

The Heart Sutra

Om Namo Bhagavatyai Prajnaparamitayai!
Homage to Perfection of Wisdom, the Lovely, the Holy

Thus have I heard: At one time the Blessed One was dwelling at Vulture Peak Mountain, together with a great gathering of monks, nuns and bodhisattvas. At that time the Blessed One entered into the Samadhi on the enumeration of phenomena called the Appearance of the Profound. At the same time the noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva, the Great Being, was engaging in the practice of the profound Perfection of Wisdom and clearly saw the 5 skandhas to be empty of essential nature.

Then, by the inspiration of the Buddha, venerable Shariputra said to noble Avalokiteshvara, “Wishing to practice the profound Perfection of Wisdom, how should a son or daughter of good lineage train?”

The noble Avalokiteshvara replied to venerable Shariputra, “O Shariputra, a son or daughter of good lineage, who wishes to practice the profound Perfection of Wisdom should discern in this way: view the 5 skandhas to be empty of essential nature. Appearance is emptiness and emptiness is form. Appearance is not other than emptiness, emptiness is not other than appearance. Whatever is emptiness, that is appearance. Whatever is appearance, that is emptiness. In the same way, feeling,

recognition, karmic formation and consciousness are emptiness.”

“Here, O Shariputra, all phenomena are marked with emptiness. They have no characteristics. There is no arising and no cessation; there is no impurity and no purity. There is no decrease and no increase.”

“Therefore, Shariputra, In emptiness there is no appearance, no feeling, no recognition, no karmic formation, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no appearance, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no phenomena. There is no eye element up to no mind element, and so on up to no mind consciousness element.”

“There is no ignorance and no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to no aging and death and no extinction of aging and death. There is no suffering, no cause of suffering, no cessation of suffering, and no path. There is no attainment and no non-attainment.”

“Therefore, Shariputra, because the Bodhisattvas have no attainment, they rely on the Perfection of Wisdom. Since there is no obscuration, there is no fear. They transcend all error and attain complete Nirvana, passing beyond the bounds of sorrow.”

“All the Buddhas of the three times, by means of Perfect Wisdom, have been fully awakened to the utmost, true and complete Enlightenment.”

“Therefore, the mantra of the Perfection of wisdom is the great mantra, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequaled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering. It is true because it is not false. The mantra of the Perfection of Wisdom is said in this way:

Om Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha
Om, Gone, Gone, Gone Beyond, Gone Completely
Beyond, Enlightenment, So Be It.

Then the Blessed One arose from that Samadhi and commended noble Avalokiteshvara, the Bodhisattva, the Great Being: “Well done! Well done O son of good lineage, thus it is. One should practice the profound Perfection of Wisdom just as you have taught, and all the Tathagatas will rejoice.

After the Blessed One thus spoke, venerable Shariputra, noble Avalokiteshvara, the entire assembly and the world, with its gods, humans, asuras and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

Nalanda Institute. Prepared by Bob Harris 2009 & 2016

