THE CHINESE ORIGINS OF THE *HEART SUTRA* REVISITED: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CHINESE AND SANSKRIT TEXTS

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ABSTRACT

The Chinese *Heart Sutra* was traditionally considered a translation of an Indian Sanskrit text. In the late 20th century scholars began to question this tradition. The *Heart Sutra* reuses passages from other texts, principally the *Large Prajñā-pāramitā Sutra*. The reused passages are extant in Sanskrit and Chinese source texts and this enables us to perform a unique form of comparative analysis to confirm what language the *Heart Sutra* was composed in. Jan Nattier (1992) examined about half of the text – the "core section" – and concluded it was composed in Chinese and "back-translated" into Sanskrit. Nattier's method has been extended to other parts of the text with the same result (Huifeng 2014; Attwood 2017, 2018b, 2020a). This article details an exhaustive application of Nattier's method to the *Heart Sutra*. Considering 22 points of comparison, many of them new, we find a pervasive pattern of features and bugs that definitively point to Chinese origins.

1. Introduction

It is now some twenty-nine years since this journal published Jan Nattier's (1992) groundbreaking thesis that the *Heart Sutra* was composed in Chinese, reusing passages from Kumārajīva's *Large Prajñāpāramitā Sutra* translation (T 223).[1] And yet in 2015 we still see Jonathan Silk writing that "the *Heart Sūtra* revered in Japan is a Chinese translation from Sanskrit" (2015: 217). By far the most common response to the Chinese

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[1] Note that *Heart Sutra* translates the abbreviated Chinese title, *Xīnjīng* 心經. In Sanskrit, the title is *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* "Heart of Perfect Paragnosis." The form *Heart Sūtra* (with a macron on u) appears to translate *xīn* 心 into English and *jīng* 經 into Sanskrit. The word "sutra" is anglicised and found in all major English dictionaries. The English title is, or should be, *Heart Sutra*, which I have used throughout, except in quotations.

origins thesis in the English-speaking world seems to have been ambiv-
alence. This is conveyed by any number of mentions-in-passing and foot-
notes which acknowledge that Nattier *has a theory* but make no attempt
to engage with her evidence or methods. A representative recent example
is Coleman and Anderson (2017: 44), "Indeed, Nattier has suggested that
the original version of the *Heart Sutra* was actually composed in China
from a mixture of Indian-derived material and new composition, and was
only later translated back into Sanskrit."[2] Scholars who give an opinion
on the Chinese origins thesis are rare. Jay Garfield (2014: 63) refers to
the *Heart Sutra* as "Canonically regarded as Indian, but almost certainly
Chinese in origin." Even here, however, there is no discussion of relevant
evidence or methods, nor the implications of the conclusion. Dan Lusthaus
(2003) makes some interesting observations based on the earliest commen-
taries by Kuījī and Woncheuk, but too obviously privileges the Sanskrit
"original" and seems oblivious to his subject's comments on the nature
of the *Heart Sutra* (compare the discussion in Nattier 1992: 206–207,
n. 33; and Attwood 2020b: 174–178).

By contrast, the late Fukui Fumimasa reported that the article
"shook the Japanese academic world" and went on to say: "As the
Prajna Heart Sutra is one of the most revered sutras in Japan, it would
be a matter of grave concern if this were proved to be an apocryphon
produced in China" (Fukui 2000 cited in Tanahashi 2014: 77). Fukui
(1987) had argued that the *Heart Sutra* was not a *sūtra* but rather a
dhāraṇī text intended for liturgical use (and Nattier concurred that this
was likely). Watanabe Shōgo (1991) followed this with a study of the
history of the *Heart Sutra* and concluded that the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* 大明
呪經 (T 250) is a 偽経 (*gikyō*) or "false text."[3] Nattier concurs with the

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[2] See also Lopez 1996: xi, Tarocco 2007: 58, McCorkle 2010: 27, n. 8.

[3] In Chinese this same term, 偽經 *wěi jīng*, was used by medieval bibliographers for
texts that they considered to be local productions. In an undated interview at the Taishō
University (in Japanese), Watanabe says, 鳩摩羅什訳の『般若心経』は偽経であると
いう説が提示され、現在、学界で定説となっています。"The theory that Kumāra-
jīva's *Heart Sutra* is a spurious scripture was suggested [in the 1991 article], and it has
become an established theory in the academic world at present" https://www.tais.ac.jp/
faculty/department/buddhist_denominational_studies/blog/20131105/24390/ (accessed
August 21, 2021, translation by Jeffrey Kotyk; personal communication). The first phys-
ical evidence for the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* I have been able to locate is an inscription from

reasons for this, if not the designation (1992:184). This conclusion is now widely accepted and it undermines the traditional chronology of the text.[4]

Fukui (1994, 2000) himself attempted to refute Nattier's thesis, although he never really addressed the central arguments presented.[5] Harada Waso also wrote polemics against Nattier's thesis (2002, 2010). Ji Yun (2012) equivocated, acknowledging that the text appeared to be a digest text, but generally coming out against the idea that the *Heart Sutra* was composed in Chinese. Siu Sai Yau (2017) argues that the Sanskrit *Heart Sutra* arrived in China from India during the Sui Dynasty and describes the text as "an abridged and rewritten version of *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*" (Siu 2017: abstract).[6] Note that, in the light of Watanabe (1991), the very earliest reliably dated evidence for the *Heart Sutra* is the Fangshan Stele (March 13, 661), well into the Tang Dynasty (Attwood 2019).

Something that has attracted critical attention is Nattier's carefully hedged speculation that Xuánzàng *might* have been involved in the creation of the *Heart Sutra*. Ishii Kōsei (2015) and Ng and Ānando (2019) both overstate Nattier's speculations as assertions that Xuánzàng was solely responsible and casually dismiss Nattier's thesis without any real attempt at engagement let alone a considered refutation. Few of the articles in Japanese and Chinese have appeared in English and most remain beyond the language barrier. In any case, there seems to be a firm opinion against

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Fangshan dated 1085 CE. My thanks to Jason Protass for drawing this to my attention to this inscription, and supplying me with a pdf of it.

  [4] Matsumoto (1932) questioned the attribution of *Dàmíngzhòujīng*, arguing that there is no record of the text or the attribution before 730 CE. Conze (1948) repeats this argument and also notes that the *Xīnjīng* is not mentioned in a 6th century list of Kumārajīva's translations (1967: 154, n. 2). These arguments are echoed by McRae (1988: 89) and Nattier (1992: 184–189).

  [5] Nattier wrote a rebuttal of Fukui's (1994) criticisms in 1995 but unfortunately it was never published. I thank Professor Nattier for sending me a copy of the draft paper.

  [6] The idea that the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* (*Hṛd*) and *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* (*Vaj*) are "abridgements" can be traced to Edward Conze (1960) and independently to Hikata Ryūshō (1958). Conze grouped *Hṛd* and *Vaj* together (ca 300–400 CE), however, most modern scholars now agree with Hikata that *Vaj* belongs to the earliest period of Prajñāpāramitā literature. This undermines the idea of a general trend toward abridgement of texts in India.

the Chinese origins amongst East Asian scholiasts. This is reflected in the popular literature on the *Heart Sutra*.[7]

In English language publications until now, only Huifeng and I have taken up Nattier's *methods* and in doing so both managed to reinforce and extend the Chinese origins thesis. Each of our observations is outlined below. Before beginning to explore the text in detail, it will be useful to review Nattier's evidence and methods since these seem to be poorly understood and frequently misrepresented in the literature.

1.1 *Nattier's Method*

It is beyond dispute that the *Heart Sutra* copied the "core passage" from the *Large Sutra*. We have a copied passage in Sanskrit and Chinese versions in addition to the source which exists in Sanskrit and Chinese translation.[8] Either the passage was copied in the source language and independently translated into the target or the copy was made in the target language and back-translated into the source.

Copying is a relatively conservative activity compared to translation. A literate copyist can correct errors as they go. Even if a text is altered by the copyist, we expect much or all of the original text to be conserved. By contrast, translation is necessarily transformative and highly dependent on the translator. When an original and a copied text are translated independently by two different translators living centuries apart, we expect a pattern of difference between the two translations (unless one copied from another, cf. 2.7 below). We expect the original and the copy to be substantially similar in the source language (and changes to be idiomatic) and we expect them to be significantly different in the translations. Furthermore, the translator may introduce idiosyncratic changes in vocabulary and idiom to the translation that may have diagnostic value.

Nattier focused on the core passage as it occurs in four texts: the Gilgit manuscript of the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* (*Pañc*); Conze's

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[7] See for example Red Pine 2004: 24 or Tanahashi 2014: 79–80, 84.
[8] Two of the Chinese translations (T 221 and T 223) predate the earliest extant Sanskrit manuscript from the Gilgit cache.

(1967) edition of the *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* (*Hṛd*);[9] Kumārajīva's translation of the *Large Sutra* (*Dàjīng*; T 223) and the *Heart Sutra* traditionally attributed to Xuánzàng (*Xīnjīng*; T 251). By comparing the four versions of the passage and noting patterns of similarity and difference, we should be able to identify whether the core passage was copied in the source language and then translated or whether the original was translated and then copied and back-translated to the source language. In the case of the *Heart Sutra*, there are two possibilities, which we can call the *Indian origins thesis* and the *Chinese origins thesis*. Stated in the ideal:

> If the *Heart Sutra* was composed in Sanskrit using passages from *Pañc*, then *Hṛd* and *Pañc* will be identical and both will use idiomatic Buddhist Sanskrit throughout. *Xīnjīng* and *Dàjīng* will be different because they were translated by two translators who lived 250 years apart.

> If the *Heart Sutra* was composed in Chinese using passages from Kumārajīva's *Dàjīng* and then "back-translated" into Sanskrit in China, then *Hṛd* and *Pañc* will be substantially different. We expect *Xīnjīng* and *Dàjīng* to be identical.

Developments since 1992 allow us to improve the precision of the method. The late Karashima Seishi and colleagues (2016) published a new facsimile edition of the Gilgit *Pañc* that is much easier to read, but also Kimura (1986–2009) published his edition of the Nepalese manuscripts of *Pañc* which substantially revises and improves upon the edition by Dutt (1934) that Nattier consulted.[10] We thus have much better access to the two *Pañc* recensions. We can also make use of the *Dàjīng* translations produced by Mokṣala (T 221) and Xuánzàng (T 220).[11] To the extent that *Pañc* is an

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[9] There are at least three versions of Conze's edition in circulation (1948, 1967, and 1975). Attwood (2015, 2018a) has since identified a number of mistakes in Conze's Sanskrit that affect all of these versions.

