

Gautama Siddhartha Buddha

Buddhism - The Heart Sutra - The
Dhammapada - The Early Suttas of the **Dīgha**
Nikāya

PREFACE

at work

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Buddhism – The Heart Sutra – The Dhammapada

edited by Sebastiano Vottari

I. The word that spans the millennia

There are texts that belong neither to the time in which they were conceived, nor to the language in which they were first uttered, nor to the civilization that saw them born. They are texts that exist in a dimension different from that of ordinary literature, because their *raison d'être* lies not in the elegance of their form—astonishing as that may sometimes be—but in their ability to speak directly to the human condition as such, without distinction of era, latitude, culture, or creed. The reader who opens this volume holds in his hands a collection of such texts: words spoken or attributed to Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, the Enlightened One, the Awakened One, he who in Indian tradition is called Śākyamuni, the sage of the Śākya clan, and whom humanity's memory has preserved for over twenty-five centuries as one of the profoundest and most luminous voices ever to resound on earth.

This collection brings together three pillars of Buddhist literature: the Heart Sutra, a gem of the Mahāyāna tradition and perhaps the shortest and most densely packed sacred text ever composed; the Dhammapada, the collection of “verses of the law” that constitutes the ethical and poetic heart of the Pali canon and which for centuries has been considered the ideal gateway to the Buddha's thought; and finally, a selection of the first nine discourses of the Dīgha Nikāya, the so-called “Long Discourses” of the Sutta Piṭaka, which represent some of the most complex, philosophically daring, and narratively

compelling moments of the entire canon. The decision to bring together these three bodies of text in a single volume is neither accidental nor merely an anthological: it responds to a precise intention, which is to offer the reader a simultaneously broad and profound vision of Buddhist teaching, capable of traversing its various historical, doctrinal, and stylistic stratifications without reducing them to a summary or drowning them in an inaccessible academic apparatus.



II. The Man Who Became the Buddha: Historical and Spiritual Context

To fully understand the significance of the texts collected in this volume, it is necessary to at least glimpse the world from which they emerged. India in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE—the era in which Siddhartha Gautama lived and taught—was a seething cauldron of spiritual, philosophical, and social ferment. Vedic civilization, with its elaborate sacrificial rituals, rigid caste structure, and pantheon of cosmic deities, was undergoing a profound internal crisis. The Upanishads, the speculative texts composed on the fringes of the Brahmanic tradition, had already begun to shift the focus of spiritual inquiry from the externality of ritual to the internality of meditation, from the invocation of the gods to the search for the Ātman, the universal self. But alongside this reformist current within Brahmanism, a whole

galaxy of heterodox movements flourished — the so-called śramaṇa, the “wandering ascetics” — who radically contested the authority of the Vedas, the priestly monopoly of the Brahmins and the social hierarchies founded on birth.

Into this universe of research and contestation, Siddhartha Gautama was born, traditionally dated between 563 and 483 BC, though the chronology remains a matter of scholarly debate. His biography, as handed down to us by tradition, blends historical and legendary elements in a web that is not always easy—or perhaps necessary—to unravel. Son of the chief of the Śākya clan, in the region where India and Nepal now border, the young Siddhartha grew up in luxury and protection, surrounded by every material comfort, until the day when, according to tradition, he encountered four scenes that forever changed the course of his life: an old man, a sick man, a corpse, and a wandering ascetic. These four figures embodied the fundamental questions that every human being, sooner or later, is forced to confront: why do we age? Why do we suffer? Why do we die? And is there a way out of all this?

The “Great Renunciation”—the abandonment of the princely life and the choice of a wandering ascetic life—was Siddhartha's answer to these questions. For six years, according to tradition, he practiced the most rigorous disciplines, studied under the most reputable masters of the time, pushed his body and mind to the limits of endurance, experiencing both the extremes of austerity and the extremes of meditative

concentration, without finding in either the definitive answer he sought. It was only when he abandoned both extremes, sitting beneath the bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya with the firm determination not to rise until he understood the truth, that he achieved Awakening—the bodhi—becoming the Buddha, the Enlightened One, the Tathagata, "he who has thus arrived."

