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Alternative Lineages: The *Shisong lü* 十誦律 in Japanese Ancient Manuscript Buddhist Canons

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Abstract: Traditional studies on Chinese Buddhism have largely relied on printed canons from the Song, Yuan, Ming, and Goryeo dynasties. However, recent discoveries of Dunhuang and Turfan manuscripts, along with growing recognition of *Nihon kosha issaikyō* (Japanese Ancient Manuscript Canons), have expanded the scope of Buddhist textual research. Despite their significance, Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons remain underexplored, particularly in relation to their textual lineages and connections to Tang-dynasty texts. This study examines *Nihon kosha issaikyō* through a philological analysis of the *Shisong lü* (*Ten Recitation Vinaya*), assessing textual variants, structural patterns, and transmission histories. By situating *Nihon kosha issaikyō* within the broader East Asian Buddhist tradition, this research clarifies their role in preserving alternative textual lineages beyond standardized printed canons. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Buddhist textual transmission, canon formation, and the interplay between manuscript and printed traditions in China, Korea, and Japan. This study highlights the historical processes that shaped East Asian Buddhist canons and offers new insights into their adaptation and preservation across different cultural contexts.

Keywords: *Shisong lü* 十誦律; textual criticism; lineages of texts; Buddhist canons; Japanese ancient manuscript scriptures; Japanese ancient manuscript canons



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1. Introduction

Traditional studies on Chinese Buddhism have long relied on modern reconstructions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, primarily based on printed editions from the Song 宋, Yuan 元, Ming 明, and Goryeo 高麗 dynasties. However, in recent decades, significant developments have reshaped the field. First, the gradual public release of manuscript discoveries from Dunhuang and Turfan has greatly advanced research in both Buddhist and Chan studies. Second, the exploration and utilization of foreign manuscript resources—commonly referred to as *Nihon ko shakyo* 日本古寫經 (Japanese ancient manuscript scriptures)—have expanded the diversity and textual stratification of canonical sources. Finally, in addition to facsimile and reprint editions of various printed Buddhist canons, recent technological advances, such as full-text digital image databases, have enabled scholars to engage more directly with these primary sources. These abundant textual materials provide a more robust documentary foundation for Buddhist studies. At the same time, they introduce new philological challenges, particularly in terms of structure, textual content, and transmission history.

Compared to manuscript findings from Dunhuang and Turfan, or the well-studied printed canons of the Song, Yuan, and Goryeo dynasties, Chinese scholarship has only recently begun to explore the concept of Japanese ancient manuscript scriptures¹. This

study seeks to address this gap by focusing on a specific category within this corpus—the *Nihon kosha issaikyō* 日本古寫一切經 (Japanese ancient manuscript canons). The term *Nihon koshakyō* broadly refers to all Chinese-language Buddhist texts copied in Japan prior to the Kamakura 鎌倉 and Muromachi 室町 periods, while the *Nihon kosha issaikyō* specifically denotes Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons produced during the same period. This study focuses specifically on the *Nihon kosha issaikyō*, analyzing surviving manuscript Buddhist canons from the Nara 奈良, Heian 平安, and Kamakura periods to assess their textual lineage and historical development.

The history of the Japanese manuscript Buddhist canon dates back to the first half of the eighth century during the Nara period and continued to develop through the Heian and Kamakura periods. In terms of extant textual materials, approximately 2000 scrolls from the Nara-period Buddhist canon survive, whereas manuscript Buddhist canons from the late Heian period onward number in the tens of thousands, spanning over ten major collections. In the 1990s, Buddhist scholars began to recognize that some Heian- and Kamakura-period manuscript Buddhist canons contained ancient and previously lost Buddhist texts (*koitsu butten* 古逸佛典), prompting comprehensive investigations. As a result, it was hypothesized that manuscript Buddhist canons copied after the twelfth century inherited their textual lineage from the Nara-period manuscript Buddhist canon, which in turn derived from Tang-dynasty Buddhist manuscripts. While scholars have suggested that Heian- and Kamakura-period Buddhist canons inherited their textual lineage from Nara-period manuscripts, direct textual evidence remains limited. This study addresses this gap by providing a concrete philological analysis of the *Shisong lü* 十誦律.

Many ancient Japanese Buddhist manuscripts, including those of the *Shisonglü*, exhibit characteristics of what modern codicologists term the “patchwork codex” (*baina ben* 百衲本). This phenomenon refers to the practical strategy of recombining partial or fragmentary texts over time—often due to missing scrolls or transmission interruptions—by inserting replacement sections or reusing leaves from other manuscripts. As a result, a single scroll may contain material copied at different periods by different hands, leading to textual layering or duplication. This codicological reality reflects the pragmatic ethos of Buddhist textual preservation, in which functionality and ritual usability often took precedence over bibliographic purity. Recognizing this layered structure is essential for interpreting the form and content of the Japanese *Shisonglü* manuscripts examined in this study, and it helps contextualize their textual “disorder” and redundancy. Through a detailed philological analysis of the *Shisong lü*, examining its textual variants, structural patterns, and transmission histories, this study assesses whether Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons preserve direct links to Nara-period manuscripts.

To examine this hypothesis, this paper situates the Japanese manuscript Buddhist canon within the broader framework of the East Asian Chinese-language Buddhist canon, revealing the complexities and distinctive features of these transregional textual sources. It further seeks to clarify the position of the Japanese manuscript Buddhist canon in the historical development of East Asian Buddhist textual traditions. By integrating manuscript and printed textual traditions from China, Korea, and Japan, this study aims to offer new insights into the transmission, adaptation, and preservation of Buddhist scriptures in East Asia. In doing so, it contributes to a more nuanced understanding of Buddhist textual history, the evolution of canonical traditions across different cultural contexts, and the complex interactions between regional Buddhist communities—ultimately enriching the field of Buddhist textual studies. By bridging manuscript and printed traditions, this research deepens our understanding of Buddhist textual transmission while contributing to broader discussions on textual authority, canon formation, and the cross-cultural adaptation of re-

ligious texts, ultimately shedding new light on the historical processes that shaped East Asian Buddhism and its canonical traditions.

2. The Transmission and Textual Bifurcation of the *Shisong lü* into Northern and Southern Lineages

As the first Chinese translation of a comprehensive Vinaya 廣律 (*guang lü*) text and the only complete version of the **Daśa-bhāṇavāra-vinaya* (alt. *Sarvāstivādivinaya?* **Daśādhyāya-vinaya*), the *Shisong lü* 十誦律 was translated into Chinese in the early fifth century CE (see [Hirakawa 1960](#), p. 128). The translation process began on the seventeenth day of the tenth month in the sixth year of the Hongshi 弘始 era of the Yao Qin 姚秦 dynasty (404 CE), with the Central Asian Buddhist monk Punyatāra 弗若多羅 (fl. 404 CE) reciting the Sanskrit text while Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什 (343–413 CE) rendered it into Chinese. However, the project was abruptly interrupted when Punyatāra passed away, leaving only two-thirds of the text translated². The following year, Dharmaruci 曇摩流支 (fl. 405 CE) arrived in Chang'an 長安 and, at the request of Huiyuan 慧遠 (334–416 CE) of Mount Lu 廬山, collaborated with Kumārajīva to complete the translation, producing an initial 58-scroll draft. This preliminary version remained complex and unrefined, and before it could be properly revised, Kumārajīva passed away in the eleventh year of the Hongshi era (409 CE)³. Fortunately, his Vinaya teacher, Vimalākṣa 卑摩羅叉 (?–413 CE), was also in Chang'an at the time. After Kumārajīva's death, Vimalākṣa traveled to the Eastern Jin territory and, at Shijian Monastery 石澗寺 in Shouchun 壽春 (present-day Shouxian, Anhui), undertook a thorough revision and expansion of the initial draft, shaping what would become the 61-scroll expanded edition⁴.