[10] A feature of the editions by Dutt (1934) and Kimura (1986–2009), and virtually all other editions of relevant texts, is that editors have tacitly changed the standard Buddhist spelling *bodhisatva* to the Classical Sanskrit spelling *bodhisattva* throughout. Bhattacharya (2010) points out that this is not a scribal bug; it is a *feature* of Buddhists manuscripts. It is an odd procedure to change every single occurrence of a word that occurs very frequently across the whole genre of literature without making some kind of note or offering a justification.

[11] I take the second section of T 220, i.e. *juan* 401–478, to be representative of *Dàjīng*. Xuánzàng was quite consistent across the various texts, unlike Kumārajīva who was not always consistent across chapters of *Dàjīng*.

expansion of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* (*Aṣṭa*), we can also extend the comparison to include versions of the passages in that text and the various Chinese translations of it. In addition, we can consult early commentaries by Kuījī 窺基 (T 1710) and Woncheuk 圓測 (T 1711). Kuījī was Xuánzàng's student and collaborated on translation projects. Woncheuk was Xuánzàng's contemporary and a scholar in his own right who also collaborated on translation projects. There is also a less useful commentary by Fǎzàng 法藏 (T 1712) composed 702 CE. These are the three most important and influential Tang Dynasty commentaries, translated into English respectively by Shih and Lusthaus (2006), Hyun Choo (2006), and Cook (1978). With the (English language) publication of details of the stone tablet from Fangshan (Attwood 2019) and of the *Stone Sutra* series by Harrassowitz Verlag (e.g. Wang and Ledderose 2014), we can now include some early epigraphical evidence in our deliberations. Advances in technology mean that we have electronically searchable versions of many of the key texts. All of which means we are now in a much better position to evaluate the text to see which of these two theses is more plausible. All that remains is to work through the *Heart Sutra* looking for points of comparison, of which I have identified twenty-two.

Comparative Analysis

2.1 *Genre*

Although the *Heart Sutra* is universally referred to as a *sūtra*, by the criteria that applied in early medieval China the text was definitely not a *sūtra* (cf. Nattier 1992: 174–175). These criteria include:

1. begins "thus have I heard" (*evaṃ mayā śrutam*; 如是我聞 *rú shì wǒ wén*);
2. states where the discourse was delivered;[12]
3. was spoken or approved by the Buddha;
4. was appreciated by the audience.

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[12] Schopen (2004) has discussed rules found in a Mūlasarvāstivāda *Vinaya* text that deals with creating a *nidāna* for a text that lacks one, but is still considered authentic. Many Pāli *sutta*s lack a *nidāna*.

The standard text of the *Heart Sutra* has none of these features although they were eventually supplied in the extended version.[13] Early medieval Chinese bibliographers developed a scale of authenticity for texts accepted as *sūtra*s. At the top were those texts that not only met these criteria but also had a known connection with India; that were translated by a known (and respected) translator; and that were considered consistent with Buddhist doctrine. Nattier noted that Kuījī and Woncheuk both thought that the *Heart Sutra* wasn't a *sūtra* (1992: 206–207, n. 33), although of course both still associated the text with Xuánzàng.

We think of the *Heart Sutra* as a *sūtra* text for two reasons. The first is the story of Xuánzàng's connection to the text found in the *Dà Táng dà Cí'ēnsì sānzàng fǎshī chuán xù* 《大唐大慈恩寺三藏法師傳序》 (T 2053) *A Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Ci'en Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty* (trans. Li 1995). The second is the attribution of the "translation" to Xuánzàng in all extant documents. However, the story in the *Biography* is not plausible as history and seems to have been interpolated into an existing narrative (Attwood 2019, Kotyk 2019).

As noted above, Fukui (1987) argued that *Xīnjīng* is a *dhāraṇī* text, equating the character *xīn* 心 "heart" with *dhāraṇī*, although other expressions are more common; for example, the translation *zhòu* 咒 or the transliteration *tuóluóní* 陀羅尼. Fukui's argument is echoed by Siu (2017). This view is not *prima facie* unlikely and Nattier found it plausible but supplied another one in her notes that we can now foreground.

Robert Buswell, having recently edited the volume *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (1990), wrote to Nattier suggesting that the *Heart Sutra* was an example of a *chāo jīng* 抄經 i.e. a "sutra extract" or "digest text."[14] As Buswell notes, *chāo jīng* is "a fairly common genre of scriptural writing in early Chinese Buddhism, which excerpted seminal passages from the Mahāyāna *sūtra*s to create easily digestible 'gists' of these texts" (Nattier 1992: 210, n. 48). Sēngyòu's 僧祐 *Collection of Records* (515 CE) lists

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[13] The issue of where this extension was made is an open question. Early indications are that there are two extended *Heart Sutra* texts and it seems likely that one was made in Chinese and the other in Sanskrit.

[14] Digest texts are discussed in Tokuno 1990, Storch 2014. Hsu (2018) discusses the idea of *chāo* 抄 more generally.

some 450 digest texts amongst 2500 Buddhist translations in total.[15] Both Ji (2012) and Siu (2017) appear to agree that *Xīnjīng* is a digest text, but do not follow through with the implications of this (i.e. that this means it was created in Chinese). Attwood (2019, 2020b) confirmed that the *Heart Sutra* is a Chinese digest text and discussed the implications for the historiography of the *Heart Sutra*.

Despite the modular nature of many Buddhist texts (Silk 2015: 208), the digest text is a distinctively Chinese genre. Having established that the *Heart Sutra* is a digest text, any suggestion that it was composed in Sanskrit now carries the burden of proof. At present, there is no evidence to suggest that the *Heart Sutra* existed in Sanskrit before it existed in Chinese. Indeed, the earliest evidence for an Indian text is not from India at all; it is the commentary attributed to Kamalaśīla (ca. 740–795) and preserved in the Tibetan *Kanjur* (Lopez 1988: 8–11).

2.2 *Reuse in Prajñāpāramitā*

Nattier makes an important point when introducing her discussion of the *Dàmíngzhòujīng*: "it seems clear that students of Kumārajīva (in particular Sēngzhào 僧肇) read and commented on the core passage of the *Heart Sūtra* found in Kumārajīva's version of the *Large Sūtra*" (1992: 184). Following this thread, we discover that the *Zhào lùn*《肇論》(*Treatises of Zhào*) composed by Sēngzhào in 409 CE includes the phrase「色不異空，空不異色。色即是空，空即是色。」(T 1858; 45.156c5–6).[16] This is far from the whole core passage, but it does at least show that the equation of form and emptiness was an important passage even in the early 5th century. The same part of the core passage is quoted in the *Móhēzhǐguān*《摩訶止觀》(T 1911), a collection of lectures by Zhìyǐ 智顗 published by his student Guàndǐng 灌頂 in 594 CE.[17] A third example

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[15] *Chūsānzàng jìjí*《出三藏記集》(*Collection of Records about the Production of the Tripiṭaka*), T 2145.

[16] Translated in Liebenthal 1968: 98. This passage was noted by McRae (1988: 89 and 107, n. 9).

[17]「豈有空能遣空。即色是空。受想行識亦復如是。」(T 1911; 46.5b19–20). The text is translated by Paul L. Swanson (2018: I.160).

is found in the translation of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* 《大乘莊嚴經論》 (T 1604), by Prabhākaramitra 波羅頗蜜多羅, completed during 630–633.[18]

The epithets passage (see also 2.19 below) appears in all versions of *Aṣṭa* and *Pañc* as well as a few other Prajñāpāramitā texts (Attwood 2017). An inscription of this passage found at Mt. Sili (*Sīlì Shān* 司里山), Shandong Province, was probably carved in the Northern Qi (550–577 CE) (Wang and Ledderose 2014). It was identified by Takuma Nobuyuki (2003) as being from the *Xiǎopǐn bōrě jīng* 《小品般若經》 (T 227) or *Small Sutra* translated by Kumārajīva et al. ca. 408 CE. The epithets are also found in (*Fó shuō*) *Guānfó sānmèi hǎi jīng* 《佛說觀佛三昧海經》 (T 643), also likely to be a Chinese-produced text from the first half of the 5th century.[19]

Some of the passages chosen for the *Heart Sutra* were circulating in Chinese, based on Kumārajīva's translation, well before the first evidence for the *Heart Sutra* appears.

2.3 *Guānyīn*

The presence of Guānyīn 觀音 or Guānshìyīn 觀世音, i.e. Avalokiteśvara, has long puzzled some commentators. The *Heart Sutra* is associated with *prajñā* (wisdom, insight, paragnosis), while Guānyīn is associated with *karuṇā* (compassion) creating an apparent conflict for some. *Pañc* features just two bodhisatva figures: Maitreya and Mañjuśrī. Only Maitreya plays an active role in the text. Most of the time the Prajñāpāramitā texts discuss "the bodhisatva" in the abstract, as at the beginning of *Pañc*, Chapter Three:

> When this was said, Elder Śāriputra said this to the Bhagavan: "Bhagavan, how should the *bodhisatva mahāsatva* conduct themselves with respect to perfection of insight?"[20]

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[18] 「經言空不異色、色不異空，空即是色。」 (T 31.618b5, b11–12).

[19] My thanks to Yamabe Nobuyoshi for this observation (personal communication; August 17, 2019) and for sending a copy of the relevant paper, i.e. Yamabe 2006.

[20] *ukte āyuṣmān śāriputro bhagavantam etad avocat*: *kathaṃ bhagavan bodhisattvena mahāsattvena prajñāpāramitāyāṃ caritavyam?* (Kimura 1986–2009: I-1.53).

However, in 7th century China, the bodhisatva par excellence is precisely Guānyīn. It is no surprise to find Guānyīn in any Chinese text composed in the early medieval period (Nattier 1992: 176). Epigraphy and art show that Mañjuśrī was also popular and more directly associated with *prajñā*, but still, the centrality of Guānyīn in Chinese Buddhist life is not controversial or puzzling. Guānyīn's presence is entirely consistent with the text being composed in China and only a problem for the Indian origins thesis.

