

The Doctrine of Wisdom in the Dharmākara Story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng**

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Abstract

This paper addresses the formation of the doctrine of wisdom in the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. This question is approached in the following ways. I commence with a brief treatment of the importance of the *Píngděngjué jīng*. Secondly, I compare the first paragraph of the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* with its counterparts in other versions. Thirdly, I consider, on the basis of three key-words, why the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* created these 129 characters, which comprise several vows, but which do not exist in any other version. Finally, I discuss the paragraphs relating to the term 二十四願, by which may assist in determining the purpose of the translator who edited the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

Key-words: Wisdom; Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection; Contemplation Over Five Kalpas; the Dharmākara Story; the *Dà āmítuó jīng*

Introduction

This paper addresses the formation of the doctrine of wisdom in the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* 大阿彌陀經 (T12, No.362, or *siglum*: 大阿), the oldest version of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. Undoubtedly, the story of Dharmākara plays a significant role in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. This is not only because the story of Dharmākara is closely connected to the vows of Amitābha, the most important part in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, but also because this section in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* presents a unique structure which is largely different to the ones in the other versions. There are at least three significant differences in the Dharmākara story between the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the other versions.

Firstly, *zuò púsàdào* 作菩薩道 “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection” is a significant distinction between this story in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the one in the other versions of the sūtra.

Secondly, the words 具足五劫, 思惟攝取 (cf. note 33), do not appear in the two versions of the Early Recension,⁽¹⁾ which relate the story of Dharmākara’s resolution to make the forty-eight vows by contemplating for five full kalpas.

Thirdly, a short paragraph consisting of 129 characters, which comprises several vows, appears in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, but these 129 characters do not exist in any other versions. These questions,

which are directly related to the formation of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, are still vague.

Accordingly, this paper will focus on these questions based on a philological analysis.

1. The Importance of the *Píngděngjué jīng*

It is worth noting that the *Píngděngjué jīng* (T12, No.361, or *siglum*: 清淨) plays an important role in helping to reveal about the original form of the Indian text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.⁽²⁾ The *Píngděngjué jīng* has the following notable characteristics.⁽³⁾

The *Píngděngjué jīng* is the second oldest version of the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*, whose translation period is very close to that of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.⁽⁴⁾ Undoubtedly, the *Píngděngjué jīng* has a close connection to the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. For example: many contexts in the *Píngděngjué jīng* are simply the copies from the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

Undoubtedly, the translator of the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* 佛說無量壽經 (T12, No.360, or *siglum* 無量) referred to their counterparts either in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* or in the *Píngděngjué jīng*,⁽⁵⁾ when it was translated into Chinese, and almost all of the twenty-four vows in the *Píngděngjué jīng* are consistent - both in order and content - with the first half of the forty-eight vows in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng*, accordingly, the *Píngděngjué jīng* provides us with a bridge between *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the versions in the Later Recension.

The content of the *Tanbutsu-ge* of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, a part of the Dharmākara story, corresponds closely to its counterpart in the extant Sanskrit version.⁽⁶⁾

There are some differences in structure between the Dharmākara story in the *Píngděngjué jīng* and the one in the extant Sanskrit version but they correspond to each other in meaning.

This paper will present a comparative study in detail between the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and that in other versions, especially the *Píngděngjué jīng*.

2. The Perfection of Wisdom in the Story of Dharmākara

The whole story can be divided into four paragraphs. The first paragraph is as follows:

【大阿】A-1 次復有佛，名樓夷亘羅，在世間教授，壽四十二劫。A-2 乃爾時世有大國王，王聞佛經道，心即歡喜開解；便棄國捐王，行作沙門，字曇摩迦。A-3 作菩薩道，為人高才，智慧勇猛，與世人絕異。往到樓夷亘羅佛所前，為佛作禮，却長跪叉手，白佛言：⁽⁷⁾ (T12, p. 300c18—23)

Its counterpart in the *Píngděngjué jīng* is as follows.

【清淨】P-1 復次有佛，名樓夷亘羅，在中教授四十二劫，皆已過去。乃爾劫

時作仏。P-2 天上、天下人中之雄；經道法中勇猛之將，佛為諸天及世人民說經、講道莫能過者。P-3 世饒王⁽⁸⁾ 聞經道，歡喜開解，便棄國位行作比丘，名曇摩迦留。P-4 堯菩薩意，為人高才、智慧勇猛、無能踰者、與世絕異。⁽⁹⁾ (T12, p.280a24—b01)

The above comparison with the first paragraph of the Dharmākara story in the different versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* demonstrates that (owing to space constraints, only the contexts of the two earliest versions have been presented above, the parallel contexts in the remaining versions see ŌTA 2005, p24-25): (1) the contexts of the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* (T12, p.267a14-20) show major differences to its counterparts in two versions of the Early Recension, especially with the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, and: (2) the original text of the Dharmākara story in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* mainly corresponds to the one in the extant Sanskrit version.⁽¹⁰⁾ The paragraphs above are respectively divided into three and four parts, A1–3 in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and P1–4 in the *Píngděngjué jīng*. From the paragraph above in the *Píngděngjué jīng*, we can read: (i) P1 is just the copy of its counterpart A1 in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*; and: (ii) P2 has no counterpart in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, but is most likely to be an abbreviated summary of the contexts appearing in the Sanskrit version and the *Wúliàngshòu jīng*, which lists ten kinds of names of Buddhas;⁽¹¹⁾ and: (iii) P3 is the one which follows its counterpart A2 and P4 is the one which follows its counterpart A3. Three phrases are selected as the key words in the paragraph of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, — 壽四十二劫 “Life Span of Forty-two *kalpas*,” 作菩薩道 “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection,” and 智慧勇猛 “Unrivaled Wisdom.”