This path is not a simple biographical anecdote: it is the very paradigm of Buddhist teaching. The "middle way"—the *majjhimā paṭipadā*—between sensual indulgence and ascetic self-affliction is not a lukewarm compromise but a radical discovery: suffering is overcome neither by pursuing pleasure nor by escaping the body, but by understanding the very nature of the mind and phenomena. And this understanding is not an intellectual acquisition, a concept to be memorized, but a direct experience, a transformation of consciousness that irreversibly changes the individual's relationship with himself and the world. All the texts collected in this volume, from the dizzying negations of the Heart Sutra to the crystalline verses of the Dhammapada, from the systematic analyses of the Brahmajāla Sutta to the dazzling similes of the Potṭhapāda Sutta, are different expressions of this unique discovery, expressed in different forms and registers depending on the audience, the context, and the question addressed, but always faithful to its incandescent core: the cessation of suffering is possible, and the path that leads there is accessible to anyone.



III. The Heart Sutra: The Emptiness That Illuminates

The Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra—the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra—occupies, within the confines of this volume, just a few pages; yet its brevity is as deceptive as the smooth surface of an ocean beneath which lie immeasurable depths. In just fourteen stanzas, this text summarizes the entire doctrine of emptiness—*śūnyatā*—which is the metaphysical foundation of the Mahāyāna tradition and one of the most revolutionary and most misunderstood concepts in the history of human thought. When the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara declares that “form is emptiness and emptiness is form,” he is not proposing a rhetorical paradox or a play on words: he is indicating, with the precision of a surgeon who cuts exactly where necessary, the ultimate nature of reality, which is neither the substantial fullness postulated by naive realism nor the absolute nothingness feared by nihilism, but a radical interdependence of all phenomena, devoid of any autonomous foundation, yet capable of manifesting itself in all the richness of experience.

The reader approaching this text for the first time might be disoriented by its density, its apparent cryptic nature, its progression through successive negations that seem to tear the ground from under one's feet without offering any foothold. But it is precisely in this vertigo that the transformative power of the Heart Sutra lies: it does not seek to provide a new doctrine to believe, a new system to memorize, but rather to free the mind

from every doctrine and every system, leading it to that open and luminous space that the masters call *prajñā*, transcendent wisdom, which is not a content of thought but the very way in which thought dissolves into direct understanding. The final mantra—"Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā"—is not a magic formula but a cry of jubilation: "Gone, gone, gone beyond, completely gone beyond: awakening!" It is the exclamation of someone who has crossed the ocean of confusion and touched the other shore, discovering that the other shore had never been separated from this one.

It should not be forgotten, moreover, that the Heart Sutra is part of the vast literature of the *Prajñāpāramitā*, the "Perfection of Wisdom," which includes texts of enormously variable length, from the monumental 100,000-verse *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* to this very brief compendium. Tradition holds that these texts were guarded by the *nāgas*, the serpent deities of the underground, until Nāgārjuna, the great philosopher of the second century CE, brought them to light. Legend aside, what is certain is that the doctrine of emptiness, in its mature formulation, represents one of the most daring and fruitful developments in Buddhist thought, a development that has influenced not only philosophy and meditation, but also the art, poetry, and aesthetics of entire civilizations, from Tibet to China, from Korea to Japan. The reader who approaches this text, therefore, is not reading an archaeological document: he is entering a living, still pulsating force field that passes through the present as it passes through the past.

IV. The Dhammapada: The Path of Immortal Verses

If the Heart Sutra is a diamond concentrated in a point of dazzling light, the Dhammapada is a vast garden in which every flower is a teaching, every path a meditation, every shadow a warning. Its four hundred and twenty-three verses, divided into twenty-six thematic chapters—from the opening "Couples" to the grandiose final section dedicated to the Brahmin—constitute the most beloved, most translated, and most cited work of all Theravada Buddhism. And this is no coincidence: the Dhammapada possesses a quality shared only by the absolute masterpieces of universal literature: the ability to be simultaneously simple and profound, accessible and inexhaustible, immediate in understanding and infinite in meditation.

