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# **Preliminary Notes on the Extended Heart Sutra in Chinese.**

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# Preliminary Notes on the Extended Heart Sutra in Chinese.

## Abstract

This article offers an introductory overview of the attribution and dating of the versions of the extended *Heart Sutra* preserved in the Chinese Tripiṭaka and some preliminary assessments of the reliability of these sources. It includes some observations about the interesting features of each version and a stemma showing how they relate to the wider world of *Heart Sutra* versions. Finally, a conjecture is made about the language in which the extension was made. The *Heart Sutra* appears to have been extended twice in the early eighth century, leaving us with two different versions of the extended text. It appears that the first extended text, like the standard *Heart Sutra*, may have been composed in Chinese, while the second extended text appears to have been composed in Sanskrit.

## 1. Introduction

The English title—*Heart Sutra*—translates the abbreviated Chinese title, i.e. *Xīnjīng* «心經».<sup>1</sup> The full title in Chinese is *Bānrěbōluómìduō xīnjīng* «般若波羅蜜多心經» (*Heart of Perfection of Paragnosis Sutra*).<sup>2</sup> The standard Sanskrit title is *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* (*Heart of Perfection of Paragnosis*). *Prajñā* refers to knowledge that comes from beyond the sensorium, comes in point of fact, only from the unique circumstances that obtain when the withdrawal of attention from the sensorium means that it ceases to consciously register. I translate this as “paragnosis” (knowledge from beyond) if only to make a clean break from Conze and his “perfection of wisdom” or “wisdom gone beyond”.

The *Heart Sutra* exists in two main versions: the *standard text* epitomised by the *Xīnjīng* (T 251) and the *extended text*, in which the first sentence of the standard text is much expanded and a colophon is added. The extended text is preserved in many Sanskrit documents from Nepal, as well as a few from China, and Japan. The Tibetan *Kanjur* contains two versions of an extended text [47] and eight Pala Dynasty (ca 750-1162 CE) commentaries in Tibetan translation [34, 35]. There are five versions of the extended text in Chinese, which I will refer to by their Taishō running number, i.e. T 252, 253, 254, 255, and 257. Various versions in Chinese and Tibetan were found amidst the Dunhuang cache; although there is no published study of these yet, a standard text in Tibetan translation has been published in facsimile [55: 61-4]. Preliminary work on the Dunhuang *Heart Sutra* manuscripts by Ben Nourse [43] shows at least two hybrid versions combining elements of both standard and extended texts.

The additional elements in the extended text supply the missing apparatus of a genuine sutra. In the opening paragraph this includes:

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<sup>1</sup> All the major British and American English dictionaries treat “sutra” as an Anglicised word; so there is no need to translate *jīng* 經 into the Sanskrit *sūtra*.

<sup>2</sup> Authorities vary on the word breaks in the Pinyin transcription. I am persuaded by the arguments of Zacchetti [54: 3, n.5] and others for transcribing 般 using the standard Pīnyīn *bān* rather than as *bō* per Chinese Buddhists.

- The implied presence of the narrator, Ānanda, via the phrase “Thus have I heard” (*rú shì wǒ wén* 如是我聞; *evaṃ mayā śrutam*).
- The occasion and place of the preaching in the form “At one time the Bhagavan was staying at...” (*yīshí fó zài* 一時佛在...;<sup>3</sup> *ekasmin samaye bhagavān...viharati sma*).
- The presence of an audience.

And in the closing paragraph:

- Endorsement of the teaching by the Buddha.
- Rejoicing of the audience and commitment to practice the teaching.

Comparative analysis of the language of the standard *Heart Sutra* text has shown that it was composed in Chinese and then translated into Sanskrit by someone who had little or no familiarity with the Sanskrit *Prajñāpāramitā* idiom [9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 28, 34, 39].

Following this brief introduction, four loosely connected sections follow. In Section Two, I outline the traditional attributions and dates for the various extended texts and note that some of them are problematic or remain vague. It seems likely that “translators” were more like redactors in some cases. In Section Three, I compare the extensions as they occur in T 252 and T 253 to illustrate the differences between T 252 and other *Heart Sutra* texts. I argue that these differences amount to two distinct recensions of the extended text: Recension One, of which T 252 appears to be the only representative, and Recension Two—i.e. T 253, 254, 255, 257, as well as the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions—all of which are variations on the same text. Section Four contains notes on the language of the texts, noting lexical and syntactic idiosyncrasies and variations that contribute, in Section Five, to a discussion of the language of composition of the extensions based on the language. While the evidence is circumstantial it seems likely that Recension Two was extended in Sanskrit and translated into Chinese and Tibetan. However, T 252 has no Indo-Tibetan counterparts and may well have been composed in Chinese.

In this essay, I do not give much attention to Tibetan texts. This is mainly because I do not know any Tibetan. However, having studied the Sanskrit and Chinese texts and their attributions, my working hypothesis is that the *Heart Sutra* went to Tibet directly from China, where the text was composed ca 654-6 CE [15]. If the Tibetans had a Sanskrit text at all (which is not obvious), it most likely came from China, not from India. There is no evidence whatever of an “Indian tradition” of the *Heart Sutra*. Moreover, although there is no consensus, at least some of the “Indian” commentaries appear to have been composed in Tibetan and may well have been based on a Tibetan *Heart Sutra* text [28: 56]. Experience has shown that we cannot take attributions of Buddhist texts at face value.

Note that I prefer the Buddhist Sanskrit spelling *bodhisatva* as commonly found in Buddhist manuscripts. The classical spelling, *bodhisattva*, has been tacitly imposed on Buddhist literature by editors without any argumentation or justification.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Also *yīshí báojiāfàn zhù* 一時薄伽梵住(T 255) and *yīshí shìzūn zài* 一時世尊在 (T 257)

## 2. The Five Extended Heart Sutra Versions in Chinese

Establishing the provenance and date of these translations relies mainly on Chinese bibliographies or catalogues of Buddhist translations prepared during the Tang and Song Dynasties.<sup>5</sup> There are few studies of these catalogues in English, the most important being Storch [49] and Tokuno [50]. Below I list such bibliographic metadata as I have been able to discern, although as we will see, there is a good deal of work yet to be done on the provenance of these texts.

### T 252

T 252 is titled *Pǔbiànzhìzàng bānrěbōluómìduō xīn jīng* «普遍智藏般若波羅蜜多心經» (*Universal Treasury of Knowledge, Heart of the Perfection of Paragnosis Sutra*). This text only exists in Chinese. The attribution of T 252 reads *Mójiétíguó sānzàng shāmén fǎyuè chóngyì* 摩竭提國三藏沙門法月重譯 “Retranslated by the Trepitaka from Magadha,<sup>6</sup> Monk Fǎyuè 法月”.<sup>7</sup> Fǎyuè (653–743), literally “Dharma moon”, has been reconstructed as Dharmacandra, and is also attested as *Dámózhàn’nièluó* 達摩戰涅槃 (T 2156: 55.766c.1).<sup>8</sup> This is the only translation attributed to Fǎyuè.

