



The Heart Sutra

The Heart Sutra is a verbal description of the enlightened state by the Great Bodhisattva of Mercy, Avalokitesvara. It comes at the end of the Surtra on Perfecting Transcendental Wisdom, the Prajna Paramita, as the historical Buddha Sakyamuni, surrounded by his disciples, is sitting in deep meditation on Vulture Peak near Rajgir, in northern India. It seems that while he was watching the seated Buddha, Avalokitesvara experienced his most profound understanding of transcendental wisdom, the knowledge that is not subject to physical laws. Sariputra, the most intelligent disciple, begins the Heart Sutra by asking the unanswerable question that the disciples asked constantly. What is enlightenment? The answer that Avalokitesvara gave is regarded as the best one possible, i.e. the words that would naturally come to one's lips upon awakening.

MAHA PRAJNA PARAMITA HRIDAYA SUTRA, A VA LO KI TES VA RA, THE BO DHI SATT VA OF COM PAS SION, DO ING DEEP PRAJ NA PA RA MI TA, CLEAR LY SAW THAT THE FIVE SKAN DHAS ARE SUN YA TA, THUS TRAN SCEND ING MIS FOR TUNE AND SUF FER ING. O SA RI PU TRA, FORM IS NO O THER THAN SUN YA TA, SUN YA TA IS NO O THER THAN FORM. FORM IS EX ACT LY SUN YA TA, SUN YA TA EX ACT LY FORM. FEEL ING, THOUGHT, VO LI TION, AND CON SCIOUS NESS ARE LIKE WISE LIKE THIS. O SA RI PU TRA, RE MEM BER, DHAR MA IS FUN DA MEN TAL LY SUN YA TA. NO BIRTH, NO DEATH, NO THING IS DE FILED, NO THING IS PURE. NO THING CAN IN CREASE, NO THING CAN DE CREASE. HENCE IN SUN YA TA, NO FORM, NO FEEL ING, NO THOUGHT, NO VO LI TION, NO CON SCIOUS NESS, NO EYES, NO EARS, NO NOSE, NO TONGUE, NO BO DY, NO MIND, NO SEE ING, NO HEAR ING, NO SMELL ING, NO TAST ING, NO TOUCH ING, NO THINK ING; NO WORLD OF SIGHT, NO WORLD OF CON SCIOUS NESS, NO IG NOR ANCE AND NO END TO IG NOR ANCE, NO OLD AGE AND DEATH AND NO END TO OLD AGE AND DEATH. NO SUF FER ING, NO CRA VING, NO EX TINC TION, NO PATH; NO WIS DOM, NO AT TAIN MENT. IN DEED, THERE IS NO THING TO BE AT TAINED; THE BO DHI SATT VA RE LIES ON PRAJ NA PA RA MI TA WITH NO HIN DRANCE IN THE MIND. NO HIN DRANCE, THERE FORE NO FEAR. FAR BE YOND UP SIDE DOWN VIEWS, AT LAST NIR VA NA. PAST, PRES ENT, AND FU TURE, ALL BUD DHAS, BO DHI SATT VAS, RE LY ON PRAJ NA PA RA MI TA AND THERE FORE REACH THE MOST SU PREME EN LIGHT EN MENT. THERE FORE KNOW: PRAJ NA PA RA MI TA IS THE GREAT EST DHA RA NI, THE BRIGHT EST DHA RA NI, THE HIGH EST DHA RA NI, THE IN COM PARA BLE DHA RA NI. IT COM PLETE LY CLEARS ALL SUF FER ING. THIS IS THE TRUTH, NOT A LIE. SO SET FORTH THE PRAJ NA PA RA MI TA DHA RA NI. SET FORTH THIS DHA RA NI AND SAY: GA TE GA TE PA RA GA TE PARA SAM GA TE, BO DHI SVA HA HEART SU TRA...

Praj na pa ra mi ta [*Transcendental Wisdom*], **skan dhas** [*Aggregates of composition*],

Sun ya ta [*Emptiness: vast, original, ineffable source*], **dha ra ni** [*long mantra*],

ga te ga te pa ra ga te para sam ga te, Bo dhi sva ha:

[*Bodhisattvas see the world as empty, empty, completely empty, and here now fully present*].