Its verses open with one of the most famous statements in all of world religious literature: "All things are preceded by the mind, guided by the mind, and made of mind." This single sentence condenses an entire psychology, an entire ethic, and an entire metaphysics. The mind is the starting point and the end point: it is from it that pain and happiness, bondage and liberation, darkness and light arise. The Dhammapada is not an abstract treatise: it is a manual for daily life, a traveling

companion that speaks with the calm yet firm voice of the master who has traveled the path to the end and now shows it to others, without constraints, without threats, without supernatural promises, but with the serene certainty of one who has seen.

The images of the Dhammapada belong to an ancient world—the herdsman counting his cows, the rain entering the poorly covered house, the bee gathering nectar without harming the flower, the elephant enduring the arrow on the battlefield—yet they speak with a freshness undimmed by time. It is the freshness of truth observed directly, without the mediation of theological systems or metaphysical speculations: suffering exists, has a cause, has a cessation, and there is a path that leads to that cessation. The entire Dhammapada revolves around this incandescent core, revealing it in a thousand nuances—vigilance and negligence, wisdom and foolishness, patience and anger, detachment and attachment—with a richness of perspective that never tires the reader, for each verse is a small mirror in which he can recognize himself.

Particularly moving are the chapters dedicated to old age and death, in which the Buddha speaks with a frankness that is neither morbid nor desperate, but possesses the crystalline clarity of one who has faced impermanence without averting his gaze. "Why laugh, why rejoice, when the world is always burning?" is not an invitation to cynicism but to awareness: only those who understand the fragility of all that is conditioned can stop clinging and find the peace that does not depend on

circumstances. And the famous line "Builder of the house, I have seen you! You will no longer build this house" resonates like the triumphant cry of one who has finally unmasked the mechanism that generates suffering, discovering that it has no other substance than illusion itself.

No less significant is the overall architecture of the Dhammapada, which proceeds in a far from random order. The first chapters establish the foundation: the mind as the origin of everything, vigilance as the necessary condition, mental discipline as the tool. The central chapters explore the qualities of the sage, the monk, the arahant—he who has attained the goal—contrasting them with those of the foolish, the wrathful, and the attached. The final chapters soar toward the pinnacles of doctrine: the eightfold path, thirst as the root of suffering, and finally the figure of the brahmin, understood not as a member of a caste but as one who has achieved inner purity through practice and realization, regardless of birth. This progression is not didactic but organic, like the growth of a tree that ascends from the roots to the trunk and from the trunk branches out toward the sky.



V. The First Nine Long Discourses: The Architecture of Buddhist Thought

The third and largest section of this volume is devoted to the first nine suttas of the Digha Nikaya, the collection of Long Discourses that constitutes the first of the five divisions of the Sutta Piṭaka, the "Basket of Discourses" of the Pali canon. These are texts of great commitment, both in terms of their length and philosophical complexity.

The Brahmajāla Sutta, which opens the collection, is a colossal work in which the Buddha systematically examines and deconstructs sixty-two philosophical views—from eternalism to annihilationism, from finitism to infinitism, from the doctrines of perception after death to those of nibbāna in the here and now—showing how each arises from specific conditions and how each, however sophisticated, remains trapped by an attachment to views that impedes true liberation. The image of the "net of Brahmā" from which the sutta takes its name is powerful and memorable: all the metaphysical views that beings can conceive are like fish floundering in a net; however much they struggle, however different they may be from one another, none of them can escape the net, because the net itself is attachment to views as such. This lesson remains extraordinarily relevant in an age like ours, dominated by ideological wars and the fanaticism of certainties.

The Sāmaññaphala Sutta, second discourse, offers a panoramic view of the fruits of the contemplative life, listing with astonishing systematicity the stages of the meditative path—from the renunciation of moral discipline, from the

surveillance of the senses to inner serenity, from the four jhānas to higher knowledge, up to the destruction of the āsavas and the realization of nibbāna. The narrative context is of extraordinary dramatic force: King Ajātasattu, tormented by remorse for having killed his father, seeks from the Buddha an answer to his question about the visible benefits of spiritual life, and the Buddha responds with an exposition that is both a treatise on contemplative psychology and a work of narrative art. The greatness of this discourse lies in its ability to make tangible, almost physically perceptible, experiences that by their nature transcend ordinary language: the similes of water, the lake, the lotus, and the lamp accompany the reader through increasingly subtle states of consciousness with a grace that no abstract treatise could match.