Nattier (1992: 190–191) proposed that Xuánzàng may have been involved in editing a pre-existing text but that concluded that attributing the composition of the *Heart Sutra* would be "going too far." However, if Kotyk (2019) is correct then Xuánzàng playing a role in composing the *Heart Sutra* is more plausible. By putting Guānyīn in the role of protagonist Xuánzàng may have been obliquely referring to a didactic story he included in the *Notes on the Western Regions* (西域記 *Xīyù jì*; T 2087), composed at the behest of Emperor Tàizōng 太宗. Max Deeg suggests that an episode in the *Notes* – in which Avalokiteśvara advises King Harṣa on how to behave appropriately – is a subtle admonition of Tàizōng for his treatment of his father (Deeg 2016: 126–129). In this scenario, the inclusion of Guānyīn in the *Heart Sutra* as a gift could be a reminder of this episode for his son, Emperor Gāozōng 高宗 and his Consort Wǔ Zhào 武曌, later Emperor Wǔ Zétiān 武則天 (624–705 CE).

The presence of Avalokiteśvara in an Indian Prajñāpāramitā *sūtra* makes no sense while the presence of Guānyīn in a Chinese digest text does make sense (and offers several interpretations).

2.4 *End of Suffering*

The final part of the first sentence in Chinese presents a unique problem because here we have an expression in Chinese that has no Sanskrit counterpart in any version of *Hṛd* or *Pañc*, i.e. *dù yī qiè kǔ è* 度一切苦厄.

In the whole Chinese *Tripiṭaka*, this phrase occurs only one other time, in a translation of a *sūtra*, *Dàfāng guǎng shílún jīng* 《大方廣十輪經》 (T 410: 13.708.a26–27). There is no extant Sanskrit text but the title has been reconstructed as **Daśacakrakṣitigarbhasūtra*. A more literal rendering would be *Vaipulyadaśacakrasūtra*. The name of the translator is not

recorded, but the title is recorded in a bibliography of Buddhist translations made during the Northern Liang Dynasty (北涼), ca. 397–439 CE. This means that it predates the composition of the *Heart Sutra* and may well be the source of this phrase, although there is no direct evidence of reuse.

The *Daśacakrakṣitigarbhasūtra* was also translated by Xuánzàng (T 411) and he translated this phrase as 脫一切憂苦 (*tuō yīqiè yōu kǔ*). Note that here Xuánzàng's phrasing is different from that of the *Heart Sutra* attributed to him (T 251). His other works suggest that he aimed for and achieved a remarkable consistency of translation vocabulary.

The wording of *Xīnjīng* being identical to an existing Chinese source is suggestive of Chinese origins. The fact that the phrase is missing from *Hṛd* is difficult to explain, nor do we have a Sanskrit text of *Daśacakrakṣitigarbhasūtra* to complete the comparison. This is not Xuánzàng's preferred translation which undermines the attribution of the translation to him.

2.5 *The Missing lines*

One of the notable differences between the *Xīnjīng* and the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* is that the latter has two additional blocks of characters in the "core passage."[21] After *dù yī qiè kǔ è* 度一切苦厄。 *Dàmíngzhòujīng* inserts

> 舍利弗！色空故無惱壞相，受空故無受相，想空故無知相，行空故無作相，識空故無覺相。何以故？ (T 250; 8.847c5–7)

Nattier (1992: 185) notes that this passage is identical to a passage from Kumārajīva's *Large Sutra* translation, i.e. T 223; 8.223a11. Then again after the "marked" passage (see below 2.7), *Dàmíngzhòujīng* inserts the line 是空法，非過去、非未來、非現在。 This also comes from the *Large Sutra*, i.e. T 223; 8.223a16.

The additional passages in the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* are part of a continuous passage in the *Large Sutra* (8.223.a11–20). The *Xīnjīng* extract starts at 223a13 (missing out 37 characters), misses out 223.a16 (12 characters), and ends at 223.a20. In the table below I give the three texts alongside

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[21] To the best of my knowledge there is no Sanskrit text corresponding to the *Dàmíngzhòujīng*.

each other. The other differences are the spelling of the name Śāriputra, the lines omitted from *Xīnjīng*, and the character *yì* 亦 "also" omitted three times in *Xīnjīng* and four times in *Dàmíngzhòujīng* (indicated by □). Otherwise, the three versions of the core passage are identical.

Xīnjīng (T 251)	Large Sutra (T 223)	Dàmíngzhòujīng (T 250)
	舍利弗色空故無惱壞相受空故無受相想空故無知相行空故無作相識空故無覺相何以故	舍利弗色空故無惱壞相受空故無受相想空故無知相行空故無作相識空故無覺相何以故
舍利子色不異空空不異色色即是空空即是色受想行識亦復如是	舍利弗色不異空空不異色色即是空空即是色受想行識亦如是	舍利弗非色異空非空異色色即是空空即是色受想行識亦如是
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The two Chinese *Heart Sutra* texts are too similar to be independent translations from Sanskrit. Both are drawing on the same Chinese source. If we take into account Watanabe's revised chronology then we can say that *Dàmíngzhòujīng* is a modified version of *Xīnjīng*, likely made at a time when Xuánzàng's Prajñāpāramitā translations were available but not used. It appears that *Xīnjīng* has had lines removed that were restored in the *Dàmíngzhòujīng*. If this is true, then the author of the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* turned to the same source as the author of the *Xīnjīng* to replace the missing characters. In other words, it was apparent to the author of the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* that the core passage in *Xīnjīng* was copied from Kumārajīva's *Large Sutra* translation (T 223). And the reason that no Sanskrit text corresponding to *Dàmíngzhòujīng* is extant is that it never existed in a Sanskrit version.

2.6 *Form is emptiness*

One of the most important aspects of Nattier's evidence was the phrasing of the statements that equate form and emptiness.[22] The passage in question uses two pairs of expressions, which are typically translated as "form is emptiness, emptiness is only form; form is not different from emptiness, emptiness is not different from form." If we compare the texts for the statement: "form is not different from emptiness," we find:

> *Hṛd*: *rūpān na pṛthak śūnyatā*
> *Xīnjīng*:色 不異空
> *Dàjīng*: 色 不異空
> *Pañc*: *nānyad rūpaṃ anyā śūnyatā*

This section is part of the core text that we know is copied from the *Large Sutra*. The two Chinese texts are identical here and the two Sanskrit texts are almost completely different (though they mean much the same thing). According to the method set out above, this tells us that the copying occurred in Chinese.

Nattier (1992: 186–187) further notes that the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* has an alternate text at this point 非色異空. The *Dàzhìdù lùn* (T 1509) also has this reading. And thus Nattier speculates that *Dàmíngzhòujīng* copied from *Dàzhìdù lùn* rather than directly from the *Dàjīng*. The difference between the two versions can be expressed as: "It is not the case that form is different from emptiness" (非色異空) versus "Form is not different from emptiness" (色不異空). In response to this, Huifeng (2008) pointed out that the notes for this passage in the *Taishō* show that the *Dàjīng* has 非色異空 in some earlier editions, particularly the Old Song Edition dated 1104–1148 CE. Huifeng infers from this that 非色異空 is the "original" reading in *Dàjīng* and that 色不異空 was introduced by the

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[22] Although I retain the standard translations here for the sake of simplicity, I no longer believe that they adequately convey the sense of the Sanskrit or Chinese. *Rūpa* is not form generally, but only *outward* form (something reflected in Chinese). Compare the object of the ear (*śrotra*) being sound (*śabda*), not the vibrating object that is the source of the sound. *Rūpa* means "appearance" in this context, i.e. that which presents itself to the eye. Similarly I believe that, correctly understood, the *Heart Sutra* makes it clear that *śūnyatā* refers to the *absence* of sense experience (cf. *suññatāvihāra* in the *Cūḷasuññata Sutta*; MN 121). "Absence" is thus an epistemological term in this context, in sharp contrast to the metaphysics of "emptiness" that emerges from Madhyamaka. See also Huifeng 2014 and Attwood 2017 and 2019.

editors of the Taishō Edition. In other words, the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* in all likelihood borrowed directly from the *Dàjīng* in an earlier edition rather than from the *Dàzhìdù lùn*. Huifeng (2008) accepts the traditional attribution of both *Xīnjīng* and *Dàmíngzhòujīng*.

As we have seen above (2.2), the phrase 色不異空 occurs in the *Zhào lùn* 《肇論》 by Kumārajīva's student Sēngzhào (T 1858; 45.156c5–6) and some other texts that predate the *Heart Sutra*. It is also present in the Fangshan stele version of the *Heart Sutra* (Attwood 2019) and thus dates from 661 CE at the latest. This shows that 色不異空 was the version that was in common use and the variant reading must be taken with a grain of salt.

Nattier noted that the wording found in *Hṛd* was "a perfectly good (if somewhat unidiomatic) translation of Chinese [色不異空]" (1992: 171). Electronic searching also allows us to state with some confidence that the word *pṛthak* is more than "somewhat unidiomatic." It is not used in the Sanskrit *Pañc* or *Aṣṭa* at all. One *can* use *pṛthak* this way in Sanskrit; it is simply that the Buddhists who composed the Prajñāpāramitā never did. The way the Chinese text is phrased is much less significant than Huifeng (2008) seems to suggest because the Sanskrit expression in *Hṛd* is such an oddity. *Hṛd* cannot have borrowed from *Pañc* meaning that the Indian origins thesis is refuted no matter what we decide about the Chinese text.

There are two more small points about this section. The first is that the pairs are inverted in *Hṛd*. Whereas *Pañc*, *Dàjīng*, *Xīnjīng* and *Dàmíngzhòujīng* all firstly assert the non-difference and secondly the equality of form and emptiness; *Hṛd* alone does this the other way around. In the India origins thesis, this requires both Kumārajīva and Xuánzàng to make the same wilful change in the text. In the Chinese origins thesis, it only takes the unknown translator to make the change. Before we can judge the plausibility of the latter we need to see more of the text.