Firstly, the phrase addressing the life span of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja 壽四十二劫 is slightly different in structure, between the two earliest versions and the remaining versions of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*, but its meaning in different versions is almost the same.⁽¹²⁾ Four of the seven extant versions, the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, the *Píngděngjué jīng*, the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* and the Sanskrit version, are consistent with each other, in which the Buddha Lokeśvararāja's life span is said to be forty-two *kalpas*.⁽¹³⁾ It is worth noting that the structure of the words 壽四十二劫 is somewhat complicated in the two earliest versions. There is no verse in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. By contrast, the *Tanbutsu-ge* appears in the *Píngděngjué jīng*, but the words 壽四十二劫, whose counterpart in the extant Sanskrit version is placed following the *Tanbutsu-ge*, are unexpectedly inserted in the front of the Dharmākara story in the *Píngděngjué jīng* where they are exactly akin to the extant version of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. The problem is why the words 壽四十二劫 were placed in the front of the Dharmākara story in the *Píngděngjué jīng*. Because the *Tanbutsu-ge* in the *Píngděngjué jīng* corresponds exactly with its counterpart in the Sanskrit version, we have reason enough to believe that the Dharmākara story in the original Indian text of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, at least in the part relating to the Dharmākara story, is likely to correspond with its counterpart in the extant Sanskrit

version.⁽¹⁴⁾ Accordingly, only one possibility can be considered; namely, that because the translator of the *Píngděngjué jīng* followed the counterparts of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, in part, such as the words 壽四十二劫, and compiled these words into the paragraph above where it is in front of the story of Dharmākara, while he was translating the *Tanbutsu-ge*. Moreover, the phrase 壽四十二劫 in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is probably not consistent, in structure, with its counterpart in the original text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. If the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* purposely edited or revised some contexts based on his own notion, the translator must have compiled other contexts which can help us to understand the translator's intentions.

Secondly, the words *zuò púsàdào* 作菩薩道 “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection” plays an important role in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, in that this phrase also appears in those special 129 characters, a unique paragraph, which consists of several vows, only appearing in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*; and the 7th vow, which is considered as the most significant vow in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.⁽¹⁵⁾ The following points are worth noting: (i) the doctrine of 作菩薩道 disappeared in all versions of the Later Recension of the Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*, especially in the extant Sanskrit version; (ii) The counterpart of these characters has been revised to *fā púsà yì* 發菩薩意 P4 in the *Píngděngjué jīng*. A sentence suggests that 發菩薩意 must have been purposely revised based on the main idea of the original Indian text of the *Píngděngjué jīng*.⁽¹⁶⁾ This sentence, which is placed just following the *Tanbutsu-ge*, reads: 發意欲求無上正真道最正覺 (T12, p.280c15).⁽¹⁷⁾ Its counterpart in the extant Sanskrit version is “*anuttarāyāṃ samyaksaṃbodhau cittam utpādayāmi*.”⁽¹⁸⁾ Also, in the versions of the Later Recension of the Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*, there is no counterpart which has parallels with the words *zuò púsàdào*. The problem is whether the doctrine of *zuò púsàdào* is derived from its original Indian text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, or is just a production based on the translator's own notion.

Thirdly, *zhìhuì* 智慧 ‘wisdom’ is another significant term, which appears 43 times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. In these instances, 17 of them appear in the form of compound word *zhìhuì yǒngměng* 智慧勇猛, but only one instance has a counterpart in the Sanskrit version⁽¹⁹⁾ - the rest do not hold a counterpart in the Sanskrit version. It is worth noting that the term *zhìhuì* appears repeatedly not only in the paragraph consisting of 129 characters and the 7th, the 18th, and the 22nd-23th vows, but in all three grades of rebirth to the Pure Land of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. As I suggested in my previous study, the aim of rebirth in *Sukhāvātī* in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* was not to overcome samsara as we find in the Later Recension of Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* but, primarily, to attain the same wisdom as Amitābhā (cf. XIAO 2009). As long as one is able to establish this feature together with the doctrine of *zuò púsàdào*, it is not difficult to infer the intention of translator which is to purposely emphasize the doctrine of wisdom in

the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, because attaining wisdom akin to the Buddhas is the most important item in the Six Perfections (*ṣaṭpāramitā* in Sanskrit and *liù bōluómì* 六波羅蜜 in Chinese).

3. The Special 129 Characters

The second paragraph of the Dharmākara story in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* comprises 129 characters, pertaining to several important vows. It is a unique structure in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. In my previous paper, I pointed out that the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* compiled several significant vows, into these 129 characters.⁽²⁰⁾ In this paper, I would like to discuss why the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* compiled these 129 characters and inserted them into the paragraph of the story of the Daharmākara.

