

**Apocryphal Treatment for Conze’s Heart Problems:
“Non-attainment”, “Apprehension” and
“Mental Hanging” in the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya***

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Conze’s critical editions, translations and commentary on the Sanskrit Heart Sūtra indicated three problematic statements: 1. “no attainment and no non-attainment” (§1.1); 2. “because of non-attainment(ness)” (§1.2); and 3. “without thought coverings” (§1.3). Utilizing Nattier’s theory of the text’s history (§1.4), we trace back these three phrases from the Chinese Heart Sūtra, to the Chinese larger *Prajñāpāramitā* texts, to the Sanskrit *Pañcaviṃśati* (§1.5). Subsequently, we generate new readings and incidentally a new structure for these three phrases, distinct from the Sanskrit Heart Sūtra, which is possibly apocryphal. Our new readings are: 1. “no attainment” as no realization (§2). 2. “due to engagement in non-apprehension” (§3). 3. “the mind does not hang on anything” (§4). The new structure ties the usage of the second phrase back to the first phrase within the Sūtra context of “Therefore, in emptiness there is no form, ... no attainment; due to engagement in non-apprehension”, rather than at the start of the next section. The third phrase indicates the mind which does not take any object, a synonym for non-apprehension. While the readings and overall structure are new, they still reflect the core notions, i.e. the heart, of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā*, the key Perfection of Wisdom texts (§5).

1. Conze’s Heart Sūtra Problems

Many years ago, Edward Conze established himself as the leading Western authority on the *Prajñāpāramitā* in the 20th century. This was achieved through

his prolific critical editions, translations and explanations of this range of literature. Among these, a translation and commentary on the Heart Sūtra in English. This work was based on his very comprehensive critical edition of the text, "The Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya Sūtra", originally published in 1948, and again in his *Thirty Years of Buddhist Studies* in 1967. This critical edition used no less than twelve Nepalese Sanskrit manuscripts, seven Chinese editions and another seven Chinese translations, two manuscripts from Japan, and the Tibetan. Conze identified two problems in the Sanskrit text, both related to variant readings that required some serious explanation. To facilitate an understanding of these problems, we would like first to reproduce Conze's own translation of this part of the Heart Sūtra in English. Then we shall reproduce the relevant Sanskrit critical edition material, complete with critical apparatus.

For the translation, his commentary, and the critical edition upon which they were based, Conze analyzed the entire text of the Heart Sūtra into eight divisions, numbered from I to VIII. According to Conze, divisions II, III, IV-V, and VI-VII correspond respectively to the four holy truths of dissatisfaction (II), origin (III), cessation (IV-V) and path (VI-VII). Conze's problematic material spans from his division V, "The dialectics of emptiness, third stage", through to division VI, "The concrete embodiment of full emptiness, and its practical basis" (1958: 81). Thus, by Conze's own analysis, the problematic material spans his division into the truth of cessation and that of the path.

The first passage in Conze's translation of the Sūtra, in division V "The dialectics of emptiness", reads as follows (Conze 1958: 97):

[Sūtra, V] Therefore, O Śāriputra, in emptiness there is no form [the five aggregates; the eighteen elements; the twelve limbs of dependent origination in forward and reverse order; the four holy truths.] There is no cognition, no attainment and no non-attainment.

It is in the next section of his divisions, section VI, "The concrete embodiment of full emptiness, and its practical basis", that the passage in question continues as follows (Conze 1958: 101f):

[Sūtra, VI] Therefore, O Śāriputra, it is because of his non-attainment-ness that a Bodhisattva, through having relied on the perfection of wisdom, dwells without thought-coverings. In the absence of thought coverings he has not been made to tremble, he can overcome what can upset, and in the end he attains to Nirvana.

For reference, we here reproduce divisions V and VI from Conze's critical edition corresponding to the above English translation, in full, including the footnotes most relevant to our discussion in their original numbering (Conze 1967: 151f):

[Sūtra, V] ²² *tasmāc Chāriputra* ²³ *śūnyatāyāṃ* ²⁴ *na rūpaṃ na vedanā na samjñā na saṃskārāḥ na vijñānam*, ²⁵ *na cakṣuḥ-śrota-ghrāṇa-jihvā-kāya-manāṃsi* ²⁶ *na rūpa-śabda-gandha-rasa-spraṣṭavya-dharmāḥ* ²⁷ *na cakṣur-dhātur* ²⁸ *yāvan na* ²⁹ *manovijñāna-dhātuḥ* ³⁰ *na-avidyā* ³¹ *na-avidyā-kṣayo* ³² *yāvan na* ³³ *jarāmaraṇaṃ na jarāmaraṇakṣayo* ³⁴ *na duḥkhasamudaya-nirodha-mārgā* ³⁵ *na jñānaṃ* ³⁶ *na prāptir na-aprāptiḥ*.

[Sūtra, VI] ³⁷ *tasmāc Chāriputra* ³⁸ *aprāptitvād bodhisattvo* ³⁹ *prajñā-pāramitām āsṛitya* ⁴⁰ *viharaty acittāvaraṇaḥ*. ⁴¹ *cittāvaraṇa-nāstitvād* ⁴² *atrasto* ⁴³ *viparyāsa-atikrānto*. ⁴⁴ *niṣṭhā-nirvāṇaḥ*.

It is within these two divisions, V and VI, that the problematic variant readings occur. However, rather than Conze's point of view that these are two problems, we shall sub-divide the former into two distinct issues, making three in total. The reasons for the distinction will soon become apparent. In addition to Conze's position vis-à-vis the three, we shall also cite several other English translations and modern commentaries on these passages. In order to highlight the lack of consensus—if not outright confusion—over the understanding of this popular text, we shall draw from a range of modern works representing the Tibetan, Chinese, Korean and Japanese traditions.

Conze 35 N^k adds: *na-ajñānaṃ*.

Conze 36 So N^{bek} Cade J^b ChT 8, Ti. – J^a: *na prāptitvaṃ*. – N^{cdim} ChT^{1,2,5,6}: *na prāptiḥ*. ChT 9: *na prāptitvaṃ ca na-aprāptiḥ*. – C^b *na prāptir na-abhisamaya*.

Conze 38 N^{ab?c?d?eim} Cg Ti: *aprāptitvāt*. – J^b: *aprāptitvena*. – C^b: *aprāptitva*. – J^a om. *aprāptitvāt*. – C^d: *aprāptitā-prāptiryāvavat*. – C^e: *na prāptirna-aprāptir yāvat*; this is Feer's correction for what I read as: *aprāptitāprāptir-yāvat*. – *bodhisattvasya* J^a. – C^b J^b: *bodhisattvānām*. – N^{bcea?}: *bodhisattvā mahāsattvā*. – N^k: *bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ*. – N^m: *bodhisattvaḥ*. – C^c: *bodhisattva*. – C^g Nⁱ: *bodhisattvā*. – Ti: *byañ-chub sems-dpa' rnam*s. – C^e om. *Bodhisattvo*.

Conze 40 J^a: *viharati cittāvaraṇa*. *cittāvaraṇa*. – Kokio's first copy: *vaharaty citvāvaraṇaḥ*, which he corrects to *viharani citnavaraṇaḥ*. – J^b: *viharati cittāvaraṇaḥ*. *cittav-*. – C^c: *viḥarya cita / avarṇa cita / a (varṇa-nā) stitva*. – C^g: *viharatya ciyāvaraṇa*. – N^b: *viharanti*. – Suzuki: *viharato*. – C^{ae}: *viharaṇś*. – N^m: *viharati / nacittāraṃvana-mātratvād anuttarāyāṃ samyaksambodhau paryāsa-tikrāntāṃtāniṣṭhā*. – Nⁱ: *-āyāḥ ... śā? Māsāntikrānmo ... - acittāvaraṇaḥ* om. N^{abcde} C^{ae} Ti.

Conze 41 Cade: *cittālamanaṃ*. – N^{abcd?ek}: *cittāraṃbaṇa-mātratvāt*. – Ti: *sems-la sgrib-pa med ciñ*.

1.1 The Problem of “*na prāptir nāprāptiḥ*”

Conze's first problem, our first and second problems, concerns “... ³⁶*na prāptir na-aprāptiḥ*. ³⁷*tasmāc Chāriputra* ³⁸*aprāptivād bodhisattvo ...*”; translated as “... no attainment and no nonattainment. Therefore, O Śāriputra, it is because of his nonattainmentness that a Bodhisattva...”¹ At footnote 36, we see that some editions only deny *prāptiḥ* (attainment), where others also deny its opposite, *aprāptiḥ* (nonattainment), at the end of this long standard taxonomic list of *dharmas*. Some versions also negate *abhisamaya* (direct realization). Conze states that (1967: 155)

the *sūtra* originally was content to deny in regard to emptiness all the main categories of Buddhist analysis. Later a part of the tradition thought to guard against misunderstanding by denying also the negation of those categories that easily form opposites. Thus Kumārajīva and several of the MSS. know nothing of the clause ³⁰*na vidyā* ³¹*na vidyākṣayo*; and so with ³⁶*na-a-prāptiḥ*, which appears in the Chinese translations only quite late, after about 850, in ChT^{8,9}.

It is the matter of “non-attainment” in particular, at the end of Conze's Division V that we would like to draw to the reader's attention. In our study here, this shall be our first problem. To this, Conze's commentary to his English translation gives the following interpretation (Conze 1958: 100)

[Commentary:] Finally, (8) Attainment means the obtaining of ecstatic meditation, of the four Paths (of a Streamwinner, Once-Returner, Never-Returner, and Arhat), and of the enlightenment of Buddhahood.

While he describes “no attainment” thus, no description of the immediately subsequent statement on “no nonattainment” is given. One could argue, though, that if Conze refers to attainments in meditation and spiritual realization, then “no nonattainment” could simply mean that it is not the case that the bodhisattva is lacking such states.

¹ Other noteworthy English translations and commentaries include: Thich & Levitt (1988: 42), Shengyan (2001: 97, 114), Tenzin & Thupten (2007: 125ff), and Brunnhölzl (2012: 145).

