

The Heart Sutra in Sanskrit

prajnaparamita hrdaya sutra

om namo bhagavatyai aryaprajnaparamitayai aryavalokitesvaro bodhisattvo
gambhiram prajnaparamitacaryam caramano vyavalokayati sma pancaskandhas
tams ca svabhavasunyam pasyati sma

iha sariputra rupam sunyata sunyataiva rupam rupan na prthak sunyata
sunnyataya na prthag rupam yad rupam sa sunyata ya sunyata tad rupam evam
eva vedanasamjnasamskaravijnanani iha sariputra sarvadharmah sunyatalaksana
anutpanna aniruddha amala avimala anuna aparipurnah

tasmac chariputra sunyatayam na rupam na vedana na samjna na samskarah na
vijnam na caksuhsrotraghranajihvakayamanamsi na rupasabdagandha
rasasprastavyadharmah na caksurdhatur yavan na manovijnanadhatuh navidya
navidyaksayo yavan na jaramaranam na jaramaranaksayo na
duhkhasamudayanirodhamarga na jnamam na praptir napraptih

tasmac chariputra apraptitvad bodhisattvasya prajnaparamitam asritya viharaty
acittavaranah cittavarananastitvad atrasto viparyasatikranto
nisthanirvanapraptah tryadhvavyavasthitah sarvabuddhah prajnaparamitam
asrityanuttaram samyaksambodhim abhisambuddhah

tasmaj jnatavyam prajnaparamita mahamantro mahavidyamantrao nuttaramantrao
samagamamantrah sarvaduukhaprasamanah satyam amithyatvat
prajnaparamitayam ukto mantrah tadyatha

gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha

iti prajnaparamitahrdayam samaptam

1.

om namo bhagavatyai āryaprajñāpāramitāyai

OM homage to the Illustrious Noble Perfection of Wisdom

2.

āryāvalokiteśvaro bodhisattvo gambhīrāṃ prajñāpāramitācaryāṃ caramāṇo vyavalokayati sma pañcaskandhās tāṃś ca svabhāvaśūnyān paśyati sma

Noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva, practising the profound way of the perfection of wisdom, observed with penetrating analysis and saw five skandhas empty of intrinsic existence.

3.

iha śāriputra rūpaṃ śūnyatā śūnyataiva rūpaṃ rūpān na pṛthak śūnyatā śūnyatāyā na pṛthag rūpaṃ yad rūpaṃ sā śūnyatā yā śūnyatā tad rūpaṃ evam eva vedanāsaṃjñāsaṃskāravijñānam

Regarding these [skandhas], Śāriputra: form is emptiness, emptiness itself is form. Emptiness does not exist separately from form; form does not exist separately from emptiness. That which is form is emptiness; that which is emptiness is form. Likewise: feeling, determinative perception, volition and consciousness.

4.

iha śāriputra sarvadharmāḥ śūnyatālakṣaṇā anutpannā aniruddhā amalā avimalā anūnā aparipūrṇāḥ

In these [skandhas], Śāriputra, all phenomena (dharmas) are characterised by emptiness. They are not arisen, not ceased; not stained, not stainless; not deficient, not complete.

5.

tasmāc chāriputra śūnyatāyāṃ na rūpaṃ na vedanā na saṃjñā na saṃskārāḥ na vijñānaṃ na cakṣuḥśrotraghrāṇajihvākāyamanāṃsi na rūpaśabdagandharasaspraṣṭavyadharmāḥ na cakṣurdhātur yavan na manovijñānadhātuḥ nāvidyā nāvidyākṣayo yavan na jarāmaṇaṃ na jarāmaṇakṣayo na duḥkhasamudayanirodhamārga na jñānaṃ na prāptir nāprāptiḥ

Therefore, Śāriputra, in emptiness, form does not exist, nor feeling, nor determinative perception, nor volition, nor consciousness. There is no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. No form, sound, smell, taste, touchable, or mental object. No eye-element, up to and including no mind-consciousness element. No ignorance, no destruction of ignorance, up to and including no old age-and-death, no destruction of old age-and-death. No suffering, no cause, no cessation, no path. No nondual-awareness. No attainment, no non-attainment.

6.

**tasmāc chāriputra aprāptivād bodhisattvasya prajñāpāramitām āśritya viharaty acittāvaraṇaḥ
cittāvaraṇanāstivād atrasto viparyāsātikrānto niṣṭhā nirvāṇaprāptaḥ**

Therefore, Śāriputra, because Bodhisattvas have no attainment, they rely on the perfection of wisdom and dwell without mind-obscurations. Because their minds are without obscurations, they are unafraid. Going beyond confused views, they attain complete nirvāṇa.