Lancaster and Park [32] credit this information to the *Great Tang, Zhenyuan Period Supplementary Catalogue of Teachings from the Kaiyuan Period* (*Táng zhēnyuán xù kāiyuán shìjiào lù*. «大唐貞元續開元釋教錄» T 2156: 55.748c.3-7; hereafter *Zhēnyuán Catalogue*) compiled by Yuánzhào 圓照 (794 CE) [3]. The *Revised List of Canonical Buddhist Texts of the Zhenyuan Era* (*Zhēnyuán xīndìng shìjiào mù lù Zhenyuan* «貞元新定釋教目錄». T 2157; hereafter *Revised Zhēnyuán Catalogue*)[4] adds that Dharmacandra travelled to China via Kucha arriving in Chang’an in 732 (T 2157; 55.878b12–879a5). He is said to have translated the extended *Heart Sutra* ca 741 CE, the same year he left China for either Khotan or Kashgar (where he died in 743). He did this with the help of his amanuensis, Lìyán 利言 (fl. 726-788). The *Revised Zhēnyuán Catalogue* states, “Monk Lìyán recorded the translated Sanskrit words” (*shāmén Lìyán yì fànyǔ bǐ shòu* 沙門利言譯梵語筆受. T 2157; 55.748c05).

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<sup>4</sup> This issue has been discussed at length by Gouriswar Bhattacharya [18]. Stefano Zacchetti describes *-satva* as “common and indeed well-known” and notes that *satva* is the “normal form” used through the Gilgit manuscript of the *Larger Prajñāpāramitā* [54: 24]. Richard Salomon notes that, in epigraphic Sanskrit, “notation of doubled consonants is often inconsistent... *sattva* is very commonly written *satva*.” [45: 96].

<sup>5</sup> Reference to entries in catalogues can be found in Lancaster and Park [32], where their items K 20, 21, 1267, 1383, 1427 correspond to T 251, 250, 252, 253, 257.

<sup>6</sup> That is *Mójiétíguó* 摩竭提國. The *Zhēnyuán Catalogue* says he is from *dōng tiānzǔ guó* 東天竺國 (T 2156; 55.748c4) – i.e. “Eastern Sindu-deśa” or Eastern India. Magadha was centred on the eastern end of the central Ganges Valley.

<sup>7</sup> Taishō notes: 重【大】，奉詔【宮】

<sup>8</sup> This attestation of the name was pointed out to me by Jeffrey Kotyk.

## T 253

T 253 is simply called *Bānrěbōluómìduō xīnjīng* «般若波羅蜜多心經» *Heart of the Perfection of Paragnosis Sutra* and is the earliest translation that corresponds to the extant Sanskrit and Tibetan translations. The attribution of T 253 reads *Jībīnguó sānzàng Bānrùò gòng Lìyán děng yì* 罽賓國三藏般若共利言等譯) i.e. “Translated by the Trepitaka, Bānrùò 般若 (Prajñā) from Kapiśā,<sup>9</sup> with Lìyán 利言 and others.”<sup>10</sup> The traditional date of this translation is 788 CE, but it’s not clear where this date comes from.

In an undated entry of the *Chinese Buddhist Canonical Attributions* (CBCA) database, Atsushi Iseki [6] summarises an article published in Japanese:

“Tsukinowa [51] believes that almost all other titles ascribed to Prajñā were his own compositions, because 1) no original texts of his works have been found; 2) no alternate translations have been found in Chinese nor in Tibetan; 3) none of those works are cited in Indian texts; and 4) the contents and style of those works of his are too peculiar to be proper translation[s].”

Atsushi then says that Tsukinowa considered *only* T 253 to be a genuine translation. Given what we now know about the provenance of the *Xīnjīng* (T 251) we have to wonder if Prajñā also composed (rather than translated) the extended *Heart Sutra*. Moreover, Tsukinowa’s criteria could also be applied to T 252 suggesting that Fǎyüè might have composed that version. Citing work in Japanese by Funayama Tōru, Eric Greene notes that

“That these texts have nonetheless been labelled in traditional records as ‘translations’ is by no means unusual. Many texts that early records describe as compositions or compilations carried out by Indian monks in China were eventually remembered simply as ‘translations’.” [27: 42 n. 115]

Lìyán 利言 appears to be the same person that assisted Fǎyüè, still active forty-seven years later. Lìyán has his own entry in the *Sòng gāosēng zhuàn* «宋高僧傳» “Biographies of eminent monks compiled during the Song period” (T 2061, 50:804b17 ff.). He was originally from Kucha. He was ordained in 726 CE and is said to have mastered a wide range of Buddhist texts and the Chinese classics. Not much else is known about him. He also appears in the biography of the later monk Prajñācakra, in the *Sòng gāosēng zhuàn*, i.e.

*Jì-bīn Sānzàng Bōrě kāi shì fànběn. Hànlín dàizhào Guāngzhái sì Shāmén Lìyán dù yǔ*  
罽賓三藏般若開釋梵本。翰林待詔光宅寺沙門利言度語。(T 2061, 50:716b17-8)

<sup>9</sup> Jībīn guó 罽賓國 refers variously to Gandhāra, Kashmir, or even to Samarkand depending on who is using it and in what time period. In the Tang it refers to Kapiśā in what is now Afghanistan [24].

<sup>10</sup> Paul Copp has summarised of the life of Prajñā [22: 360-2].

Kapiśā Trepitaka, Prajñā, explained and translated the Sanskrit text. Academician awaiting orders<sup>11</sup> at Guāngzhái Temple, Shāmén Liyán, conveyed the speech in Chinese.

## T 254

This version is also called *Bānrěbōluómìduō xīnjīng* «般若波羅蜜多心經». The attribution of T 254 says

Táng shàng dū Dàxīngshàn sī sānzàng shāmén zhìhuì lún fèng zhào yì  
唐上都大興善寺三藏沙門智慧輪奉 詔譯 (8.850a08)

Tang, Upper Capital, Dàxīngshàn Temple, Trepitaka Shāmén Zhìhuì lún translated with Imperial authority.

Zhìhuì lún 智慧輪 “Wisdom Wheel” is a translation of the name Prajñācakra, elsewhere transliterated as Bānrùo rějiélúo 般若惹羯羅 or Bānrùo zhuójiélúo, 般若斫羯囉 (fl. 847-882). The translation was undertaken at Dàxīngshàn Temple in Luòyáng 洛陽. The date of translation is usually given as 861 CE, however, no date is given in the text itself and there is no date given in the *Chinese Buddhist Canonical Attributions* database entry for T 254.

