

**THE
HEART
SUTRA**

*The Sutra on the
Essence of Transcendent Wisdom*

A Living Recension for
The Way of Sudden Awakening
By Russell Smith
Third edition 2009

Humbly Dedicated to:

*The One Mind and all the Buddhas
of the past, present and future
who "came forth" from it.*

*The entire lineage of
the Ekayana (Supreme Vehicle) Dharma
throughout history
in whatever country and time they appeared
to compassionately Awaken
ordinary human beings.*

Nippo Syaku

*All the teachers and students of the
Way of Sudden Awakening
here and now.*

THE HEART SUTRA

The Sutra on the Essence of Transcendent Wisdom

Adoration to the Prajnaparamita

(Transcendent Perfect Wisdom)

which is beyond words, thought and praise,

whose True Nature is like unto space,

neither created nor destroyed,

which is a state of Wisdom evident to our inner awareness,

and which is the mother of all Excellent Ones

of the past, present, and future.

Thus have I heard:

Once the Blessed One (the Buddha) was dwelling
in the royal domain of the Vulture Peak Mountain,
together with a great gathering of monks and bodhisattvas.
At that time the Blessed One was absorbed in the Samadhi
which examines all phenomena (inner and outer),
called "Profound Illumination".

At the same time noble Avalokiteshvara,
the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva,
himself practicing the profound Transcendent Perfect Wisdom,
saw the True Nature of the five skandas*
which is their natural Emptiness.

Then through the inspiration of the Buddha,

Shariputra said to Avalokiteshvara:

“How should those noble ones abide,
who wish to follow the profound practice
of Transcendent Perfect Wisdom?”

And Avalokiteshvara answered:

“Shariputra, whoever wishes to follow the profound practice

of Transcendent Perfect Wisdom

should look at it like this -

seeing the True Nature of the five skandas

which is their natural Emptiness.

Form is Emptiness,

Emptiness is form;

Emptiness is none other than form,

form is none other than Emptiness.

That which is form is Emptiness,

That which is Emptiness is form.

In the same way
perception (sensation),
conception (memory),
discrimination (volition),
and consciousness (thought)
are Emptiness.

Thus all phenomena (inner and outer)
are Emptiness
and have no (inherent) characteristics.

They are unborn and unceasing.

They are neither impure nor pure.

They have neither decrease nor increase.

They are neither limited nor unlimited.

They are neither unfinished (deficient) nor finished (completed).

Therefore,
Emptiness is not form,
not perception (sensations),
not conception (memory),
not discrimination (volition),
not consciousness (thought).

It is not the eye,
not the ear,
not the nose,
not the tongue,
not the body,
not the brain.

It has no appearance (shape),
no sound,
no smell (odor),
no taste (flavor),
no sensation (touch),
and is not an object of mind (thoughts and emotions).

It is not the quality or experience of seeing,
not the quality or experience of hearing,
not the quality or experience of smelling,
not the quality or experience of tasting,
not the quality or experience of sensing (touching),
not the quality or experience of thinking or of consciousness.

It is not the links (nidanas**)
that constitute the chain of conditioned existence
from beginning ignorance to decay and death
nor is *it* the elimination of them.

It is not ignorance
nor the absence or elimination of ignorance;
it is not decay and death
nor the absence or elimination of decay and death.

It is not learning or ignorance
and *it* is not the elimination of learning or ignorance.

It is not suffering,
not the cause of suffering,
not the ending of suffering
and not a path.

It is not knowledge or cognition,
not an attainment
nor (a state of) non-attainment.

Therefore,
since there is no attainment,
the Bodhisattvas abide by means of Transcendent Perfect Wisdom.

Since there is no obscurity of mind,
they have no confusion;
they transcend falsity (error)
and pass beyond the bounds of sorrow
into Nirvana.

All the Buddhas
of the past, present, and future,
by means of Transcendent Perfect Wisdom
fully and clearly Awaken to
Unsurpassed, True, Complete, Perfect Enlightenment.

Therefore,
the mantra of Transcendent Perfect Wisdom,
the mantra of deep insight,
the mantra of great Wisdom,
the unsurpassed mantra,
the unequalled mantra,
the incomparable mantra,
which unfailingly puts an end to all suffering,
should be known as Truth,
for there is no deception.

In Transcendent Perfect Wisdom
the mantra is proclaimed:
Gate gate paragate parasamgate Bodhi svaha.***

O' Shariputra,
this is how a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva should himself
practice profound Transcendent Perfect Wisdom.”

Then the Blessed One (Buddha)
arose from that Samadhi
and praised the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Avalokiteshvara,
saying:

“Good, good, O’ son of noble family!
Profound Transcendent Perfect Wisdom
should be practiced just as you have taught,
and the Tathagatas (Buddhas) will rejoice.”

When the Blessed One (Buddha) had said this,
Shariputra and Avalokiteshvara,
that whole gathering and the world with its inhabitants,
their hearts full of joy,
praised the words of the Blessed One (Buddha).



[*Note: The skandas are the experience of form, sensation, memory, will or volition and thoughts/consciousness.]

[**Note: Nidanas or the links of the chain of conditioned existence or causation. 1) avidya – ignorance, 2) samskara – discrimination, tendency or impulse, 3) vijnana – consciousness, 4) namarupa – name and form or the mental and physical, 5) sadayatana – six sense organs, sense fields, 6) sparsa – contact, 7) vedana – sense perception, sensation, 8) trishna – craving or thirst for existence, 9) upadana – attachment, grasping, or clinging inclusive of clinging to prospective birth in the womb, 10) bhava – being, existence, or becoming, 11) jati – birth, 12) jaramarana – decay or old age and death.]

[***Note: Gone, gone, gone beyond, completely gone, Awake, so be it.

Or: Accomplished, accomplished fully, accomplished inseparably united, Liberation.

Or: Gone, gone, gone beyond, gone altogether beyond, what an Awakening, all hail!

Or: Gone, gone, gone over, gone right over, Awakening, so be it.]