【大阿】我欲求佛為菩薩道，令我後作佛時，於八方、上下諸無央數佛中，最尊、智慧勇猛、頭中光明如佛光明，所焰照無極；所居國土，自然七寶極自軟好；令我後作佛時，教授名字，皆聞八方、上下無央數佛國，莫不聞知我名字者；諸無央數天人民、及蜎飛蠕動之類諸來生我國者，悉皆令作菩薩、阿羅漢無央數都勝諸佛國。如是者寧可得不？⁽²¹⁾ (T12, pp.300c-301a)

Firstly, consider the corresponding relationship between these 129 characters above with the one in other versions. In my previous paper, I followed the suggestion of ŌTA (2004, pp. 28-29) regarding the corresponding relationship between these 129 characters with the texts of the first paragraph following the *Tanbutsu-ge* in the remaining versions of the Later Recension (XIAO 2012b, p.86). However, in my recent research, I noted that the arrangement method of ŌTA is not able to accurately reflect the uniqueness of the 129 characters in the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha*. Accordingly, I propose to reconsider the relationship between the 129 characters of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the first paragraph following the *Tanbutsu-ge* in all other versions in order that: (i) the uniqueness of these 129 characters can easily be seen and: (ii) that the similarity of the first paragraph following the *Tanbutsu-ge* between the *Píngděngjué jīng* and its counterpart in all other versions of the Later Recension, especially the extant Sanskrit version, can be made more prominent. Based on this principle, I would like to make two corrections at this point based on ŌTA's research: (1) these 129 characters do not have a counterpart in any other version, and: (2) the corresponding relationship of the first paragraph following the *Tanbutsu-ge* between the *Píngděngjué jīng* and other versions is on the basis of ŌTA's suggestion.⁽²²⁾

Secondly, as I suggested in my recent paper, in addition to the corresponding relationship between the vows and the fulfillment articles, a two-fold correspondence exists in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, between 129 characters and several vows. Regarding this, I suggest that we determine this

question on the basis that if one term or phrase is used repeatedly and there is no counterpart in other versions - especially in the Sanskrit version - then this suggests that the sentences containing one or more special terms should have been noted more. The corresponding relationship between 129 characters and the vows based on this principle is as follows. ⁽²³⁾

Table 1

Terms Appearing Both in 129 Characters and the Vows	Corresponding Vows in the <i>Dà āmítuó jīng</i>
菩薩·阿羅漢無數	第 2 願 (一部)、第 20 願
七寶、柔好	第 3 願
智慧勇猛、為菩薩道	第 7 願
光明	第 24 願
智慧 (勇猛)	第 18、22 願
菩薩阿羅漢、智慧勇猛、光明	第 23 願

Thirdly, three phrases are selected as the key-words of these 129 characters: *wèi púsàdào* 為菩薩道 “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection”; *zhìhuì yǒngměng* 智慧勇猛 “Unrivaled Wisdom”; and *púsà āluóhàn wúshù* 菩薩阿羅漢無數 “Measureless Bodhisattvas and Arhats”.

(i) These three key-words appear again in the 7th vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, which is the most significant vow for addressing the conditions of rebirth in Amitābha’s land. The difference is that what the 129 characters pertain to is Dharmākara’s bodhisattva path, but what the 7th vow addresses is the one who desires rebirth in the Pure Land. Moreover, there are no Sanskrit terms corresponding with the three key-words in the parallel vow, the 18th vow, in the extant Sanskrit version.

(ii) The idea of *púsà āluóhàn wúshù* in the Pure Land is something of a paradox in the Larger *Sukhāvātīvyūha*. This idea is emphasized here and there in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. By contrast, this idea has been changed into 諸弟子無數 “measureless disciples” in the *Píngděngjué jīng*; 聲聞無數 “measureless śrāvaka” in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* and the *Rúláihuì* as well as the Sanskrit version. ⁽²⁴⁾ This term which appears again in this paragraph corresponds with the second vow, in part, and the 20th vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. It is of interest that the second vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* mainly addresses “Women’s Rebirth to the Pure Land” and “Rebirth by Transformation”. However, the idea of ‘Measureless Bodhisattvas and Arhats’ has been inserted in this vow, after all, the 20th vow is the one which is specifically devoted to this idea. This feature itself suggests that these words are somewhat special and should have been given more attention. Undoubtedly, the idea of “Measureless Bodhisattvas and Arhats” is the purpose of “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection” in the paragraph above.

Accordingly, these 129 characters which comprise several vows can be summarized by the following three points: (1) Dharmākara aspires to attain Buddhahood by cultivating the bodhisattva path; (2) After he attains Buddhahood, he will be the one with superior intelligence and foremost wisdom; and (3) “Measureless Bodhisattvas and Arhats” means there are measureless bodhisattvas and arhats cultivating the bodhisattva path in the Pure Land like Dharmākara himself.

