

The *Heart of Wisdom* in India and Tibet  
On an Indian Source for the Opening Verse of the Tibetan version of the *Heart Sūtra*.

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### Abstract

The *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*, commonly called the *Heart Sūtra*, is one of the most famous and widely commented upon scriptures in Mahāyāna Buddhist cultures. The scripture is preserved in at least seven Asian languages in two recensions, Short and Long. In Indian and Tibetan Buddhist culture the scripture is known as the *Heart of Wisdom* (*prajñāhṛdaya*, *shes rab snying po*) preserved in both recensions. The Long recension preserved in Tibetan, and recited on a daily basis in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, contains a famous preliminary opening verse. The poetic verse praises the *Perfection of Wisdom* (*prajñāpāramitā*) and describes it, in part, as “ineffable, inconceivable...the essence of space.” Tibetan commentators often attribute the verse to either the Buddha’s son Rāhula or to the *Prajñāpāramitāstrotra* by Rāhulabhadra. The former attribution is an untraceable oral tradition and the verse is not found in the latter work as recent scholarship has documented. Is there a textual source for this verse? When did Tibetans begin to recite this verse in their monastic institutions? This paper documents an Indian source for this verse and provides evidence for its recitation in Indian Buddhist monasteries. The paper initially discusses the known history of the *Heart of Wisdom* being transmitted from India to Tibet, the existence of Short recensions of the *Heart of Wisdom* in Tibet, and the canonization of the Long recension based on the translation and commentary of the Indian Buddhist master Vimalamitra. The paper then documents early extant occurrences of the preliminary opening verse and argues that Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054 CE) brought to Tibet the practice of reciting this preliminary opening poetic verse to the *Heart of Wisdom*. The paper concludes that the opening verse of the long Tibetan version of the *Heart of Wisdom* originates in India and was ritually recited in at least one major Indian monastery during the late Pāla period.

### Introduction

The *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*, commonly called the *Heart Sūtra*, is one of the most famous and widely commented upon scriptures in Mahāyāna Buddhist cultures. The scripture is preserved in at least seven Asian languages in two recensions, Short and Long. In Indian and Tibetan Buddhist culture the scripture is known as the *Heart of Wisdom* (*prajñāhṛdaya*, *shes rab snying po*). The Long recension preserved in Tibetan, and recited on a daily basis in Tibetan

monasteries, contains a famous preliminary opening verse. The poetic verse praises the

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*Perfection of Wisdom (prajñāpāramitā)* and describes it, in part, as “ineffable, inconceivable...the essence of space” (see below). Tibetan commentators often attribute the verse to either the Buddha’s son Rāhula or to the *Prajñāpāramitāstrotra* by Rāhulabhadra. The former attribution is an untraceable oral tradition and the verse is not found in the latter work as recent scholarship has documented. Is there a textual source for this verse? When did Tibetans begin to recite this verse in their monastic institutions? This paper documents an Indian source for this verse and provides evidence for its recitation in Indian Buddhist monasteries.

I initially discuss the known history of the *Heart of Wisdom* being transmitted from India to Tibet, the existence of Short recensions of the *Heart of Wisdom* in Tibet, and the canonization of the Long recension based on the translation and commentary of the Indian Buddhist master Vimalamitra (eighth century). I then document early extant occurrences of the preliminary opening verse and argue that Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054 CE) brought to Tibet the practice of reciting this preliminary opening poetic verse to the *Heart of Wisdom*. I conclude that the opening verse of the long Tibetan recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* originates in India and was ritually recited in at least one major Indian monastery during the late Pāla period.

Before reviewing the evidence for the preliminary opening verse to the *Heart of Wisdom* being transmitted from Indian Buddhist culture to Tibetan Buddhist culture, I provide a brief overview of the history of the *Heart of Wisdom* being transmitted from India to Tibet. Why does the possibility of such a transmission need to be demonstrated? Some scholars, guided by certain theories, may be led to claim that the *Heart of Wisdom (shes rab snying po)* did not exist in India and was only commented on by such Indian Buddhist scholars such as Vimalamitra, Atiśa, and so forth, who encountered the scripture in Tibet because the *Heart of Wisdom* “originated” in China.

An early advocate for the hypothesis that the “Heart Sūtra” is an apocryphal text that came from China due to the influence of the famous monk-translator Xuanzang 玄奘 (596-664 CE; Brose 2021) is Jan Nattier (1992). Nattier’s provocative thesis rests on a number of problematic philological issues and unproven assumptions.<sup>1</sup> A general problem with Nattier’s (1992) framing of the historical narrative is the presumption of a stable “Large Prajñāpāramitā” corpus that is comparable between the versions attributed to Kumārajīva or Xuanzang either brought to China, or composed in China, based on a regional Sanskrit version at Gilgit.<sup>2</sup> Nattier relied on Schopen for this regional Gilgit representative version, but as Schopen (2009, 2012) himself has later clearly demonstrated, following upon Ruegg’s (2004: 21) suggestion, there was not any single Urtext traceable to a unique archetype of any Indian Mahāyāna Buddhist literary document, as there could be multiple variant versions of a scripture at the same time from the very same place (Schopen 2009: 193; Cf. Apple 2014, 27n4). In brief, scriptures in Indic Buddhist traditions were an open textual tradition with versions subject to emendation, change, and recensional variants from the same scriptural text even in the same locatable time and place, not to speak of the variables of a scriptural text across time and place. Fukui (2000, as cited in Tanahashi 2014, 77) has described Nattier’s article as “driven by theory and not convincing.” In addition, Nattier’s hypothesis is based on the presumption that “all Indo-Tibetan commentaries...are based on the longer version...” of the *Heart of Wisdom* (Nattier 1992, 179). However, this hypothetical presumption is not the case because Kamalaśīla (740–795 CE) wrote

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<sup>1</sup> See Ishii 2015 for an overview of the problematic issues with Nattier’s hypothesis.

<sup>2</sup> As McRae 1988, 106n8 notes in reference to the Large Prajñāpāramitā, “There are slight differences between the texts of Kumārajīva and Hsüang-tsang versions, probably indicating differences in the original Sanskrit texts.” The segment of the Large Gilgit version (seventh century) that is thought to correspond with the *Heart of Wisdom* /*Heart Sūtra* is found in Zacchetti 2005, p.393 (21v1 ff.)

a commentary on the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* that is preserved among Tibetan Dunhuang documents (see below; also Apple 2024). In brief, textual and historical evidence belies the claim that the *Heart of Wisdom* was not known in India or that this scripture was not transmitted from India to Tibet.

As is well-known in the study of Buddhist traditions related to the *Heart of Wisdom* there are “two broad recensions...conventionally referred to as Long and Short” (Silk 2021, 100). Both Long and Short recensions are preserved in Sanskrit, Chinese, and Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts. Among works preserved in Tibetan, the Short recension is only preserved at Dunhuang while Tibetan canonical sources preserve the Long recension as well as Indian and Tibetan commentaries on the Long recension. Until now, a commentary on the Short recension by an Indian Buddhist author has not been found or recovered.<sup>3</sup> Among the known and cataloged manuscripts from Dunhuang at least ninety, if not more, are preserved in Tibetan script. As far as currently known, there are roughly five types of the *Heart of Wisdom* among Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts: (1) the Long recension in the Tibetan language such as PT 449 that is different from the Tibetan Kangyur (*bka' gyur*) Long recension; (2) a Long recension in the Tibetan language matching that found in the Kangyur as in the example of PT 457; (3) a transliteration version of the Chinese “Heart Sūtra” written in Tibetan script. This type would include PT 448 which is a transliteration of Xuanzang’s Chinese translation; (4) manuscripts that preserve the Short recension, such as Lalou (1939) catalog numbers PT 451–456, and all the listings from PT 464 through to PT 486. The Short recension is the most numerous among

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<sup>3</sup> There are perhaps over 180 copies of the *Heart of Wisdom/Heart Sūtra* among manuscripts, fragments, and art work discovered and preserved from the ancient oasis city-state of Dunhuang. A great number of these manuscripts are preserved in the British Library in London, England brought by Aurel Stein (1862–1943) and at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, France brought by Paul Pelliot (1878–1945).

