve a protracted dispute over the authorship of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa* (*Dazhidu Lun* 大智度論, abbreviated as *DZDL* hereafter) --whether or not it is the work of the great Indian Mādhyamika philosopher, Nāgārjuna. The *DZDL* is a commentary on the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*The Sūtra of Transcendental Wisdom in Twenty-five Thousand Lines*, or, in Chinese, *Dapin Jing* 小品經, the *Large Version of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, abbreviated hereafter *LPP*). This work, which has almost one million Chinese characters and one hundred chapters, is the largest in the extant Buddhist exegetical literature.¹ Kumārajīva translated it into Chinese upon the request of the Buddhist king of the Later Qin dynasty, Yao Xing, from the summer of 402 to the twelfth month of 405. Chinese Buddhists have since relied upon this single text to study the highly dialectical and opaque Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of *prajñāpāramitā*, and have firmly believed Kumārajīva's assertion that Nāgārjuna is its author. This assertion was never questioned until recently, first by E. Lamotte and then by other Buddhist scholars.

In 1944, while publishing his first annotated French translation of the

¹ According to testimonies of contemporary Chinese Buddhists, Kumārajīva only translated the commentary on the first chapter of the *LPP* in full and abridged it beyond Chapter I. Otherwise the *DZDL* would be ten times longer than it now is.

DZDL, Lamotte suspected that the work is not by Nāgārjuna, a southern Indian, as conventionally claimed, but by a Sarvāstivādin convert to Mahāyāna Buddhism in Kashmir in the early fourth century. His suspicion finally materialized in 1970 in a long essay in the third volume of the French translation of the *DZDL*.² Lamotte's startling discovery attracted the attention of many other Buddhist scholars. Conze follows Lamotte's suggestion by saying that "Kumārajīva, the translator, was himself such a convert," and thus implies that Kumārajīva was the author of the *DZDL*.³ Hikata pointed out the many explanatory passages, such as "it is meant in Chinese," which are only sensible as being addressed to Chinese, rather than Indian, readers, advocating that the text was basically written by Nāgārjuna, but with many "additions or insertions by Kumārajīva."⁴ Tucci thinks that there could be two: one is the great Mādhyamika philosopher and the other is the author of the *DZDL*.⁵ Yet some scholars, like Ramanan and Venerable Yinshun, still hold the conventional view.⁶ Yinshun particularly argues against Lamotte, contending that Lamotte confused two branches of the Abhidharmic study in northwestern India, the Dār's!tāntikin in Gandhāra and the Sarvāstivādin in Kashmir, by mistaking the former for the latter. Yinshun thinks that the *DZDL* accepts the former for its liberal view, while rejecting the latter for its conservative view, of Abhidharmic learning; in no way could the author once have been a Sarvāstivādin scholar-monk, as Lamotte suggests. Yinshun also rejects Hikata's addition

2 E. Lamotte, "Introduction," *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse* vol. III (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1970), v-lxviii.

3 E. Conze, *The Prajñāpāramitā Literature* (Tokyo: Reiyukai, 1978), 94.

4 R. Hikata, *Suvikrāntavikrāmi-parip!cchā Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra* (Fukuoka: Kyushu University Press, 1958), lii-lxxv.

5 Giuseppe Tucci, "Review of *Le Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse*, by E. Lamotte," *East and West*, n.s., 22, nos.3-4, 1972, 367. In regard to the problem as to how many Nāgārjunas there are, see Ian Mabbett, "The Problem of the Historical Nāgārjuna Revisited," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118.3, 1998, 332-347; Jan Yun-hua, "Nāgārjuna, One or More?" *History of Religions* 10, 1970, 139-155.

6 K. Venkata Ramanan, *Nāgārjuna's Philosophy* (Varanasi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, 1971), 13.

theory by attributing wrong rhetoric and phraseology in the Chinese translation to Sengrui, Kumārajīva's Chinese amanuensis, rather than to Kumārajīva himself.⁷

Under further scrutiny, their arguments, however, become contradictory, with historical accounts going one way or another. First, if, as Lamotte suggests, the *DZDL* is not Nāgārjuna's work, then the scholarship and integrity of the learned Kumārajīva becomes questionable. Yet, as an earnest follower and promulgator of Mādhyamika Buddhism, he was unlikely to fail to recognize the author of this text, or to deceive Chinese Buddhists while honestly informing them of the right Indian authors of other Buddhist works in his translation.

Second, it is indeed unusual that Indian and Tibetan Buddhism is silent about this work, since Nāgārjuna is well-known and this work is huge. However, also noteworthy is that no Chinese Buddhists who later went to Central Asia and India to seek the Dharma reported this work as forged. Since Chinese scholar-monks have always been sensitive about the authenticity of a Buddhist scripture, the absence of such negative reports effectively nullifies Lamotte's suspicion and Conze's suggestion. Besides, the Chinese translation of *The Life of Nāgārjuna* (龍樹菩薩傳, T #2047) does record that Nāgārjuna wrote the [*Mahāprajāparamitā*]-*upadeśa*.⁸

Third, Kumārajīva wished that he could write a Mahāyāna *vibhāśā*.⁹ The *DZDL* is actually very much like a *vibhāśa* in terms of expository style

7 Yinshun, "Dazhidulun Zhi Fanyi Jiqi Zuozhe 大智度論之翻譯及其作者," *Dongfang Zongjiao Yanjiu*, n.s., 2, 1991, 9-67.

8 T 50, p. 184c. One may contend that *The Life of Nāgārjuna* is not written by Kumārajīva because Sengyou's *Chu Sanzang Jiji* (出三藏記集, *The Collection on Accounts of the Translation of the Tripitaka into Chinese*, abridged as *CSZJJ* hereafter), the most reliable Chinese Buddhist catalogue of the early sixth century, does not mention this work in the list of Kumārajīva's works. This contention is untenable, for part of the text can be found in Kumārajīva's own explanation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* in 406 C.E. (T 38, p. 339c). In other words, if not in entirety, the completion of this work must be based upon the accounts Kumārajīva provided.

9 *Vibhāśā*, literally meaning "extensive analysis," is a kind of expository work made by collecting different interpretations of Buddhist tenets.

and magnitude. Kumārajīva could simply have applied his name to this work. Why did he not do that, instead of listing Nāgārjuna as the author of this work?

Fourth, Hitaka's addition theory is untenable, because he misattributes to Kumārajīva many Chinese Buddhist technical terms that contradict Kumārajīva's own knowledge of Indian Buddhism (see Section VII of this paper).

Fifth, the conventional view, as maintained by Yinshun and Ramanan is also faulty, however. As Lamotte pointed out, the stories cited and the doctrines discussed in the *DZDL* mainly circulated in northwestern India. It is valid to say that this text has a stronger connection with northwestern India than with Andhra, where Nāgārjuna is supposed to have lived. Furthermore, for, as Joseph Walser points out, "philosophical propositions may claim to be universal, but dialectics are always local," we must assume from the dialogue in the text that Nāgārjuna once lived in the area of Gandhāra-Kashmir and engaged in debate there, but we have no historical account of them. All we have about Nāgārjuna's refutation of the Sarvāstivādin doctrine are actually derived from Candrakīrti, Bhāvaviveka or Kumārajīva.¹⁰

There is no easy way to reconcile these contradictions. The one certainty is that there was a Sanskrit original of the *DZDL* and that it was translated by Kumārajīva into Chinese.

Yet we notice that the authorship issue arises (1) from the perspective of Indian Buddhism and (2) in the conception that the *DZDL* was "faithfully" translated from its original Sanskrit into Chinese. In other words, readers expect to read a work of Nāgārjuna, whose thought is compatible with what he wrote in Indian Buddhism, and a Chinese translation without interventions of other Buddhist doctrines and Chinese interpretations. Once non-Mādhyamika doctrines and non-Indian interpretations occur in the Chinese translation, scholars doubt whether or not the *DZDL* is Nāgārjuna's work. It appears that scholars forget that the

10 Joseph Walser, "Nāgārjuna and the *Ratnāvalī*," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25-1 & 2, 2002, 209-262.

purpose of the translation of the *DZDL* was to correct the earlier Chinese Buddhist misunderstanding of the *LPP*. Therefore, this study looks at this issue from the perspective of Chinese Buddhism. Two approaches will be adopted, textual comparison and intellectual history.

The paper will begin, in Sections I and II, with a review of the intellectual activities of two protagonists of the translation, Kumārajīva, the translator, and Sengrui, his Chinese amanuensis (*bishuo* 筆受) to portray the contemporary Chinese Buddhist intellectual situation in which the translation was undertaken. Section III will examine the translation process, from which to show that, during the translation, Sengrui, Yao Xing and Kumārajīva underwent the discussion on terminological differences and textual variations between the old translations of the *LPP* by Moks!!ala and Dharmaraks!!a and the new one by Kumārajīva. Section IV will engage in the investigation of the form of discussion, which happens to be coincident with the literary form of the *DZDL*. Section V focuses on terminological corrections, and Section VI on textual variations and their accompanied explanation in the *DZDL*, based on the textual comparison of the translations of the *LPP*. From these two sections, I will argue that the authorship of the text must be equally shared by someone who knew earlier Chinese Buddhism well and someone who knew Indian Buddhism well. It is because, in the dialogical form of the *DZDL*, many questions were raised on the basis of the textual content of the old translations, which could not be perceived by the original writer, but by someone who knew the earlier Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures; conversely, the answers, were given in the Mādhyamika view, which is beyond the scope of questions. Section VII will affirm the *DZDL* as the product of Sengrui's editorship which comprises the contemporary translation of a Sanskrit original and the discussion of the textual variations between the old and new translations of the *LPP* and their related doctrinal problems, rather than the translation itself.

Section VIII will explain why Chinese Buddhists believed that Nāgārjuna is the author of the *DZDL* through examination of psychological and intellectual anxiety of the "borderland phobia" of Chinese Buddhists,

and of a miraculous story that justifies Kumārajīva's assertion. In conclusion, Section IX, I will suggest that authorship of the *DZDL* must be ascribed to the contemporary Chinese Buddhist intellectual situation, not to Nāgārjuna, not to a Sarvāstivādin convert to Mahāyāna Buddhism, and not to Kumārajīva alone.

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I. Sengrui (352?-436?)

Thanks to recent studies of Sengrui,¹² we have come to understand the historical place of his service as primary amanuensis for Kumārajīva's translation in bringing Chinese Buddhism into a new phase. To illustrate this, we must first review two aspects of Dao'an's late Buddhist thought, which deeply instructed Sengrui to translate Buddhist scriptures: the principle of translating a Buddhist scripture from Sanskrit to Chinese and the realization of the place of Sarvāstivādin śāstras in understanding of fundamental Buddhist concepts. Both of them crystallize Dao'an's life-long effort to overcome the interpretive problem of concept-matching, or *geyi*

11 The dates of Sengrui's birth and death are unclear. The earliest information on the date of his death is recorded in the *Gausenzhuan* (高僧傳, *Lives of Eminent Monks*, abbreviated as *GSZ* hereafter), that puts it "in the midst of the years of Yuanjia 元嘉 (424-453)." T 50, p. 357b. Chen Yuan'an 陳援庵, based on a Tang source, puts the life of Sengrui from 355 to 439, *Shishi Yinian Lu* 釋氏疑年錄 (Beijing: Zonghua, rpt. 1964), 10 Here I follow Ōchō Enichi's research, "Soei to Eiei wa donin nari 僧叡と慧叡は同人なり," *Chūgoku Bukkyō no Kenkyū* Vol. II (Kyoto: Hōzokan, 1974), 119-44.

