

**Heart Sutra Study**  
**Teacher: Samu Sunim**  
**Date: Unknown**  
**Location: Toronto**  
**Event: Heart Sutra Study 04**  
**Transcriber: Zack, Toronto//re-listened by Jisik**  
**Date of Transcription: Apr 23, 2024**

Close your eyes and we'll repeat, we'll recite, Maha Prajna Paramita seven times together.

Maha Prajna Paramita.

Maha Prajna Paramita.

Maha Prajna Paramita.

Maha Prajna Paramita.

Maha Prajna Paramita.

Maha Prajna Paramita.

Maha Prajna Paramita.

As you have noticed, in this short sutra so many negations appear. Negations, self-denials, non-duality, and mutual identity, they prevail. There are eight items that are negated, denied. These are all actually major Buddhist doctrines that prevailed, predominated, previous to the rise of Mahayana Buddhist movement. So it's important to understand that. So I'll list those eight teachings, doctrines, items that are negated.

Number one we already did, five skandhas. Number two, six sense organs. And number three, six sense objects. And then the eighteen elements. And five, Twelve Links of Chain of Dependent, Conditioned Arising. And six, Four Holy Truths or Four Noble Truths. And then seven is cognition. And eight is attainment.

Okay, these are all denied. So if you look at the text, in the prologue, that five skandhas, the emptiness of all five skandhas, okay. And then going down it's six sense organs: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind. And then six sense objects: form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or objects of mind. And then eighteen elements are, here it just appears here. No realm of sight, no realm of consciousness. Just the beginning and the, the first and the last. Eighteen elements are of all our experience, that's eye, ear, nose, tongue, by six sense organs, and six objects, and six corresponding kinds of consciousness. So for instance, that's eye consciousness, that's visual consciousness, and ear consciousness is auditory consciousness, and nose is olfactory

consciousness, and, wait a minute. That's, yeah olfactory consciousness, and tongue is **gustatory** consciousness and body tactile consciousness, and then mind consciousness. So those are called the eighteen elements of all our experience.

And then Twelve Links of Chain of Dependent or Conditioned Arising. That's here, here the first one, "No ignorance." The first is ignorance. And then they skip, and then goes right to the "No ignorance and no extinction of ignorance." And then the eleventh, and then, so the first and twelfth here, the twelfth is "No old age and death and no extinction of them." It's first, Twelve Links of Chain of Causation or Dependent arising is, first it lists production from one another. So ignorance instigates, you know, impulses and impulses in turn instigates, you know, consciousness, that's previous life. And then consciousness finds its womb, and then the present life begins and so forth, and then all that. So, and then that's production, and then the extinction, all this. That's extinction of ignorance, so both are denied. The production is denied and extinction is denied.

And then this Four Holy Truths here is denied. That's Four Holy Truths here. And then, here cognition means, it's knowledge here, "No knowledge." And then here, "No attainment" is, there is these four paths, it's called "the four holy paths" or "four stages of holiness." First is called *sotapanna*. It's called "stream winner" or "stream enterer." So when you set out on the Buddhist path and, making vows, and practicing six paramitas, for instance, that's in the Mahayana but in the Hinayana or Theravada it's called four *brahmaviharas*. That's compassion, loving-kindness, sympathetic joy, and equanimity. Those four unlimited virtues. Then it's called *sotapanna* or stream winner or stream entry. In other words, you get your feet wet, your, you know, begin to do the stream crossing. And, *sotapanna*. Stream winner or stream enterer.

So, in this stage you are reborn seven times until you attain the final liberation. So you come back seven times in order to attain liberation. And in this stage you are at least free from three fetters. The three fetters are individualism or individualistic view and doubt. And, what's the third one? I forgot the third one. The three fetters, individualistic view, and doubt, and it's, I think it's clinging. So you are free from three fetters. And then the second word is called *sakadagamin*. This is second stage. So this is first stage, and then you advance to second stage. So it's, you go through the four stages of holiness until you become *Arahant*. This is once, it's called "once-returner." So, because you come back just one more time before you attain final release. So here you are free from the three unwholesome defilements, that's greed, to some extent, not completely, that's why you come back one more time. So greed, aggressiveness, and delusion. And three is *anagami*, that's called "never-returner." And then the four one is *Arahant*. So you go through these four stages of holiness. So this attainment, these are called, the attainment refers to these four stages of holiness according to Hinayana teachings. So these are denied. It's no attainment, nothing to attain. So these four stages are denied.

So first it's skandhas, five skandhas. So five skandhas constitute one's personality, and these are denied. And then no eye, ear. "O Sariputra, all dharmas are empty." Let's take a look at the Sanskrit version here. "So thus have I heard, at one time the Lord dwelled at **Rajagriha** on the

Vulture Peak together with a large gathering of both monks and bodhisattvas. At that time, the Lord, after he had taught the discourse on Dharma called Deep Splendour, had entered into concentration.” This is usually the introduction, it’s very standard. It’s opening chapter of all Buddhist scriptures. So even this, this is, but in, usually, it must have been added but it’s, in Chinese translation it’s completely taken out. So later on it would appear, during the Buddha’s time there’s these Four Holy Truths. It’s called, the first sermon, it’s stated in his first sermon, these Four Noble Truths represents advanced teaching for people who have prepared themselves by moral and spiritual development previously. So this fourfold structure, that’s Four Noble Truths, it’s for, it’s meant for higher teachings. So, like, in the case of his first five disciples after his attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, he journeyed to Sarnath, just outside the ancient city Benares, or Varanasi, and that was something like, about 300 kilometres he journeyed on foot. There he found his old friends. And, so to them he preached the first sermon and upon hearing the first sermon they opened their hearts, they came to freedom and attained enlightenment. But these five disciples, the first five, these five ascetics, they were his companions, the Buddha’s companions when he was undergoing austerities. So they were already very, you know, cultivated, morally and spiritually cultivated persons. So they were able to attain enlightenment right away upon hearing the Four Holy Truths.

