

An Experiential Rendering of the  
Heart of Unsurpassed Perfect Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) Sutra  
with  
Explanations of the Modifications  
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# Heart of Unsurpassed Perfect Wisdom (Prajnaparamita) Sutra

The Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara,  
while ‘In-Awareness’ deep within the Per-fec-tion of Wisdom, clearly saw  
that even the five roots of sentient experience are empty •  
of inherent ‘self’-nature, and realized the cessation of suffering and distress.

Ho! (Say your name)! • Form and emptiness are each other!  
Form is none other than emptiness and emptiness none other than form.  
The same is true of sensations, perceptions, conceptions, and consciousness.  
All that arises is itself emptiness; all that is emptiness is *such*. •

Ho! (Say your name)! • All beings, things, and ideas are empty of self being!  
No-thing comes to be and no-thing ceases.  
No-thing is entire and no-thing is a part of.  
No-thing’s realized and no-thing’s obscured.

In emptiness, there is no form, sensation, perception, conception, or consciousness;  
no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind;  
no sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, or thoughts;  
no realms of sight and so forth, up through no realm of mind-consciousness.

There is no ignorance and no cessation of it, up through  
no decrepitude and death and no cessation of them, as well.  
There’s no suf-fer-ing, no origin of suf-fer-ing, no end of ..., and no path.  
There is no Wisdom, no attainment, and no non-attainment, either.

And so, without attaining or not attaining,  
all bodhisattvas, within the Per-fec-tion of Wisdom,  
find that mind’s without hindrance, free of ‘self-being’,  
being *such* with no fears, transforming Samsara – realizing Nirvana.

All Awakened Ones – past, present, and future –  
gestate in Prajnaparamita  
and are born in  
Unsurpassed Complete Perfect Enlightenment.

‘Thus’ – the Prajnaparamita Mantra – is the great bright Mantra,  
is the utmost Mantra, is the supreme Mantra,  
which realizes the cessation of suffering and distress.  
And, as its truth is itself ‘Stillness’, this Truth is not false.

So, with this awareness, we now do proclaim the Prajnaparamita Mantra, chanting:  
Gaté! Gaté! Paragaté! Parasamgaté! Bodhi! Svaha!  
Gaté! Gaté! Paragaté! Parasamgaté! Bodhi! Svaha!  
Gone! Gone! Gone ‘beyond’! Gone beyond ‘beyond’! Awakened! • Yahaa!

## Explanation of this rendering of the Heart Sutra

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The accompanying notes are attempts to explain insights that arose directly from within meditative experiences.

The notes in parentheses refer to other internal notes and, additionally, to various outside texts and teachings.

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Verse I: **The Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara,  
while ‘In-Awareness’ deep within the Per-fec-tion of Wisdom, clearly saw  
that even the five roots of sentient experience are empty  
of inherent ‘self’-nature, and realized the cessation of suffering and distress.**

Verse I-Line 1: **The Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara,**

Unbounded compassion arises integrally *within* the realization of *emptiness*; and so, stating “Bodhisattva of Compassion” correlates the manifesting of the Compassionate Mind (Avalokitesvara) with the realization of ‘emptiness’ explicated in the Sutra. (See extensive notes below on “*within*”). (See ‘Mind’ in notes to Verse VI Line 3.{VI-3})

I-2: **while ‘In-Awareness’ deep within the Per-fec-tion of Wisdom, clearly saw**

‘In-Awareness’ expresses an unfolding ‘condition’ and not a process of ‘doing’. Many translations use action verbs such as ‘practicing’ or ‘doing’. Since numerous Mahayana sutras emphasize the ‘non-doing’ nature of existence, using an action verb in the translations contradicts the teachings and the realization. Once again, as is taught and realized, along with no ‘doing’ there is no ‘location’. ‘In-Awareness’ is placed within semi-quote marks and is hyphenated to present this as a single concept rather than as a prepositional phrase indicating location. To further emphasize the conceptual unity and significance of this state of mind, the first letter of each word is capitalized. And so, ‘In-Awareness’ is itself a unified state of consciousness, an ‘*abiding*’ in and as what is often referred to as “self-arising *Ground of Awareness*” – without ‘*abiding*’ as an activity. (See the notes to Verse VI.) (See, also, the second to last sentence of *Making ‘Things’*: “To realize the end of all suffering, ‘*be-thus*’ in *Awareness*.”)

