PRAJNAPARAMITA HEART SUTRA
PRAJNAPARAMITA HEART SUTRA

Translated from the Chinese Version of Xuanzang

English Translators
Venerable Yifa
M. C. Owens
P. M. Romaskiewicz
© 2006 Buddha's Light Publishing.
All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Published by Buddha's Light Publishing
3456 S. Glenmark Drive
Hacienda Heights, CA 91745 USA
e-mail: ite@blia.org

In conjunction with the Center for Sutra Translation and Research
University of the West
1409 Walnut Grove Ave. Rosemead, CA91770 USA
Executive Advisor: Venerable Master Hsing Yun

Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra: Translated from the Chinese Version of Xuanzang
Venerable Yifa, Michael Charles Owens, Peter Matthew Romaskiewicz
SECOND EDITION 2006

Frontispeice: Illustration of a five tier pagoda composed of the characters from the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra. It is based on a series of manuscripts discovered in the Caves of a Thousand Buddhas near Dunhuang, China. The title forms the spire of the pagoda and the sutra begins (and ends) just below the Buddha in the center.
Cover design: P. M. Romaskiewicz.
Frontispeice Illustration © P. M. Romaskiewicz.

Printed in Taiwan
CONTENTS

Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra
2

Sutra Introduction
8

Translation Catalogue
22

Glossary
27

Editorial Message
34
般若波羅蜜多心經

唐三蔵法師玄奘譯
PRAJNAPARAMITA HEART SUTRA

Translated by the Tang Tripitaka Master Xuanzang
般若波羅密多心經

觀自在菩薩，行深般若波羅蜜多時，
照見五蘊皆空，度一切苦厄。
舍利子，色不異空，空不異色，
受想行識亦復如是。
是諸法空相，不生不滅，不垢不淨，
不增不減，是故空中無色，無受想行識。
耳鼻舌身意，色聲香味觸法，無眼界乃至意界，無無明，亦無老死，
無無明盡，亦無老死盡，無苦集滅道，無智亦無得。
The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, while practicing the profound prajnaparamita, clearly saw that all five skandhas are empty, thus overcoming all suffering. Sariputra,

form is no different from empty,
empty no different from form,
form is just empty,
empty just form,
sensation, perception, volition and consciousness are also like this.
Sariputra, this is the emptiness of all dharmas:
they neither arise nor cease,
are neither defiled nor pure,
neither increase nor decrease.

For this reason within emptiness there is no form, no sensation, perception, volition or consciousness; no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body or mind; no sight, sound, scent, taste, touch or thought; no seeing,…even no thinking; no ignorance nor end of ignorance,…even no aging and death, nor end of aging and death; no suffering, origin, cessation or path; no wisdom and no attainment.
般若波羅蜜多心經

以無所得故菩薩摩訶薩依般若波羅蜜多故
心無罣礙故無罣礙故無有恐怖遠離顛倒夢。
想究竟涅槃三世諸佛依般若波羅蜜多故
得阿耨多羅三藐三菩提故知般若波羅蜜多是大神咒是大明咒是無上咒是無等等呪能除一切苦真實不虛故說般若波羅蜜

揭諦菩提薩婆訶。

揭諦菩提薩婆訶。
Because nothing is attained, bodhisattvas maintain *prajnaparamita*, then their heart is without hindrance, and since without hindrance, without fear; escaping upside-down, dream-like thinking, and completely realizing *nirvana*. All buddhas of all times maintain *prajnaparamita*, thus attaining *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. Hence know, *prajnaparamita* is the all-powerful mantra, the great enlightening mantra, the unexcelled mantra, the unequaled mantra, able to dispel all suffering. This is true, not false. Therefore proclaim the *prajnaparamita* mantra. Recite the mantra thus: *Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha!*
SUTRA INTRODUCTION
THE Prajnaparamita HEART Sutra