Dunhuang Tibetan manuscripts of the *Heart of Wisdom*. Many manuscripts of this type state that they are translated from the Indian language (*rgya gar skad du*) and/or based on Indian exemplars (*rgya dpe*); (5) Finally, a fifth type of Dunhuang Tibetan *Heart of Wisdom* manuscript is a recension found within a commentary or liturgical text. This type includes texts such as IOL 751, or the manuscript of IOL Tib J 122 which contains Kamalaśīla’s *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayavṛtti*. Kamalaśīla’s *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayavṛtti* is a commentary on the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* and is also found in the Dunhuang exemplars IOL Tib J 125, Pelliot Tibétain 495, and Pelliot Tibétain 496. These manuscripts comment upon a Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* in a commentary composed by Kamalaśīla that differs from Xuanzang’s translation of the Short recension.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the philological comparison of the Short recension embedded in Kamalaśīla’s *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayavṛtti* with other Dunhuang manuscripts, how can one infer that the recension found in IOL Tib J 122 is different from the well-known Short recension of Xuanzang’s *Xinjing* 心經 (Taisho No. 251) or other Short recensions of the *Heart of Wisdom/Heart Sūtra*? As Silk (2021, 104) has recently reported, the “Tibetan script transcription of the *Heart Sūtra* found at Dunhuang (Pelliot tibétain 448) records Xuanzang’s Chinese translation in Tibetan script.” Along these lines, a Short recension of the Sanskrit preserved in Chinese transcription (Taisho 256), initially credited to Xuanzang is “clearly due to Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774)” (Silk 2021,103) and actually differs from Xuanzang’s translated

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<sup>4</sup> For a full English translation and Tibetan edition of this work see Apple, “Kamalaśīla’s Word Commentary to the *Heart Sūtra*, Translation and Edition” (in publication). IOL Tib J 122 is listed in La Vallée Poussin’s (1962) catalog of Dunhuang manuscripts and in Ueyama 1965. Apple is the first to identify the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts PT 495 and PT 496 as being the same Short recension preserved in Tibetan of the *Heart of Wisdom* (*prajñāhṛdaya*) found in IOL Tib J 122.

version as pointed out by Ishii (2015, 499[26]-494[31]). A primary difference, among others, clearly discussed by Ishii (2015), is that all extant Sanskrit manuscripts, as well as all the Tibetan translation documents referenced in this present article, read “*svabhāvasūnyān*” (≈ Tib. *ngo bo nyid kyis stong par*), “empty of essence,” which Xuanzang’s version lacks. In brief, there are at least three different Short recensions preserved at Dunhuang: (1) Xuanzang’s Chinese version, (2) Amoghavajra’s transliteration version, (3) and Tibetan Short recension version(s). These three are different versions of a Short recension. The Tibetan Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* embedded in IOL Tib J 122 matches other extant Sanskrit short versions but does not match Xuanzang’s or Amoghavajra’s version.

Even then, from a broader historical perspective, how can one infer that the Short recension embedded in Kamalaśīla’s commentary, as well the commentary itself, or even the *Heart of Wisdom* (a.k.a *Heart Sūtra*), were even known in India at this time? The colophon of IOL Tib J 122 attributes the commentary to Kamalaśīla and the internal evidence in the commentary demonstrates an author familiar with details of Indian religious culture in its comments on the life of Śāriputra.<sup>5</sup> The content of IOL Tib J 122 also provides the foundation for the commentarial exegesis of the Indian Buddhist scholar Praśāstrasena’s *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayaṭīkā* (Tôh. no. 3821), which is a word commentary on the Long recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* (translated in Lopez 1996, 150–164). Although Praśāstrasena’s commentary is on the extended Long recension, embedded in its comments are remnants of the earlier Short recension Tibetan Dunhuang translations that have been observed but not

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<sup>5</sup> The colophon to IOL Tib J 122 (fol. 61b3; Apple, 2024) reads: “The Ācārya Kamalaśīla was the one who explained this commentary” (*’grel pa ’di ni slob dpon ka ma la shi las mdzad cis bshad*). Regarding Śāriputra the commentary states, in part, “[Śāriputra,] after engaging with the disciplinary-doctrine of the non-Buddhists and Jains..(fol. 54b1, *sha rI’ bu zhes bya’o / / mu steg can rgyu gu can gyi chos la zhugs pa las...*).

recognized as belonging to earlier Tibetan translations found among Dunhuang manuscripts (e.g. *kun tu spyan ras gzigs kyi dbang po; sarvāvalokiteśvara*, Lopez 1996, 154; also Conze 1974, 60–61). These points also apply to the eighth century Indian Buddhist commentator Jñānamitra, whose *Āryaprajñāpāramitāhṛdayavyākhyā* (translated Lopez 1996, 141–150) on the Long recension preserves the earlier language of the Short Recension as well (e.g. Lopez, 1996, 143).

In addition to Kamalaśīla’s commentary (IOL Tib J 122, fol. 52b4–5) preserving a word commentary on the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom*, the following statement from Dharmamitra, an early ninth century abbot of Nālanda who was a student of Kamalaśīla’s classmate Haribhadra (ca. 730–795 CE), indicates that some form of this scripture was known in India. Dharmamitra states,

The Blessed One, king of the Śākyas, moistened with a compassionate mind, taught as many teachings of concordant doctrines each of their own specific type as a means of establishing definite goodness (*niḥśresyas*) and high status (*abhyudaya*) to all sentient beings; the pure, the best, the principal, and most sublime among the 84,000 divisions of the Dharma is the Perfection of Wisdom (*Prajñāpāramitā*) because there is nothing which is not contained in that. Furthermore, some say that the foremost essential meaning (*snying po’i don*), ultimate reality, is in the *Noble Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom* (*Āryaprajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*) and so forth.<sup>6</sup>

Along these lines, Dharmamitra’s commentary also preserves an Indian Buddhist understanding of the “Essence” or “Heart” (*hṛdaya*) of the Perfection of Wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*),

...[5b] The Mahāyāna sūtra called “*The Noble Buddhāvataṃsaka*” states, “The childish although not knowing awakening, they rely upon it.” Therefore, this

<sup>6</sup> *Abhisamayālaṅkārikāprajñāpāramitopadeśa śāstraṭīkāprasphuṭapadā*, D 2a: *bcom ldan ’das shākya’i rgyal po thugs rje’i thugs brlan pa des ’gro ba thams cad mngon par mtho ba dang nges par legs pa la ’god pa’i thabs su gyur pa rang rang gi rigs dang rjes su mthun pa’i chos bstan pa ji snyed chos kyi phung po brgyad khri bzhi stong bstan pa rnams las rab dang phul dang / gtso bo dang / gya nom pa nyid ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ste / [2b] der gang ma bsdu pa’i don ’ga’ yang med pa’i phyir ro / / de yang kha cig ni don dam pa’i bden pa snying po’i don gtso bor byas pa **’phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i snying po la sogs pa’o / /**. See Apple (2015, 4-5n5) on adding “Noble” (*ārya* ≈ *’phags pa*) to the title of a discourse to indicate that it is a teaching of the Buddha.*

natural Perfection of Wisdom is the principal Perfection of Wisdom and because it is very dear (*rab tu gces pa*) one speaks of the so called **heart** of the Perfection of Wisdom. How is it that a force apprehended by the mind abides and increases in the body and so forth? When that mind becomes stable in relation to the various part of the body it is called “**heart**.” The agitated mind is due to latencies. It is an abode of many conceptual thoughts. One says, “Abiding as the object of the heart” and when there is not a heart that supports that, the mind does not abide, and when [an object] definitely does not abide in the body along with the faculties, that is the **heart** and that is very dear and reknowned as “*hṛdaya*.” Likewise, if there did not exist a natural Perfection of Wisdom, non-conceptual wisdom would not arise no matter what object of observation was relied upon. If [non-conceptual wisdom] does not arise, then how will the path, results, and texts occur? Therefore, this [natural Perfection of Wisdom] is called “*hṛdaya*” because it is very dear.<sup>7</sup>

An exegetical understanding of *hṛdaya* is also found in the early extant Indian Buddhist commentaries of Kamalaśīla (IOL Tib J 122, folio 52b4-5; Apple, in publication), Jñānamitra (Lopez 1996, 141–2), and Praśāstrasena (Lopez 1996, 151). In addition to these points that some form of the *Heart of Wisdom* existed in India and that Indian Buddhists were familiar with the notion of *hṛdaya* in relation to *prajñāpāramitā*, there is no record of Dharmamitra ever travelling to Tibet or anywhere else outside of India. In brief, the knowledge of the *Heart of Wisdom* and its exegesis in Indian Buddhist history at Nālandā, and from scholars trained at Nālandā, is actually a distinct possibility in the history of *Prajñāpāramitā*.