The second small point is that Conze included the extra phrase *yad rūpaṃ sā śūnyatā yā śūnyatā tad rūpaṃ* which occurs in some of his witnesses. However, no other version of the core passage has this extra phrase. Nattier left it out of her considerations and Attwood (2020a) suggests we remove it from the critical edition.[23]

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[23] Both Red Pine (2004: 75–85) and Tanahashi (2014: 159–163) include *yad rūpaṃ sā śūnyatā yā śūnyatā tad rūpaṃ* and thus have three pairs of Sanskrit phrases and only

2.7 *Marked*

The next problem concerns the passage:

> *Hṛd*: *iha Śāriputra sarvadharmāḥ śūnyatālakṣaṇā, anutpannā aniruddhā,*
> *amalā avimalā, anūnā aparipūrṇāḥ.*
> *Xīnjīng*: 是諸 法空相 不生不滅不垢不淨不增不減。
> *Dàjīng*: 是諸 法空相 不生不滅不垢不淨不增不減。
> *Pañc*: *ya Śāradvatīputra śūnyatā na sā utpadyate, no nirudhyate, na saṃ-*
> *kliśyate, na vyavadāyate, na hīyate, no vardhate.*

Xīnjīng translates as "All dharmas are marked with emptiness not born,
not dying; not dirty, not clean; not increasing, not diminishing." This text
is identical to *Dàjīng*. As with the previous example, we have a striking
identity between the two Chinese texts and a striking difference between
the two Sanskrit texts. The sentences in *Hṛd* and *Pañc* have a different
subject: in *Hṛd* is it *sarvadharmāḥ* "all dharmas" whereas in *Pañc* it is
śūnyatā "emptiness." The subject of the sentence makes a huge difference
in how we interpret this passage. And *Hṛd* follows *Dàjīng* rather than
Pañc.

Xuánzàng's *Large Sutra* text follows Kumārajīva's here. Mokṣala (T 221)
has almost the same vocabulary but arranges the sentence differently and
also has "emptiness" as the subject:

> 空則是識 亦不見生 亦不見滅 亦不見著 亦不見斷 亦不見增 亦不見減
>
> Emptiness should be known: it does not see birth and it does not see death;
> it does not see attachment and it does not see severing; it does not see
> increasing and it does not see diminishing.

A second important difference is that *Pañc* details the qualities of *śūnyatā*
using verbs while *Hṛd* does it for *sarvadharmāḥ* with adjectives. *Hṛd* has
a strong preference for adjectives and adjectival compounds when verbs
would be more usual and idiomatic in Sanskrit. This is suggestive of a
Chinese speaker translating from Chinese into Sanskrit. In just two of six
terms, *Hṛd* chooses an adjective from the same verbal root as the verb in
Pañc, but other words are synonyms.

two pairs in Chinese. Tanahashi has confused which corresponds to which. Red Pine
takes the equivalent line 是色彼空 是空彼色 from T 256 (but does not mention his
source).

Pañc	Chinese	*Hṛd*
na utpadyate	不生	*anutpannā*
na nirudhyate	不滅	*aniruddhā*
na saṃkliśyate	不垢	*amalā*
na vyavadāyate	不淨	*avimalā*
na hīyate	不增	*anūnā*
na vardhate	不減	*aparipūrṇā*

Nattier noted that the appearance of such synonyms is "one of the lead-
ing indicators of back-translation" (1992: 170). The list of terms from *Pañc*
is used repeatedly, both in whole and in part. The list in *Hṛd* is found
nowhere else across the whole Prajñāpāramitā literature. Nattier points
out that the Chinese could conceivably represent both Sanskrit lists, and
that the Chinese characters, like the Sanskrit expression, are used repeat-
edly (1992: 172).

2.8 *Negated Lists*

> *Hṛd*: *na cakṣuḥ-śrotra-ghrāṇa-jihvā-kāya-manāṃsi*
> *Xīnjīng*: 無眼耳鼻舌身意
> *Dàjīng*: 無眼耳鼻舌身意
> *Pañc*: *na cakṣur na śrotraṃ na ghrāṇaṃ na jihvā kāyo na manaḥ*

Lists such as the five *skandha*s, twelve *āyatana*s (sense faculties plus sense
objects), and eighteen *dhātu*s occur very frequently in the Prajñāpāramitā
literature. They occur both in the positive form and in the negated form.
In the positive form, it is not unusual to see them agglutinated into one
long *dvandva* compound. Chinese translators do this for the negated form
as well, but Sanskrit Prajñāpāramitā texts do not. Sometimes, as in the
Heart Sutra, we may see some property attributed to the first member of
the list, for example, *rūpaṃ śūnyatā*, and a following note to say the other
members of the list are the same, e.g. *evam eva vedanā-saṃjñā-saṃskāra-
vijñānaṃ*.

   Nattier noted that negating lists the Chinese way "simply does not 'ring'
properly (that is, does not sound idiomatic) to the well trained Sanskrit
ear" (1992: 178), revealing in a note that the ear in question was Richard
Salomon's. I am pleased to be able to confirm Salomon's intuition.
A distinctive feature of *Pañc* is that where such lists are negated, they

are always negated individually, e.g. *na rūpaṃ na vedanā na saṃjñā na saṃskārā na vijñānaṃ*. It is only in Chinese that we see the convention of supplying one negative particle for the list as a compound. Most of the lists in the *Hṛd* are given in the Chinese format with a single negating particle followed by the list as a compound.

Thus the negated lists in *Hṛd* differ from Sanskrit Prajñāpāramitā *sūtra*s and resemble Chinese translations in both syntax and lexicon. This is strong support for Chinese origins.

2.9 *Nidānas*

One of the negated lists is the 12 *Nidānas*.

> *Hṛd*: *nāvidyā nāvidyākṣayo yāvan na jarāmaraṇaṃ na jarāmaraṇakṣayo*.
> *Xīnjīng*: 無無明亦無無明盡 乃至　無老死亦無老死盡
> *Dàjīng*: 亦無無明亦無無明盡 乃至亦無老死亦無老死盡
> *Pañc*: *na tatrāvidyā nā vidyānirodhaḥ na saṃskārā na saṃskāranirodhaḥ na vijñānaṃ na vijñānanirodhaḥ na nāmarūpaṃ na nāmarūpanirodhaḥ na ṣaḍāyatanaṃ na ṣaḍāyatananirodhaḥ na sparśo na sparśanirodhaḥ na vedanā na vedanānirodhaḥ na tṛṣṇā na tṛṣṇānirodhaḥ nopādānaṃ nopādānanirodhaḥ na bhavo na bhavanirodhaḥ na jātir na jātinirodhaḥ na jarāmaraṇaṃ na jarāmaraṇanirodhaḥ*

The two Chinese texts are identical except that *Xīnjīng* has skipped *yì* 亦 twice, which does not affect the meaning. The two Sanskrit texts are very different although the differences are exaggerated because *Pañc* goes through the entire list of twelve *nidāna*s, whereas *Hṛd*, like *Xīnjīng* and *Dàjīng*, lists only the first and last terms and uses a word indicating the abbreviation (Skt. *yāvan*; Ch. 乃至 *nǎizhì*).

Nattier also notes in her examples of back-translation (1992: 171–172) that there is an important change of terminology. By long-standing tradition dating back to early Buddhism, the standard way of referring to the cessation of any *nidāna* (in Pāli, Sanskrit, and Gāndhārī) is *nirodha* "cessation."[24] In *Hṛd* the expected word is replaced by *kṣaya* "destruction."[25]

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[24] The Gāndhārī spelling is *nirosa*, with many variants.

[25] While the *nidāna*s typically cease (*nirodha*) it is the influxes (*āsava*) that are destroyed (*kṣaya*). The difference in terminology might be because the language of *āsava* comes from Jainism, where actions (*karma*) causes an influx of substance (*dravya*) that

Both Chinese texts have *jìn* 盡 "to exhaust." Xuánzàng, on the other
hand, has *miè* 滅 in his *Large Sutra* translation. This is important because
the word *nirodha* occurs in other contexts within the core passage. Firstly,
both Kumārajīva and Xuánzàng use the characters *bù shēng bù miè* 不生
不滅 to translate the common phrase "not arising and not ceasing." Sec-
ondly, they both use *miè* 滅 in the context of the Four Noble Truths – i.e.
kǔ jí miè dào 苦集滅道 (*duḥkha*, *samudaya*, *nirodha*, and *mārga*). Both
translators consistently translate *nirodha* as *miè* 滅, except in this case
Kumārajīva chose a nonstandard translation.

Although we can still make sense of it, the author of *Hṛd* has used the
wrong term. The apparent source of this error is Kumārajīva's nonstandard
translation of *nirodha* in the context of the *nidāna*s. This fact points away
from composition in an Indian milieu and towards a Chinese-speaking
one.

2.10 *Attainment and Realisation*

The next example was first noticed by Huifeng (2014) and then expanded
on by Attwood (2020a). It involves the end of the core section:

> *Hṛd*: *na jñānaṃ na prāptir*
> *Xīnjīng*:無智亦無得
> *Dàjīng*: 無智亦無得
> *Pañc*: *na prāptir nābhisamayo*

The extant texts of *Pañc* have *na prāptir nābhisamayo* "no attainment,
no realisation." The same wording can be discerned in the other *Large
Sutra* translations: Mokṣala T 221: *yì wú suǒ dǎi dé yì wú xū tuó huán*
亦無所逮得 亦無須陀洹 (8.6a11–12) and in Xuánzàng T 220–222: *wú
dé wú xiànguān* 無得 無現觀 (7.14a23). Kumārajīva's *Large Sutra* trans-
lation is the odd one out. Notably, T 256 has a hybrid of the two, i.e. *na
jñānaṃ na prāpti nābhisamayaḥ*.[26]

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sticks to the soul (*jīva*) and causes it to be reborn (*punarbhava*). Destroying the influxes
means ending the cycle of action and consequence, and thus ending rebirth.
  [26] 曩誐攘喃[卅八] 曩鉢囉[二合]比底[卅九] 曩鼻娑麼 which can reconstructed as *na g
yā naṃ na p rā p ti nā bhi sa ma (ya)* = The accompanying Chinese text reads *wú zhì wú
dé wú zhèng* 無智無得無證 (T 8.851.c22–23).