It is a great honor to introduce the first translation in our series of bilingual sutra publications. To inaugurate our new standardized canon of Chinese Buddhist sutras in English, we are proud to present a translation of the *Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra*. The translation is based on a series of scrolls discovered in the caves at Dunhuang (敦 煌), where the characters of the sutra are arranged and connected to form the shape of a pagoda.¹ The Chinese is the version of the Tang Dynasty monk Xuanzang (玄奘 602~664 CE) and matches the text found in the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō*, the standard Buddhist canon compiled in Japan.² These unique

¹ 佛 說 般 若 波 羅 蜜 多 心 經 . Four versions of the *Heart Sutra Pagoda* are known from Dunhuang; Stein Mss. 4289 and 5410 (reproduced in Huang Yongwu, ed., *Dunhuang bao-zang*, 35:187, 42:410), both are held by the British Library, London. And Pelliot Mss. 2168 and 2731 (reproduced in ibid., 123:515b-16a) both held by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.
images date from approximately the 9th century. However, the official issuing year for Xuanzang’s version of the Heart Sutra is 649 CE, the same year he translated eleven other texts from Sanskrit upon returning from his 16-year pilgrimage to India.\(^3\)

The Heart Sutra is unlike any other sutra in the Buddhist canon. It is by far the most popular sutra read today and contains some of the Buddha’s most profound teachings. The English word ‘heart’ actually comes from the Sanskrit hṛdaya, and, as it is used in the title, has many of the same connotations as both the Chinese and Sanskrit, which indicate that it is the essence, or fundament of a topic (as in the phrase “the heart of the matter”). For Buddhists, the Heart Sutra presents the essence of the Buddha’s teachings on prajña, the highest form of wisdom attained by enlightened beings, and the means to its perfection (paramita). As such, it is praised for its precision and brevity in handling such a profound topic.

\(^3\) In total, Xuanzang returned from India with 657 texts, of which he himself translated over seventy-three works in more than one thousand scrolls. He is considered one of the greatest translators of Sanskrit Buddhist texts into Chinese, and over the course of his life he produced more translations than any other translator.
As a sutra, the version attributed to Xuanzang is uncommon in that it does not have the traditional “Thus have I heard…” introduction like all other sutras, and the Buddha himself is conspicuously missing from the text. Rather, we are first introduced to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who delivers the discourse in his stead. Avalokitesvara has been revered in East Asia as a savior deity since the first centuries of the Common Era, and remains the most popular bodhisattva in the Buddhist pantheon. Often depicted with a thousand arms and eleven heads, Avalokitesvara, or Guanyin (觀音) as she is known in China, is capable of manifesting herself in a variety of forms depending on the need. Xuanzang is said to have encountered the Bodhisattva in the desert as he lay dying of thirst and chanting the Heart Sutra. She led him and his horse to an oasis of water, and Xuanzang remained devoted to her throughout his life.

The other character that appears in the text is Shariputra, one of the first and wisest of the Buddha’s disciples, considered the foremost expert in abhidharma, the Buddhist teaching about the constituent elements of reality. According to the earliest schools of Buddhist thinking, all
phenomena, both mental and physical, can be broken down into fundamental principles, or particles, called dharmas. In his first discourse to five ascetics in Deer Park at Sarnath, the Buddha revealed the most basic understanding necessary for the cessation of suffering, that the sentient subject is not one single entity, and has no essential Self or Soul, but is actually the momentary coalescence of five dharmas called skandhas. The five skandhas are form (or matter), sensation, perception, volition, and consciousness, and it is the misunderstanding of their coming together and falling apart that leads to our suffering. This revelation of impermanence set into motion the turning of the Wheel of the Law, as it is called in Buddhist tradition, and represents the beginning of the Buddha’s forty-five years of teaching.

The Heart Sutra, however, comes to us from a later time in the history of Buddhism, and presents a radically different understanding of the nature of phenomena and dharmas. As a prajnaparamita text, the Heart Sutra elucidates the fundamental doctrine of Mahayana Buddhism, that all phenomena are empty of any independent,
substantial or eternal existence. In other words, for the later schools of the Mahayana tradition, not only is the Self devoid of any real, objective existence, so are the very dharmas that combine to create the illusion of a Self. Or, as Avalokitesvara realizes in the Sutra, all five skandhas are empty, and it’s through this realization of emptiness, rather than impermanence, that the Bodhisattva overcomes all suffering.