The subsequent suttas—the Ambaṭṭha Sutta on the question of caste, the Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta on the qualities of the true Brahmin, the Kūṭadanta Sutta on sacrifice without violence, the Mahāli Sutta on divine perceptions, the Jāliya Sutta on the relationship between soul and body, the Mahāsīhanāda Sutta on the “great roar of the lion,” and finally the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta on the nature of perception and the self —compose an extraordinarily rich mosaic, in which the reader can explore virtually every fundamental aspect of Buddhist thought: the critique of social distinctions based on birth, the radical redefinition of the concepts of nobility and purity, the rejection of ritualism and blood sacrifice, the phenomenological analysis

of states of consciousness, the deconstruction of the concept of self, and the relationship between language and reality.

The last of these nine discourses, the Poṭṭhapāda Sutta, deserves special mention, as it culminates in one of the loftiest formulations of ancient Buddhist philosophy: “These are worldly conventions, worldly languages, worldly expressions, worldly designations, which the Tathāgata uses without grasping.” This sentence encapsulates an entire philosophy of language, an awareness of the conventional nature of the categories with which we name reality that predates the reflections of modern Western philosophy by millennia. The Buddha does not claim to abolish language, nor does he propose a mysticism of absolute silence: he uses the words of the world—“self,” “person,” “I,” “you”—but without believing that they indicate substantial realities, without clinging to them as if they were faithful mirrors of being. And the famous simile of the transformations of milk—from milk to curdled milk, from butter to clarified butter—shows with an image of disarming simplicity how the different “acquisitions of the self” are not separate entities struggling for reality, but successive states of a continuously evolving process.



VI. The Doctrinal Heart: The Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path

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For those approaching the Buddha's teachings for the first time through the texts collected here, it may be helpful to keep in mind the doctrinal framework that runs through them all, even when not explicitly stated. This framework is made up of the Four Noble Truths—the first teaching the Buddha gave after his Awakening, in the Deer Park at Sarnath—and the Noble Eightfold Path, which is the practical content of the fourth truth. The Four Noble Truths are not articles of faith to be passively accepted, but a diagnosis and therapy of that universal condition the Buddha calls *dukkha*: the suffering, dissatisfaction, and profound unease that pervades conditioned existence.

The first truth—the truth of *dukkha*—observes with merciless but not despairing clarity that suffering is an intrinsic component of the human experience: birth, old age, illness, and death are suffering; being united with what one does not love is suffering; being separated from what one loves is suffering; not obtaining what one desires is suffering. This observation is not pessimism—as it has too often been misunderstood in the West—but realism: it is the first step in any true healing, which consists in facing the illness without hiding from it. The second truth identifies the cause of *dukkha* in *taṇhā*, the "thirst," the compulsive desire that manifests in three forms: thirst for pleasure, thirst for existence, and thirst for non-existence. The third truth proclaims that the cessation of *dukkha* is possible: where thirst is quenched, suffering ceases. And the fourth truth indicates the path that leads to this cessation: the Noble Eightfold Path, divided into right view, right intention, right

speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration.

The reader will find these themes on every page of this volume. In the Dhammapada, they resonate in lines such as "There is no fire like passion, no grasp like hatred, no net like delusion" and "Among the paths, the best is the eightfold; among the truths, the four." In the Long Discourses, they unfold in vast and detailed analyses, such as the contemplative progression of the Sāmaññaphala Sutta or the deconstruction of the sixty-two views of the Brahmajāla Sutta. In the Heart Sutra, they are simultaneously affirmed and transcended in the dizzying formula "there is no suffering, no origin of suffering, no cessation, no path"—which does not deny the Four Noble Truths but transcends them by showing that they too, as concepts, are empty of intrinsic existence. It is precisely in this ability to look at the same doctrinal core from different, sometimes apparently contradictory, perspectives that the inexhaustible richness of Buddhist thought lies, and this volume has the merit of making it visible to the reader in its entirety.