As a result of this complex translation history, the bifurcation of the *Shisong lü* into Northern and Southern textual lineages had already taken shape by the early fifth century. The 58-scroll initial draft, completed in Chang'an under the Yao Qin, became the foundation of the Northern lineage, while the revised and expanded 61-scroll edition, finalized in Shouchun under the Eastern Jin, marked the beginning of the Southern lineage. Both lineages have surviving textual witnesses. Manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang and Turfan predominantly belong to the Northern lineage and often contain non-canonical versions of the text (See [Hirakawa 1963](#), pp. 545–51; [L. Wang 2021](#), pp. 84–95; [Liu 2021a](#); [2021b](#), pp. 7–18; [2022](#), pp. 27–43). In contrast, the Southern lineage, which later became the canonical version, is preserved in both printed Buddhist canons and Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons. This study focuses on the latter, examining its transmission, textual evolution, and role in shaping the East Asian Buddhist canon.

The Southern lineage of the *Shisong lü* (canonical texts) comprises two primary components: the *Shisong* 十誦 (Ten Recitations) and the *Lüxu* 律序 (Preface to the Vinaya). The *Shisong* consists of ten recitations (chapters) that address various aspects of monastic discipline. The first through sixth recitations concern the precepts for monks (*senglü* 僧律), the seventh focuses on regulations for nuns (*nilü* 尼律), the eighth outlines additional rules (*zengyi fa* 增一法), the ninth presents dialogues between Upavāsatha and the Buddha elaborating on monastic conduct, and the tenth contains miscellaneous regulations (*za fa* 雜法) addressing disciplinary matters not covered in the preceding sections.

The *Lüxu*, also known as the “Preface to the *Shisong lü*” (*Shisong lü xu* 十誦律序), or simply the “Vinaya Preface” (*Pini xu* 毗尼序), is typically structured into three scrolls and divided into four sections (*pin* 品). The first scroll contains Section 1, “The Assembly of Five Hundred Bhiksus and the Compilation of the Tripitaka” (*Wubai biqiu ji sanzang fa* 五百比丘集三藏法), which describes the earliest efforts to codify the monastic rules, followed by the beginning of Section 2, “The Assembly of Seven Hundred Bhiksus and the Elimination of Unwholesome Dharma” (*Qibai biqiu ji mie'e fa* 七百比丘集滅惡法), which discusses

subsequent refinements of the Vinaya. The second scroll completes Section 2 and introduces Section 3, “Miscellaneous Vinaya Matters” (*Pini za pin* 毗尼雜品), which addresses additional monastic regulations. The third scroll consists of Section 4, “Conditions and Circumstances Leading to the Compilation of the Vinaya” (*Yinyuan pin* 因緣品), which details the historical context, process, and narratives surrounding the establishment of monastic rules. The *Lüxu* thus provides an essential framework for understanding the formation, codification, and historical development of monastic discipline in the Southern textual lineage of the *Shisong lü*.

The transmission and evolution of the *Shisong lü* have long been subjects of scholarly debate, centering on two key issues: the relationship between the Northern and Southern lineages, and the origins of the *Lüxu*. Early sources from the Southern Dynasties, such as the *Gaoseng zhuan* 高僧傳 (*Biographies of Eminent Monks*) and *Chu sanzang ji ji* 出三藏記集 (*Collection of Records about the Translation of the Tripitaka*), regarded the Southern lineage as a revision of the Northern lineage but made no explicit mention of the *Lüxu*.⁵ During the Sui dynasty, Buddhist catalogues such as Fajing’s 法經 (fl. 594 CE) *Zhongjing mulu* 眾經目錄 (*Catalogue of Buddhist Scriptures*) and Fei Changfang’s 費長房 *Lidai sanbao ji* 歷代三寶紀 (*Records of the Three Treasures throughout the Successive Dynasties*) described the Southern lineage as either a “retranslation” (*chongyi* 重譯) or “alternative translation” (*bieyi* 別譯) of the Northern lineage⁶. By the Tang dynasty, a more balanced perspective emerged in works such as the *Datang neidian lu* 大唐內典錄 (*Great Tang Inner Canon Catalogue*)⁷ and Zhisheng’s 智昇 (fl. 730 CE) *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄 (*Kaiyuan Catalogue of Buddhist Scriptures*). The *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu*, in particular, refuted earlier claims from the Six Dynasties and Sui sources by conducting a comparative analysis of two Northern lineage versions (one with 58 scrolls and another with 59 scrolls) alongside the 61-scroll Southern lineage version⁸. It concluded that the 58-scroll *Shisong* section was translated collaboratively by Punyatāra, Kumārajīva, and others, whereas the three-scroll *Lüxu* was a later augmentation attributed to Vimalākṣa⁹. This argument further reinforced the distinction between the two textual lineages and provided a clear historical framework for understanding their divergence.

These historical disagreements have continued to fuel debate among modern scholars. Notably, Japanese scholar Hirakawa Akira 平川彰 examined Northern lineage manuscripts discovered in Dunhuang and preserved in the British Library, identifying significant differences in scroll division, content complexity, classical Chinese phrasing, and translation terminology between these manuscripts and the canonical texts of Southern lineage (See [Hirakawa 1963](#), pp. 545–51). Based on these findings, he supported the view—found in Southern Dynasties sources—that the Southern version was a reconstruction of the Northern version, and argued that the Northern version likely included content corresponding to the *Lüxu*, albeit with a structure and wording that differed from those of the Southern version, raising doubts on whether Vimalākṣa was truly its translator (See [Hirakawa 1960](#), p. 128).

In contrast, Chinese scholars have focused on two primary differences between the Northern and Southern lineages: variations in the *Shisong*, particularly in scroll division, content length, and translation terminology (See [L. Wang 2021](#), pp. 84–95; [Liu 2022](#), pp. 27–43). These inconsistencies are not uniform across all chapters, suggesting that the extent of revisions in the Southern lineage depended on the quality of the Northern version’s original translation—sections rendered with greater fidelity underwent fewer modifications ([Liu 2022](#), p. 42). Regarding the absence of the *Lüxu* in the Northern lineage, Chinese scholars generally maintain that the *Lüxu* in the Southern lineage was indeed translated by Vimalākṣa (See [L. Wang 2021](#), pp. 84–95). This view aligns with the conclusions of the *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu*, which asserts that the Southern version inherited and revised the 58-scroll Northern version while incorporating the three-scroll *Lüxu*. However, despite

these revisions, the modifications introduced in the Southern lineage were not substantial enough to constitute a complete “retranslation” (*chongyi* 重譯) or an entirely “separate translation” (*bieyi* 別譯).

The evolution of the *Lüxu* 律序 within the Southern lineage of the *Shisong lü* underwent significant textual transformations over time. Historical records from the Six Dynasties, Sui, and Tang periods indicate that this newly added preface did not maintain a fixed position relative to the *Shisong* inherited from the Northern version. Based on its varying placement, Southern lineage texts can be categorized into three distinct types: *Lüxu danzhi* 律序單置 (Preface Independently Placed), *Lüxu houzhi* 律序後置 (Preface Post-Placed), and *Lüxu qianzhi* 律序前置 (Preface Pre-Placed).

These textual variations outline four key phases in the evolution of the Southern lineage. The first phase, during the Six Dynasties, corresponds to the *Lüxu danzhi* type, where the *Lüxu* was treated as an independent section, separate from the *Shisong*¹⁰. In this version, the final section of the *Shisong* was the Tenth Recitation (*Dishi song* 第十誦), also known as the “Virtuous Recitation” (*Shan song* 善誦) or the “Vinaya Recitation” (*Pini song* 毗尼誦).

The second phase, emerging in the Sui and early Tang periods, saw the prevalence of *Lüxu houzhi* type. In this configuration, the *Lüxu* was appended to the end of the Tenth Recitation, and the combined section was collectively referred to as the *Shan song*¹¹. Notably, in this phase, the meanings of *Shan song* and *Pini song* diverged from their earlier usage in the *Lüxu danzhi* configuration. While *Shan song* continued to designate the final portion of the *Shisong lü*, it now encompassed both the Tenth Recitation and the *Lüxu*, whereas *Pini song* came to refer specifically to the *Lüxu*.

The third phase, spanning the early Tang period through the Kaiyuan era (713–741 CE), witnessed the emergence of the *Lüxu qianzhi* type, in which the *Lüxu* was repositioned between the Ninth and Tenth Recitations.