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<sup>7</sup> *Abhisamayālaṅkārikāprajñāpāramitopadeśa śāstraṭīkāprasphuṭapadā*, D 5a-b: ...[5b] *zhes gsungs la 'phags pa sangs rgyas phal po che zhes bya ba'i mdo theg pa chen po dang rab tu ldan pa las / byis pas byang chub mi shes kyang // de dag de la rab tu gnas // zhes gsungs te / de'i phyir rang bzhin gyis shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'di ni gtso bo'i shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ste / rab tu gces pa'i phyir shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po zhes bya'o zhes kyang gsungs te / de'i phyir rang bzhin gyis shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa 'di ni gtso bo'i shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ste / rab tu gces pa'i phyir shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po zhes bya'o zhes kyang gsungs te / ji ltar lus la sogs pa gnas shing 'phel ba ni sems kyis bzung ba'i mthu yin la / sems de yang snying zhes bya ba'i lus kyi bye brag de la rab tu brtan pas na / bag chags kyis ni dkrugs pa'i sems // rnam par rtog pa mang po'i gnas // snying gi yul la rab tu gnas // zhes gsungs te / rten du gyur pa'i snying med na sems mi gnas shing // de ma gnas par gyur na dbang po dang bcas pa'i lus nges par mi gnas pas na snying ste / rab tu gces pa ni hri da ya zhes grags so // de bzhin du rang bzhin gyis shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa med na rnam par mi rtog pa'i ye shes dmigs pa gang la brten nas kyang skye bar mi 'gyur la / de ma skyes par gyur na ji ltar lam dang / 'bras bu dang gzhung dag 'byung // de bas na 'di yang hr-i da ya zhes gsungs te rab tu gces pa'i phyir ro //*

Kamalaśīla's commentary on the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* was composed during the late eighth century assimilation of Buddhism in Tibet. A number of significant developments in Tibet's assimilation of Buddhism had already occurred before Kamalaśīla's arrival. Kamalaśīla's spiritual master, Śāntarakṣita (Zhi ba 'tsho; c. 725-788), a Nālandā abbot of the Mūlasarvāstivāda ordination lineage was invited to Tibet by the Emperor Khri-srong lde-bstan (c. 742-797). Travelling through Nepal, Śāntarakṣita first arrived in Tibet in 763 and Tibetan translation activities began while Śāntarakṣita served as the Emperor's advisor.<sup>8</sup> Khri-srong lde-bstan had previously met and received teachings on the basic principles of Buddhism from Śāntarakṣita several times but anti-Buddhist forces had impeded the initial importation of Buddhism by this teacher. In order to subdue and convert forces hostile to Buddhism, the emperor also invited, through consultation with Śāntarakṣita, the renowned Tantric master Padmasambhava from the northern Indian land of Oḍḍiyāna.

According to the twelfth century historian Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–92 CE), during his tenure in Tibet, Padmasambhava advised daily Buddhist practices for the Emperor's well-being and prosperity. An excerpt from the episode states, in part,

“Perform a royal healing ceremony!” When that was stated, the paṇḍitas and lotsāwa's had a conference. As a source of devoted daily practice to externally attend upon [him], ten sūtras for the king were translated: the *Heart of Wisdom* as a sūtra of the view, *Sutra on the Wisdom of the Moment of Death* as a sūtra of meditation. *Confession of Downfalls from Bodhicitta* as a sūtra of confession. *Vajra Subjugator* as a sūtra of ablution, the *Royal Deeds of Excellent Conduct* as a sūtra of aspiration, *Amitāyus* as a sūtra of prolonging life, *Blue Vajrapāṇi* as a sūtra of protection, *Vasundra, the Goddess of Wealth* as sūtra to gain riches, *White Ushnika* as a sūtra of averting [harmful spirits], the *Single Syllable* [of *Prajñāpāramitā*] as a sūtra of the essence. After these [sūtras] were translated and

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<sup>8</sup> For an overview of Śāntarakṣita life and works see Eltschinger and Marks (2019a) and Doney (2017) for his role as the Emperor's advisor. On Tibetan translation activities commencing in 763 when Śāntarakṣita arrived in Tibet see Scherrer-Schaub (2002).

conferred as a source of royal devotion, they were continually practiced.”<sup>9</sup>

This episode preserves an account of the Ten Royal Sūtras comprised of brief works headed by the *Heart of Wisdom* as a discourse on the view (*lta ba*). This account correlates with the Dunhuang manuscripts that a recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* was present in Tibet during the mid-to-late eighth century.

The construction of the first Tibetan monastery of Samyé (*Bsam yas*) started in 775. The first seven Tibetan monk were ordained in 779. In the 780s, Tibetan military expansion extended into northwest China up into the Ordos region (Beckwith 1987: 148–56), including the major Buddhist oasis-state of Dunhuang. These martial activities prompted an exchange between various currents of Buddhism in central Tibet and Dunhuang. Khri-srong lde-bstan requested an arrangement with China (781) to send two Buddhist monks, replaced every two years, for teaching Buddhism (Demiéville 1952: 184n2). Khri-srong lde-bstan also patronized the copying and studying of the *Śatasahāsrikā-prajñāpāramitā* as evinced by the numerous Tibetan manuscripts of this scripture found at Dunhuang and the Emperor’s own commentary on the massive work.<sup>10</sup> The emphasis on the *Śatasahāsrikā-prajñāpāramitā* is significant because late eighth century Indian Buddhist commentators such as Jñānamitra and Vimalamitra as well as

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<sup>9</sup> Nyang ral Nyi ma ’od zer (1124–92). *Chos ’byung me tog snying po sbrang rtsi’i bcud*. Lhasa: Bod rjongs bod yig dpe snying skrung khang, 2010, p. 311.3–10: / rgyal po’i sku’i rim gro gyis shig / gsungs nas paN Di ta dang po lo tsa’ ba rnams bka’ gros mdzad de / phyi’i bskangs rim gror thugs dam rgyal po’i mdo bcu bsgyur [te /] shes rab snying po lta ba’i mdo / ’da’ ka ye shes sgom pa’i mdo / byang chub ltung bshags bshags pa’i mdo / rdo rje rnam ’joms khrus kyi mdo / bzang po spyod pa smon lam mdo / tshe dpag med tshe bsrings pa’i mdo / gos sngon can srung ba’i mdo / nor rgyun ma nor sgrub pa’i mdo / gtsug tor dkar mo bzlog pa’i mdo / yi ge gcig ma snying po’i mdo / de rnams bsgyur nas rgyal pa’i thugs dam du phog nas nar mar mdzad / ...

<sup>10</sup> See Khri srong sde btsan, Chos rgyal (ca. 742-797), *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ’bum pa rgya cher ’grel pa in Khri srong lde’u btsan gyi gsung ’bum* (2013). On the importance of the Tibetan manuscripts of the *Śatasahāsrikā-prajñāpāramitā* at Dunhuang see Lalou (1954), Dotson (2013-2014), and Doney (2023).

early twelfth century Tibetan commentators will consider the *Heart of Wisdom* to be extracted from this scriptural version of the *Prajñāpāramitā*.

Along these lines, the Chinese Buddhist scholars that the Tibetans encountered in the expansion of their empire did not place great emphasis on the *Heart of Wisdom*.<sup>11</sup> After the conquest of the Dunhuang region in 787, Khri-srong lde-bstan communicated with such figures as the Yogācāra master Tankuang 曇曠 who had studied at the Ximing-si temple before arriving in Dunhuang in 763 CE (Ueyama 2012: 20-23) and who composed a work in response to the questions of the Tibetan King Khri srong-lde-btsan (Pachow 1979a:42-43; Apple and Apple 2017, 101). The Emperor also brought a Chinese Chan master known as heshang (monk) Moheyan, or hva shang Mahāyāna in Tibetan, to central Tibet. Moheyan taught a system of *dhyāna* (meditation) that was current in the Dunhuang region at this time and gained as many as five thousand Tibetan followers (Demiéville 1952: 25, 154), including noble ladies from prominent clans residing at the royal court (Wangdu, Diemberger, and Sørensen 2000: 76–77). Moheyan’s teachings were controversial in that he advocated a spontaneous path to Buddhahood (*cig car pa or ston mun pa*; Ch. *dunmen*) involving sudden awakening (*dunwu*). These teachings and the patronage they generated troubled Indian scholar-monks residing at Bsam-yas who taught a path of gradual attainment (*rims gyis pa or btsen min pa*; Ch. *jianmen*).

After the death of Śāntarakṣita in 788, his disciple Kamalaśīla (Padma’i ngang tshul, c. 740-795) arrived shortly thereafter and became involved in a discussion or council (ca. 792–794) at Samyé (*bsam yas*) with Moheyan and his followers commonly known as the “Samyé Debate.” The *Vajracchedikā-prajñāpāramitā* appears to have been popular at this time as Tankuang,

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<sup>11</sup> This is in spite of the known Chan commentarial exegesis on the *Heart Sūtra/Heart of Wisdom* in Dunhuang in the late seventh to ninth centuries, see McRae 1988.

Moheyan, and Kamalaśīla cite this scripture in their works. Kamalaśīla would later compose a commentary on the *Vajracchedikā*.<sup>12</sup> The *Heart of Wisdom*, however, is not cited by Tankuang, nor is this scripture cited by Moheyan or Kamalaśīla in the Samyé Debate related literature. Rather, for the Samyé Debate, Kamalaśīla reportedly focused on the *Samḍhinirmocanasūtra* while Moheyan utilized the *Śatasahāsrikā-prajñāpāramitā* and the *Vajracchedikā*.<sup>13</sup> Recent scholarship has demonstrated that both Moheyan and Kamalaśīla relied upon the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* to substantiate their arguments.<sup>14</sup> Along these lines, Van Schaik's work on "Tibetan Zen" also indicates that the *Vajracchedikā* was important for Chinese and Tibetan based groups in Tibet and Dunhuang during the late eighth century (Van Schaik 2014, 2015). However, the *Heart of Wisdom* was not cited among elite scholars active during this time as a source for their arguments.