12 Because of the documentary confusion about Sengrui and Huirui 慧叡, scholars debate whether they are identical or not. The view that they are identical is more persuasive. In regard to the review of this issue, see 鎌田茂雄, tr. by Guan Shiqian, *Chūgoku Bukkyōshi* 中國佛教史 vol. II, (Kaohsiung: Foguang Press, 1986), 304-313. Also see Arthur Wright, "Sengrui Alias Hui-rui," *Sino-Indian Studies* 5, nos. 3-4, 1957, 272-94. Arthur Wright attributes the documentary confusion to Huijio, the author of *GSZ*, who was not familiar with northern Chinese Buddhism. See his "Biography and Hagiography: Huichiao's Lives of Eminent Monks," *Silver Jubilee Volume of the Jimbun Kagaku Kenkyūjo* (Kyoto: Kyoto University, 1954), 383-432.

格義。¹³

In supervising a translation program in Chang'an from 380 to 385 CE, Dao'an saw Chinese Buddhist failure to understand the doctrine of the *prajñāpāramitā* rooted in the earlier unfaithful translation. He concluded the observation of this with his famous thesis, *wushiben* 五失本 and *sanbuyi* 三不易 (the five losses from the original and three difficulties),¹⁴ and demanded translators to keep the format and expression of their Chinese translation as close to the original as possible. In his words,

In past translations, translators disfavored expressions in the foreign language because they were concise and ancient, and changed them to fit to current Chinese. ... These translators were incapable of knowing a foreign language. Therefore, in translating a foreign language into Chinese, they would like to use rhetorical expressions. Why are we bothered whether an expression is rhetorical or ancient? Being clumsy or ancient is a matter of the epochal style that has already been fixed with each scripture. Please do not change [the epochal style]. If one cannot completely deliver the style of a scripture in the translation, it is the translator's fault. Everyone praised this viewpoint. This is so true, indeed. Therefore, this scripture (the *Abhidharma-vibhāṣā*) was

13 The historical place of *geyi* and its methodological can be seen in the studies below. Tang Yongtong 湯用彤, *Hanweilangjin Nanbeichao Fojiaoshi* 漢魏兩晉南北朝佛教史 (referred to as the *History* hereafter) (Taipei: Dingwen, rpt. 1962), 229-277; "On 'Ko-yi,' the Earliest Method by Which Indian Buddhism and Chinese Thought Were Synthesized," ed. W. R. Inge et al. *Radhakrishnan Festschrift: Comparative Studies in Philosophy in Honour His Sixtieth Birthday*, (London: Allen & Urwin, 1951), 276-286; Leon Hurvitz, "The First Systematizations of Buddhist Thought in China," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 2, 1975, 361-88; Whalen Lai, "The Early *prajñā* Schools, Especially 'Hsin-wu,' Reconsidered," *Philosophy East & West* 33, no. 1, 1983, 61-76.

14 CSZJJ, T 55, pp. 52b-c. The explanation of *sanbuyi* as the "three unalterabilities," or the "three difficulties," varies among scholars. See following articles. L. Hurvitz & A. Link, "Three *Prajñāpāramitā* Prefaces," *Melanges de Sinologie Offerts a Monsieur Paul Demiéville* (Paris: Bibliothèque de L'institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises, 1974), 403-70; Ōchō Enichi, *Chūgoku Bukkyō no Kenkyū* vol. I (Kyoto: Hōrōkan, 1959), 249-50, "Tao-an on Translation," *The Eastern Buddhists* 8, no. 4, 1958, 1-9.

rendered as it is, with neither additions nor omissions. Occasionally, the orders of sentences were changed. Other than this, they all are the same as the original.¹⁵

Under his instruction, Sengrui had the chance to practice translation by helping Kumārabodhi render the *Annotations to Selected Tenets of the Four Agamas* (the *Si Ahanmu Chaojie* 四阿含暮抄解) (T #1510) into Chinese. This work is, like the other Buddhist scriptures under Dao'an's supervision, too awkward to read. Yet he kept in mind his teacher's guideline in his assistance to Kumārajīva's translation of the *DZDL*, in the fear that he would become as reckless as those in transmigration who presumptuously translated Buddhist scriptures as what Dao'an had criticized.¹⁶

The other Dao'an intellectual achievement concerns his understanding of the integral place of Abhidharmic śāstras in the tripartite Buddhist canon and their role in understanding primary Buddhist doctrines. In previous *geyi* practice, primary Buddhist concepts, such as the five *skandhas* (the five psycho-physical constituents), were understood by way of "comparing them with, and referring to, similar ones in the Chinese literature, making analogies to promote understanding of them."¹⁷ After having read Sarvāstivādin Abhidharmic treatises in Chinese translation, Dao'an came to realize how complicated primary Buddhist concepts are. By connecting the *Abhidharma-jñānaprasthāna* with the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, he felt that the understanding of the *Sūtra* came into sight. He joyfully said,

The *Abhidharma[-jñānaprasthāna]* is the garden of dharmas. In Kapilavastu, there were no erudite scholars who did not study the

15 CSZJJ, T 55, p73c.

16 "When Ānanda was issuing the sūtras, the Buddha had not been gone for very long. Yet the Venerable Kāśyapa asked the five hundred arhats with the six super-knowledges critically to examine and write down [the Tripitaka]. Nowadays a thousand years have passed since that time. Translators conjured and modified the meanings of scriptures with modern ideas. As compared with scrupulous transmission of the Dharma by those arhats, those people in samsara were very reckless. Are those who do not know the Dharma presumptuous?" CSZJJ, T 55, p. 52c.

17 R. Mather, *A New Account of Tales of the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 123.

Abhidharma. The boat to be made for crossing the great ocean must be sturdy in its structure. Likewise, the text to be formed by exhausting every dharma must be grand in its composition. Therefore, from the beginning, the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* must raise each dharma one by one. The scripture is completed with every dharma that is included. For this reason, the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is the voice of all scriptures, the core of the Way. How can one not study it hard! How can one not study it hard!¹⁸

He noted the fundamentality of Abhidharma in learning the Buddhist Dharma again in his preface to the *Abhidharmavibhāṣā*, translated by Samghabhūti in 383,

The Abhidharma means the “great law (*dafa* 大法) [that goes above or behind laws]”. The Buddha wanted something through which one could see what the ultimate achievements of the Way are, what they appear to be, and what characters they hold. In this sense of transcending, Abhidharma is called “great.” The Buddha also wanted an organized system of knowledge that could serve as a compass to observe and investigate a dharma. In this sense of guiding, Abhidharma is called “the law [above or behind laws.]” When putting two together, Abhidharma means “the great law [that goes beyond or behind laws].” In the *Madhyāgama*, the Buddha rebuked Udāyi, “How dare you criticize the Abhidharma!” The Buddha entrusted Śāriputra with the dharmas in five categories made of the great Abhidharma. After the Buddha entered nirvāna, Kātyāyana thought that the scriptures were too enormous to study. Therefore he composed the Great Law. This book has eight sections or *khandhas*, and forty-four chapters. ... It was praised by the elders and inspired erudite scholars. None of the monks from India fail to cite this book in veneration. They all base their preaching on the Abhidharma.¹⁹

Dao’an strongly recommended that every Buddhist student carry the

18 *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 70a.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 72a.

Abhidharmavibhāṣā with him as the primary reference book when reading Buddhist scriptures.²⁰ Sengrui's later assistance to Kumārajīva's translation reflects his mastery of Abhidharmic learning.

If Dao'an's thought represents the cutting-edge of Chinese Buddhism, we see its intrinsic weakness. He failed to know that those Abhidharmic works belong to the Sarvāstivādin school, whose philosophical assumption of the nature of dharma is ontologically incompatible with Mahāyāna Buddhism. Probably for this reason, indigenously interpretative theses on the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of *prajñāpāramitā* resulted from the concept-matching practice still remained active. Disentangling Dao'an's wrong doctrinal connection and realizing his wish to defeat concept-matching had to await some really learned, linguistically adept and dedicated Mahāyāna Buddhist scholar-monk, like Kumārajīva, to come along.

Between 385, when Dao'an's passed away, and 401, when he began to serve as Kumārajīva's amanuensis, Sengrui must have gone to India. There he mastered the "phonology, etymology, and various doctrinal ideas of the foreign language."²¹ His study in India eventually proved to be a great help that resulted in Kumārajīva's translation being of a high caliber. For this, Kumārajīva was once pleased to say to Sengrui, "In translating the sūtras and śāstras, I have been able to meet you; indeed, there is nothing in my life to regret!"²²

In the beginning, Sengrui seemed dissatisfied with Kumārajīva's translation. We see his criticism of Kumārajīva's translation of the *Viśeṣ!acintā-brahma-pariprcchā* (T #586) in 402:

The title of this sūtra in Sanskrit is *Viśeṣ!acintā*, which is designated for other-worldly heavenly bodhisattvas with the supreme, distinguished mind. I carefully listened to Kumārajīva's translation of this term and repeatedly pondered it. I thought that the translation did not fully express the meaning of the term. This could well be attributed

20 Ibid., p. 367b.

21 GSZ, T 50, p. 367a. Arthur Wright, "Seng-jui Alias Hui-jui," 278.

22 GSZ, T 50, p. 364b. Arthur Wright, *ibid.*, 275.

to his being unable to grasp the linguistic difference between the superficial meaning of an individual word and the particular reality it represents in the Chinese context. I investigated the meaning of the word [*viśes!acintā*] and came to comprehend its purport. I thought that the term ought to be translated as *chixin* 持心 (firmly holding the mind), instead of *siyi* 思益 (enhancing thought). He simply could not understand the meaning of *chi* (firmly holding); therefore, he used *yi* (enhancing). The meaning of *yi* (enhancing) has the denotation of “surpassing, particularizing, being distinguished.” The meaning of *si* (thinking) has the denotation of “anxiously advancing achievement to the higher and supreme state, and self-strengthening and ceaselessly moving up.” The old translation of *chixin* (firmly holding the mind) best catches the meaning.²³

Sengrui’s criticism testifies how scrupulously he translated and how well he knew Sanskrit. His preference for the old translation of *chixin* (firmly holding the mind) to the new one of *siyi* (enhancing thought) indicates that Sengrui knew the meaning of *viśes!a-* (to enhance, to particularize, to be distinguished, to surpass, to excel) and *-cintā* (thought, anxious thought about) very well. Yet he wanted the translation to be as close to Chinese philosophical expression as possible without losing the original meaning. “Mind” or *xin* in Chinese thought had multiple meanings that comprised “heart,” “thought,” and “anxious thought.” The *Xunzi*, one of the major contemporaneous intellectual sources, says that the mind is the Heavenly Lord which governs the sensory faculties; with its innate faculty of reflection, the mind constantly brings a man close to the Way.²⁴ To Sengrui, translating *viśes!acintā* into *chixin* rather than *siyi* was more philosophically proper than Kumārajīva’s translation, which, though not wrong, did not satisfy Sengrui’s sense of exactitude.