The fourth phase, spanning from the mid-to-late Tang dynasty through the Five Dynasties period, marked a return to the *Lüxu houzhi* type, thereby restoring the structural arrangement that had prevailed during the Sui and early Tang periods. This shift was largely catalyzed by the influence of Zhisheng’s *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu*, which strongly advocated for the *Lüxu houzhi* configuration¹². Zhisheng’s work also introduced terminological reforms that had a lasting impact: he renamed the *Lüxu* as *Pini xu* 毗尼序 (Vinaya Preface)¹³, a designation that has since become standard. By replacing the earlier term *Pini song* 毗尼誦 (Vinaya Recitation) with *Pini xu* 毗尼序 (Vinaya Preface), Zhisheng redefined its textual status from a “recitation” (*song* 誦) to a “preface” (*xu* 序), thereby consolidating its canonical position in subsequent traditions.

The *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* exerted a profound influence on Buddhist catalogues and canonical compilations from the mid-Tang period onward. As a result, manuscript canons produced during the late Tang and Five Dynasties uniformly adopted the *Lüxu houzhi* configuration as the authoritative structural model (Chi 2021, pp. 31–32; L. Wang 2022, pp. 31–32). This trend continued into the printed canons of the Song 宋, Khitan 契丹, Jurchen 金, Yuan 元, and Goryeo 高麗 dynasties, all of which followed this format, consistently incorporating the *Lüxu houzhi* version and referring to the *Lüxu* as the *Pini xu*.

An examination of extant Buddhist canons confirms that editions of the *Shisong lü* in the printed canons from the Song, Khitan, Jurchen, Yuan, and Goryeo periods all conform to the *Lüxu houzhi* structure, consistently comprising a total of 61 scrolls. In contrast, manuscript Buddhist canons from Japan’s Nara, Heian, and Kamakura periods uniquely preserve the *Lüxu qianzhi* format, thereby distinguishing them from their continental counterparts¹⁴. This divergence highlights Japan’s distinctive role in preserving an alternative textual lineage. The following section turns to an analysis of the *Shisong lü* as transmitted in woodblock-printed Buddhist canons.

3. The Textual Evolution of the *Shisong lü*: Focusing on the Southern Lineage in the Canonical Tradition

The woodblock-printed editions of the Buddhist canons produced during the Song, Khitan, Jurchen, Yuan, and Goryeo dynasties are generally classified into three major textual lineages. The first is the Central Plains lineage (中原系 *Zhongyuan xi*), which includes the Kaibao Canon 開寶藏, both editions of the Goryeo Canons 高麗藏, and the Jurchen Canon 金藏. The second is the Northern lineage (北方系 *Beifang xi*), represented by the Khitan Canon 契丹藏. The third is the Jiangnan lineage (江南系 *Jiangnan xi*), which comprises various regional editions such as the Fuzhou Canons 福州藏 (including the Dongchan 東禪 and Kaiyuan 開元 editions), the Sixi Canon 思溪藏, the Qisha Canon 磧砂藏, and the Puning Canon 普寧藏 (see [Chikusa 2000](#), pp. 281–89).

While all three lineages of woodblock-printed canons include the *Shisong lü* in its *Lüxu houzhi* version, consistently comprising 61 scrolls, their internal structures and textual content exhibit notable variations. The precise origins of these textual sources and their interrelationships remain unclear in many respects. To better understand these differences, this section selects representative editions from each of the three lineages and compares their textual structures (See Table 1). Additionally, to highlight the distinctive features of the *Lüxu houzhi* configuration, the *Lüxu qianzhi* type preserved in Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons is also incorporated as a point of comparative reference.

The extant *Shisong lü* in the Central Plains lineage of the Buddhist Canon is preserved in several editions, including the Kaibao Canon (one scroll, Scroll 46)¹⁵, the Initial Edition of Goryeo Canon (15 scrolls: Scrolls 12–15, 18–19, 42–45, 48–52)¹⁶, the Recarved Edition of Goryeo Canon (61 scrolls)¹⁷, and the Jurchen Canon (54 scrolls: Scrolls 1–2, 4–7, 9–20, 22–36, 39–43, 45, 47–61)¹⁸. Taking the Recarved Edition of Goryeo Canon (hereafter referred to as the Recarved Goryeo edition) as an example, it comprises 59 scrolls of the *Shisong* and two scrolls of the *Lüxu*, totaling 61 scrolls in the *Lüxu houzhi* format. However, its internal structure does not fully conform to the arrangement described in the *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu* and appears somewhat irregular and unbalanced. The discrepancy arises from the allocation of 59 scrolls to the *Shisong* section, which—within the constraints of the 61-scroll framework—necessitated compressing the *Lüxu* from three scrolls into two. As a result, Scroll 61 (76 folios) is more than twice the length of Scroll 60 (34 folios).

The Northern lineage, represented by the Khitan Canon, has largely been lost. However, its internal structure, including that of the *Shisong lü*, can be inferred from records in the *Xin zan yiqiejing yuan pinci lu* 新續一切經源品次錄 (a treatise from the end of the Tang Dynasty), and the *Xin ji zangjing yinyi suihsan lu* 新集藏經音義隨函錄 (a treatise from the Five Dynasties)¹⁹. These sources indicate that the Northern lineage consisted of 58 scrolls of the *Shisong* and three scrolls of the *Lüxu*, making it the version most consistent with the structure described in the *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu*. (See [Chi 2021](#), pp. 25–59). By the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods, this textual form had become the predominant version of the *Shisong lü* in Northern China, representing its final phase of evolution. In comparison, the Central Plains lineage exhibits several structural differences. The First Recitation diverges in its division point (between Scrolls 3 and 4), and the addition of a scroll in the Seventh Recitation (Scrolls 42–47) shifts all subsequent recitations forward by one scroll. Apart from Scrolls 47, 50–52, and 60, most scroll divisions also differ.

The Jiangnan lineage, comprising multiple regional canons, offers a rich and diverse textual tradition. Taking the Fuzhou Dongchan Edition ([Kunai-chō shoryō-bu shūzō kanseki shūran n.d.](#))²⁰ as an example, it consists of 58 scrolls of the *Shisong* and three scrolls of the *Lüxu*. In this version, the *Lüxu* is divided into three scrolls, annotated as “Nine”, “Ten”, and “Eleven” (corresponding to scrolls 59, 60, and 61, respectively). Compared to the Northern edition, the Jiangnan editions differ in the segmentation of the Third Recita-

tion (between Scrolls 19 and 20), the Ninth Recitation (between Scrolls 53 and 54), and the Tenth Recitation (between Scrolls 55 and 56)²¹. Despite these differences, the overall method of segmentation remains highly consistent with that of the Northern edition.

Table 1. Comparison of the *Lüxu qianzhi* and the *Lüxu houzhi* versions of the *Shisong lü*.

Lüxu Qianzhi Version		Lüxu Houzhi Versions			
Structure	Japanese Manuscript Canons	Structure	Northern Edition	Jiangnan Edition	Central Plains Edition
First Recitation	Scrolls 1–6	First Recitation	Scrolls 1–6	Scrolls 1–6	Scrolls 1–6
Second Recitation	Scrolls 7–13	Second Recitation	Scrolls 7–13	Scrolls 7–13	Scrolls 7–13
Third Recitation	Scrolls 14–18	Third Recitation	Scrolls 14–18	Scrolls 14–18	Scrolls 14–18
	Scroll 19		Scroll 19	Scroll 19	Scroll 19
	Scroll 20		Scroll 20	Scroll 20	Scroll 20
Fourth Recitation	Scrolls 21–28	Fourth Recitation	Scrolls 21–28	Scrolls 21–28	Scrolls 21–28
Fifth Recitation	Scrolls 29–34	Fifth Recitation	Scrolls 29–34	Scrolls 29–34	Scrolls 29–34
Sixth Recitation	Scrolls 36–41	Sixth Recitation	Scrolls 36–41	Scrolls 36–41	Scrolls 36–41
Seventh Recitation	Scroll 42	Seventh Recitation	Scroll 42	Scroll 42	Scroll 42
					Scroll 43
	Scroll 43		Scroll 43	Scroll 43	Scroll 44
	Scroll 44		Scroll 44	Scroll 44	Scroll 45
	Scroll 45		Scroll 45	Scroll 45	Scroll 46
Eighth Recitation	Scroll 46	Eighth Recitation	Scroll 46	Scroll 46	Scroll 47
	Scroll 47		Scroll 47	Scroll 47	Scroll 48
	Scroll 48		Scroll 48	Scroll 48	Scroll 49
	Scroll 49		Scroll 49	Scroll 49	Scroll 50
	Scroll 50		Scroll 50	Scroll 50	Scroll 51
Ninth Recitation	Scroll 51	Ninth Recitation	Scroll 51	Scroll 51	Scroll 52
	Scroll 52		Scroll 52	Scroll 52	Scroll 53
	Scroll 53		Scroll 53	Scroll 53	Scroll 54
	Scroll 54		Scroll 54	Scroll 54	Scroll 55
	Scroll 55		Scroll 55	Scroll 55	Scroll 56
Tenth Recitation	Scroll 56	Tenth Recitation	Scroll 56	Scroll 56	Scroll 57
	Scroll 57		Scroll 57	Scroll 57	Scroll 58
	Scroll 58		Scroll 58	Scroll 58	Scroll 59
Tenth Recitation	Scroll 59	Lüxu	Scroll 59	Scroll 1	Scroll 60
	Scroll 60		Scroll 60	Scroll 2	Scroll 61
	Scroll 61		Scroll 61	Scroll 3	