Attwood (2020a) added that each occurrence of *na prāptir nābhisamayo* is followed by a list of attainments and realisations. In the Gilgit *Pañc*:

> No attainment, no realisation: no stream-entry and no fruit of stream-entry, no once-returning and no fruit of once-returning; no non-returning and no fruit of non-returning, no arhat and no arhatship, no individual awakening and individually-awakened, no knowledge of the path-maker and no bodhi-satva, no awakening and no awakened.[27]

This is a well-known list that goes back to an original list of the four types of noble people (*ariyapuggala* in Pāli) and their eight attainments and realisations.[28] More often, the two components of the lists are known as the path (*mārga*)[29] and fruition (*phala*). Attwood (2020a) suggests that here *prāpti* and *abhisamaya* are local substitutes for *mārga* and *phala* and therefore Kumārajīva got this quite wrong. Unless we argue that the author of the *Heart Sutra* working in Buddhist India made the same mistake as a Kuchan working in China, we have to accept that Kumārajīva's mistake was first copied into the *Xīnjīng* and then translated in *Hṛd*.

2.11 *Extra Negations*

In some recensions of *Hṛd*, in particular the influential Hōryūji Manuscript, some extra negations have been inserted. We can tell this by comparison with the passage in the *Large Sutra*. In particular, in Sanskrit, we see that two lines have been altered.[30]

1. *na jñānaṃ na prāptiḥ* augmented to read *na jñānaṃ na prāptir nāprāp-tiḥ*.

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[27] *na prāptir nābhisamayaḥ na srota-āpanno na srota āpattiphalaṃ* [*na sakṛdāgāmī*] [*na sakṛdāgāmi*]*phalaṃ nānāgāmī nānāgāmiphalaṃ nārhan nārhatvaṃ na pratyekabodhir na pratyekabuddhaḥ na tatra mārgākārajñatā na bodhisatvaḥ na tatra bodhir na buddhaḥ* (folio 21 verso–21 recto; my transcription).

[28] The four *ariyapuggala* are the stream-entrant (*sotāpanna*), the once returner (*sakadāgāmī*), the non-returner (*anāgāmī*), and the realised (*arahat*). Each is associated with the attainment of a path or seeking (*magga*) and of a fruit (*phala*) usually connoting the first moment of the attainment and the subsequent enjoyment of it. The combination gives rise to the list of eight noble people or *aṭṭhapurisapuggala*.

[29] Note that a literal sense of *mārga* in Monier-William's dictionary is "seeking, searching."

[30] Conze mis-records the variant reading in Hōryūji (Ja) and T 256 (Cb).

2. *nāvidyā nāvidyākṣayo yāvan na jarāmaraṇaṃ na jarāmaraṇakṣayo* is
augmented to *na vidyā nāvidyā na vidyākṣayo nāvidyāksāyo yāvan na
jarāmaraṇaṃ na jarāmaraṇakṣayo*.

In the first case – *nāprāptiḥ* – the change has become an accepted feature
of the text. Conze includes it in all three versions of his Sanskrit edition
(1948, 1967, and 1975). But the previous section – observations about
the pair *na prāptir nābhisamayaḥ* – makes it clear that *nāprāptiḥ* is out
of place. This will be reinforced in the discussion of the next section.
The interpolations in the *nidāna*s were too much even for Conze, who left
them out. These extra negations seem to be the result of an overzealous
editor obsessed with the notion that the *Heart Sutra* is concerned with
negation but without a clear understanding of the context.

Neither the *Xīnjīng* nor the *Dàmíngzhòujīng* includes these amendments
but they are included in both the Hōryūji manuscript and the *Táng Fàn
fān duì zìyīn Bōrěluómìduō Xīnjīng* 《唐梵飜對字音般若波羅蜜多心
經》 (T 256),[31] a Sanskrit text transcribed using Chinese characters (prob-
ably 8th century).[32] Both of these documents are amongst the earliest evi-
dence that we have for the *Heart Sutra* in Sanskrit.

The next few items discussed below (2.12–17) all relate to Section VI
which is particularly problematic, even once we resolve the difficulties
caused by Conze's erroneous full stop in the middle of it (Attwood 2018a).
Words and phrases from this section have been discussed by Huifeng
(2014) and Attwood (2020a). We do not have a Sanskrit text because this
passage was composed rather than copied, though we can usually see the
influence of the *Large Sutra* nonetheless.

2.12 *Practising non-apprehension*

Huifeng (2014) made a major contribution to understanding the *Heart Sutra*
by identifying that Kumārajīva's translation team used the expression
yǐwúsuǒdégù 以無所得故 to translate the Sanskrit term *anupalambhayogena*

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[31] Also represented in a document found at Dunhuang: British Library manuscript
Or.8210/S.5648.

[32] *Wúmíng wú wúmíng jìn wúmíng jìn wú wúmíng jǐn* 無明無無明盡 無明盡無無明盡
(T 256; 8.851c17–21).

"through the practice of nonapprehension [of dharmas]." Attwood (2020a) points out that they also used *yǐbùkědégù* 以不可得故. This tells us that *suǒdé* 所得 and *kědé* 可得 are both binomials and represent words from *upa√labh*, clearing up a potential ambiguity. In Middle Chinese, *dé* 得 means "obtain, attain, acquire" (Kroll 2015: 80). In *Xīnjīng*, *dé* 得 represents *prāpti* "attainment."

The problem is that *Hṛd* has *aprāptitvād* where we expect *anupalambhayogena*. At face value, *yǐwúsuǒdégù* might be a workable translation of *aprāptitvād* and thus be consistent with the Indian origins thesis. However, the word *aprāptitva* doesn't occur in *Pañc* and we have to say that *aprāptitvād* is itself a strange idiom. It can be parsed as Sanskrit, but there's no need for the text to slip from the substantive *prāpti* to the abstract *prāptitva*. What's more, *aprāptitvād* poses some problems for translators, viz Conze: "because of his non-attainmentness" (1975: 93).

Looked at from the other direction, *aprāptitvād* is a plausible misreading of *yǐwúsuǒdégù*. Anyone unfamiliar with Kumārajīva's source texts might well have parsed the expression based on *dé* 得 representing *prāpti*. The context, in which the previous word was *wú dé* 無得 *na prāptiḥ*, might well have reinforced this.

Furthermore, Huifeng (2014) wrote that if *anupalambhayogena* is the correct expression then it makes more sense to take it as the last word of Section V – the section that begins *tasmāc Chāriputra śūnyatāyāṃ* or *shì gù kōng zhōng* 是故 空中 – it thus qualifies the negated lists. Attwood (2020a) confirms that this is how the word *anupalambhayogena* is used in *Pañc*. One reads, for example, that the four foundations of mindfulness are Mahāyāna "and that by the practice of nonapprehension" (*tac cānupalambhayogena*, Kimura 1986–2009: I-2.86).[33] The two earliest ancient commentators are split on this issue. Kuījī (T 1710: 33.541a03) agrees with Huifeng and Attwood, and he treats *yǐwúsuǒdégù* as the end of Section V. Woncheuk takes the more familiar approach in which this phrase opens Section VI (T 1711: 33.548b26). Samuel Beal's translation takes *yǐwúsuǒdégù* as belonging to section V, despite reading *suǒdé* 所得 as "attain" (Beal 1865).

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[33] Note that in T 223 Kumārajīva also translated *tac cānupalambhayogena* as *yǐwúsuǒdégù*.

The mistaken reading of this phrase supports Chinese origins. It's not a copying mistake since *anupalambhayogena* and *aprāptitvāt* are not easily confused in Sanskrit.

2.13 *Because of the nonexistence of…*

Attwood (2020a) commented on the Sanskrit term *nāstitvāt*, which occurs in *Hṛd* as the second member of the compound *cittāvaraṇanāstivāt*. The problem is not that *nāstitvāt* is not Sanskrit; it can be parsed and understood. The problem is that it defies conventions of Prajñāpāramitā idiom. In the previous part of the sentence, the text tells us that the *bodhisatva* is "without mental hindrance" (*acittāvaraṇaḥ*).[34] If one wanted to cite this fact as the reason for some other fact, event, or action there is no need to make an abstract noun, rather we could simply put it in the ablative case: *acittāvaraṇāt*. Since it follows directly on, we would likely use the ablative pronoun, *tasmāt* "from that" or a model adjectival pronoun *tathā* "in that way."

The relationship between *Xīnjīng* and *Hṛd* is more than usually complicated at this point as shown by Huifeng (2014). As we will see in the next section, *xīn wú guà ài* 心無罣礙 is not a credible translation of *acittāvaraṇaḥ*, nor is *wú guà ài gù* 無罣礙故 a plausible translation of *cittāvaraṇa-nāstitvāt*. Nor does it make sense in the other direction. Something has gone badly wrong here.

The term *nāstitvād* does occur in Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's *Mīmāṃsaślokavārttika* (Msv),[35] as a standalone word at Msv 5,7.35. Sucaritamiśra's *Kāśikā*, which is included in Jha's edition, also uses this idiom, e.g. *ghaṭāder nāstitvam* "nonexistence of pots, etc.," in the commentary on Msv 5,7.88, and *prāṅnāstitvaṃ* "nonexistence of the former" in the commentary on Msv 5,8.1. The word appears to refer to the nonexistence of some object. It seems doubtful that the verb *asti* could be applied to something abstract like "a mental hindrance." Kumārila Bhaṭṭa seems to have flourished in

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[34] Conze and others translate *cittāvaraṇa* as a plural (e.g. "thought coverings") the compound is grammatically singular. It is possible to read *citta* as plural "hindered thoughts."

[35] My thanks to the editor for pointing out this occurrence. I consulted the electronic text in the GRETIL archive: https://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/corpustei/transformations/html/sa_kumArila-mImAMsazlokavArttika-comm.htm, accessed August 21, 2021.

the mid to late 7th century (sources are vague on this) – around the time that the first evidence for the *Heart Sutra* appears (Attwood 2019) – and his works were unknown in China at the time.

2.14 *His mind does not become attached*

Huifeng (2014) also pointed out a significant mismatch in Section VI. Where *Xīnjīng* has *xīn wú guà ài* 心無罣礙, *Hṛd* reads *viharaty acittā-varaṇaḥ* and neither of these appears to be a plausible translation of the other. What's more, Kumārajīva regularly used the verb-phrase *wú guà ài* 無罣礙 to translate another Sanskrit phrase, i.e. *na kvacit sajjati* "his mind is not attached anywhere." In other words, this phrase is problematic whatever direction we think translation moved in.