We see again that he argued with Kumārajīva about correctness in translating the *DZDL*, when he served as Kumārajīva’s amanuensis for

²³ *CSZJJ*, T 55, pp. 57c-58a.

²⁴ *Xunzi*, tr. by H. H. Dubs “On the Rectification of Terms,” (New York: Paragon, 1966), 281-300.

translating the text from the summer of 402 to December of 405.

The Dharma Master [Kumārajīva] has great difficulty with the Chinese language. In regard to translating, the Sanskrit is beautiful, but his translation can hardly be understood. If the language cannot be understood, the actual thought cannot be inferred. If the actual thought cannot be inferred, it cannot be expected that enlightenment can be achieved from verbal externals. If the language cannot be understood, how is it possible to realize that arguments in different ways are made for the same common goal? All these are obvious. Therefore, I stopped writing and argued for the right translation. I checked Kumārajīva's translation against the original for the entire day, but ended with nothing accomplished.²⁵

His argument with a foreign translator for the correct translation was unprecedented, for earlier Chinese amanuenses just wrote down whatever the foreign translators rendered and polished their words into readable Chinese. His linguistic capacity and missionary zeal do not yet allow him to continue a bad translation. In addition, he was haunted by Dao'an's guideline that demanded that translation be rigorous and faithful. He said:

When I held the brush, [my] deceased guru's teaching of the "five losses from the original and three difficulties [of translation]" immediately came to my mind. I was afraid and anxious. I was extremely careful in translating. The idiom that "it is as if one walks on thin ice on a river or on the narrow path on a steep cliff" cannot fully describe my feelings.²⁶

Through years, Sengrui became much adept than Dao'an had been in making readable translation. This can be attested in a case where Kumārajīva re-translated the *Lotus Sūtra* in 406. Encountering the passage, "Devā api manus!yān draks!yanti, manus!yā api devān draks!yanti," Kumārajīva did not like Dharmarakṣa's earlier translation, "天見人，人見

25 CSZJJ, T 55, p. 75b. Robert Shi translated this Prolegomenon into English. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Sinology* (Taipei: Academic Sinica, 1981), 749-750. I revised his translation.

26 CSZJJ, T 55, pp. 53a-b.

天” (The gods see men, and men see gods), and said to Sengrui, “This sentence has the same meaning as what is expressed in Western Region, but it keeps to the words and overpasses the substance.” Sengrui said, “Should it not be ‘men and gods are in contact and they see each other?’” Kumārajīva was pleased and said, “It is really so.”²⁷

Moreover, the new interpretation in the *Mādhyamika* vein along with the translations of the *DZDL* and the *LPP* received immediate response from Chinese Buddhists. It can be seen from Sengrui’s paeans to *Mādhyamika* philosophy in the four śāstras---the *DZDL*, the *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*, the *Śataśāstra*, and the *Dvādaśamukhaśāstra*, which Kumārajīva translated. In the “Prolegomena to the *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*,” he wrote in excitement:

When beholding how grand this treatise is, then one knows how inferior one-sided understanding is. How fortunate it is that this land of China has suddenly had Mount Gr!dhrakū!a moved to it to be its chief mountain, and that biased minds in this borderland [i.e., China] receive the flowing light of its surplus of kindness. From now on, for the first time, the worthies who discuss the Way can converse about reality.²⁸

He continued:

It is said that in all the states of India there were no diligent scholars who did not study this treatise [the *Mūlamādhyamakakārikā*], because they all thought it to be indispensable to make access into Buddhism. . . . The *Śataśāstra* deals with the conceptions of the Tīrthikas and shuts out false views. The *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā* is to banish misconceptions of Buddhists by dissolving [conceptual] obstructions. The *DZDL* is profound and vast [with its thoroughgoing expositions of doctrine]. The *Dvādaśamukhaśāstra* is concise and to the point. When one examines these four, it is indeed as if the sun and moon entered one’s bosom. There is nothing that is not mirrored forth clearly. When I engaged in reading this book [the

27 Wright, “Seng-jui Alias Hui-jui,” 276. *GSZ*, T 50, p. 364b.

28 *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 77a. Richard Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in India and China* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 207.

Mūlamādhyamakakārikā] and pored over it, I could not let it out of my hand.²⁹

Sengrui's praise of Mādhyamika philosophy testifies to the removal of Chinese Buddhist confusion about the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of *prajñāpāramitā*. Soon the Chinese concept-matching device was abandoned and Indian Sarvāstivādin thought was relegated to an inferior level.

30

II. Kumārajīva (344-413)

It is needless to repeat the already existent many studies of Kumārajīva;³¹ I will only mark out some of his intellectual episodes relevant to his translation mission, especially the translation of the *DZDL*, in China. First, before he became a Mahāyāna Buddhist monk, he had received solid education in conventional Buddhism. He learnt all the Abhidharmic works, which Dao'an had studied only in late life, under instruction of Bandhudantta, who was reportedly the forty-eighth patriarch of Sarvāstivādin school.³²

Second, according to the *Mingseng Chuanchao* 名僧傳抄 by Baochang 寶唱, Kumārajīva's conversion to Mahāyāna Buddhism was initiated by reading the *Mādhyamikakārikā* and the *Śataśāstra* at age of 13.³³ From written records of Kumārajīva's Chinese disciples,

29 CSZJJ, T 55, p.77a. Richard Robinson, 207.

30 For a summary of past discussions on the dates of Kumārajīva's birth and death, see Kamata Shigeo 鎌田茂雄, tr. by Guan Shiqian, *Chūgoku Bukkyōshi* 中國佛教史 vol. II (Kaoxiong: Foguang Press, 1986), 219-234.

31 Let me name a few of them. Johannes Nobel, "Kumārajīva," *Sitzungsberichte der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Berlin, 1927, 206-33. Tang Yongtong, *History*, 278-322. Richard Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in Indian and China*, 71-95.

32 CSZJJ, T 55, p.89b.

33 *Dainihon Zokuzōkei* 大日本續藏經, Vol. 77, p. 359c.

Nāgārjuna was said to live in the third century.³⁴ Therefore we can infer that Mādhyamika philosophy probably was transmitted into the Tarim Basin shortly before Kumārajīva's birth. He must have felt excited to learn this new thought, and became so enthusiastic a follower that he even converted his teacher, Bandhudantta, to Mahāyāna Buddhism that Mādhyamika philosophy endorses.

Third, probably right after his conversion to Mahāyāna Buddhism in his teens, Kumārajīva decided to follow Nāgārjuna's suit to restore the glamour of True Dharma, or Saddharma. The doctrine of the decline of Dharma must have been circulated in Central Asian Buddhism. He felt that he lived at the end of Counterfeit Dharma (*Pratirūpaka*), in which the interpretations of the truth were one-sided and inferior, and the decline of Dharma was oncoming.³⁵ Ironically, his religious goal was eventually

34 E. Lamotte, *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976), 14-17. When Nāgārjuna lived is extremely controversial in the academic community. S. Bailey thinks that he lived in the first century C.E., *Śatapañśatika of Māv'ce'la* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 9. Murti thinks that Nāgārjuna lived in the second century C.E. *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (London: Urwin, 1955), 87.

35 This is concluded from two records in Sengrui's essays. The first one is in his "The Prolegomenon to the *DZDL*," "Nāgārjuna was born at the end of the period of Counterfeit Law. . . . At the end of the period of Counterfeit Law, there were many troubles. Nāgārjuna frequented the profane and taught the awakening of beings by a gradual method. . . . If there had been no Nāgārjuna, the teaching of the Way would have fallen into desuetude. Why? . . . The truth was stifled and the false Law prospered. The steep path disputed for the vehicle with the great road. Those who had just entered on the Way under such circumstances, went astray; those who were advancing towards the Way, deceived, roamed aimlessly. Without . . . Nāgārjuna, who could have redressed the situation?" *CSZJJ*, T 55, pp. 74c-75a. The second quotation is in "The Clarification of Doubts," "During the first five hundred years after the Buddha preached the Dharma, many were saved and few were not. Because the majority was saved, [this period] is called that of the True Law. During the following five hundred years, right and wrong were debated and widespread argument arose. Few were saved and many were not. Because the majority was not saved, [this period] is called that of the Counterfeit Law." *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 41c. Walter Liebenthal, "A Clarification," *Sino-Indian Studies* 5, no. 2, 1956, 91-92. According the contemporary view that Nāgārjuna lived nine hundred years after the death of the Buddha (the date of the Buddha's death is another controversial subject in the academic community) and that Kumārajīva lived one hundred years after the death of Nāgārjuna, Kumārajīva would be at the end of the period of the Counterfeit Law

carried out in the Chinese, rather than the Indian, world, when he was carried captive away from his home, Kucha, by Chinese troops in 383.

From 401 to 413, Kumārajīva translated 35 Buddhist scriptures, according to Sengyou's *CSZJJ*. They must have been cautiously selected by Kumārajīva from his immense knowledge.³⁶ In addition to a few Buddhist scriptures on meditation and precepts which are not of his expertise, he carefully translated many important Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures into Chinese for their second (the *Lotus Sūtra*), third (the *LPP*), or even fourth times (the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* and the *Asaśāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*), to ensure that their doctrines were rightly expressed in Chinese. Moreover, it is these four Mādhyamika treatises, the *DZDL*, the *Śataśāstra*, the *Mādhyamikakārikā*, and the *Dvādaśamukha śāstra*, for which he initiated translations. He must have realized that without introducing the Mādhyamika philosophy, Chinese Buddhists could not really understand Mahāyāna Buddhism, and their understanding would remain immured within Chinese concept-matching practice and Indian Sarvāstivādin thought.

Nevertheless, none of Kumārajīva's translations of Buddhist scriptures can be compared with his translation of the *DZDL* in terms of revolutionizing the Chinese Buddhist interpretative structure. Although having recognized the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* as the text addressing the mind in the ultimate enlightened state, Chinese Buddhists had no idea that the scripture is the source material inspiring Nāgārjuna to establish Mādhyamika thought that, in return, philosophized Mahāyāna Buddhism.³⁷ Kumārajīva not only carefully completed the new translation of the *LPP* and the *DZDL* for three and a half years, but also reiterated Buddhist concepts in the Mādhyamika philosophical discourse during the translation of these two texts. Many passages from Nāgārjuna's *Mādhyamikakārikā*

and the beginning of the period of the Decline of Law. Kumārajīva was therefore alerted by the temporal elapse and decided to defend Mahāyāna Buddhism.

36 *GSZ* cites someone's remark after Kumārajīva's death that Kumārajīva only delivered less than one-tenth of his scholarship in his Chinese preaching and translation. *CSZJJ*, T 55, p.102c.

37 T. R. V. Murti, *The Central Philosophy of Buddhism* (Boston: Unwin, 1955).

have been cited in the *DZDL*.³⁸ This authentic Nāgārjuna work was translated by Kumārajīva later in 409. That means that, along with the translation of the *DZDL*, not only was part of the *Mādhyamikakārikā* translated, it was probably orally explained in its entirety.

Moreover, the *DZDL* cites source materials from more than one hundred twenty Buddhist scriptures. Most of them were translated by Kumārajīva himself or someone else before him.³⁹ That means that the translation of the *DZDL* was not mainly to introduce a new Buddhist text to Chinese Buddhists. Rather, it was to introduce a new interpretive discourse by which the Buddhist scriptures with which Chinese Buddhists were already familiar could be meaningfully understood from the Mahāyāna Buddhist (actually, Mādhyamika) point of view. Chinese Buddhists thereafter began to view Mahāyāna Buddhism in this way.