1.2 The Problem of “*aprāptivād...*”

Our second problem also derives from the latter half of Conze's passage, that is, “...³⁸*aprāptivād bodhisattvo...*”; translated as “... it is because of his non-attainment-ness that a Bodhisattva...”, etc., which appears as the opening statement of his Division VI.² This is in turn explained in the commentary as (Conze 1958: 103)

[Commentary:] Non-attainment-ness sums up the “no attainment and no non-attainment” of no. 36, which in their turn summarized section V. It can be understood to mean that the Bodhisattva is “indifferent to any kind of personal attainment”, and so I have translated BT 146 and SS 54. Using an old English mystical term one can also say that the Bodhisattva is “devoid of any propriety”.

This is more explicit than the earlier commentary, which basically skips over the term “non-attainment”. This translated term is now glossed as meaning “indifferent” or without “propriety”. Note that Conze's translation includes the suffix “-ness”, which, as we shall examine below, is due to his reliance on Sanskrit versions of the text.

In order to deal with the issue of negating both the term and its opposite, Conze resorts to what we may call a trans-logical or mystical explanation. In his critical edition he claims that “[o]bviously the rules of ordinary logic are abrogated in this *sūtra*. Contradictions exist in emptiness” (1967: 155); and “while the *aprāpti* is not a fact, *aprāptitva* is the basis of the conduct of a bodhi-sattva... one of the paradoxes in which the *sūtra* gives expression to the laws of spiritual life” (1967: 156). While the overturn of logic and other conceptualization is not at all uncommon in religious and spiritual literature, and Conze himself refers here to Dionysius Areopagita and earlier to old English mysticism for authority, one must be wary of using such arguments to explain away all manner of textual and logical tensions and contradictions. Due to his manner of analysis, it is our overall impression that this matter is still somewhat unresolved and worthy of deeper examination.

²Other noteworthy English translations and commentaries include: Red Pine (2004: 129ff), Mu (2010: 7, 73, etc.), and Brunnhölzl (2012: 148).

1.3 The Problem of “*cittāvaraṇa*” or “*cittālabhāna*”?

The third problem, Conze's second, is that of “*cittāvaraṇa*”, for which there are several variants of “*cittālabhāna*”, in footnotes 40 and 41, again found in division VI (Conze 1967: 152). Conze favored the former term “*cittāvaraṇa*” for his later English translation of “thought coverings” (1958: 101).³ However, he acknowledged in the critical edition that haplography in the Nepalese Devanagari manuscripts could easily cause this variant (1967: 156)

We may suppose that originally there was चित्तरम्बण [*cittārambaṇa*]. Now ल [*la*] and र [*ra*], and ब [*ba*] and व [*va*] are constantly interchanged in Nepalese MSS., and the म् [*m*] is represented by an *anusvāra* [*ṃ*]. This would give “रंवण” [*raṃvaṇa*]. If the *anusvāra* is dropped, as often happens, a simple juxtaposition would lead to “वरण” [*varaṇa*]. ... The normal Chinese equivalent for *āvaraṇa* is 障 [*zhàng*]. ... The earlier versions ... all have 心無罣礙 [*xīn wú guà'ài*] ... related to a meaning “hung up”, “suspended”, and therefore seems to have more affinity to *ā-LAMB-ana* than to *ā-VAR-aṇa*.

With no clear factor to decide between the received Sanskrit text before him and a fairly straightforward haplographic issue that really makes more sense, Conze was forced to admit that “Although the reading *cittāvaraṇa* makes sense it is perhaps not the original reading” (1967: 157).

In his commentary to the English translation, where he used “*cittāvaraṇa*”, Conze parsed “*citta*” as “either (a) ‘thoughts’, mental activities, or (b) ‘Thought, Spirit’; and “*āvaraṇa*”, from √*vri*, as either “obstruction”, “obstacle”, “impediment” or “covering”. The resultant English was “thought coverings”, of three kinds, namely *karma-āvaraṇa*, *kleśa-āvaraṇa* and *jñeya-āvaraṇa*. Noting that “*cittāvaraṇa* is very rare”, Conze “assume[s] it to be identical with the third kind of obstacles, the cognitive ones” (1958: 105). However, he gives no reason or supporting citations for this assumption, and we are still left with a feeling of vagueness about what the passage really means here. In his critical edition, Conze references the Chinese texts for a solution, texts for which he was by no means the specialist that he was vis-à-vis the Sanskrit and Tibetan, demonstrating the potential value of the Chinese translations which have often received rather scathing criticisms

³Other noteworthy English translations and commentaries include: Red Pine (2004: 133), Tenzin & Thupten (2007: 127, 128), Mu (2010: 77f) and Brunnhölzl (2012: 150).

from other scholars. The issue of the value of the Chinese texts will play a key role in our examination here, as we shall now demonstrate.

1.4 Textual History and Nattier's "Apocryphal Text?"

No modern study of a religious text would be complete without an examination of the corpus of various sources, across the classical languages, in their appropriate historical order. With regard to the text-historical issue, our approach may differ from the expected, in that we shall use in particular Nattier's article, "The *Heart Sūtra*: A Chinese Apocryphal Text?" (1992). This study in turn relies quite heavily on earlier research by Fukui Fumimasa, *Hannya shingyō no rekishiteki kenkyū* ["Research into the Composition of the Heart Sūtra"] (1987). Examining the various versions of the text in Chinese and Sanskrit, Nattier shows the following sequence of textual development. In her own words, the conclusion of her article is as follows (Nattier 1992: 198)

In this paper I have sought to demonstrate, primarily on the basis of philological evidence, that a flow chart of the relationships among the Sanskrit and Chinese versions of the *Large Sūtra* and the *Heart Sūtra* can reasonably be drawn in only one sequence: from the Sanskrit *Large Sūtra* to the Chinese *Large Sūtra* of Kumārajīva to the Chinese *Heart Sūtra* popularized by [Xüánzàng] to the Sanskrit *Heart Sūtra*. To assume any other direction of transmission would present insuperable difficulties—or would, at the very least, require postulating a quite convoluted series of processes, which (by virtue of this very convolution) seems considerably less likely to have taken place.

The argument for a back translation is well evidenced, particularly by the fact that while the meaning of the individual words in all these texts correspond, there is only strict equivalence between the Chinese large and Heart *sūtras*, whereas the Sanskrit *Pañcaviṃśati* and Heart Sūtra are quite distinct. The irregularity of the grammatical and other syntactic forms of the Sanskrit Heart Sūtra, quite different from any of the other Sanskrit texts of the genre, is very clear indeed.

This is naturally quite a provocative conclusion, which Nattier is well aware of. While this article was no doubt met with skepticism in the non-academic Buddhist world, perhaps it is the lack of well argued and presented articles to the contrary that really indicates how plausible and convincing her conclusions are. One of the few scholars that we are aware of who has attempted to counter or otherwise

critique Nattier's position is Dan Lusthaus, in his article "The Heart Sūtra in Chinese Yogācāra: Some Comparative Comments on the Heart Sutra Commentaries of Wonch'uk and K'uei-chi" (2003). Note, however: Lusthaus' examinations of Wonch'uk and Kuiji's commentaries does not at all refute Nattier's thesis that the text is a Chinese apocryphal creation, but merely shows very strong evidence that Xūánzàng's version was not the first, as versions by Kumārajīva and others were also known during his time (Lusthaus 2003: 81-87). Therefore, one of Nattier's key findings remains, namely, the very real possibility that the Chinese Heart Sūtra precedes the Sanskrit text. No doubt there are other criticisms of her thesis, but this paper has aims other than a comprehensive critique and review thereof, and we shall adopt it as a working hypothesis.

Having already introduced Conze's critical Sanskrit text (§1), we may now turn immediately to the Chinese versions. Taking Lusthaus' study as an amendment to Nattier, and thus including the possibility of a version at least attributed to Kumārajīva, we presently have six Chinese editions. In historical order and with reference to the portions equivalent to Conze's Divisions V and VI, the six editions are as follows: Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什), Taishō 250,⁴ from 402-412; Xūánzàng (玄奘), Taishō 251,⁵ from 649; Dharmacandra (法月), Taishō 252,⁶ from 738; Prajñā (般若), Taishō 253,⁷ from 790; Prajñācakra (智慧輪), Taishō 254,⁸ from 861; Fāchéng (法成), Taishō 255,⁹ from 856. (All dates from Lancaster 1979, and Nattier 1992: 200 n1; 214 n65). These Chinese transliterations have already been included in Conze's considerations for his critical edition of the Sanskrit text. Note, however, that the Taishō punctuation of periods, commas and so forth are modern additions.

There are thus very strong similarities and consistency through the centuries of Chinese versions of the text. While slight changes can be found, large changes

⁴Kumārajīva 鳩摩羅什: *Móhē Bānrūòbōluómíduō Dàmíngzhòu Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜大明咒經》 (To8, no. 250, p. 847, c17-22).

⁵Xūánzàng 玄奘: *Bānrūòbōluómíduō Xīn Jīng* 《般若波羅蜜多心經》 (To8, no. 251, p. 848, c11-17).

⁶Dharmacandra 法月: *Pǔpiànzhìzàng Bānrūò-bōluómíduō Xīn Jīng* 《普賢智藏般若波羅蜜多心經》 (To8, no. 252, p. 849, b3-9).

⁷Prajñā 般若: *Bānrūòbōluómíduō Xīn Jīng* 《般若波羅蜜多心經》 (To8, no. 253, p. 849, c9-15).

⁸Prajñācakra 智慧輪: *Bānrūòbōluómíduō Xīn Jīng* 《般若波羅蜜多心經》 (To8, no. 254, p. 850, a24-29).

⁹Fāchéng 法成: *Bānrūòbōluómíduō Xīn Jīng* 《般若波羅蜜多心經》 (To8, no. 255, p. 850, c7-14).

are generally absent. In a recent paper, “Experimental core samples of Chinese translations of two Buddhist Sūtras analysed in the light of recent Sanskrit manuscript discoveries” (2010a), Paul Harrison demonstrates very graphically how later Chinese translators owed many of their lexical choices to previous translators, using the *Vajracchedika* and *Vimalakīrtinirdeśa* as examples. The range of differences in our Heart Sūtra “core samples” above displays even less variation than that seen in Harrison’s study. Even Xūánzàng, who was no follower of translation fashion, barely varies from the version attributed to Kumārajīva.