Now, one way to look at this Heart Sutra is it’s a restatement, restatement of Four Noble Truths. In the Mahayana way, of course. So the Four Noble or Four, it’s called *arya*. First, *dukkha*, the truth of *dukkha*. The first truth concerns ill of *dukkha*, or unsatisfactory state of life. Usually it’s suffering, but it means unsatisfactory state of one’s life. It’s what, the six realms of unenlightenment, so that’s hell beings, and animals, and ghosts or hungry ghosts, so hell beings, animals, and ghosts, the three lower realms and then the three higher realms, humans, and angels, or demons and gods, they are more or less at ill. More or less. So that’s what *dukkha* means, it’s not satisfactory. And then, the second truth concerns the cause of *dukkha*, what is the cause of *dukkha*, which is craving. And now, the third truth is, by removing the cause, the unsatisfactory state ceases. That’s called cessation, *nirodha*. Suffering ceases. And then the fourth truth concerned the, the recovery of full health. That’s by following Eightfold Path, called Middle Way.

Now, this fourfold structure is the basis for actually all Buddhist teachings, higher teachings, and also it parallels of the practice of medical doctor of the Buddha’s time. So first identify the disease. What is the disease, identify the disease. Someone is ill. And then the second truth is, then identify its cause, what is the cause. So it’s cause and effect, there’s effect, someone is ill, the effect, but what is the cause of this effect. And then the third truth is determine, found out whether this can be curable. Find out whether a cure can be found for the disease. And then that’s *nirodha*, it’s called cessation. It’s the same as nirvana. So find out if nirvana can be attained. Like, health can be, this guy can recover his own health. And then the fourth truth is yes there is a cure. Outline a course of treatment to cure it. That’s Eightfold Path, which is Right, Right Thought. Or sometimes called Right View. Right View, and then Right Thought, or Right Outlook, and Right Speech, Right Action, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration. So that’s Eightfold Path.

So that was the practice in previous to, prior to the rise of Mahayana Buddhist movement. Now, so, and this Heart Sutra, here Heart Sutra is replacing the fourfold structure of the basis of Buddhist teachings. It's just like capturing. So if you understand, if you realize the teachings contained in this sutra then, also you attain enlightenment. So, like, in the early stage of Mahayana Buddhist movement, when, in order to, it's, this Heart Sutra is used as a certificate of the person's enlightenment level. So you give a copy of Heart Sutra, it's like to certify your level of understanding, your level of enlightenment. And then, Zen people, they are always impatient. You know, they recite it but it's just still too long. This is one page sutra, even too long. So they summarize in *hwadu*, it's *hwadu* practice.

So now, at the end here, say, it's Gate, there's this [unclear]. "Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha." So it's, you can take a look at this Heart Sutra as like, in Zen fashion it could be dropping off your body-mind, or sink into your true nature, or like dharani which is all-embracing formula. Like a cure-all. And then just, we just, it's reduced down to this, what, how many syllables here? It's one, two, three, four, five, six, something like seven or eight, nine syllables. You reduce to this dharani, "Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha."

But it's, in Tibetan tradition when a person dies, to help the deceased person find release, and so, at least to be born in the rightful place, not wandering around and not, you know, getting into wrong kind of place, their family members, they recite this over and over again following the coffin on the way to crematorium. Or in that cases they just take the horses to the top of the mountain and, it's called a sky burial. There are different forms of sky burial, what they do is, well, I think the fuel is very scarce so what they do is, also in accordance with Buddhist teachings, it accords with the Buddhist teachings, they just cut the flesh up, you know. It's like butcher, cut it up and then feed the vultures. So, I mean it's going to decay so why, it's better way just to feed the hungry.

So there is this apparently, I forgot the name, the guy who does this, and he has a hut, you know, on top of the mountain. So he's like the funeral director. But he, apparently he does it very skillfully, you know. And also what, apparently, like, some vultures don't like the taste of human flesh so he coats it with a little bit of sugar. Then, you know, vultures, you can say the vultures, they know, well, as soon as there is decay, they know it, well it's animal, so they hover around. So when you see the vultures are hovering around, something, someone's going to die. It's a bad omen. Usually, when you go to Mexico you see that. All these, there is this, they just put highways, just right, the highways would run right near these, you know, pre-modern village. So, and then the, the traditional lifestyle would still go on in the primitive village, there are no cars on there, and then all these superhighways runs over that. So these village dogs, they have no idea, you see. So each time the cars runs, they just jump on the highway, and then they get killed. So you see a lot of dead animals on Mexican highway. So then the vultures, you know, they usually fly around, you see. Hawks, too. At one time I saw, we were driving in [unclear] Peninsula, it was early in the morning, these big vultures, you know, they were drying their wings in the early morning sun, you know. Like, that was impressive, you know, sitting under, you know...they were not afraid of the cars. Yeah, passing cars.

Okay, and also this Korean custom it's, in Diamond Sutra, Diamond Sutra is the main text of Korean Jogye Order. So the lay people, when they die, it's their wish to have, or they want to carry, to take a copy of Diamond Sutra. So copy of Diamond Sutra is placed in the coffin so that it's, the power of Diamond Sutra would protect them from falling into wrong path. And also their body or their consciousness is, before taking possession of another womb, would somehow observe the teachings contained in the Diamond Sutra. So it's their wish.