Dàxīngshàn Temple is famously where the three important early esoteric Buddhist translators—Śubhakarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra—were housed. However, we also know that Dàxīngshàn Temple was destroyed by the anti-Buddhist purge under Emperor Wǔzōng 武宗 (840–846). Since this is twenty years before the supposed translation, we may need to revise the commonly cited translation date.

Prajñācakra has a biography in the *Sòng gāosēng zhuàn* (T 2061, 50: 722c21 ff.), though this does not mention the *Heart Sutra*. Notably, there is no entry for T 254 in Lancaster and Park’s catalogue of the Korean Buddhist canon (1979).

## T 255

The title, again, is simply *Bānrěbōluómìduō xīnjīng* «般若波羅蜜多心經». After which Taishō records: *Dùnhuáng shìshì běn* 燉煌石室本, indicating that the original was found in the library cave in Dunhuang along with about 180 manuscripts of the *Heart Sutra* in many different versions. The attribution is “Translated by the Trepitaka Dharmamaster Fǎchéng” (*guó dà dé sānzàng fǎshī shāmén fǎchéng yì* 國大德三藏法師沙門法成譯) However, it’s not clear what the source for this attribution is.

Fǎchéng 法成 is the Tibetan monk Chos grub or 'gos chos grub (fl. 820~840s; pronounced like Chodrub). Chos grub also translated Woncheuk’s *Samdhinirmocanasūtra* commentary which was subsequently known in Tibet as *The Great Chinese Commentary on the Ārya Samdhinirmocanasūtra* (*'phags pa dgong pa zab mo nges par 'grel pa'i mdo'i rgya*

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<sup>11</sup> *Hànlín dàizhào* 翰林待詔 [29: 222 s.v. *hàn-lín tài kào* (sic, i.e. *chào*)].

*cher 'grel pa*; *Derge Ed. 4016*). The appearance of this text in Tibetan catalogues gives us approximate dates for the translator [26]. Chos grub appears to have been based at Xiūduō Monastery (*Xiūduō sì* 修多寺), in Dunhuang, during the Tibetan occupation of Gansu, ca 755–850 [33: 157-8]. The usual date given for T 255 is 865 CE. While we know that Chos grub continued working as a translator this date might be a little late.

## T 257

The last version is titled *Fóshuō shèng fómǔ bānrěbōluómìduō jīng* «佛說聖佛母般若波羅蜜多經» corresponding to *\*Buddhabhāṣa-bhagavatī-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*.<sup>12</sup> Note the absence of *xīn* 心 or *heart* in the title.

T 257 is attributed to Shīhù 施護 (Skt *\*Dānapāla*; fl. 980-1017 CE), originally from Udyāna (*Wū zhàng nà guó* 烏仗那國) he was active as a translator during the Northern Song 北宋 (960–1127 CE). The attribution in full reads:

*Xītiān yì jīng sānzàng cháofèng dàfū shì guāng lù qīng chuánfǎ dàshī cì zǐ chén*  
*Shīhù fèng zhào yì*  
 西天譯經三藏朝 奉大夫試光祿卿傳法大師賜紫臣施護奉 詔譯

Unpacking this: we discover his origin in India (*xītiān* 西天) and role as sutra translator (*yì jīng* 譯經), his name, Shīhù 施護, his Buddhist title “Trepitaka” *sānzàng* 三藏, and honorary titles bestowed by the emperor, i.e. “Grand Master for court service” (*cháofèng dàfū* 朝奉大夫) [29: 118] and “Acting Chief Minister of the Court of Imperial Entertainment” (*shì guāng lù qīng* 試光祿卿) [46: 128], “Dharma-spreading great teacher” (*chuán fǎ dàshī* 傳法大師), and “favoured purple-robed subject” (*cì zǐ chén* 賜紫臣)<sup>13</sup> followed by the imprimatur “translated with imperial approval” (or “by imperial decree”) *fèng zhào yì* 奉 詔譯.

This attribution is based on an entry in the *Dàzhōng xiángfú fǎbǎo lù* «大中祥符法寶錄» *Catalogue of the Dharma Treasure During the Dàzhōng xiángfú Reign*<sup>14</sup> Compiled by Yáng Yì 楊億 and monk Wéi jìng 惟淨 in 1013 CE [32: s.v. K 1427]. Unfortunately, I don’t have access to this source.<sup>15</sup>

## Provenance notes

Some of the attributions seem doubtful and as noted it may be that “translators” may have been redactors responsible for extending the text, especially in the cases of T 252 and T 253.

<sup>12</sup> This reconstruction is partly based on notes in Dreitlein [23: 24]. Lancaster and Park give the title as *Shèngfómǔ bānrěbōluómìduō jīng* «聖佛母般若波羅蜜多經» which is reconstructed as *\*Bhagavatī-prajñā-pāramitā-hṛdaya-sūtra* [32: s.v. K 1427].

<sup>13</sup> The bestowing of a purple robe as a sign of high office was begun during the reign of Empress Wǔ Zétiān (r. 690–705 CE) [19: 320-1].

<sup>14</sup> Lancaster and Park refer to this text throughout as *Ta-chung-lu*.

<sup>15</sup> According to Worldcat there is no copy in the UK.

This is one of those issues that we would not be surprised to find had been covered in detail in Japanese or Chinese but the result never translated into English. In any case, if Buddhologists are to understand this text and the processes of textual production in China during this period, we need a Sinologist to excavate the dates and attributions of these texts and critically assess them, preferably in English. Ideally, this would be done in connection with studies of the Dunhuang *Heart Sutra* texts as well.<sup>16</sup>

We can take a closer look at the content of the extensions to the *Heart Sutra*, and in particular I hope to show that there are two very different extensions amongst the canonical Chinese texts.

### 3. Extensions

#### Extended Frame

In this section, I present texts and translations<sup>17</sup> that highlight why we should think of the extended *Heart Sutra* as having two distinct recensions. T 252 is the sole representative of Recension One (R1) and T 253 stands as a representative of Recension Two (R2). There are layers of further differences within R2 but the texts are obviously related and the differences are localised editorial adjustments or scribal errors. I cite here the extended first paragraph of each, broken into several sections for ease of reading and comparison, and the additional final paragraph, also broken into sections.

#### T 252

如是我聞：一時佛在王舍大城靈鷲山中，與大比丘眾滿百千人，菩薩摩訶薩七萬七千人俱，其名曰觀世音菩薩文殊師利菩薩彌勒菩薩等，以為上首。皆得三昧總持，住不思議解脫。

爾時觀自在菩薩摩訶薩在彼敷坐，於其眾中即從座起，詣世尊所。面向合掌，曲躬恭敬，瞻仰尊顏而白佛言：「世尊！

I have heard that one time the Buddha was in Rājagrha on Vulture Peak, together with a great *bhikṣu*-congregation of 100,000, and 77,000 *bodhisatva mahāsatvas* in all, whose leaders were Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva*, Mañjuśrī *bodhisatva*, and Maitreya *bodhisatva*. All had attained *samādhi* and *dhāraṇī*, and abided in inconceivable liberation.