Some comments on the structure and parsing of these Chinese texts are in order. While Conze’s divisions have been applied to the texts, the CBETA punctuation already indicated period breaks at the start of V; at the end of V to indicate the start of VI as a new sentence idea; and at the end of VI. The split between sentences between V and VI is more natural with the last, i.e. Fāchéng’s version, with the addition of “是故舍利子” (*shìgù shèlìzǐ*), but it is not the only possibility for the other versions. In terms of content, as Conze (1967: 155) and Nattier (1992: 193) have already shown, all versions before Fāchéng’s have at the end of V “無智亦無得” (*wúzhì yì wúdé*) or equivalent; only Fāchéng’s version has the extra negation of “...無不得” (*wú búdé*). At the start of VI, all versions read from “以無所得故” (*yǐ wúsuǒdé gù*) which starts the section. Fāchéng’s addition at the start does not detract from this basic meaning, however. We can now proceed to note clearly the basic lexical terms used by the Chinese editions for our three problematic passages.

One: the equivalent term for Conze’s “no attainment” (*na prāptir*), at the end of Division V, for all versions, is “無得” (*wúdé*), with Fāchéng’s addition as “無不得” (*wúbùdé*) being the only variant.

Two: for Conze’s “due to non-attainment-ness” (*aprāptitvāt*) at the start of Division VI, all versions use “以無所得故” (*yǐ wúsuǒdé gù*). Grammatically, the structure “以...故” (*yǐ...gù*) functions as a Sanskrit instrumental, or less commonly as an ablative. The “所” (*sǔo*) usually turns the subsequent verb, in this case “得” (*dé*), into a past participle. The only remaining question then, is the meaning of “得” (*dé*), which we shall return to below.

Three: for the passage where Conze’s translation reads “without thought coverings” (*cittāvaraṇam*), in the middle of Division VI, in all cases, the term “心” (*xīn*) is used, which corresponds well with the Sanskrit “*citta*”. This is fairly unremarkable. The first four Chinese versions, from Kumārajīva to Prajñā, then use “無罣礙” (*wú guā'ài*) and then “無罣礙故” (*wú guā'ài gù*); but Prajñācakra uses

“無障礙” (*wú zhàng'ài*) and “無障礙故” (*wú zhàng'ài gù*), while Fächéng only uses the first expression, lacking the second. Thus Prajñācakra and Fächéng have decided to change the lexeme “罣礙” (*guà'ài*) to “障礙” (*zhàng'ài*). Fächéng is also the exception in using the term only once in Division VI. The other versions use the term twice, and add “故” (*gù*), to the second, which when alone after a verbal form is usually grammatically equivalent to a Sanskrit ablative form. This leaves us with the problem of what is meant by “罣礙” (*guà'ài*) or “障礙” (*zhàng'ài*).

1.5 Tracing the Sources Back To and From the Heart

As for the Chinese translations of the *Pañcaviṃśati*, a few caveats are in order before we delve into the literature. The first caveat is simply that the literature is massively extensive, not only in terms of individual texts, but in that most individual texts also have multiple translations. We must thus apologize that our examination here cannot be exhaustive, due to the time and space constraints involved. Nattier proposed that the source of the Chinese Heart Sūtra may have been Kumārajīva's translation of the larger *Prajñāpāramitā* (1992). So we shall primarily rely on Kumārajīva's *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* translation for parallels of our key phrases in the Chinese Heart Sūtra. A second caveat is due to working between multiple recensions of the text, which involve Chinese translations of different times and translators, while we really have no Indic version that any scholar would say comes even close to a very old, let alone “original” text. That is, when we examine an equivalent Chinese term and then the equivalent location in the Sanskrit text, can we be sure that the Chinese translator was looking at the same Sanskrit term? We simply cannot. Moreover, the use of standardized dictionaries to ascertain “original” Sanskrit terms behind translation idioms can be problematic. For example, the Chinese lexeme “得” (*dé*) was used by Kumārajīva to translate $\sqrt{bhū}$, *prāpta* / *prāpti*, \sqrt{budh} , \sqrt{labh} , and other terms. Paul Harrison's recent paper entitled “Resetting the Diamond” gives an excellent account of how Kumārajīva “flattened” translation terminology through using the same Chinese character for multiple Indic terms in the *Vajracchedikā* (Harrison 2010b), reducing a broad Indic semantic range into a narrower Chinese range. We must be flexible, therefore, and not simply examine the exact string of Chinese characters as they appear in the Chinese versions of the Heart Sūtra alone, but also variants on these.

The first problematic passage concerns “The ‘No Attainment’ Problem”, which we shall first tackle in Section §2. This material is fairly straightforward, as it lies

within the textual content of the Heart Sūtra that is also found within the larger *Pañcaviṃśati Sūtra* and equivalent Chinese translations thereof. The second is “The ‘Due to Non-attainment(ness)’ Problem”, in Section §3. While this issue follows immediately after the material paralleled in the larger texts, Nattier’s text-historical considerations are still valid. We shall thus attempt a reconstruction of how the passage in the Chinese Heart Sūtra follows a form similar to that in the Chinese translations of the larger text, and from there back to the Sanskrit *Pañcaviṃśati*. Third and last is “The ‘Mind Without Mental Obstruction’ Problem”, to be covered in Section §4. The process here is the same as that for the second problem, though we shall discover that translation “flattening” means ascertaining a potential Sanskrit under-text is much more difficult. Having so reviewed Conze’s three problems, attempting to reconstruct not only the individual Sanskrit terms but also the broader ideas underlying them, we shall attempt a rereading of the Heart Sūtra. It is intended that this reading, an “Understanding from the Heart of Perfect Wisdom” in Section §5, will thus draw from the broader *Prajñāpāramitā* texts as a whole, in leading us back to the heart of wisdom.

2 The ‘No Attainment’ Problem

The first problem is that of “no attainment”, in the Sanskrit “*aprāptih*”, and Chinese “無得” (*wúdé*) (§1.1). This term is the last of a long list of phenomena that are negated “in emptiness”. This lies at the end of Division V according to Conze’s analysis of the parts of the Heart Sūtra text. This is the portion of the Chinese Heart Sūtra, Divisions III, IV and V, that is no doubt directly drawn from Kumārajīva’s Chinese *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng*. Nattier’s study already includes a useful comparison between the *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* and Xūánzàng’s version of the Heart Sūtra (Nattier 1992: 159f). While content on “no attainment” in Division V is present in the larger *sūtra*, the material on “due to non-attainment(ness)” and “mental obstructions” is not found in this particular part of the larger *sūtra*. How the terms for these latter two phrases in the Chinese Heart Sūtra do appear *elsewhere* in the Chinese sources for the larger text will be shown in subsequent sections (§3, §4).

2.1 Chinese Sources of the Larger Sūtras for Division V

In order to give an exhaustive account of the Chinese versions of the larger text, we must note all five translations. In the historical order of their translation and with

reference to the portion corresponding to Conze's Division V, they are: Mokṣala (無叉羅), Taishō 221,¹⁰ from 291; Dharmarakṣa (竺法護), Taishō 222,¹¹ from 286; Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什), Taishō 223,¹² from 404; and Xūánzàng (玄奘), Taishō 220 (2) and (3),¹³ from 659-663.

Philological consideration of this material is fairly straightforward. Mokṣala's translation features “無所逮得” (*wú sùodāidé*), giving the impression of either a past participle or object encountered or attained. Dharmarakṣa, Kumārajīva and both Xūánzàng's Assembly 2 and 3 feature “無得” (*wú dé*), the same term as found in the Chinese Heart Sūtra. Without considering the Sanskrit (we shall do this below), this could be understood as meaning “no reaching”, “no obtainment”, “no attainment”, and so forth. However, both of Xūánzàng's versions also add “無現觀” (*wú xiànguān*), which by the Chinese would be read along the lines of “no direct observation”, “no present insight”, and so forth. Obviously, we need to examine the Sanskrit for these terms in order fully to appreciate their significance in the context of a translation of a Mahāyāna sūtra, and so the Sanskrit sources of the larger text, i.e. the *Pañcaviṃśatisahāsrīkā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, demand examination.

2.2 Sanskrit Sources of the *Pañcaviṃśati* for Division V

For the Sanskrit sources, again, Nattier provides a convenient synoptic tabulated layout of both the ancient Gilgit Manuscript (from circa 6th century) and a more recent Nepalese Manuscript (from circa 19th century) (Nattier 1992: 221ff). The former, ancient as it is, requires a few minor emendments, but these are rather unremarkable (1992: n20, n23, n24). However, it may be worth citing Conze's translation of *The Large Sūtra on Perfect Wisdom* for an English rendition of these passages from the Sanskrit (Conze 1975: 60-62).

(C1) And that emptiness, ... (II) There is no form in it, no feeling, etc.; no eye, etc. to: no mind; no form, etc. to: no mind objects; no

¹⁰Mokṣala: *Fāngguāng Bānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《放光般若波羅蜜經》 〈3 假號品〉 (To8, no. 221, p. 6, a6-13).

¹¹Dharmarakṣa: *Guāngzàn Bānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《光讚般若波羅蜜經》 〈3 行空品〉 (To8, no. 222, p. 153, c8-22).

¹²Kumārajīva: *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》 〈3 習應品〉 (To8, no. 223, p. 223, a13-24).

¹³Xūánzàng: *Dà Bānrūòbōluómì Jīng* (2) 《大般若波羅蜜多經：2會》 〈3 觀照品〉 (To7, no. 220, p. 14, a11-26); *ibid.* (3) 《大般若波羅蜜多經：3會》 〈2 舍利子品〉 (To7, no. 220, p. 435, b27-c12).

eye element, etc. to: no mind consciousness element; no ignorance, no stopping ignorance, etc. to: no decay and death, no stopping of decay and death; no suffering and no comprehension of suffering; no origination and no forsaking of origination; no stopping and no realization of stopping; no path and no development of the path; no attainment, and no reunion; no Stream-winner, and no fruit of a Stream-winner; etc. to: no Bodhi-sattva, and no knowledge of the modes of the path; no Buddha, and no enlighten-ment. (III) It is in this sense, Śāriputra, that a Bodhisattva, a great being who courses in perfect wisdom, is to be called “joined”.