So in the Sanskrit, so the, okay, the third, no, the fourth paragraph, there are the five skandhas, and those he sees in their own being as empty. Here, "O Sariputra, form is emptiness and the very emptiness is form. Emptiness is no other than form. Form is no other than emptiness. Whatever is form, that is emptiness. Whatever is emptiness, that is form." These three statements are very well known. "And the same is true of feeling, perceptions, impulses and consciousness." So these are, we are still talking about five skandhas over there.

Now, *sunyata*, which is emptiness, there's this *pudgala sunyata*. *Pudgala* means, "ego or self." So *pudgala sunyata* means emptiness of one's ego, emptiness of one's self. So in other words, self-denial. Self-denial is the essence of spirituality, so that's very essential for spiritual journey. Because self and spiritual journey, or ego and spiritual journey, they are not compatible. So now, and then, so that's skandhas. Skandhas are denied. That's called *pudgala sunyata*.

And then *svabhava sunyata*. *Svabhava* means, "self-nature." Or, so it's emptiness of self-nature of all things. So prior to the rise of Mahayana Buddhist movement, like, for instance, Sariputra understood *pudgala sunyata*. That's where he ended. So in other words, Sariputra did not understand *svabhava sunyata*. So his understanding of *sunyata*, his understanding of emptiness, of the doctrine of emptiness, was inferior. That's what this sutra is subtly indicating. So this is emptiness of Hinayana Buddhism, *pudgala sunyata*. So that's, in other words, personality. Five skandhas were denied. They understood the emptiness of five skandhas.

So now, so this here, talking about five skandhas, they are exposing five skandhas, the emptiness of five skandhas. Here, let's look at this. So there are the five skandhas. "Those he sees in their own being as empty." So here, and form is emptiness, and then the very emptiness, and then go on, "the same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness," those are five skandhas. Now, five skandhas constitute personality. So you see, five skandhas are, it's physical and psychological factors, that's form. Material and physical forms. And then perception, I'm sorry, feelings or sensation, and perception, and impulses or volitions, and consciousness. So it's physical and psychological factors. So, and it's called, these are called five skandhas, or five aggregates, or five groups. And these are also called five *upadana* skandha. It means attachment, for instance, craving or desire attach itself to the five skandhas. And then attract them, attract the five skandhas, to itself. That's craving and desire. And then this craving or desire makes over them object of attachments and brings out, brings about suffering. So if five skandhas are denied, then there is no suffering. Because suffering don't originate.

So when the spiritually blind, when ignorance imagines personalities, personality, then the one with the Wisdom Eye, spiritually awake, would only see five skandhas, but not personality. Not a self or ego. So just five skandhas appearing, disappearing, reappearing. So that's, and that's when the five skandhas empty, emptiness. And that's *pudgala sunyata*. So this is a prerequisite to understand Prajnaparamita. You see it's, first it's self denial. It's the essence of a spiritual journey.

And then, here it says *svabhava sunyata* is dharma. It says, "All dharmas are empty." Not just five skandhas, but all dharmas empty. Dharmas are events, happenings, and, you know, facts. So, and whether it is *pudgala* or *svabhava* it's in their self-nature. It means devoid of their essence. So, for instance, in the case of *pudgala*, the five skandhas, when the Hinayana Buddhists, when they thought, okay, self or ego, they are empty, but that means the other things, they exist. So it means, it's like empty vessel, for instance. But in *svabhava sunyata*, even empty vessel, in other words conditioned and unconditioned, both are empty. Well, unconditioned by its definition are empty. Both are denied.

Now, along with this, now this *pudgala sunyata* could be partial emptiness. It means partial, partially awakened. Partial understanding or, it's not full emptiness. So when, Mahayana Buddhists says *svabhava sunyata* is full emptiness. We'll come to that, the full emptiness.

So, and the way it progresses is, in *pudgala sunyata*, then since five skandhas are empty then of course what happens is the three unwholesome defilements are gone. That's greed, and aggressiveness, and delusion. Because there's no self. So the *upadana* skandha is gone. So there is no suffering. So the three unwholesome roots, that's greed, and aggressive, aggressiveness, and delusion are eliminated.

And now, in *svabhava sunyata*, here, the same is true of feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness, they are all empty, thus, "O Sariputra, all dharmas are empty of own being and are without marks. They are neither produced nor stopped. Neither defiled nor immaculate. Neither deficient nor complete." In Chinese translation it goes like, "They are not born nor annihilated. They are not defiled nor immaculate. They do not increase nor decrease." Now this *svabhava sunyata*, here, the three signs of being is gone too. The three signs of being is, like, impermanence, the first one is impermanence. So they are not born nor annihilated. Now, being born is conditioned. Now here, annihilated means its unconditioned. It means nirvana. But here both conditioned, you know, being born, conditioned. Usually in, in *pudgala sunyata*, conditioned you exist, but unconditioned you don't exist. But in *svabhava sunyata* it's, there's, of course self is denied. There is no selfhood, there's no self-nature. But it's, it's unconditioned thing. Each of us, we depend so much upon others. That's the interdependent, also. In this there's no separate entities. So in that sense, conditioned or unconditioned, it's empty, completely empty.

So here, so that's, there's no impermanence, impermanence is gone. The first sign of being, first mark of being. And then, "They are not defiled nor immaculate." This is not immediately

obvious, is suffering part, it's, defiled, defiled is, you know, defilements, *klesha*, and immaculate is also the unconditioned part, partner. So those are denied. And "They do not increase nor decrease," but in Sanskrit original it's more clear, "It's complete or deficient." So that's, it's three signs of being. Impermanence, lack of self, and suffering, they are gone, they are eliminated here.

So it's, all dharmas are marked with emptiness, *sunyata*, they have no separate existence. Because they all depend upon each other, so there's no separate entities, no separate existence. So there is only one characteristic remains. Their one and only characteristic, and there is no other, is, and one can say that it is their mark. Not only to empty, but to be emptiness itself. Means it's full emptiness. Here full emptiness means beyond, transcendental. That means all these dharmas, they go beyond their limitations. So they become transcendental. That's full emptiness.