Rather, the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom*, as commented on by Kamalaśīla, was considered a *dhāraṇī* text (*gzung 'di'i gzhung*, 61b2) for recitation (*bstan pa'i chos bzlas*, 53a4). Kamalaśīla explains that his Short recension word-by-word commentary is for the benefit of ordinary beings. In addition to the Dunhuang Tibetan Short recension exemplars found in, for instance, Stein (IOL Tib J 120) and Pelliot Tibétain (PT 465), that match the Short recension embedded in Kamalaśīla's commentary, a calqued citation of the same recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* appears in a late eighth-early ninth century catalog by famed hermit sPug Ye shes dbangs (ca. 735-814; Tauscher 2021, 17). This citation illustrates that the Tibetan Short

<sup>12</sup> For Kamalaśīla's *Prajñāpāramitāvajracchedikāṭīkā* see Tendzin 1994.

<sup>13</sup> Wangdu, Diemberger, and Sørensen 2000: 78; Biondo 2021, 76-77

<sup>14</sup> See Ding 2023, 6-8. Ding (2023,7) notes, according to Moheyan's own testimony, the scriptures that he studied as, "...the (1) *Mahāprajñāpāramitā*, (2) *Laṅkāvatāra*, (3) *Brahmapariṣecchā*, (4) *Ghanavyūha*, (5) *Vajracchedikā*, (6) *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa*, (7) *Mahabuddhoṣṇīṣa* [i.e., Pseudo-*Śūraṅgamasūtra*], (8) *Buddhāvataṃsaka*, (9) *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra*, (10) *Ratnakūṭa*, and (11) *Ajātaśatrukaukṛtyavinodanā*. I [, Moheyan,] have faith in and uphold them accordingly."

recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* contained in Kamalaśīla's commentary circulated in Tibet at this time among Buddhist Tibetans who did not reside at Samyé or in the Emperor's court. Moreover, among the 441 citations in sPug Ye shes dbangs's catalog, the *Heart of Wisdom* (citation 318; Tauscher 2021, 109) is not listed among the citations from Chinese sources.<sup>15</sup>

Kamalaśīla's *Vṛtti* on the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* may be one of his first works that he introduced in Tibet when he arrived around 788 CE.<sup>16</sup> Kamalaśīla's commentary introduces its audience to a word-by-word account of the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom*. Scholars can no longer claim that a Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* was not known in Indian Buddhist tradition or that Indian Buddhist commentaries on the *Heart of Wisdom* do not preserve the exact words of the scripture. In commenting on the Short recension, Kamalaśīla provides a very Madhyamakan style of interpretation, mentioning the two realities, conventional (*saṃvṛti*) and ultimate (*paramārtha*), while thoroughly denying inherent existence (*svabhāva*) throughout the commentary.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, Kamalaśīla explains the conventional appearance of things by mentioning latencies (*vāsanās*) projected from the subliminal storehouse consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) in his discussion.<sup>18</sup> This combination of Madhyamaka and Yogācāra commentarial scholarship supports Kamalaśīla's authorship of the

<sup>15</sup> As Tauscher (2021, 190) notes “*Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya*.. title is not listed among the texts cited in *brGyad bcu khungs*, but cit. 318, quoted as *Shes rab kyi pha rold tu phyind pa'i mdo'*, fits almost perfectly. It is a short citation speaking about material form (*rūpa*) and emptiness (*śūnyatā*) not being distinct.” This citation (Tauscher 2021, 109) reads: *shes rab kyi pha rold tu phyind pa'i mdo' las / 'di ni sha ri'i bu gzugs stong pa nyid de / stong pa nyid kyang gzugs so / gzugs dang stong pa nyid tha dad pa yang ma yin / gzugs dang yang tha myi dad do / de bzhin du tshor ba nas chos thams cad kyi bar du stong pa nyid kyi mtshan ma ste / myi skye myi 'gog myi 'phel myi 'bi'o /*

<sup>16</sup> See Vincent Eltschinger and James Marks (2019b) for Kamalaśīla's arrival in Tibet and activities.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Kamalaśīla, *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayavṛtti* (IOL Tib J 122, fol. 53a1): “Omniscience is total knowledge of both conventional and ultimate reality” (*thams cad mkhyen pa ni / kun rdzob dang / don dam pa'I chos gnyis ma lus par mkhyen te*); Apple, in publication.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Kamalaśīla, *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdayavṛtti* (IOL Tib J 122, fol. 59b1): “Even the zealous application on the bodhisattva stages is merely eliminating the gradual purification of the latencies of ignorance on the *ālayavijñāna*” (*sa'I rim pa smos pa yang kun gzhi rnam par shes pa la ma rlg pa'I bag chags rlm gyis sbying ba tsam du zad de*); Apple, in publication.

commentary, as he is well-known in both his other commentarial works and in later Tibetan doxography for combining these Mahāyāna philosophies in the same fashion as his mentor Śāntarakṣita.<sup>19</sup>

Ueyama (1965, 76) suggests that the Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* was never included in the Tibetan canon due to the antiquity of the translation language. That is, the Tibetan Short recension and Kamalaśīla’s commentary have not been updated to conform with the imperially decreed “new resolution” translation reforms whose final redaction occurred in 814 CE.<sup>20</sup>

The translation into Tibetan of the Long recension is attributed to the Indian scholar Vimalamitra (Silk 1994) who is thought to have arrived in Tibet around 797 CE (Horiuchi 2022), notably after the death of Kamalaśīla in 795 and the death of the Emperor Khri-srong lde-bstan in or around 797 as well. The Tibetan Long Recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* was initially

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<sup>19</sup> On the Madhyamaka-Yogācāra synthesis of Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla see Ruegg 1981, Tillemans 1990, Schoening 1995, Keira 2004, Blumenthal (2004), McClintock (2010), and Blumenthal and Apple (2022).

<sup>20</sup> According to several Euro-North American scholars and indigenous Tibetan scholars, such as Skyogs ston rin chen brka shis (ca. 1495–after 1577), the development of Tibetan translation practices occurred within three stages related to imperial decrees: (1) an initial stage of “the first royal resolution” (*dang po bkas bcad kyis*) consisting of preliminary translations from the era of the legendary seventh century inventor of the Tibetan script Thon mi sambhota up through the reign of Khri Srong lde brtsan (c. 742–797 CE). Texts initially translated during this period include the *Buddhāvataṃsaka* the four āgama, the vinaya, and various sūtras. These works had not been edited to conform with the imperially decreed “new resolution” of 814 CE and utilized old words with orthographic particularities. Evidence in colophons to Tibetan canonical texts refer to these ancient translation terms as “*brda rnying du snang ngo*,” “that which appears in the old language” (Dietz, 1989: 283). The Tibetan Short recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* and Kamalaśīla’s commentary belongs to the pre-revision period of Tibetan translation activity and consists of Old Tibetan terminology before the “new, fixed language” of the second resolution (*bkas bcad gnyis pa*) (see Appendix 5 for terminological comparisons). (2) The so-called second resolution related to Tibetan translation was formally ratified under the imperial decree of the Tibetan Emperor Khri gtsug lde brtsan (alias Ral pa can, r. 815–841 CE) and utilized by such Tibetan translators as Dpal brtsegs and Ye shes sde. (3) Stage three concerns translations rules established by Western Tibetan kings, such as Lha bla ma Ye shes ’od, during the second dissemination of Buddhism phase of Tibetan history beginning in the eleventh century and falls outside the scope of this study. See Apple 2021, 12–14. Although it should be noted that colophons to the revised Tibetan translation of the Long recension are associated with dGe ba’i blo gros, a West Tibet monk and translator student of Rin chen bzang po (958–1055), who worked with Atiśa (982–1054) when Atiśa first resided in West Tibet for three years (see Silk 1994, 47–56 on the colophon to Tibetan revised translations). Among other affiliations with the revisions of the *Heart of Wisdom*, Atiśa brought the ritual practice of reciting a poetic verse prior to recitation of the *Heart of Wisdom* based on new evidence from recently recovered Tibetan manuscripts, see Apple, *forthcoming*.

translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan in the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> centuries, with a version translated by Vimalamitra and Rin chen sde included in Tibetan Buddhist Kangyurs.<sup>21</sup> The colophon to this version mentions that it was inscribed on a temple wall in Tibet’s first monastery of Samyé (*Bsam yas*).<sup>22</sup> The Long Recension *Heart of Wisdom* and its commentaries were updated during the period of the second resolution under the imperial decree of the Tibetan Emperor Khri gtsug lde brtsan (alias Ral pa can, r. 815–841 CE). The two canonical recensions of the longer *Heart of Wisdom* based on these updated revisions are contained in present day Kangyurs (edition and translation Silk 1994) and the Indian commentaries to these versions are found in the Tengyurs (translated in Lopez 1988, 1996).

The preserved ninth century catalogs of the lDen kar ma and ’Phang Thang call the scripture *Heart of Wisdom* (*shes rab snying po*) and only in later catalogs is the work classified as a “Mahāyāna sūtra” (*theg pa chen po’i mdo*) (see Herrmann-Pfandt 2008: 9, no. 14 for a survey of listings). Among Dunhuang documents, the Long recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* was ritually recited in 822 CE as witnessed in the ‘Prayer of Dégayutsel (*De ga g.yu ’tsal*) Temple’ as found in PT 16/ IOL Tib J 751.<sup>23</sup> The sequential relation between Kamalaśīla’s commentary and Vimalamitra’s commentary is illustrated in the twelfth century work of Deyu’s *History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* who lists a work by Kamalaśīla called *Essence of*

<sup>21</sup> See Silk 1994 for Tibetan critical editions based on the Kangyur.