VII. Anātta: The Doctrine of Non-Self and Its Implications

Of all the concepts the reader will encounter in the pages of this volume, perhaps none is more revolutionary—and more difficult for the Western mind to grasp—than the doctrine of anāṭṭa, the non-self. While all other ancient Indian spiritual traditions, from the Upanishads to classical yoga, postulate the existence of an immortal soul, an Ātman identical to the universal Brahman, the Buddha takes an unprecedented step: he denies that there is a permanent, unitary, and independent self behind the ever-changing flow of experience. What we call "I" is nothing other than the dynamic interplay of five aggregates—form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness—each of which is impermanent, conditioned, and devoid of its own essence. There is no hard core, no hidden pilot, no soul observing from within: there is only the process itself, like a river that has no substance other than the flow of its waters.

This doctrine runs through all three bodies of text collected in this volume. In the Heart Sutra, it reaches its most radical formulation: "In emptiness there is no form, no sensation, no perception, no mental formations, no consciousness"—the five aggregates themselves are declared empty, devoid of intrinsic existence, and with them any possibility of establishing a self on any basis vanishes. In the Dhammapada, the doctrine of anāṭṭa takes a more practical and existential form: the verses about the mind wandering far away, alone, disembodied, hidden in the cave, invite the practitioner to observe the mind without identifying with it, to tame it as one tames a wild elephant, recognizing that what one calls "I" is not the mind's master but

its product. In the Long Discourses, and in particular in the Potṭhapāda Sutta, the doctrine is explored with a philosophical subtlety that has nothing to envy the most refined analyses of modern Western philosophy: the three “acquisitions of the self”—gross, mind-made, formless—are shown as conventional designations, linguistic tools that the Tathāgata uses to communicate but to which he does not cling, just as milk becomes curds and then butter without any of these names indicating a separate substance.

Understanding anāṭta is not an academic exercise but a transformative practice. When the Dhammapada says, "The self is one's refuge: what other refuge is there?" it is not contradicting the doctrine of non-self: it is using the word "self" in the conventional sense of "the person who practices," without postulating a metaphysical entity. It is this free and unattached use of language—the ability to say "I" without assuming the pronoun indicates something solid—that the Buddha teaches as a result of deep understanding. The reader is encouraged not to try to intellectually resolve the paradox of anāṭta, but to let it function as a koan, a question that works silently in consciousness until the answer emerges on its own, not as a thought but as an experience.

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VIII. From Voice to Writing: The Miracle of Transmission

One aspect that modern readers can easily forget is that all the texts collected in this volume were originally transmitted orally. The Buddha wrote nothing down: his teachings were preserved for centuries in the memory of monks, passed down from generation to generation through collective recitation, before being recorded in writing in the first century BC in Sri Lanka, on palm leaves. This circumstance explains many of the stylistic features of the Pali texts—the formulaic repetitions, the systematic enumerations, the recurring similes, the frame structures—which are not literary flaws but highly refined mnemonic devices, designed to ensure faithful transmission in the absence of written text.

The fact that such a vast and detailed corpus was preserved for four or five centuries through oral memory alone is one of the most extraordinary phenomena in human cultural history. It testifies not only to the prodigious mnemonic capacity of ancient Buddhist monks, but also to the importance the community placed on the integral preservation of the teachings. Buddhist councils—the first of which, according to tradition, was held shortly after the Buddha's death, under the presidency of the Venerable Mahākassapa—had as their primary purpose precisely the collective recitation and verification of the texts, to ensure that nothing had been added, removed, or altered. The formula “Evaṃ me sutam” — “Thus have I heard” — which

opens many discourses, including the Heart Sutra translated here, is an echo of this tradition: it attributes the discourse to a direct witness, generally Ānanda, the Buddha's cousin and personal attendant, and guarantees its authenticity by anchoring it to a specific place, time, or circumstance.

