

Outlines of the *Heart Sutra*

1. **The meaning of the title**
2. **The homage by the translators**
3. **The explanation of the main body of the sutra**

1. **The meaning of the title**

In the Indian language: *bhagavati prajna paramita hridaya*

In the Tibetan language: *bcom ldan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i snying po*

[In the English language: *The Essence of the Perfection of Wisdom, the Bhagavati*]

The first segment.

2. **The homage by the translators**

Homage to the Perfection of Wisdom, the Bhagavati.

3. **The explanation of the main body of the sutra**

- 3.1. **The common prologue / the common explanation of the background of the sutra**
- 3.2. **The uncommon prologue / the uncommon explanation of the background of the sutra**
- 3.3. **The explanation of the actual sutra**

3.1. **The common prologue / the common explanation of the background of the sutra**

Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavan was dwelling on Mass of Vultures Mountain in Rajagriha together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas.

This passage describes the following:

- a) The speaker of the sutra (Buddha Shakyamuni)*
- b) The time when the sutra was spoken (at the time when the Buddha was on Mass Vultures Mountain in Rajagriha)*
- c) The place where the sutra was spoken (on Mass Vultures Mountain in Rajagriha)*
- d) To whom the sutra was spoken (a great community of monks and nuns and a great community of bodhisattvas)*

3.2. **The uncommon prologue / the uncommon explanation of the background of the sutra**

At that time, the Bhagavan was absorbed in the concentration on the categories of phenomena called "Profound Perception." Also, at that time, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara looked upon the very practice of the profound perfection of wisdom and beheld those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

3.3. **The explanation of the actual sutra**

- 3.3.1. **The question of Shariputra**
- 3.3.2. **The answer by Avalokiteshvara**
- 3.3.3. **The approval of the answer by the Buddha**
- 3.3.4. **The followers are pleased and take the teachings to heart**

3.3.1. The question of Shariputra

Then, through the power of Buddha, the Venerable Shariputra said this to the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara: "How should any son of the lineage train who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom?"

3.3.2. The answer by Avalokiteshvara

3.3.2.1. A brief explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the paths of accumulation and preparation

3.3.2.2. An extensive explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the paths of accumulation and preparation

3.3.2.3. An explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the path of seeing

3.3.2.4. An explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the path of meditation

3.3.2.5. An explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the path of no-more-learning

3.3.2.6. Conclusion

3.3.2.1. A brief explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the paths of accumulation and preparation

He said that and the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara said this to the Venerable Sharadvatiputra. "Shariputra, any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who wishes to practice the activity of the profound perfection of wisdom should look upon it like this, correctly and repeatedly beholding those five aggregates also as empty of inherent nature.

3.3.2.2. An extensive explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the paths of accumulation and preparation

3.3.2.2.1. An explanation of the four profundities of the aggregate of form

3.3.2.2.2. An explanation of the four profundities of the aggregates of feeling, and so forth

3.3.2.2.1. An explanation of the four profundities of the aggregate of form

3.3.2.2.1.1. The profundity of the ultimate of the aggregate of form

3.3.2.2.1.2. The profundity of the conventional of the aggregate of form

3.3.2.2.1.3. The profundity of the two truths being of one nature with regard to the aggregate of form

3.3.2.2.1.4. The profundity of the two truths of being nominally distinct with regard to the aggregate of form

3.3.2.2.1.1. The profundity of the ultimate of the aggregate of form

Form is empty.

3.3.2.2.1.2. The profundity of the conventional of the aggregate of form

Emptiness is form.

3.3.2.2.1.3. The profundity of the two truths being of one nature with regard to the aggregate of form

Emptiness is not other than form;

3.3.2.2.1.4. The profundity of the two truths of being nominally distinct with regard to the aggregate of form

form is also not other than emptiness.

3.3.2.2.2. An explanation of the four profundities of the aggregates of feeling, and so forth

In the same way, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, and consciousness are empty.

3.3.2.3. An explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the path of seeing

Shariputra, likewise, all phenomena are emptiness; without characteristic; unproduced, unceased; stainless, not without stain; not deficient, not fulfilled.

3.3.2.4. An explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the path of meditation

Shariputra, therefore, in emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no discrimination, no compositional factors, no consciousness; no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind; no visual form, no sound, no odor, no taste, no object of touch, and no phenomenon. There is no eye element and so on up to and including no mind element and no mental consciousness element. There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so on up to and including no aging and death and no extinction of aging and death. Similarly, there is no suffering, origination, cessation, and path; there is no exalted wisdom, no attainment, and also no non-attainment.

3.3.2.5. An explanation of how to train in the perfection of wisdom on the path of no-more-learning

Shariputra, therefore, because there is no attainment, bodhisattvas rely on and dwell in the perfection of wisdom, the mind without obscuration and without fear. Having completely passed beyond error, they reach the end-point of nirvana. All the buddhas who dwell in the three times also manifestly, completely awaken to unsurpassable, perfect, complete enlightenment in reliance on the perfection of wisdom.

3.3.2.6. Conclusion

Therefore, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the mantra equal to the unequalled, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering, should be known as truth since it is not false. The mantra of the perfection of wisdom is declared:

TADYATHA [OM] GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

3.3.3. The approval of the answer by the Buddha

Shariputra, the bodhisattva mahasattva should train in the profound perfection of wisdom like that." Then the Bhagavan arose from that concentration and commended the Bodhisattva

Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara saying: “Well said, well said, son of the lineage, it is like that. It is like that; one should practice the profound perfection of wisdom just as you have indicated; even the tathagatas rejoice.”

3.3.4. The followers are pleased and take the teachings to heart

The Bhagavan having thus spoken, the Venerable Sharadvatiputra, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Arya Avalokiteshvara, those surrounding in their entirety along with the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas were overjoyed and highly praised that spoken by the Bhagavan.