At that time, Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva mahāsatva* was abiding seated with the others, rising up from his seat amidst the congregation, he went to visit the Bhagavan, on one side he joined his palms, bowed respectfully, gazing respectfully at the honoured face,

<sup>16</sup> Benjamin Nourse has been working on these texts and hopefully will soon publish something on the variety of texts found at Dunhuang and their relations with other texts.

<sup>17</sup> I make no pretence of being expert in Buddhist Middle Chinese or a translator per se. One translation each of T 252 [44] and T 253 [42] can be found on the internet (details in the bibliography). I consulted these but wanted to standardise the terminology so produced my own translations. Some technical terms are difficult to translate into English without decontextualisation, e.g. according to Sanskrit *vyākaraṇa* analysis, *bodhisatva* is a *bahuvrīhi* compound: one whose *satva* (essence, nature, being) is *bodhi* (awakening, enlightenment). This doesn't translate into English easily or well.

我欲於此會中，說諸菩薩普遍智藏般若波羅蜜多心。唯願世尊聽我所說，為諸菩薩宣祕法要。」

爾時，世尊以妙梵音告觀自在菩薩摩訶薩言：「善哉，善哉！具大悲者。聽汝所說，與諸眾生作大光明。」

於是觀自在菩薩摩訶薩蒙佛聽許，佛所護念，入於慧光三昧正受。入此定已，以三昧力行深般若波羅蜜多時，照見五蘊自性皆空。彼了知五蘊自性皆空，從彼三昧安詳而起。即告慧命舍利弗言：「善男子！菩薩有般若波羅蜜多心，名普遍智藏。汝今諦聽，善思念之。吾當為汝分別解說。」

作是語已。慧命舍利弗白觀自在菩薩摩訶薩言：「唯，大淨者！願為說之。今正是時。」  
(T 252, 8: 849a7-27)

### T 253

如是我聞：一時佛在王舍城耆闍崛山中，與大比丘眾及菩薩眾俱。時佛世尊即入三昧，名廣大甚深。爾時眾中有菩薩摩訶薩，名觀自在。行深般若波羅蜜多時，照見五蘊皆空，離諸苦厄。

he said this to the Buddha: “Bhagavan, I want to preach to the bodhisatvas in this congregation the *Universal Treasury of Knowledge, Heart of the Perfection of Paragnosis Sutra*. My only wish, Bhagavan, is that they will listen to me as I proclaim this exceptional<sup>18</sup> summary of the Dharma.

At that time, the Bhagavan, using the wondrous Brahma voice, addressed Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva mahāsatva*: “*Sādhu. Sādhu, Mahākaruṇika*.<sup>19</sup> May they listen to your preaching and may great light shine upon living beings.

When this [was said], Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva mahāsatva*, having received the permission of the Buddha, through the Buddha’s mindfulness, entered the wisdom light *samādhi*. After he entered [*samādhi*] and settled, through the power of the *samādhi* practising the profound paragnosis, he examined the five *skandhas*, [and found] each empty of self-existence. With that realisation that the five *skandhas* are empty, he peacefully arose from that *samādhi*. He addressed Elder<sup>20</sup> Śāriputra: “Kulaputra, a bodhisatva has the heart of the paragnosis named *Universal Treasury of Knowledge*. Now listen and pay attention, think carefully about it. I will distinguish liberation for you.”

After this was said, Elder Śāriputra addressed Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva mahāsatva* saying, “Indeed, Great Purifier, please explain it. Now is the right time.”

I have heard that one time the Buddha was in Rājagṛha on Vulture Peak, along with a great congregation of *bhikṣus* and a congregation of bodhisatvas. At that time, the Buddha, the Bhagavān, entered the *samādhi* named “Vast and Extremely Profound”. Moreover, at that time, in that congregation, there was a *bodhisatva-mahāsatva* named Avalokiteśvara. When he practised the profound *prajñāpāramitā* he clearly saw the five *skandhas* were empty and he was apart from all suffering and misery.

<sup>18</sup> *Mi* 祕 usually means “secret” but *Prajñāpāramitā* is not secret or esoteric so the secondary meaning of “exceptional” or “rare” must apply here.

<sup>19</sup> *Jù dà bēi zhě* 具大悲者 “Endowed with great compassion”.

<sup>20</sup> *huì mìng* 慧命 “Elder”; Skt. *ayusmat*.

即時舍利弗承佛威力，合掌恭敬白觀自在菩薩摩訶薩言：「善男子！若有欲學甚深般若波羅蜜多行者，云何修行？」

如是問已。爾時觀自在菩薩摩訶薩告具壽舍利弗言：「舍利子！若善男子善女人行甚深般若波羅蜜多行時，應觀五蘊性空。(T 253, 8: 849b26-c1)

Then Śāriputra, due to the prestigious force of the Buddha, joined palms respectfully and addressed Avalokiteśvara bodhisatva mahāsatva, saying: “Kulaputra, if there is a practitioner who wants to learn the profound *prajñāpāramitā*, how should they practice?”

When this was said, at that time, bodhisatva mahāsatva addressed Elder Śāriputra, saying, “When a *kulaputra* or *kuladuhitṛ* practices the profound *prajñāpāramitā*, they should observe that the five skandhas are empty in nature.”

These passages replace the first paragraph of the standard *Heart Sutra* and after this, the standard and extended texts are identical until after the *dhāraṇī*.

## Extended Endorsement and Rejoicing

### T252

佛說是經已，諸比丘及菩薩眾，一切世間天人阿脩羅乾闥婆等，聞佛所說，皆大歡喜，信受奉行。(T 252, 8: 849b16-18)

After the Buddha preached this sutra, all the bhikṣus and the bodhisatva congregation, all the world—the devas, humans, asuras, gandharvas, etc—heard what the Buddha said, they were all greatly pleased, faithfully accepted and respectfully put it into practice.

### T253

「如是，舍利弗！諸菩薩摩訶薩於甚深般若波羅蜜多行，應如是行。」

Therefore, Śāriputra, all *bodhisatva mahāsatvas* who study the genuine and deep *Prajñāpāramitā* practice, should practice it in this way.