So there are two sides here. One is denied, both conditioned and unconditioned. That means their limitations are transcended. So here, emptiness transforms them into beyond. Emptiness means, here, emptiness, or negation, or self denial, means beyond and becoming transcendental. So here, something like, something that exists, or something that looks like something is always on the way of becoming everything. Conversely, everything that looks like everything is always on the way of becoming something. So this becoming or transforming. So, for instance, well a few days ago, I mean Chicago was spared, but New England had this unexpected snowstorm. So could be this wretched moment. Now this wretched moment, now this happy exciting moment. Well this is more, like, Zen-like but you can take it as it comes and you can always enjoy life, but it's...so it's full emptiness.

It's, in the Diamond Sutra which is like, Diamond Sutra and Heart Sutra, they are kind of like partners. It's this, it's actually, in Zen, this emptiness is something you cannot grasp. It's beyond. Beyond of any rational contents. So you cannot grasp it, you cannot comprehend it. The only way you can grasp it has to be experienced, it has to be directly experienced. That's what meditation is about. So in the Diamond Sutra there is this, "Past mind cannot be grasped." Here it's, it's mind. More like Zen-like mind. In Zen they talk about mind, they hold onto mind. Buddha as ultimate reality. So Buddha is mind, like that. So, there is no, "Past mind cannot be grasped. Present mind cannot be grasped. And future mind cannot be grasped." There is this guy, **Diamond Zhou**, well he, this monk, he specialized in Diamond Sutras. And all his translated versions, he compared, and collated, and all that. Like, he did a PhD on this and then he started all these commentaries, and sub-commentaries, and, you know. So he was very proud of himself so, so far, you know, when it comes to Diamond Sutra there's no one, I mean, he's the authority. No one can compete with him, you know, in understanding and expounding Diamond Sutra. So, and he was proud and, so proudly he would carry all his, these collated versions, and commentaries, and sub-commentaries in his monk's tote bag. It was like walking library or encyclopedia of Diamond Sutra. And he was living in Northern China which is more civilized part of the country, and South of the **Yangtze** river where there, Barbarians, they, you know, the Southern Chinese, the Cantonese, you know, the Hong Kong people live there. That's the, those

are short in their statures, and they don't know how to read and write, and they smell like chop suey and, you know.

So one day, he was northerner, you know, he was tall and eating rice. No, eating rice and, that's right, no eating the bread. Bread, the southerners, they eat rice. So one day he heard, the Buddhists, the Buddhist monks in the south, they don't hold the scriptures in high esteem, you know. They are scripture destroyers, you know. So it's, it's a mind only doctrine, not scriptures. Your mind is the best scripture. So he was really incensed when he heard that so he set out, he must crush these heretical views, you see. So he was determined so, took him, what, a couple of months to reach the south and then he was inquiring around to catch these heretics.

So someone told him that there's a Zen master living on top of this mountain so he was very happy to finally locate this heretic. And, so he started climbing up the mountain, it was summer. On several stops on the mountain there are tea houses manned by, usually old women who are retired and their children left, you know, who cannot, you know, like, instead of staying at home with a husband, you know, when all these [unclear] have left, so like empty syndrome, there's no [unclear] so they go and run, you know, run this tea house. So he dropped by at one of these tea houses and then he, you know, put down his tote bag, it's kind of heavy. And, so he ordered tea and then this granny looked at him and said, "So what are you carrying in your tote bags? It looks pretty heavy."

"Oh, you know, those are wonderful, you know, scriptures, you know.

"And what are they?"

"And, you wouldn't know, it's Diamond Sutra."

"Oh, Diamond Sutra, I heard about Diamond Sutra."

And, well, "I'm the king of Diamond. It's king of Diamond Sutra."

"Oh, is that right? Then I have a question, I have a question for you. And if you answer my question I'll serve you tea and rice cakes free, but if you don't answer my question I may refuse to, you know, serving tea to you."

"That's an odd thing, well, go ahead."

So the granny asked, "Well, in the Diamond Sutra it says past mind cannot be grasped, present mind cannot be grasped, and future mind cannot be grasped. Now, with what mind are you going to have tea?"

And, this guy got stuck, you know. And indeed, you know, in the Diamond it says that past mind cannot be grasped, future mind cannot be grasped, and present mind cannot be grasped. And he

never thought, I mean, before he even got to the top of the mountain, you know, to catch this heretic, now he's being humiliated in front of this granny running tea house. Can you imagine?

So, so he went, you know, his face went through about 36 different colours, you see. All these emotions. Humiliation, anger, you name it, there are 36 of them. But after all, this guy is, you know, here, he was a cultivated person, it took him five minutes. Sometimes it takes, you know, one whole lifetime, you know, and still not resolved. Or three years. I mean, you look at yourself. But this guy, took him five minutes to run through the 36, you know, karmic emotions, you know. And finally came out of that. He said, and, "Grandma, please tell me, help me. With what mind can I have the tea?"

"Well I cannot help you, but you climb up to the mountain top and the Seon master, Zen master, will help you." So that's what he did.

Now, I ask you, the present mind. Here is mind, is, present mind is empty. Present mind cannot be grasped. Your five skandhas are empty. Present mind cannot be grasped. Future mind cannot be grasped. And present mind cannot be grasped. And, with what mind, say you are going to have tea, with what mind are you going to have tea? Can anyone answer that? Say something about it?

(No mind.)

Huh?

([Unclear] mind?)

