

Dissertation Title : An Analytical Study of the Emptiness in the
Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra and in Mahāyāna
Schools with Special References to their
Commentaries

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Abstract

This dissertation is of three objectives:- (1) To study the origin and the development of Hṛdaya Sūtra and the translation of it, (2) to study the commentaries of Hṛdaya Sūtra, and (3) to analyse and to compare of the teaching about the Emptiness in Hṛdaya Sūtra and in Mahāyāna schools with special references to their commentaries.

This dissertation is a qualitative research study. The main purpose in the writing of this dissertation is to study the Emptiness taught in Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra and to discuss the way how the concept of emptiness becomes instrumental to overcome all the sufferings and to attain the fully enlightenment. The consulted literary sources include the Tibetan and the Chinese Tripiṭakas, and are specially related to their commentaries and a wide range of scholarly studies of Buddhism, the scientific books, the articles and the electronic sources.

From the research it is found as follows:

(1) From the modern scholars evidence shows that the exact date of the sutra is unclear, the place of the origin of the Prajñāpāramitā is still some controversial. But it can be traced back to the longer version of the text, it can be seen the first origin of Hṛdaya Sūtra took place in the vulture peak at Rājagṛha, and it is generally accepted by scholars. Moreover, we believe primarily on the basis of above scholarly documentary evidence, that the place origin of the Hṛdaya Sūtra possibly in the northern and was composed around the first century B.C. It is also very important to note that the most earlier Indian Sanskrit palm leaves manuscript was preserved today in Horyu-ji temple in Japan since 609 A.D. Except the two leaves version we could not found any original Sanskrit version before the 6th century.

The development of the Prajñāpāramitā literature in India. The Hṛdaya Sūtra was created in the third stage of development and is the best known of all Prajñāpāramitā texts. Followed by, the development of this sutra in china, the translation of first Hṛdaya Sūtra in Chinese started from Dong Wu dynasty by Chih-ch'ien (190-250 C.E). But unfortunately, his translation, however, has been lost since the early 6th century. Now there are eleven versions translations of the Hṛdaya Sūtra in the standard Chinese Tripiṭaka, until Song dynasty. Though there are several different translations, it is the one by the master Xuan-Zang that is most popular and widely adopted throughout the ages, because Xuan-Zang version consists of 260 Chinese characters only, with very clear and simple language. This is also the significance of this version. Recently, the most popular English translation of Hṛdaya Sūtra by E. Conze and this is a very accurate Western version, his translation text words are beautiful and simple than the previous others translation.

(2) The commentaries are considerable number, because commentaries are the value of deep understanding the sutra. Based on the history, there are total seven commentaries in Indian Buddhist history. The seven commentaries now preserved in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, luckily now have been translated into English, but at the same time

unfortunately it has been entirely lost in the land of its origin (India). The seven extant Indian commentaries made a big role and influences during the Pāla dynasty. This period exegetes are very carefully examined the sutra of Mahāyāna, we can also clearly see that the Hṛdaya Sūtra is considered line by line through selections from the exegeses of the Pāla period scholars.

The more representative commentaries made by Tibetan and Chinese commentators, appeared from the Tang until Qing dynasty. Furthermore, compare with Indian and Tibetan, the Chinese commentaries are double than others two countries. The modern era commentary mostly made by those modern famous Buddhist master's and internationally expert scholars and make the modern people much easier to take a part in practice through by the light of wisdom and good metaphor given in the contemporary commentary with simple language and easy way. If we compare with the modern and ancient commentaries, we found that, it is suggested that the study of the ancient commentaries is better than the modern one. Early Indian Tibetan and Chinese commentaries are full comprehensive study and exploration of the teachings of 'Emptiness' with more wider and deeper from the different perspectives of Mahāyāna Yogācāra, Mādhyamaka, Tathāgatagarbha, and Tantrayāna philosophy etc.

(3) Based on the documentary evidence which shows that there are two methods which are Meditation and Prajñā offered by the Prajñāpāramitā Hṛdaya Sūtra to remove the suffering of all the sentient beings. We are unable to attain the fully enlightenment or to be free from the cyclic existence of suffering, if we are lack in any of these two methods. These methods are Interrelated. Only the meditation is not enough. It is needs more cooperation with Prajñā (wisdom) simultaneously. These teachings have also been shared by Theravāda Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna schools. We can say this is the innovation of this dissertation. Moreover, Hṛdaya Sūtra, Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra School particularly accept the teachings of emptiness in the "Mahaprajñāpāramitā Sūtra", because the emptiness is the main teaching

of all the Mahāyāna schools to be completely free from all the suffering. “Mahaprajñāpāramitā Sūtra” is also the one causing Mahāyāna Buddhism to arise in India before a century.

The core teaching of the Hṛdaya Sūtra is Prajñā of Emptiness. When it is realized, all the problems come to an end. It is undoubted that this one subject of Emptiness covers all of the Buddha’s teachings. The Hṛdaya Sūtra causes us to think differently, to open our mind eyes and to let our thoughts go beyond the enlightenment” or to reach the shore of the ocean of suffering ‘Nirvāṇa’.

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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini
B.C.E	Before Common Era
B.C	Before Christ
CBETA	Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association
C.E	Common Era
Chi.	Chinese
DN	Dīghanikāya
Etc.	et cetera/ and others
Eg.	For example
Ibid.	Ibiden / in the same book
MMK	Mūlamadhyamakakārikā
No.	Number
Op.cit.	Opere citato/ as referred
p.	Page
Skt.	Sanskrit
Tib.	Tibetan
Trans.	Translator, translated by, translation
Vol.	Volume

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