Some critical observations can be made. For the entire content, the main differences between the two Sanskrit recensions are three in number: 1. The Gilgit features “*yā notpadyate na nirudhyate... , na saṃkliśyate na vyavadāyate, na hīyate na vardhate, nātītā, nānāgatā na pratyutpannāḥ*”, which is a near repeat of the immediately preceding sentences, not repeated and thus absent from the Nepalese. 2. Almost immediately after this, the Nepalese has a list of the six elements “*na pṛthivīdhātur ... na vijñānadhātur*”, not found in the Gilgit. 3. Then, subsequent to this, the Gilgit negates a list of the twelve sense organs and objects, followed by the categories of the aggregates, senses and sense elements “*na cakṣur... na manāḥ; na rūpaṃ...na dharmāḥ; (na) tatra skandhā na dhātavo nāyatanāni*”.

After negating lists of the eighteen elements and the twelve limbs of dependent origination in forward and reverse order, we then reach the negation of the four holy truths (*āryasatyāni*), and finally our key problematic terms. The key words are “*na prāptir na abhisamayaḥ*” and “*na prāptir na abhisamayo*” respectively, the only difference being merely external *saṃdhi*. This is rendered by Conze in his *Large Sūtra* as “no attainment and no reunion” (1975: 62). It is important to note that in the larger texts, these statements are not the end of this long passage of taxonomic lists, as they continue by negating the states and fruitions of the four stages of *śrāvaka* sanctity, and the states and fruitions of the *pratyekabuddhas* and fully awakened *buddhas* too. From the aggregates, through the senses, to the eighteen elements, dependent origination and then the truths, the appearance of “*na prāptir na abhisamayaḥ*” has the significance that the former categories are the objects of “attainment” and “direct realization” (Conze’s “reunion”). This is particularly so for schools such as the Sarvāstivāda, for whom the path of vision (*darśanamārga*) involved direct realization of the four truths. The result of this is the state and fruition of a stream entrant, gradually proceeding through the other

stages of sanctity. The end of the passage is: “So indeed, Śāriputra, the aspirant to awakening, the great hero, who is practicing engaged with perfect knowledge is said to be ‘engaged’” (*evaṃ hi śāriputra bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ prajñāpāram-itāyāṃ caran yukto yukta iti vaktavyaḥ*). The text continues in a similar vein with respect to the six perfections, and so forth. In addition to the *Pañcaviṃśati* here, the smaller *Aṣṭa-sāhasrikā* has a different but very similarly structured passage in Chp. 2 (refer Conze 1973: 97).

2.3 Reading: “No attainment” as “No direct realization”

All the material in both texts is largely taxonomic lists, Abhidharmic in content and structure, all of which are negated “in emptiness” (*sūnyatāyām*). The only difference is that the Heart Sūtra gives the lists in abbreviated format (*saṃkṣipta*), whereas the *Pañcaviṃśati* here gives the fully detailed schemas (*vistareṇa*). Because of the very clear correspondences between the Chinese Heart Sūtra, the Chinese versions of the larger text, and the Sanskrit larger text, the reading of these passages is not too problematic. That is to say, the Chinese Heart Sūtra’s “無得” (*wú dé*) appears to directly correspond to the Sanskrit “*na prāptir*”, and in this context means the “attainment” or “obtainment” of one or other of the holy stages of the path. We can deduce that this applies to either so-called *śrāvaka*, *pratyekabuddha* or *sambuddha* attainments from the larger text, even though this is not explicit in the Heart Sūtra itself.

However, the examination of these larger texts does pose another question for the Chinese Heart Sūtra. Whereas the larger *sūtras* run from the four truths to attainment (*prāpti*) to direct realization (*abhisamaya*), the Chinese Heart Sūtra has the four truths, then “無智...無得” (*wú zhì ... wú dé*) (Prajñācakra has “無智證...” (*wú zhìzhèng*)). A simple and plausible explanation would be that the two terms “*prāpti*” and “*abhisamaya*” have been juxtaposed, and that the latter equates to the Chinese “無智(證)” (*wú zhì(zhèng)*). This, of course, differs from our purported Sanskrit Heart Sūtra, which has “*na jñānaṃ*” at this point. The further negation of “無不得” (*wú bùdé*) by Fǎchéng, a solitary variant in the latest of the Chinese Heart Sūtras, and also echoed in the Sanskrit Heart Sūtra with “*na aprāpti*”, may simply be as Conze originally argued when he wrote: “Later a part of the tradition thought to guard against misunderstanding by denying also the negation of those categories that easily form opposites” (Conze 1967: 155). The very fact that Indic Buddhist texts continued to grow, expand and change in the

hands of their editors is yet another timely warning not to assume that such an Indic manuscript equals an “original Sanskrit” text.

3 The ‘Due to Non-attainment(ness)’ Problem

We may now move on to the second problematic statement, that of “Due to non-attainment(ness)”, in the Chinese Heart Sūtra “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú sùodé gù*) (§1.2). Located in Division VI of the Heart Sūtra, this is a more complicated matter, due to being outside the main body of the text—Divisions III, IV and V—which corresponds to the larger *Prajñāpāramitā*, whether in Chinese or Sanskrit. Thus, in order to establish the meaning of the terms in the Chinese Heart Sūtra, we are forced to look not only at the same term within the larger Chinese and then Sanskrit text, but more specifically at the same terms as they appear in a similar context or structure. A brief review of some extant Buddhist lexical resources will show just how much the Heart Sūtra and its accepted providence have influenced our scholarly understanding. For example, in the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism* we find “無所得 Basic Meaning: nothing to be attained”, with—what we assume to be a reconstruction—the Sanskrit of “*aprāptitva*”, the same as the purported Sanskrit of the Heart Sūtra (DDB 2014). Granted, other potential Sanskrit sources for this Chinese phrase are also given for this entry, but it is “*aprāptitva*” that is given as the default Indic term. This is also the case in the recently published *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, which only references “*prāpti*” (Pāli “*patti*”) for “得” (*dé*) (2013: 636, 663, 1108).

3.1 Chinese “以無所得故” ← Sanskrit “*an-upa√lambha(yogena)*”?

Let us begin by searching for the exact phrase “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú sùodé gù*) from the Chinese Heart Sūtra, as it appears in Kumārajīva’s larger *sūtra*. It also so happens that this term appears often in the larger Chinese text. Given that the “以…故” (*yǐ...gù*) construction is usually a translation for a Sanskrit instrumental case, another Chinese phrase, “用無所得故” (*yòng wú sùodé gù*) would also appear to be a translation variant of the same original Sanskrit term. Together, these two phrases appear over 40 times within the Chinese larger text, and, more importantly, we are able to identify a source for these in the Sanskrit text. Here we shall present only a few examples in any detail, merely providing textual references for the remaining cases.

One excellent example is found in Chp. 15 of the Chinese *Móhē* text, with six uses of “用無所得故”.¹⁴ This is in a discussion of practices all of which are “said to be the bodhisattva mahāsattva’s going forth on the great vehicle.” Each practice lists some negated expression, often a kind of knowledge (智慧) or gnosis (智), an otherwise standard form of meditation or contemplation that the bodhisattva does not engage in (不行). For example, their gnosis does not engage in the past, present or future; their gnosis does not engage in the mundane or transmundane, conditioned or unconditioned phenomena, etc.; or in the contemplation of permanence or impermanence, etc. to self or not self. All of these negations which make up the bodhisattvas going forth on the great vehicle are performed as “用無所得故”, which from the Chinese alone could be rendered as “by application of non-attainment”, or something to that effect.

The Sanskrit equivalent of this passage can be found in Chp. 13,¹⁵ and in English translation from Conze’s *Large Sūtra* (1975: 134). The Sanskrit passage has some slight differences from the Chinese, but these appear insignificant for our purpose here. Without any exceptions, the clear equivalent of the Chinese phrase “用無所得故” is “*anupalabhamānena*”. Our analysis of the Chinese translation as an instrumental form proves to be correct, as the term is an instrumental singular of “*an-upa√labh*” as a present participle, suffix “*-māna-*”. In Conze’s translation, he renders this as “without taking them as basic facts”, and “that because there is nothing to apprehend” (Conze 1975: 134). It could also be rendered as “by way of not apprehending” the various phenomena which are the objects of gnosis or contemplation.

Another good example, which uses the exact phrase “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú sùodé gù*), is found nine times in another long passage from the *Móhē* Chp. 27.¹⁶ This corresponds also to Chp. 2 of the smaller *Prajñāpāramitā*, where the gods request the teaching on perfect wisdom from Subhūti, concerning how to “stand” or “abide” (住) in *Prajñāpāramitā*. All contemplations are performed with a mind set upon omniscience (薩婆若心). The first contemplation is of the five aggregates in terms of being impermanent, unsatisfactory, empty and not self, like a disease, etc. to being a dart piercing the body. All this is to be carried out “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú sùodé gù*), i.e. “by way of non-attainment”. The second con-

¹⁴ *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷4 〈15 辯才品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 246, c28-p. 247, a18).

¹⁵ *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 1-1:144f)

¹⁶ *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷7 〈27 問住品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 273, c5-23).

templation is of the various senses and elements in the same manner. The third is of the aggregates as “neither arising nor ceasing, neither tainted nor pure”; and the fourth is of the senses and elements in the same way. This is followed by contemplations of the twelve limbs of dependent origination in forward then reverse order. Next, the four establishments of mindfulness, up to the various unshared powers of a fully awakened Buddha. Finally, the six perfections. All of these practices are described as being performed “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú sùodé gù*), i.e. “by way of non-attainment”, and this phrase appears at the end of each practice in question.