III. The Translation Process

In regard to the translation process, we have contemporary records to provide us with valuable information. First, the colophon of the *DZDL* by an anonymous author at some time right after the translation, presumably in 406, says:⁴⁰

In the summer of the fourth year of Hongshi, Dharma Master Kumārajīva, at the pavilion of the west gate of the Palace of Carefree Wondering, translated this *Upadeśa* for *Devarāja* Yao. He completed the translation on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month in the seventh year of Hongshi. During this period, he also completed the translation of the text of the [*LPP*] *Scripture*, the scriptures on meditation and precepts, the *Hundred Treatise*, and the *Chanfayaojie*.

38 Saigusa Mitsuyoshi, "Jidoron Ni Inmochi Saneta Shojinden Nitsuide 智度論に引用された諸經典について," *IBK*, 1, no. 2, 1953, 132.

39 Yin Shun, *Chuqi Dasheng Fojiao Zhi Qiyuan Yu Kaizhan* 初期大乘佛教之起源與開展 (Taipei: Zhengwen Chubanshe, 1972), 24-32.

40 *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 75b.

They are five hundred thousand words in total. Including this *Upadeśa*, the total will be one million five hundred thousand. The first thirty-four chapters are the exegesis of the first chapter [of the *LPP*]. They are the translation in full. From the second chapter on, the Dharma Master just selected something relevant to translate, as long as it sufficed to explain the textual purport. He did not translate in detail any longer and produced the text in one hundred chapters. If he translated the complete text as it was, it would be ten times more voluminous than it is now.

Second, by Sengrui says in his prolegomenon to the *DZDL*:⁴¹

On the twentieth day of the twelfth month in the third year of Hongshi of the Qin dynasty, Kumārajīva arrived in Chang'an from Guzang. The king of the Qin⁴² respected him very much. . . . He joined with Kumārajīva in order to propagate the wisdom. . . . He personally held the profound texts and checked the fixed terms against the original Sanskrit text. He consulted [Kumārajīva] about the crucial passages. He paved the way for people to tread in the future. The text of the *Scripture* having been established, this *Upadeśa* was then to be translated.

Third, Sengrui says again in his prolegomenon to the *LPP*:⁴³

On the twenty-third day of the fourth month of the fifth year of Hongshi, the year of Kueimao, Kumārajīva, in the Palace of Carefree Wondering in the north of the capital, translated this *Scripture*. The Dharma Master held the Sanskrit text and orally translated it into Chinese. He explicated strange transliterations in a twofold way and analyzed the literal purport through cross-references. The king of the Qin personally held the old translation(s), and checked the gain and the loss in the new translation. He consulted [Kumārajīva] about the arguments and leveled the path to the goal. He, with those elder and

41 Ibid., p. 75a.

42 On Yao Xing's patronage of, and involvement into, the translation, see my paper, "Yao Xing Yu Fojiao Tianwang 姚興與佛教天王," *Historical Inquiry*, 30(2002, Taipei), 207-242.

43 Ibid., p. 53b.

learned śramānas, Huigong...(a list of names of monks), etc., more than five hundred, discerned the meanings and purport, examined the words, and then wrote them down. On the fifteenth day of the twelfth month of the same year, the writing of the text was done. The revision and proofreading of it were completed on the twenty-third day of the fourth month in the next year. The text, however, was roughly fixed. As checked with the *Upadeśa*, many meanings were not expressed. Therefore, the translation of the *DZDL* was undertaken. The proofreading went side by side with the translation. When the translation of the *DZDL* was completed, the proofreading of the text of [the *LPP*] was finalized too.⁴⁴

The accounts of the translation are quite confusing, so I organize them into the following timetable:

Summer, 402	The translation of the <i>DZDL</i> began.
4 th /23, 403	The translation of the <i>LPP</i> began.
12 th /15, 403	The draft of the translation of the <i>LPP</i> was completed.
4 th /23, 404	The first proofreading of the <i>LPP</i> was completed.
12 th /27, 405	The translation of the <i>DZDL</i> was completed and the proofreading of the <i>LPP</i> was finalized.

There are seven points worth noticing according to the above accounts and the timetable.

First, although the *DZDL* and the *LPP* are bound together in the current textual format of the *DZDL*, they were separate books and were separately translated.

Second, the translation started with the *DZDL* and then the *LPP* several months later. The problem is that, since the *LPP* is the text being interpreted, how did the translation of the *DZDL* proceed without the new translation of the *LPP*? Evidently, the translation team must have relied on the old translations by Moks!ala and Dharmaraks!a. We can rationally infer that when the translation of the *DZDL* had proceeded for a while, the translation team discovered that the old translations would not be good

44 Ibid., p. 54a.

enough to serve as the text to be interpreted; therefore, the re-translation of the *LPP* was required. We do not know how much of the *DZDL* was translated in this first phase.

Third, after the translation of the *LPP* started on 4th/23, 403, it continued and ended on 12th/15. During this period, the translation team did not translate the *DZDL*. However, as soon as proofreading the translation draft of the *LPP*, the team discovered to be it far from perfect in delivering meanings. They therefore decided to resume the translation of the *DZDL*.

Fourth, after 4th/23, 404, the translation of the *DZDL* was resumed. Its purpose was to revise and refine the already completed new translation of the *LPP*. This is what Sengruī meant by the passage, “the text of the *Scripture* having been established, this *Upadeśa* was then to be translated.” The second phase of the translation of the *DZDL* ended on 12th/27, 405. The proofreading of the *LPP* ended at the same time too. It can be inferred that while the *DZDL* was translated to improve the translation of the *LPP*, the editing went hand in hand with the translation.

Fifth, the proofreading of the *DZDL* is never mentioned during and after its translation. That must have something to do with its textual status. As an expository work, its goal is to help readers understand the *Scripture* that it explains. For this purpose, the editor must have included in it many other explanations outside the original text. Moreover, the editor must have re-arranged the explanations in the original text by placing them beneath the passages of the *Scripture* being explained. As a result, there was no way to proofread the *DZDL*.

Sixth, when the *DZDL* was published, it must have had one hundred chapters, the same chapter number we have in the current text. This is stated by Huiyuan of Mt. Lu in his essay in 406 relating that he received a copy of the newly translated *DZDL* in such a number of chapters.⁴⁵ As mentioned above, the *DZDL* and the *LPP* were originally separated texts. The combination of these two texts must have done made in the editing which must have been around 12th/27, 405; otherwise, Huiyuan could not have received it and mentioned it in one hundred chapters in his essay.

45 *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 76b.

Seventh, this editing must have been based upon Chinese word order. Let me demonstrate this with a piece of textual evidence. The passage, “mahātā bhiks!usamghena sārdham pañcamātrair bhiks!u-sahasraih,” in the Sanskrit original of the *LPP*, was translated into Chinese as “共摩訶比丘僧大數五千” (altogether with the great bhiks!u sangha in the large number of five thousand). The explanations in the *DZDL* follow Chinese word order, i.e. 共 (sārdham), 摩訶 (mahātā), 比丘 (bhiks!u), 僧 (samghena), 大數 (mātrair), 五千 (pañcam . . . sahasraih), from first to last, instead of the Sanskrit word order.

With the analysis above, the process of the translation and the editing of the *DZDL* can be clearly perceived.

IV. Literary Form

Dialogue is the literary form in which the *DZDL* presents explanations. However, this form is vulnerable to the insertion of alien content, especially when the dialogue really takes place to discuss the meanings of Buddhist doctrines. This is precisely what happened to the actual translations of the *DZDL* and the *LPP*.

As shown above, the king, Yao Xing, “personally held the old translations, and checked the gain and the loss in the new translation. He consulted Kumārajīva about all crucial passages of the essentials” in his new translation, and Sengrui, in dissatisfaction with Kumārajīva’s translation, “stopped writing, argued for the right translation,” and “checked his translation against the original for the entire day.” It can be imagined that Kumārajīva must have been busy with explaining the Buddhist ideas and terminology in question. As a result, the translation turned out to be the discussion.

The contemporary Chinese Buddhist discussion required two types of person: the dharma-master (*dharma-khatin*, *fashi* 法師) who hosted the presentation of the main ideas, and the assistant (*dujiang* 都講) who was responsible to raise related problems. The participants listened to and, if

necessary, wrote down the discussion between these two persons. Chinese Buddhists believed that this form of discussion is invented by Buddha himself,⁴⁶ and the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is the exemplary work made in this form in which the Buddha is the master and Subhūti is the assistant.⁴⁷ In the fourth century, this form of discussion was noticeably adopted by the Chinese intellectuals and Buddhist monks. The famous discussion on the *Vimalakīrti-nideśa* between Zhi Dun 支遁, a Chinese monk, and Xu Xun 許詢, a layman scholar, was recorded and widely spread.⁴⁸

In the translation of the *LPP*, Sengru and the king certainly served a similar role as *dujiang* who asked questions about the import of Buddhist doctrines from time to time, while Kumārajīva as *fashi* replied by “explaining strange transliterations in a twofold way” (*liangshi yiyin* 兩釋異音) and “analyzing the literal purport through cross-references” (*jiaobian wenzhi* 交辯文旨).⁴⁹ “A twofold way,” as demonstrated in the *DZDL*, refers to more than one way of explaining Buddhist technical terms in their Sanskrit meanings. For instance, in the interpretation of the meaning of *bhagavat* (*pojiapo* 婆伽婆 in Chinese transliteration), one of the ten titles of the Buddha, the *DZDL* says as follows. (1) “*Bhaga*” means virtue (*gun/a*) and “*vat*” means possession. Therefore, the term means “the possession of virtue.” (2) “*Bhāga*” means analysis (*vibhāga*) and “*vat*” means skillful (*kuśala*). Therefore, the term means “skillful analysis of general and special characters of dharmas.” (3) “*Bhāga*” means glory

46 See Kang Senghui’s “Prolegomenon to the *Anbansoyi Jing*.” “When The World-Honored One, in the beginning, wanted to preach this Sūtra, the world shook, and men and deities were terrified. Although he preached the *Anban* (*Ānāpāna*) for three days, none could question him. Therefore, The World-Honored One transformed his body into two. One was called *hedeng* 何等, “one who raises questions of ‘what is’”; the other was called *zhuyan* 主演, “the host preacher,” responsible for the explanation. In this way, the meaning of the Sūtra came out.” *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 43b.

47 *Damingdu Jing*, T 8, pp. 481c-482a.

48 *GSZ*, T 50, p. 348c.

49 *DZDL*, T 25, p. 59a.