Having examined the structural features of the Central Plains, Northern, and Jiangnan canonical editions, we now turn to the question of whether significant textual differences exist among them. Important clues can be found in the *Collation Supplementary Records* 校正別錄 (*Jiaozheng Bie lu*), particularly in Scroll 20, which highlights variations in Scroll 5 of the *Shisong lü* across the Khitan, Initial Goryeo, and Kaibao editions²². These collation records reveal that, compared to the Initial Goryeo and Kaibao editions, the Khitan edition contained three extensive passages, which were later incorporated into the Recarved Goryeo edition. Scroll 5 of the Jurchen edition also retains these three passages, albeit in an abbreviated form, a characteristic of the Central Plains lineage.

In contrast, in the Jiangnan lineage as represented by the Dongchan edition, Scroll 5 not only abbreviates the aforementioned three passages but also drastically shortens two additional sections to just twelve characters each. Notably, these same sections contain 1349 and 1021 characters, respectively, in the Jurchen and Recarved Goryeo editions. Since the *Collation Supplementary Records* does not provide collation notes for these two instances, it can be inferred that the Kaibao and Initial Goryeo editions did not differ from the Khitan and Recarved Goryeo editions in these instances.

These five cases of textual omission and expansion reveal systematic differences among the three major textual lineages. The Jiangnan lineage consistently presents the most concise versions, with brevity serving as a defining feature. The Central Plains lineage—excluding the Recarved Goryeo edition—adopts an intermediate editorial stance, abbreviating the first three passages while retaining the longer versions of the latter two. In contrast, the Northern lineage preserves the most extensive textual content, with accretive tendencies constituting a hallmark of this tradition.

Given that the Northern lineage represents the final evolutionary stage of the *Shisong lü* and was dominant in Northern China during the late Tang and Five Dynasties periods, it is possible to infer the relative chronology of these textual traditions based on their textual proximity to the Northern lineage. Unless exceptional circumstances apply, the closer a text aligns with the Northern lineage, the later its likely date of production. By this measure, the Jiangnan lineage—which exhibits the greatest divergence—likely represents the most archaic stratum. The Central Plains lineage occupies an intermediate position, while the Northern lineage, as the most developed, probably did not emerge until the mid-ninth century.

These patterns reveal two major evolutionary trends in the Southern lineage of the *Shisong lü* during the Tang Dynasty: (1) increasing structural refinement, characterized by greater segmentation and reorganization; and (2) gradual textual accretion, reflected in the incremental inclusion of additional passages. Together, these developments offer a clearer framework for understanding the evolution of the *Shisong lü* within the broader context of the East Asian Buddhist canonical tradition.

4. The *Shisong lü* in Japanese Manuscript Buddhist Canons of the Nara, Heian, and Kamakura Periods

During the Kaiyuan era (713–741 CE) of the Tang Dynasty, both the *Lüxu houzhi* and *Lüxu qianzhi* versions of the *Shisong lü* were in circulation in Chang'an. However, after the late tenth century, the *Lüxu qianzhi* version disappeared from both China and the Korean Peninsula, surviving only in Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons. These Japanese manuscripts provide valuable supplementary sources for the study of ancient Chinese Buddhist literature. This section introduces the manuscript Buddhist canons of the Nara and Heian periods and examines their respective versions of the *Shisong lü*.

According to historical records, Japan's tradition of copying manuscript Buddhist canons dates back to the second year of Emperor Tenmu 天武天皇 (673 CE) during the

Asuka 飛鳥 period²³. By the Nara period (710–794 CE), both governmental and private institutions were actively engaged in the transcription of Buddhist scriptures, resulting in the production of more than twenty distinct official Buddhist canons²⁴. The official Buddhist canon of the Nara period was primarily sponsored by the central government, with transcription activities overseen by two major imperial institutions.

The first of these institutions was the Office of the Empress's Household 皇后宮職系 (*Kōgōgūshiki-kei*), which played a pivotal role in organizing large-scale scripture transcription projects. This office was responsible for producing the earliest state-sponsored manuscript Buddhist canon and remained a major center for Buddhist textual production throughout the Nara period. Initially established prior to the eighth year of the Tenpyō 天平 era (736 CE), it gradually evolved into the State Scriptorium 寫經所 (*Shakyōsho*), which, by the twentieth year of the Tenpyō era (748 CE), came under the administrative authority of the Bureau of the Great Eastern Temple 造東大寺司 (*Zō Tōdaiji-shi*). This bureau, which oversaw the construction and maintenance of the Great Eastern Temple 東大寺 (*Tōdai-ji*), subsequently became a central institution for the transmission and preservation of Buddhist texts.

The most significant Buddhist canon produced under the Office of the Empress's Household was the Scriptures/Canon [copied] at the behest of Empress Kōmyō's wish 光明皇后御願經, also known as the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* 五月一日經 (Scriptures/Canon [with the Imperial Wish Text dated] on the first day of the fifth month [of the 12th year of the Tenpyō era (740 CE)]). This monumental manuscript canon was transcribed between the fifth year of the Tenpyō era (733 CE) and the eighth year of the Tenpyō Shōhō 天平勝寶 era (756 CE), under the patronage of Empress Kōmyō (701–760 CE). The *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* not only established the standard for subsequent manuscript Buddhist canons but also served as the textual foundation for later transcription projects.

Beyond the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō*, the Office of the Empress's Household also supervised the production of several other manuscript Buddhist canons, including the Great Officer Canon 大官一切經 (*Daikan issaikyō*), the Early Manuscript Buddhist Canon 先寫一切經 (*Sensha issaikyō*), the Later Manuscript Buddhist Canon 後寫一切經 (*Kōsha issaikyō*), the Votive Buddhist Canon of Empress Kōmyō 光明皇太后發願一切經 (*Kōmyō Kōtaigō Hotsugan issaikyō*), and the Memorial Buddhist Canon for Empress Kōmyō's Death Anniversary 光明子周忌齋一切經 (*Kōmyōshi Shūki-sai issaikyō*)²⁵. These manuscript Buddhist canons reflect the imperial court's sustained commitment to Buddhist textual preservation and ritual practice. They not only played a foundational role in shaping Japan's early Buddhist scriptural tradition but also contributed to the broader transmission and adaptation of Buddhist texts across East Asia.

The Second institution was the Office of the Imperial Household 內裏系 (*Dairi-kei*), which was responsible for overseeing the transcription of Buddhist scriptures on behalf of the imperial family. This bureau was originally established to produce the Votive Canon for Emperor Shōmu 聖武天皇御願經 and operated under the Manuscript Buddhist Canon Bureau 寫御書所. Over time, it evolved into the Imperial Scriptorium for Buddhist Texts 奉寫御執經所 (*Hōsha Goshitsukyō sho*), which was formally established during the Tenpyō Hōji 天平寶字 period (757–765 CE), under the reign of Empress Shōtoku 稱徳天皇 (r. 764–770 CE).