7.

**tryadhvavyavasthitāḥ sarvabuddhāḥ prajñāpāramitām āśrityānuttarā samyaksambodhim
abhisambuddhāḥ**

All Buddhas of the three times, relying on the perfection of wisdom, are fully awakened to the utmost, perfect awakening.

8.

**tasmāj jñātavyam prajñāpāramitā mahāmantra mahāvidyāmantra nuttaramantro
samāsamamantraḥ sarvaduḥkhaḥpraśamanaḥ satyam amithyatvāt prajñāpāramitāyam ukto
mantraḥ tadyathā gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā**

Therefore one should know the perfection of wisdom to be the great mantra, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the most unequalled mantra, the mantra that calms all suffering; one should know it to be real because it is not false. In the perfection of wisdom, the mantra is recited thus:

gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā.

9.

iti prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya samāptam

This ends the Heart-essence of the perfection of wisdom

Pronunciation Guide

In Pali and Sanskrit every letter is pronounced and there are no diphthongs. The short vowels a, i and u, are voiced more briefly than the others which are known as long vowels. An approximate guide to pronunciation is as follows:

<p>Vowels:</p> <p>a as in cut ā as in cart ai as in high au as in out e as in veil i as in kick ī as in bee o as in low u as in put ū as in too r as the ri in trip with some rolling of the sound</p>	<p>Consonants</p> <p>as in English, with the following qualifications:</p> <p>g hard as in good c soft as in chat d and t as in English, but with the tongue tip against the back of the upper front teeth ḍ and ṭ as in ḍ and ṭ, but with the tongue tip curled up and backwards against the roof of the mouth h at the end of a word has a slight echo of the preceding vowel j as in jay unless followed by n when it may be hard as in signal ś and ṣ soft as in shin v is pronounced somewhere between English v and w</p>
<p>Nasal sounds:</p> <p>Before a consonant make the natural sound associated with that consonant:</p> <p>nk as in trunk ng as in sang nc as in crunch nj as in hinge nt or nt, as in tent nd or nd, as in bend mp as in limp mb as in limbo</p>	<p>Before vowels:</p> <p>n as ny in banyan m at the end of a word nasalizes the preceding vowel, as in the French <i>bon</i>. ṇ as in nit but with the tongue tip against the back of the upper front teeth. ṅ as in nit, but with the tongue tip curled up and backwards against the roof of the mouth. Aspirated consonants are shown followed immediately by the letter h, and should be pronounced with an audible out-breath. Note that th is always pronounced as in shorthand; ph is always pronounced as in haphazard. Doubled consonants are pronounced as such, e.g. <i>sadda</i> as in midday, <i>ks</i> as in bookshop.</p>

Parallel versions of the Heart Sutra *(from the Triratna Puja book)*

From the Sanskrit version, transl. Tejananda

From the Chinese version, transl. Bodhin Kjolhede

Om homage to the Illustrious Noble Perfection of Wisdom

Noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva, practising the profound way of the perfection of wisdom, observed with penetrating analysis and saw five skandhas empty of intrinsic existence.

The Bodhisattva of Compassion, When he meditated deeply, Saw the emptiness of all five skandhas And sundered the bonds that caused him suffering.

Regarding these [skandhas], Śāriputra: form is emptiness, emptiness itself is form. Emptiness does not exist separately from form; form does not exist separately from emptiness. That which is form is emptiness; that which is emptiness is form. Likewise: feeling, determinative perception, volition and consciousness.

Here then, Form is no other than emptiness, Emptiness no other than form, Form is only emptiness, Emptiness only form. Feeling, thought, and choice, Consciousness itself, Are the same as this.

In these [skandhas], Śāriputra, all phenomena (dharmas) are characterised by emptiness. They are not arisen, not ceased; not stained, not stainless; not deficient, not complete.

All things are by nature void, They are not born or destroyed; Nor are they stained or pure, Nor do they wax or wane.

Therefore, Śāriputra, in emptiness, form does not exist, nor feeling, nor determinative perception, nor volition, nor consciousness. There is no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. No form, sound, smell, taste, touchable, or mental object. No eye-element, up to and including no mind-consciousness element. No ignorance, no destruction of ignorance, up to and including no old age-and-death, no destruction of old age-and-death. No suffering, no cause, no cessation, no path. No nondual-awareness. No attainment, no non-attainment.

