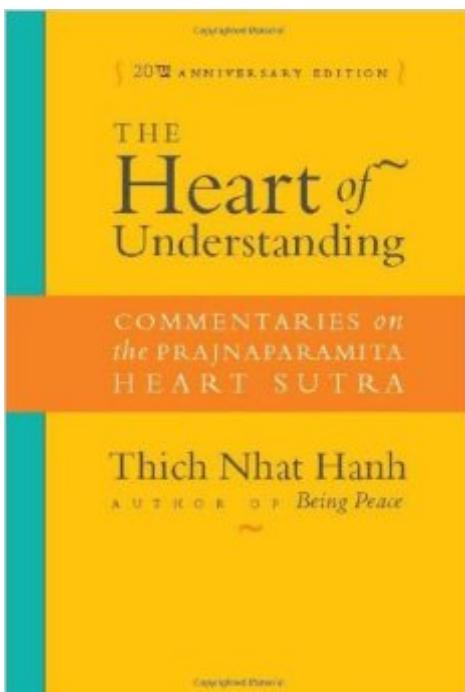


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The Heart Of Understanding: Commentaries On The Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra



Synopsis

The heart of the Prajñāparamita Sutra is regarded as the essence of Buddhist teaching, offering subtle and profound teachings on non-duality and the letting go of all preconceived notions, opinions, and attachments, and so becoming open to all the wonders of our life. The Heart Sutra is recited daily in Mahayana temples and practice centers throughout the world. Thich Nhat Hanh's translation and commentary are the fruit of the author's more than sixty years of monastic study and practice. He describes the sutra as "a precious gift to us, the gift of fearlessness." Based on a historic lecture at the Green Gulch Zen Center, Muir Beach, California on April 19, 1987, this is one of the most simple, clear, concise, and understandable commentaries on this very important Buddhist sutra. In the Heart Sutra, the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara describes how to train in the perfection of wisdom by seeing through the illusory nature of all things. The Heart Sutra is Buddhism in a nutshell, containing only 632 characters in the traditional Chinese translation. Despite its brevity, it covers more of the Buddha's teachings than any other scripture and has had the most profound and wide-reaching influence of any text in Buddhism. This revised edition celebrates the 20th anniversary of the initial release and features a new introduction by Peter Levitt and a new afterword by Thich Nhat Hanh. Edited by poet and Zen teacher Peter Levitt, author of Fingerpainting on the Moon.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In a very few words, Thich Nhat Hanh puts in very simple terms what many of us struggle to come

to terms with - the esoteric Dharma-teachings on emptiness. Perhaps it's the Zen-born simplicity that makes this treatise so approachable and readable. This would be a good book for newcomers to Buddhism who hear about emptiness and hairs stand up on the back of their neck. A gentle and skilful introduction to profundity. A must read for anyone with an interest in emptiness as applied in our conventional world.

He explains the sometimes frightening truths of emptiness in a manner which melts the fears away with understanding. As you read this book, you can feel how much the author wants the reader to understand the text and how much he wants to benefit the reader. It's so easy to just allow your mind to relax and rest on the Sutra as you read through it. Very enjoyable and highly recommended.

Thich Nhat Hanh sheds light on this superb Buddhist text. The paradoxical language of the scripture is important to convey the illusory qualities of emptiness and individual existence. Unfortunately this language makes it extremely difficult to understand. Hanh takes this esoteric teaching and explains it to a child. I recommend any of his sutra translations and commentaries.

This is THE book that made me call myself a Buddhist with confidence. I'm a Japanese who was born to a Zen Buddhist family. Although I naturally memorised the Heart Sutra growing up listening to it being recited by monks often, I'd never really understood what it meant. I've read several commentaries on this sutra (by Japanese monks and nuns) but none of them helped me. Some didn't make sense, others left me pessimistic. Let alone allowing me to adapt the teaching to my real life. Now, with this Thich Nhat Hanh's little book, I finally got the "A-ha!" moment. The Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra is not an enigma any more to me because this fantastic teacher explained it in the warmest way possible. I will recommend this book to anyone who has been questioning the significance of this sutra (or even Buddhism generally). One more thing... Thich Nhat Hanh's approach towards Buddhism wouldn't give any atheist a yuk. It's got nothing to do with supernatural power or anything, like some denominations' do.

I still cannot believe that anyone was able to explain emptiness in such a beautiful fashion. I honestly cried with joy while I read this book. Please read it!

This was the first book I read by Thich Nhat Hanh. I had heard a lot about him prior to this. When I read the book, I could easily see why there is so much excitement about him and his works. He

writes in a very clear, very accessible style. This book is a commentary on the Heart Sutra. The Heart Sutra is said to contain the essence of Buddhist teachings. I would recommend any book written by Thich Nhat Hanh!

Just reading the first couple paragraphs of this book was like, "aaaahhh..." Completely relaxing. The writer's message and style is simple yet poetic, and very important--how to not be afraid. This is the first Buddhist book I have ever picked up, being that I had only studied Buddhism from the classroom/historical aspect, and never viewed it in any way as something I would actually connect to or practice in my life. Now I can. This book is refreshing, short, easy to read. I would recommend it to anyone.

The Heart Sutra is the premiere sutra, or sermon of the Buddha, in all of East Asian Buddhism. People from Tibet to Japan, and now in the West chant the Heart Sutra. Many people study it because it gets to the "heart" of Buddhism (no pun intended). As such, it's very easy to find commentaries on the Heart Sutra, but few can surpass this one. Thich Nhat Hanh understands the Sutra inside and out. The sutra can be cryptic at times, but Thich Nhat Hanh patiently works his way through each section, allowing the reader to really get the whole picture. I definitely recommend this book to any Buddhist, new or veteran, as (re-)discovering the Heart Sutra is a great step on the Buddhist path.

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