4. A Metaphorical Story for Cultivating the Bodhisattva Path

The third paragraph of the story of Dharmākara in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* consists of two parts. The first part is the narrative encouraging Dharmākara to cultivate the bodhisattva path, which I labelled as *Daikai no tatoe* 大海の喩え in my recent Japanese paper (XIAO 2012b, pp.92–98). The second part (underlined) addresses how Dharmākara chose his vows after he had heard Lokeśvararāja's teaching. The context is as follows.

【大阿】I 佛語阿難：“其樓夷亘羅佛，知其高明所願快善，即為曇摩迦菩薩說經言：”譬如天下大海水，一人斗量之，一劫不止，尚可枯盡令空⁽²⁵⁾，得其底泥。人至心道，可知當不可得乎？求索精進不休止，會當得心中所欲願爾。”

II 曇摩迦菩薩聞樓夷亘羅佛說經如是，即大歡喜踊躍。其佛即選擇二百一十億佛國土中，諸天人民之善惡、國土之好醜，為選擇心中所欲願。⁽²⁶⁾ (T12, p.301a02)

The first part of the paragraph above only appears in three versions, the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, the *Píngděngjué jīng* and the *Wúliàngshòu jīng*. And the sentences with identical patterns appear again in the earliest two versions. The one in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* reads: 諸天下大海水，一人斗量之，尚可枯盡得其底泥；佛智不如是 (T12, p.309a29–b01).⁽²⁷⁾ Although similar sentences also appear in the *Píngděngjué jīng*, it is not possible that it was translated from the original Indian text of this version. Rather, it was just a copy of the sentences found in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. The following points can support my suggestion: (i) Although there are no key-words for the paragraph above, the first part addresses “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection,” which corresponds with 129 characters discussed above, but those 129 characters have disappeared in the *Píngděngjué jīng*; (ii) Many sentences, even some paragraphs, in the *Píngděngjué jīng* are just a copy of the ones in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*; and (iii) Even though the phrase 作菩薩道 also appears in the 18th vow of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, which is the counterpart vow of the 7th vow in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* (ÖTA 2004, pp.54–55), it is not derived from the original Indian text, but is just a copy of the 7th vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, in that 奉行六般若蜜經⁽²⁸⁾ (‘abiding respect for the teaching of Six Perfections’) which appears in the 7th vow was deleted and “…我即與諸菩薩、阿羅漢…” (‘…I will appear (before them) surrounded by bodhisattvas and arhats…’) was revised to “…壽終時我與不可計比丘眾…”

(‘at their death, I will appear before them surrounded by measureless bhikṣus’) in the 18th vow of the *Píngděngjué jīng*.

The second part of the paragraph above (underlined) unexpectedly corresponds to each other in all versions. In other words, the first part of the paragraph above shows something unique, because it only appears in three versions whereas the second part is common in all versions.⁽²⁹⁾

In sum, the first part of the paragraph, a vivid metaphorical story for cultivating the bodhisattva path, is not derived from the original Indian text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* but has been deliberately compiled and inserted by the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. The intention of the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* is to highlight the importance of cultivating the bodhisattva path repeatedly in the two paragraphs above and in the following text.

5. The Meaning of the Phrase 二十四願

The fourth part consists of the following words where they are just before the vows.

【大阿】(I) 便結得是二十四願經，則奉行之，精進勇猛勤苦求索。……(II) 其曇摩迦菩薩至其然後，自致得作佛，名阿彌陀佛，最尊智慧勇猛光明無比，今現在所居國土甚快善。……(III) 佛語阿難：“阿彌陀佛為菩薩時，常奉行是二十四願，珍寶愛重，保持恭慎，精禪從之，與眾超絕，卓然有異，皆無有能及者”。佛言：“何為二十四願”？⁽³⁰⁾ (T12, p.301a13-24)

The paragraph above is unique as it only appears in two of the oldest versions, which can be divided into three segments based on the content. Part (I) addresses how Dharmākara cultivated the bodhisattva path after he had made the twenty-four vows, so-called *zuò púsàdào*. Part (II) is the fulfillment of the special 129 characters discussed above; and Part (III) repeatedly highlights, in detail, how Dharmākara cultivated the bodhisattva path.

It is worth noting that: (1) Part (II) clearly mentions that the intention, and the result, of Dharmākara's bodhisattva cultivation is to attain the sublime wisdom, the most significant of the Six Perfections; and: (2) The phrase (阿彌陀佛) 為菩薩時 in (III) above appears seven times in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* - three of them are placed together with the phrase *èrshí-sì yuàn*, with the remaining phrases all addressing the importance of cultivating the bodhisattva path. Accordingly, no one can deny that the main idea of the paragraph above is to highlight the importance of cultivating the bodhisattva path to perfection. In this instance, the phrase 二十四願 in the *Dà āmítuó jīng* holds a special meaning, which is “*zuò púsàdào*”(‘the ultimate goal is to attain the sublime wisdom’).⁽³¹⁾