The doctrine of emptiness, called sunyata, is the ultimate conclusion of the Buddha’s teaching that all things depend upon causes and conditions to arise and, therefore, lack any intrinsic nature. A Buddhist monk from the south of India named Nagarjuna (龍樹 c. 150 BCE~150 CE) is credited with having founded an entire school of Buddhist thought based on the Mahayana doctrine of emptiness, called the Madhyamika. Nagarjuna is considered the greatest expositor of Buddhist thinking after the Buddha himself, and his school of thought is considered the second turning of the Wheel of the Law. Nagarjuna constantly warns
against the reification of \textit{sunyata} as the underlying substratum or essential nature of reality. Hence, there is a danger in translating the most famous line of the \textit{Heart Sutra}, which equates the first \textit{skandha} (form) with \textit{sunyata}, because there is the potential of construing emptiness as an object that simply replaces matter as the substance of the world. Rather, \textit{sunyata} should be understood as a principle that explains the manifestation of all phenomena by revealing that the underlying nature of all things is empty, and that the perception of independent, self-existing objects is an illusion. As the \textit{Heart Sutra} makes clear, this is true of all \textit{dharmas}, all things, ideas and concepts, including the Buddha’s most fundamental teachings about the nature of suffering. Therefore, in reality, there is no coming together or falling apart, nothing to be labeled pure or impure, nothing to be or not to be.

Once this most profound doctrine of emptiness has been set forth, Avalokitesvara continues to apply this negation to all the basic components of the \textit{abhidharma} thinking that Shariputra
represents in the text, including the eighteen bases of perceptual activity, the twelve links in the chain of causation, and the Four Noble Truths. The Bodhisattva explains that even prajna, the very wisdom that arises through this penetratingly deep understanding of emptiness, is also empty, and that ultimately nothing is attained in the practice of prajnaparamita because there is nothing to attain and no one to attain it. This paradox of non-attainment is at the very heart of the prajnaparamita literature and is nowhere more clearly presented than in the Heart Sutra.

The prajnaparamita Sutras are a genre of Buddhist literature that began to appear predominantly in the northern regions of the Indus Valley between 100 BCE and 100 CE. Although produced considerably late in the history of Buddhism, these sutras present themselves as records of the teachings of the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gotama. According to Chinese tradition, the Buddha spent 22 years discoursing on prajna during his lifetime. Edward Conze, the foremost Western scholar of
The Prajñāpāramitā Literature

(See E. Conze, The Prajñāpāramitā Literature (New Delhi; Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2000).

The popularization of Prajñāpāramitā sutras is usually traced back to the activities of the founder of the Madhyamika school, Nagarjuna. Legend has it that Nagarjuna was lecturing at the famous monastery at Nalanda when he caught sight of two shape-shifting serpents, known as nagas, in human form attending his class. Afterwards he followed them down to an underwater kingdom where he encountered the seven-headed Naga King

prajna sutras, lists forty different extant sutras dealing with prajna in his extensive bibliography of prajnaparamita literature. In Sanskrit these sutras are typically measured by their number of slokas, lines of verse in 32 syllables. The largest extant prajna sutra is in 100,000 lines, with other versions ranging in length from 25,000 lines to one of the smallest in 14 lines, which is also known as the Heart Sutra. Yet, despite having such a large body of information, the exact origin of this sutra is shrouded in a veil of mystery.