As usually understood, “deep within” does give a sense of location, but here and throughout the *Sutra* and *Making ‘Things’* “within” connotes a non-abiding ‘abiding’, again, *in* and *as* this *Awareness*. (See note: VI-2)

“Per-fec-tion” is bullet-separated into syllables for chanting purposes. This is also done in verse V-line 3 with the word ‘suf-fer-ing’, where, to keep the rhythm, the word needs to be articulated in three distinct syllables.

The phrase “clearly saw” has the standard meaning of the clear ‘seeing’ of *Realized Awareness*.

I-3: **that even the five roots of sentient experience are empty**

This entire line is the core of the realization of Prajnaparamita: that nothing, ***not even*** the very means by which experience arises, has *inherent* existence. The qualifier “**even**” (present in the Sanskrit but not in the Chinese) **Completes** the realization. (See: VII-2-4) (Also see: [Essence of the Heart Sutra](#), The Dali Lama: pg. 60 & 83 & YouTube: May 1, 2021)

Most renditions of the Heart Sutra use the Sanskrit term “skandhas” or translations of it that are technical and can be confusing. “Heaps”, “conditions”, and “aggregates” are not palpably alive for most English speakers. On the other hand, “**roots**” is vibrant and familiar; and it is used here so that the sense of this important term may feel immediate and not abstract.

Although suffering is considered a human dilemma, all sentient beings create their mental realities through the same process; and so, “sentient experience” is used to indicate a process shared by all sentient beings and not limited to humans.

I-4: **of inherent ‘self’-nature, and realized the cessation of suffering and distress.**

Semi-quotes are placed around “self” to bring attention to the preeminent delusion that is the essence of sentient experience: *At the core of existential reality, all entities and their qualities inherently exist and exist independently.* “Inherent ‘self’-nature” more broadly describes the fullness of the delusion. Assuming this delusion to be the Truth of Reality is *ignorance*, and results in our being driven by the meanings we give.

‘Self-existence’ (*svabhava* in Sanskrit) is expressed slightly differently in two other locations: 1) at the end of III-1, but without the hyphen. Separating “self” from “being” emphasizes the isolation and power of each; and 2) at the end of VI-1, ‘self-being’ now has semi-quotes as used with ‘In-Awareness’ to emphasize ‘self-existence’ as a unified concept. It also has a hyphen to reinforce the intimate link between the two.

NB: The term “realize(d)(s)” in this rendering is not used personally with its normal meaning of a person realizing the significance of something, but is used in the financial sense! When profits, or losses, are realized, nothing is done. Transactions may be made, but profits or losses are simply present in the resulting conditions.

*Liberation* on an individual level occurs with the ceasing of the process of creating mental realities, believing that these powerful images are extant, and then acting in the world based on the belief that what is thought *is* the world. *Karma* is the trail of effects of actions done from within this belief. On the other hand, the “cessation” of suffering is not simply a personal release for Avalokitesvara, as most translations express it. Suffering *itself* ceases in awakening to the nature of existence as being without any inherent characteristics or qualities. All beings, sentient and insentient, on the level of the ‘Totality of Existence’, are realized as manifesting *practice/enlightenment*, i.e., ‘*This Existence*’, perfect and complete, without suffering, and actually free of karmic becoming. This may well be what the Buddha intimated when, on his enlightenment, he said, “I and all sentient beings simultaneously enter the Way.” This realization is universal. The release is universal. In this, the Bodhisattva vows are realized and fulfilled. (See also: *The Avatamsaka Sutra* – Stage 10)

And yet, there remains suffering. For sentient beings, there remains the belief in *being* and in *becoming*. This seeming contradiction is central to the bodhisattva’s realization and guides *all* the bodhisattva’s activities as ‘*upaya*’, i.e. skillful means, for the sake of *all* sentient beings. (“(A)ll”, as used here, means “none left out”)

Quantifying adjectives such as “all” and “every” reinforce the experiential solidity of an assumed ‘reality’ by creating an image of a ‘totality’ (having the *inherent* qualities of ‘a totality’), and so are not used in this line.

