

Press Release

**Construction works and the Exhibition for the Heart Sutra Inscription Project**

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The construction works for the “Heart Sutra Inscription Project” (the Project) commenced on site at Lantau near Ngong Ping in September, and is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2005. An exhibition on the design and other information of the Project will be hosted by Jao Tsung-I’s Petite Ecole, the University of Hong Kong starting from today.

The Commissioner for Tourism, Ms Eva Cheng, said, “Professor Jao Tsung I is an internationally renowned master in Chinese studies, calligraphy and painting with outstanding achievements in both academic research and art. His works are highly regarded locally and overseas. Professor Jao has presented this piece of the calligraphy of the *Heart Sutra* as a gift to the public of Hong Kong. We will, in a unique way, present his original calligraphy in the form of a large-scale wood inscription display in an outdoor environment, in order to enable the community at large as well as overseas visitors alike to appreciate this masterpiece and the meaning of the *Heart Sutra*.”

The project involves the inscription of Professor Jao's whole piece of "*Heart Sutra*" calligraphy onto 38 timber obelisks at varying heights ranging from 8 metres to 10 metres. Ancient Chinese writing used to be inscribed on ‘bamboo tablets’. The inscription of the calligraphy of Heart Sutra on timber logs bears close resemblance to the ‘bamboo tablets’, and pays reference to the long and distinct cultural heritage of China.

Professor C F Lee, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong, and a member of the Project Steering Committee said, “The Heart Sutra Inscription Project is an art piece which embraces both the Chinese culture and philosophy, and it is also a manifestation of Professor Jao Tsung I’s achievements in art. The Project site sits on a slope near Lantau Peak at Ngong Ping. Its tranquil atmosphere will perfectly complement Professor Jao’s masterpiece.

The overall layout design of the Heart Sutra Inscription Project originates from a mathematical symbol representing the infinity (i.e. “ ”) to symbolize the concept of immeasurable splendour and eternity. The timber log to be installed at the top of the slope will not be used for carving in order to exemplify the idea of “emptiness” to signify the concept of “no attachment and hindrance in minds” described in the *Heart Sutra*. The location and height of each of the timber obelisks has been carefully planned according to the natural landscape of the selected site, together with the subtlety of the timber obelisks, in order to blend in with the nature.

To enable members of the public to learn more about the design of the Project, an exhibition will be hosted by Jao Tsung-I’s Petite Ecole, in the University of Hong Kong, 2/F, 2 University Drive, Pokfulam, Hong Kong, from September 28, 2004 to October 30, 2004. Exhibits include physical models showing the layout of the timber obelisks, an explanation of the design concept and information on the carving process and so on.

The Project is expected to be completed in the first quarter of 2005. Upon completion, local residents as well as visitors from overseas, especially those who are interested in Chinese calligraphy and Buddhism will be attracted to the site to appreciate this unique piece of art in its spectacular natural setting.

(For enquiries on the exhibition, please call the Jao Tsung I’s Petite Ecole, the University of Hong Kong at 2241 5598.)

End/Tuesday, September 28, 2004  
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