named Muchilinda. Muchilinda had once protected the Buddha for seven days with his massive hood during a hailstorm, for which the Buddha bestowed him with special teachings. It was from the Naga King that Nagarjuna first heard the Great prajnaparamita Sutra, which supposedly consisted of one million lines of metered verse. When he returned to the world of men, Nagarjuna began making known the wisdom he had obtained by teaching and writing about prajna and its related systems. The Buddhist tradition holds that over time the essence of the prajnaparamita Sutra was distilled into more and more condensed versions, until it finally reached its most succinct form as the Heart Sutra. However, this story does not entirely agree with what we know from historical records. There are essentially two versions of the Heart Sutra, a longer and a shorter, which have both appeared in a variety of different languages throughout the centuries, including: Sanskrit, Tibetan, Sogdian, Mongolian, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese and Japanese. The shorter version appears to be the oldest, judging by both Sanskrit
and Chinese sources, and lacks the traditional introduction of a Buddhist sutra with the six characteristic marks: Faith in the accuracy of the text (ru shi 如是), a rapporteur (wo wen 我聞), the time (yi shi 一時), the Buddha (fo 佛), the place (zai 在), and the assembly (zhong 眾). The longer versions have these elements appended to the front, yet none appear prior the production of Xuanzang’s, which is by far the shortest rendition, consisting of only 268 Chinese Characters.

In total there are eight extant translations of the Heart Sutra in the standard Chinese Buddhist canon, as well as five versions that are known to be lost. The earliest record of what might be the Heart Sutra comes from the oldest surviving catalogue of Chinese Buddhist Sutras compiled by Sengyou (僧 祐 445~518 CE) around 515 CE, which contains information from the very first catalogue made by Dao’an (道安 312~385 CE) in 374, which is now lost. According to these catalogues, there was a translation made sometime during the mid-third century by a Central Asian monk named Zhi Qian
(支謙190~250 CE) of a text Sengyou’s catalogue calls the *Mahaprajnaparamita Spirit Spell* (摩訶 般 華 波 羅蜜 大 明 呪). This title appears to be anachronistic to the time and is remarkably close to a later version of the text that also refers to it as a mantra, or spell, rather than a sutra *(see below)*. Zhi Qian’s translation, however, has been lost since the early 6th century, and without it, it is difficult to say with certainty that it was a version of the *Heart Sutra*.

The oldest surviving version of the *Heart Sutra* is a Chinese translation attributed to the Kuchean monk Kumarajiva (鳩摩羅什 344~413 CE), dated to approximately 401 CE, the same year he entered the capital city of China at Chang’an. This version has been grouped among the works of Kumarajiva only since the 8th century, when a catalogue listed him as its translator, yet there are doubts concerning its authorship.⁵ Upon close

⁵ 摩訶 般 華 波 羅蜜 大 明 呪，*T* no. 250. For the catalogue listing Kumarajiva as the translator see *T* no. 2154, 開 元 釋 敎 錄.
examination the Chinese text appears to have been pieced together from sections of Kumarajiva’s translation of the larger Prajnaparamita Sutra in 25,000 lines, rather than the traditional account that it was translated from Sanskrit, and today there is scholarly debate over the original language of the Heart Sutra and its country of origin.6

The version done by Xuanzang is almost identical to Kumarajiva’s, and appears to be a more refined version of his rather than a new translation. According to Xuanzang’s biography, he received a version of the Heart Sutra (perhaps Kumarajiva’s) from a beggar he had helped in Sizhuan prior to his journey to the West, and used it as a talismanic chant during his treacherous crossing of the Gobi desert. After he retuned to China, Xuanzang issued his own version of the sutra with several important changes, the most significant being the title. The Kumarajiva version is called the

---

Mahaprajnaparamita Great Enlightening Spell, which indicates that it should be read as a mantra, or chant, rather than as a sutra. This would explain why the shorter version of the text is missing the six aforementioned elements of a sutra, because it may not have been intended to be read as one. Xuanzang’s version, however, is the first to be called a sutra and, as such, raises interesting questions regarding its nature.