(*yaśas-*) and “*vat*” means possession. Therefore, the term means “the possession of glory.”⁵⁰

“Cross-references” are often indicated in the *DZDL* with the statements: “This point has been made before. Why do you mention it here again?” or “The interpretation of each word has been completed; the interpretation of the entire passage will be given as follows.” For instance, in the explanation of the meaning of “*evam% mayā śrutum ekasmin samaye*” (thus was heard by me at one time), the *DZDL* first explains each word in detail, and then the general meanings and advanced implications of the phrase.⁵¹

These two ways in which Kumārajīva replied to questions raised by the king and the amanuensis are identical with the given expository style of the *DZDL* in its Sanskrit original. According to Sengrui’s description,

In the treatise, he [Nāgārjuna] starts by quoting the various points of view (of his predecessors) in order to exhaust their beauty, and ends by extolling detachment (from all these views) as the best solution. If the explanation is incomplete, he engages in a discussion to clarify it; if the discussion fails to lead to a clear decision, he then chooses the Middle Way (Mādhyamika) as the definite solution.⁵²

As a result, it is hard to sift the discussion from the translation. Even so, there are many replies made by the preacher in a lofty attitude and in an annoyed voice to deny interlocutor(s)--“Your argument is nonsense” or “If you had understood it [my earlier explanation], you would not make such argument”--that vividly manifest that an intense discussion once took place between the preacher and his audience,⁵³ who, it seems, are best referred to as Kumārajīva and Sengrui (or the king).

As in contemporary Buddhist lectures, the translation and the

50 *DZDL*, T 25, p. 70b. Lamotte, *Traité*, vol. I, 115-16.

51 *DZDL*, T 25, pp. 62c-66b.

52 *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 74c.

53 Guo Zhongsheng 郭忠生, “Shilun Dazhidulun Zhong De Duihuazhe 試論大智度論中的對話者,” *Zhengguan* 2, 1997, 63-175.

discussion had to be noted down by the Chinese audience, and later collected and edited for publication and circulation. The person in charge of this task must have been Sengrui, who described his editing of Kumārajīva's translation and explanation of the *Vimalakīrti* in his "Prolegomenon to the Recording of [Kumārajīva's] Explanation of the *Vimalakīrti*,"⁵⁴

With paper and ink I recorded [Kumārajīva's explanation], which transcended the verbal externals. By borrowing the audience's notes, I compiled this book. If the notes were profuse, I honored the matter noted. If the notes were simple, I underlined the meaning noted. In terms of meaning, this book is broad and profound. If one were not an amanuensis, how could he assume this duty?⁵⁵

Sengrui also mentioned his similar editing task in his preface to the *Bodhisattva-dhyāna* again in 407:

The translation of the Scripture was completed [in 401]. In the ninth year of Hongshi [407], I asked [Kumārajīva] to edit this text again. I am afraid that I did not understand it well when I served my first duty as amanuensis. A slight difference in phrasing may cause a big distortion in understanding. I carefully edited the translation and corrected many things. Afterwards, the translation became impeccable and immaculate.⁵⁶

Evidently, Sengrui and nobody else edited the *DZDL*. In doing so, he followed the conventional Chinese expository structure by putting the exegesis and the explained text together and placing the exegesis beneath the text being explained.⁵⁷ As a result, the *DZDL* is rare in textual format in that few Indian Buddhist commentaries have the entire text explained with exegesis.

⁵⁴ Kumārajīva's explanation of the *Vimalakīrti* is extant today. It is mixed with Sengzao's, Daosheng's, and others' commentaries and is numbered as 1775 in the Taisho Tripitaka.

⁵⁵ CSZJJ, T 55, p. 59a.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 65b.

⁵⁷ Tang, *History*, 114-16.

V. A Terminological Examination

To prove that the *DZDL* comprises the contemporary discussion among Kumārajīva, Sengrui and the king, this section turns to the examination of differences in use of Buddhist technical terms. In the “Prolegomenon to the *LPP*,” Sengrui informs us that Kumārajīva strictly followed Sanskrit to rectify the earlier wrong Chinese translation of nine Buddhist terms. I list these nine terms, their initial and later corrected translations as following: 1. *skandha*: Yin 陰 (invisible force) was changed to *zhong* 眾 (aggregate), 2. *āyatana*: ru 入 (entrance) was changed to *chu* 處 (place), 3. *dhātu*: chi 持 (hold) was changed to *xing* 性 (nature), 4. *vimokṣa*: jietuo 解脫 (release) was changed to *beishe* 背捨 (turning away and relinquishing), 5. *abhibhāvāyatana*: churu 除入 (removal-entry) was changed to *shengchu* 勝處 (place of victory), 6. *smṛtyupasthāna*: yizhi 意止 (idea-stopping) was changed to *nianchu* 念處 (place of concentration), 7. *samyak-prahāṇa*: yiduan 意斷 (thought-cutting) was changed to *zhengqin* 正勤 (right effort), 8. *bodhyaṅgha*: jueyi 覺意 (cultivating of the mind to awakening) was changed to *puti* 菩提 (awakening), 9. *ārya-mārga*: zhixing 直行 (straight path) was changed to *shengdao* 聖道 (holy way). All these terms actually are of *shishu* 事數, the fundamental Buddhist tenets in numbered constituents, i.e., the five *skandhas*, the six *āyatanas*, the eighteen *dhātus*, the eight *vimokṣas*, the eight *abhibhāvāyatanas*, the four *smṛtyupasthānas*, the four *samyak-prahāṇas*, the seven *bodhyaṅghas*, and the eight *ārya-mārgas*.

Demiéville checked these terms in the *DZDL*, discovering that old terms are still used therein, and hence thought that the Chinese monks must have slipped in “les confusions, les quiproquos, les interpolations . . . dans une traduction,” because “nombreuses ont aussi les gloses de Kumārajīva qui se sont glissées dans le texte du Ta-che-tou-louen, au point qu’on ne sait jamais très bien ce qui est de lui et ce qui appartient à l’original

sanskrit.”⁵⁸ Robinson furthered Demiéville’s suggestion with the other three probabilities for this. (1) Many scribes employed in editing the translations were insufficiently educated. (2) Even senior editors like Sengrui were not really used to the new terms. (3) Some of the re-writers were self-consciously opposed to certain of the new terms and eliminated them from whatever they re-wrote.⁵⁹ Demiéville’s and Robinson’s common view is that the *DZDL* must have been handled by Chinese monks with poor scholarship.

Thanks to today’s computer software, we can precisely count those terms in Moks!ala’s, Dharmaraks!a’s, and Kumārajīva’s translations of the *LPP* and the *DZDL* (with the *LPP* removed). With their formal terminology like the five *skandhas*, etc., to check, I put my findings in the table below. The Chinese in the first line of each Sanskrit entry is the old translation, and the one in the second line is the new proposed translation. The number means the frequency that the term appears in a certain translation of the text. (0 means that it never appears in the text.) The character in the parentheses means that it is the actual one that appears in the text and the number following it is the frequency it appears in the text.

58 Paul Demiéville, “Sur le *Traité de la Grande Vertu de Sagesse* Traduit par É. Lamotte,” *Choix D’études bouddhiques* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 481.

59 Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in China and India* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 82.

		<i>Fanguang</i>	<i>Guangzan</i>	<i>LPP</i>	<i>DZDL</i>
<i>Skandha</i>	陰	751	40	42	8
	眾	0	0	0	597
<i>Āyatana</i>	入	0 (衰 35)	16 (衰 18)	7	24
	處	0	0	1	1
<i>Dhātu</i>	持	0	0	0	1
	性	41	0 (種 41)	0 (界 54)	1 (界 54)
<i>Vimokṣa</i>	解脫	0 (惟無 32)	1	8	14
	背捨	0	0	41	28
<i>Abhibhvāyatana</i>	除入	0	0	0	0
	勝處	0	0	2	17
<i>Smṛtyupasthāna</i>	意止	7	72	0	3
	念處	0	0	365	167
<i>Samyakprahāṇa</i>	意斷	6	61	0	0
	正勤	0	0	25	13
<i>Bodhyaṅga</i>	覺意	7	59	0	8
	菩提 (覺分)	(0)	(0)	0 (33)	0 (22)
<i>Āryamārga</i>	直行	0 (正行 2)	0 (由行 57)	0	0
	聖道	0	0	155	49

According to this table, we have eight findings as follows.

1. Those old terms, *chi* 持 (*dhātu*), *churu* 除入 (*abhibhvāyatana*), *zhixing* 直行 (*āryamārga*), can be found in neither Dharmaraks!a's nor Moks!ala's translations of the *LPP*.
2. *Ārya-mārga* was respectively rendered as *zhengxing* 正行 and *youxing* 由行, not as *zhixing* 直行, in Dharmaraks!a's and Moks!ala's translations, and *āyatana* as *shuai* 衰 not as *ru* 入 in Moks!ala's translation.
3. *Jueyi* 覺意 (*bodhyaṅga*) actually became *juefen* 覺分, not *puti* 菩提, in the new translation of the *LPP* and the *DZDL*.
4. *Skandhas* continued to be used as *yin* 陰 in the translation of *LPP*, but was translated much more by *zhong* 眾 (597 times) than by *yin* 陰 (8 times).
5. The *LPP* and the *DZDL* continued to use *ru* 入 for rendering *āyatana*.
6. The proposed new translation of *dhātu* as *xing* 性 was actually used in Moks!ala's translation (actually as *zhong* 種 in Dharmaraks!a's translation) but was *jie* 界 in the new translation, the *LPP* the *DZDL*.⁶⁰
7. *Samyak-prahāṇ!a* was changed from its old name, *yiduan* 意斷, to a new one, *zhengqin* 正勤; *smṛ!tyupasthāna* was changed from *nianchu* 念處 to *yizh* 意止; *abhibhvāyatana* was rendered only as *shengchu* 勝處, *ārya-mārga* was rendered only as *shengdao* 聖道, in the Chinese texts of the *LPP* and in the *DZDL*.
8. *Vimoks!a* was explained more by *beishe* 背捨 than by *jietuo* 解脫.

With these eight findings, we can re-assess Sengrui's statement. First, although Sengrui's statement was made in relation to the new translation of the *LPP*, those old terms are not only employed inclusively in the old translations by Dharmaraks!a and Moks!ala, no matter how true these two works were indeed used to compare with Kumārajīva's translation. These terms should be instead seen as commonly used by contemporary Chinese Buddhists, and some can be found coined by An Shigao in as early as the

60 Only in one place is *dhātu* noted to be *chu*. T 25, p. 639b.

mid-second in his translation of the *Yinchiru Jing* 陰持入經 (T #603).

Second, Sengrui's statement is only sensible in the situation that Kumārajīva made the correction in oral explanation rather than in Chinese writing, and that his correction impressed Chinese Buddhists to realize their long erroneous understanding of those primary Buddhist tenets.

Third, although Chinese Buddhists and Kumārajīva knew that the new terms were more correct, they continued to use the old terms. Kumārajīva himself even used old terms to correspond with Huiyuan and to translate the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*.⁶¹ They must have so much familiarized themselves with those old terms that they were not able to abandon them right away.

At last, points 7 and 8 shows that Kumārajīva's correction was more or less followed, for which we must praise Sengrui for his rigorous editorship.

Sengrui's statement only demonstrates that Chinese Buddhism was in transition about using the old and new Buddhist terminology. We cannot accept European scholars' negative judgment of the scholarship of contemporary Chinese Buddhists, because it distorts the reality of the translation. Nevertheless, the statement indeed indicates that Chinese Buddhists were deeply concerned about the conceptual purports of Buddhist primary tenets in different Chinese translations.

VI. Textual Variations

The same concern was also given to textual variations, which noticeably bring out explanations in the *DZDL*. Since there are many cases of this, I will only give ten examples below.