It is worth noting that there is one small difference in the structure, but a significant difference in meaning, between the earliest two versions and the versions in the Later Recension. With regard to the structure in all versions of the Late Recension (see ŌTA 2004, pp.32-33) and the KUDARA

fragment,⁽³²⁾ the line addressing the life-span of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja is the same in each, where it is placed next to the words addressing how Dharmākara selected and made the forty-eight vows, which reads 具足五劫, 思惟攝取 “Contemplating for Five Full kalpas” in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng*.⁽³³⁾ By contrast, there is another story in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, where we do not find the words about 具足五劫 but, rather, the doctrine of 作菩薩道 is highlighted here and there in this version. If one does not consider this point in the context of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, then it is quite possible to misunderstand that this difference is due to a gradual evolution from an earlier version to a later version, such as suggested by SHIZUTANI (1974, pp.55-110). In fact, another possibility can be considered (which is quite likely); namely, that a counterpart term of 具足五劫 was included in the original Indian text of the *Píngděngjué jīng* but this content was deleted by the translator. The following three points can support this suggestion:

(1) As discussed above, a sentence following the *Tanbutsu-ge* of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, 發意欲求無上正真道最正覺 (T12, p.280c15), suggests a piece of significant information regarding this problem (cf. note 18 of this paper), in that these words must be the ones translated from the original Indian text of the *Píngděngjué jīng*.

(2) The *Tanbutsu-ge* of the *Píngděngjué jīng* corresponds to the counterpart of the extant Sanskrit version, which presents the earliest form both in rhythm and language (cf. note 6 of this paper).

(3) Although the words of the life-span of the Buhhda Lokeśvararāja have been moved to the front of the Dharmākara story in the *Píngděngjué jīng*, the content is entirely the same as its counterparts in the Sanskrit version and the *Wúliàngshòu jīng*, and both the content and structure are entirely the same as its counterpart in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

Accordingly, the original Indian text of the Dharmākara story of the *Píngděngjué jīng* almost certainly corresponds to the one in the extant Sanskrit version. In this instance, one cannot maintain that there are no words relating to 具足五劫 in the original text of the *Píngděngjué jīng*, as it is clear that those words had been deleted by the translator in order that the main idea of the Dharmākara story can correspond with the one in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. This deliberate amendment by the translator of the *Píngděngjué jīng* resulted in the fact that sometimes these are consistent with each other, and sometimes contradictory - one of the features of the *Píngděngjué jīng*. The original text the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* may well correspond to the one in the extant Sanskrit version,⁽³⁴⁾ in that the translation period of the *Píngděngjué jīng* is just slightly later than the period of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Accordingly, it is quite possible that the verse was consciously omitted by the translator as suggested by FUJITA (2007, p.84). Furthermore, the differences, between the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and one of the other versions in the Later Recension, are all about the doctrine of cultivation of the bodhisattva path and they do not have a counterpart in the

extant Sanskrit versions.

A short paragraph following the vows, in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*, is also associated with the Dharmākara story. The Six Perfections are listed in this short paragraph as follows.

【大阿】佛告阿難：“阿彌陀為菩薩時，常奉行是二十四願。分檀布施，不犯道禁，忍辱、精進、一心、智慧。……”⁽³⁵⁾ (T12, p.302b15-16)

There are identical words which appear in the last part of the Five-Evils Paragraphs of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* as follows.

【大阿】若曹於是益作諸善，布恩施德、能不犯道禁忌、忍辱、精進、一心智慧，展轉復相教化作善為德。如是經法，慈心專一，齋戒清淨一日一夜者，勝於在阿彌陀佛國作善百歲。⁽³⁶⁾ (T12, p.315c14-18)

The sentences above are only to be found in the last part of the Five-Evils paragraphs, which is quite likely to be a conscious creation by the translator of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.⁽³⁷⁾ This paragraph was written to promote the importance of cultivating roots of virtue (the Six Perfections listed above) in the turbulent period of the five defilements. Accordingly, the doctrine of “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection” is the main idea not only in the Dharmākara story but in the whole version of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. This idea is not derived from the original text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* but is the creation by the translator based on his notion.

Another short paragraph highlights the doctrine of *zuò púsàdào*, and the phrase *èrshí-sì yuàn* also appears two times in it (T12, p.303b02-08). This paragraph relates the predictions to Ajātaśatru and an eminent audience of five hundred, in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Of course, there is no counterpart to this in the Sanskrit version. According to FUJITA, it is hard to imagine that these words are derived from the original Indian text of the Larger *Sukhāvatīvyūha* (cf. FUJITA 1970, p.173). Accordingly, we have reason enough to believe that this short paragraph are not derived from the original Indian text of the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.

Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn based on the above investigations:

Firstly, the greatest difference of the Dharmākara Story between the *Dà āmítuó jīng* and the remaining versions is that the doctrine of “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection” and “Perfection of Wisdom” are deliberately highlighted in the *Dà āmítuó jīng*. Instead of being derived from early Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, which is commonly believed by scholars, it is a typical feature representing the translator’s own Mahāyāna ideas which are extended from Dharmākara’s cultivation to everyone who desires to be reborn in the Pure Land. Because the “wisdom” is the

most significant item in the Six Perfections, wisdom is highlighted together with the doctrine of the “Cultivation of the Bodhisattva Path to Perfection”.

Secondly, the original text of the Dharmākara story of the *Píngděngjué jīng* must correspond with the one in the extant Sanskrit version. And the original Indian text of the Dharmākara story of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* corresponds, quite possibly, with the one in the *Píngděngjué jīng* and the Sanskrit version.

