

EXCERPTS FROM: *The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 lines and its verse summary*
Translated by Edward Conze 1973.

Chapter 1 Verse Form

Preliminary Admonition

“Call forth as much as you can of love, of respect and of faith!
Remove the obstructing defilements, and clear away all your taints!
Listen to the Perfect Wisdom of the gentle Buddhas,
Taught for the weal of the world, for heroic spirits intended! P. 9

The Basic Teachings (5-15)

5. No wisdom can we get hold of, no highest perfection,
No Bodhisattva, no thought of enlightenment either.
When told of this, if not bewildered and in no way anxious,
A Bodhisattva courses in the Well-Gone's wisdom.

6. In form, in feeling, will perception, and awareness
Nowhere in them they find a place to rest on.
Without a home they wander, dharmas never hold them,
Nor do they grasp at them-The Jina's Bodhi they are bound to gain.

7. The wanderer Srenika in his gnosis of the truth
Could find no basis, though the skandhas had not been undone.
Just so the Bodhisattva, when he comprehends the dharmas as he should
Does not retire into Blessed Rest. In wisdom then he dwells.

8. What is this wisdom, whose and whence, he queries,
And then he finds that all these dharmas are entirely empty.
Uncowed and fearless in the face of that discovery
Not far from Bodhi is that Bodhi-being then.

9. To course in the skandhas, in form, in feeling, in perception
will and so on, and fail to consider them wisely;
or to imagine these skandhas as being empty;
Means to course in the sign, the track of non-production ignored.

10. But when he does not course in form, in feeling, or perception,
in will or consciousness, but wanders without home,
Remaining unaware of coursing firm in wisdom,
His thoughts on non-production-then the best of all the calming
Trances cleaves to him.

Chapt. XIII Unthinkable

1. Five Attributes of Perfect Wisdom p. 180

Subhuti: Deep, O Lord, is perfect wisdom. Certainly as a great enterprise has this perfection of wisdom been set up, as an unthinkable, incomparable, immeasurable, incalculable enterprise, as an enterprise which equals the unequalled.

The Lord: So it is, Subhuti. And why is it an unthinkable enterprise? Because unthinkable are Tathagatahood, Buddhahood, Self-existence, and the state of all knowledge. And on these one cannot reflect with one's thought, since they cannot be an object of thought, or of volition, or of any of the dharmas which constitute thought. And why is it an incomparable enterprise? Because one cannot reflect on Tathagatahood, etc., nor compare it. And why is it immeasurable? Because Tathagatahood, etc. is immeasurable. And why is it incalculable? Because Tathagatahood, etc. is incalculable. And why is it an enterprise which equals the unequalled? Because nothing can be equal to the Tathagata, to the fully Enlightened One, to the Self-existence, to the All-knowing, how much less can anything be superior to him?

Subhuti: Do these five attributes apply only to Tathagatahood, etc. or also to the skandhas, and to all dharmas?

The Lord: They apply to them also. Also the skandhas, and also all dharmas are unthinkable. For with regard to the true essential nature of form, etc., there is no thought, no volition, nor any of the dharmas which constitute thought, nor any comparing. For that reason the skandhas and all dharmas are also unthinkable and incomparable. They are also immeasurable, because one cannot conceive of a measure of form; since such a measure does not exist, in consequence of the infinitude of all dharmas. They are also incalculable, because they have risen above all possibility of counting. They are also equal to the unequalled, because all dharmas are the same as space. What do you think, Subhuti, does there exist with reference to space any sameness, or counting or measure, or comparison, or thought, or a dharma which constitutes thought?

Subhuti: No, Lord.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PRACTICING WITH THE PRAJNA PARAMITA SUTRA

1. No self and No Thing is extremely mysterious and beyond thought, feeling, skandas...–
Notice your selfing process.....
How are you weaving your self today?
What self are you weaving?
Do you have complete devotion to the way?
2. Practicing with the 5 Attributes of Perfect Wisdom
 - a. Immeasurable
In what ways am I measuring my life?
Chant: May I honor the preciousness of my life/your life in this moment?
(Bow)
 - b. Incalculable
Each moment is too great, too many to be counted.
What emerges next is unpredictable
Notice your predictions for your life-then chant: NOT IT
During the day pause and chant: This moment is incalculable.
 - c. Inconceivable
Cannot be conceived; incredible; impossible; inherently contradictory.
What do you think is impossible for your life?
Notice what happens when you challenge this.
 - d. Incomparable
Unsuitable for comparison. Comparative thought negates the preciousness, the uniqueness of your life.
Notice when you are caught in comparative thought, pause, return to emptiness and notice again.
 - e. Illimitable
Cannot be limited; boundless, infinite; timeless.
Wisdom is space.
Practice letting go into space.
3. Practicing with the Unthinkable –
“Course on the stage of the Faith-Follower”
Call forth as much as you can of love, of respect and of faith”
Remove the obstructing defilements, and clear away all of your taints!
By negating and then not negating all thought/feeling.