如是說已。即時，世尊從廣大甚深三摩地起，讚觀自在菩薩摩訶薩言：「善哉，善哉！善男子！如是，如是！如汝所說。甚深般若波羅蜜多行，應如是行。如是行時，一切如來皆悉隨喜。」爾時世尊說是語已，具壽舍利弗大喜充遍，觀自在菩薩摩訶薩亦大歡喜。時彼眾會天人阿脩羅乾闥婆等，

After this was said, at that time, the Bhagavān arose from the vast and extremely profound *samādhi*, he praised Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva mahāsatva*, saying, “Good. Good, kulaputra. That is it. That is it. Just as you said. Genuine practice of the deep *Prajñāpāramitā* should be practised in that way. When practising that way all the Tathagatas respond to everyone with delight.” At that time, after the Bhagavān had spoken, Elder Śāriputra overflowed with great joy, Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva mahāsatva* was also greatly pleased. Then, that numerous gathering of devas, humans, asuras, gandharvas, etc heard what the Buddha said, they were all greatly pleased, faithfully

聞佛所說，皆大歡喜，信受奉 行。(T 253, 8: 849c22-850a1) accepted and respectfully practised.

In the following section (Four) I include some notes on idiosyncrasies of the language found in the extensions, and then use these to consider the likely language of composition.

#### 4. Notes on the Text

##### General Notes

While I think the differences between T 252 and T 253 should be immediately apparent, let me highlight a few of the most interesting ones. In the opening extension, T 252 gives specific (superlative) numbers of bhikṣus and Bodhisatvas present, but in T 253 there are no numbers. In T 252, Avalokiteśvara seeks and receives permission from Bhagavan to teach the congregation then, after meditating, he directly addresses Śāriputra (per the standard text) although Śāriputra does not ask any questions. By contrast in T 253, the Bhagavan enters *samādhi* and is afterwards passive. Inspired by the Bhagavan's *anubhāva*, Śāriputra, asks the question about how the *kulaputra* should train themselves and in response Avalokiteśvara preaches the *Heart Sutra*.

Where details are not forced on the text by the standard *Heart Sutra*—which, for example, specifies the participants and the subject matter—T 252 is different from T 253. At the same time, T 253 is the same or very similar to T 254, 255, 257, the Sanskrit and the Tibetan texts. Thus there appear to be two distinct and unrelated recensions of the extended *Heart Sutra*.

Some of these details are diagnostic of language in which the extensions were composed and we now turn to consider this question.

##### Overcoming Suffering

T 253 and T 254 both included the phrase (at the end of paragraph one above)—“and was apart from all suffering and misery” (*lí zhū kǔ è* 離諸苦厄). This is similar to the phrase at the end of the first paragraph of the *Xīnjīng* “and overcame all adversity from suffering” (*dù yī qiè kǔ è* 度一切苦厄). The phrase 度一切苦厄 only occurs in three places in the Taishō Ed., i.e. in the standard *Heart Sutra* (T 250, T 251) and in the *Dàfāng guǎng shí lún jīng* «大方廣十輪經» (\**Daśacakra-kṣitigarbha-sūtra*. T 410; 13.708.a26-7). The name of the translator of the *Dàfāng guǎng shí lún jīng* is not recorded, but the translation was made during the Northern Liang (*Běi Liáng* 北涼) Dynasty ca. 397 – 439 CE. The phrase *lí zhū kǔ è* 離諸苦厄 is also found in the *Xiányú jīng* «賢愚經» \**Damamūka-nidāna-sūtra* (T 202; translated 445 by Huijué 慧覺 et al. at Tianansi 天安寺).<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Some older editions of the *Tripitaka* record the title as *Xiányú yīnyuán jīng* «賢愚因緣經» (T 202; 4.349a, n.1)

## The Five Skandhas

In a key moment for the extended text, Avalokiteśvara inspects the *skandhas* and finds that they are all empty of self-existence (*zì xìng jīē kōng* 自性皆空, where *zì xìng* 自性 translates Sanskrit *svabhāva*). However, we know that something has gone wrong here because the original passage in *Xīnjīng* does not mention *zì xìng* 自性, rather it says: “[Avalokiteśvara] inspected the five skandhas and all were absent.” (*zhào jiàn wǔyùn jīē kōng* 照見五蘊皆空. T 251; 8.848c7-8). All the *skandhas* were absent because Avalokiteśvara was practising the deep practice of Prajñāpāramitā (...*xíng shēn bōrě bōluómì duō shí* ...行深般若波羅蜜多時. T 251; 8.848c07), which the *Heart Sutra* itself explains involves the yoga of nonapprehension (*yīwúsuǒdégù* 以無所得故. T 251; 8.848c15) [30: 102]. Attwood has linked this to early Buddhist meditation practices that involve withdrawing attention (*amanasikāra*) from sensory experience, particularly the practice described in the Pāli *Cūlasuññata Sutta* (MN 121) [15]. Without attention, the conditions for the arising of sensory experience are absent, and thus sensory experience does not arise, leaving the meditator in a conscious mental state characterised by the absence of sensory experience (Pāli *suññatāvihāra*).<sup>22</sup> The state of absence of sensory experience occurs when all conditions for sense experience have ceased. Thus *absence* is a state that has no condition except the absence of other conditions, i.e. it is “without a condition” (*asaṃskṛta*). In other words, absence is tantamount to *nirvāṇa*, *vimokṣa*, *āsravakṣaya*, etc.

T 254, 255, 257 replace the phrase from the standard *Heart Sutra* with “he examined the five skandhas [and saw they were] all empty of self-existence,” (*zhào jiàn wǔyùn zì xìng jīē kōng* 照見五蘊自性皆空). All seem to align with the Sanskrit *svabhāva-śūnya* “absence of independent existence”. The assertion that the *skandhas* lack *svabhāva* is a reference to the metaphysics of Madhyamaka in which the absence of sense experience is reified and *śūnyatā* becomes synonymous with ultimate reality (*paramārtha-sat*). Reality, in this view, is the absence of sensory experience. This metaphysics is out of place in the *prajñāpāramitā* context where the focus is on phenomenology and epistemology. The absence of sensory experience is commonly reported amongst mystics of many traditions, but each translates this state into a different system of metaphysics. *Prajñāpāramitā* is not concerned with the metaphysical implications, but rather with the soteriological implications, i.e. that by undergoing cessation of sensory experience one brings rebirth to a halt also. That the *skandhas* are *absent* in the *samādhi* is the significant aspect rather than any attempt to relate the *skandhas* to some ontology.

## Names

In T 254, Prajñācakra sometimes uses the old spelling, Guānshìyīn 觀世音, where the other Chinese texts use the new spelling introduced by Xuánzàng, Guānzìzài 觀自在. In places Prajñācakra opted for the hybrid, *Guānshìyīn zìzài* 觀世音自在 (850a13, 850a15, 850a17,

<sup>22</sup> This state is now attracting attention from consciousness researchers and has been called “contentless awareness” [48] or “minimal phenomenal consciousness” [37].