So, in emptiness, no form, No feeling, thought, or choice, Nor is there consciousness. No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind; No colour, sound, smell, taste, touch, Or what the mind takes hold of, Nor even act of sensing. No ignorance or end of it, Nor all that comes of ignorance; No withering, no death, No end of them. Nor is there pain, or cause of pain, Or cease in pain, or noble path To lead from pain; Not even wisdom to attain. Attainment too is emptiness.

Therefore, Śāriputra, because Bodhisattvas have no attainment, they rely on the perfection of wisdom and dwell without mind-obscurations. Because their minds are without obscurations, they are unafraid. Going beyond confused views, they attain complete nirvāṇa.

So know that the Bodhisattva Holding to nothing whatever, But dwelling in Prajna wisdom, Is freed of delusive hindrance, Rid of the fear bred by it, And reaches clearest Nirvana.

All Buddhas of the three times, relying on the perfection of wisdom, are fully awakened to the utmost, perfect awakening.

All Buddhas of past and present, Buddhas of future time, Using this Prajna wisdom, Come to full and perfect vision.

From the Sanskrit version, transl. Tejananda

Therefore one should know the perfection of wisdom to be the great mantra, the mantra of great knowledge, the unsurpassed mantra, the most unequalled mantra, the mantra that calms all suffering; one should know it to be real because it is not false. In the perfection of wisdom, the mantra is recited thus: *gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā*.

This ends the Heart-essence of the perfection of wisdom.

From the Chinese version, transl. Bodhin Kjolhede

Hear then the great dharani, The radiant peerless mantra, The Prajnaparamita Whose words allay all pain; Hear and believe its truth:

Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha

Contemplating the five skandhas

This is intended to be 'progressive' – i.e. do 1. and as and when that is clear experientially, go on to 2. Just 1. could well be enough – but in either case, when your session comes to an end, just sit for some time.

If you feel you are experientially clear about the impermanence of the skandha, you could go on to explore 3, which is intended to bring out the insubstantial / empty nature of the skandha.

Always end with just sitting.

1. Getting a skandha 'in view' (see below) This means there being a direct experience of it 'actually happening'. Sit aware of its arising, for some time. Be careful to distinguish the **immediate sensation** of the skandha from the **mental activities** around it.

2. Notice that what you're directly aware of is changing. If it's not evident that it's changing, look more closely. Look 'inside' the apparently solid experience and see if you can discover 'parts'. Stay with it for some time. Is it *really* not changing? Explore with awareness.

3. Exactly how is the sense of 'I' / 'me' being experienced now, in relation to this skandha? Can you sense it manifesting as particular thoughts (e.g. beliefs), emotions or sensations?

4. Ask, then explore with awareness in **direct experience**:

1. Is this sense of 'I' or 'me' actually **doing** the what's arising in experience? Or is it just happening 'on its own'?
2. Is this sense of 'I' or 'me' **experiencing** what's arising? Is there a sense of me as the 'experiencer' somehow separate from the experiencing? Or what? Does this experiencing require an 'experiencer' or is the experiencer just a thought or belief?

5. Let go of any reflecting or cultivating and just sit for as long as you wish.

Getting the skandha in view:

I suggest this simplified approach to the skandhas in terms of what we're trying to get 'in view', aimed at what the skandha represents in direct experience.

i. Rupa as body - tactile sensations.

Cultivate awareness of **tactile sensations** of all kinds 'gross' and 'subtle', including any 'emotional sensations' or felt-senses in the body and more subtle energetic 'tinglings'.

- You could also focus on sight, hearing, taste or smell, if you find any of these more obvious. It's good to explore them all anyway, if you have the time.

ii. Vedana as feelings.

I.e. 'feeling tone', pleasant, neutral or unpleasant, primarily in the body / sphere of tactile sensation.

iii. Samjna as perceptions.

With any sense arising, notice the immediate direct recognition of each experience. (Or the attempt to recognise in the case of an arising that can't be immediately identified)

iv. Samskara as volitions, thoughts, emotions.

Here it's important to have cultivated enough shamatha that the mind is fairly quiet – that way, you are more likely to be able to notice samskaras happening, rather than just getting caught up in the 'story'. If you are really caught up in a story or 'closed-circuit' mental rumination, you can't actually contemplate it.

v. Vijnana as 'my' consciousness

i.e. when becoming conscious of any sense arising / skandha, there is a sense (gross or subtle) of 'me here' having the experience and 'that there' which is experienced. Notice directly this sense of duality or separation in experience.

So it's enough to get just one aspect of one skandha 'in view' – don't try to do this kind of contemplation with them all at once!