One of the most significant transcription projects conducted by this institution was the Scriptures/Canon [copied] at the behest of Empress Shōtoku 稱徳天皇御願經, also known as the *Jingo-keiun-kyō* 神護景雲經. This manuscript Buddhist canon was transcribed between the second year of the Tenpyō Hōji era (758 CE) and the third year of the Jingo-keiun 神護景雲 era (770 CE). In the first year of the Jingo-keiun era (767 CE), a major institutional reform took place: the Tōdai-ji Scriptorium (originally under the Empress's Bureau

of Buddhist Manuscripts) and the Imperial Buddhist Manuscript Bureau were merged into a newly consolidated Imperial Buddhist Manuscript Bureau of the Buddhist Canon 奉寫一切經所 (*Hōsha Issaikyōsho*). This restructuring streamlined administrative operations and improved coordination in the transcription of Buddhist scriptures. During the Hōki 寶龜 era (770–781 CE), this institution produced the Five-set Buddhist Canons 五部一切經 (*Gobu Issaikyō*), which included the First Set 先一部 (*Saki ichibu*), the Second Set 始二部 (*Shi nibbu*), the Additional Set 更一部 (*Kō ichibu*), and the Further Additional Set 今更一部 (*Imakō ichibu*)²⁶. These projects reflect the Office of the Imperial Household's sustained role in promoting preservation and transmission of Buddhist texts in Japan.

Among the Nara-period Buddhist manuscript canons, the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* and the *Jingo-keiun-kyō* held a preeminent status as the only two officially designated Buddhist canons (imperialy authorized Buddhist canons, 敕定一切經). As imperialy sanctioned canons, they carried the highest level of authority among manuscript Buddhist canons in Japan. While both adhered to the textual standards established by the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*—the authoritative scripture catalogue compiled in Tang China—they also incorporated a wide range of apocryphal, dubious, and non-canonical scriptures, significantly expanding their content beyond standard texts. As a result, these two imperial canons amassed more than 6500 scrolls in total, making them among the most extensive Buddhist manuscript canons of their time²⁷.

The two institutions responsible for compiling and transcribing these canons—one affiliated with the State Scriptorium at Tōdai-ji and the other associated with the Imperial Palace—played a central role in the production, standardization, and preservation of Buddhist canonical texts during the Nara period. Their transcription efforts were deeply influenced by the textual traditions of Tang-dynasty Buddhist canons, thereby maintaining Japan's connection to the broader East Asian Buddhist literary landscape. At the same time, these institutions introduced unique adaptations and organizational frameworks, shaping the distinct character of Japan's early Buddhist manuscript traditions. Through their meticulous efforts, the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* and the *Jingo-keiun-kyō* not only preserved Buddhist scriptures but also contributed to the localization of Buddhist textual culture in Japan, setting a precedent for the manuscript Buddhist canons of the Heian and Kamakura periods.

The *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* corpus comprises approximately 1000 extant scrolls, the majority of which—750 scrolls—are preserved in the Sacred Words Collection of the Shōsōin Repository 正倉院聖語藏 (*Shōsōin Shōgozō*). The remaining 250 scrolls are dispersed across various private collections (See [Horiike 2003](#), pp. 302–14). Among them, 26 scrolls of the *Shisong lü* have been identified across multiple repositories. Specifically, 23 scrolls are preserved in the Shōsōin Repository (Scrolls 11–20, 29–37, 39, 40, 51, and 61), while additional individual scrolls are found in the Iwasaki Collection at the Tōyō Bunko Library (*Tōyō Bunko Iwasaki Bunko* 東洋文庫岩崎文庫, Scroll 22), the Japanese Agency for Cultural Affairs Collection (*Nihon Bunka-chō* 日本文化廳, Scroll 38), and the Nezu Museum (*Nezu Bijutsukan* 根津美術館, Scroll 56).

Similarly, the *Jingo-keiun-kyō* comprises approximately 60 extant scrolls, including six scrolls of the *Shisong lü*, which are scattered across several institutions. These include Scroll 17 in the Gotō Art Museum (*Gotō Bijutsukan* 五島美術館), Scroll 25 in the Kyoto National Museum (*Kyōto Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan* 京都國立博物館), Scroll 42 in the Shōwa Women's University Kōyō Museum (*Shōwa Joshi Daigaku Kōyō Hakubutsukan* 昭和女子大學光葉博物館), Scroll 51 in the Fuse Art Museum (*Fuse Bijutsukan* 布施美術館), and Scrolls 52 and 55 in the Ishiyama-dera 石山寺. Additionally, the Sacred Words Collection of the Shōsōin Repository holds another 740 scrolls attributed to the *Jingo-Keiun-kyō*²⁸, including 17 scrolls of the *Shisong lü*. Among these, 16 scrolls have been identified as part of the Further Additional Set Canon, transcribed around the year 775 CE ([Iida 2012](#), pp. 186, 191).

In addition to Nara-period manuscripts, Japan preserves an extensive collection of Buddhist canons transcribed by private temples during the Heian (794–1185 CE) and Kamakura (1185–1333 CE) periods. These manuscript Buddhist canons exhibit considerable variation in content, and the dates of transcription can typically only be inferred from extant colophons. Among them, several representative collections contain relatively complete versions of the *Shisong lü*, offering valuable evidence for the textual transmission and adaptation of Vinaya texts in Japan.

One of the most significant collections is the Ishiyama-dera Manuscript Buddhist Canon 石山寺一切經, located in Ōtsu City, Shiga Prefecture 滋賀縣大津市. This collection, whose transcription spans from the Nara to the Muromachi period, has a primary corpus dating from 1148 to 1159 and consists of 4485 scrolls, including 57 scrolls of the *Shisong lü* (with Scrolls 17, 25, and 42 missing; Scroll 51 is currently housed in the Fuse Art Museum) (Ishiyamadera Bunkazai Sōgō Chōsadan 1978, pp. 494–504, 771, 845). Another important collection is the Chūson-ji Manuscript Buddhist Canon 中尊寺一切經, preserved at the Kōyasan Reihōkan Museum in Osaka 大阪高野山靈寶館. Copied between 1117 and 1126, this canon comprises 4296 scrolls, including 60 scrolls of the *Shisong lü* (missing Scroll 45) (Ueyama 1997, p. 1; Fujisawa 1990, pp. 30–32). The Matsuo Shrine Manuscript Buddhist Canon 松尾社一切經, housed at Myōren-ji Temple in Kyoto 京都市妙蓮寺, was transcribed between 1115 and 1138 and consists of 3545 scrolls, including 51 scrolls of the *Shisong lü* (missing Scrolls 4–6, 12, 45, 47, 50, 55, and 60) (Nakao 1997, pp. 365, 408–13). Another significant collection is the Kōshō-ji Manuscript Buddhist Canon 興聖寺一切經 in Kyoto 京都市, dating from 1163 to 1169, which includes 5294 scrolls and preserves a complete 61-scroll version of the *Shisong lü* (Kyōto-fu Kyōiku linkai 1998, pp. 196–98, 459). Additional noteworthy collections include the Nanatsu-dera Manuscript Buddhist Canon 七寺一切經, located in Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture 愛知縣名古屋市, which consists of 4954 scrolls, including 56 scrolls of the *Shisong lü* (missing Scrolls 3, 12, 20, 42, and 49) (Nanatsudera Issaikyō Hozonkai 1968, pp. 82–83, 189). The Kongō-ji Manuscript Buddhist Canon 金剛寺一切經, housed in Kawachinagano, Osaka 大阪府河内長野市, was copied between 1208 and 1268 and comprises 4500 scrolls, including 45 scrolls of the *Shisong lü* (Scrolls 2, 4–5, 23–24, 31–33, 35–50, 52, 54–59) (Ochiai 2007, pp. 286–89, 502–03).

These Heian- and Kamakura-period manuscript Buddhist canons illustrate the continued transmission and preservation of the *Shisong lü* in Japan. Their variations in textual structure and content reflect the complex process of textual adaptation, compilation, and preservation across different regions and historical contexts. Moreover, the survival of these manuscripts provides crucial comparative material for understanding the broader transmission history of Vinaya texts in East Asia.

