



Elaborations on Emptiness

Donald S. Lopez Jr.

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The *Heart Sutra* is perhaps the most famous Buddhist text, traditionally regarded as a potent expression of emptiness and of the Buddha's perfect wisdom. This brief, seemingly simple work was the subject of more commentaries in Asia than any other sutra. In *Elaborations on Emptiness*, Donald Lopez explores for the first time the elaborate philosophical and ritual uses of the *Heart Sutra* in India, Tibet, and the West.

Included here are full translations of the eight extant Indian commentaries. Interspersed with the translations are six essays that examine the unusual roles the *Heart Sutra* has played: it has been used as a mantra, an exorcism text, a tantric meditation guide, and as the material for comparative philosophy. Taken together, the translations and essays that form *Elaborations on Emptiness* demonstrate why commentary is as central to modern scholarship on Buddhism as it was for ancient Buddhists. Lopez reveals unexpected points of instability and contradiction in the *Heart Sutra*, which, in the end, turns out to be the most malleable of texts, where the logic of commentary serves as a tool of both tradition and transgression.

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