<sup>22</sup> *Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya* (*Bcom ldan ’das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i snying po*), Dergé *sher phyin*, ka, folios 146a1-3, colophon: *bcom ldan ’das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa’i snying po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo rdzogs so // // rgya gar gyi mkhan po bi ma la mi tra dang / lo tsā ba dge slong rin chen sdes bsgyur cing / zhu chen gyi lo tsā ba dge blo dang nam mkha’ la sogs pas zhus te gtan la phab pa // // dpal bsam yas lhun gyis grub pa’i gtsug lag khang gi dge rgyas bye ma gling gi rtsig ngos la bris pa dang zhu dag legs par bgyis so*

<sup>23</sup> See Apple 2024b, “A Late Old Tibetan Version of the Heart Sūtra Preserved in Dunhuang IOL Tib J 751.” The ‘Prayer of Dégayutsel (*De ga g.yu ’tsal*) Temple’ is a text written on a single *pothī* manuscript of twenty folios, now divided between PT. 16 (fols. 22–34) and IOL Tib J 751 (fols. 35–41), which lists prayers to the emperor by Eastern Tibet military and political officials. See Doney 2023, 23 for details and further sources.

*Wisdom (ye shes snying po)* followed by the listing of Vimalamitra's *Heart of Wisdom* commentary (see Martin 2022, 322).

After the fall of the Tibetan empire in 842 CE, Buddhist monastic education continued in the borderlands in such places as Denma (*'dan ma*) in eastern Tibet (Iuchi 2013). Recently recovered manuscripts of the Kadam (*bka' gdams*) masters Potowa Rinchen Sal (*po to ba rin chen gsal*, 1027– 1105) and Ar jangchub yeshé (*ar byang chub ye shes*, 11<sup>th</sup> century) indicate that they received teachings on the *Heart of Wisdom* preserved at the Eastern Tibet monastic institutes of Denma. The Tibetan empire period traditions of the *Heart of Wisdom* were transmitted to these Kadam masters by such figures as Setsun Wangchuk Shönu (*se btsun dbang phyug gzhon nu*) and Smṛtijñānakīrti who retained the Buddhist education traditions that were transmitted after the collapse of the Tibetan empire. Potowa remarks in his recently available commentary to the *Heart of Wisdom* that,

“Previously, the king Khri-srong lde-btsan made three hundred treasured children of taxpayers take ordination. They became officiating monks at court, engaged in above their livelihood. After the evening meal they would recite one section of the *Śatasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā*. The Ācārya Vimalamitra, with the intention of the Conqueror for both the Dharma and the Saṃgha, taught them this *sūtra* and also composed a great commentary.”<sup>24</sup>

Potowa considers that a *sūtra* form of the *Heart of Wisdom* was related to the *Śatasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā* and that Vimalamitra instructed officiating monks on the scripture and commentary.

An account from Ar jangchub yeshé (*ar byang chub ye shes*, 11<sup>th</sup> century) states,

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<sup>24</sup> Po to ba Rin chen gsal (1027– 1105). *Sher phyin gyi don bsdu pa*. In *bKa' gdams gsung 'bum phyogs bsgrigs thengs bzhi pa*. Si khron dpe skrun tshogs pa si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2015: 2a1-2: *sngon rgyal po khri srong lde btsan gyis 'bangs gces phrug sum brgya rab tu phyung / bla'i mchod gnas su mdzad / 'tsho ba bla nas sbyor / gro'i rjes la 'bum gyi bam po re klog pa la / slob dpon bhi ma la mi tras chos dang dge 'dun gnyis ka'o rgyal bar dgongs nas mdo 'di klog tu bcug / 'grel chen yang mdzad do /*

“In this regard, although there existed many commentaries generally on the *Heart of Wisdom*, both the *sūtras* of the one-with-twenty-five-*ślokas* and the three heaps (i.e., *triskandhaka*), objects of veneration by Khri-srong lde-bstan, were bestowed to the monks for objects of devotion. Later, at the time of the invitation of the Indian upādhyāya Vimalamitra, he was requested to give a commentary to this *sūtra* of Tibetan devotion. When the Princely-Lord [Atiśa] viewed and comprehended many *sūtras* and *tantras*, the [Sanskrit manuscript of the] commentary was in Samyé. This is a commentary of especially excellent meaning.”<sup>25</sup>

Ar jangchub yeshé emphasizes in his comments that the “one-with-twenty-five-*ślokas*” was first venerated by the Emperor and then given to all the monks for recitation. He also notes that Vimalamitra’s commentary was among the Sanskrit manuscripts reviewed by Atiśa at Samyé.<sup>26</sup>

The master and Tibetan historian Tāranātha, in his book length commentary to the *Heart of Wisdom*, discusses the exegetical style he adopts and the significance of Vimalamitra’s commentary for Tibetans. Tāranātha states that,

[Regarding,] the explanatory commentarial style of the Paṇḍita Vimalamitra. He is called “Vimalamitra” in the Indian language; “Drimé shényen” in the Tibetan language. At the time of his arrival in Tibet during the reign of King Khri-srong lde-bstan, this renowned extensive commentary that he composed was perceived to the most superior and even greater than all the previous great [commentaries] that had arrived here in [Tibet]. From the viewpoint of this commentary all exposition and teaching on [the *Heart of Wisdom*] had been brought to a definitive conclusion. Here, [the colophon states,] “The extensive explanation of the *Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom* was made by Vimala in the presence of the assembly of monks at the temple of Tshang pa’i ’byung gnas.” It is said that [Vimalamitra] made the teaching of Dharma for the purpose of the monastic community (*samgha*) of Samyé (*bsam yas*) and so forth. Although the manner of explanation for this commentary is a bit unacceptable, it is suitable, but generally, even though there are many good explanations, specifically it is an important dharma teaching which occurs in the context of a genuine teaching of the *sūtra* system in the land

<sup>25</sup> *ar byang chub ye shes, Shes rab snying po’i mdo rgya cher ’grel pa zhes bya ba bzugs so*, page 4.14: / *de la shes rab snying po la spyir ’grel pa mang du yod mod kyi / ’on kyang sho lo ka nyi shu rtsa lnga pa dang phung po gsum pa’i mdo gnyis khri srong lde bstan gyis mchod gnas dge slong rnam la thugs dam du gnang ba yin no // dus phyis rgya gar gyi mkhan po bi’ ma la mi tra spyang drangs pa’i dus su / bod kyi thugs dam gyi mdo ’di la ’grel pa gcig bya bar zhus pa la / jo bos mdo dang rgyud sde mang po gzigs rtogs mdzad nas / ’grel pa ’di bsam yas su mdzad pa yin no // ’di shin tu don bzang ba’i ’grel pa zhig [5]*

<sup>26</sup> See Apple 2019 for the episode of Atiśa’s review of Sanskrit manuscripts at Samyé (*bsam yas*).

of the Noble ones (i.e., India) and because the bodhisattva king of Tibet venerated it as supreme; if you know this commentary by means of how it looks, how it sounds, and so forth, it is good. The way of teaching this is in this way.<sup>27</sup>

Vimalamitra's commentary, from the perspective of Tibetan scholarship, represents a culmination of the early Indian Buddhist commentarial exegesis of the *Heart of Wisdom* received by the Tibetans. Vimalamitra's translation of the Long recension became the canonical standard and the commentarial style of Vimalamitra was followed by a number of subsequent Tibetan commentators.

The Long recension preserved in Tibetan, and recited on a daily basis in contemporary Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, contains a famous preliminary opening verse. The preliminary opening verse found in the Tibetan versions of the *Heart Sūtra* praises the *Perfection of Wisdom* (*prajñāpāramitā*) and may be translated in English as follows,

I bow down to the mother of the Victors of the three times,  
The Perfection of Wisdom, who is ineffable, inconceivable, unutterable,  
unborn, unceasing, the essence of space, in the scope of individually intuited  
awareness.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Tāranātha, *Sher snying gi 'grel pa sngon med legs bshad*. Par gzhi dang po, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2004. Page 131: *PaN chen bi ma la mi tra'i 'grel tshul / mdo 'di la rgya gar gyi 'grel par grags pa 'ga' re yod pa las / rgya skad du bi ma la mi tra / bod skad du dri med bshes gnyen zhes bya ba / rgyal po khri srong lde btsan gyi dus su bod du byon pa des mdzad pa'i rgya cher 'grel par grags pa 'di bzang shos su snang la / phyogs 'dir byon pa chen po sngon rabs pa thams cad kyis kyang / 'grel pa 'di'i sgo nas 'chad nyan gyis gtan la 'babs par mdzad do // 'dir tshangs pa'i 'byung gnas gtsug lag khang gnas pa'i / dge slong dge 'dun rnams kyi zhal ngor ni / shes rab pha rol phyin pa'i snying po yi // rgya cher bshad pa dri ma med pas byas // zhes 'byung ste / chos 'khor bsam yas la sogs pa'i dge 'dun rnams kyi don du mdzad pa yin skad / 'grel pa 'di la bshad tshul mi 'thad pa yang ci rigs par yod mod kyi / spyir legs bshad kyang mang zhing khyad par du 'phags pa'i yul du mdo lugs kyi bstan pa rnal ma yod pa'i skabs su byung ba'i / sde snod 'dzin pa yang yin la bod kyi rgyal po byang chub sems dpas mchog tu bkur ba yin pa'i phyir / 'grel pa 'di yang blta ba dang snyan pa la sogs pa'i sgo nas shes na legs so // 'di'i 'chad tshul ni 'di ltar yod do /*

<sup>28</sup> Tibetan: *smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin / / ma skyes ma 'gags nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid / / so sor rang rig ye shes spyod yul ba / / dus gsum rgyal pa'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo / /*. See Table 1 for versions of the verse in preserved Indian Buddhist texts in Tibetan. Note that the spelling *smras* (Silk 1994, 169) does not occur in any text among 414 electronic texts on the BDLC database (<https://library.bdrc.io>) or in over 47 matches on Buddhalexus (<https://buddhanexus.net/>).