5. The Textual Transmission and Complexity of Japanese Manuscript Versions of the *Shisong lü*

Among the *Shisong lü* manuscripts from the Nara, Heian, and Kamakura periods discussed above, all versions—except for the *Imakō ichibu* canon, whose structural status remains uncertain—place the *Lüxu* (Scrolls 55–57) before the *Shisong* proper. This structural arrangement is a defining feature of the *Lüxu qianzhi* version. However, despite this shared structural characteristic, significant textual variations exist among these Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons, particularly in Scroll 61, which appears in two distinct versions.

Only a limited number of Japanese manuscripts preserve Scroll 61 of the *Shisong lü*. This analysis focuses on three representative examples: the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript Buddhist Canon, the Nanatsu-dera Manuscript Buddhist Canon, and the Kōshō-ji Manuscript Buddhist Canon. All three confirm their affiliation with the *Lüxu qianzhi* tra-

dition by positioning the *Lüxu* (Scrolls 55–57) before the Tenth Recitation. However, they diverge in their treatment of Scroll 61, revealing distinct textual transmission patterns.

A key discrepancy emerges in the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript, where Scroll 61 duplicates the fourth section (i.e., the third scroll) of the *Lüxu* (Scroll 57), resulting in textual redundancy. In contrast, both the Nanatsu-dera Manuscript and the Kōshō-ji Manuscript preserve the fourth scroll of the Tenth Recitation in Scroll 61, maintaining a more coherent structural organization. This suggests that the Nanatsu-dera and Kōshō-ji manuscripts retain the original configuration of Scroll 61 as found in the *Lüxu qianzhi* version²⁹, whereas the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript exhibits a degree of textual disarray. Further investigation traces this textual “disorder” in the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript back to the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* of the Nara period. Meanwhile, the Nanatsu-dera and Kōshō-ji manuscripts appear to reflect textual corrections influenced by the Kaibao Canon version of the *Shisong lü*, which was introduced to Japan at the end of the tenth century.

This section examines the textual discrepancies found in Scroll 61 and explores how they reflect the complexities and unique transmission patterns of Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons. To facilitate this discussion, we first present a comparative analysis of the final portion of the *Shisong lü* (Scrolls 55–61) as preserved in the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* and the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript Canon (See Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of Scrolls 55–61.

Scroll No.	Title	The <i>Shisong lü</i> in Gogatsu-Tsuitachi-Kyō	The <i>Shisong lü</i> in Matsuo Shrine Manuscript Buddhist Canon
Scroll 55	(Missing)	(Not extant)	(Not extant)
Scroll 56	Opening Title	Preface to the <i>Shisong lü</i> , Middle Scroll (56) 十誦律序卷中 (五十六)	Preface to the <i>Shisong lü</i> , Second Scroll (56) 十誦律序卷中 (五十六)
	Closing Title	(Not known)	Preface to the <i>Shisong lü</i> , Scroll 56 十誦律序卷 卷第五十六
Scroll 57	Opening Title	(Not extant)	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , Third Scroll (Yinyuan Chapter) (57) 十誦律卷下 (因緣品 五十七)
	Closing Title	(Not extant)	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , Scroll 57 十誦律卷第五十七
Scroll 58	Opening Title	(Not extant)	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , First Scroll of Virtuous Recitation (58) 十誦律善誦卷第一 (五十八)
	Closing Title	(Not extant)	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , Scroll 58 十誦律卷第五十八
Scroll 59	Opening Title	(Not extant)	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , Second Scroll of Virtuous Recitation (59) 十誦律善誦卷第二 (五十九)
	Closing Title	(Not extant)	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , Second Scroll of Virtuous Recitation 十誦律善誦卷二
Scroll 60	Opening Title	(Not extant)	The <i>Shisong [lü]</i> , Third Scroll of [Virtuous] Recitation 十誦□□誦卷第三
	Closing Title	(Not extant)	(Unable to verify)
Scroll 61	Opening Title	Preface to the <i>Shisong lü</i> , Fourth Section of Causal Chapter (Scroll 61) 十誦律序因緣品第四 (卷六十一)	Preface to the <i>Shisong lü</i> , Fourth Section of the Yinyuan Chapter, (Scroll 61) 十誦律序因緣品第四 (卷六十一)
	Closing Title	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , Scroll 61 十誦律卷第六十一	The <i>Shisong lü</i> , Scroll 61 十誦律卷第六十一

The comparative analysis of Scrolls 55–61 in the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* and the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript Buddhist Canon highlights key differences in scroll structure, titles, and textual placement, revealing critical inconsistencies that shaped later manuscript traditions. One of the most striking anomalies in the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* appears in the final scrolls of the *Shisong lü*. Notably, Scrolls 55 and 57–60 are missing, with only Scrolls 56 and 61 extant. Since Scroll 56 contains the second scroll of the *Lüxu*, it is reasonable to infer that Scroll 55 originally contained the first scroll and Scroll 57 the third. This configuration confirms that the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* follows the *Lüxu qianzhi* version, placing it in alignment with the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript.

More significantly, Scroll 61 in the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* erroneously duplicates the content of Scroll 57 (the third scroll of the *Lüxu*)—a structural anomaly that is closely mirrored in the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript. This correspondence suggests that the root of the Scroll 61 inconsistency observed in later Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons can be traced back to the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō*. A key question thus arises: Why did the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* include this erroneous duplication, and what became of the fourth scroll of the Tenth Recitation (Scroll 61), which should have contained the final section?

The answer cannot be found within the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* itself. However, later Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons—particularly the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript—provide valuable clues. Copied in the late Heian period, the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript closely replicates the structural features of the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō*. It places the *Lüxu* in Scrolls 55–57, contains only three scrolls of the Tenth Recitation (Scrolls 58–60), and lacks the expected fourth scroll. Instead, it erroneously duplicates the third scroll of the *Lüxu* in Scroll 61. This strongly suggests that the Matsuo Shrine Manuscript inherited the textual lineage of the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō*, along with its structural inconsistencies. The persistence of this anomaly into the twelfth century highlights the durability of transmission errors within Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons.

By contrast, other late Heian manuscripts—such as the Nanatsu-dera Manuscript and the Kōshō-ji Manuscript—successfully corrected this structural anomaly. This correction did not originate from within Japan, but was facilitated by the introduction of the Kaibao Canon, which was transmitted to Japan in the late tenth century. Prior to the arrival of the Kaibao Canon, all extant Japanese manuscript versions of the *Shisong lü* appear to have lacked the fourth scroll of the Tenth Recitation.

To understand why the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* erroneously duplicated the third scroll of the *Lüxu* in Scroll 61, it is necessary to examine its compilation process. The imperial manuscript canon project for the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* began in the fifth year of the Tenpyō era (733). By the seventh month of the eighth year (736 CE), the project had adopted a compilation policy based on the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, using Buddhist scriptures imported by Genbō 玄昉 (d. 746 CE) as the primary textual source. By the fourth month of the twelfth year (740 CE), the canon had reached a total of 3531 scrolls, at which point the *Vow Text of Empress Kōmyō* was appended to all scrolls.

In the thirteenth year of the Tenpyō era (741 CE), the project was transferred to the Fukuju-ji Scriptorium 福壽寺寫經所, which was later renamed the Konkōmyō-ji Scriptorium 金光明寺寫經所. By the fourteenth year of the Tenpyō era (742 CE), the canon had expanded to 4561 scrolls—approaching but still falling short of the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*'s target of 5048 scrolls. At this point, acquiring additional source texts became increasingly difficult. Consequently, the scriptorium shifted its focus to compiling apocryphal and dubious scriptures, as well as Buddhist commentaries not listed in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*. This strategic shift ensured that the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* would not only become Japan's largest Buddhist canon, but also serve as a comprehensive repository of all Buddhist texts avail-

able in Japan at the time. By the eighth year of Tenpyō Shōhō era (756 CE), following the death of Emperor Shōmu, the manuscript canon was officially finalized³⁰.