In the Sanskrit text, this is found in Chp. 22 (refer Conze's translation 1975: 204f).¹⁷ The Sanskrit equivalent term is again clear, and while it is also an instrumental, it differs from our earlier example, being “*an-upa-√lambha-yogena*”. Conze renders this as “without taking it / them as a basis”, though to emphasize the term “-yoga-”, we could say “by way of engagement in non-apprehension”, or “by way of non-apprehending engagement”.

For fear of being too verbose, we shall only cite the above two examples in detail. However, examination of other examples reveals that the majority of the appearances of the Chinese phrase “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú sùodé gù*) directly correspond to the Sanskrit “*an-upa-√lambha-yogena*”.¹⁸ Others as a rule equate to some or other Sanskrit term from the same root *√labh* with prefix *upa*, such as “*upalabhyate*”.¹⁹ Other uses of the character “得” (*dé*), in particular when in a negated form, such as “不得” (*bù dé*), or “不可得” (*bùkě dé*), also regularly derive from Sanskrit verbal or noun forms from the root *√labh*, such as “*na ... upalabhyate*”,

¹⁷ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:3).

¹⁸ *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷5 〈18 問乘品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 250, a9-b3); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 1-2: 44); *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷8 〈30 三歎品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 280, a19-22); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:35); *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷8 〈30 三歎品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 280, b5-7); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:37); *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷8 〈31 滅諍品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 281, c6-10); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:45); *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷8 〈31 滅諍品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 282, b7-12); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:51); *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷10 〈37 法稱品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 292, c29-p. 293, a2); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:99); *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷10 〈37 法稱品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 293, a15-19); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:100); *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷10 〈38 法施品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 295, a10-12); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:109); etc.

¹⁹ *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷8 〈30 三歎品〉 : (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 279, c24-27); ≈ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:35); etc.

“na ... upalabhate”, and so forth.²⁰ In fact, in all the examples we have examined, none are found to derive from any other Sanskrit verbal root.

3.2 Chinese “無得” ← Sanskrit “aprāpti” or “abhisamaya”?

At this point we may wonder what happened to Conze's Heart Sūtra term “aprāp-titvāt”, and the equating of the Chinese “得” (*dé*) with Sanskritic “prāpti” forms? For “無得” (*wú dé*) alone, without “以...故”, we do find that there are correspondences to negations of Sanskrit “prāpti”. However, these seem to mostly occur together with “abhisamaya”. This conforms to our findings at the end of Division V, but may have implications for our phrase here at the start of Division VI.

There is some inconsistency among the correspondences between the Chinese translations and the Sanskrit, however. For example, “無得無著” (*wú dé wú zhuó*) appears to be for “aprāpti ... anabhisamaya”;²¹ or “...[]...[]” (... *zhī ... dé*) for “prāpti ... abhisamaya”;²² and in other examples the Chinese “得” (*dé*) is used with “-道” (*-dào*), “-果” (*-guǒ*), or “能-” (*néng-*) etc., for some other combination of “prāpti” and / or “abhisamaya”.²³ It would appear as if “prāpti” and “abhisamaya” were near synonyms for the compilers and later scribes of the text, so

²⁰ *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷12 〈43 無作品〉: (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 308, b15-18); Sanskrit “anupalabdhitāḥ” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 2-3:170); *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷2 〈4 往生品〉: (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 227, a4-13); Sanskrit “na ... upalabhate” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 1-1: 90); *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷3 〈9 集散品〉: (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 236, a27-b1); Sanskrit “upalabhyate” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 1-1: 154); etc. etc.

²¹ *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷12 〈42 歎淨品〉: (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 306, c22—p. 307, b25); for Sanskrit “na prāptir nābhisamayāḥ” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 2-3: 160, 163); etc.

²² *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷7 〈26 無生品〉: (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 271, c6-17); for Sanskrit “nāsti prāptir nāsty abhisamayāḥ” or “asti prāptir asty abhisamayo” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 1-2: 165); etc.

²³ *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷26 〈86 平等品〉: 「不得道、不得果」 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 414, b25-c1); Sanskrit “na ca dvayena kācīṭ prāptir nābhisamayāḥ” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 6-8:169); *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷25 〈80 實際品〉: 「能得道、能得果」 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 404, a5-10); for Sanskrit “prāptim vābhisamayam vā” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 6-8:104); *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷22 〈74 遍學品〉: 「能得」 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 380, c6-16); for Sanskrit “prāptir nābhisamayo” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 5:150); *Móhēbānruòbōluómi Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷22 〈74 遍學品〉: 「不得」 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 382, c10-23); for Sanskrit “nāsti kutāḥ punaḥ prāptiḥ kuto 'bhisamayāḥ” in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 5:167); etc.

that the two were nearly interchangeable. Note, however, that none of the corresponding Sanskrit passages appears in an instrumental form, which is a critical part of the Chinese passage in this second problematic phrase. While they are not verbs, the notions of “*prāpti*” and “*abhisamaya*” are used specifically with respect to particular holy fruitions and insights.

3.3 Reading: “Due to non-apprehending engagement”

Despite the appearance of “得” in this form, and the acceptance that at the end of Division V of the Heart Sūtra the correct sense is indeed that of “*na prāpti*” and / or “*anabhisamaya*”, the usage in our second problematic phrase “以無所得故” is substantially different here at the start of Division VI. The first difference is grammatical: our Chinese Heart Sūtra text strongly suggests a kind of instrumental semantic function. The second is structural: the Chinese Heart Sūtra phrase comes at the end of a list of various *dharma*s—either in the sense of phenomena or in the sense of practices to be undertaken. Neither is the case for the reading of “*prāpti*” or “*abhisamaya*” in the larger Sanskrit texts. A third difference is that our reading maintains consistency of meaning with later portions of the text. Division VI of the Heart Sūtra ends with “and in the end he [i.e. the bodhisattva] attains to *nirvāṇa*” (from Conze 1958: 102). Where most translators render the two statements as “no attainment” and then “attains to...” respectively, the contradictory tension demands a clear and appropriate explanation. Our reading here avoids this problem. The whole thread of the passages from the end of Division V to the end of VI would thus read that “due to not attaining (holy fruitions) he attains (holy fruitions)”, a logical contradiction which it requires a paradoxical interpretation to resolve. While we should not reject such an interpretation as intrinsically implausible, rather to say that “due to non-apprehension (of phenomena) he attains (holy fruition)” not only avoids direct contradiction, but also makes sense in a Buddhist epistemological cum soteriological world view, wherein holy fruitions are not phenomena in the manner in which the aggregates and so forth are. All our earlier versions of the Divisions V to VI still place our phrase here at the start of Division VI. But our discovery that the phrase “due to non-apprehension” usually lies at the end of a passage, not at the start, is a critical challenge to this. If we reposition “due to non-apprehension” to the end of Division V, the whole passage would read as: “In emptiness, there are no aggregates, etc.; no realization, etc.; due to non-apprehension.” That is to say, in the state of emptiness, one does not apprehend phenomena. The “In empti-

ness” is referring, not to the ontological status of phenomena, but to a subjective state—a meditative state if you will—which should rather be described as epistemological in nature. Therefore, we conclude that the phrase “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú suǒdé gù*) is more plausibly derived from “*an-upa√lamba-yogena*”, i.e. “due to non-apprehending engagement”, than from the idea of “due to non-attainment-ness” of Conze, or other similar readings which imply the non-attainment of a spiritual realization or holy fruition in the classic Buddhist sense.

4 The ‘Mind Without Mental Obstruction’ Problem

We may now turn to our third problematic phrase, the “mind without mental obstruct-tion”, in the Chinese “心無罣礙” (*xīn wú guà'ài*), and either “*acittāvaraṇa*” or debatably “*acittālambaṇa*” in Conze’s critical Sanskrit edition (§1.3). Immediately after its first appearance, the phrase reappears a second time in modified form, as “due to the mind being without mental obstruction”, that is, “無罣礙故” (*wú guà'ài gù*) in Chinese, Sanskrit “*cittāvaraṇanāstitvāt*” (or presumably “*cittālambaṇanāstitvāt*”). Both of these expressions are located in the middle of Division VI according to Conze’s analysis of the text. As mentioned previously, the first element of the compound, i.e. “心” (*xīn*^o) or “*citta*^o”, translated as “mind” or “thought”, is quite straightforward. It is the second part of the compound that is problematic and draws our attention.

Before we examine the broader range of *Prajñāpāramitā* literature in both Chinese and Sanskrit, it is again worth referring to some standard Buddhist studies dictionaries and other reference texts to see how the purported Sanskrit Heart Sūtra has influenced the reading and standard back translation of the terms in the Chinese texts. Unlike in our previous example, for our present problematic phrase, the Chinese “無罣礙” (*wú guà'ài*), we see a much greater range of possible Sanskrit forms. For example, in the *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, while the expression “*āvaraṇa-nāstitva*” of the Sanskrit Heart Sūtra is given as an equivalent for the Chinese phrase, a range of other Sanskrit possibilities are also listed (DDB 2014: 無罣礙). A large range of other uses of the character “罣” (*guà*) within the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature when not in this particular compound is also provided from Karashima’s glossaries (2011, in DDB 2014). Drawing from such a broader textual basis to provide Sanskrit back translations for Chinese terms is far more reliable than a single, short text. It is worth noting that *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* actually references Chinese “障” (*zhàng*) for “*āvaraṇa*” (Buswell &

Lopez 2013: 83), though this is of course not restricted to a *Prajñā-pāramitā* context.

Thus, with this term, there again appears to be some degree of translational “flattening” as described by Harrison (2010b): the same Chinese character is used to translate a number of distinctly different Indic terms. So while we may begin by examining the exact phrase from the Chinese Heart Sūtra as it appears in the larger *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts, we must also examine a broader range to avoid too narrow a focus.

4.1 Chinese “無罣礙” ← Sanskrit “*a-√saṅga*” / “*a-√sañj*”?

The direct phrase “無罣礙” (*wú guà'ài*), or simply “罣礙” (*guà'ài*) without the negation, appears only twice in Kumārajīva's *Móhē* text, in Chp. 65. We may translate the first passage in context as follows.²⁴

Then, Śakra, Lord of the Gods, said to Subhūti: Whatever Subhūti has stated is only for the sake of emptiness, without being hung-obstructed (無罣礙). Just as an arrow shot up into empty space is not obstructed (無礙), so too is Subhūti's Dharma teaching not obstructed (無礙).