To keep the rhythm, the word “suffering” is chanted here in two syllables rather than three as in V-3.

The Sanskrit term “*duhkha*”, rendered here as “suffering and distress”, describes a state of anxiety and unsatisfactoriness that existentially pervades all of our normal experiences and is reinforced by a craving to make what is experientially believed as ‘real’ either a permanent part of one’s life or, if found to be distasteful, to make it, or wish that it go away. (For a fuller explanation of this term, its cause, and the means to its cessation, see the second paragraph of *Making ‘Things’*.)

Some translations use “misfortune” and “pain”. However, ‘misfortune’ is easily misunderstood to mean ‘bad things happening to us from the outside’. Additionally, while ‘pain’ is simply a sensation, as are sound and sight, ‘suffering’ arises with our intractable belief in real and permanent existences within the impermanence of unfolding conditions. *Suffering* is the response of the injured ‘I’ in its attachment to a permanent and unalterable ego. *Distress* is the apprehensiveness experienced in that attachment.

Verse II: **Ho! (Say your name)! • Form and emptiness are each other!  
Form is none other than emptiness and emptiness none other than form.  
The same is true of sensations, perceptions, conceptions, and consciousness.  
All that arises is itself emptiness; all that is emptiness is *such*. •**

II-1: **Ho! (Say your name)! • Form and emptiness are each other!**

“Ho!” (*iha* in Sanskrit) is an emphatic that is meant to shock the mind. As explained by Red Pine in his The Heart Sutra, its accepted use dates back to Buddhism’s Third Council in 267BCE. In classic Zen practice, the use of shouts, hits, and slaps reflect this insight, and provided for those about to break through a sudden inroad into direct realization. (See: The Heart Sutra, Red Pine (Bill Porter) pg.71.)

Saying Shariputra’s name has been replaced by saying one’s own name. Who else is Shariputra than ourselves to whom the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Avalokitesvara, is offering this intimate realization? (Note the pause mark)

“Form and emptiness are each other!” identifies the ‘separateness’ of ‘other’ and, simultaneously, brings forth their non-separateness. (See also VI-4 on *Samsara* and *Nirvana*.)

II-2: **Form is none other than emptiness and emptiness none other than form.**

This line is rendered similarly to most translations and has the same meaning of mutual identity.

II-3: **The same is true of sensations, perceptions, conceptions, and consciousness.**

The word “true” is not the same as ‘this applies to...’ but implies the realized ‘Truth’ expressed below in the last line in Verse VIII.

Rather than “volitional formations”, which suggests a ‘will’ that is seemingly separate and independent, this list of Skandhas includes “conceptions” to signify the state at which complete thoughts and ideas ‘present themselves’ (arise) as full-blown experiential emotion-laden entities. The Sanskrit term for the fourth Skandha, *sanskara*, is comprised of *san* (together) and *kri* (to make), connoting an assembling of new experiences and already stored ideas. (See: The Heart Sutra, Red Pine (Bill Porter) pg. 63-64.)

II-4: **All that arises is itself emptiness; all that is emptiness is *such*. •**

Although this line is not included in the original Heart Sutra text, its meaning is carried in the sutra’s next line. More comprehensively, the *Heart Sutra in Eight Thousand Lines* devotes an entire chapter to it, stating in Chapter XVI that everything is itself ‘emptiness’ and the nature of emptiness is *such*. All existence is ‘such’ (or ‘thus’), i.e. mutual co-arising (*unfolding*) conditions, including that which one sees, the seeing process itself, and, likewise, the seer. (See also: Nagarjuna: *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, Ch. XXIV-v18&19; and: Chandrakirti: *Introduction to the Middle Way*, Ch. VI-v35.) (See, also: Dogen’s fascicles: *Manifestation of Great Prajna*, *The Moon*, and *The Reality of All Things*)

*Such* and *thus*, *suchness* and *thusness* are interchangeable. In *suchness* (or *thusness*), the nature of Existence is revealed: the *form of form*. (See the use of “*such*” and “*thus*” in *Making ‘Things’*.)