It's all, it's completely free from any concepts, any thoughts. You cannot answer it with any thoughts, with any mind, with any consciousness. That's awakening. Just, you know, it's, here. Your tendency is immediately, you know, try to figure out. So it's thoughts running, and feelings are running, and all that. That's called "running dog." So first you have to learn to prevent yourself from becoming a running dog. That's, you know, in order to save yourself, you have to save yourself. Also you have to save yourself from being embarrassed, you know. And then wake up. Waking up. It's like conducting interview, it's exactly the same thing.

You see, it says, says in their own being, that's, in their own being, in its self nature, its empty. Well it's, it's over and over again, we always miss the most obvious thing which is always available in front of us. The most obvious. I keep pointing out, like having bowel moment. It's the most obvious.

[end of side A, side B begins]

[Unclear]. So in a sense, see it's subject and object, see? An object without a subject is called suchness. A subject without an object is called mind or Buddha-mind. So how do you exert your mind? Okay, past mind cannot be grasped, future mind cannot be grasped, and present mind,

how can you exert your mind? So most obvious. Once again, like a tiger. Well, here tiger means, you have to be here, Avalokitesvara bodhisattva, the protagonist.

So now, the last time, here, okay this emptiness, this stage. So you expect some performance going on. It's empty stage where you expect some kind of creative activity, right? It's, for artist, it would be empty canvas, you know; for performers, it would be like stage; for writer, it would be a piece of blank paper. Here, it's perfect. That's what it is. Emptiness, perfect. Full emptiness.

There is a, Avalokitesvara, she is here. So actually, Avalokitesvara is performing all by herself. Expounding emptiness. And then later on it comes on, it's Prajnaparamita, then even the circle is gone. Emptiness is gone. Emptiness is kind of negative but now it's suchness prevails. Buddha-nature prevails. Or *tathata* prevails. **Once again it says**, "When spring comes, sky opens up." The grey sky is gone, right? That's nice, eh? Sky opens up, water starts flowing, flowers bloom, then the birds will sing. So mutual interpenetration, or boundless interpenetration, would prevail. Unobstructed.

So thus, "O Sariputra, all dharmas are empty of own being. Are without marks. They are neither produced nor stopped. Neither defiled nor immaculate. Neither deficient nor complete. Therefore then, O Sariputra, where there is emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no impulse, no consciousness." So far that's skandhas, five skandhas. Five skandhas are exposed. And it's emptiness is revealed to its fullest extent.

Now, the dharmas. Dharmas are exposed. Therefore then, "O Sariputra, where there is emptiness there is no form, no feeling, no perception, no impulse, no consciousness. No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind. No form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touchable, no object of mind. No sight organ element," and so forth, until we come to, that's kind of standard abbreviation, "no mind consciousness element. There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance," and so forth until we come to, "there is no old age and death. No extinction of old age and death. There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path. There is no cognition, no attainment nor non-attainment." Those are all eight items. Eight doctrines all negated. And then the no sign is gone. And then this part is embodiment. Embodiment of emptiness. The negative side is gone. It's embodiment of full emptiness. Therefore then, "O Sariputra, owing to a bodhisattva's indifference to any kind of personal attainment, he dwells as one who has relied solely on the perfection of wisdom. In the absence of an objective support to his thought, he has not been made to tremble. He has overcome what can upset. In the end, sustained by nirvana." Here, and then bodhisattva, and then Buddha.

So you can see that as Heart Sutra as a restatement of Four Holy Truths, Four Noble Truths, here, it's here. Here the *dukkha* part, the first truth, *dukkha*. The illness or suffering, that's skandhas, okay? So five skandhas empty. That's how the first truth is being replaced in the Heart Sutra. And then the cause of *dukkha*. That's craving.

Now, here it says skandhas empty, craving is empty. The five skandhas empty. So the *upadana*, the attachment, it's all empty. That's how it is answering. And then the cessation, nirvana. It's, that's, it's not born so nor annihilated, no immaculate, no decrease, it's, in Sanskrit, translation from Sanskrit here. So it says, "Neither produced nor stopped, neither defiled nor immaculate, neither deficient nor complete." And then finally, the Eightfold Path is replaced here with Prajnaparamita. So that's where it comes down to.

The, the partial emptiness and full emptiness, this *anatman sunyata*, I said *pudgala sunyata*, *anatman sunyata* is the same thing. So, it's in the Hinayana tradition, that's prior to the rise of Mahayana Buddhist movement, *sunyata* is only applied to the person, *pudgala*. That's why it's called *pudgala sunyata* or *anatman sunyata*. Ego or self, that's the substance that is the bearer of the cycle of rebirth. It's actually, the last injunction of the Shakyamuni Buddha is all composite beings are, you know, subject to decay. So in ancient Buddhism, that is, you know, Hinayana form of Buddhism, the all composite things are marked with the three signs of being. That's empty, impermanent, like composite means it's formed. So it's conditioned. So whatever is formed, whatever is conditioned, that's composite things, are empty of its self nature, and impermanent, and devoid of an essence, *anatman*, and so characterized by *dukkha*, suffering. Means it's unsatisfactory.

It's, in other words it's, it's like, first it arise, I mean things arise, and subsist, change, and decay. It's something like that. Spring, summer, fall, winter. And so it's appear, and then stay for a while, and change, and decay, or transform, and so it's reappear. And then, so you can see how it's called empty. The *anatman*. And now *svabhava sunyata*, it's all things are seen as empty of self-nature. It's all things, that's events, happenings, and facts. It's, doctrine of the emptiness of all dharmas, that's all dharmas are empty. It says devoid of self-sufficient and independent existence or lasting substance.

Now, that's the negative side, but *sunyata* is also often equated with the absolute. That's the Prajnaparamita in the Mahayana. And that means it's, absolute means it's without duality and any, free from empirical forms. So *sunyata* is the, you know, it's equated or it's the same as ultimate absolute truth, or that is emptiness beyond existence and non-existence of all phenomena. Of course, which cannot be grasped, which can only be experienced. And that leads to meditation.