As we can see, the term differs slightly between the first reading and the second and third instances, which are slightly abbreviated by using only the second character. We have rendered “罣” (*guà*) as “hung”, based partly on the Kāngxī Dictionary entry which gives as an alternative the character “絀” (*guà, guī*), explained as “掛” (*guà*), meaning “to hang up”, or “suspend”, as in “懸掛” (*xuán'guà*). The common glyph sans radical “圭” (*guī*), coupled with the similar phonetics “*guà*” of all three terms, may help draw together or conflate their otherwise nuanced meanings.

The Sanskrit for the corresponding passage in the *Pañcaviṃśati* uses a verbal form, identical in all three instances, “*na kvacit sajjati*”, i.e. “it does not hang anywhere”.²⁵ The verb “*sajjati*” is from the root *√sañj*, meaning “to stick”, “to hang”, “to be attached”, and so forth. We may cite Conze's translation of the full passage here (1975: 480):

²⁴ *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷19 〈65 度空品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 362, a1-3).

²⁵ Sanskrit *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 5:66).

Śakra: Whatever Subhūti the Elder may expound, all that he expounds with reference to emptiness, and he does not get stuck anywhere [(*na kvacit sajjati*)]. Just as an arrow shot into the air does not get stuck anywhere [(*na kvacit sajjati*)], just so Subhūti the Elder's demonstration of Dharma.

This metaphor of an arrow not getting stuck, hanging, or being obstructed in empty space appears earlier in the text, at Chp. 60 in the Chinese, and Chp. 54 of the Sanskrit. There, it is a metaphor for how the bodhisattva's skillful arrow of insight upholds the merit of their virtuous deeds aloft in emptiness, without letting that merit prematurely fall to the ground of the two vehicles as opposed to the ground of a fully awakened Buddha (see Conze 1975: 426).²⁶ However, this full explanation of the arrow metaphor in this earlier chapter does not use the terms “無(罣)礙” or “*na kvacit sajjati*” at all.

A possible explanation for the exact translation idiom of this singular appearance of the term “無罣礙” in Kumārajīva's *Móhē* could be the influence of the earlier translation of the same text, the *Fàngguāng Bānrūòbōluómì Jīng* (放光般若波羅蜜經). The wording in the *Fàngguāng* is nearly identical in the first case, with “無所罣礙” (*wú suǒguà'ài*). The subsequent second and third appearances use “無礙” (*wú ài*) and “無所著” (*wú suǒzhùó*), i.e. “without any attachment”.²⁷ This influence may be similar to Harrison's explanation of the translation history of the *Vajracchedikā* (2010a), whereby later translators and translations borrow heavily from earlier efforts.

Both these passages from the larger texts are in turn also found in, and thus actually derived from, the earlier literature of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and Chinese equivalents.²⁸ They are thus not new material added when the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* expanded into the *Pañcaviṃśati*. However, for the former shorter passage, while the Sanskrit *Aṣṭa* still uses “*na kvacit sajjati*”, Kumārajīva's *Xiāōpīn* translation only uses “無礙” (*wú ài*), just like the second and third instances of this term in the *Móhē*.

A second appearance of “無罣” (*wúguà*) is also present in the *Móhē* translation. This, however, appears to have undergone editorial emendment by the com-

²⁶Sanskrit in *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 4:196). Refer the Chinese at *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷18 〈60 不證品〉 (CBETA, T08, no. 223, p. 350, b27-c11).

²⁷*Fàngguāng Bānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《放光般若經》卷15 〈66 牢固品〉 (CBETA, T08, no. 221, p. 104, a20-22).

²⁸*Aṣṭasāhasrikā*- (Vaidya 1960: 224); cf. Conze (1973: 263). The detailed explanation at *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (Vaidya 1960: 185); cf. Conze (1973: 224). *Xiāōpīn Bānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《小品般若波羅蜜經》卷9 〈24 囑累品〉 (CBETA, T08, no. 227, p. 577, a29-b2).

plers of the Taishō, who have “corrected” the term “意無闕” (*yì wúhé*) to “意無罣” (*yì wú-guàhé*); where a variant of “罣” (*guà*) is given as “罣” (*guà, guī*) in the Sòng and Gōng editions. The Sanskrit for this in the *Pañcaviṃśati* is “*apraṭi-hatacittair*”, i.e. “who have unobstructed minds”.²⁹ We shall return to the use of “*a-prati-√han*” below (§4.2). Since this second appearance in the Taishō may simply be due to modern critical editing, we cannot lay too much importance on it here for an attempted reconstruction and rereading of the classic Chinese Heart Sūtra.

While there are only the above two uses of “無罣” (*wúguà*) in the larger Chinese *Móhē* text, terms from the root $\sqrt{sañj}$ or \sqrt{saj} , meaning “to stick” or “to hang”, are much more common, and worthy of examination. Several more examples can be mentioned in brief as follows:

1. In the same list of qualities of the bodhisattvas found at the very start of the text, which includes “an unobstructed mind” above, we also have “得無闕陀羅尼” (*dé wú'ài tuólóu'ní*), equivalent to Sanskrit “*asaṅgadhāraṇīpratīlabdhair*”, meaning “have obtained unobstructed mnemonics”.³⁰ This therefore translates “*asaṅga*”, from “*a-√sañj*”, as “無闕” (*wúhé*), and thus is like our earlier second case of the emendment from “意無闕” (*yì wúhé*) to “意無罣” (*yì wúguàhé*) in the *Móhē* text.
2. The large text continues the well known definition of “bodhisattva” that is found in the middle of the first chapter of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* and Chinese translations. This definition is based on the etymological similarities between what is most likely a Prakrit “(*bodhi*)*satta*” Sanskritized as either “*sattva*” (“living being”) or the past participle of “*sañj*”, i.e. “*sakta*” (“attached”). That is, the “awakening being” (*bodhisattva*) is both “not a being” (*asattva, asatta*) and also “unattached” (*asakta, asatta*). The expanded *Móhē* text of this definition states that the bodhisattva should train in and know “nonattachment toward all phenomena” (一切法無闕(相)中);³¹ in the *Pañcaviṃśati* this is “*sarvadharmāṇaṃ ... asaktatāyāṃ*”.³²

²⁹ *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷1〈1序品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 217, a20-25). Refer Sanskrit *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 1-1: 1).

³⁰ *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷1〈1序品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 217, a15); Sanskrit, *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 1-1: 2) “*kṣāntisamatāpratīlabdhair asaṅgadhāraṇīpratīlabdhair acyutābhijñair ādeyavacanair akūhakair*”.

³¹ *Móhē-bānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷4〈12句義品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 242, b28-c5).

³² *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 1-2: 24); Conze (1975: 120).

The *Xiaōpīn* version of this gives “無障礙”; the Sanskrit, also “[a]saktatāyām”.³³ The term “asaktatā” is the negative of the past participle from verbal root √sañj, in the abstract (-tā).

3. Another appearance of “na ... sajjati” in the sense of “not hang” can be found in the Sanskrit *Pañcaviṃśati*. The idea is that the bodhisattva engages in the full range of Mahāyāna practices, as well as teaching other living beings to engage in them, all without either himself or others “being attached” (*nābhiniṣṭo*) or “hanging on anything” (*na kvacit sajjati*). This is just as a magical creation of the Tathāgata “does not hang” (i.e. get attached to) (*na...sajjati*) onto a donor, donation or recipient.³⁴ So says the Sanskrit, but the Chinese *Móhē* only features “無所著” (*wú suǒzhuó*), which corresponds to “*nābhiniṣṭa*”.³⁵ The Sanskrit “na ... sajjati” may well be a later addition, though this association of terms still highlights its sense as “not be attached to” something.

4. There are other uses of “無(所)礙” (*wú (suǒ)ài*) to translate “√sañj”. For example, the notion of “being without obstruction (無所礙; *asaṅga*) through the power of skillful means”. It is worth noting that this passage in didactic question and answer style is punctuated with “The bodhisattva should perceive the mind (*citta*)”,³⁶ combining the term with “mind” as in the Heart Sūtra, and also the “unobstructed (無礙; *asaṅga*) practice of perfect knowledge”.³⁷

5. In a call and response litany section, from the *Móhē* translation, *Prajñāpāramitā* is also described as “unobstructed (無礙) gnosis”, “because of non-obstruction, non-hindrance (無障無礙) of gnosis with regard to all (phenomena)”.³⁸ When we compare with the Sanskrit, it appears that the Chinese may have elided passages, for the Sanskrit is far more coherent. The Sanskrit states that it is an unobstructed perfection “*asaṅgapāramitā*” due to all phenomena having the same own nature as space (*ākāśa*); and that it is a direct penetrative wisdom (*pratisamvid*), due to “non-obstruction, non-hindrance of all gnosis” (*sarvatrajñānāsaṅgāprati-*

³³ *Xiaōpīn Bānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《小品般若波羅蜜經》卷1〈1初品〉(CBETA, To8, no. 227, p. 538, c14-17); Sanskrit, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* (Vaidya 1960: 9); cf. Conze (1973: 89).

³⁴ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 6-8:74).

³⁵ *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷24〈78四攝品〉(CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 397, c28-p. 398, a1).

³⁶ *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷12〈42歎淨品〉(CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 307, c15-20); Sanskrit, *Pañca-viṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:168).

³⁷ *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷12〈42歎淨品〉(CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 307, c29-p. 308, a3); Sanskrit, *Pañca-viṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 2-3:168).

³⁸ *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷12〈44遍歎品〉(CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 313, a18-19).

ghātītām).³⁹ This echoes the arrow metaphor with respect to “empty space”. The use of “無礙智” (*wú'ài zhi*) for Sanskrit “*pratisamvid*” is prevalent throughout the entire *Móhē* translation. The Chinese translation idiom strongly suggests a reading of the root “ \sqrt{vid} ” as meaning both “gnosis” (\sqrt{vid}), hence “智”, and also “penetrate” (\sqrt{vidh}), therefore “無礙”, combined as a binome.