Example One

Ten metaphors are often used to explain the real state of emptiness (*śūnyatā*): an illusion (*māyā*), a flame (*marīci*), a reflection of the moon in

61 Robinson, *Early Mādhyamika in Indian and China*, 79-80.

water (*udakacandra*), a vacuous space (*ākāśa*), an echo (*pratiśruktā*), an apparition (*gandharva*), a dream (*svapna*), a shadow (*chāyā*), an image (*bimba*) in the mirror, and a magic creation (*nirmāṇa*). Among them, the apparition metaphor only appears in Kumārajīva's translation. The *DZDL* explains this metaphor by relating it to radical Mahāyāna Buddhist view of the insubstantiality of mental constructions (*dharmā-sūnyatā*) that differs from the conventional Buddhist view of the insubstantiality of physical constructions (*ātma-sūnyatā*).⁶²

Example Two

In mentioning one of the qualities of a bodhisattva, the *LPP* in Kumārajīva's translation and the extant Sanskrit text says that he can “cut off various views, defilements and passions” (能斷種種見纏及諸煩惱 *nānādr̥ṣṭiṅṅāparyavasthānakleśamanakuśalaiḥ*).⁶³ Moksāla and Dharmarakṣa only brought out views (*dr̥ṣṭiṅṅā*, 見), while leaving out defilements (*paryavasthāna*, 纏) and passions (*kleśa*, 煩惱), in their translations respectively made as “種種諸見，離於所著，”⁶⁴ and as “進退能決若干種見所著之處。”⁶⁵ Since views, defilements and passions are the three kinds of unwholesome causes entrapping one in the transmigratory realm, the *DZDL* makes a detailed explanation of this passage, which is the main presentation on these three in the commentary.⁶⁶

Example Three

Kumārajīva's translation relates that when the Buddha emerged from the state of concentration and exhibited His own body in the trichilocosm before preaching, his whole body was smiling (舉身微笑 *sarvakāyāt smitam akarot*).⁶⁷ Kumārajīva's translation also notes that the Buddha's

62 T 25, p. 103b. Lamotte, *Traite*, Vol. I, 370-372.

63 T 8, p. 217a.

64 T 8, p. 1a.

65 T 8, p. 147a.

66 T 25, pp. 110a-b.

67 T 25, pp. 123c-124b.

body was natural (常身 prakṛtyāmbhāva) at this scene.⁶⁸ However, the note and the scene of the Buddha's body's smiling are absent in Moks!ala's and Dharmaraks!a's translations. Therefore questions are raised in the *DZDL* about what caused the Buddha's body's smiling and what was the property of the Buddha's body in the exhibition. In the explanation,⁶⁹ the *DZDL* evidently intends to dismiss Moks!ala's view in his translation “如諸如來無所著等正覺法，以大普音遍三千大千國土” that the Buddha's body at the scene was His invisible dharma-body.⁷⁰

Example Four

The *LPP* begins to unfold the dialectic and transcendence of *śūnyatā* with the passage, “A bodhisattva-mahāsattva abides in the perfection of wisdom by way of not abiding in it” (bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prajñāpāraitāyām% sthitvā-sthāna-yogenā), which Kumārajīva translated as 菩薩摩訶薩以不住法住般若波羅蜜中.⁷¹ Dharmaraks!a skipped this sentence in his translation, and Moks!ala translated the passage as “菩薩摩訶薩行般若波羅蜜，定意不起，”⁷² failing to bring out its dialectical nuance. We are not surprised to see that the *DZDL* makes the explanation of it in as long as two chapters.⁷³

Example Five

Only Kumārajīva's translation of the *LPP* states that “one who wants to know the four conditions should be trained in *prajñāpāramitā*.” The four conditions are the auxiliary causes for the change of things. They are

68 T 8, p. 218a.

69 T 25, pp. 122b-123b.

70 The earliest concept of the dharma-body in the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is inherited from conventional Buddhism, which means “the body of dharmas.” See Lewis Lancaster, “The Oldest Mahayana Sutra : Its Significance for the Study of Buddhist Development,” *The Eastern Buddhist* (New Series) 8:1, 1975, 30-41.

71 T 8, p. 218c.

72 T 8, p. 2c.

73 T 25, pp. 139a-153a.

referred to as the *hetu-pratyaya* (the condition with the quality of the cause 因緣), *samanantara-pratyaya*, (the condition with the quality to produce one consequence after another 無間緣), *ālambana-pratyaya* (the condition with the quality of a the reasoning object 緣緣), and *adhipati-pratyaya* (the condition for producing further results 增上緣). They are the main constituents in the causation theory of Sarvāstivādin Buddhism.

The *DZDL* explains the passage while refuting the Sarvāstivādin view of the four conditions.

Question: "If one wants to know the meanings of the four conditions extensively, he should learn them from the Abhidharma. Why does the passage say instead that one should learn them from the training in *prajñāpāramitā*?" Answer: "The meanings of the four conditions in the Abhidharma give beginners realistic knowledge. When they study more deeply, the Abhidharma's explanations turns out to be wicked, just as what I showed by refuting them above. Again, if dharmas are based upon the four conditions, then upon what are the four conditions based? If there is some cause upon which the four conditions are based, then the Abhidharma falls into the error of infinite regress. If there is no cause upon which the four conditions are based, then there are no four conditions. Thus, dharmas come from no conditions."⁷⁴

The *DZDL* continues the explanation which by implication refutes Chinese Neo-Daoist causative view that all things are evolved from the one latent Reality.

Moreover, there are two cases to assert that dharmas are produced from causes and conditions. In the first case, wherein there is something preexisting in causes and conditions, the production of dharmas becomes independent of causes and conditions. Causes and conditions become irrelevant in the process of production. In the second case, wherein there is nothing preexisting in causes and conditions, then causes and conditions become dispensable. The faults can be discovered in either way if one wants to manipulate the doctrine

74 *DZDL*, T25, p. 297a.

of the four conditions. However, such faults cannot be discovered in the perfect wisdom, because in it *śūnyatā* cannot be grasped. It is like the fact that people in the world, although seeing the phenomena of birth, old age, illness and death, cannot perceive their minute variation as they occur. Because of this, the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* dispels the wicked doctrine without negating the four conditions.⁷⁵

Example Six

The knowledge of a thing as it is (*yathābhūta-jñāna* 如實智) is only stated in Kumārajīva's translation of the *LPP* in the passage where this knowledge is listed after other ten kinds of knowledge: *saṃvṛti-jñāna* (世俗智 knowledge of worldly conventions), *dharmaj* (法智 knowledge of Buddhist concepts arising in the realm of desire), *anvaya-j* (類智 knowledge of Buddhist concepts arising in the realms of Form and Formlessness), *duhkha-j* (苦智 knowledge of suffering), *samudaya-j* (集智 knowledge of the causes of suffering), *nirodh-j* (滅智 knowledge of destroying suffering), *mārga-j* (道智 knowledge of treading the path to nirvāna), *paracitta-j* (他心智 knowledge of all mental activities and constructions), *ksāya-j* (盡智 knowledge of no more learning), and *anutpāda-j* (無生智 knowledge of all things as non-born). In conventional Buddhism, the ten kinds of knowledge are primary subjects under study and are extensively explained in Abhidharma works.⁷⁶ The *DZDL* says that the ten kinds of knowledge are commonly shared by śravākas, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas. Only *yathābhūta-jñāna* is exclusively possessed by the Buddhas⁷⁷ and only Mahāyāna Buddhism brings it into relief. All other kinds of knowledge are subsumed in this knowledge that

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 297a.

⁷⁶ *DZDL*, T25, pp. 233b-c.

⁷⁷ Kumārajīva echoed this idea in a letter to Huiyuan: "A bodhisattva has a sharp capacity. Therefore, he uses this knowledge, *yathābhūta-jñāna*, to comprehend the reality of things." Kimura, Eiichi 木村英一, *Eon Kenkyū: Iunhen* 慧遠研究 遺文篇 (Kyōto: Kyōto University Press, 1960), 50.

activates Buddha-eyes to comprehend general and particular marks of dharmas.⁷⁸ It is identical with all-knowledge (*sarvājñā*).⁷⁹ In other words, it is the deepest knowledge in which one can holistically see the reality of dharmas and cannot fail to comprehend it.

Example Seven

Kumārajīva translated the passages describing the nature of *prajñāpāramitā* as follows.

“World-Honored One! Transcendental wisdom is always non-discriminating (*li* 離, *viveka*) in the state of transcendence.” The Buddha says, “This is because it is completely empty.” “World-Honored One! Transcendental wisdom is always non-destroyed (*buhuai* 不壞, *anavamardanīya*) in the state of transcendence.” The Buddha says, “This is because all dharmas are not graspable there.” “World-Honored One! Transcendental wisdom is always of no position (*wubi’an* 無彼岸, *apada*) in the state of transcendence.” The Buddha says, “This is because it is nameless and incorporeal.” 爾時慧命須菩提白佛言：「世尊！離波羅蜜是般若波羅蜜。」佛言：「畢竟空故。」
 「世尊！不壞波羅蜜是般若波羅蜜。」佛言：「一切法不可得故。」
 「世尊！無彼岸波羅蜜是般若波羅蜜。」佛言：「無名無身故。」⁸⁰

Mokṣala respectively translated *viveka* as *jijing* 寂靜 (quiet), *anavamardanīya* as *wunengfu* 無能伏 (unconquerable), and *apada* as *zhongzhong* 種種 (various), which are wrong.⁸¹ The *DZDL* explains why

⁷⁸ *DZDL*, T25, pp. 232c-234a.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 331a.

⁸⁰ T 8, p. 311c. The corresponding Sanskrit passages are the following: “Subhūtir āha: viveka-pāramiteyam Bhagavan yad uta prajñāpāramitā. Bhagavān āha: atyanta-śuntatām upādāya. Subhūtir āha: anavamardanīya-pāramiteyam Bhagvan yad uta prajñāpāramitā. Bhagavān āha: sarvadharmānupalabdhitām upādāya. Subhūtir āha: apada-pāramiteyam Bhagavan yad uta prajñāpāramitā. Bhagavān āha: anāmāsarīratām upādāya.” Kimura Takayasu, *Pañcavimśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* Vol. IV (Tokyo: Sankibo Press, 1990), 1.

⁸¹ Mokṣala translated those passages as follows: 世尊。波羅蜜寂靜。佛言。常空故。世尊。波羅蜜無能伏者。佛言。諸法無所有故。世尊。種種波羅蜜空。答言。亦無字亦無身

these three terms are used as descriptive of properties of *prajñāpāramitā*.⁸²

Example Eight

Kumārajīva translates the passages about the mental activities in *prajñāpāramitā* as follows,

A Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva, who treads *prajñāpāramitā*, should know his thought of enlightenment. The equal mind (*samacitta*, 無等等心) should not memorize or sublimate. The great mind (*bhodhicitta*, 大心) should not memorize or sublimate. Why is this so? Thought is non-thought. The characteristic of thought is purity. 「無等等心，不應念，不應高。大心，不應念，不應高。何以故。是心非心。心相常淨故。」⁸³

The new translation replaces Dharmarakṣa's 等無等心 for *samacittam%*, and 入微妙心 for *bhodhicittam%*.⁸⁴ Two terms in Kumārajīva's translation have technical and sanctified meanings. *Daxin* has a two-fold meaning: the Buddha's enlightenment, and the inspiration of a bodhisattva for the exhaustive realization of the Buddha's merits.⁸⁵ *Wudengdengxin* means the even mind in which all imaginations of "being" and "not being" have completely ceased to be.⁸⁶ The *DZDL* gives sanctified explanations of these terms.⁸⁷ In addition, the passages were misconceived in the earlier

故。T 8, pp. 68a-b.