Now, "The bodhisattva holds onto nothing." Relies on the, that's the embodiment of full emptiness. It says, "he dwells," therefore then, "O Sariputra," there are three therefores here, it's like, coming to the conclusion. Therefore then, "O Sariputra, owing to a bodhisattva's indifference to any kind of personal attainment," we did attainment, what are the attainments? "He dwells as one who has relied, who has relied solely on the perfection of wisdom."

So, "holds onto nothing but Prajnaparamita." So all these things have proven being unreliable. So now bodhisattva has nothing left but Prajnaparamita. Now, there is this thing, it's, relying, it's, in Sanskrit it's *avarana*. It's three kinds, *avarana* means obstructions, or hindrances, or

impediment. “The bodhisattva holds onto nothing but Prajnaparamita, therefore his mind is clear of any delusive hindrance. Without hindrance there is no fear.” So this hindrance, obstructions, and there are three kinds of these obstructions. The practical, moral, and cognitive, it’s, the first one is karmic, you know, it’s karma. So it’s karmic obstructions. So these, the wrong deeds or your wrongful deeds of the past that are still to be expiated, you know. They’re still to be cleared. So it becomes an obstruction to your spiritual development. I mean, we all have that. It comes in different forms. So that’s karmic obstructions. And the second one is *klesha*, called, it’s, means the three unwholesome roots. That’s greed, aggressiveness, and delusion. And finally, the third one is called *jneya-avarana*. It’s impediments, obstructions arising from the belief in the real existence of separate objects. So it’s deluded mind, delusion. So what it says is your mind is now finally clear of any of these hindrances, obstructions, either karmic, or the *klesha*, practical, moral, or cognitive. Or the *jneya*, that’s impediments arising from the belief in the real existence of separate entities, objects.

So, “Away from all perverted views, he reaches final nirvana.” Now, it’s, once again, the, speaking of Diamond Sutra, “The bodhisattva holds onto nothing but Prajnaparamita, therefore his mind is clear of any delusive hindrance.” There is one statement that comes from Prajna, the Diamond Sutra which captures the teachings here in a very Zen way. That’s, “Without abiding anywhere, let your original mind come forth.” That’s a very Zen expression. Without abiding anywhere, like your mind keeps abiding, that’s why it keeps being tainted. Like, the spurious nature of one’s self. So your selfhood, the illusion of your selfhood, cannot be maintained without these artificial props and support. That’s called keeps abiding, relying on. Right? That’s the spurious nature of one’s self. So without abiding anywhere, that’s the bodhisattva holds onto nothing but Prajnaparamita, therefore his mind is clear of any delusive hindrance. Without abiding anywhere let your original mind, original mind does not dwell on anything, does not abide anywhere. Nowhere it is, and nowhere it is not. It is nowhere, but it is everywhere.

So that’s transcendence. So transcendental mind. That’s Prajnaparamita. So emptiness has that power of transformation, transforming power. So that’s, the question is like that, I said past mind cannot be grasped, the present mind cannot be grasped, the future mind cannot be grasped. With what mind are you going to have your tea? With what mind are you going to have anything at all?

So now, we have been building up all these negations. All these negations, or emptiness, point the way to a, the final ultimate reality. That’s Prajnaparamita, that’s where we are right now. So, for instance, all these negations, whether it’s no suffering, no cause of suffering, or no attainment, or could be no mind, all of a sudden, there you are, out of the forest, and no mind, almost miraculously, leads, it’s no attainment. That means no attainment nor non-attainment, same thing. Leads to the attainment of nirvana. It violates all Western logic. And wonderful thing is this teaching is available even to children, even to ordinary minds. They recite it. “Form is emptiness, emptiness form.” That means absolute, complete, reciprocal identity. “Form is no other than emptiness, emptiness no other than form.” It’s just no difference. No separation. That

means, form is the first of five skandhas so, like, it could be, you know, all these five skandhas. Form, and like, and sensation, and feelings, perception, and all that. Same thing, they are all...

Now, so “form is emptiness” means, means form is what form is not. So, like, feelings, feelings are emptiness. That means feelings are what feelings are not. And what feelings are not is feelings.

Now, there are, where two are not distinct, of course it's, it helps. Well, I keep saying that even the Four Noble Truths were for people, advanced people who have prepared them for, you know, moral and spiritual cultivation. But this Heart Sutra is certainly not for the spiritually blind, it's for the spiritually awake. It's, in the prologue, you know, the stage is set and Avalokitesvara enters as protagonist and then makes this opening statement about five skandhas. And the emptiness of five skandhas. It's like, like thunderbolt. Of course there's, in Sanskrit originally has all these, you know, offerings so it's, we called [unclear]. You know, the head and tail is cut off, you know. Head is gone, cut off. It means, these, all unnecessary conditions are removed and just, you know, this, what is it called, thunderclap, you know. And then the boom comes the statement, the three statement, “Form is emptiness, emptiness form.”

Now, where the two are not distinguished, says ten thousand things would reveal themselves. So that's the, say the victory of Prajnaparamita. It's, the embodiment of emptiness, which is Prajnaparamita, is oneness. This ineffable oneness can be called, in Zen it's called, “Seeing into your true nature.” Seeing into your true nature is, well, one the one hand, realizing the emptiness of the true nature of all beings. It's called, it's, all your doubts are shattered or cut asunder. It's just, clear sky prevails where you can see everything with Wisdom Eye, with unclouded eye.

So it's the prologue, and five skandhas, and dharmas empty, and the eight items, and then bodhisattva, and then comes Buddhas. “All Buddhas of past, present, and future, through faith in Prajnaparamita attain to the highest perfect enlightenment.”

