

The Heart Sutra in English

Translated by Gerhard Herzog

When the holy Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara had truly grasped the transcendent wisdom, he realized that visible form is only illusion. The same applies to its perception, to its names and categories, to discriminative intellect and finally even to our consciousness. They are all illusion. With this realization he was beyond all sorrow and bitterness.

Disciple Sariputra! The material is not different from the immaterial. The immaterial and the material are in fact one and the same thing. The same applies to perception, concepts, discriminative thinking and consciousness. They are neither existing nor not existing.

Sariputra! All things therefore they are in themselves not good and not bad, they are not increasing and not decreasing.

Therefore one may say there are no such things as form, perception, concepts, thinking process, and consciousness. Our senses such as eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are misleading us to illusion; thus one may also say there is no reality in visible form, sound, smell, taste, touch and mindknowledge. There are also no such things as the realms of sense from sight up to mind, and no such things as the links of existence from ignorance and its end to old age and death and their end. Also the Four Noble Truths* are nonexistent, just as there is no such thing as wisdom and also no gain.

Because the holy Bodhisattva who relies on transcendent wisdom knows that there is no gain, he has no worries and also no fear. Beyond all illusion he has reached the space of highest Nirvana.

All Buddhas of the past, present and future, found highest perfect knowledge because they relied on transcendental wisdom.

Therefore we ought to know that the great verse of the transcendent wisdom is unsurpassed in its splendor, and that it appeases truly all pain**. It reads:

GATE, GATE, PARAGATE, PARASAMGATE BODHISVAHA!

(Go, do it, make the step, you all must break through to the Absolute, then you will be immediately enlightened.)

* Four Noble Truths: Life means suffering; The origin of suffering is attachment; The cessation of suffering is attainable; The path to the cessation of suffering.

** pain: The more appropriate word may be "suffering".