82 T 25, p. 518c.

83 T. 8, p. 166 and p. 362b. The corresponding Sanskrit original is "evam% hi śāriputra bo mahāsattvena prajñā paramitāyām% cātā bhodhicittam% nāma jñātañyam% samacittam% nāmodāracittam% nāma jñā, tat ksyam hetoh!, tabhā tac cittam acittam% prakr!tiś cittasya prabhāsvarā." ed. Nalinaksha Dutt, *Pañcavim%śatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* (London: Luzac, 1934), 121.

84 T 8, p. 233c. The passages are translated by Dharmarakṣa as "不當念，菩薩摩訶薩！又當念等無等心、入微妙心。所以者何？其心無心。心者本淨。本淨心者。自然而樂清明而淨。"

85 *DZDL*, T 25, p. 86a.

86 *Ibid.*, T 25, p. 262b.

87 T 25, p. 363a.

Chinese Thought-Negation thesis,⁸⁸ whose interpretation was thoroughly rejected by Sengzhao 僧肇, one of Kumārajīva's best Chinese disciples.

Example Nine

In the exegesis of the passage, “when men and women of good families copy the profound text of the *Prajñāpāramitā* and further practice it, the Buddha says, ‘Śāriputra, indeed, indeed, the numberless Buddhas in the ten directions see sentient beings with Buddha-eyes,’” we read in the *DZDL*:

Question: “Are sentient beings seen with god-eyes (*dviyacaks!us*) or with Buddha-eyes (*buddhacaks!us*)? If they are seen with god-eyes, why does the text say Buddha-eyes? Sentient beings are illusory; how can they be seen with Buddha-eyes?”⁸⁹

With the new translation that says nothing about god-eyes, the interlocutor's question confuses us. In checking Moks!ala's translation, we see that it speaks of god-eyes.⁹⁰ It is evident that the interlocutor raised the question by the textual comparison.

Example Ten

Kumārajīva's translation states that the status of Ānanda was in the *srotāpanna* (the stage where one has entered the stream of holy living), one of the stages of *śaikṣa* (one who still needs more knowledge), when the Buddha preached the doctrine of *prajñāpāramitā*, but Moks!ala's translation does not.⁹¹ The absence of this statement in a way is consistent with the perception in the Buddhist canonical tradition that Ānanda was the producer of all Buddhist scriptures, including the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, in

88 Chen Yinke 陳寅恪, “Zhi Mindu Xueshuo Kao 支愍度學說考,” *Zhongyang Yanjiuyuan Lishiyuanyan Yanjioshuo Jikan, Cai Yuanpei's Memorial Volume, part I*(1933, Taipei), 1-18.

89 *DZDL*, T 25, p. 530a.

90 T 8, p. 71c.

91 Note that the passage is not in Nalinaksha Dutt's edited Sanskrit text, *Pañcavimśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, but it appears in Dharmarakṣa's and Xuanzang's Chinese translations.

the First Council. However, this perception is contradictory to Mahāyāna Buddhism in two points: (1) it fails to account for why Ānanda, if already an arhat, would and could learn those profound teachings of the Buddha only for bodhisattvas, and, more importantly, (2) it fails to differentiate Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures from conventional Buddhist scriptures in textual origin. These two doctrinal contradictions are overcome by the explanation in the *DZDL*. The *DZDL* relates that Ānanda, deciding to serve as dharma transmitter, purposefully stayed in the stage of *śaikṣa* to learn all kinds of dharmas from the Buddha, who, of course, had foreknown⁹² and entrusted him to do so. Yet, being in the stage of *śaikṣa* means that one's defilements have not been removed; therefore, Ānanda was seized and expelled from the preparatory meeting of collecting the Buddha's teachings after the Buddha's parinirvāna. The episode about his sudden attainment of enlightenment and possession of the magical power that enabled him to go through a key-hole is required to prove his arhatship, and thereby, accounts for the origination of the Buddhist canon from his amazing memory in the First Council.

The *DZDL* continues that Ānanda in the First Council only chanted the sūtras for śravākas, those of the lower intellectual capacities. Afterwards, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya brought Ānanda somewhere to chant Mahāyāna scriptures reserved for bodhisattvas, those of sharp intellectual capacities.⁹³

This explanatory story in the *DZDL* let Chinese Buddhists for the first time know the differences between Mahāyāna Buddhism and conventional Buddhism in terms of the receiver of the doctrine (despite a Mahāyāna bias) and its canonical origin. It is so powerfully persuasive that Sengyou later compiled the episode of Ānanda's sudden attainment of arhatship into his work, *The Collection on Accounts of the Translation of the Tripitaka into Chinese*.⁹⁴

92 *DZDL*, T25, p. 83a-b.

93 *Ibid.*, p. 756a-b. Hubert Durt, "The Difference Between Hīnaayāna and Mahāyāna in the Last Chapter, Paṇḍinā, of the *Ta-Chih-Tu Lun (Mahāprajñāpāramitopadeśa)*," *Buddhist Studies Review*, 2:2, 1988, 123-138.

94 *CSZJJ*, pp. 1b-4a. Arthur Link, "The Earliest Chinese Account of the Compilation of the

It can be demonstrated from these ten instances that many explanations of the *DZDL* were made along with the discussions on the textual variations between the old and new translations of the *LPP*. The corrections of the unfaithful translation and the refutations of the Sarvāstivādin and concept-matching interpretations are perceptible too. This way of translating the *LPP* and the *DZDL* is not unique for Kumārajīva, who later translated the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa* in the same manner.⁹⁵

VII. Sengrui as Editor of the Text

While acknowledging that Kumārajīva “added” his own explanations in the *DZDL*, I do not accept Hikata’s addition theory, since he attributed the Chinese Buddhist conception of *Prajñāpāramitā* literature to Kumārajīva, while ignoring Sengrui’s editorship in forming the current text. Let me demonstrate this observation.

First, reading the *DZDL*, we come across two chapter names, *Māra*⁹⁶ and *Avivartin*.⁹⁷ However, Sengrui informs us that Kumārajīva thought that these two chapter titles were superfluous in the Sanskrit text.

In the Sanskrit text [of the *LPP*], only three chapters (*parivarta*) bore names: *nidāna*, *avivartin*, and *māra*. The others chapters only indicate the enumeration of doctrinal categories (*shishu* 事數). Dharma Master [Kumārajīva] thought that the chapter carrying a certain name is counter to its Buddhist textual format. Therefore, he only preserved the

Tripitaka,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 8:2, 1961, 87-103.

95 When Kumārajīva in 406 translated and explained the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, he compared his new translation with the old ones. We often see his remarks with the sentence “another text says” (別本云) for his modified phrases. For instance, for the passage, “to carry on the prosperity of the Three Treasures and make it last in perpetuity 紹隆三寶能使不絕” (T14, p. 537a) in the new translation, he noted its old translation “別本云：興隆三寶，能使不絕。” This passage in “another text” is found in Zhi Qian’s translation made between 222 and 229 in Jiangkang (today’s Nanjing). T 14, p. 519a.

96 T 25, p. 415b, 458b, 604b, 636b, 996b, & 996c.

97 T 25, p. 86b, 349c, 409b, 597a, 713b, & 713c.

chapter *nidāna* and crossed out the other two.⁹⁸

Therefore, it is very unlikely that Kumārajīva (or Nāgārjuna) put these chapter names in the exegesis. However, the content of chapters in these two terms is crucial for understanding the Mahāyāna doctrine of *śūnyatā*. Chapter 46 called *Māra* in Kumārajīva's translation of the *LPP* admonishes that any substantial view of *prajñāpāramitā* and *śūnyatā* is wicked and evil, because the Devil, *Māra*, made this view substantial. Chapter 55 called *Avivartin* in Kumārajīva's translation of the *LPP* explains why a bodhisattva at the never-receding (*avivartin*) stage comes to realize the real meaning of *prajñāpāramitā* and *śūnyatā*. Without them, the philosophical subtlety and dialectics cannot be distinguished. Since Moks!ala's translation had already given chapter names in relation to these two subjects, they could not be removed, no matter how Kumārajīva disliked their presence.

Second, in exegesis of the statement that the *LPP* encourages Buddhists to copy various versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the *DZDL* says, "The corpus of *Prajñāpāramitā* literature.... includes there are the *Guangzan*, the *Fangguang*, and the *Daoxing*"⁹⁹ (是般若波羅蜜部黨 光讚、放光、道行), Hikata thinks that the sentence was added by Kumārajīva because, "no sūtra known by these names had existed in India."¹⁰⁰ I have two reasons to hold that Sengrui should be responsible for the passage.

First, when introducing *Prajñāpāramitā* literature to Sengrui, Kumārajīva faithfully followed the Indian Buddhist textual tradition that differentiated different versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* according to the number of *kārikās*, or verses, which they carried.¹⁰¹ When he translated the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra in Twenty-five Thousand Lines* and the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra in Eight Thousand Lines* into Chinese, he merely

98 CSZJJ, T 55, p. 53b.

99 DZDL, T 25, p. 529b.

100 Hikata, *Prajñāpāramitā-Sūtra*, lviii.

101 CSZJJ, T 55, p. 55a.

named them “The Large Version” and “The Small Version.”¹⁰² He did not follow the conventional Chinese method of giving the first chapter of each version a Chinese name, by which to differentiate different versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* with the given Chinese name of the first chapter, such as *Guangzan*, *Fanguang*, and *Daoxing*. Therefore, the passage cited above cannot be ascribed to Kumārajīva.

Sengrui, on the contrary, is the likeliest candidate. Like the other Chinese Buddhists, he read all *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras* as a whole with the perception that the differences of the versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* were derived from the Buddha’s intention, in the different times, to preach the doctrine in a detail or in an abbreviated way.¹⁰³ Essentially, all versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* expressed the same idea. Therefore, when Sengrui in his “Prolegomenon to *the Small Version of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*” praised the new translation of the scripture for its faithful expression and verbal beauty, he mentioned several chapter names to present the characteristics of the Buddha’s perfect wisdom. None of the names was contained in the new translation. Below, I list those names of the chapters and the versions of the Chinese translations where they appeared; the numbers in parentheses are the chapter numbers in the translations.

<i>Leijiao</i> 累教	<i>Daoxing</i> (25); <i>Damingdu</i> 大明度 (66); <i>LPP</i> (66)
<i>Gongde</i> 功德	<i>Daoxing</i> (3); <i>Damingdu</i> (3); <i>Mohe Banruo Jingchao</i> 摩訶般若經抄 (3)
<i>Wenxiang</i> 問相	<i>Fanguang</i> (50); <i>LPP</i> (49)
<i>Huangpin</i> 幻品	<i>Guangzan</i> (10)
<i>Daoxing</i> 道行	<i>Daoxing</i> (1); <i>Mohe Banruo Jingchao</i> (1)
<i>Nanwen</i> 難問	<i>Daoxing</i> (2)
<i>Sueixi</i> 隨喜	<i>LPP</i> (39)
<i>Zhaoming</i> 照明	<i>Daoxing</i> (10); <i>Damingdu</i> (10); <i>LPP</i> (40); <i>Fanguang</i> (41)

102 This is another way that Chinese Buddhists of the fourth century differentiated Moks!ala’s and Lokakṣema’s translations of the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*. The former was called “The Large Version,” and the latter “The Small Version.” *CSZJJ*, T 55, pp. 55a-56c.