Thirdly, owing to space constraints, the vows connected with wisdom (the 7th, the 18th, the 22th vows and their fulfillment passages), cannot be considered here, although I hope to do so in a subsequent paper.

Endnotes

- * The draft of this paper was presented at the 17th International Association of Buddhist Studies held between 18–23 August at the University of Vienna. A Japanese summary, in part, presented to the 65th Congress of the Japanese Association of Indian and Buddhist Studies, which held between 30–31 August at Musashino University in Tokyo, published in Vol.63 of the *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* (see XIAO 2014c). I have a special debt of gratitude to Rev. JOHN PARASKEVOPOULOS for his editorial assistance. Remaining errors are, of course, my responsibility.
- (1) For convenience, I would like to follow the previous study of scholars in this paper. The two earliest versions, which include the twenty-four vows, belong to the Early Recension while the remaining versions belong to the Later Recension. By no means do the original texts of the two versions of the Early Recension also have twenty-four vows as we find in the present form, as they appear to be revised by their Chinese translators.
- (2) In fact, it is hard to consider that there is an Indian text containing 24 vows that are exactly akin to the extant version of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* (XIAO 2014b). It is noteworthy that we can, at least, say that an unknown Chinese version with the forty-eight vows system, which is attributed to the Early Recension of the Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha*, existed before the period when the versions of the Later Recension had been translated. This has been suggested by MITANI based on the fragments of an unknown Chinese version (see MITANI 2014, pp. 21–22).
- (3) On the importance of the *Píngděngjué jīng* in the field of the early Pure Land studies, see XIAO 2010.
- (4) According to FUJITA, the *Dà āmítuó jīng* was translated by *Zhīqiān* 支謙 in 222/223–228/253 C.E.; and the *Píngděngjué jīng* was translated by *Bó yán* 帛延, (or *Bái yán* 白延) in 258 C.E. (See FUJITA 1970, 2011).
- (5) Some evidence see XIAO 2012b, p.103 note 25.
- (6) According to SAKAMOTO, the *Tanbutsu-ge* in the extant Sanskrit version of the Larger *Sukhāvāṭīvyūha* holds the earliest form both in rhythm and language. See SAKAMOTO 1994, pp.148–153; also see FUJITA 2007, p.92.
- (7) This might be tentatively translated as follows: “Then there appeared a Buddha named *Lokeśvararāja* who was teaching (the Dharma) in that land and whose life-span is forty-two kalpas. At that time there was a king of the kingdom who, having heard the Buddha’s exposition of the dharma, rejoiced and fully comprehended it in his heart. He renounced his kingdom and throne and became a monk named

Dharmākara. He then cultivated the bodhisattva path to perfection. Having unrivaled wisdom and courage, he distinguished himself in the world. He went to the Buddha Lokeśvararāja, worshipping him, knelt down and, putting his hands together, said to the Buddha.” The counterpart of this text in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* cf. T12, p. 267a14–20; and its translation cf. INAGAKI 1995, p. 31. The counterpart in the Sanskrit version cf. FUJITA 2011, pp.9–10; an English translation cf. GÓMEZ 1996, p. 65.

- (8) 世饒王 need to revise as 王, which is the name of Dharmākara's official position before he renounced his household life. Obviously, the translator of the *Píngděngjué jīng* confused the two people's names, - the Buddha's and Dharmākara's, when he compiled this paragraph. This mistake was noted and revised referring to its counterpart in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* by the composer of the Tripiṭaka (compiled in Ming Dynasty). A note in the Taishō version of the *Píngděngjué jīng* clearly records this historical case (T12, p.280, note 5).
- (9) *Then there appeared a Buddha named Lokeśvararāja, who was teaching (the Dharma in that land) and whose life-span was forty-two kalpas. All other Buddhas having passed away, he attained Buddhahood during those kalpas. The Buddha was sovereign both in the heavenly realm and throughout the world. The Buddha was the noblest of all men. He was an unrivaled general in the Dharma and Buddhist path. He was invincible and taught the sutras and Dharma for all beings both in the heavenly realm and in the world. At that time, there was a king of the kingdom who, having heard the Buddha's exposition of the dharma, rejoiced and fully comprehended it in his heart. He renounced his kingdom and throne and become a monk named Dharmākara. He awakened aspiration for the bodhisattva path. Having superior intelligence, unrivaled wisdom and courage, he distinguished himself in the world and nobody could surpass him.*
- (10) In addition to the Dharmākara story, many contexts in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* are closely paralleled with their counterparts in the extant Sanskrit versions. For example, forty-eight vows of the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* are consistent with the vows' articles in the Sanskrit version both in content and order, though they have slight differences in the numbers of the vows.
- (11) See XIAO (2012b, pp.84–85). Its counterpart in the Sanskrit version reads: “*tathāgato 'rhan samyaksambuddho loka udapādi vidyācaraṇa-saṃpannaḥ sugato lokavid anuttaraḥ puruṣadamyaśārathīḥ śāstā devānāṃ ca manuṣyānāṃ ca buddho bhagavān* (FUJITA 2011, pp.9–10).” And its counterpart in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* cf. T12, p.267a14–15.
- (12) For instance, in the *Wúliàngshòu rúlíhuì* 無量壽如來會 (T 310.5. hereafter the *Rúlíhuì*), the life-span of the Buddha is forty *kalpas*, which it reads: 彼佛壽量滿四十劫 (T 310.5, p.93b06–07). The counterpart in the *Zhuāngyán jīng* 莊嚴經 (T 363) reads: 佛告阿難：彼佛壽命滿四十劫 (T363, p.319a14). The placement of the sentence in two versions is the same as where it lies between the *Tanbutsu-ge* and the vows.
- (13) In addition to these four versions, a short fragment —only about 615 characters— of an unknown Chinese manuscript which only includes the story of Dharmākara, in part, with the 1–5th vows has been introduced by KUDARA in 1989 (see KUDARA 1989, p.382, also see below). Although this manuscript cannot present the whole picture of the vows in that unknown Chinese version, there is still some valuable information which can help us to determine what is the original form of the Dharmākara story in the Larger *Sukhāvāṣṭyūha*. Firstly, the life-span of the Buddha Lokeśvararāja is also forty-two *kalpas*, the same as in the four versions mentioned above. Secondly, the structure of the context addressing the life-span of the Buddha is the same as the one in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* and the Sanskrit versions, where it appears just in front of the vows. Thirdly, the text relating to fact that Dharmākara's

