

THE SŪTRA OF THE HEART OF TRANSCENDENT KNOWLEDGE

Thus have I heard. Once the Blessed One was dwelling in Rājagṛiha at Vulture Peak mountain, together with a great gathering of the saṅgha of monks and a great gathering of the saṅgha of bodhisattvas. At that time the Blessed One entered the samādhi that expresses the dharma called “profound illumination,” and at the same time noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva mahāsattva, while practicing the profound prajñāpāramitā, saw in this way: he saw the five skandhas to be empty of nature.

Then, through the power of the Buddha, venerable Shāriputra said to noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva mahāsattva, “How should a son or daughter of noble family train, who wishes to practice the profound prajñāpāramitā?”

Addressed in this way, noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva mahāsattva, said to venerable Shāriputra, “O Shāriputra, a son or daughter of noble family who wishes to practice the profound prajñāpāramitā should see in this way: seeing the five skandhas to be empty of nature. Form is emptiness; emptiness also is form. Emptiness is no other than form; form is no other than emptiness. In the same way, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness are emptiness. Thus, Shāriputra, all dharmas are emptiness. There are no characteristics. There is no birth and no cessation. There is no impurity and no purity. There is no decrease and no increase. Therefore, Shāriputra, in emptiness, there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no 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 dharmas; no eye dhātu up to no mind dhātu, no dhātu of dharmas, no mind consciousness dhātu; no ignorance, no end of ignorance up to no old age and death, no end of old age and death; no suffering, no origin of suffering, no cessation of suffering, no path, no wisdom, no attainment, and no nonattainment. Therefore, Shāriputra, since the bodhisattvas have no attainment, they abide by means of prajñāpāramitā. Since there is no obscuration of mind, there is no fear. They transcend falsity and attain complete nirvāṇa. All the buddhas of the three times, by means of prajñāpāramitā, fully awaken to unsurpassable, true, complete enlightenment. Therefore, the great mantra of prajñāpāramitā, the mantra of great insight, the unsurpassed mantra, the unequalled mantra, the mantra that calms all suffering, should be known as truth, since there is no deception. The prajñāpāramitā mantra is said in this way:

OM GATE GATE PĀRAGATE PĀRASAMGATE BODHI SVĀHĀ

Thus, Shāriputra, the bodhisattva mahāsattva should train in the profound prajñāpāramitā.”

Then the Blessed One arose from that samādhi and praised noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva mahāsattva, saying, “Good, good, O son of noble family; thus it is, O son of noble family, thus it is. One should practice the profound prajñāpāramitā just as you have taught and all the tathāgatas will rejoice.”

When the Blessed One had said this, venerable Shāriputra and noble Avalokiteshvara, the bodhisattva mahāsattva, that whole assembly and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

Lotsāwa bhikṣhu Rinchen De translated this text into Tibetan with the Indian paṇḍita Vimālamitra. It was edited by the great editor—lotsāwas Gelo, Namkha, and others. This Tibetan text was copied from the fresco in Gegye Chemaling at the glorious Samye vihāra. It has been translated into English by the Nālandā Translation Committee, with reference to several Sanskrit editions.

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