DHARMAGUPTA’S UNFINISHED TRANSLATION OF
THE DIAMOND-CLEAVER (VAJRACHEDIKA-
PRAJÑĀPĀRAMITĀ-SŪTRA) 1

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List of Abbreviations

JGNDJ = Dharmagupta (transl.), Jingang nengduan banruo boluomi jing 金刚能断般若波羅蜜經, T. 238 (vol. VIII p. 766c-771c)
S = Edward Conze’s edition of the Vajracchedikā-Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra (in: Conze 1957 p. 27-63)
tr = Edward Conze’s translation of the Vajracchedikā-Prajñāpāramitā-
sūtra (in: Conze 1957 p. 65-92)
CSZJJ = Sengyou 僧祐, Chu sanzang jiji, 出三藏記集; T. 2145
KYL = Zhisheng 智昇, Kaiyuan shijiao lu, 開元釋教錄; T. 2154
XGSZ = Daoxuan 道宣, Xu gaoseng zhuoan, 繼高僧傳; T. 2060
T = J. Takakusu and K. Watanabe (eds.), Taishō shinshū daizōkyō, Tokyo, 1922-1933 大正新修大藏經

Part I: The technique of Chinese Buddhist translations: an outline of its
evolution from the second to the seventh century A.D.

One of the most interesting aspects of the history of Chinese
Buddhism is the progressive development of a highly specialized
technique of translation.

Since the earliest pioneering translations of the Late Han
dynasty, through the whole history of Chinese Buddhism, the render-
ing of Buddhist scriptures was due to the collective work of translation teams. 2

1 I want to express my sincerest gratitude to Professor Tilmann Vetter and Professor Erik Zürcher of Leiden University, who took the care of reading the first draft of the present article, suggesting many corrections and improvements. This article is a development of a part of my graduate thesis, The Chinese Transla-

2 See Zürcher 1959, p. 31.

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The first documents describing one of these teams are two ancient colophons\textsuperscript{5} dating back to the Late Han dynasty.

The most detailed of the two\textsuperscript{4} says:

«Banzhou sanmei jing: on the 8th day of the second month of the second year of Guanghe era [179 A.D.], at Luoyang, the Indian Bodhisattva\textsuperscript{5} Zhu Shuowo recited [it] (chu 出); at that time the Yuezhi\textsuperscript{6} Bodhisattva [Loka]ksema was translator (chuan yan zhe 傳言者), and transmitted [the translation] to Meng Fu, named Yuanshi from Luoang in Henan, [and to] Zhang Lian, named Shaoan, who, assisting the [two] Bodhisattva, wrote down [the translation] (bi shou 笔受) ...»

As far as we can induce from the sources we possess (especially colophons and prefaces collected in chapters VI-IX of CSZ[J]), this tri-functional structure of translation teams (i.e. 1. the main transmitter who recited the original text; 2. the interpreter, who orally translated it; 3. the scribes, who wrote down the translation)\textsuperscript{7},

\textsuperscript{5} 1) Colophon of the Dao xing jing 道行經 (T. 224; the earliest Chinese translation of Aṣṭāsāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā sūtra); in CSZ[J] p. 47c 5-9. 2) Colophon of the Banzhou sanmei jing 碧舟三昧經 (T. 417/418; the earliest Chinese translation of Pratyutpanna-samādhi sūtra); in CSZ[J] p. 48c 10-15. The two translations were probably carried out at the same time by the same team of translators, led by Lokakṣema and Zhu Shuowo 竹嶺佛 (see Zürcher 1959, n. 67 p. 330). The two documents contained in CSZ[J] are in fact later copies of Han originals (the first dates back to 255 A.D., the second to 208 A.D.; see Zürcher 1959, ibidem).

\textsuperscript{4} CSZ[J] p. 48c 10-13. In quoting this passage, I follow the text emended and punctuated by Tang Yongtong (1938 p. 68). The colophon also mentions two later revisions of the text, carried out in 198 and 208 A.D. The other colophon hardly differs from this one. See also Paul Harrison, The Samādhi of Direct Encounter with the Buddhas of the Present: An Annotated English Translation of the Pratyutpanna-Buddha-Sammukhāvasthita-Samādhi-Sūtra, Tokyo, 1990, p. 259-260.

\textsuperscript{5} The term “Bodhisattva” was widely used as an honorific title in early Chinese Buddhism, especially referring to foreign translators. See Tang Yongtong 1938 p. 102.

\textsuperscript{6} Indoscythian.

\textsuperscript{7} A main variant of this scheme happened when the main transmitter’s command of Chinese enabled him directly to supply the translation (see Fuchs 1930 p. 87). The first explicit mention of this way of translating can be found in Kang Senghui’s 凱僧會 preface to the Fa jing jing 法鏡經 (T. 322), which was translated during the Han dynasty by An Xuan 安玄 and Yan Fotiao 毅佛剽 (see CSZ[J] p. 46c 5-6). Many great transmitters used to translate without resorting to a translator: such as Dharmaraksa (see Zürcher 1959 p. 69; a list of sources on Dharmaraksa’s translations can be found in Zürcher 1959, n. 221 p. 343; actually for the first text produced by him Dharmarakṣa had to resort to a translator; see below, note 8, item 1); Sanghadeva (see CSZ[J] p. 72b 23-24; p. 73a 23-24); Kumārajīva (see his biography, CSZ[J] p. 101b 17; Sengru’s 僧叡 preface to Da pin jing 大品經,