850b10, 850b14). The difference is not merely a translation preference. Guānshìyīn reflects the Indic name Avalokitasvara (i.e. *avalokita-svara*) while Guānzìzài reflects the change to Avalokiteśvara (i.e. *avalokita-īśvara*). This change and other aspects of the name, as well as the timing of the change, are discussed at length by Jan Nattier [41] and by Seishi Karashima [31].

In T 253 we see the older form of Śāriputra’s name: Shèlìfú 利弗言 immediately followed by the form introduced by Xuánzàng: Shèlizi 舍利子 (T 253 8: 849c4-5). Does this reflect ambivalence on the part of the translator? Sometimes Prajñā includes the honorific *jū shòu* 具壽 “Elder” (Skt *ayuṣmat*) and other times not. It is one of the distinctive features of the Sanskrit *Prajñāpāramitā* tradition that honorifics are used with slavish consistency at the expense of fluidity.

## Teacher

In the *Prajñāpāramitā* tradition that these texts draw on, the teachings are given by the Buddha and through his *anubhāva* (power) by Elder Subhūti, designated a *sthavira* or senior *bhikṣu*. In the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, for example, the Buddha asks Subhūti to “make clear how the bodhisatvas went forth in *Prajñāpāramitā*” and can be read as implying that Subhūti *is* a bodhisatva.<sup>23</sup> It is perhaps a measure of the distance in time between the *Prajñāpāramitā* sutras and the *Heart Sutras* that this relationship is changed. In the *Heart Sutra*, it is Avalokiteśvara *bodhisatva mahāsatva* who gives the teaching to Elder Śāriputra.

The presence of Avalokiteśvara has been problematised but he is the *bodhisatva* par-excellence in Tang China, and strongly associated with Xuánzàng, the likely composer of the text [17, 39]. His presence has been construed as incongruous only because of the presuppositions that the text is pre-Tang and Indian.

Note that in T 252 it is Avalokiteśvara who preaches the text, but the endorsement section attributes it to the Buddha: “After the Buddha preached this sutra [everyone] heard what the Buddha said...” (佛說是經已... 聞佛所說。T 252, 8: 849b16-18). It appears that the redactor took a standard Buddhist sutra ending and tacked it onto the text without paying attention to who was speaking in the text they were redacting.

## Kulaputra

There is an anomaly in T 253: Śāriputra says “Kulaputra, if there is a practitioner who wants to learn the profound *prajñāpāramitā*, how should they practice?” (*Shànnánzǐ! Ruò yǒu yù xué shèn shēn bānrěbōlúómìduō xíngzhě, yún hé xiū xíng?* 善男子! 若有欲學甚深般若波羅蜜多行者, 云何修行?). In T 252, Avalokiteśvara addresses Śāriputra as *kulaputra*, but the other Recension Two texts follow the Sanskrit: “How should a *kulaputra* or *kuladuhitṛ* train?” (*yaḥ kaścit kulaputro vā kuladuhitā... katham śikṣitavyam?*) Note also that the Sanskrit text

<sup>23</sup> In Vaidya’s edition: *tatra khalu bhagavān āyuṣmantam subhūtiṃ sthaviram āmantrayate sma - pratibhātu te subhūte bodhisattvānām mahāsattvānām prajñāpāramitām ārabhya yathā bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ prajñāpāramitā niryāyur iti* // [2: 2]. Mitra’s edition ends... *prajñāpāramitām niryāyur iti* [1: 3].

asks and answers the question with respect to both *kulaputra* and *kuladuhitṛ*. The other versions ask the question only in terms of *kulaputra* but answer it for both.

What do *kulaputra* and *kuladuhitṛ* mean in this context? *Putra* and *duhitṛ* mean “son” and “daughter” respectively. Since *kula* can mean any group of animals or humans and has no built-in implication of status, I am unconvinced by translations such as “son or daughter of good family” [20], “gentlemen and ladies” [25, 40], or any of the other variants indicating high social status such as “noble-born son/daughter”. That said, the common Chinese translations—*shàn nánzǐ* 善男子 and *shàn nǚrén* 善女人—translate *kula* with the character *shàn* 善 “good, excellent, benevolent, etc”, which is also routinely used to translate *kuśala* “good, moral, skilful, etc”.

It appears that translators and commentators have wrongly conflated *kulaputra* with *sujāta* in such sources as the Pāli *Ambaṭṭha Sutta* (DN 3).<sup>24</sup> The two terms are used there as complimentary descriptions of the arrogant Brahmin novice, *Ambaṭṭha*, but they are *not* synonyms. The Pāli commentaries, e.g. *Papañcasūdanī* (MA I.111), speak of two kinds of *kulaputta*: 1) one who is born to it (*jāti-kulaputta*), usually a Brahmin, of whom *Ambaṭṭha* is a perfect example; and 2) the one who comes to it by way of good conduct (*ācāra-kulaputta*). The commentator says that this second case refers to anyone who “has gone forth from home into the homeless life out of faith” (*saddhā agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajitā*). In other words, the non-congenital *kulaputra* is simply a *bhikṣu* and the *kula* in question is the *bhikṣusamgha*.

The word *kulaputra* is used very frequently in *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and its descendent texts. Scanning the digitised version of Vaidya’s edition of *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* [2], I cannot see anyone being directly addressed as *kulaputra*. The vocative case is used in hypothetical situations, such as the one found here, in which *kulaputra* seems to stand for an aspirant to awakening. This suggests that the term *kulaputra* and *kuladuhitṛ* were primarily a *literary device* in *Prajñāpāramitā* and used to refer to male and female members of the monastic *saṃgha*.

## Samādhi

Apart from T 252, all the texts agree that the Buddha entered a *samādhi* but they disagree on what it was called.<sup>25</sup>

253 佛世尊即入三昧，名廣大甚深。

At that time, the Buddha, the Bhagavān entered the *samādhi* named “vast (廣) and extremely (大) profound (甚深)”.

254 世尊入三摩地，名廣大甚深照見。

the Bhagavān entered the *Samādhi* named “vast (廣) and extremely (大) profoundly (甚深) examined (照見)”.

255 世尊等入甚深明了三摩地法之異門。

the Bhagavān entered the *Samādhi* of the preaching of the Dharma called “profound illumination (甚深明

<sup>24</sup> “Sir, Master *Ambaṭṭha* is well born, is *kulaputta*, is learned, a beautiful speechmaker, clever, capable of speaking with the honourable Gotama.” (*Sujāto ca, bho gotama ambaṭṭho māṇavo, kulaputto ca ambaṭṭho māṇavo, bahussuto ca ambaṭṭho māṇavo, kalyāṇavākkaraṇo ca ambaṭṭho māṇavo, paṇḍito ca ambaṭṭho māṇavo, pahoti ca ambaṭṭho māṇavo bhotā gotamena saddhiṃ asmim vacane paṭimantetun ti*. DN I.95)

<sup>25</sup> Tibetan text and translations are from Silk’s critical edition [47: 172-3]; the Sanskrit text is from Conze’s 1967 revised edition [21].