The *Shisong lü* within the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* consists of 61 scrolls, but its compilation occurred in two distinct phases, drawing upon source texts from different textual lineages. The first phase (Tenpyō 9–12, 737–740 CE) involved the imperial scriptorium transcribing the initial 60 scrolls based on manuscripts imported by Genbō³¹. This manuscript set appears to have belonged to the *Lüxu qianzhi* type, but it notably lacked the final scroll of the Tenth Recitation (Scroll 61). As the project adhered to standards set by the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, the absence of this final scroll was noted, though no solution was available at the time. The second phase (Tenpyō 14–19, 742–747 CE) saw the Konkōmyō-ji Scriptorium discover an alternative version of Scroll 61 in the Inner Hall 内堂 (*Naidō*). This manuscript was transcribed and appended to the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* in the fourteenth year of the Tenpyō era (742 CE). However, it was not fully incorporated into the canon until 746–747 CE (Tenpyō 18–19)³², indicating a period of uncertainty and deliberation regarding its inclusion. This delayed integration highlights the textual complexities surrounding the *Shisong lü* in Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons and reflects broader anxieties regarding textual authority and consistency in canonical transmission.

The newly discovered Scroll 61 contained two distinct texts: the “Yinyuan pin, the Fourth Section of [the Preface to the *Shisong lü*] 因緣品第四”—a duplication of Scroll 57 from the original 60-scroll set—and the *Buddha’s Discourse on the Gravity of Violating Precepts* 佛說犯戒罪報輕重經, an entirely separate Vinaya text³³. This presented a dilemma for the scriptorium. Although the manuscript was labeled as Scroll 61, its contents did not correspond to the anticipated fourth scroll of the Tenth Recitation. The scriptorium faced two options: either to catalog the manuscript separately as an apocryphal Vinaya scripture or to append it to the existing 60-scroll set to maintain the intended numerical total. Initially, they chose the former, treating the scroll as an independent text. However, by the nineteenth year of the Tenpyō era (747 CE), as the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* was being finalized as the official Buddhist canon of Tōdai-ji, they adopted the latter strategy—incorporating the duplicate Scroll 61 into the canon to ensure numerical completeness³⁴.

This case highlights a fundamental tension in the compilation of the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō*. The scriptorium aspired to construct an ideal Buddhist canon in accordance with the authoritative *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, yet practical constraints made this goal unattainable. Many texts—including the *Shisong lü*—were incomplete, and the extant Buddhist materials in Japan did not fully conform to Chinese canonical models. As a result, compromises were inevitable, leading to textual inconsistencies that would persist in Japanese manuscript canons for centuries. This analysis underscores the complexities of textual transmission in East Asia and the enduring challenges of preserving Buddhist scriptures with absolute fidelity.

6. Concluding Remarks

By tracing the textual evolution of the *Shisong lü*, this study has examined the origins and transmission of Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons from the Nara, Heian, and Kamakura periods within the broader context of East Asian Buddhist textual traditions. Since its initial Chinese translation in the fifth century, the *Shisong lü* underwent an early bifurcation into two lineages: the Northern lineage, preserved only in unearthed manuscripts from Dunhuang and Turfan, and the Southern lineage, which became the dominant version incorporated into Buddhist canons. Within the Southern lineage, two distinct textual traditions emerged: the *Lüxu houzhi* (Post-Appended Preface) version, found in printed Buddhist canons from the Song, Yuan, and Goryeo dynasties, and the *Lüxu qianzhi* (Pre-Appended Preface) version, preserved in Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons. While the

former reflects the standardized textual tradition of mid-to-late Tang Buddhism, the latter retains pre-Kaiyuan textual features. Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons thus represent an alternative textual lineage, serving as a complementary counterpart to printed Buddhist canons and offering valuable insights into early Buddhist textual formations and the transmission of Vinaya texts in East Asia.

This study has demonstrated that Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons evolved through processes of adaptation, hybridization, and selective revision. The Nara-period *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* exemplifies this dynamic, having been reconstructed from a 60-scroll *Lǔxu qianzhi* version combined with a single scroll from a *Lǔxu houzhi* version, resulting in a structurally unique and internally redundant text. This hybrid form circulated in Japan for over two centuries, with its inconsistencies remaining uncorrected until the introduction of the Kaibao Canon in the late tenth century. Only thereafter did some Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons begin to align with printed canons, addressing textual discrepancies and moving toward greater standardization. These findings confirm that while Heian- and Kamakura-period manuscript Buddhist canons inherited textual elements from Nara-period sources, their transmission was neither direct nor static; rather, it involved continuous modification in response to new textual imports and evolving monastic needs.

As the final recipient of Buddhist textual culture in East Asia, Japan relied on external sources while actively adapting them to its own manuscript tradition. During the Nara period, Japan depended heavily on imported Buddhist texts, necessitating the integration and repurposing of extant materials. The subsequent arrival of printed Buddhist canons, particularly the Kaibao Canon, further reshaped textual practices, promoting increased standardization and contributing to a broader shift in textual authority. This transition from manuscript-based to print-based canonical authority marks a pivotal transformation in the history of East Asian Buddhist textuality and warrants further scholarly attention.

On a broader scale, this study highlights the distinct yet complementary roles of three major categories of Buddhist textual resources. First, unearthed Buddhist manuscripts from Dunhuang and Turfan preserve the Northern lineage of the *Shisong lǔ*, offering critical insights into its earliest textual forms and regional variations. Second, printed Buddhist canons from the Song, Yuan, and Goryeo dynasties reflect the standardized Southern lineage, demonstrating how editorial intervention and institutional oversight shaped the evolution of the Vinaya tradition. Third, Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons preserve pre-Kaiyuan features of the Southern lineage, providing crucial evidence for reconstructing earlier, pre-codified textual traditions that were later refined in printed canons.

A systematic integration of these three textual traditions—Dunhuang and Turfan manuscripts, Song-Yuan-Goryeo printed canons, and Japanese manuscript Buddhist canons—will allow for a more precise reconstruction of the historical evolution and transmission of the *Shisong lǔ*. Future research should continue to explore these interconnections to deepen our understanding of the formation, transmission, and institutionalization of Buddhist canons across East Asia. Ultimately, this integrative approach reinforces the philological foundations of Buddhist studies and sheds new light on the historical processes that shaped the transmission, adaptation, and preservation of Buddhist texts.

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Abbreviations

K = *Gaoli Dazangjing* 高麗大藏經 [Korean Re-carved Edition of Buddhist Canon]. 80 vols. Edited by Yuwai hanji zhenben wenku bianzuan chuban weiyuanhui 域外漢籍珍本文庫編纂出版委員會 (comp.). Beijing: Xinzhuang shuju 線裝書局, 2004.

KI = *Gaoli Dazangjing chuke ben jikan* 高麗大藏經初刻本輯刊 [Collection of the Initial Edition of the Korean Buddhist Canon]. 81 vols. Edited by Yuwai hanji zhenben wenku bianzuan chuban weiyuanhui 域外漢籍珍本文庫編纂出版委員會 (comp.). Kunming and Beijing: Xinan shifan daxue chubanshe and Renmin chubanshe 西南師範大學出版社、人民出版社, 2013.

KS = *Kunaichō Shoryōbu Shūzō Kanseki Shūran* 宮內廳書陵部收藏漢籍集覽 [Catalogue of Chinese Texts in the Archives of the Imperial Household Agency]. Accessible online: https://db2.sido.keio.ac.jp/kanseki/bib_frame?id=007075 (accessed on 1 February 2025).

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T = *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新脩大藏經 [Buddhist Canon Compiled during the Taishō Era (1912–26)]. 100 vols. Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaigyoku 渡邊海旭 et al., eds. Tōkyō: Taishō Issaikyō Kankōkai 大正一切經刊行會, 1924–1934. Digitized in CBETA (v. 5.2) and SAT Daizōkyō Text Database (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT/satdb2015.php?lang=en>, accessed on 1 May 2024).

ZCJZ = *Zhaocheng Jin zang* 趙城金藏 (The Jin canon preserved in Zhaocheng), 122 volumes, Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe 北京圖書館出版社, 2008.

ZHZ = *Zhonghua dazangjing* (Hanwen bufen) 中華大藏經（漢文部分） [The Zhonghua Canon (Chinese-language Part)]. Edited by Zhonghua dazangjing bianji ju 中華大藏經編輯局, 100 volumes, Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 1984–1997.