Jonathan A. Silk in his 1994 critical edition of the two recensions of the *Heart of Wisdom/Heart Sūtra* in Tibetan regulated this verse to an appendix (Silk 1994:169-70, Appendix IV), noting that Enga Teramoto's 1911 edition and some modern Tibetan editions carry the verse. In regards to this verse, Silk (1994, 169n1) noted that he does not “mean...to imply that the stanza was ever written in Sanskrit” and that “it may well be a Tibetan composition.” Silk closed his discussion on this verse by stating that “the historical importance [of the verse] should be taken up by scholars of Tibetan Buddhism” (1994, 170). Kazuaki Tanahashi (2014:223-226) in his recent “comprehensive guide to the *Heart Sūtra*” includes a transcription and translation of the Long Tibetan recension of the *Heart of Wisdom/Heart Sūtra* among his seven Asian languages versions for comparison. The transcription and translation of the Long Tibetan recension, carried out by Christian P. B. Haskett for Tanahashi's book, includes the opening verse, but Tanahashi's book does not provide any information for the source of this Tibetan version, whether it is from a canonical or vulgate Tibetan source, from a prayer book, or even, just pulled off the internet. The dedicatory preface to Yaroslav Komarovski's (2015) recent volume on Tibetan mysticism fully cites the verse while attributing it to Rahulabhadra. Suzanne M. Bessenger (2016) in her recent biographical study of the Tibetan female holy person Sönam Peldren (*bsod nams dpal 'dren*, fourteenth century), totally overlooks the reference to the opening verse of the *Heart of Wisdom* found at the beginning of the biography.<sup>29</sup> In brief, the

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<sup>29</sup> Bessenger (2016) translates on page 191, “regarding the meaning of Dorjé Nenjorma: the meaning is described in the “Perfection of Wisdom”; the emptiness of appearance, the emptiness of sound, and the emptiness of awareness are indistinguishable, and are the abiding manner of the mind itself” with Tibetan transcription noted on page 275, note 30, “*don gyis rdo rje rnal 'byor ma ni / smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin* [3] *zhes brjod bya'i don ni / snang stong grags stong rigs stong dbyer med pa sems nyid kyis bzhugs tshul* / . An alternative translation: “Actual Dorjé Nenjorma is said to be “unutterable, inconceivable, inexpressible Perfect Wisdom” which indicates that the emptiness of appearance, the emptiness of sound, and the emptiness of awareness are indistinguishable and the abiding mode of the mind itself (or, “the indistinguishable emptiness of appearance, sound, and awareness is the abiding mode of the mind itself).”

opening verse for the Tibetan version of the *Heart of Wisdom*, if even recognized at all, is not often discussed by modern scholars.

The popularity of this verse in Tibetan Buddhist culture is well-known. The famous Tibetan translator Lobsang P. Lhalungpa (1926-2008) attributed this verse to the Buddha himself as a description of the sublime nature of diamondlike meditative absorption (1986:xli). Matthew Kapstein has stated with regard to the opening verse of the Tibetan version of the *Heart of Wisdom* that, “I would not be far wrong in holding that all traditionally educated Tibetan Buddhists, regardless of sectarian affiliation, know this verse by heart...” (2000:110-111). The prominence and popularity of this opening verse is well-attested in the works of Tibetan scholars since the twelfth century. Is this verse a Tibetan creation or does it have a basis in Indian forms of Buddhism? Are there Indian Buddhist textual sources for this verse? When did Tibetan Buddhists begin to recite this verse in their monastic institutions? The following sections demonstrate that the verse in question is found in Indian Buddhist sources, was recited at Vikramaśīla monastery in India, and that the tradition of reciting this verse as a preliminary to the recitation of the *Heart of Wisdom* itself was brought to Tibet by Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982–1054 CE).

In the currently available Tibetan historical and commentarial literature, Tibetan commentators since the twelfth century onwards often attribute the opening verse to either the Buddha’s son Rāhula (*sgra gcan ’dzin*), to the *Prajñāpāramitāstotra* by Rāhulabhadra, or to Nāgārjuna. A good example of this manner of attribution is found in works of the twelfth century Kagyudpa (*bka’ rgyud pa*) scholar Gampopa Sönam Rinchen (*sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen*, 1079–1153 CE), who cites the verse in four different works in his collected writings. In his

famous *Ornament of Precious Liberation* he attributed the verse to the Buddha's son Rāhula,<sup>30</sup> while in another minor work he attributed the verse to the Indian master Nāgārjuna.<sup>31</sup> In brief, Gampopa is not sure where the verse comes from, and a number of Tibetan commentators following in his footsteps repeat the same vague source attributions to the opening verse.

Is the opening verse found in Rāhulabhadra's *Prajñāpāramitāstotra*? Rāhulabhadra's *Praise to Perfect Wisdom* consists of about twenty *ślokas* and is extant only as a preface to Sanskrit manuscripts of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and *Pañcaviṃśatiprajñāpāramitā*. The complete *stotra* has been edited and translated in the notes to the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* by Étienne Lamotte in 1949 and also in a later article by M. Hahn in 1988.<sup>32</sup> As recently noted by Karma Phuntsho (2005: 229, note 28), "although this verse is attributed to Rāhulabhadra by Tibetan scholars, it does not appear in the *Prajñāpāramitāstotra*." So where is this verse located?

In brief, I have so far located the opening verse in three works by eleventh century Indian Buddhist authors who were from Vikramaśīla monastery. These works include, as indicated in Table 1, Ānandagarbha's *Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍalavidhi* in column two, Ratnakīrti's *Yogacaturdevastotra* in column three, and Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna's *General Explanation of, and Framework for Understanding, the Two Realities* in column four.

<sup>30</sup> sGam po pa, *gsung 'bum* [etext W22393:001:0038], *Dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan ces bya ba bzhugs so: sgra gcan 'dzin gyis yum la bstod pa las kyang\*/ smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin / / ma skyes mi 'gag nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid / / so so rang rig ye shes spyod yul ba / / dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo / /*. English translation in Roesler *et al*, 2015, 326; Guenther 1959, 215.

<sup>31</sup> sGam po pa, *gsung 'bum* [etext W22393:001:0006], *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs bzhugs so: de lta bu ci yang ma yin pa'i don de la rig pa zhes bya stel/ ye shes kyi spyod yul yin pa las / rnam rtog gi blos mthong ba ma yin te / des na rje klu sgrub kyis / smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin / / ma skyes mi 'gag nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid / / so so rang rig ye shes spyod yul ba / / dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo / / zhes gsungs so*

<sup>32</sup> Étienne Lamotte (1949), *Le traité de la grande vertu de sagesse de Nāgārjuna-Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*. (Traduction annotée). Louvain: Bureaux du Muséeon, pp. 1060-1065. See Hahn 1988, "Bemerkungen zu zwei Texten aus dem Phudrag-Kanjur."

All three of these authors lived and composed these works during the Pāla dynastic period. The historian Alexis Sanderson, in his recent work on the rise and dominance of Śaivism in India's medieval period, has outlined how under the Pālas rulers (r. c. 750–1200) “Mahāyāna Buddhism in eastern India witnessed an extraordinary development in all its branches, particularly in the Tantric Way of Mantras (, the Mantranaya)” (Sanderson 2009:87-108). This turbulent, yet creative, period of Buddhist literature and culture coincided with the final period of in the development of *Prajñāpāramitā* literature, a phase that emphasized the ritual use of *Prajñāpāramitā* texts and cultivated visualizations of *Prajñāpāramitā* as a hypostasized deity with attributes. In this period of literature, texts such as the *Prajñāpāramitānayasatapañcaśatikā* (“The 150 methods”) began to contain esoteric Buddhist terminology like *vajra*, *guhya*, and *siddhi*. The literature at this time also displayed signs of hypostatizing the qualities of *Prajñāpāramitā* into a wisdom goddess (*prajñā*). This is evident in the *Prajñāpāramitānāmāṣṭasataka* (“The 108 qualities”) and the *Prajñāpāramitāstrotra* (“Hymn to the Goddess”). Sanderson notes that during the reign of Dharmapāla, fifty religious foundations (*dharmādhikārāḥ*) were created, with thirty-five devoted to the study of *Prajñāpāramitā* texts under the influence of the scholar-advisor Haribhadra (Sanderson 2009:92), and that Haribhadra's pupil, Buddhajñāna, a master of the Tantric system of *Guhyasamāja*, became the first Vajrācārya of Vikramaśīla monastery. In brief, Vikramaśīla monastery in the Pāla dynastic period was infused with the practice and rituals of *Prajñāpāramitā* and the Tantric Way of Mantras (Mantranaya). Ānandagarbha's *Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍalavidhi*, Ratnakīrti's *Yogacaturdevastotra*, and Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna's *General Explanation* are products of this era and reflect the doctrinal interpretation and ritual praise of *Prajñāpāramitā*.