From these multiple examples, we see that while there may be a number of grammatical and contextual variations, Sanskrit terms from $\sqrt{sañj}$ or $\sqrt{saḥ}$ and their translation into Chinese based around “礙” (*ai*) are very common throughout the larger *Prajñāpāramitā* text. While this Chinese matches the Heart Sūtra, the particular Sanskrit term is neither the standard phrase in the Sanskrit *Hṛdaya*, nor the common variant from “*ālambana*”.

4.2 Chinese “無礙” ← Sanskrit “*a-prati-√gha*” / “*a-prati-√han*”?

Our last example above combined “無障” (*wúzhàng*) and “無礙” (*wú'ài*) together, the former from *a-√sañj*, the latter from *a-prati-√han* with the sense of “not (*a*) striking (\sqrt{han}) against (*-prati-*)”. The latter in turn derives from the same root as another expression which was often translated as the verbal form “不礙” (*bú ai*), in Sanskrit “*na ... prati-√han*”. This is another potential Sanskrit source for the Heart Sūtra's notion of “無罣礙” (*wú guà'ài*) which is in need of examination.

One passage in Chp. 54 of the Chinese and Chp. 48 in the Sanskrit corresponds to the expansion of the central chapter of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* entitled “Suchness” (*Tathatā*; 如 *rú*). This passage refers to the *Prajñāpāramitā* in terms used much earlier in the Buddhist tradition⁴⁰ to describe the Buddha's reflections immediately after his awakening, in which he describes the Dharma he has realized as profound, difficult to know and comprehend, and “running against the entire world” (*sarvalokavipratyanīkā*) (cf. Conze 1975: 375). After the discussion within the larger *Prajñāpāramitā*, the conclusion is in fact the reverse of this. In the *Móhē*, “This Dharma is in accord with all *dharmas*” (是法隨順一切法; *sarvadharmānulomiko 'yaṃ ... dharmah*), and thus “It does not obstruct form” (不礙; *na pratihanyate*), or the other *dharmas*, up to omniscience itself.⁴¹ The

³⁹Sanskrit in *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 4:7).

⁴⁰For example, Rhys Davids & Oldenberg (1881: 84-85); = Pāli *Vinaya* i 4-5; other *Vinayas* have equivalent passages. Also in *Samyutta Nikāya*, SN 6:1, i 136; Bodhi (2000: 231); etc.

⁴¹*Móhēbānrūò-bōlúómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷16〈54 大如品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 335, b7-14); and *ibid.* (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 335, c1-3). *Pañcaviṃśati-* (Kimura 1986: 4:119); and also *ibid.* (Kimura 1986: 4:119ff). Refer English translation in Conze (1975: 377f).

conflicting points of view of being against or in accord with the world are largely due to the respective senses of Dharma as teaching and fundamental law, but the rhetorical effect of “shock” is still striking.

Another use of Chinese “無礙” (*wú ài*) for Sanskrit “*prati-√han*” later in the same chapter appears to be a case of a confused attempt at translation standardization possibly brought about by the earlier passage. In the Sanskrit, referring to the altruistic ideal of the bodhisattva, it states how they “should develop an attitude of benefit” (*hitacittatotpādayitavyā*) toward all beings, “an attitude of nonaversion” (*apratihataṃ cittam*), and likewise for “an attitude of non-harm” (*aviheṭhanācittam*) (cf. Conze 1975: 385).⁴² These are precisely the three positive attitudes that are the traditional defining features of right intention (*samyak saṅkalpa*) within the eightfold path. The Chinese translation of the *Móhē* has “安隱” (*ānyīn*), “無礙” (*wú'ài*), and “無惱” (*wú'naǎo*), respectively.⁴³ The first and last translation maintain the original sense, but the use of “無礙” (*wú'ài*) for “*apratihata*” really does not convey the notion of “nonaversion” or “non-aggression”. The choice of translation lexicon may be due to the earlier passages on “non-obstruction”, and perhaps a perceived need for consistency of idiom between the Sanskrit and Chinese. This reading is thus more an exception than the rule, and carries little interpretative weight for our present purposes.

Other translations in the *Móhē* of “無礙” (*wú'ài*) for “*apрати-√gha*” appear to be significantly different from our intended meaning here.. An example is within the formulaic Ābhidharmika expression describing phenomena as “without form, invisible, non-obstructing (*apratighā*; 無礙)”. The variants outside the Taishō of “無對” (*wúduì*) is often the more standard translation term.⁴⁴ “Obstructing” in this sense is the defining characteristic of material form (*rūpa*) for the Abhidharma systems.

Above we have provided ample evidence for the use of “無罣礙” (*wú guà'ài*) as a translation in the *Móhē* for Sanskrit terms derived from the verbal “*na ... √sañj*” or noun forms “*a-√saṅga*”; and also from the verbal form “*a-prati-√han*” or noun “*a-prati√gha*”. The reader may recall, however, that in the textual passage we are examining, the Sanskrit text had neither of these terms.

⁴²Sanskrit, *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 4:135).

⁴³*Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷16 〈54 大如品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 338, a9-12).

⁴⁴*Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 5:159); English cf. Conze (1975: 543f). *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷22 〈74 遍學品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 382, b10-16).

4.3 Chinese “無礙” ← Sanskrit “*an-ā-√vr̥*” (*anāvaraṇa*)?

Conze's critical text of the Heart sūtra has “*cittāvaraṇa*”, though he conceded that “*cittālabhana*” was another possibility (see §1.3). Neither of these terms appears in a compound with “*citta*” in the Sanskrit *Pañcaviṃśati* or *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* texts. This is yet another hint at the language correspondences between Sanskrit and Chinese in the Heart Sūtra that underlie Nattier's thesis (§1.4). However, there are numerous cases where either “*āvaraṇa*” or “*ālabhana*” alone, or prefixed, do feature.

One of the passages featuring “*anāvaraṇa*” appears at the end of Chp. 54 of the Chinese, Chp. 48 of the Sanskrit, on Suchness (*Tathatā*; 如 *rú*). We have already discussed the start of this chapter, which features “不礙” as a translation for “not obstruct” (*na prati-√han*) (see §4.2). Conze's translation from the Sanskrit reads “When he thus trains and abides, then form, etc. *to*: the stability of the Good Dharma, will be uncovered (*anāvaraṇa*) to him” (1975: 387).⁴⁵ Kumārajīva's *Móhē* reads “When the bodhisattva thus trains, thus practices, he shall attain unobstructed form (當得無礙色) ... attain unobstructed stability of Dharma (得無礙法住)”. The sentence construction in either Sanskrit or Chinese could also potentially be rendered “shall attain non-obstruction [with respect to] form”.⁴⁶

Another passage at the end of the text brings in the notion of the “essential emptiness” (*prakṛtiśūnyatā*) of phenomena as the manner in which the bodhisattva “contemplates all phenomena without any obstruction” (*na kasyacid dharmaśyāvaraṇaṃ samanupaśyati*). Without apprehending a living being, they teach the Dharma to living beings, just as if there were illusory creations.⁴⁷ This statement is rendered into Chinese in the *Móhē* as “知一切法無礙” (*zhī yīqièfǎ wú'ài*), i.e. “knowing all phenomena without obstruction”.⁴⁸

In both cases, the use of “without obstruction” is used to describe—adjectivally or adverbally—a form of practice or contemplation. With only a couple of appearances, we note that this is a rare phrase in the larger *Prajñāpāramitā* text.

⁴⁵ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 4:14of). Cf. Conze (1975: 387).

⁴⁶ *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷16 〈54 大如品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 338, c29-p. 339, a2).

⁴⁷ *Pañca-viṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 6-8:97).

⁴⁸ *Móhēbānrūòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷24 〈78 四攝品〉 (CBETA, To8, no. 223, p. 397, a3-8).

4.4 Chinese “無礙” ← Sanskrit “*an-ā-√lamb(h)*” (*anālabhana*)?

There are, in addition, several examples in the Sanskrit text of terms from “*an-ā-√lamb(h)*”, either in verbal or nominal forms. The term is also uncommon, however, and mainly appears in the latter half of the text, where the material may have been added as the text expanded over time. In our present commonly used late manuscripts and critical editions of the *Pañcaviṃśati*, the term appears frequently within the section headings of the embedded *Abhisamayālaṃkāra*. As they were unknown in the classic Chinese Buddhist sphere, and likewise in Chinese translations, we rightly ignore such section headings here. Even more curiously, the term is far more prevalent in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā* than in the *Pañcaviṃśati*, which runs against our usual texthistorical notion of the relationship between the two, namely that almost the entirety of the smaller text is preserved intact within the larger. We shall only focus on the *Pañcaviṃśati* here, however, for its direct connection with the Heart Sūtra.

A prosaic non-technical use of the verb “*adhy-ā-√lamb*” as “get hold of” appears in Chp. 45 of the Sanskrit and Chp. 51 of the *Móhē*. This is “get hold of” a log or plank from a shipwreck in the ocean in order to avoid death, as a metaphor for how the practitioner “gets hold of”, i.e. takes as an object, this *Prajñā-pāramitā* to escape the ocean of *saṃsāra*. The Chinese translation uses “取” (*qū*), i.e. “seize upon”, rather than the more technical translation “所緣” (*suōyüán*) for “*ālabhana*” (refer Buswell & Lopez 2013: 83).⁴⁹ Other appearances of the term are also translated in a non-technical sense in the Chinese. For example, “to seek” (求 *qiú*) supreme awakening, for “*adhy-ālabhate*”;⁵⁰ and also that the bodhisattva does “not desire” (不貪 *bù tān*) the grounds of the two vehicles, for “*na ... adhyālabhate*”.⁵¹ Note that only one of these non-technical uses of the term is a negation, and both are prefixed in the Sanskrit with “*adhi*”, which distinguishes them from the term under examination in the variant Sanskrit reading of the Heart Sūtra.

