

The Sutra of the Heart of Transcendent Knowledge

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In Sanskrit : « bhagawati prajnaparamita hridaya »

Thus I have heard:

Once the Bhagavan was dwelling in Rajagriha on the Vulture Peak mountain, together with a great gathering of monks and a great gathering of the sangha of bodhisattvas.

At that moment, the Bhagavan entered the samadhi that expresses the dharma called « Profound Illumination ».

At the same time, the noble bodhisattva mahasattva Avalokiteshvara, while practicing the profound prajnaparamita, saw the following : he saw that the five skandhas were empty of inherent nature.

Then, through the power of the Buddha, the venerable Shariputra said to the noble bodhisattva mahasattva Avalokiteshvara :

« How should the sons and daughters who wish to practice the profound prajnaparamita set about it » ?

Addressed in this way, the noble bodhisattva mahasattva Avalokiteshvara answered the venerable Shariputra :

« Ô Shariputra, those noble sons and daughters who wish to practice the profound prajnaparamita should see in this way : they should perfectly view the five skandhas as being empty of inherent nature.

Material form is empty ; emptiness is also material form. Emptiness is no other than material form ; material form is no other than emptiness.

In the same way, feelings, perceptions, formations and consciousness are empty.

Thus, ô Shariputra, all phenomena are emptiness. They do not possess any characteristics. They are without birth or cessation. They are neither pure nor impure. They do not decrease nor increase.

Thus, ô Shariputra, in emptiness, there is no material form, nor feelings, nor perceptions, nor formations, nor consciousness. There is no eye, nor ear, nor nose, nor tongue, nor body, nor mind. There is no appearance, nor sound, nor smell, nor taste, nor touch, nor mental phenomena.

From the visual to the mental faculty, up to the faculty of mental consciousness, all that is non-existent. From ignorance and the end of ignorance up to old age and death, and the end of old age and death, all that is non-existent.

There is no suffering, nor origin of suffering, nor cessation of suffering, nor path. There is no wisdom, nor attainment, nor non-attainment.

Therefore, o Shariputra, since the bodhisattvas have no attainment, they rely on the prajnaparamita and dwell in it. Since their minds are without defilement, they fear nothing. And transcending all errors, they attain complete nirvana.

Relying on the prajnaparamita, all the bouddhas of the three times fully awaken to unsurpassable, true and complete enlightenment.

Therefore, the mantra of the prajnaparamita is the mantra of great insight , the unsurpassed mantra, the unequalled mantra, the mantra that utterly pacifies all sufferings and that should be known as truth, since it is without deception. The mantra of the prajnaparamita is said in the following way :

TADYATHA GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA

Thus, o Shariputra, in this way, the bodhisattvas mahasattvas should practice the profound prajnaparamita.»

Then, the Bhagavan arose from his samadhi and applauded the noble bodhisattva mahasattva Avalokiteshvara, saying :

« Good, good, o noble son, thus it is. One should practice the profound prajnaparamita just as you have taught. And all the tathagatas rejoice. »

When the Bhagavan has said that, the venerable Shariputra, the mighty bodhisattva mahasattva Avalokiteshvara, the entire assembly and the world with its gods, human beings, semi-gods and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the words of the Bhagavan.

This completes the noble Sutra of the Heart of Transcendent Knowledge.