Every version of the Heart Sutra concludes with a mantra, a sacred incantation used in the practice of meditation and the performance of ritual. Another word used for this type of formulae is a dharani, which is similar to a mantra but considered to have more protective or magical properties. A dharani can also be thought of as a mystical mnemonic device, containing vast amounts of Buddhist knowledge in highly condensed phrases. Thus, in the same way that the essence of the Prajnaparamita Sutra retrieved by Nagarjuna from the nagas was condensed into smaller and smaller versions until it finally reached the size of
the *Heart Sutra*, the meaning and the essence of the *Heart Sutra* itself is believed to be held in the phrase: *Gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha.*
TRANSLATION CATALOGUE

The following is a fairly comprehensive list of books and journals that contain versions of the *Heart Sutra* in Chinese or in English translation.

CHINESE VERSIONS


ENGLISH VERSIONS

Translations from Chinese:


Hurvitz, Leon. “Hsüan-tsang (602-664) and the Heart Scripture.” in Prajñāpāramitā and Related...


Teiser, Stephen F. “Heart Sūtra.” In *Ways With Words: Writing About Reading Texts From Early China*,


Translations from Sanskrit:


Translations from both Chinese and Sanskrit:


Translations from both Sanskrit and Tibetan:


GLOSSARY

The entries in this glossary fall under two categories: 1) foreign terms and technical concepts that appear in the body of the text and 2) generalized topics that are inferred in the text and which have thematic importance to the reading of the sutra.

All entries that are covered by the first category are parenthetically followed by their commonly romanized Sanskrit form, with diacritical marks if necessary, and by the appropriate Chinese character(s) as they are exactly found in the text. The Sanskrit term provided is the most typical equivalent of the Chinese word found in the text.

Since entries covered by the second category are topical and are not discussed in the text directly, the Sanskrit and Chinese equivalents are not included.

When possible we have also provided other common translations of terms at the end of some entries.
anuttara-samyak-sambodhi (anuttarā-saṃyak-sambodhi 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提): A term that refers to the complete enlightenment of a buddha. It is considered to be the greatest class of awakening and is characterized by the possession of omniscience and the ten powers. Other translations: “supreme correct enlightenment” or “unexcelled perfect enlightenment”.

Avalokitesvara (Avalokiteśvara 觀自在): An extremely popular bodhisattva famed for the practice of compassion who is often called upon for assistance in times of danger or despair. In Sanskrit Avalokitesvara literally means “The Lord Who Looks Down”, implying the role of a compassionate caretaker who looks after those in need. In China this bodhisattva is known as Guanyin 觀音 (“Perceiver of Sounds”) or Guanshiyin 觀世音 (“Observer of the World’s Cries”). Originally Avalokitesvara was depicted as male, but has taken on a female form in East Asian iconography.

bodhisattva (bodhisattva 菩薩; 菩提薩埵): A title given to a being who compassionately vows to liberate all sentient beings from suffering and help free them from the cycle of rebirth. Originally this term was exclusively used to describe the Buddha in his previous lives before his enlightenment, but in the Mahayana tradition this term denotes anyone who aspires to attain buddhahood.
The term “bodhisattva” is traditionally glossed as meaning “enlightenment being”.

**buddha** (*buddha 佛*): A title meaning “Awakened One” used for a being who has perceived the true nature of all phenomena, has overcome all suffering, and who compassionately teaches these insights to others. It is one of the ten titles of a fully enlightened being. When capitalized and preceded by definite article “the” the term refers to the historical figure Siddhartha Gautama, and when it is pluralized or not capitalized or it refers to anyone in the general class of fully enlightened beings.

**dharma** (*dharma 法*): 1. A constituent element of the phenomenal world. Dharmas comprise both the physical world as well as the internal psychological processes of a subject. Other translations: “phenomena” or “thing”. 2. A thought or idea, the sensory object of mental perception. Other translations: “mind-object”. 3. The Dharma refers to the body of Buddhist teachings. Other translations: “Truth” or “Law”.