The passage has not been identified as a copied or reused passage; however, *Xīnjīng* employs the vocabulary developed by Kumārajīva and his Chinese collaborators and as such we can still use Kumārajīva's *Dàjīng* as a guide. And this suggests *Xīnjīng* is the source and *Hṛd* the "catastrophic misunderstanding."[36]

The strong implication from Huifeng's (2014: 103) final revised translation of the Chinese text is that *Hṛd* is a poor translation of *Xīnjīng* into Sanskrit that employed non-standard idioms and phrasing. Huifeng did not explore the implications for the Sanskrit text but Attwood (2020a) has proposed an alternative Sanskrit translation that better reflects the Chinese text.

2.15 *Not being attached*

Following on from the observation in 2.14, *Xīnjīng* connects the two clauses of Section VI using a straightforward Chinese idiom, i.e. *xīn wú guà ài*, *wú guà ài gù* 心無罣礙, 無罣礙故… "His mind is not attached/ stuck, since (故 *gù*) being unattached/not stuck…" Attwood (2020a) pointed out that Sanskrit also has idiomatic ways of handling this kind of conjunction, the most common of which in Buddhist texts is the absolutive.

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[36] Compare remarks about the unreliability of Chinese translations by Nattier (2003: 71).

If the appropriate verb is *viharati* "dwelling" then the next clause could have been attached using *vihṛtya* "having dwelled." Alternatively, following Huifeng, if we consider that Kumārajīva intended *sajjati* by *guà ài* 罣礙, then the absolutive is *saktvā*. So we could express it as, *na kvacit sajjati*, *asaktvā…* "he is not stuck anywhere, being not stuck…" This kind of construction is exceedingly common in Buddhist texts, sometimes stringing many sequential actions together.

It is in this context that we have to look at "… *viharaty acittāvaraṇaḥ cittāvaraṇa-nāstivāt…*" Not only is the verb *viharati* badly mismatched against the Chinese (or vice versa) but the use of a phrase like *x-nāstivāt* to make the connection is uncommon at best. And yet the Chinese phrasing is quite straightforward and idiomatic. The Indian origins thesis leaves us at a loss to explain this. The author used idioms that have no parallel in extant Buddhist Sanskrit literature and that defy very long-standing Buddhist stylistic conventions. It is more plausible that a Chinese Sanskrit user reached the limits of their competence and lacked knowledge of the appropriate idioms, not only here but in several places in the *Heart Sutra*.

2.16 *Removed from versus going beyond*

Another difference between the two texts is that the binomial *yuǎnlí* 遠離 "far removed" does not correspond to the Sanskrit *atikrāntaḥ* "gone beyond" and vice versa.[37] Assuming that a past participle is indeed appropriate here, we can again weigh the relative merits of the two possibilities:

atikrānta → 遠離
遠離 → *atikrānta*

The *Heart Sutra* itself has a verb meaning "to go beyond" in the phrase *dù yī qiè kǔ è* 度一切苦厄 (see above 2.4). In fact, *dù* 度 "to cross over" is often used to translate the related word, *samatikrānta*. In his translation (*tuō yīqiè yōu kǔ* 脫一切憂苦), Xuánzàng used the verb *tuō* 脫 "release"

which usually corresponds to words from the root √*muc* such as *mukta*. We can at least say that Xuánzàng's preferred translation of *atikrānta* is not the one we find in *Xīnjīng*. The problem, of course, is that we don't have a Sanskrit counterpart of *dù yī qiè kǔ è* 度一切苦厄 either in *Hṛd* or the **Daśacakrakṣitigarbhasūtra*. We do have *Pañc*, however, and it much prefers *samatikrānta* and uses *atikrānta* in only one context, in the phrase *divyena cakṣuṣā viśuddhenātikrāntamānuṣyakena* "with the purified divine eye that surpasses the human" (e.g. Kimura 1986–2009: I-1.98–101). On the other hand, if *yuǎnlí* 遠離 is the original then we might expect a Sanskrit word like *vivikta* "removed from, isolated" in the translation (Attwood 2020a). Once again, the Chinese origins thesis makes more sense than the alternative.

2.17 *Adjectival Compounds and Abstractions*

I noted above that *acittāvaraṇaḥ* is an adjective that goes with *bodhisatvaḥ* and that it is an awkward way to express something that is quite elegantly expressed in Chinese as *pútísàduǒ… xīn wú guà ài* 菩提薩埵… 心無罣礙. Based on how Kumārajīva employs *xīn wú guà ài* 心 and *wú guà ài* 無罣礙 to translate Sanskrit terms, we expect some combination of the nouns *bodhisatva* and *citta* and the verb *sajjati*: something like *bodhisatva-cittaṃ na kvacit sajjati* "The mind of the bodhisatva is not stuck anywhere."

Similarly, if we want to say "he is not afraid" or "his extinction is complete" in Buddhist Sanskrit we would not choose adjectival compounds to express this. Attwood (2020a) suggests that the use of such adjectives in *Hṛd* is consistent with a Chinese literary aesthetic that relies on ambiguity in Chinese words. In Chinese we can make a statement like *jiù jìng nièpán* 究竟涅槃 "final extinction" and it is obvious that this has a verbal connotation of "attaining" or "accomplishing" because that fits the context. The verb need not be stated explicitly. But this emphatically does not work in Sanskrit.

This part of the text has been confused in modern scholarship by the misplaced full stop in Conze's editions (Attwood 2018a), but even with it gone we have a passage that reduces to *bodhisatvo niṣṭhānirvāṇaḥ*. This does not work in Sanskrit, at least not in the sense indicated by

various translations. It needs a verb and the manuscript tradition has suggested either adding the past participle -*prāpta* to the compound *niṣṭhānirvāṇa-* or adding the finite verb *prāpṇoti* to the sentence. Conze equivocated, sometimes opting for *niṣṭhānirvāṇaprāptaḥ* (1958, 1975) and sometimes for *niṣṭhānirvāṇaḥ* (1948, 1967) with no verb.

The string of adjectives – *atrasto viparyāsātikrānto niṣṭhānirvāṇaḥ* – can be parsed, but they make the sentence awkward to construe, even without the extraneous full stop. By contrast, the expression in *Xīnjīng* – 無有恐怖，遠離顛倒夢想，究竟涅槃。 – is just the kind of construction we expect in Chinese.

A similar stylistic argument can be made about the expressions that are converted into abstractions in Sanskrit and used in the ablative as conjunctions:

1. *na prāptir → aprāptitvāt*
2. *acittāvaraṇaḥ → cittāvaraṇanāstitvāt*

Nothing is gained here by opting for the abstract noun. It would be much more straightforward, for example, to have: *na prāptir… aprāptyāḥ…* "no attainment… since he is without attainment" or *acittāvaraṇaḥ… tasmāt…* "without mental hindrance… because of that…" In these two cases, Huifeng (2014) showed that there was a rather glaring disparity between *Xīnjīng* and *Hṛd*; and between *Hṛd* and *Pañc* where parallels could be identified.

The point is that whoever composed *Hṛd*, be they Indian or Chinese, they seem to have been unaware of the usual Sanskrit idioms. *Hṛd* is the kind of composition we might expect from a student who had a working knowledge of how to translate from Sanskrit into some other language but who had not studied composition in Sanskrit. Indian Buddhists of this period spoke Middle-Indic languages that gave them a feel for how to use Sanskrit that no one with a Sinitic first language could match.

2.18 *Buddhas of the Three Times*

Attwood (2018b) explored the phrase "all the Buddhas of the three times" in Prajñāpāramitā texts. Some clear patterns of use enable us to distinguish Sanskrit and Chinese idioms. While in Sanskrit the "three times" can be

referred to collectively (*tryadhvan*) it is more common to see "past, future, and present" either as a compound (*atītānāgatapratyutpanna*) or as three separate adjectives (*atīta*, *anāgata*, and *pratyutpanna*). A quirk of Prajñāpāramitā texts is that although they use *tryadhvan* sometimes, they never refer to the buddhas of the three times using *tryadhvan*. Additionally, *vyavasthita* is not used this way in Prajñāpāramitā texts because one can simply say *atītā buddhāḥ* "past buddhas" and it is apparent that one means buddhas who appeared or lived in the past. Alternatively one may use the locative case, i.e. *atīte buddhāḥ* "buddhas in the past."

In China, the counterparts of the time adjectives are semantic loan words from Indic, i.e. *guòqù* 過去 "past," *wèilái* 未來 "future," and *xiànzài* 現在 "present." Beginning with the *Dàmíngdù jīng* 大明度經 (T 225), a translation of the *Short Prajñāpāramitā Sutra* attributed to Zhīqiān (ca. 223–229 CE), Chinese translations began to use the term *sān shì zhū fó* 三世諸佛 "all the buddhas of the three times." This phrase is distinctively Chinese.

Attwood (2018b) concluded that *tryadhvavyavasthitāḥ sarvabuddhāḥ* is a calque of *sān shì zhū fó* 三世諸佛 with a redundant *vyavasthita*. Because this part of text appears not to be copied, but composed, this suggests that the whole text was composed in Chinese and translated into Sanskrit.

2.19 *Epithets*

The section of the *Heart Sutra* often known as the "epithets of the mantra" is another copied passage from the *Large Sutra*. As such it provides us with an opportunity to repeat Nattier's method on a part of the text that she did not examine, although she dropped a hint in a note inserted at the last minute before the article was printed (1992: 211–213, n. 54a). Note 54a included findings sent to Nattier by Yamabe Noboyoshi pointing to several parallels of the epithets passage in both *Pañc* and *Aṣṭa*. Nattier passed on Yamabe's observation that where Chinese texts have *míng zhòu* 明呪, it invariably corresponds to Sanskrit *vidyā* (1992: 213).[38]

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[38] Note that 呪 and 咒 are simply graphical variants with no phonetic or semantic differences.