My time is up. Any questions? Yes.

(Could you just briefly go over the two *sunyatas* again? *Sunyatas*?)

The *anatman sunyata* and *svabhava sunyata*?

([Unclear] the second, the definition of the second [unclear]?)

It's, the, in the first *sunyata*, that's five skandhas empty, right? So it's, personalities, in other words person or ego and self are denied. But the things, in other words the objects, they exist. They are not denied. And also unconditioned. As, for instance, as itself, as themselves, they exist. But in *svabhava* all those are also denied. So this is called, like full emptiness. So in other words that's, the *pudgala sunyata* or *anatman sunyata*, that's what the Sariputra understood. So there was insufficient understanding.

(So then the *pudgala sunyata* only went as far as self-being empty? And the *svabhava sunyata* went to say that all things are empty. [Unclear])

All denied. That's exactly what it is here. *Svabhava sunyata* is what it is here in the Heart Sutra. It's, it's this empty vessel thing. In *svabhava sunyata*, *svabhava* means self-nature. Or in Sanskrit it says their own being. In other words, in itself by itself. And self-nature, or independent nature, and these are all empty. That's *svabhava sunyata*, so for instance all things are seen as empty of self-nature. For instance, devoid of self-sufficient independent existence or lasting substance. This however does not mean, this does not mean they do not exist at all, but rather that they are nothing but pure appearance and do not constitute the true reality. In other words, they do not possess an essence. They do not possess a self-nature. That's *svabhava*. And this is, this kind of *sunyata* is first introduced in Prajnaparamita literature, *svabhava sunyata*. So that's what it is, all these eight items. Six sense organs and objects, and the six corresponding kinds of consciousness, and all that. That's *svabhava*. In other words, they do not exist as separate entities. That's, I mean, they exist depending on others. So in their own being, they are empty. They appear to exist. In other words, they exist conditioned. They condition each other. They exist by mutual condition. So those, that's why it's called empty.

Okay.

(Before the Mahayana tradition arose there were people who were enlightened, but it wasn't clear to them. It confuses me, that they, they didn't see that.)

It's, it's a classic case. These guys, they needed a new enlightenment to justify their movement. Of course, you know, the old guys were enlightened in their own time. But we have our own task. For instance, as I said, if you start a new Buddhist movement in Chicago or the US then you replace yourself as Avalokitesvara here. So, you know, the guys who started this Mahayana movement, I mean, they, you know, I mean, this Avalokitesvara is set up there. They are working behind the stage. So it's, you can understand Heart Sutra on many different levels. And Heart Sutra is meaningful because, you know, we are in the process of starting new Buddhist movement here in the West. So eventually we would have to create our own sutras. We have to come up with new Dharma, new wisdom, for, for people of a post-industrial society. For computer generation. We have to come up with a new language too. This is, obviously this was very, kind of, revolutionary Dharma language in those days. We need our own enlightenment for our age. This always happens. So, for instance, you know, we, as Buddhists, we are living embodiment of Buddha-Dharma-Sangha. What is the meaning of Buddha-Dharma-Sangha for us living today in the West? It's good, we don't talk about Heaven or Earth, but we talk of Buddha-Dharma-Sangha. What is our shelter, what is our refuge?

So even in this lecture, you must have learned there are a few levels you can relate to emptiness. There are many levels of *sunyata*. *Sunyata* is, like, almost like a creation centre. You can fish out, you know, it could be, *sunyata* could be just negating all these things, you know. It's like you are man, but you are not man, therefore you are man. That's over and over again, in the Diamond

Sutra it says. You are man, and your manness is negated. And it says therefore you are a man. Because you are not a man, so you are a man, it says. You're woman, but you are not a woman. So you can be woman, you see. It's like, you know, you can talk this language to bureaucrats. You go to CEO and then...

Yes.

(There's actually that sense of non-duality in Western tradition going back to Euclid. Geometry is about non-duality. Spreading the definitions, and points, and [unclear].)

Do they lead to liberation?

(Unfortunately it seems to go in a different direction.)

I think they got stuck with analysis of knowledge. I mean, it's true as, it's, Prajnaparamita and philosophy, it has a kind of similarity. Philosophy is love of wisdom, right? And Prajnaparamita is the perfection of wisdom. But what happened to philosophy, they got stuck with the analysis of knowledge. In Prajnaparamita it means, of course, transcendental wisdom.

([Unclear], sort of forming periods in the Diamond Sutra [unclear] because, because the Buddha has no marks and can recognize a Buddha, that kind of thing. Is it the same thing in the Heart Sutra? I mean, it seems like Avalokitesvara sort of attacks the hold Hinayana as sort of metaphysics of skandhas and, you know, and just takes it down, and down, and down, there are no dharmas and it comes to a point where it's saying...)

It deconstructs it.

(It is. You know, because there is no, I mean, he's saying, you know, whenever you have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, all the things you can list, you have emptiness. And it's like, that's sort of like the Theravadan approach. They're saying these things should be void of self-nature and it seems like they come to sort of emptiness as this sort of negative category of what's left. Whereas it seems like in the Heart Sutra it comes around saying, but not only is form emptiness but emptiness is form, it's like because there's emptiness you can have the skandhas and you can have the eyes, ears, nose, tongue...)

There's no such thing as because there is emptiness there's no...it's, emptiness is also empty, that's another thing. Don't get stuck with emptiness. Don't take it, you know, emptiness as something that is there.

(But, I mean, it's, would it be, it's almost as though, because things can be void of self-nature that they can even be what they are. That if they're, I mean, it's like in [unclear] things can turn around and become a very positive thing in the Heart Sutra.)