257	世尊即入甚深光明宣說正法三摩地。	了)”。 The Bhagavān entered the samadhi of profound illumination (甚深光明) and preaching the true Dharma (宣說正法).
Skt.	<i>bhagavān gambhīrāvabhāsaṃ nāma dharmaparyāyaṃ bhāsitvā samādhiṃ samāpannaḥ</i> <sup>26</sup>	Having taught a Dharma discourse named “profound illumination”, the Bhagavan entered samādhi.
Tib A	de' i tshe bcom ldan 'das zab mo snang ba zhes bya ba chos kyi rnam grangs kyi ting nge 'dzin la snyoms par bzhugs so. <sup>27</sup>	the Blessed One was entered into the concentration of the preaching of the Dharma called “Profound Illumination”
Tib B	de' i tshe bcom ldan 'das zab mo' i (chos kyi rnam grangs) snang ba zhes bya ba' i kyi ting nge 'dzin la snyoms par zhugs so. <sup>28</sup>	the Blessed One was entered into the concentration called “Illumination of the Profound preaching of the Dharma”.

In T 252 it is Avalokiteśvara who enters a *samādhi* known as *huìguāng sānmèi* 慧光三昧 (Skt. \**jñāna-prabha-samādhi*). Note that only the Sanskrit separates the “teaching” (*bhāsitvā*) and the “entering” (*samāpannaḥ*) *samādhi*. The same elements appear to be present in most of the Recension two texts, but the relationships between them vary and I can see no simple explanation for them. In T 254 the addition of *zhàojiàn* 照見 to the end of the phrase appears to be a scribal error.

We can now consider the language in which the extensions were made, and relationships between the extended versions and how these fit into the larger picture of the evolution of the *Heart Sutra* into numerous versions.

## 5. Comments and Conclusions

### Language of Composition

The Buddha’s *dharmaparyāya* and *samādhi* are a point of departure for the Recension Two texts. It seems to me that the Sanskrit text which names the *dharmaparyāya* and leaves the *samādhi* unnamed is likely to be original. The Chinese texts don’t mention a *dharmaparyāya* and this would be an odd detail to *add* to a sutra that was missing it. Or we could say that, since the Chinese R2 texts are in agreement, the work does not feature the Buddha giving a

<sup>26</sup> There is considerable variation in the Sanskrit manuscripts. According to Conze [21: 149] the text he adopted occurs in his sources N<sup>ab</sup>, C<sup>ade</sup>; we also see:

N<sup>c</sup>: *gambhīrāyaṃ prajñāpāramitāyā avabhāsaṃ nāma dharmaparyāyaḥ*

N<sup>e</sup>: *gambhīrayāyaṃ pravara-bhāsan-nāma*

J<sup>b</sup>: *gambhīrāvasambhodaṃ nāma*

N<sup>m</sup>: *gambhīrāvabhāsan nāma*

N<sup>l</sup>: *gambhīrāvabhāsaṃ nāma samādhiṃ samāpannaḥ*

<sup>27</sup> For the purpose of comparison of Tib A and Tib B, I parse this as: *de'i tshe* (at that time) *bcom ldan 'das* (bhagavan) *zab mo snang ba* (profound illumination) *zhes bya ba* (called) *chos kyi rnam grangs kyi* (of the dharma teaching) *ting nge 'dzin la snyoms par bzhugs so* (he entered the samadhi that).

<sup>28</sup> For the purpose of comparison of Tib B and Tib A, I parse this as: *de'i tshe* (at that time) *bcom ldan 'das* (bhagavan) *zab mo'i chos kyi* (of the profound teachings) *rnam grangs (paryāya) snang ba* (illumination) *zhes bya ba'i kyi* (of the so called) *ting nge 'dzin la snyoms par zhugs so* (he entered the samadhi that).

*dharmaparyāya*, and the presence of a *dharmaparyāya* in Sanskrit is the oddity and the principle of *lectio difficilior potior* applies. The Tibetan texts both have *dharmaparyāya* (Tib. *chos kyi rnam grangs kyi*) and *samādhi* (Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*) even if they have different versions of the same sentence [47: 172-3].<sup>29</sup>

As noted, the Chinese extended texts, except for T 253, have *zì xìng jiē kōng* 自性皆空 (Skt. *svabhāvaśūnyān*) when *Xīnjīng* merely has *jiē kōng* 皆空, which would translate as *sarvā śūnyatā*. *Xīnjīng* does not mention *svabhāva*. If the text of *Xīnjīng* was extended in Chinese, we would expect to see *jiē kōng* 皆空 in the extension also. That T 252 has *zì xìng jiē kōng* 自性皆空 undermines the idea that it was composed in Chinese, although there is some evidence that the Sanskrit translation of *Xīnjīng* passed off as the “original” influenced the later interpretations.<sup>30</sup>

T 253 treats *kulaputra* in Śāriputra’s question as a vocative, addressing Avalokiteśvara. Here T 253 is out of step with all the other extant documents pertaining to Recension Two. This makes most sense as a mistranslation from a Sanskrit source or the result of an earlier copying error in Sanskrit, causing a nominative *kulaputraḥ* to be misread as a vocative *kulaputra*. Also, only the Sanskrit text is consistent in having the question both asked and answered in terms of *kulaputra* and *kuladuhitṛ*. One might, again, invoke *lectio difficilior potior* and resist the idea that the omission of *kuladuhitṛ* was a translation mistake and counter that the addition of *kuladuhitṛ* in the late Sanskrit manuscripts was the result of smoothing over a lacuna in the source too late to prevent the lacuna being copied into all the extant translations. This still does not explain the anomaly in T 253.

Another argument for a Sanskrit original for Recension Two is an awkwardness that occurs because of the use of the verb *vyavalokayati*. This works well enough in the standard *Heart Sutra* but when the Redactor tries to recast this verb in the standard form of a *Prajñāpāramitā* question, i.e. “how should the bodhisatva go about his business”, where the activity is phrased using a future passive participle—often *śikṣatavyam*—the transitivity of *vyavalokayati* trips them up. For example, if the bodhisatva was expected to train (*śikṣati*) in some form of Buddhist practice then the question would be *katham śikṣatavyam* “how should he train?” And after the explanation, Avalokiteśvara might say, “for this reason *he should practice in this way*” (*tenaiva śikṣatavyam*) as in Conze’s Ce, aka “Feer’s polyglot edition” [21: 150]. Most of the Sanskrit manuscripts were finished with “for this reason he should examine in this way” *tenaivaṃ vyavalokitavyam*. The reason it sounds so awkward is that the verb is transitive (Conze makes this mistake throughout his edition [7]); that is, one cannot simply *examine* in the absence of *something* to examine. In this case, the infelicitous Sanskrit might also indicate that the redactor of Recension Two was working with a Sanskrit source.