(The term “nature”, used throughout this writing, does not imply an immutable characteristic, but is simply “the name ascribed”. See Chandrakirti *Introduction to the Middle Way* Ch. VI-v221 [pg. 99] & Mipham’s Commentary pgs. 322&323)

The use of “such” is repeated in VI-4 when bodhisattvas, realizing *suchness*, realize fearlessness, simultaneously, seeing existence, no longer fixed into ‘Things’, *unfolding* simply and compassionately. (See, also, the description of this “*seeing*” in the opening paragraphs of Dogen’s *Genjokoan*.)

Verse III: **Ho! (Say your name)! • All beings, things, and ideas are empty of self being!  
No-thing comes to be and no-thing ceases.  
No-thing is entire and no-thing is a part of.  
No-thing’s realized and no-thing’s obscured.**

III-1: **Ho! (Say your name)! • All beings, things, and ideas are empty of self being!**

Rather than retaining the technical Sanskrit term ‘dharma’s’ and, in that, continuing the Mahayana refutation of the Theravada formulation that ‘dharma’s’ truly exist, the use of “All beings, things, and ideas” is an attempt to encompass the full range of human understanding: the animate, the inanimate, and the imagined.

“(E)mpty of self being!” repeats Avalokitesvara’s realization for Shariputra’s (our?) sake. However, as mentioned above, “self” and “being” are not hyphenated in order to emphasize the power of each word as a separate understanding and existential belief.

III-2-4: **No-thing comes to be and no-thing ceases.  
No-thing is entire and no-thing is a part of.  
No-thing’s realized and no-thing’s obscured.**

Translations, by their nature, remain tethered to a text’s original words. However, we are warned in nearly every teaching – from the Buddha’s cautions in the Kamala Sutta through the great teachings of Chan and Zen – that relying on words for understanding will prevent us from realizing the insights embodied in the very words we are reading. This points to the need for deep meditative ‘study’, or *hensan*, as Dogen expresses it in his fascicle of the same name, to overcome our preconceptions and to ‘enter’ the non-personal ‘transcendent’ experience of the terms. With that in mind, as these lines describe aspects of human imputation, I have felt quite free to choose other terms and rearrange the original order as needed.

“No-thing” is used to identify that it is ‘Thing’-ness that is realized to be the delusion. Hyphenating “Nothing” is an attempt to avoid the pitfall of nihilism. (See: Nagarjuna *Mulamadhyamakakarika* - especially: Ch. XXIV-v11)

III-2: **No-thing comes to be and no-thing ceases.**

The explication of the emptiness of ‘beings’, ‘things’, and ‘ideas’ continues here in detail. No “beings, things, or ideas” come to be, i.e. are born, are created, or are thought of, and no beings, etc. cease, etc. (See also: Nagarjuna *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, Ch. XXI.) This line also brings into question our assumptions of the character of ‘time’ and the nature of change as occurring in, or within, or due to a separate universal plenum that enables the alteration of experienced fixed ‘real’ entities. (For an exploration of ‘time’ as integral to ‘unfolding’, see Dogen’s fascicle *Uji* - ‘Time/Being’.)

III-3: **No-thing is entire and no-thing is a part of.**

In an effort to make the concepts less abstract, the terms used here are an alternative to what is often translated as “increase or decrease” and “complete or incomplete”, stating that nothing is an entity entire in itself and nothing is an entity that is part of a larger, more complete entirety. (For an in-depth articulation underlying this choice, see: Chandrakirti’s *Intro. to the Middle Way*, w/ Mipham’s Commentary Ch.VI-pgs.150-167, & *Chandrakirti’s Seven Fold Reasoning* by Joe Wilson)

III-4: **No-thing’s realized and no-thing’s obscured.**

This line applies to the mind and to ideas and concepts. It completely undermines the normal understanding of ‘realize’, and even the way ‘realize’ is rendered in this Heart Sutra. It also connects with the last line in Verse V, concerning ‘Wisdom’ and ‘attainment’.