- resolving to make forty-eight vows by the contemplation over five *kalpas*, which reads 滿五劫中, 專精思維, which is similar in meaning to the counterparts in the versions of the Later Recension. Moreover, the term *qīngjìng* 清淨 repeatedly appears 9 times in this short fragment.
- (14) In addition to SAKAMOTO's suggestion on the *Tanbutsu-ge* of the Sanskrit version (see note 6 of this paper), the contexts of the Dharmākara story in the *Píngděngjué jīng*, which are distinct from their counterparts in the Sanskrit version, are due to the translator purposely revising the text (see below).
- (15) A Japanese summary on the formation of the 7th vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* cf. XIAO 2014c, pp.496-495.
- (16) Please note that the *Tanbutsu-ge* in the *Píngděngjué jīng* exactly corresponds with its counterpart in the Sanskrit version. Accordingly, we have reason enough to believe that Dharmākara story in the original text of the *Píngděngjué jīng* must correspond to the extant Sanskrit version.
- (17) The phrase 無上正真道最正覺 is a typical phrase frequently appearing in the early Chinese Buddhist translations. For example, in the *Ā chù fú guó jīng* 阿閼佛國經 (T11, No. 313 by *Zhī lóu jiā chèn* 支婁迦讖), this phrase appears 3 times; in the *Zhèngfǎ huá jīng* 正法華經 (T9, No. 263, by *Zhú fǎ hù* 竺法護), this phrase appears 6 times. This phrase also appears in the *sūtras* by *Zhú fǎ hù*, cf. 佛說德光太子經 (T3, No.170); 佛說阿惟越致遮經 (T9, No. 266); 郁迦羅越問菩薩行經 (T12, No. 323); 弥勒菩薩所問本願經 (T12, No. 349); 佛說方等般泥洹經 (T12, No. 378); 佛說文殊師利現寶藏經 (T14, No. 461); 佛說海龍王經 (T15, No. 598); and it appears 17 times in the *Dàmíng dù jīng* 大明度經 (T8, No. 225, by *Zhīqiān*).
- (18) See FUJITA 2011, p.12. An English translation cf. GÓMEZ 1996, 67. Its counterpart in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* reads: 世尊！我發無上正覺之心 (T12, 267b20). An English translation cf. INAGAKI 1995, p. 30. A different suggestion cf. SHIZUTANI 1974, pp. 51–110 and ŌTA 1990, pp.266–293.
- (19) According to KARASHIMA, term *zhīhuì yǒngměng* appearing in the contexts above corresponds to *prajñāvaṇ adhimātraṃ vīryavān* in the Sanskrit version (1999, p.137).
- (20) See XIAO 2012b, pp.86–92; and 2014, pp.59–62. A different suggestion see SUEKI 1980, p.256; and KARIYA 2003, pp.5–6.
- (21) A tentatively translation refers to XIAO 2014b, p. 60.
- (22) In the *Píngděngjué jīng*, it begins with the words: 法寶藏比丘說此唱讚世饒王如來 (T12, p.280c14–20); in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng*, it begins with the words: 佛告阿難：“法藏比丘說此頌已而白佛言 (T12, p.267b19–27). In the remaining versions, see ŌTA 2004, pp. 28–29.
- (23) According to SUEKI, this passage corresponds to the 24th, the 3rd and the 4th vow of the *Dà āmítuó jīng* in meaning, See SUEKI 1980, p. 256. Also see KARIYA 2003, pp.5–10.
- (24) This characteristic has been discussed by scholars, such as UJITANI (see, UJITANI 1969, pp.125–126) but the explanations aren't persuasive. A detailed discussion of this problem will be undertaken in a subsequent paper.
- (25) The counterpart of these words in the *Wúliàngshòu jīng* has been revised to ‘譬如大海，一人斗量，經歷劫數，尚可窮底，得其妙寶’(T12, p.267b29–c02).
- (26) *The Buddha said to Ananda, “At that time the Buddha Lokeśvararāja recognized Dharmākara's noble and high aspirations, and taught him as follows: ‘If, for example, one keeps bailing water out of a great ocean with a ladle, one will be able to reach the bottom within one kalpa. Likewise, if one sincerely and unceasingly seeks the Buddhist Way, one will be able to reach one's destination. What vow is there which cannot be fulfilled? Then Dharmākara rejoiced in his heart, having heard the Buddha's exposition of the Dharma. The Buddha Lokeśvararāja explained (in detail) the greater and lesser aspects of two hundred*

and ten kotis of Buddha-lands, together with the good and evil natures of heavenly and human beings living there, and made him select his vows”.