**eighteen dhatu**: The eighteen bases (*dhātu 界*) of perceptual activity which include the six sense faculties (eye 眼, ear 耳, nose 鼻, tongue 舌, body 身, and mind 意), the six sensory objects (sight 色, sound 聲, scent 香, taste 味, touch 觸, and thought 法), and the
six perceptual awarenesses that arise from the contact between the sense faculty and its corresponding sensory object (e.g., visual 眼界 and mental awareness 意識界).

emptiness (śūnyatā 空): A central tenet in Mahayana philosophy which claims that all phenomena are empty of independent, substantial or eternal existence. The doctrine of emptiness is not to be equated with nihilism nor is it to be reified as an underlying substratum of all things. Other translations: “voidness”.

empty (śūnya 空): See emptiness.

five skandhas (pañca-skandha 五蕴): The five constituent elements that combine to form a sentient subject. The Buddhist analysis of sentient existence thereby refutes the notion of an eternally present Self or soul. The five skandhas are: form 色, sensation 受, perception 想, volition 行 and consciousness 識. Other translations: “five aggregates”, “five bundles”, or “five heaps”.

Four Noble Truths: One of the foundational tenets of Buddhism taught by the Buddha in his first sermon which describes the nature of suffering and the method for its eradication. The Four Noble Truths are: suffering 苦, its origin 集, its cessation 滅, and the Eightfold Path 道.
gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha (gate gate pāragate pārasamgate bodhi svāhā 揭帝揭帝般羅揭帝般羅僧揭帝菩提僧莎訶): The mantra found at the end of the Heart Sutra. The efficacy of mantas is understood to be in their phonetic quality and generally have no English equivalent. However, Edward Conze has translated this mantra as “gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, o what an awakening, all hail!”

mantra (mantra 咒): A sacred incantation used in the practice of meditation and the performance of ritual. Mantras are thought to be imbued with the power to produce specific effects and range from a single syllable to a lengthy series of words. The continuous recitation of mantras is generally accompanied by other practices such as visualization techniques and the positioning of the body into particular postures.

nirvana (nirvāṇa 涅槃): The Buddhist goal of liberation from the cycle of rebirth and the cessation of all suffering caused by the extinction of greed, hatred and delusion. Nirvana literally means “blown out”.

prajnaparamita (prajñāpāramitā 般若波羅蜜多): The practice of the highest form of Buddhist wisdom that is fully actualized by bodhisattvas. This wisdom (prajña) denotes the specific insight into phenomenal
reality that results in the direct realization of emptiness. It is one of the six perfections (paramita) that comprise the Mahayana Bodhisattva path. Other translations: “perfection of wisdom”, “perfection of insight”, or “transcendental wisdom”.

Sariputra (Śāriputra 舍利子): The chief disciple of the Buddha who was considered foremost in wisdom. He entered the Buddha’s monastic order with his lifelong friend Maudgalyayana, and both are commonly represented in artworks as flanking the sides of the Buddha. Sariputra is regarded one of the ten great disciples of the Buddha.

skandha (skandha 蘊): See five skandhas.

sutra (sūtra 經): Scripture which traditionally preserves the discourses of the Buddha. The earliest preservation of the dialogues of the Buddha were done orally, and it is commonly held that his teachings were not committed to writing until the first century BCE. With the advent of Mahayana Buddhism new sutras were circulated in Northern India and Central Asia.

twelve links: The twelve causally connected factors that condition each other and delineate why sentient beings are continuously reborn life after life. The twelve links
are: ignorance 無明, volition, consciousness, name and form, six sense bases, contact, sensation, craving, clinging, becoming, birth, and aging and death 老死.
Editorial Message

With the growing popularity of Buddhism around the world, access to its doctrine through reliable translations of its scriptures is of utmost importance. Therefore, we have set as our pinnacle goal the production of a new standardized canon of Buddhist sutras in English. As scholars, teachers and students of Buddhism, we recognize that the most valuable resources for Buddhist texts are the exhaustive editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, yet of the hundreds of sutras in Chinese, only a fraction have been reliably translated into the English language. We are aware of the efforts of other translation committees and translators involved in the effort to produce English translations of Buddhist texts. However, we feel our endeavor is unique in several important ways.

