

# The Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra

*With Standless Verse Commentary and Explanation by Tripitaka Master Hua*

These are the ten small afflictions:

1) *Upset*. The mind loses its equanimity. Wouldn't you say that is an affliction? It is to be truly, totally, despicably messed up. Do you like the first one or not? If you like it, then take it.

2) *Enmity*. "I hate you; I hate you right through." Hate is the other side of love. Why do you hate people? It is because you love them and your love is unrequited. I have a disciple who had a guest-defiler of a boyfriend. As soon as he heard that she wanted to leave the home-life, his hatred arose, and he said to her on the telephone, "I hate you!" He really surprised and frightened her, and she said, "Oh, that is really terrible!"

3) The third, *annoyance*, is even fiercer than enmity. When you are annoyed, you are not at all at ease (*tzu-tsai* 自在). The Chinese character for "annoyance" (*nao* 惱) is related to the word for brain (*nao* 腦), that is, your head. As soon as you become annoyed, your head hurts and your eyes burn. You can't tell how big your head is. The more you are disturbed, the bigger your head gets, and when you are extremely disturbed, you get water on the brain. That can be fatal. Your head swells up, bigger and bigger, until it is as big as it can get, and then the water pours out of your head and you die.

The Chinese word *nao*(惱), "annoyance," is used in the compound *fan nao* (煩惱), which means affliction.

4) *Repression*. The literal meaning is "to cover", as "Heaven covers over and Earth contains." Repression is even more harmful than upset, enmity, and annoyance, which are all externalized. Repression, on the other hand, implies a wish that others will not know. To cover up and to hide something inside is very harmful to you. It gives you ulcers. Americans don't get them as much as Chinese people, especially those who have left the home-life. Why? Because they repress their afflictions and do not let others know, and no one asks them about it. It isn't important, but they hide it inside; they are very clearly afflicted, but they cover it up so it cannot flow out. So inside they get ulcers. When people have this type of illness, you know they are repressing afflictions.

5) *Lying*. The Chinese character *k'uang* (謊), "lying", is made up of two characters, *yen*(言), "speech", and *k'uang* (荒) "crazy". False speech becomes an affliction. When you are upset, someone may ask you, "Why are you afflicted?" and you reply, "I'm not afflicted. Who's afflicted?" You even ask, "Who's afflicted?" The fire of ignorance inside you attacks and destroys even the heavens. Asked again, you still deny any affliction and say, "Who's afflicted?" That is the fifth affliction, lying.

I didn't want to tell you about that affliction, because I was afraid that when the time came to speak falsely, you might be like a certain one of my disciples. Now if he were to

get angry, I might ask if he is angry, and he might say, "No, no, I didn't get angry." Then he would be lying. First, he would repress his anger, and then he would speak falsely. Because he didn't understand the method before, I would have kept him from lying by not explaining it. But now I have already talked about it.

6) *Obsequious flattery*. In your heart you simply don't like someone, but when you see him, you still want to speak to him nicely. The colloquial Chinese expression "to pat the horse" refers to this sort of flattery. When someone who is poor sees some -- one who is rich, he is particularly likely to say, "Aaah, Mr. Chaang, where are you goooooing?" — all in that tone of voice. His manner is one of constant obsequious flattery. He pats you on the shoulder and laughs in an ugly way.

7) *Arrogance* is the seventh small affliction. "I won't even pay any attention to you. If you are rich, that's your affair. I'll just attend to whatever I have to do. See how big I am; I am Number One in the whole world. My body is even bigger than Mount Sumeru, so why do I have to be polite to you?" That kind of arrogance makes you think that your body is bigger than Mount Sumeru. The previous affliction of obsequious flattery is changed into arrogance." You pat the horse, so I don't pay any attention to anyone."

8) Next comes *malevolence*. "So you are rich and powerful? Ha! I'll knife you to death, and then we will see of what use it will be. "Here someone wishes to harm people, but doesn't actually do the harmful deeds. Thinking in your mind about harming people is what is called malevolence, your very own eighth small affliction.

9) *Jealousy*, I haven't given you this ninth small affliction before, but you've all had it for a long time. I don't know where you stole it from. It's jealousy. You are jealous of him, and he is jealous of you. Since you don't understand where the jealousy came from, I said that you stole it. Not understanding how it came about is the same as its being stolen. Since you didn't know, I'm telling you that your jealousy came from the list of ten small subsidiary afflictions.

10) The tenth, *stinginess*, is just about the same. Some people have it, and some people don't. Stinginess means that you cannot bear to give things up. You cannot stand giving. Although you have a penny, you clutch it in your palm and squeeze and squeeze until it turns to water. Then you cry, "Oh, my penny has disappeared! I didn't even spend it, so where did it go?" The fact is that it turned to water. Stinginess is the tenth affliction.

The two middle-sized subsidiary afflictions are *lack of shame* and *lack of humility*. The Chinese character *ts'an* 慙, "shame" is composed of the element 心, meaning "mind" and the character *chan* 斬 which means "to behead" or, more generally, "to cut off" or "to kill," as in the expression to "cut off affliction." When you are afflicted in your mind by a lack of shame, then if you do something wrong you don't admit it is wrong, and you do not know how to change and repent.

The lack of shame also refers to the failure to cut off the afflictions in your mind which should be cut off. Having a murderous intent in your mind which is left unrectified is also known as shamelessness. Since you lack shame, you know no embarrassment. Your

actions are so lacking in light and uprightness that you ought to be unable to look at people; nevertheless, you do not even admit to being wrong. You still say, "What difference does it make? So-and-so acts wrongly in just the same way." You try to convince yourself that you are being reasonable, so you act as your own defense attorney. You say, "Because of this and that circumstance, I had a good cause to do what I did, and so I am right. Yes, because my reasoning is especially precise, I am confident that I am in the right."

What is meant by a lack of humility? The Chinese character *k'uei* 愧, translated as "humility" or "remorse" is written with an element meaning heart on the left and the character for ghost on the right. In other words, there is no light in your heart, but you nevertheless consider it right to have a bad conscience and feel that you should apologize to other people, you still don't say "I'm sorry," but think to yourself, "I'm not going to apologize to those people!"

Next are the eight large subsidiary afflictions.

1) The first is *disbelief*. You never would have thought that the lack of belief is an affliction, would you? Someone afflicted by disbelief doesn't believe anything you say, no matter what it is, whether it is right or wrong. If you speak so that "heavenly flowers fall this way and that and golden lotuses spring forth from the earth," he still acts as if he didn't hear. If you explain something that contains the principles of the Way, he doesn't believe it. If you explain something that is unprincipled, he believes that even less. You explain a little more, you explain a little less, in either case he doesn't believe it. If you talk about existence, or nothingness, or emptiness, or non-emptiness, he won't believe any of it. In short, the essential tenet of his principles is disbelief.

2) The second of the large subsidiary afflictions is *torpor*. None of you thought that torpor was one of the large subsidiary afflictions. To be torpid is not to study the Dharma-doors diligently. A person afflicted by torpor is always torpid, whatever he does. He eats lazily, waiting five minutes between mouthfuls. When he sleeps, he is in a stupor. The only time he is energetic is when he plays mah-jhong. This affliction makes one lazy about the Dharma and lazy in cultivation. The laziness has the nature of an affliction.

Not only is he lazy himself, but he also wishes to influence others to be lazy. He basically doesn't want anybody to do anything at all. "However you people cultivate, I will not cultivate. I will influence you not to cultivate either. I am so lazy that if you are near me for two days, before the third day is up you will be lazy too." He wants other people to follow him in his laziness, so it is called a "following" affliction.