- (27) A tentative translation is as follows: “*If one keeps on bailing water out of the great oceans in all the heavens with a ladle, one will be able to reach the bottom. Yet the wisdom of the Buddhas is different in this case*”. In addition, it is worth noting that the counterpart of these words in the *Píngděngjué jīng* has been revised as: 其諸天下大海水, 一人升量之尚可枯盡得其底; 佛智亦如是, 八方上下無窮無極、無有邊幅 (T12, p.291a17-20) “*If one keeps on bailing water out of the great oceans in all heavens with a ladle, one will be able to reach the bottom. Yet the wisdom of the Buddhas is like this, namely infinite and boundless in the eight quarters, as well as above and below*”. It is likely that the words of the *Píngděngjué jīng* are something of a paradox after having been revised by the translator. Accordingly, this fact suggests that many contexts in the *Píngděngjué jīng* are not a translation from the original texts but just a copy, or revision from the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.
- (28) According to SIZUTANI, *Liù bōluómì jīng*, 六般若蜜經 does not indicate an unknown sutra, but a general term for cultivating the Six Perfections, see SIZUTANI 1974, p. 57; also see KARASHIMA 1999, p.139.
- (29) Concerning the corresponding relationship between this paragraph above and its counterpart in other versions, see ŌTA 2004, pp.30–31. It is worth noting that the names of both Dharmākara and Buddha Lokeśvararāja are translated in free translation as, *Fǎ bǎozàng* 法寶藏; *Shì ráo wáng* 世饒王, in the corresponding text of the *Píngděngjué jīng* so that both Dharmākara and the Buddha Lokeśvararāja have two names in the story of the Dharmākara of this version. This suggests that a part of the words in the *Píngděngjué jīng* are translations from the original text, and the others are just copies from the *Dà āmítuó jīng*.
- (30) A tentative translation of the paragraph is as follows: “*He then made a resolution in his heart and resolved to make twenty-four vows. During past measureless kalpas, he was diligent and courageous, strong-willed and untiring, and he acknowledged measureless Buddhas as his masters and made offerings to them. After that, Dharmākara himself attained the Buddhahood named Amituo (Amitābha) Buddha who is foremost in sublime wisdom and measureless in brilliance. The land where he is living is possessed of the utmost excellence. He is teaching the Dharma to humans and devas now as well as to all species that flit and wriggle in the immeasurable Buddha-lands of the eight quarters, as well as in realms above and below; to lead them all to emancipation from anxieties and sufferings. The Buddha said to Ananda: ‘When Amitābha was a bodhisattva, he constantly pursed these twenty-four vows. He attaches the greatest importance to the Dharma which he cherishes like a treasure. And he remained very respectful and cautious towards the Dharma which he was pursuing diligently; He was extraordinary and outstanding and no one was able to reach his level of attainment. The Buddha said, ‘What are the twenty-four vows?’*”
- (31) Although the paragraph above is followed in the *Píngděngjué jīng* (T361, p.281a03–13), the vows in two versions show considerable differences to each other, both in their order and in contents. In this instance, wisdom is not highlighted in the vows of the *Píngděngjué jīng*.
- (32) These words also appear in the KUDARA manuscript, which it reads: 滿五劫中, 專精思維, cf. note 13 above.
- (33) It reads: 時彼比丘聞佛所說嚴淨國土, 皆悉親見。……具足五劫, 思惟攝取莊嚴佛國清淨之行。阿難白佛: “彼佛國土壽量幾何?” 佛言: “其佛壽命四十二劫。” (T12, p.267c05–c9). A translation cf. INAGAKI 1995, pp.31–32).
- (34) Of course, this problem needs to be discussed in detail with other features.

- (35) This might be tentatively translated as follows: “*The Buddha said to Ānanda : When the Buddha Amitābha was a bodhisattva, he constantly pursued the Dharma of twenty-four vows: practising charity, abstaining from breaking the precepts, being patient and diligent, and cultivating meditation and wisdom.*”
- (36) This might be tentatively translated as follows: “*If you cultivate roots of virtue, are benevolent, give generously, abstain from breaking the precepts, are patient and diligent, practise meditation and wisdom, encourage people to do virtuous deeds, strictly observe the precepts of abstinence with benevolent and concentrated minded, even for a day and a night, the merit acquired will surpass that of cultivating good in Amitābha’s land for a hundred years.*”
- (37) Concerning the Five-Evils paragraphs, see XIAO 2012a.

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