

HEART OF PERFECT WISDOM (Prajñā Pāramitā Hṛidaya)

The Bodhisattva of Compassion
from the depths of prajñā wisdom
saw the emptiness of all five skandhas
and sundered the bonds that create suffering.

Know then:

Form here is only emptiness;
emptiness only form.
Form is no other than emptiness;
emptiness no other than form.
Feeling, thought, and choice—
consciousness itself—
are the same as this.

Dharmas here are empty;
all are the primal void.
None are born or die,
nor are they stained or pure,
nor do they wax or wane.

So in emptiness no form,
no feeling, thought, or choice,
nor is there consciousness.
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind,
no color, sound, smell, taste, touch,
or what the mind takes hold of,
nor even act of sensing.
No ignorance or end of it,
nor all that comes of ignorance:
No withering, no death, no end of them.

Nor is there pain, or cause of pain,
or cease in pain,
or noble path to lead from pain;
not even wisdom to attain:
Attainment too is emptiness.

So know that the Bodhisattva,
holding to nothing whatever,
but dwelling in prajñā wisdom,
is freed of delusive hindrance,
rid of the fear bred by it,
and reaches clearest nirvāṇa.

All buddhas of past and present,
buddhas of future time,
through faith in prajñā wisdom,
come to full enlightenment.
Know then the great dhāraṇi,
the radiant, peerless mantra,
the supreme, unfailing mantra,
the Prajñā Pāramitā,
whose words allay all pain.
This is highest wisdom,
true beyond all doubt;
know and proclaim its truth:

Gate, gate
pāragate
pārasamgate
bodhi, svāhā!

WORD LIST

HEART OF PERFECT WISDOM

Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya

The Perfection of Transcendent Wisdom (vehicle in majayāna & vajrayāna traditions, maybe from 100 BCE)

bodhisvattva: bodhi (awakened); sattva (sat from "es" to be, essence, presence, being). In Sanskrit, Avalokiteśvara (someone who has a compassionate mind to benefit all sentient beings (bodhicitta)). Avalokiteśvara: ava (down), lokita (notice, behold, observe), īśvara (ruler, master, sovereign); one who gazes down at the world, who hears the cries of the world, who perceives the cries of those who need help, who looks down upon sound, who works tirelessly to help those who call upon the name, who always looks upon all beings with the eye of compassion. Avalokiteśvara said to emanate as the Dalai Lama, Christ; male and/or female: China (Guanyin), Japan (Kanzeon, Kannon).

buddha: budh (to awake, to know).

dhāraṇi: dhr̥ (to hold, maintain). Chant codes. Dhāraṇi & mantra somewhat interchangeable: dhāraṇi = more meaningful phrases; mantra = more syllabic formula, not necessarily rationally understood.

dharmas: dhr̥ (to hold, keep); dhamma (cosmic law, natural law, the principle which remains constant, the supporter, the path, the order that makes life possible, organizing principle, the teachings of transformation). The wheel symbolizes dharma.

mantra: man (mind); tra (tool). Numinous sound, sound that alters consciousness, verbal instruments.

nirvāṇa: nir (not); vana (blow): quenching, blowing out, extinguishing, release from saṃsāra (wandering in cyclic worldly change) cessation of suffering (dukkha, duḥkha).

prajñā: pra (higher, supreme); jñā (consciousness). Intuition, insight, wisdom.

pāramis: the perfections as a path of the aspirant: dāna pārami (generosity), sīla pārami (virtue, conduct), nekkhamma pārami (renunciation), paññā (transcendental wisdom, insight), viriya pārami (energy, diligence, vigour, effort), khanti pārami (patience,

endurance), sacca pārami (honesty), adhiṭṭhāna pārami (determination, resolution), dhyāna pārami (one-pointed concentration, contemplation), prajñā pārami (wisdom, insight, intuition), mettā pārami (goodwill, friendliness, loving-kindness), upekkhā pārami (equanimity, serenity).

skandhas: 5 aggregates (form/matter/body = rūpa; feelings/sensations received from form = vedanā; perceptions = saṃjñā; mental activity/formations = sankhāra; consciousness = vijñāna). Anything of bulk, observable by the senses.

gate: gone.

pāra: (gone beyond, opposite bank of the river from where one is standing, beyond further boundary, further shore).

sam: intensifier prefix (so thoroughly gone).

ita: that which goes beyond, transcendent.

svahā: more a performative sound than a word that conveys meaning. Name of Agni's (fire) wife.

gate gate pāragate pārasamgate = om mani padme hūm.

gate gate pāragate pārasamgate bodhi svāhā

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