The modern reader is therefore invited to read these texts with the awareness that behind each sentence lies not only the voice of the Buddha, but also the voice of generations of monks who recited, memorized, meditated, and relived those sentences in the silence of their cells and the fervor of their assemblies. The written text we hold in our hands today is the crystallization of a river of living voice that has spanned the centuries, and something of that original vitality can still be felt in the musicality of the verses of the Dhammapada, in the solemnity of the formulas of the Long Discourses, in the vibrant conciseness of the Heart Sutra.



IX. Relevance for the Contemporary Reader

One might legitimately ask: why would a twenty-first-century reader devote their time to texts written in a culture so different from our own, in an era so distant, in a religious and social context that bears almost nothing in common with our own? The answer is multifaceted, but it can be condensed into a simple

observation: what the Buddha describes—suffering, desire, illusion, the fear of death, the pursuit of happiness, the internal conflict between what we know and what we do—hasn't changed one iota in twenty-five centuries. Technologies have changed, social structures have transformed, scientific knowledge has multiplied beyond measure; but the fundamental condition of the human being facing himself, his own mind, his own mortality, remains exactly the same. And the texts collected here speak to that condition with a precision that no updating could improve.

Indeed, one could argue that the Buddha's message is more relevant today than ever. In an age of sensory overstimulation, digital addiction, widespread anxiety, and a crisis of meaning, the teaching on the nature of the mind and the possibility of training it, calming it, and freeing it from its automatisms responds to a need felt with growing urgency by millions of people around the world. It is no coincidence that the practice of mindfulness meditation—mindfulness, which has its roots in Buddhist satipatthana—has spread widely throughout Western societies, entering hospitals, schools, businesses, and mental health programs. But mindfulness, separated from its doctrinal context, risks being reduced to a relaxation technique, a performance-enhancing tool: it is by reading texts like those collected here that practitioners can rediscover the depth and radicality of the original teaching, which aims not simply to make us feel better but to transform our way of seeing reality.

At the same time, the ethical message of the Dhammapada—nonviolence, compassion, rejection of hatred, personal responsibility—retains a disruptive force in a world torn by conflict, inequality, and violence. "Overcome anger with non-anger, evil with good, greed with giving, falsehood with truth": these words are not naive idealism but a strategy for individual and collective transformation that, wherever it has been seriously implemented—from the Indian independence movement to the peace movements in Southeast Asia—has proven its effectiveness. And the critique of social distinctions based on birth, so powerful in the Ambaṭṭha Sutta and the Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta, speaks directly to a humanity still struggling with racism, discrimination, and structural inequalities.



X. An invitation to the reader

The texts collected in this volume were not written to be read and forgotten, nor to be admired as relics of a remote antiquity. They were spoken—or rather, according to tradition, "heard thus"—to be meditated upon, re-examined, and allowed to slowly penetrate the consciousness like a fine rain that soaks the soil to its roots. Each verse of the Dhammapada, each negation

of the Heart Sutra, each simile of the Long Discourses contains within itself an entire practice: a hundred readings are not enough to exhaust them, because each reading reveals layers of meaning unexplored by the previous reading, like a well that, the deeper one descends, the deeper it becomes.

The Buddha himself, in the texts collected here, insistently reiterates that his teachings should not be taken on blind faith or authority, but should be verified through personal experience, as a goldsmith tests gold by burning it, cutting it, and rubbing it on a touchstone. This attitude—which is both scientific in its methodology and contemplative in its purpose—makes Buddhism a particularly valuable interlocutor for contemporary man, who has learned to distrust dogma but has nevertheless continued to seek a path to understanding himself and the world. The texts collected here offer that path with a clarity and generosity unparalleled in human spiritual literature.

I therefore invite the reader to proceed slowly, to pause where the mind ignites or the heart is moved, to turn back when they feel they have passed something without understanding it, to let the Buddha's words work within them as a seed works in the earth, in silence and darkness, before emerging into the light. One does not have to be a Buddhist to benefit from these texts, just as one does not have to be Greek to admire Plato or Jewish to meditate on the Psalms. Wisdom, when it is authentic, transcends the confines of the traditions that generated it and speaks to anyone with ears to hear and a heart to understand.