103 *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 55a.

Sengrui's failure to mention the chapter names in the new translation does not mean that the new translation did not provide new understanding. Rather, he was viewing various *Prajñāpāramitā* scriptures as a whole in the conventional way. In addition, he was too familiar with terms in old translations to think that there was anything wrong in using old chapter names to talk about the characteristics of perfect wisdom. Similarly, Sengzao, in his essay, "Prajñā is not knowledge," still cited passages from the old translations of the *Fangguang* by Moks!ala and of the *Daoxing* by Lokaks!ema, instead of the new translation by Kumārajīva, to express the Mādhyamika view of *prajñāpāramitā*.

VIII. The Borderland Phobia

If the *DZDL* does contain the discussion of rhetorical meanings and of textual purport among Kumārajīva, Sengrui, and the king, why did Sengrui and other Chinese monks not admit this? Why did they unanimously assert that the commentary was the translation? One obvious reason, of course, is that there indeed was a Sanskrit commentary on the *LPP*. Kumārajīva translated it into Chinese, and asserted that Nāgārjuna is its author. The Sanskrit commentary, along with many Sanskrit texts,¹⁰⁴ must have been destroyed in war in 417, when Chang'an was encircled and besieged. Yet the deep and hidden reason should be sought by exploring the intellectual anxiety and psychological restlessness of the Chinese Buddhist elite, and a

104 An interesting story informs us that there were many Sanskrit texts in Chang'an in the early fifth century. A learned Brahman priest wanted to propagate his religion in China. He rode a camel to Chang'an with many foreign books. He told Yao Xing that he wanted to debate with Chinese monks. That worried Buddhist monks very much. Kumārajīva told Daorong, "If this tīrthika wins the debate, the Dharma Wheel will be destroyed. You are the only qualified person to argue with him." Daorong had not read many of the tīrthika's scriptures and felt unconfident about the debate. Kumārajīva helped him to copy them. In a short time, Daorong read and memorized them. At the scheduled date, Yao Xing oversaw the debate. Dignitaries, bureaucrats, and monks observed it. Through the fervent arguments back and forth for rounds, Daorong defeated the Brahman priest. *GSZ*, T 50, p. 363c.

legend that justifies Kumārajīva's assertion as sacrosanct.

As shown in Section I, the Chinese Buddhist elite never succeeded in comprehending the doctrine of *prajñāpāramitā*. Besides their inability to master Sanskrit and the earlier defective Chinese translation, they particularly ascribed the failure to two of the eight unfortunate conditions (*as!t!!āvaks!an!āh*)¹⁰⁵ which prevent one from comprehending the Buddha's Dharma during one's lifetime on earth: the wrong time--the interim between the presences of two Buddhas (*tathāgatānām*), so that the Buddhas were absent from the world, and the wrong place--the borderland (*pratyanta*). Although diligent study and humble practice could enable them to avoid rebirth into the other six unfortunate conditions--(1) the hells, (2) the animal realm, (3) the realm of hungry ghosts, (4) the immortal heaven, (5) deafness, blindness, or muteness, and (6) self-righteousness, Chinese Buddhists felt totally helpless about these two conditions. Geographically, China was the borderland in contrast to the "Middle Land," *madhyadeśa*, where the Buddha was born and preached the Dharma. Temporally, Śākyamuni had passed away and Maitreya, the future Buddha, had not yet come; Chinese Buddhists thus lived in a world with no Buddha. They lamented that they lived in such a wrong time and place that they could not comprehend the Buddha's Dharma.¹⁰⁶ Despite studying hard, they were not even confident whether they understood Buddhism correctly. Wrong understanding would result in no salvation. In this borderland phobia, Chinese Buddhists tried in three ways to overcome their intellectual anxiety and soteriological fear.

The first way was to practice the Eightfold Fast (*Baguanzai* 八關齋) held by Buddhists on six days (the 8th, the 14th, the 15th, the 23rd, the 29th, and the 30th) of each month; on these days, lay Buddhists also adhere rigorously to the monastic code.¹⁰⁷ According to the *Ekottarāgama*, the Eightfold Fast could keep participants from falling into one of the eight

105 *Dīrghāgama*, T 1, p. 55c.

106 Dao'an's "Preface to the *Sūtra on Skandha, Āyatana, and Dhātu*," *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 45a.

"Preface to the *Twelve-Gates Sūtra*," *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 46a.

107 See Zhiqian's translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, T 14, p. 532c.

unfortunate conditions in a future rebirth.¹⁰⁸ In the mid-fourth century, Zhi Dun was famous for holding this fast with lay Buddhists.

The second way is exemplified by Dao'an's whole-hearted worship of Maitreya. He wished to ascend to the Tuslita Heaven, where this future Buddha lived, to ask Maitreya whether his understanding of Buddhism was correct or not.¹⁰⁹

The third way, as Faxian did, was to travel to India, where, according to a Buddhist legend, a person in the Middle Land could easily understand the Dharma. Many Chinese Buddhist monks, after arriving in India, did not want to return to China, where the truth was hardly heard and salvation was less easily achieved.¹¹⁰

Nevertheless, none of these three ways could immediately rescue Chinese Buddhists from the urgent intellectual predicament. Kumārajīva's timely arrival and translation greatly helped Chinese Buddhists to dissipate the intellectual confusion. In collaboration with Sengrui, the learned and thoughtful Kumārajīva not only re-translated the *LPP* along with other Chinese Buddhist favorites of Mahāyāna Buddhist scriptures, but also explained Mahāyāna Buddhism in the Mādhyamika philosophical discourse in the translations of the *DZDL* and other Mādhyamika philosophical treatises. Chinese Buddhists were infatuated with his scholarship. When he told Chinese Buddhists that the great Nāgārjuna was the author of the *DZDL*, they completely accepted this assertion. Feeling inferior in the borderland, Sengrui, after having listened to Kumārajīva explain the *Vimalakīrti*, attributed the faults of the earlier Chinese Buddhist understanding of this text to "the deviant mind in the borderland, where

108 *Ekottarāgama*, T 1, p. 625c.

109 *CSZJJ*, T 55, p. 59a. The ascent to the Tuslita Heaven to ask Maitreya for clarification of doubts is popular in the Buddhist world. Xuanzang 玄奘 had the same wish before going to India. *Xugaosengzhuan* 續高僧傳, T 50, p. 447b. He recorded in his travelogue, *Datang Xiyu Ji*, an Indian story that Gunaprabha and Bhavaviveka went to the Tuslita Heaven to meet with Maitreya for resolving their doubts. T 51, p. 891c & pp. 930c-931b.

110 For instance, Daozheng, Faxian's companion, did not go back to China for this reason. T 51, p. 864c.

comprehending the Truth is difficult” (邊情險誑，難可以參契真言).¹¹¹ When the real meaning of *prajñāpāramitā* came into light through the exposition of the *DZDL*, who in the borderland dared to say that this work was not made by the great saint, Nāgārjuna? Kumārajīva, as a true follower of Nāgārjuna, must also have acknowledged that his explanation was a derivation from Nāgārjuna’s thought, and there was no difference between his explanation and Nāgārjuna’s thought. When Chinese Buddhists desperately needed a great mind from the holy place, the translation of the *DZDL* fulfilled this need and the author of the text, of course, was Nāgārjuna.

Moreover, Kumārajīva’s assertion was reinforced by a Buddhist myth that if a monk correctly preaches *prajñāpāramitā* in his lifetime, his tongue will survive the cremation.¹¹² So did Kumārajīva’s tongue. This miraculous story was widely circulated and Huijiao in the early sixth century put it into *Biographies of Eminent Monks*.¹¹³ Concomitant with the prevalence of this similar story of other monks in the later Chinese Buddhist community,¹¹⁴ no Chinese Buddhists have ever since questioned Kumārajīva’s assertion.

IX. Conclusion

I have shown in this study that the *DZDL* is the record of Kumārajīva’s teaching of Mahāyāna Buddhism to contemporary Chinese Buddhists, and his translating of an original Sanskrit commentary on the *LPP*. By bringing together the textual observation of the work comprising the earlier Chinese Buddhist knowledge and the newly introduced

111 *CSZJ*, T 55, pp. 68c-59a.

112 T 25, p. 127a.

113 *GSZ*, T. 52, p. 333a.

114 Suwa Gijun 諏訪義純, ”Rokuchū kara zuidōjidai niokeru zetsufushū no shinkō nitsuite 六朝から隋唐時代における舌不焼の信仰について,” and “Dō kara sō niokeru zetsuhushū no setsuko nitsuite 唐から宋における舌不焼の説話について,” 中國南朝佛教史の研究 (Kyōto: Hōzōkan, 1997), 303-330.

Mādhyamika thought, and the historical observation of the intellectual background against which the translation occurred, I would argue that authorship of the *DZDL* should be ascribed to Sengrui's editorship that reflected the evolution of Chinese Buddhism out of previously intellectual predicament in the early fifth century C.E. rather than some specific person, like Nāgārjuna, a Sarvāstivādin convert to Mahāyāna Buddhism, or Kumārajīva alone. In other words, the authorship issue is of a historical event rather than a personal identity. Furthermore, changing the textual nature of this inherently Indian Buddhist text from the translation to the testimony of how Chinese Buddhists comprehended the opaque doctrine of *prajñāpāramitā*, we come to see how earlier concept-matching was defeated, how powerful Indian Sarvāstivādin thought conceded its doctrinal dominance to Mahāyāna Buddhism in China, and how a new Chinese Buddhism emerged and evolved upon the basis of Kumārajīva's teachings in the early fifth century.

A final remark. The exposition of the *DZDL* put the Chinese Buddhists' groping for the meaning of *prajñāpāramitā* to an end. Whenever later Chinese Buddhists were baffled about what the mind in the enlightened state is like, they just read the *DZDL*. The *DZDL* became the solely authoritative work to answer this religiously ultimate question in Chinese Buddhism. In the sense of author as "auctor," the one who establishes the founding principles for a discipline,¹¹⁵ the *DZDL* sets up the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature as the very primary teaching (*shijiao* 始教) of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Because of this, the authorship issue became intricate and difficult to see through.

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115 Donald E. Pease, ed. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas MaLaughlin, "Author," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 105-120.

重論《大智度論》的作者

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提 要

此文說明為何中國佛教徒相信龍樹是《大智度論》的作者。本文反對過去從印度佛教的立場對此論作者所做的解釋，並提出一個新的觀點。即是《大智度論》文本經過僧叡的編修，反映的是第五世紀初中國佛教的思想處境。作者問題其實是個歷史問題而不是作者身份問題。本文分別從對鳩摩羅什、僧叡、翻譯的過程進行調查，並比較若干佛教專有術語與文本差異在《放光》、《光讚》與《小品經》中的不同，以及它們在《大智度論》中的解釋。

關鍵詞：大智度論 小品般若經 鳩摩羅什 僧叡 龍樹 佛經翻譯

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