Verse IV: **In emptiness, there is no form, sensation, perception, conception, or consciousness;  
no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind;  
no sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, or thoughts;  
no realms of sight and so forth, up through no realm of mind-consciousness.**

IV-1: **In emptiness, there is no form, sensation, perception, conception, or consciousness;**

The word “emptiness” is not capitalized because it should be understood as a ‘nature’ and not a ‘place’. (For a detailed background to this choice, see: Jamgon Mipham’s commentary on Chandrakirti’s Introduction to the Middle Way, pgs. 316-319.)

IV-2-4: **no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind;  
no sights, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile sensations, or thoughts;  
no realms of sight and so forth, up through no realm of mind-consciousness.**

These lines list the 18 modalities of perception grouped by *organ*, *experienced object*, and *realm* of perception.

Verse V: **There is no ignorance and no cessation of it, up through  
no decrepitude and death and no cessation of them, as well.  
There’s no suf-fer-ing, no origin of suf-fer-ing, no end of ..., and no path.  
There is no Wisdom, no attainment, and no non-attainment, either.**

V-2: **no decrepitude and death and no cessation of them, as well.**

The line is only modified by the use of “decrepitude” instead of “old age” as a broader concept of decline leading to eventual final complete collapse and death of the entity & even idea held as being real & permanent.

V-3: **There’s no suf-fer-ing, no origin of suf-fer-ing, no end of ..., and no path.**

As mentioned above in I-2 regarding ‘Per-fec-tion’, ‘suf-fer-ing’ is bullet-separated into three syllables to maintain a rhythmic chanting.

The phrase “end of ...” is used similarly and to avoid a third use of “cessation”. However, “end of” carries a sense of *time* unlike “cessation”, which connotes the ceasing of a causal process. Here “end of” = “cessation”.

V-4: **There is no Wisdom, no attainment, and no non-attainment, either.**

Although the original Sanskrit term is ‘*jñāna*’ (knowledge), when *Wisdom* is ‘realized’, even though that realizing is often referred to as “transcendent knowing”, there is no *Prajna* that is known - or attained - and, note as well, there is no knower and no knowing “to be found”. (Revisit “No-thing’s realized...” in III-4.)

My thanks, again, to Red Pine (Bill Porter) for pointing out the need to make clear that, unlike the single “no attaining” or “no gain” expressed in many translations, there is neither attaining nor not attaining – nothing done nor not done, nothing gained nor not gained. (See: The Heart Sutra, Red Pine (Bill Porter) pgs. 124-5.) (See, also, note to VIII-1&2, again citing Nagarjuna’s *Four Propositions and Hundred Negations*: *p*,  $\sim p$ ,  $(p\sim p)$ ,  $\sim(p\sim p)$ , etc..)

Verse VI: **And so, without attaining or not attaining,  
all bodhisattvas, within the Per-fec-tion of Wisdom,  
find that mind’s without hindrance, free of ‘self-being’,  
being *such* with no fears, transforming Samsara – realizing Nirvana.**

Verse VI is difficult to chant because the steady rhythm established in previous verses disappears. This is intentional. One stumbles within this verse trying to find something to hold on to, but there is nothing dependable to anchor one’s chanting. One, also, can’t find a place to catch one’s breath; the words are such that they suck the air right out. In the end, one simply gives everything. (See note VI-4, below.)

VI-1: **And so, without attaining or not attaining,**

This line reiterates the previous line emphasizing the choicelessness of *this awareness* that is neither attained nor not attained; implying similarly to the object of such attaining – ‘emptiness’. (See: note V-4, above.)

VI-2: **all bodhisattvas, within the Per-fec-tion of Wisdom,**

In this line, the word “within” echoes Avalokitesvara’s “deep within”, in I-2, where “within” refers not to a location but connotes a state of ‘*self-abiding awareness*’. (Again, see note VI-3, below, on “mind”).

VI-1-3: **And so, without attaining or not attaining,  
all bodhisattvas, within the Per-fec-tion of Wisdom,  
find that mind’s without hindrance, free of ‘self-being’,**

In lines 1&3, each use of the word “without” echoes the other, while “within” sits in between, raising the question of what “without” could signify beyond its obvious meaning. (See, also, the use of “within” and “without” in the last sentence of *Making ‘Things’*.)

