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Title: Kumārajīva and Prajñāpāramitā in China

Abstract:

Amongst the most important contributions of Kumārajīva to Chinese Buddhism is his translations of a number of Sanskrit Mahāyāna texts which had remained highly influential in China to this day. The most remarkable example amongst these translations would arguably be those of the Prajñāpāramitā texts (Lesser Prajñāpāramitā, Greater Prajñāpāramitā and Vajracchedikā) and the important commentary *Dazhidulun* (*Prajñāpāramitopadeśa) attributed to Nāgārjuna. Despite that some of these Prajñāpāramitā texts had been retranslated up to seven times during the first millennium in China both before and after Kumārajīva, Kumārajīva's translations remained the most widely circulated as a sacred text. In this paper, I hope to address a number of issues concerning these texts, from both a philological as well as historical perspective: their Sanskrit origin, motive for retranslation and characteristics of the translations which made them last through the subsequent 1500 years as an important legacy and witness to the cultural exchange between China and India.