This was confirmed by Attwood (2017) who more systematically identified all the occurrences of the epithets passage in Sanskrit and Chinese. The passage in the same four sources that Nattier used is:

> *Hṛd*: *prajñāpāramitā mahāmantro mahāvidyāmantro 'nuttaramantro 'sama-samamantraḥ*
> *Xīnjīng*: 故知般若波羅蜜多是大神咒 是大明咒是無上咒，是無等等咒
> *Dàjīng*: 般若波羅蜜是大明咒無上明咒無等等明呪。(T 223 8.286b28– c7)
> *Pañc*: *mahavidyeyaṃ bhagavan yaduta prajñāpāramitā / anuttareyaṃ bhagavan vidyā yaduta prajñāpāramitā asamasameyaṃ bhagavan vidyā yaduta prajñāpāramitā.*

We see again the familiar pattern of similarities between *Xīnjīng* and *Dàjīng* and major differences between *Hṛd* and *Pañc*. However, there is one notable difference between *Xīnjīng* and *Dàjīng*. We know that text of *Xīnjīng* very closely resembles *Dàjīng* but that in places it has been altered to reflect innovations introduced by Xuánzàng. This passage also seems to have been altered according to Xuánzàng's preferred "spelling."

The basic form of the epithets is that three qualities are attributed to Prajñāpāramitā: it is a *mahāvidyā*, an *anuttarā vidyā*, and an *asamasamā vidyā*. The terms *mahā* "great," *anuttara* "unexcelled," and *asamasama* "unequalled" are common superlatives. Primarily, "*vidyā* refers to knowledge in a particular field: knowledge of the Vedas, knowledge of political governance, etc." (Attwood 2017: 42). It is knowledge gained through application and experience, rather than from book learning, divine inspiration, or insight. *Vidyā* also has magical connotations, "knowledge in the sense of *vidyā* bestows control over the subject studied; when one thoroughly knows a subject one is said to have 'mastered' it." (Attwood 2017: 42). In the context of Prajñāpāramitā, *vidyā* seems to mean knowledge in a verbal form that has specific apotropaic and/or soteriological value in a Buddhist context. And finally, *vidyā* is used to mean a magical incantation that encapsulates such knowledge of or power over something. What the epithets passage in its original context seems to refer to is a form of soteriological knowledge.

Into this basic formula, *Xīnjīng* interpolates *dà shénzhòu* 大神咒. At face value, this means something like "great divine *dhāraṇī*." But Attwood (2017) showed that in all likelihood *shénzhòu* 神咒 is another term for

vidyā. Xuánzàng also has this extra epithet along with one more in his *Large Sutra* translation, i.e.

> 如是般若波羅蜜多是大神呪、是大明呪，是無上呪，是無等等呪，是一切呪王[39] Prajñāpāramitā should be known as a great *vidyā*, as a great *vidyā*, as an unexcelled *vidyā*, as an unequalled *vidyā*, and as the Queen of all *vidyā*.

The first and last epithets are mostly found in Xuánzàng's translations. Only he has all five. The only other place is the translation of *Aṣṭa* attributed Zhīqiān, i.e. 《大明度經》 *Dàmíngdù jīng* (T 225). This has just two epithets that correspond to the first and last in Xuánzàng's *Dàjīng*: i.e. *zhū fú shénzhòu* 諸佛神呪 and *zhòu zhōng zhī wáng yǐ* 呪中之王矣. We can translate these roughly as "All Buddha *vidyā*" and "Queen of *vidyā*." So, although rare, there seems to have been a recension of *Aṣṭa* that had these two epithets but is no longer extant. Either Xuánzàng chanced to bring back at least one manuscript from this recension, or he was aware of the translation by Zhīqiān and decided to include the two extra epithets in all his translations. Still, only one of the two made its way into the *Heart Sutra*.

This would be less interesting except that the first physical evidence of *Xīnjīng* (and of the *Heart Sutra* generally) is a stone tablet dated 13 March 661 (Attwood 2019). This is after Xuánzàng began translating his collection of Prajñāpāramitā texts in 660 CE, but some years before he finished translating them in late 663 CE. It seems to rule out Xuánzàng's translations as the source of this modification of Kumārajīva's text.[40] In the final analysis *dà míngzhòu* 大明呪 and *dà shénzhòu* 大神呪 both appear to correspond to Sanskrit *mahāvidyā*. And this fits Attwood's conjecture that by Xuánzàng's time it was *de rigueur* to read Kumārajīva's *míngzhòu* 明呪 (*vidyā*) as two words rather than one, perhaps meaning "bright *dhāraṇī*." This would have obscured the similarity between of 大明呪 and 大神呪.

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[39] This passage is found at T 220-ii: 7.156.a17–22 (fasc. 429) = T 220-i: 5.580.b27–c13 (fasc. 105) = T 220-iii: 7.556.a24–26 (fasc. 502).

[40] The phrase *dà shénzhòu* 大神呪 is also used in the *Dàmíngdù jīng* 《大明度經》 (T 225) although nothing else points to this translation being a source used to make the *Heart Sutra*.

The fact that *Hṛd* has *mantra* when we expect *vidyā* is strong evidence in support of Chinese origins. Mantra is never used in this sense in Prajñāpāramitā literature available to Xuánzàng (though it is used in later, explicitly tantric texts). *Mantra* is a misreading of *zhòu* 呪 that must date from after Tantric Buddhism was introduced to China in the 650s (see also 2.22 below).

2.20 *Removing All Suffering*

After the epithets, but still apparently referring back to 般若波羅蜜多 (Skt. *prajñāpāramitā*), we find the expression *néng chú yīqiè kǔ* 能除一切苦 in *Xīnjīng* or *sarvaduḥkhapraśamanaḥ* in *Hṛd*. At face value, either phrase could be construed as a translation of the other.

However, note that *praśamana* is not a term used in *Pañc*. Where suffering is "eased" in Pāli and Prajñāpāramitā texts the word is typically *upaśama* (P. *dukkhūpasama*). Even the word *sarvaduḥkha* is used only once in *Pañc*, i.e.

> For here, Kauśika, perfection of insight is an extinguisher of all mental phenomena, not an enhancer... is an extinguisher of the whole mass of suffering (*sarvaduḥkhaskandhasya upaśamayitrī*), not an enhancer.[41]

The phrase *sarvaṃ duḥkham* is similarly rare in Buddhist Sanskrit. In the *Mahāmeghasūtra* (a *dhāraṇī* text) we do find two expressions: *sarvaduḥkhāni praśraṃbhyeyuḥ* and *sarvaduḥkhapratipraśrabdhāḥ*.[42] These expressions with verbal forms from *(prati)pra√śrambh* mean precisely to "alleviate all suffering."

A search for actions relating to *duḥkha* in *Pañc* turned up no obvious parallels to *duḥkhapraśamana*. In Pāli the fourth *ariyasaccā* is frequently referred to as *maggaṃ dukkhūpasamagāminaṃ* "the path leading to the

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[41] *tathā hi kauśika prajñāpāramitā sarvadharmāṇāṃ upaśamayitrī na vivardhikā, katameṣāṃ dharmāṇām?.. sarvaduḥkhaskandhasya... upaśamayitrī na vivardhikā* (Kimura 1986–2009: II–III: 44).

[42] "By this singular teaching all the suffering of all the *nāga*s attending upon the Lord of the Serpents, will be alleviated" *ekadharmena bhujaṅgādhipate samanvāgatānāṃ sarvanāgānāṃ sarvaduḥkhāni praśraṃbhyeyuḥ* (*Mahāmeghasūtra*, unpaginated https://www.dsbcproject.org/canon-text/content/47/443, accessed August 21, 2021).

easing of suffering" (SN 15.10, SN 22.78, 56.22, AN 4.33, Dhp 191, Sn 726). The standard Chinese phrase appears to be *kǔ miè dào* 苦滅道, literally "suffering cessation path" or *kǔ miè dào jī* 苦滅道跡 "the course of the path to the cessation of suffering."

Another frequent expression is "Through acquiring right-view they have overcome all suffering" (*sammādiṭṭhisamādānā, sabbaṃ dukkhaṃ upaccagun ti*; AN 4.49; II.52) which is paralleled in the *Ekottarikāgama* as *biàn jiàn shì fǎ chú yīqiè kǔ* 便見是法除一切苦 (EA₂, no. 5; T 150A) "directly seeing this teaching eliminated all suffering." This is, in fact, closer to the wording in *Xīnjīng*, suggesting that *chú* 除 could translate *upaccagun* (i.e. *upa + ati + √gam*; not attested in Sanskrit).

The phrase *néng chú yīqiè kǔ* 能除一切苦 only occurs in three other texts, none of which has Sanskrit parallels.[43] By contrast, the shorter phrase *chú yīqiè kǔ* 除一切苦 "eases all pain" occurs dozens of times, many of them before the earliest evidence for the *Heart Sutra* in 661.

2.21 *True and not false*

The epithets passage concludes with a statement to the effect that the *prajñāpāramitā* is true and not false. Nattier only mentions this in passing (1992: 177–178). The Sanskrit expression is *satyam amithyatvāt*. In idiomatic Sanskrit, *satya* "truth" is usually juxtaposed with *asatya* "untruth" or *mṛṣā* "false;" while *mithyā* "wrong" is juxtaposed with *samyañc* "right." In the context of Buddhist Sanskrit literature, if we were to mix these sets we might say that *prajñāpāramitā* is both *satya* and *samyañc*; or we might say that it is not *asatya* or *amithyā*. It is unidiomatic to say that *prajñāpāramitā* is *satya* and *amithyā*. Furthermore making *amithyā* into an abstract noun with the addition of the suffix *-tva* is (again) an awkward shift in the level of abstraction.

Xīnjīng has *zhēnshí bù xū* 真實不虛. We have some Indic texts that indicate what the Chinese expression 真實不虛 represents. For example, it is found in *sūtra* 206, of the second translation of the *Samyuktāgama*《別

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[43] T 397 大方等大集經 *Mahāvaipulyamahāsannipātasūtra* (414~426 CE); T 410 大方廣十輪經 *Daśacakrakṣitigarbhasūtra* (397~439 CE); T 1421 彌沙塞部和醯五分律 The Five Section Vinaya of the Mahīśāsaka School (423~424 CE).