VI-3&4: **find that mind’s without hindrance, free of ‘self-being’,  
being *such* with no fears, transforming Samsara – realizing Nirvana.**

The possibilities expressed in these lines are linked to the condition “within the Perfection of Wisdom,” *within* which bodhisattvas abide as ‘*such*’, their minds unhindered by any imputing of existence as ‘Things’ to unfolding experiences and attaching ‘real’ meaning and significance to them. (See the last paragraph of *Making ‘Things’*.)

In the Pali Canon, the Buddha referred to Five Hindrances - craving, aversion, laziness, anxiety, and skeptical doubt - blocking one’s capacity for introspective *study* (*henzan*). “Hindrances”, too, result from the automatic processes of the *skandhas* (“**roots**”) and the Twelve Links, by which sentient beings create ‘Realities’ / ‘Things’. In this rendering, however, “without hindrances” refers to *boundless awareness*, an awareness that doesn’t even ‘hold’ boundless awareness, and returns to “Avalokitesvara, /while ‘In-Awareness’...” (See note I-2)

Liberated from creating ‘Realities’, bodhisattvas are free of any grasping, fixedness, or self-identity. As such, they empathetically are able to intuit the attentions, i.e. ‘read the minds’, of sentient beings, ‘seeing’ them hold firmly to the belief that there are inherently self-existing real entities, attach meaning to these ‘Realities’, and, repeatedly, become twisted in cycles of anxiety and fear. In *this awareness*, the bodhisattvas are overwhelmed with immense compassion and become committed to discovering ways by which entrapped sentient beings can be liberated from the shackles of these vicious cycles. (See note I-1) (See paragraph above, starting with “*Liberation...*”)

VI-3: **find that mind’s without hindrance, free of ‘self-being’,**

This line begins with the word “find”, which is implied in the *goal-lessness* of neither attaining nor not attaining and the *non-doing* awareness of realization. (See: *In the Buddha’s Words*, pg. 67, “there took place in me...”)

“(M)ind”, here, does not refer to individual consciousness; but, is *found* as vast and beyond definition, unhindered by any characterization or condition. *Mind* manifests in unbounded magnificent fundamental non-specific *awareness*, a *self-abiding wisdom* beyond all conceptualization, a *suchness* pervading and being all realms of existence, and yet, not being and not even requiring ‘existence’, i.e. form. *This* the Buddha referred to as the *Unborn*, the *Uncreated*. Bodhidharma describes “*vast emptiness*”. Tibetans – particularly Dzogchen – use the term *Rigpa*. (See note I-2, regarding the term ‘In-Awareness’) However, it is not something else, something ‘other’, and so is not capitalized. It is, as well, delusions and sentient beings—compassionately ‘held’.

The line ends with “‘self-being’”, this time bracketed by semi-quotes and joined with a hyphen to point to the existential unity in the delusion of ‘self’-ness and of ‘being’ as *the* intrinsic fundamental nature of existence.



VI-4: **being *such* with no fears, transforming Samsara – realizing Nirvana.**

Along with the breath, what also disappears by the last line is the antecedent. The reference in this line is ambiguous, utilizing dangling present participles that lose their temporal reference, as well as their subject reference. The list of these verb forms starts with “being” (which intentionally contradicts the previous phrase “free of ‘self-being’”) and, unlike the remaining two participles, is not active but states a ‘nature’ – that of ‘suchness’. (See, again: Chandrakirti Ch.VI-v221 and paragraph 1 of *Making ‘Things’*) The grammatical ambiguity of this line is arranged with the intention of undermining any sense of stability and surety.

Awakened bodhisattvas also profoundly understand – again *jnana* in Sanskrit – the equivalence of Samsara and Nirvana through the experiential paradigm shift of *Realized Awareness* (“clearly saw” in I-2) characterized by a compassionate unity of *Abiding Suchness* completely engaged in *dynamic mutual offering*. They know that all existence, including themselves, is *Awakened Awareness*, i.e. *Buddha Nature*, which neither has nor requires inherent existence. The way Samsara is now experienced is transformed: Nirvana and Samsara are realized *as* the same – and *each other*! (See note II-1 on *form* and *emptiness*.) (Recommendations: Abe: [A Study of Dogen](#) & Roberts: [Being-Time](#))