Yeah. But it's like, well in American Buddhism, too, like the, the [unclear] or deconstruction going on, it's like socially engaged Buddhism, it means it's, they are taking down monastic, you know, monasticism. Bringing Buddhism out into the marketplace, into the family, into the workplace. That's one aspect of socially engaged Buddhism. But I'm, you know, I'm not wholly embracing socially engaged Buddhism as it's going, you know. I think they are abandoning Asian roots too quickly. That can be dangerous. They may become sloppy psychoanalysts, you see.

(Would this sutra been like first presented in a debate sort of thing between, you know, this new group and older group that debates being a...)

No, according to scholars the, I mean, the Prajnaparamita literature, they spearheaded the movement, there is no doubt about that. But it's, Prajnaparamita is, it's host of scriptures. It's almost 600 fascicles, so many volumes, which developed over six or seven centuries. So it started out the 1st century in BCE and the very first sutra, Prajnaparamita sutra, that appeared was Prajnaparamita in Eight Thousand Lines. And then it went through the process, and then it's a restatement, and then additions, and all that. It got big, big. And then it took the opposite, you know, and then it, like, Diamond Sutra and Heart Sutra, a distillation took place. It's condensed form. So it went through several processes. So this Heart Sutra, in this form was apparently composed around 4th century. So the movement had been going on for some time by the time when Heart Sutra showed up. Because they got tired of all these things, you see. And then, I mean, so it's like, you know, kind of went with the Zen movement. So it does have a Zen flavour.

Yes.

(You were saying over and over that in this Heart Sutra all the elements, five skandhas, over and over are, the, [unclear...] when you say no it's denied, I have a question. How can you deny something that does not exist?)

Five skandhas it's, it's empty. What is it?

(Not just five skandhas, everything. We deny, say Heart Sutra denies everything. How can we deny something that does...)

Because people believe they are real. Because people believe that.

(Who believes?)

Lot of people believe it. It's, as I said, you know, five skandhas so it's, you look at a person. I mean, people with no Wisdom Eye would see as a person, right? So he would be, such a person would be under influence of the illusion of selfhood. All troubles would, you know, come from that, right? But people with Wisdom Eye or spiritually awake would see them as the five skandhas, right? Just that's, five skandhas, that's the physical form, and then psychological

factors, which change from moment to moment. That's emptiness. But if you see it as a person, as fixed reality, person, then you are stuck. Then, you know, it's, then the craving and desire arise and they take five skandhas as objects and attach, you know, itself to them and attract them to itself. And then become object of attachment, and suffering ensues. There's a whole melodrama. But here it's, at least it's in their own being, in its true nature they are empty and then come back into Prajnaparamita. So it's, the other side of emptiness, what emptiness all talking about is suchness, or oneness, or Buddha-nature. So, as it says here, "without hindrance," that means without hindrance, attachment to five skandhas bring about. That's what it means here. So the bodhisattva, the idea. So, in other words, what it says, how can we become a bodhisattva? How we can become a bodhisattva, the living embodiment of compassion and wisdom? The bodhisattva who realizes the emptiness of all these things, that's wisdom side. Still don't retire but, you know, I cannot abandon the world. So the bodhisattva postpones her entry into nirvana. So I shall not enter nirvana until everyone has been liberated. So it's, it helps to look at this like, in Zen you have ten ox herding pictures? Here, you know, it's stages of realizations. And then it comes onto Prajnaparamita.

([Unclear] the film, [unclear], it's about that?)

Yeah, well, if you have not seen the film it's wonderful, it's a stunning film.

(On, first in the prologue it says that when she perceived the emptiness she delivered, past tense, at that point, all beings have no self. So why would she need to hang around?)

Out of compassion. So, what do you think?

(You could add a line, she delivered all beings from their suffering and this is how she did it. [Unclear...])

Well they say historically, historically it's, she's delivering new message. She representing all those guys starting new movement maybe behind the stage, you know? So she represents these guys, new movement, so she delivers this new message to Hinayanans but also, you know, she's making, you know, announcement. So it's teaching. Teaching. The thing is, I, you know, I'm struggling to explain all these things to you but in those days these, those guys are already familiar with. Like, you're like, you know, all these microchips, all these things, you know. They are very familiar with this language. It's their Mac language. So I'm struggling to explain this.

(I mean, is that why the sutra is presented in the voice of Avalokitesvara? I mean why, it seems funny that, you know, this bodhisattva of compassion is sort of like, sort of, presenting this discourse on wisdom to Sariputra [unclear])

No in this case it's, compassion is coupled with wisdom. To go together, yeah. So you can, you can read even a little anxiety, how it's, anxiety going in the, later in this text, too. How do you combine these two? I mean, obviously this bodhisattva, you know, represents the fusion, the fusion of there is this world and there's emptiness, you see. There's always tension there. There's

this world of suffering, but then there is emptiness, there is beyond. There is, you know, the transcendence. So there's, you see, tension running here. So this bodhisattva ideally represents that fusing, that merging, of this world. That's compassion. And then the beyond. So it says emptiness as oneness, as suchness. So after that tension, when spring comes, it blossoms as oneness. That oneness means ten thousand things, obstruction is gone. That's "Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha." The distinctions are gone. The two are gone means, ten thousand things can come out and flourish. So you can relate to this sutra from different levels. I'm sometimes trying to relate it from our movement here. What kind of insight we can get from this text for our new movement. But as I said, I mean it's, all these, I said eight items or dharmas, all these, the guys who read this text, they are all familiar with that. They know much more than we do, you know. Because there's a whole doctrine couched in these few words. But still it was very fresh and new, like form is emptiness, boom, comes out like that. That's *svabhava sunyata*.

Well you say, you have to take down the old building in order to build a new one. Put out it's... so it's almost like a, what do you say, new method to bring down this, you know, 18-story building or something like that.