譯雜阿含經》 (T 100; 2.450c19–20),[44] which describes three statements
that are true and not false (as do parallels in SF 84 and SĀ 972 – see notes
below). The Pāli equivalent is the *Brāhmaṇasaccasutta* (AN 4.185)
which has four *brāhmaṇasaccāni* "truths of the Brahmins." SĀ₂ 206 uses
two different expressions: The first is *cǐ yǔ shì shí, fēi xūwàng shuō*
此語是實，非虛妄說 and the second *zhēnshí bù xū* 真實不虛. A third
truth is not marked in the same way. Our phrase occurs in reference to the
second Brahmin truth:

> 復次，婆羅門！一切苦集是生滅法，如斯之言，真實不虛。
> "This teaching of the dependent arising of all suffering," the speaking of
> this is true and not false.[45]

This corresponds to the Pāli:

> "*sabbe kāmā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā*"*ti. Iti vadaṃ brāhmaṇo
> saccam āha, no musā*. (AN II.176)[46]
> "All sensual pleasures are impermanent, unsatisfactory, and changeable."
> A Brahmin who says this, speaks truly, not falsely.

Kumārajīva also uses the expression four times in his translation of
the *Sūtrālaṃkāraśāstra* (T 201) and twice in the *Fóshuō qiānfóyīnyuán
jīng* 《佛說千佛因緣經》 (T 426), but we do not have Indic sources texts
for these any longer. Still, these examples lead us to expect *zhēnshí bù
xū* 真實不虛 to correspond to *satyaṃ na mṛsā*.

The term *mithyātva* does occur in *Pañc*, e.g. in the list of the 108 *samā-
dhi*s we find, *asti samyaktvamithyātvasaṃgraho nāma samādhiḥ* (Kimura
1986–2009: I-1.184) "there is a *samādhi* named collection of rightness
and wrongness." Here both *samyaktva* and *mithyātva* are abstract nouns

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[44] The translator is unknown but the translation is thought to date from around the
Three Qin (三秦) period, 352–431 CE.

[45] Compare: SĀ 972 『所有集法皆是滅法，此是真諦，非為虛妄。』 "All that is
of a nature to arise, is of a nature to cease. This is true (真諦) and it is not false (虛妄)."
It is intriguing that Guṇabhadra felt he had to use binomials to convey *satya* and *mṛṣā*
here. There is close agreement between SĀ 972 and SF 84 (below) whereas other texts seem
to vary substantially.

[46] Compare: Skt. *yat kiṃcit samudayadharmaṃ sarvaṃ nirodhadharmakam iti vada-
mānā brāhmaṇāḥ satyam āhur na mṛśā*. "All that is of a nature to arise, is of a nature to
cease. Speaking this way, a Brahmin speaks truthfully, not falsely" (*Brāhmaṇasatyānisūtra*,
SF 84) https://suttacentral.net/sf84/san/hosoda, accessed August 21, 2021.

in -*tva*. Kumārajīva translated this phrase using different characters to what we find in *Xīnjīng*, i.e. *shè zhū xié zhèng xiāng sānmèi* 攝諸邪正相三昧 (T 223; 8.251b08)[47] literally "the collection 攝 of diverse 諸 mistaken 邪 and correct 正 characteristics 相 *samādhi* 三昧."

To sum up, the combination of *satya* with *amithyātva* is unexpected and not found in *Pañc*. What we expect from general knowledge, and on the evidence of the texts, is *satyaṃ na mṛsā*. The Chinese characters in *Xīnjīng* correspond to this and to translations of expressions involving *satya/mṛsā* whereas Kumārajīva used different characters to translate *samyaktva* and *mithyātva*.

2.22 *Spell*

The final part of the *sūtra* is the *dhāraṇī*. Attwood (2017) argued that the spell in the *Heart Sutra* is not a mantra on two grounds. Firstly, as we have already seen, the epithets section of the *Heart Sutra* was, like the core section, copied from Kumārajīva's *Dàjīng*. A close reading of the relevant texts reveals that *míngzhòu* 明呪 is how Kumārajīva translates *vidyā*. Although *Xīnjīng* appears to have been created in the mid 7th century, and thus may have overlapped with the arrival of the first Tantric Buddhist texts in China, the epithets passage is present in *Aṣṭa*. At that time *vidyā* and *dhāraṇī* could be synonyms, but *mantra* had yet to be incorporated into the Prajñāpāramitā literature. *Aṣṭa* does mention *mantra*, but never as a Buddhist practice. And the Tantric context – *abhiṣeka*, *mudrā*, *maṇḍala*, *sādhana* – is absent.[48]

Secondly, Attwood argued that the spell is a *dhāraṇī* based on the features it possesses or lacks:[49]

> Were it not for the recurring word *mantra* in the text, I suggest that we would conclude that the string *gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā*

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[47] DDB (s.v. 百八三昧) lists 取諸邪正相三昧 and 攝伏一切正性邪性三昧 as alternative renderings. http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=百八三昧, accessed October, 14 2021.

[48] Compare remarks by Abe Ryūichi (1999) on the importance of context for discerning the presence of Tantric Buddhism.

[49] Note also the Samuel Beal, writing before modern scholarship of the Sanskrit text, translates 呪 as *dhāraṇī*.

is a *dhāraṇī*. For example, unlike almost all mantras, it does not start with *oṃ*;[50] it does not contain a *bīja* or seed-syllable; and does not relate to a deity or ritual function. On the other hand, it does use a sequence of variants on a word that is characteristic of *dhāraṇī* (Attwood 2017: 45).

We usually think of the *dhāraṇī* as also being in Sanskrit and Conze (1975: 106) tries to interpret the word-endings as Classical Sanskrit case markers. Signe Cohen (2002) argued that the *-e* ending so frequently used in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit is a Prakrit masculine nominative singular. Edgerton ([1953] 2004: 70) also allows that *bodhi* could be a Prakrit or Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit feminine nominative singular. Words in this context being in the nominative singular make a great deal more sense than Conze's alternatives based on Classical Sanskrit.

Fukui (1987) and McRae (1988) point out that the same *dhāraṇī* is found in the *Tuóluóní jí jīng* 《陀羅尼集經》 **Dhāraṇīsamuccaya* (T 901) translated by Atikūṭa in 654 CE. Similar *dhāraṇī* can be found in the *Dōngfāng zuì shèng dēng wáng tuóluóní jīng* 《東方最勝燈王陀羅尼經》 **Agrapradīpadhāraṇīvidyārājasūtra* (T 1353) translated in the Sui Dynasty (581–618 CE) by **Jñānagupta and in the *Dàfāng děng wú xiǎng jīng* 《大方等無想經》 (*Mahāmeghasūtra*) (T 387) translated by Dharma-rakṣa ca. 414–442 CE. Nattier notes that, "the striking similarities between them suggests that a number of variants of this mantra must have been circulating out of the context of the *Heart Sutra* itself" (1992: 211, n. 53).

This reinforces the impression that the word *mantra* in *Hṛd* is due to an original misreading of *míngzhòu* 明呪 (*vidyā*) as two words with *zhòu* 呪 signifying *dhāraṇī*, and then a subsequent misreading of *zhòu* 明呪 as *mantra*.

3. Conclusion

A number of these points of comparison support the Chinese origins thesis for the *Heart Sutra*, i.e. the genre of the text (2.1), the appearance of Guānyīn (2.3), the missing lines (2.5), the treatment of "form is emptiness"

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[50] Note that some later manuscripts add *oṃ*. Conze includes it in his editions (1948, 1967) but omits it from his translation and exegesis (1958, 1975).

(2.6), the "All dharmas are marked" passage (2.7), the negated lists (2.8), the *nidāna* list (2.9), the mistaken reading of "attainment and realisation" (2.10), the mistaken reading of "through the yoga of nonapprehension" (2.12), the idiom of -*nāstitvād* (2.13), the translation of "his mind does not become attached" (2.14), the idiom of "since he is not attached" (2.15), the contrast of "going beyond" and "far removed" (2.16), the preponderance of adjectives where we expect verbs (2.17), the use of "the three times" with buddhas (2.18), the confusions between *vidyā*, *dhāraṇī*, and *mantra* (2.19, 2.22), "removing all suffering" (2.20), "true and not false" (2.21). None of the remaining points supports Indian origins.

From the level of genre, the selection of protagonist, through the grammar and syntax of almost every sentence and word (down to the level of morphology), there is a pervasive pattern of features and bugs in the *Heart Sutra* that point to composition in Chinese. Nattier concluded: "The *Heart Sūtra* is indeed – in every sense of the word – a Chinese text" (1992: 199). When I work through Nattier's evidence I come to the same conclusion. When I apply the method to other parts of the text it produces the same result. When I look closely at the Sanskrit text it strays from idiomatic use far too often to be convincingly Indian.

The *Heart Sutra* was not translated by Kumārajīva or Xuánzàng. It was not composed in India in the fourth century. It was not composed in Sanskrit. The *Heart Sutra* is a digest text composed in Chinese, largely of quotes from Kumārajīva's *Large Sutra* translation (though with small portions of other texts, notably the *dhāraṇī*, from elsewhere). It was back-translated into Sanskrit creating a minor monstrosity.

This finding leaves some open questions. Did Xuánzàng compose the *Xīnjīng*? Who translated the *Xīnjīng* into Sanskrit and managed to convince the Chinese Buddhist establishment that it was authentic? Buddhist Studies scholars might also ask some more inward-looking questions. Why did mistakes in Conze's Sanskrit go unnoticed for over sixty years? Why has Nattier's article not provoked more supplementary research? Why have the Japanese articles denouncing the Chinese origins thesis not been challenged? Why has the most popular Mahāyāna *sūtra* been so generally neglected by Buddhist Studies despite the upsurge in interest in early Mahāyāna?

Abbreviations

AN	*Aṅguttaranikāya*
Aṣṭa	*Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*
Dàjīng	Generic name for Chinese *Large Prajñāpāramitā Sutra*
DDB	*Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*
EA$_2$	*Ekottarikāgama* (T 150A) (i.e. the second *Ekottarikāgama* translation)
Hṛd	*Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*
MN	*Majjhimanikāya*
Msv	*Mīmāṃsaślokavārttika*
Pañc	*Pañcaviṃśātisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra*
SĀ	*Samyuktāgama* (T 99)
SĀ$_2$	*Samyuktāgama* (T 100)
SF	*Samyuktāgama* Sanskrit fragment
T	*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*
Vaj	*Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*
Xīnjīng	*Bōrěbōluómìduōxīnjīng*《般若波羅蜜多心經》(T 251)

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