

The Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra

With Standless Verse Commentary and Explanation

by Tripitaka Master Hua

If your mind does not have that kind of attachment, there is no problem. For even when there is filth, filth is just the same as purity. The original substance of one's own nature is neither defiled nor pure. Therefore, all is without characteristics and originally has no defilement or purity.

If you are capable of attaining the principle of the Way of neither defilement nor purity, so that your mind is not affected by defilement and purity, you will unite with your own nature; your virtue will equal that of heaven and earth, and your light, that of the sun and moon. How can the Buddha be like infinite suns? Because the Buddha was able to attain the principle of the Way of neither defilement nor purity. If you are capable of attaining this kind of natural principle of the Way, which is neither defiled nor pure, you and the four seasons – spring, summer, fall, and winter -- have all been united and transformed into one. You can be united with the auspiciousness and misfortune of gods and ghosts. Why are you unable to accomplish this? Because you have the kind of nature which is attached to accounting for things in a one-sided manner. If you didn't, you could return to the original source and so leave defilement.

"They neither increase nor diminish"--enlighten the dark and mysterious middle. When you have attained enlightenment, there is neither increase nor decrease in your own nature. You have become enlightened to the most subtle and wonderful noumenal substance of the Middle Way. I spoke earlier about Nagarjuna Bodhisattva and the doctrine of non-production which he proclaimed. I also mentioned the Dharma of the eight characteristics explained by the Buddha during the *Vaipulya* period.

No production and no extinction;
No permanence and no annihilation;
No unity and no differentiation;
No coming and no going.

Most people are attached either to annihilation or to permanence. Annihilation and permanence are the views of external paths, but the Dharma which was spoken by the Buddha is neither annihilationism nor eternalism; it is a Dharma of neither unity nor differentiation.

Let's talk about us. Would you say that people are annihilated? When people die, do they then not exist? Or would you say that people live eternally? If so, then why don't we see any people from ancient times right now? We don't see them because people don't live forever. Would you say then that people do not live eternally? The rice which we now eat is the same rice which the ancients ate. The rice has not been annihilated. If you say that it has not been annihilated, you must say that it is eternal. The ancients are not eternal, but we are eternally eating the rice the ancients ate! Since we eat it, how is it still

eternal? We eat it all the time! Therefore, the Dharma spoken by the Buddha is neither annihilationism nor eternalism. So you should not be attached either to a view of annihilationism or to a view of eternalism; you should unite instead with the Middle Way. And so the verse says, "enlighten the dark and mysterious middle."

"No coming and no going." The Buddha, the Thus Come One, does not come from anywhere or go anywhere. We should not only mention the Thus Come One, since we people also neither come nor go. You may say that there is a going; but where do people come from? You don't know. You may say that there is a going; but when we die, where do we go? You don't know that either. "No coming and no going:" there is nowhere that we come from and nowhere that we go. In other words, there is neither unity nor differentiation. The lack of unity means there is no sameness, and the lack of differentiation means there are no two different characteristics. That is, there is no characteristic of commonality and no characteristic of distinction.

Would you say that there is a characteristic of commonality? Let's talk about the body. The body is not just composed of one kind of thing that is organized to become a body. There are many different divisions. That is what is meant by "no unity." And "no differentiation"? Generally, speaking, the body is just a body. When there isn't any other distinction made, that is what is meant by "no differentiation." To explain this kind of principle is very complicated. One time a little is said and the next time a little is said. When it has been talked about several more times, you will be able to understand.

THEY NEITHER INCREASE NOR DIMINISH. One's own nature neither increases nor decreases.

In the pure and deep ultimate silence, all creation is transcended. Being very, very pure one transcends the creative and transformative processes of heaven and earth.

A sudden awakening to the original perfect fusion of self and dharmas. If you are able to understand simultaneously all the various principles which have been expounded, you will suddenly awaken to the fact that self and dharmas are originally perfectly fused, unobstructed, non-dual, and undifferentiated. Self and dharmas are one.

There is a Chinese saying which is very helpful in understanding that THEY NEITHER INCREASE NOR DIMINISH:

The years and months are unfeeling, in increase is decrease. One cannot say that the years and months have any human feelings at all. All that is mentioned is that their increasing is a decreasing. If it is said that there is neither increase nor decrease, how then is there increase and decrease nonetheless? What increases and decreases also neither increases nor decreases.

"The years and months are unfeeling." You say, "I don't want to go." You stand here today, wanting to stop the flow, saying, "Time, don't accompany me any further." You wish to tell it not to go past, but unless you make the sun standstill, no matter what you do, you will

not stop it from flowing. Now, although science has made progress, it still has found no method capable of making the sun stand still. Therefore, time is unfeeling.

"In increase is decrease." This year we are sixty years old, and next year sixty-one years old. Although it may seem that our life spans have increased by one year, try calculating from the year of death! For example, if I were to die at the age of one hundred and had now lived to be sixty-one, I would only have thirty-nine remaining years. My life would have already decreased to thirty-nine years. Therefore, when one side increases, the other side decreases. "In increase is decrease." So also in decrease is increase. If you really understand this principle, you know that there is basically neither increase nor decrease. When I was teaching you Chinese, I said, "If you do not have an old heart, you have eternal youth." Therefore, "In increase is decrease."

What should be done?

Tasty Buddhadharma!
After the bitter, the sweet.

The Buddhadharma is really most flavorful. When you study the Buddhadharma, you study a little bit, and then you understand a little bit. Recently I said, "Regarding becoming enlightened, there are small enlightenments, there are middle-sized enlightenments, and there are great enlightenments." How big is a small enlightenment? Perhaps it is as small as a speck of dust bordering on emptiness. In the field of your eighth consciousness, you have already had a small enlightenment and you still do not know it.

When you have a middle-sized enlightenment, you feel, "Ah, I understand a little more of the doctrine. That is what NEITHER INCREASE NOR DIMINISH is basically about! Fundamentally, NOT PRODUCED, NOT DESTROYED, NOT DEFILED, NOT PURE has so many meanings!" You understand the meaning of those doctrines: that is middle-sized enlightenment.

Great enlightenment ends birth and death. You know how you come and how you go. You know what is meant by increase, by decrease, and by NOT PRODUCED AND NOT DESTROYED. That's great enlightenment.

Tasty Buddhadharma!
After the bitter, the sweet.

First, you certainly must endure a little bit of suffering. That does not mean to study for three and a half days or even five days, and then to say, "I have studied enough Buddhadharma." No, you certainly should let go of that sort of patience; get rid of it, and say, "No matter what difficulty, I want to learn." This is why we stick to an unvarying schedule of language and Sutra study. Unless there are special situations, I absolutely won't be lazy about teaching you. Why? It is just that you must reliably, truly cultivate, and then you can get to the flavor: "After the bitter, the sweet." You must first take the

bitter, and afterwards you can obtain what is sweet. So in studying the Buddhadharma, no one should be afraid of suffering. Don't be afraid. The more suffering, the better. You should get up your energy, firm your stance, direct your will, and go forward with vigor and valor. You shouldn't be afraid of difficulty! Then you can study the Buddhadharma.