In longer versions of the Heart Sutra, Shariputra asks, “How should (one) train?” More deeply, he is asking: If Samsara and Nirvana are realized as the same, how does an Awakened One engage in the manifesting world of phenomena? The Avatamsaka Sutra attempts to image the enormity of this as best as words can convey. In far simpler terms, seen from *within* the realm in which they disappear as ‘Things’, the Paramitas and the Precepts are expressions of how existence interrelates. Founded in *boundless compassion* – “engaging from *within* the ‘Mind’ of offering” – an awakened bodhisattva *manifests*, in the phenomenal world, the Way (Tao) (Dharma), embodying the *compassionate intimacy* of the Paramitas and Precepts, as just described. This behavior can be termed “Thus!”, as is expressed in the first word of Verse VIII – and “Gaté” in Verse IX.. (See: *Making ‘Things’*: “To realize the end of all suffering, ‘be-thus’ in Awareness.”) (Revisit: “*boundless awareness*” in note VI-3&4, above.)

Verse VII: **All Awakened Ones – past, present, and future –  
gestate in Prajnaparamita  
and are born in  
Unsurpassed Complete Perfect Enlightenment.**

VII-1: **All Awakened Ones – past, present, and future –**

The term used most often, ‘Buddha’, is replaced by its translated meaning, because ‘Awakening’ is not for special ‘Beings’, but is an Awareness that all humans can awaken to at any time, at any point. “Awakened Ones” are ‘buddhas’ with a lower case ‘b’. (\*See also: Nagarjuna’s *Mulamadhyanakakarika*: Ch. XVIII - v12.)

VII-2-4: **gestate in Prajnaparamita  
and are born in  
Unsurpassed Complete Perfect Enlightenment.**

The key to this Awakening is *gestating within* the realization of ‘emptiness’, *seeing* no longer through separateness (described in the second paragraph of *Making ‘Things’*), but as ‘One’ and, simultaneously, as all conditions and all ‘realms’ *engaging* mutually, thereby *awakening* to Existence as interconnected compassionate causal ‘uncreated’ Unity *unfolding*; and, in that, *verifying* all the Buddhas’ realizations and teachings. Thus, Prajnaparamita is called Mother of Buddhas. (Furthering this insight, read: *Making ‘Things’*, starting from “To ‘see’...”)

Verse VIII: **‘Thus’ – the Prajnaparamita Mantra – is the great bright Mantra,  
is the utmost Mantra, is the supreme Mantra,  
which realizes the cessation of suffering and distress.  
And, as its truth is itself ‘Stillness’, this Truth is not false.**

VIII-1: **‘Thus’ – the Prajnaparamita Mantra – is the great bright Mantra,**

Beginning this line of the Sutra, “Thus” is placed in semi-quotes and is separated from “the Prajnaparamita Mantra” by ‘em dashes’ to perform three functions: first, “Thus,” as the normal grammatical equivalent of ‘Therefore,’; second, to state the functional equivalence of ‘Thusness’ and “the Prajnaparamita Mantra”; and third, to point to the *absolute* equivalence of ‘Thusness’/‘Suchness’ and ‘Mantra’ itself.

VIII-1&2: **‘Thus’ – the Prajnaparamita Mantra – is the great bright Mantra,  
is the utmost Mantra, is the supreme Mantra,**

In these two lines, “Mantra” is capitalized to indicate that this Mantra is not the mantra that is chanted but the *Mantra/Mandala* that is the *Nature of Existence*. This ‘Mantra’ is always being chanted, always being expressed by ‘Existence’ as existence. Prajnaparamita *sees* the Realizing Unfolding (emptiness) that is ‘Existence’ manifesting. And yet, such ‘seeing’ sees no ‘Thing’, ‘realizes’ no ‘Thing’, is not a ‘Thing’; and yet, again, it...not *not* a ‘Thing’; nor... etc., etc. (See V-4 referencing Nagarjuna’s *Four Propositions and Hundred Negations*.)

VIII-3: **which realizes the cessation of suffering and distress.**

It is the Mantra, i.e. Existence itself, “*which* realizes the cessation of suffering and distress” and not individual chanters or the result of an individual mantra. The use of “realize” brings the meaning back to Avalokitesvara’s realization in the first verse of the Sutra. Again, the meaning of *realize(s)(d)* is similar to realizing financial profits and losses, which arise as an unfolding condition from *within* unfolding conditions.

