

## Introduction

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Translation is at the core of what we do as scholars and educators. We translate aloud in graduate seminars, gather in workshops to discuss translations, and put translated passages on slides for conference talks. Once, most dissertations in Buddhist Studies were centered on an annotated translation of a single text; translations are still often found as appendices to theses and monographs. Translation is close reading—a way of engaging with a text deeply, puzzling out its meaning, and then making it accessible to new audiences. In the classroom, translations of primary sources give undergraduates the opportunity to grapple with the texts themselves, rather than be told what conclusions to draw. They get to see how language and rhetoric work in different times and places, and to experience the excitement of seeing patterns and making connections. In the case of sūtras that have been translated multiple times, comparing them can introduce undergraduates to the ambiguity of language, and to the challenges of choosing the right word to balance readability with accuracy. Translations play an even more significant role in the graduate seminar, as students expand their linguistic abilities, learn to punctuate a text, try out different styles of translation, and develop annotation skills. Reading secondary sources, graduate students can compare translations to original sources and think about the choices the scholar has made. Too, graduate students learn that translation is a process, and that translations can be revisited with fresh eyes and new contexts.

In this special issue, we present four new translations we hope will be put to use in courses on Buddhism and Chinese religions. Stephanie Balkwill's translation of *Foshuo wugou xiannü jing* 佛說無垢賢女經 (The Sūtra of the unsullied worthy girl as spoken by the Buddha) makes accessible in English an early scripture (ca. late third or early fourth century) in which a remarkable girl is born so that she can hear the Buddha preach—but her female body becomes a means to argue that Mahāyāna transcends distinctions such as sex.

This scripture contrasts with other texts that assume that female forms need to be transformed in order to make progress on the Buddhist path. For courses in which the *Lotus Sūtra* is assigned, Balkwill's translation would pair well with the section of the twelfth chapter on the daughter of the Dragon King. *Foshuo wugou xiannü jing* is short enough that the full translation could be assigned for a single class meeting, and reading a text in its entirety allows students to understand how sūtras open and close. Most scriptures and many other Buddhist texts are too long to be assigned as a whole, and in such cases, excerpts can give a flavor of the whole. Katherine Alexander's translation of a section of the *Liu Xiang baojuan* 劉香寶卷 (The precious scroll of Liu Xiang) introduces Liu Xiangnü, a pious young woman, and her complicated family circumstances. This selection gives a sense of how commitment to Buddhism can come into conflict with social expectations: Xiangnü, naturally beautiful, has no time for the cosmetics and ornamentation urged by her new sisters-in-law. Likewise, Xiangnü thinks her husband's time would be better spent on Buddhist cultivation, rather than studying in hopes of gaining official position. Xiangnü's religiosity brings her into conflict with the family she has married into, and Alexander's translation conveys the tension between different value systems.

Translated excerpts from longer texts, such as Ann Heirman's piece, also provide the opportunity for comparison. Selecting passages from the Dharmaguptaka vinaya and other anthologies of disciplinary texts, Heirman focuses on rules about the consumption of garlic. Forbidden in most circumstances, garlic was also understood to be an effective treatment for some ailments. Monastic guidelines thus had to balance garlic's undesirable odor with its medicinal use. However, as with many other rules, men and women are treated differently: eating garlic is a more serious offense for nuns than it is for monks, and the stories told about the instantiation of the rule reflect this. Heirman's piece introduces a rule that forms a key part of Buddhist identity, and then shows how it is gendered.

The first three translations in this issue would be suitable for a range of undergraduate classrooms; the final piece by Albert Welter illustrates how translation is used to develop arguments. Welter translates two prefaces by Yang Yi 楊億 (974–1020), a major prose stylist and a literati promoter of Chan: the preface to the *Fozu tongcan ji* 佛祖同參集 (Anthology of the shared practices of Buddhas and patriarchs) and the preface to the *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德傳燈錄 (Record of the transmission of the lamp compiled in the Jingde era). He also translates the entry on Yang Yi in *Tiansheng guangdeng lu* 天聖廣燈錄 (Expanded lamp record compiled in the

Tiansheng era). In his introduction, Welter looks at an earlier translation of the preface to the *Fozu tongcan ji*, and shows how mispunctuation and missed allusions lead to misunderstanding the preface. Welter's careful examination of allusions allows him to read the two prefaces as illustrating Yang Yi's "conversion" from Fayuan Chan to the Linji lineage. Welter's translations could be used in advanced undergraduate classes, and paired with his historically rich introduction, would be an excellent vehicle to discuss the craft of translation with graduate students.

The contents of these translations are meant to be accessible to undergraduate and graduate students, but they are accessible in another way as well: through the ongoing support of Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies they are published Open Access, with no embargo. These pieces, like all of the *Journal of Chinese Buddhist Studies*, are available to anyone who wants to read and use them, and we hope they will be widely adopted in courses on Buddhism and Chinese Religions.