Ānandagarbha's *Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍalavidhi* is a ritual text for the means (*upāyikā*)<sup>33</sup> of the *maṇḍala* of *Prajñāpāramitā* in thirteen folios. There seems to have been two well-known esoteric Buddhist authors with the name Ānandagarbha, one is a ninth-century scholar discussed by Sanderson (2009) and the other is an Ācārya from Magadha, who flourished in the time of King Mahīpāla (ca. 988-1038 CE). The Tibetan historian Tāranātha tells us that Ācārya Ānandagarbha belonged to the Mahāsāṃghika ordination lineage and studied at Vikramaśīla monastery.<sup>34</sup> The latter Ācārya Ānandagarbha is the one who authored the *maṇḍalavidhi* under examination as he was a contemporary of both Ratnakīrti and Atīsa. His eleventh century dates fits with the current of *Prajñāpāramitā* worship and ritualization that was occurring between the tenth and twelfth centuries at Vikramaśīla and in west Tibet.<sup>35</sup> Ānandagarbha's *Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍalavidhi* outlines the visualization of a *maṇḍala* of *Prajñāpāramitā* according to the principles of Yoga tantra. The verse under consideration occurs midway through the text, where, having visualized all the Tathāgatas and bodhisattvas that comprise the *maṇḍala*, one then recites verses of taking refuge. The parallel to the *Heart of Wisdom* opening verse occurs in column two as indicated in Table 1. The only difference between the *Heart of Wisdom* opening verse and the one in Ānandagarbha's *maṇḍalavidhi* is the final phrase which states that “one takes refuge in” (*skyabs su mchi*), rather the paying homage to (*phyag 'tshal*), the mother of the buddhas.

Ratnakīrti also wrote a *Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍalavidhi*, his work and Ānandagarbha's being the only extant *maṇḍalavidhis* devoted to *Prajñāpāramitā*. However, the verse under

<sup>33</sup> *Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍalopāyikā* (P 3468, 263b1-279b6 (vol.77) in Peking. *Upāyikā* (Edgerton 1953, “means”).

<sup>34</sup> Gustav Roth, *Bhikṣuṇī-Vinaya*, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute (Patna 1970), p. xvi.

<sup>35</sup> On the worship of *Prajñāpāramitā* during this time See Luczanits.

consideration is not found in this work. Rather, a related verse is found in Ratnakīrti's *Yogacaturdevastotra*. Ratnakīrti's *Yogacaturdevastotra*, whose title means "Praise to the Deity of the Four Yogas," is a work of approximately three folios that praises *Prajñāpāramitā* among other topics. The text is a classic example of Buddhist poetic meter and verse with a great amount of word-play that cannot be comprehended without an Indic based manuscript. A stanza that corresponds with the *Heart of Wisdom* opening verse occurs midway through the text. The sentence before the verse reads "Praise to the deity of the maṇḍala of the Dharmakāya." Ratnakīrti's version of the verse, as given in column three of Table 1, differs in the fourth line of the verse which reads "I salute and prostrate to..." rather than "I bow down..."

The final correspondence with the *Heart of Wisdom* opening verse I have so far located occurs in a work of Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna's entitled *General Explanation of, and Framework for Understanding, the Two Realities* (Apple 2016; Apple 2018, 171–266). This work, contained within an one hundred and twenty-four folio manuscript, furnishes an exposition of the Middle Way (*madhyamaka*) thought of Nāgārjuna based on an exegesis of conventional reality and ultimate reality within the framework of Mahāyāna path structures found in texts attributed to Maitreya-nātha. Atiśa cites the verse at the very beginning of his explanation of ultimate reality (Apple 2016, 696; Apple 2018, 248). He introduces the citation by explaining that ultimate reality is without characteristics since it is inexpressible due to being beyond referents (*tha snyad kyi yul*) and not being an object of word or thought. As indicated in column four of Table 1, Atiśa's citation exactly matches the opening verse of the Tibetan version of the *Heart of Wisdom* found in later extant Tibetan commentaries and liturgical works.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> An example of an early extant matching citation of the verse in a Tibetan commentary is in the *Sher snying 'don pa'i man ngag bar chad kun sel* ("Dispelling all obstacles, the special instructions of reciting the *Heart of Wisdom*") James B. Apple, ©2024. *Calgary Studies in Buddhism*, Vol. 1. Calgary, Alberta. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial- NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

The texts by these three authors indicate that a verse corresponding to, or closely resembling, the opening verse of the Tibetan Long recension of the *Heart of Wisdom* was recited at Vikramaśīla monastery. But was the *Heart of Wisdom* recited at Vikramaśīla monastery? In a rare third person account of activity at medieval Indian Buddhist monasteries, a Tibetan translator sent to Vikramaśīla to invite Atiśa to west Tibet, Naktso Lotsāwa Tsültrim Gyalwa (Nag tsho lo tsā ba tshul khriṃs rgyal, 1011-1064 CE), recounted how he met Atiśa while reciting the *Heart of Wisdom* at Vikramaśīla on several different occasions. The passage reads,

“Then one day I was reciting the *Heart of Wisdom* at one of the gates of the monastery. At the point [in the sūtra] where I said, “Form *ha*, feeling *ha*,” other paṇḍitas did not say anything. But once the Lord [Atiśa] was walking by. He smiled and stopped, “Thank you, āyusmat. But that is the vulgar pronunciation. Say, “form *a*, feeling *a*.” I [not realizing that he was Atiśa] thought, “This kind paṇḍita seems special. He is gentle, humble, clear, and whatever he says is spoken with the wish to be helpful. If I cannot invite the Lord [Atiśa], I must invite him [to come to Tibet].” In the morning, I was saying, “form *a*, feeling *a*,” when the Lord smiled and said, “Venerable one, even that comes out sounding harsh. This is the speech of the protector Avalokita, there’s nothing wrong with it. It is fine to say, ‘no form, no feeling.’” Thus he spoke. As a result, an even stronger faith in him was born in me.”<sup>37</sup>

Atiśa passed by the Tibetan translator and stopped to help the translator with his pronunciation in reciting the *Heart of Wisdom*. Atiśa did not question what the translator was

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by Sgra tshad rin chen rnam rgyal (1318-1388), in Khomthar Jamlö (khom̄ thar ’jam los) (ed.) (2014), vol. 4, p. 227.

<sup>37</sup> Apple 2019, 27–28; Decler 1997,172; Tibetan (p. 232.3-15): *de nas bdag gis gtsugs lag khang gi sgo drung cig tu shes rab snying po ’don pa’i med kyi thad ka na mar la / gzugs ni ha / tshor ba ni ha byas pas* [232.5] *paṇḍi ta gzhan rnams kyang mi zer ba la / lan cig jo bo byon pas / zhal ’dzum mdzad nas bzhugs te / tshe dang ldan pa ’or che / ’o na yang ’phral skad yin / gzugs a / tshor ba zer ba yin gsung / der bdag ti rtog pa ’di thugs rje chen po dang ldan pa’i paṇḍi ta khyad du ’phags pa cig snang / lcam pa / thugs rgyal chung ba / dang ba ’dren pa / gang la gang gis skad du phan sems kyis* [232.10] *gsung ’byon pa / jo bo gdan ma ’drons kyang ’di cis kyang gdan ’drons pa cig byed dgos snyam mo / nangs par yang gzugs a / tshor ba a byas tsa na / yang jo bo zhal ’dzum mdzad nas / tshe dang ldan pa de la’ang gyong bo cig las mi ’ong ba snang / mgon po spyen ras gzigs kyi gsung yin / de yang ngan rgyu cang med / gzugs med / tshor ba med byas pas chog gsung / der bdag lhag par* [232.15] *du yang dad pa skyes nas /; from ’brom ston pa rgyal ba’i ’byung ngas kyis mdzad pa’i jo bo rje’i rnam thar yig chos kyi ’byung gnas zhes bya ba bzhugs so* (2012:218-275).

reciting nor ask what text was being recited. Atiśa recognized what text was being recited even from the foreign recitation of a Tibetan monk. This episode therefore indicates that the practice of reciting the *Heart of Wisdom* was not something out of the ordinary at Vikramaśīla monastery.