Here, as in I-4, “suffering” is chanted in two syllables and not bullet-separated into three.

VIII-4: **And, as its truth is itself ‘Stillness’, this Truth is not false.**

The rendering of this line replaces the dualistic phrase, “it is true and not false.” This Truth is *realized* and is true because it is, as Dogen so aptly put it, “unconstructedness in Stillness.” The use of “truth” and “Truth” here are the second and third uses and link back to the first use of “true” in II-3 above, calling for a more profound *study* (*henzan*) of the word in that line.

Verse IX: **So, with this awareness, we now do proclaim the Prajnaparamita Mantra, chanting:  
Gaté! Gaté! Paragaté! Parasamgaté! Bodhi! Svaha!  
Gaté! Gaté! Paragaté! Parasamgaté! Bodhi! Svaha!  
Gone! Gone! Gone ‘beyond’! Gone beyond ‘beyond’! Awakened! • Yahaa!**

IX-1: **So, with this awareness, we now do proclaim the Prajnaparamita Mantra, chanting:**

The use of “with” connects with the uses of “within” and “without” in Verses I and VI and with the last sentence of *Making ‘Things’*. So, it is not just having this awareness, but *being* this Awareness. It is *in* and *with* this state of awareness that “we do proclaim the Prajnaparamita Mantra” – as does all Existence – **Gaté!...**

IX-4: **Gone! Gone! Gone ‘beyond’! Gone beyond ‘beyond’! Awakened! • Yahaa!**

‘(B)eyond’ here does not refer to ‘transcendent distance’, but is similar to the term “mystery” or “darkness” (*hsuan* in Chinese) in the *Tao Te Ching*. (See: Verse I of Stephen Mitchell’s translation: “Darkness *within* darkness / the gateway to all understanding.”) (See also: Red Pine: The Heart Sutra, pg. 138, “the word around which...the entire sutra, revolves is “beyond”.”)

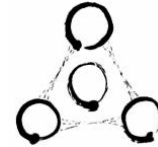
‘Svaha!’ is simply a Sanskrit celebratory exclamation: ‘Hallelujah!’, ‘Hail!’, ‘Yes!’, ‘Rejoice!’, etc. All of these work and so does an invented word: ‘Yahaa!’

## Making ‘Things’

Form is the manifesting of ‘Emptiness’. Emptiness is the unfolding Process of conditioned causality. To see ‘Things’ (including ourselves) as having inherent qualities is the delusion we commonly experience and believe as true. And yet, to deny form creates another delusional ‘reality’: the nihilism of nothingness. To ‘see’ *both* form within the conditioned causal Process *and* the causal Process free of any inherent form is to see ‘*This*’ – the Great Reality – in direct awareness. Thereby is revealed the ‘form’ of form. The ‘form’ of the ‘Buddha’ is the form of Existence, which is without fixedness and without self-being – the brilliant dynamic causal Unfolding compassionately actualizing as *such*. ‘*This*’ is the *Suchness*, the *Stillness*, that is Existence itself, and ‘*This*’ requires no existence.

Our process of making unfolding experiences into ‘Realities’ is the delusional process that leads to the craving for permanence or impermanence, i.e. suffering. This craving is the symptom of the illness of separateness, of making ‘Things’, and enables all other sufferings to follow. To realize the end of all suffering, ‘*be-thus*’ in *Awareness*. Abide *as* and *within* this Unfolding, engaging from ‘within the mind of offering’ with conditions as they manifest, without making these experiences into ‘Real’ entities, without running away into separateness – without making ‘Things’!

Mokudo  
2007



## Three Fundamental Practices

Get your ‘self’ (get ‘selfness’) out of the way!

Stop!

Engage with unfolding conditions without describing them!

## Four Bodhisattva Vows

Sentient beings are uncountable;

I vow to awaken them.

Delusions are inextricable;

I vow to liberate them.

Dharmas are inconceivable;

I vow to realize them.

The Buddha Way is unutterable;

I vow to embody It.