And if, at the end of this reading journey, the reader has discovered even just one verse, even just one phrase, even just one word that has changed something in their way of looking at life—a moment of greater clarity, a moment of greater peace, a glimmer of greater understanding of their own and others' suffering—then this collection will have fulfilled its purpose, and the editor's work will not have been in vain. Because ultimately, the Dhamma is not in books: it is in the experience of those who read and live them. The book is merely the finger pointing to the moon; it is up to the reader to raise their gaze.

Because ultimately, as the Dhammapada teaches: “Even if one recites little of the scriptures, but lives according to the Dharma, abandoning passion, hatred and delusion, with true knowledge and an unfettered mind, he truly participates in the holy life.”

The Heart Sutra

So I heard.

At one time the Blessed One dwelt at Rājagṛha, on Vulture Peak, together with a great community of monks and a great community of bodhisattvas.

At that moment the Blessed One was immersed in the concentration called “profound enlightenment.”

At the same time, the noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, while practicing the profound perfection of wisdom, clearly saw that the five aggregates are, in their very nature, empty.

Then, by the power of the Buddha, the venerable Śāriputra addressed the noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, and said:

"How should a son or daughter of noble family who wishes to practice the profound perfection of wisdom train?"

The noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, replied to the venerable Śāriputra:

«Śāriputra, a son or daughter of noble family who wishes to practice the profound perfection of wisdom must see thus clearly: he must contemplate correctly that even the five aggregates are empty in their own nature.

Form is emptiness; emptiness is form.
Emptiness is nothing but form; form is nothing but emptiness.
Likewise, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness are empty.

Thus, Śāriputra, all phenomena are empty:
they neither arise nor cease,
they are neither impure nor pure,
they neither diminish nor increase.

Therefore, Śāriputra, in emptiness there is no form, no sensation, no perception, no mental formations, no consciousness;
there is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind;
there is no visible form, no sound, no odor, no taste, no tangible object, no mental object; there is no element of sight, to the point of not having the element of mental consciousness;
there is no ignorance, nor the extinction of ignorance, to the point of not having old age and death, nor the extinction of old age and death; there is no suffering, nor the origin of suffering, nor cessation, nor path; there is no knowledge, nor attainment, nor non-attainment.

Therefore, Śāriputra, since there is no attainment for bodhisattvas, they abide relying on the perfection of wisdom; and, since the mind is unobstructed, they are fearless.
Overcoming all illusion, they finally attain nirvana.

All the Buddhas of the three times, relying on the perfection of wisdom, fully and perfectly awaken to unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment.

Therefore know that the mantra of the perfection of wisdom is the great mantra, the mantra of great knowledge, the supreme mantra, the incomparable mantra, which pacifies all suffering, true and not false.

Therefore the mantra of the perfection of wisdom is proclaimed, and it goes like this:

Gate gate pāragate pārasaṃgate bodhi svāhā.

Gone, gone, gone beyond, completely gone beyond:
awakening, health!

Then the Blessed One emerged from that concentration and praised the noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, saying:

"Well, well, son of a noble family. It is just so, it is just so. One must practice the profound perfection of wisdom exactly as you have taught, and the Tathagatas rejoice."

When the Blessed One had said this, the venerable Śāriputra, the noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva, the great being, all that assembly and the world with gods, men, asuras and gandharvas were filled with joy and praised the words of the Blessed One.

THE DHAMMAPADA

1. Couples (1–20)

1. All things are preceded by the mind, guided by the mind, and made of the mind. If one speaks or acts with a corrupt mind, pain follows him as the wheel follows the foot of the ox it draws.

2. All things are preceded by the mind, guided by the mind, and made of the mind. If one speaks or acts with a pure mind, happiness follows him like an unwavering shadow.

3. “He insulted me, he struck me, he defeated me, he robbed me”: in those who harbor these thoughts, hatred does not subside.

4. “He insulted me, he struck me, he defeated me, he robbed me”: in those who do not harbor these thoughts, hatred subsides.

5. In this world hate is not,,,,

END PREVIEW