Among the three authors discussed only Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna travelled to Tibet. Atiśa spent thirteen years in Tibet from his arrival in 1042 CE until his passing in 1054 CE. Tibetan historians note that when Atiśa first arrived in west Tibet, among his numerous activities was to correct the translations of Yoga tantra texts of Ānandagarbha and spread widely the empowerments and pith instructions for their teaching and practice. *Butön's History of Buddhism* states,

“When [Atiśa] visited the great translator Rinchen Zangpo’s room, the translator first did not offer prostrations. The scholar [Atiśa] offered praise to each of the secret mantra deities in the translator’s room, which delighted the great translator. They discussed the teachings, [then Rinchen Zangpo] offered prostrations [to Atiśa], requested instructions, and translated many texts. In particular, he corrected [the translations of] yoga tantra texts according to Ānandagarbha's commentaries and spread widely their empowerments and the pith instructions for their teaching and practice.”<sup>38</sup>

The practice of reciting the preliminary opening verse to the ritual recitation of the *Heart of Wisdom* may have been among the teachings and practices of Ānandagarbha that Atiśa brought with him from Vikramaśīla to west Tibet. Although not direct textual evidence, an early extant commentary on reciting the *Heart of Wisdom* by Sgra tshad rin chen rnam rgyal (1318-

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<sup>38</sup> *Butön's History of Buddhism in India and Its Spread to Tibet*, Boston: Snow Lion, 2013:300]. Tibetan: *nag tshos lo tsā byas te byon te lo tsā ba chen po rin chen bzang po'i gzim khang du byon pa'i tshe dang po lo tstsha bas phyag ma mdzad de / paṇḍi tas lo tsā ba'i gzim khang gi gsang sngags kyi lha rnams la bstod pa re mdzad nas lo chen mnyes te chos kyi 'bel gnam mdzad de phyag byas chos zhus 'gyur mang po mdzad de khyad par du yo ga rnams kun dga' snying po'i 'grel pa dang bstun nas dag par bcos te dbang bka' dang bshad sgrub kyi man ngag rgya cher spel lo / / . Bu ston chos 'byung 1988:201, Pe cing: krung go bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang.*

1388) cites the preliminary verse at the beginning of the work and then provides a lineage list of its practice with the first historical figure listed as Atiśa.<sup>39</sup>

When did Tibetans begin to recite the verse as a preliminary to reciting the *Heart of Wisdom* as a monastic ritual practice? D.S. Lopez Jr.'s translation of Tendar Lharampa's (*btsan dar lha ram pa*, b. 1759) commentary on the *Heart of Wisdom, The Jewel Light Illuminating the Meaning*, composed in 1839, contains a brief discussion on the preliminary opening verse (Lopez 1988, 147). Tendar Lharampa mentions that in the great Geluk (*dge lugs*) monasteries of Sera and Drepung ('bras spung) the custom is to recite the verse of praise as a preliminary practice to reciting the *Heart of Wisdom* itself (Cf. Silk 1994, 170). Tendar Lharampa's discussion documents the presence of the recitation practice of the preliminary verse at least in the nineteenth century. However, a slightly earlier source is found in a work of the great master Tāranātha Kunga Nyingpo (*kun dga' snying po*, 1575-1635).

Tāranātha states in his *Beginner's Stages [of Recitation], a Source of Benefit and Happiness* that,

“If one wishes to practice the *Heart of Wisdom*, [visualize] in the space in front of one that the Tathāgata is in the gesture of conquering Māra, with the retinue of the Noble Avalokiteśvara replying to Śāriputra, principally surrounded by the Saṃgha of the greater and lesser vehicle. While absorbed in meditation on the meaning of emptiness, as a preliminary recite whichever praise of the Perfection of Wisdom such as “The Perfection of Wisdom, who is ineffable, inconceivable, unutterable...” and so forth, then recite the *Sūtra of the Heart of Wisdom* as much as possible...”<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Sgra tshad rin chen nam rgyal (1318-1388), page 227.7–13: Tārā, Atiśa (982–1054), Dānaśīla, zla ba rgyal mtshan (b. 11th century), dbang bka' gdams pa, stod lung skyer sgang pa ye shes seng ge (skyer sgang pa chos kyi seng ge??, 1143–1216), byang chen gyi sangs rgyas sgom pa (1179–1250), snar thang gi mchims nam kha' grags (1210–1285), khro phu'i slob dpon chen po tshad ma'i skyes bu (b. 13th century), mtshan brjod par dka' ba'i bu ston lo tsā ba chen po (1290–1364).

<sup>40</sup> Tā ra nā tha. “*Las dang po pa'i rim pa phan bde'i 'byung gnas.*” gSung 'bum tā ra nā tha ('dzam thang par ma), vol. 14, pp. 427–97. Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC), Volume Pha, 24a4-7: [24a4] / shes rab snying po'i mdo bsgrub bya bar 'dod na / mdun gyis nam mkhar de bzhin gshegs pa bdud 'dul gyi phyag rgya can 'khor shA ri'i James B. Apple, ©2024. *Calgary Studies in Buddhism*, Vol. 1. Calgary, Alberta. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial- NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.

Tāranātha's work demonstrates that reciting a preliminary verse to the *Heart of Wisdom* occurred in the seventeenth century if not earlier. Yet, Tāranātha's brief discussion implies something more. Namely that the recitation of the preliminary verse, as well as recitation of the *Heart of Wisdom* itself, was, and still is, considered a common beginner's practice in Tibetan Buddhist monastic education. This suggests that documenting the history of the preliminary verse recitation as an opening practice to the recitation of the *Heart of Wisdom* in traditional Tibetan Buddhist monasteries may be difficult to trace as the opening verse would be part of a common ritual practices not requiring extensive commentary.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the opening verse of the long Tibetan version of the *Heart of Wisdom* originates in India and was ritually recited in at least one major Indian monastery during the late Pāla period, the monastery of Vikramaśīla. The three sources that I have documented demonstrate the ritual and philosophical application of this verse in later Tibetan Buddhist culture. Ānandagarbha and Ratnakīrti's citation of this verse occurs in the context of praising *Prajñāpāramitā* in poetic meter while Atiśa's citation furnishes an authoritative source for demonstrating the meaning of ultimate reality (*paramārthasatya*). Tibetan commentators over the centuries will utilize the preliminary opening verse to either praise *Prajñāpāramitā* or to demonstrate the ineffable nature of ultimate reality. The tradition of ritual recitation of the opening verse and its philosophical application was initially brought by Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna

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bu dang `phags pa spyān ras gzigs zhu lan mdzad pa gtso bor gyur pa'i theg pa che chung gi dge `dun gyis bskor bar mos la / stong nyid kyi don la sems bzhin du / smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin // zhes sogs sher phyin kyi bstod pa gang rung zhig sngon du `gro bas / shes rab snying po'i mdo gang nus su bton la /

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to Tibet and continues on in the present day throughout Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and institutions around the world.

Table 1. Opening Verse of the Tibetan version of the *Heart Sūtra* Comparison [Textual differences in bold italics].

1	2	3	4
Opening Verse of Tibetan <i>Heart Sūtra</i>	Ānandagarbha <i>Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍala-vidhi</i> (Derge, 254b4–5)	Ratnakīrti (Rin chen grags pa), <i>Yogacaturdevastotra</i> (Derge, 247b5–6)	Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, <i>General Explanation</i> (Apple 2016, 2018)
	Vikramaśīla Monastery	Vikramaśīla Monastery	Vikramaśīla Monastery
smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin/  /ma skyes ma 'gag nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid/  so so rang rig ye shes dpyod yul ba/  /dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo	/smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin/  /ma skyes <b>mi</b> 'gag nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid/  /so so rang rig ye shes spyod yul ba/  /dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la <b>skyabs su mchi</b> /	smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin/  /ma skyes <b>mi</b> 'gag nam kha'i ngo bo nyid/  /so so rang rig ye shes sbyor yul ba/  /dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal <b>bstod</b>	smra bsam brjod med shes rab pha rol phyin/  /ma skyes ma 'gag nam mkha'i ngo bo nyid/  /so so rang rig ye shes dpyod yul ba/  /dus gsum rgyal ba'i yum la phyag 'tshal lo

## Abbreviations and Bibliography

IDP International Dunhuang Project (<http://idp.bl.uk/>)

IOL Indian Office Library

Msk Manuscript Kanjur

Mvy Mahāvvyutpatti

Pt Pelliot Tibétain

*v.l.* *varia lectio* (variant reading)

### Tibetan Dunhuang Manuscripts

IOL Tib J 53

IOL Tib J 122

IOL Tib J 124

IOL Tib J 125

IOL Tib J 297

IOL Tib J 751

Or.8212/77

Pelliot Tibétain 495

Pelliot Tibétain 496

Pelliot Tibétain 1257 (Apple and Apple 2017)

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*Akṣayamatīnirdeśanāmamahāyānasūtra* ('Phags pa blo gros mi zad pas bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo). Tōh. no. 175. Dergé Kanjur, vol. MA, folios 79a1–174b7. Jens Braarvig, *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra*. Solum Forlag (Oslo, 1993).

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*Prajñāpāramitāmaṇḍalavidhi* (*Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga*) of Ānandagarbha. Tōh. no. 2644. Dergé Tanjur, vol. JU, folios 247r.4-260r.7.

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