



PRACTICE VIII
The Heart Sutra

Name:

Date:

Grade:

Homework, Class One

1) Give the full name of the Heart Sutra in English. (Tibetan track give the name both in Tibetan and in Sanskrit.)

2) What is the commentary to the *Heart Sutra* which we will be studying; who is its author, and what are his dates?

3) What is, according to the commentary, the "heart" or essence of all the teachings of the Buddha, as they exist in the form of realizations? (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

4) What did the realized being Nagarjuna say about the need to understand emptiness?

5) Give the two meanings of "perfection" in the title of the sutra.

6) Give three meanings conveyed by the words that start the *Heart Sutra*, as they do so many other sutras: "Once I heard this teaching." (Tibetan track write this in Tibetan.)

7) What question starts the sutra, and who asks it, to whom?

Meditation assignment: At least 15 minutes per day of formal meditation to identify where your current understanding of emptiness stands, especially how you think emptiness and karma are connected to each other.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



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Name:
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Homework, Class Two

1) Name the first two of the five paths, and describe what happens at each of them. (Tibetan track in Tibetan.)

2) Name and describe briefly the five "heaps," or piles of many things that make up a suffering being. (Tibetan track name in Tibetan and describe in English.)

a)

b)

c)

d)

e)

3) In what sense do these five heaps exist; that is, in what sense do they exhibit what we call "dependent origination"?

4) In what sense do these five heaps *not* exist; that is, in what sense do they have emptiness?

5) Explain the "four profound statements" made in the *Heart Sutra* about the heap of physical forms, and applied to the other four heaps as well.

a)

b)

c)

d)

6) Is it true that your body could actually *be* emptiness?

Meditation assignment: For at least 15 minutes per day in meditation, go through yourself and identify, one by one, your five heaps or parts that make you up. Then go back and try to see how each of them might be a collection of parts that your mind has forced you to organize into a particular object, forced to do so by your past karma.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



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Name:
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Homework, Class Three

1) Explain the two characteristics that each thing does have, and then the characteristic that they do not have.

2) Some Tibetan versions of *The Heart Sutra* in circulation nowadays read "Nothing is ever impure. Everything is free of impurity." Other versions read, "Nothing is ever impure. Nothing ever becomes pure." Which is correct, and why?

3) What does the sutra mean when it says, "Nothing ever gets less, and nothing ever becomes more"?

4) The lines of the sutra at this point refer to the "three doors to freedom." Name the door which corresponds to each of the following lines, and describe it briefly.

a) "Every existing thing is emptiness."

b) "Nothing has any characteristic of its own. Nothing ever begins. Nothing ever ends. Nothing is ever impure. Nothing ever becomes pure."

c) "Nothing ever gets less, and nothing ever becomes more."

5) Is it true that "every existing thing is emptiness"? Why or why not?

Meditation assignment: Review, for 15 minutes per day, the practical circumstances you will need in order to see emptiness directly.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



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Homework, Class Four

1) Quote the lines from *The Heart Sutra* which indicate the main task to be undertaken during the path of habituation on the track of the greater way.

2) *The Heart Sutra* in this section alludes to the Wheel of Life. Explain how we stop the second link of the wheel, which is "making fresh karma."

3) Explain how we stop the tenth link, of ripe karma.

4) Explain how we stop the twelfth link, of aging and death.

Meditation assignment: Each day, try to imagine three situations that you may encounter today or tomorrow where realizing that some person or situation is not coming from its own side (but is rather caused by your own perceptions, forced on you by your past karma) will help keep you from collecting new negative karma.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):



PRACTICE VIII
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Homework, Class Five

1) Describe the perfection of wisdom which warrior saints, and Enlightened Beings, are said in the sutra to practice.

2) Explain each of the following parts of the mantra of *The Heart Sutra*.

tadya ta =

ga-te =

ga-te =

para ga-te =

para sang ga-te =

bodhi so ha =

3) Explain why Lord Buddha, who never speaks a word without great meaning, says "True" three times at the end of the sutra.

4) What we call the "word of the Buddha" comes in three different forms. Which of these forms does *The Heart Sutra* follow?

Meditation assignment: 15 minutes per day reciting the mantra of *The Heart Sutra*, thinking about the actual paths or stages of realization represented by each of the parts of the mantra.

Meditation dates and times (must be filled in, or homework will not be accepted):