Notes

¹ Only a few scholars in China have systematically discussed ancient Japanese manuscript Buddhist scriptures. Notable studies include Yang and Zhang (2019) and Z. Wang (2021), among others. Alternatively, English scholarship on early Japanese Buddhist manuscript cultures and their associated ritual practices is exemplified by Lowe (2014a, 2014b, 2017).

² *Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2059, 50: 2. 333a20–23. *Chu sanzang ji ji*, T no. 2145, 55: 3. 20a28–b2.

³ *Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2059, 50: 2. 333a27–b16. *Chu sanzang ji ji*, T no. 2145, 55: 3. 20a28–b2.

⁴ *Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2059, 50: 2. 333b26–c4. *Chu sanzang ji ji*, T no. 2145, 55: 3. 20b18–21.

⁵ *Gaoseng zhuan*, T no. 2059, 50: 2. 333b29–c4. *Chu sanzang ji ji*, T no. 2145, 55: 3. 20b19–21.

⁶ *Zhongjing mulu*, T no. 2146, 55: 5. 140b4–6. *Lidai sanbao ji*, T no. 2034, 49: 14. 119a29–b1.

⁷ *Da tang neidian lu*, T 49, no. 2149, 55: 9. 324a7–10.

⁸ *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T no. 2154, 55: 4. 516a17–18; 3. 507a17–21.

⁹ *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T no. 2154, 55: 10. 576c6–7; 13. 618b21–22.

¹⁰ Refer to L. Wang (2022, pp. 28–30), which primarily relies on citations from Baochang's 寶唱 *Jinglü Yixiang* 經律異相 and Fan Fanyu 翻梵語. Also, see Chi (2024), which is based on the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Lüxu*, dated to the fourth year of the Liang Putong era.

¹¹ *Lidai sanbao ji*, T no. 2034, 49: 7. 70c20–27. *Da tang neidian lu*, T 49, no. 2149, 3. 246c11–18.

¹² *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T no. 2154, 55: 13. 618b24–25.

¹³ *Kaiyuan shijiao lu*, T no. 2154, 55: 3. 507a17–21.

¹⁴ A critical source for understanding the intended arrangement of the *Shisonglü* is the *Kaiyuan Shijiao lu*, which explicitly corrects earlier cataloging errors by stipulating that the *Pini Xu* should appear after the Tenth Recitation, rather than between the Ninth and Tenth. While Chinese printed canons incorporated this corrected scroll order, medieval Japanese manuscript traditions curiously retained the earlier, arguably redundant *Lüxu qianzhi* format. This raises a significant question: why did Japanese scribes not adopt the corrected structure, despite the influence of Chinese catalogues and printed editions? One possibility is that the Japanese monastic tradition valued continuity with established ritual or scriptural practice over bibliographic correction. Another is that these manuscript traditions developed in relative isolation from the Chinese canon-revision movements of the

late Tang and Song, relying on earlier models and prioritizing fidelity to inherited forms. Further research into Japanese monastic reading and copying practices may clarify the intentionality—or inertia—behind this preservation of the older format.

A manuscript formerly owned by Nakamura Fusetsu is housed in the Calligraphy Museum 書道博物館 of Taitō Ward, Tokyo. See Fang and Li (2010).

KI 37: 447–38: 393.

K 62: 246–63: 728.

ZHZ 37: 166–38: 243; ZCJZ 54: 405–56: 526.

Xin zan yiqie jing yuan pinci lu KI 80: 20. 284–319; *Xin ji zangjing yinyi suhan lu* K 63: 15.114. See Chi (2021) and L. Wang (2022, pp. 31–32).

Refer to KS (accessed on 1 February 2025).

The method of scroll division of the Jiangnan lineage here differs from that of the Northern lineage text but aligns with Scrolls 56 and 57 of the Central Plains lineage texts.

Gaoli guo xin diao dazing jiaozheng bielu, KI 81: 20. 407–420.

Nihon Shoki 日本書紀, Entry for the Last Day of the Twelfth Month of Hakuchi 2 白雉二年十二月晦條; Entry for the Third Month of Tenmu 2 天武天皇二年三月是月條.

For an in-depth study of the *Votive Canon of Emperor Shōmu* 聖武天皇御願經, see Sakaehara (2000, pp. 37–54). For various names of Nara-period official manuscript Buddhist canons, see Miyazaki (2006, pp. 6–7).

For information on the official Buddhist canons transcribed by the Office of the Empress’s Household 皇后宮職系 scriptorium, see Yamamoto (2002, pp. 267–373).

For research on the scriptorium system of the Imperial Household 内裏系寫經所 and the Bureau for the Transcription of the Buddhist Canon 奉寫一切經所 in the Nara period, see Sakaehara (2000, pp. 37–82; 2003, pp. 395–445).

For the definition of *chokujō issaikyō* 敕定一切經 (imperial authorized Buddhist canons) in the Nara period, see Yamashita (1999b, pp. 31–33; 1999c, esp. pp. 455 and 473). For a detailed study of imperial authorized canons in Nara-period Japan, see also Yamashita (1999a, 2000).

Only four scrolls of three Buddhist scriptures contain the votive text of Empress Shōtoku 稱德天皇御願文, while the rest were later confirmed to be part of the Five-Set Canons 五部一切經. See Iida (2012, pp. 161–210).

The format of the title, translator’s name, and subtitles, as well as the column format (approximately 14 characters per column) and textual content of Scroll 61 of the *Shisong lü* in the Nanatsu-dera and Kōshō-ji manuscript canons, clearly reflect the influence of the Kaibao Canon.

For an overview of the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* project, see Minagawa (1962, pp. 321–30); Yamashita (1999c, pp. 403–38).

The *Source Text Request Ledger* (寫經請本帳, SM 7: pp. 54–90) documents the borrowing of 2175 scrolls from Genbō 玄昉 for transcription at the Scriptorium between the 29th day of the ninth month of the eighth year of the Tenpyō era (736 CE) and the intercalary third month of the thirteenth year of the Tenpyō era (741 CE). Among these, records indicate that 60 scrolls of the *Shisong lü* were borrowed in three separate transactions: ten scrolls on the third day of the fourth month of the ninth year of the Tenpyō era (737 CE), another set of 10 scrolls from the sixth fascicle on the 12th day, and forty scrolls on the 29th day (SM 7: pp. 79, 83).

The *Scriptorium Report* (寫經司解, SM 2: p. 322), dated the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the fourteenth year of the Tenpyō era (742 CE), indicates that 403 scrolls of Vinaya texts, including the *Shisong lü*, were stored in Cabinet 10 (or possibly Cabinet 11). According to the inventory ledger of Buddhist scriptures shows that until the second day of the sixth month of the eighteenth month of the Tenpyō era (746 CE), the *Shisong lü* was still recorded as comprising 60 scrolls across six bundles 帙. However, by the eleventh day of the seventh month of the nineteenth year of the Tenpyō era (747 CE), the *Catalogue of Received and Stored Scriptures* 寫疏所納受經疏目錄 records that the *Shisong lü* in Cabinet 11 had increased to 61 scrolls. Furthermore, subsequent scriptural transcription records through the Hōki 寶龜 era consistently recognize the *Shisong lü* as comprising 61 scrolls.

The *Foshuo Fanjie Zui Bao Qingzhong Jing*, which outlines the karmic consequences of different levels of precept violation, frequently appears alongside core Vinaya texts such as the *Shisonglü* or the *Sifen Bhikṣuṇī Prātimokṣa*, as seen in manuscripts like Nakamura No. 44 and BD208. In the *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō*, the text follows Scroll 60 of the *Shisong lü*, reinforcing its role as a doctrinally resonant supplement to disciplinary literature. The consistent pairing with Vinaya texts suggests a form of canonical adjacency, possibly functioning as an exegetical or exhortative epilogue.

Before its renaming, Konkōmyō-ji 金光明寺 was originally the Yamato Provincial Temple 大和國分寺. After being designated as Tōdai-ji 東大寺, its status was elevated to that of a central provincial temple 總國分寺, making it a uniquely significant institution even among the state-sponsored temples 官大寺. The *Gogatsu-tsuitachi-kyō* was designated as the official Buddhist canon of this temple, further signifying its heightened status.

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