Based on these observations, my working hypothesis is that the standard *Heart Sutra* was extended twice. The first extension produced the text T 252 and since there is no evidence of it in any other language, we may conjecture that it was made in Chinese (just like

<sup>29</sup> Although Silk translates both as simple variants, TibB has what appears to be an eyeskip error at this point. The compound *chos kyi rnam grangs* (Skt. *dharmaparyāya*) has been shuffled forward into the middle of the compound *zab mo snang ba* (Skt. *gambhira-avabhasa*). It makes more sense to me to unshuffle them before translating.

<sup>30</sup> I refer specifically to the reading of *yīwúsuǒdégu* 以無所得故 as consistent with Skt. *aprāptivād* when Kumārajīva coined the term to translate *anupalambhayogena*. On which see Huifeng [30].

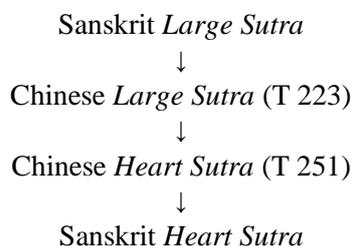
the *Xīnjīng*). This fits well with the revised history of the standard *Heart Sutra*, i.e. that it was a Chinese “digest text” (*chāo jīng* 抄經), which was “authenticated” by its association with Xuanzang and the local production of a Sanskrit text passed off as an Indian original [15]. The standard *Heart Sutra* was extended a second time, probably in Sanskrit, although with varying influence from the Chinese (especially in T 253). The Sanskrit extended text was then translated into Chinese (T 253, 254, 257) and Tibetan (including some Dunhuang manuscripts and the canonical versions), and from Tibetan back into Chinese (T 255).

The existence of several different versions of the text as a result of repeated editorial interventions is also consistent with preliminary (though as yet unpublished) results of examining the Dunhuang cache of *Heart Sutra* manuscripts by Ben Nourse [43]. What we see is repeated tinkering with the text producing several variants. The fact that Buddhists felt so free to change the *Heart Sutra* text suggests that, as per Kuījī and Woncheuk [15], they knew it was *not* an Indian Buddhist sutra.

While the minor differences are interesting and may prove diagnostic in comparative studies, the existence of two distinct recensions of the extended *Heart Sutra* in Chinese forces us to further revise the history of the text. We now know that the standard *Heart Sutra* is a *chāo jīng* 抄經 “digest text” and that the Sanskrit text was produced in China and contains several Chinese idioms [9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 30, 39]. Furthermore, Watanabe [53] has shown that *Dàmíngzhòujīng* «大明呪經» (T 250) is not an earlier translation but another Chinese production created later than the *Xīnjīng* [See also 15].

If the traditional dates are reliable, then T 252 antedates the other versions but they are not based on it. This is not a matter of simple variation; rather it looks as if the extended *Heart Sutra* was created twice. Each text was created according to the same criteria for authenticity and drawing on similar sources, but with distinctive results. Scholarship to date has always considered the extended text to be singular and thus needs to be revisited.

We can show the relationships between the extant documents in the form of a stemma diagram. The basic outline was provided by Nattier [39: 198], i.e.



The matter of the relation between *Xīnjīng* and *Dàzhìdù lùn* «大智度論» (T 1509) was raised by Nattier [39] and discussed by Attwood [15]. The relation of T 250 is based on the conclusions of Watanabe [52]. I have incorporated Ben Nourse’s preliminary findings on the Dunhuang *Heart Sutra* texts many of which show some degree of hybridisation [43], but the proposed relationships are my conjectures based on ten years of research and my twelve published articles.

This stemma is still provisional and awaits the formal publication of Nourse’s observations and scrutiny of all the recent work by qualified scholars.



the context of the twelve *nidānas* and apparently reflect a belief that the sutra is solely about negating concepts [14, 16]. Secondly, the final part of the core section—*na jñānaṃ na prāptiḥ*—has been augmented to read *na jñānaṃ na prāptir nāpāptiḥ* “no knowledge, no attainment, no non-attainment”. Again this makes no sense. As Huifeng [30] and Attwood [13] have shown, this passage has become obscured. The extant Sanskrit *Large Sutra* manuscripts have *na prāptir na abhisamayaḥ* “no attainment and no realisation”. The other Chinese translations of the *Large Sutra* by Mokṣala and Xuánzàng appear to reflect this. Attwood argued that the two words stand here for the usual *mārga* and *phala* which are headings for a list of *āryapudgala*, i.e. the path of stream-entry and the fruit of stream-entry, etc [13]. Early Buddhist lists had eight items, four under each heading, but Mahāyāna Buddhists added several terms to the list.

The “Eun Manuscript” from Japan used by Müller and Nanjio [38] for their diplomatic edition includes the phrase *yad rūpaṃ sā śūnyatā yā śūnyatā tad rūpaṃ*. Nattier noted that the phrase was absent from the majority of Conze’s sources [36: 204 n.19]. She further notes, however, that it is found in the Tibetan translation of the standard text published in facsimile by Zwalf [55].

## 6. Concluding Remarks

There is a lot more work to do in this vein, which begs the question, if this text is so popular and central to Mahāyāna Buddhism, why has this work not been done before now? The consensus, following D. T. Suzuki and Conze, that the text is illogical cannot have helped attract students to study it. Recent challenges to this consensus [9, 16] and efforts to clear up the grammatical mistakes introduced into the Sanskrit edition by Conze seem not even to have registered [7, 10, 13], nor less efforts to clarify the language of Chinese editions [8, 9, 11, 28]. Another barrier to progress is the ongoing reluctance of Buddhologists, especially in East Asia, to accept the *Heart Sutra* as a Chinese text.

Prajñāpāramitā is widely acknowledged to be central to the emergence of Mahāyāna and all subsequent Buddhism. And yet this importance is not reflected in academic publications. Not only do we have few if any reliable translations, we do not even have reliable editions of the principal texts. Since few scholars do research on *Prajñāpāramitā*, few can teach about it with any depth or guide others in doing research on it. Thus, the *Heart Sutra* continues to suffer from widespread misunderstanding and neglect even when it does attract scholarly attention. Old myths continue to be placeholders for objective scholarship.

## Abbreviations

CBCA	<i>Chinese Buddhist Canonical Attributions</i> <a href="https://dazangthings.nz/cbc/">https://dazangthings.nz/cbc/</a>
MA	<i>Majjhimanikāya-aṭṭhakathā aka Papañcasūdanī</i>
MN	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i>
DN	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
R1	Recension One
R2	Recension Two

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All Chinese texts are from CBETA 2020 version of *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經. Tōkyō: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1935.

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