First, our focus is the production of not just one, but a complete series of translations of specifically Chinese Buddhist sutras using a consistent vocabulary for technical terms and foreign concepts. Throughout all our translations we will employ a standardized lexicon and methodology for translation, so that a term will be translated, or transliterated, in the same manner in every volume in this series. In this way, we hope to aid the reader in comprehending the complexities of Buddhist
doctrine, which often call upon a diverse array of technical jargon and conceptual constructs.

Next, we are committed to producing bilingual editions of each sutra with tools for studying the original Chinese text. By providing facing bilingual pages, we hope to encourage those students who are learning Chinese to compare our English translation with the original source text, thereby deepening their understanding of the translation process and of the content of the sutra. Our editions will also include a brief history of the particular sutra, an exhaustive glossary of foreign words and ideas, and a translation catalogue of other Chinese and English translations of the same text.

Finally, our method of translation provides a literal, yet fluid rendition of the Chinese text that tries to capture the experience of reading sutras in Chinese, while remaining as faithful as possible to the original text. By attempting to make the translation process more transparent, we aim to uncover the subtleties of the text that are easily lost when rendering a sutra from one language into another. Our translation board consists of a variety of experts on Buddhism from different areas and fields, and all our translations go through a series of revisions and renditions before final printing to ensure their accuracy.
We inaugurate our series with translations of the *Heart Sutra* and *Diamond Sutra*, unquestionably two of the most popular sutras in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. By establishing our formula mentioned above with these two sutras, we intend to move on to more obscure sutras that, for one reason or another, have been overlooked by previous translators.

Through the publication of these translations, we hope to allow a greater accessibility to Buddhist sutras, and circulate them to a much wider audience. We hope to appeal not only to the uninitiated novice, but also to the more accomplished student of Buddhist thought.
ABOUT THE TRANSLATORS

Venerable Yifa has been a nun at Fo Guang Shan Monastery in Taiwan since 1979. She received a law degree from National Taiwan University, a M.A. in comparative philosophy from the University of Hawaii, and her Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale University in 1996. She was named one of “The Ten Outstanding Young Persons” in Taiwan in 1997, and was the recipient of the “Outstanding Women in Buddhism Award” in 2003 and the “Juliet Holister Award” in 2006. She was the Dean at Fo Guang Shan Buddhist College and the Provost at Hsi Lai University, Rosemead, California, as well as a visiting scholar at the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard University, a lecturer at Boston University, and a faculty member at National Sun Yat-Sen University in Taiwan. She taught at McGill University as the Numata visiting professor in the spring of 2005 and currently serves as the chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of the West in Los Angeles.

She is the author of The Origin of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China, by Hawaii University Press, and Safeguarding the Heart: a Buddhist Response to Suffering and September 11, by Lantern Books, NY. She is the co-author of Benedict’s Dharma: Buddhists Reflect on the Rule of Saint Benedict, by Riverhead, NY.
Michael Charles Owens received his B.A. in Religion from Hunter College and his M.A. in Religion from the University of Hawaii. In Fall 2001, he was accepted into Princeton University to pursue his Ph.D. in Buddhism.

Peter Matthew Romaskiewicz was born and raised in a small town near the Atlantic coastline of New Jersey. While attending Rutgers University he was captivated by the study of philosophy and world religions and was ultimately attracted to the richness of Buddhism and Chinese culture. He embarked on his study of literary Chinese at Columbia University in New York City, where he received his M.A. in Chinese Buddhism in 2005. His interests range from Buddhist ethics and linguistic philosophy and extend into art history and graphic design.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>助印功德芳名</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>張維廉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>謝宜儒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>小坂展生</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>高橋裕明</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>司徒敏堂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>黃迦優</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>黃美珠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>王秀純</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>羅鳳蘭</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>吕小燕</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>釋心瑞</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>黃麗華</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>李翊嘉</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>陳世軒</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>洪逸忠</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Orro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

（至2006年8月15日止）