The only technical uses of the term in the sense of an object of cognition or contemplation in the Sanskrit are near the end of the text. The first is that of

⁴⁹ *Pañca-viṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 4:85); cf. Conze (1975: 363). *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷15 〈51 譬喻品〉 (CBETA, T08, no. 223, p. 329, c7-12).

⁵⁰ *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 5:35). *Móhē-bānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷19 〈64 淨願品〉 (CBETA, T08, no. 223, p. 358, b26-29).

⁵¹ *Pañca-viṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 5:86). *Móhēbānruòbōluómì Jīng* 《摩訶般若波羅蜜經》卷20 〈68 攝五品〉 (CBETA, T08, no. 223, p. 365, c17-22).

“purity of the object” (*ālambanapariśuddhiḥ*), the second item on a list of four “purities”.⁵² The context is an explanation of technical lists; this list of four is merely one of many. In the second appearance, according to Conze’s translation, the bodhisattvas “obtain the sovereignty of thought through a cognition which has the indiscriminate realm for its object” (*avikalpadhātṅvālambanena*) (1975: 651).⁵³ We have unfortunately been unable to uncover the parallel textual passages in the Chinese *Móhē* translation, suggesting that perhaps it is an addition in our late Sanskrit recension. This, plus the fact that the wider context is a discourse involving Maitreya, are strong indications that the appearance of these terms from “*ā-√lamb*” are not useful for our study here.

4.5 Reading: “Mind without hanging on anything”

Applying Nattier’s theory of the textual history of the Heart Sūtra, there are no passages in the Sanskrit that offer clear and obvious equivalents to the Chinese phrase of our third problematic statement, “心無罣礙” (*xīn wú guā`ai*). Granted, this statement itself comes from Conze’s Division VI of the text, which lies outside the body of Division V taken directly from the larger *Sūtra*, and, if Nattier’s theory is correct, it is thus as much a creation of the compiler as a reworking of established textual terms, passages and ideas.

Still, some observations can be made, and a cautious thesis presented. We examined four possible Sanskrit sources for our phrase: 1. The first was “*a-√saṅga*” or “*a-√sañj*”, “to hang”. This was the only one that directly corresponded to the Chinese phrase from the Heart Sūtra. It is widely used throughout the text, and the arrow in empty space metaphor indicates that it had greater philosophical depth of usage. 2. The second “*a-prati-√gha*” or “*a-prati-√han*”, “to strike against” or “to obstruct”. This was also fairly common, though it had a broad semantic range, parts of which differed somewhat from our Heart Sūtra usage. Between these first two potential sources is an overlap of their broad range of meaning: the idea of being obstructed, stuck to, hitting up against. Subjectively, the bodhisattva’s mind is so freed in his meditation on the gnosis of emptiness; and objectively, the Dharma itself is not in conflict with anything. 3. The third “*an-ā-√vr*” (*anāvaraṇa*), “to cover”, which together with the fourth and last, 4. “*an-ā-√lamb(h)*” (*anālabhana*), “to grasp at” or “to take as a mental object”, were both

⁵² *Pañcaviṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 6-8:59).

⁵³ *Pañca-viṃśati*- (Kimura 1986: 6-8:156); cf Conze (1975: 651).

rarely used, and often in a manner quite dissimilar to that of the Heart Sūtra. Despite “*an-ā-√vr*” being the term Conze eventually opted for, and his theory of a possible scribal error from “*an-ā-√lamb(h)*”, these two seem to be the least likely matches for our problematic statement.

Comparing and weighing these possible sources, we thus read “心無罣礙” (*xīn wú guà'ài*) in the Heart Sūtra in the sense of “*na ... sajjati*”, but also containing the shared sense of non-attachment also found in “*a-prati-√han*”. Thus, the mind of the bodhisattva “does not hang on anything”.

5 Understanding from the Heart of Perfect Wisdom

We began this essay with the importance of the Heart Sūtra in the Mahāyāna tradition, both past and present. Conze's critical edition of the Sanskrit, and his translation thereof into English, have—along with a vast plethora of other English translations—also pointed the way for the future of this text in the ever growing Western Buddhist tradition (§1). Conze noted three problematic elements of his Sanskrit text, that of “*na prāptir nāprāptiḥ*” (§1.1), “*aprāptivād*” (§1.2) and “*cittāvaraṇa*” or “*cittālabhana*” (§1.3). Subsequent translations, whether also from Sanskrit, or from Chinese or Tibetan, have done little to resolve these problems. Many popular books on the Heart Sūtra in English use the text as little more than a cypher to plug in sectarian or favorite Buddhist systems for commentary, rather than attempting to explain the text in its own context and thought world.

Nattier's theory (§1.4) of an apocryphal Chinese source for the Heart Sūtra provides a possible avenue for examination. This avenue may lead to an authentic and contextualized reading of the Heart Sūtra, despite the claim of “apocryphal” that may alarm more traditional readers. In her thesis of the text's history, the Sanskrit text of the larger *Pañcaviṃśati Prajñāpāramitā* was translated into Chinese, e.g. Kumārajīva's *Móhē* text; from this a core passage of text was extracted, and a head and tail appended, to create the first Heart Sūtra in Chinese, not Sanskrit. Only subsequently did this Chinese compilation become translated, perhaps rather idiosyncratically, into Sanskrit. Her theory provides an approach to resolving Conze's problems, by reading not the Sanskrit Heart Sūtra variants, but by taking the problematic passages in the Chinese of the Heart Sūtra, tracing their appearance and usage in the larger Chinese *Prajñāpāramitā*, and from there delving back into the Sanskrit of the larger *Pañcaviṃśati Sūtra* (§1.5). We repeat that our readings here take Nattier's basic thesis as a working hypothesis.

This is the process that we have followed for each of the three problematic passages in the body of this essay. Our basic results are as follows: 1. For “無得” (*wúdé*), we followed the part of the Heart Sūtra extracted directly from the larger text to adopt a reading of “no attainment”, in the sense of realization of spiritual fruitions. This is still in conformity with the majority of modern readings (§2). 2. Regarding the phrase “以無所得故” (*yǐ wú suǒdé gù*), we concluded that it most closely corresponds to the notion of “due to engagement in non-apprehension”. This clearly differs from the common notion that it is the same basic term as the first phrase, i.e. “attainment”, and means the non-apprehension of an object of the senses or of a contemplative practice. The term is more likely from “*an-upa-√labh(-yoga)*” in the instrumental, and not from “*prāpti(tva)*” in the ablative. Moreover, we also considered that this phrase not only does not start the next section of the Heart Sūtra, but clearly concludes the early part of the text, from “Therefore, Śāriputra, in emptiness...”. The notion of “non-apprehension” of a mental object matches well with the opening of this portion of the text (§3). 3. Lastly, the term “心無罣礙” (*xīn wú guà'ài*) does not seem to correspond to either of the terms from the Sanskrit text. Rather than referring to “mental obstructions” as one of a range of specific “obstructions” as suggested by Conze—*karma*, *kleśa* and *jñeya*—it seems to refer to the mind which does not get hung up, i.e. attached, to any phenomena. Thus, the term “心無罣礙” bears closest association with the usage of terms from the Sanskrit root *√sañj* in the larger texts, particularly where the semantic range of this term overlaps with *prati-√han* (§4).

Finally, we would like to take our new readings of these passages in the Heart Sūtra, and return them to the context of the two divisions of the text, V and VI. In addition, some reflections about each of the two divisions as a whole, and also their mutual relationship, can be given.

[V] Therefore, Śāriputra, in emptiness
there is no form, no sensation, perception, volitions or cognition;
no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind;
no sight, sound, aroma, flavor, tactile or mental object;
no eye, sight, visual cognition, up to, no mind, mental object,
mental cognition;
no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, up to, no aging and death,
no extinction of aging and death;
no dissatisfaction, origin, cessation, path;

no gnosis, no realization;
due to engagement in non-apprehension.

While many have focused on this part of the text as indicating that the various standard taxonomies are negated, our new reading brings attention back to the framing of these lists and their negation. The key difference in this framing is that here, division V ends in the statement which is otherwise commonly placed at the start of division VI. The frame is “In emptiness, ... due to engagement in non-apprehension”. It is our view that this shifts emphasis from an ontological negation of classical lists, i.e. “there is no X”, to an epistemological stance. That is, when the bodhisattva is “in emptiness”, i.e. the contemplative meditation of the emptiness of phenomena, he is “engaged in the non-apprehension” of these phenomena. “Engagement” can be seen as a broad term covering practices, meditations, contemplations and so forth of perfect wisdom. Such a reading thus does not run counter to the notion that when not “in emptiness”, such phenomena may still be apprehended, perceived to exist and function as objects of contemplation.

The next division, VI, now shorn of the statement which most editions and translations place at the start, therefore reads as follows:

[VI] The bodhisattvas, due to being supported by transcendental knowledge, have minds which do not hang on anything; due to their minds not hanging on anything, they are without fear; removed from perverted perceptions and views, they ultimately realize *nirvāṇa*.

The bodhisattva, who at V was said to be “engaged in non-apprehension”, i.e. meditating on emptiness, is here “supported by transcendental knowledge”, i.e. *prajñāpāramitā*. The two phrases are basically synonymous. Therefore, due to not apprehending phenomena, the mind of the bodhisattva does not hang up on anything at all. They are “not hung up”, possibly from “*asakta*” (or “*asatta*”), and thus a bodhi- “*sattva*” (or “*satta*”) is freed of views of a living being “*asattva*” (or “*asatta*”) by his non-apprehension, his engagement in the contemplation of emptiness.

We have based our reading of Conze’s problematic portions of the Heart Sūtra on an approach which takes Nattier’s theory of an apocryphal source for the text as a working hypothesis, with a little help from Harrison. However, our conclusions are not at all radically opposed to traditional readings. Rather, we hope to reconstruct as much as possible the ideas of the terms in the mind of the text’s com-

piler(s), i.e. the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom, the *Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya*. By this, we obliquely seek to point those interested in the Heart Sūtra to draw from the larger body of this genre in their readings and understanding. We welcome all comments, corrections and criticisms from the learned readership.

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