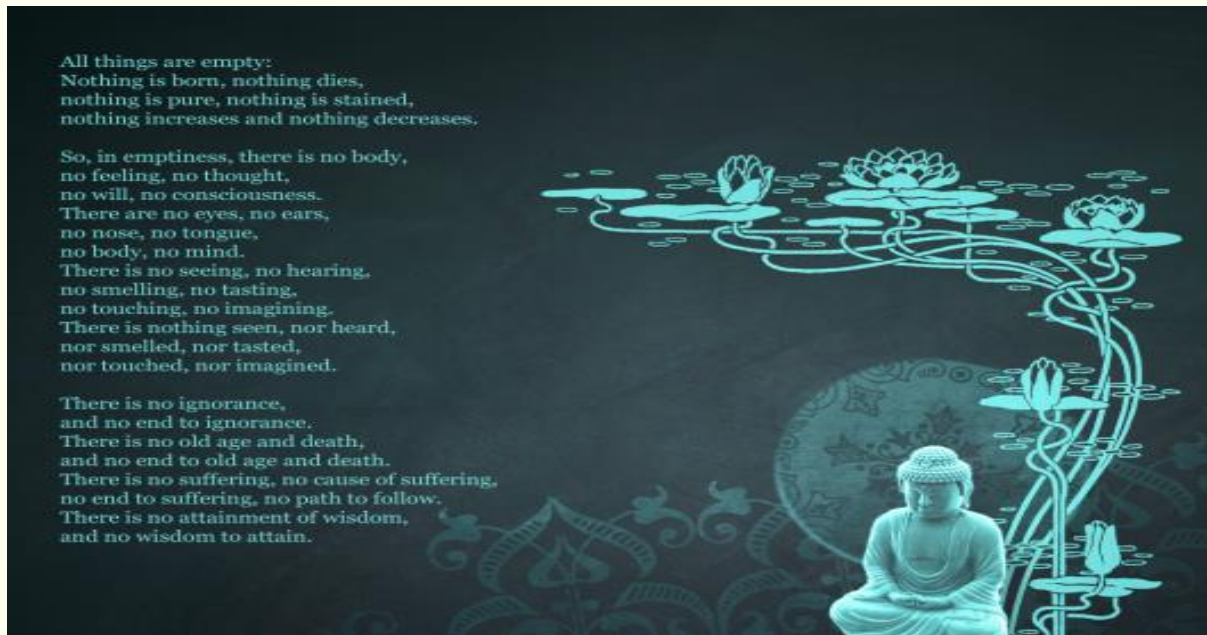


## The Heart Sutra (in English) and Its Meaning; Outline of Chanting



We will learn a few preliminary and supportive chants that are usually done in association with the Heart Sutra. We will chant them in both Japanese and in English.

### ➤ Herald or Proclamation of the Sutra

The first is a herald or proclamation of the Sutra so that all beings will turn their attention to the words of enlightenment and liberation. It declares the rarity of encountering this, the highest of teachings. It says,

*The unsurpassed, profound, and wonderful dharma,  
Is difficult to encounter in hundreds of millions of eons,  
I now see and hear it, receive and uphold it,  
And vow to fathom the Blessed One's true meaning*

This serves to draw the attention and open the minds of oneself and all beings.

### ➤ Purification

Next is purification through confession of past wrongs. Before coming to the Sutra we purify our mind stream by confessing and repenting the unwholesome actions of body, speech and mind in the past. We set aside such unskillful ways and

determine to abide by virtuous conduct from this day forward. Very importantly, we forgive ourselves and all others for the wrongs we have committed due to our confusion.

*All the evil deeds I have done in my past and present lives are due to greed, hatred, and ignorance.*

*For all these wrongdoings of my body, speech, and mind I sincerely repent.*

### ➤ **Taking Refuge**

With a purified mind, we then take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.

### ➤ **The Ten Precepts**

The 10 precepts of virtuous action of body, speech and mind follow Taking Refuge. We undertake not to kill, not to steal, not to commit adultery or any other sexual offense, not to lie, not to exaggerate, not to slander, not to turn one person against another, not to be greedy, not to be hateful, and not to persist in wrong views.

### ➤ **Four Bodhisattva<sup>1</sup> Vows**

We will chant the four Bodhisattva Vows.<sup>2</sup> This can be done three times or numerous times. It is a very powerful chant. Optional at this point is the chant to Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva. We will include it. It can be done three times or numerous times. Our heart and the heart of Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva become as one.

### ➤ **The Heart Sutra**

After these preliminaries, we will begin to chant The Heart Sutra. It can be done once, three times, or numerous times.

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<sup>1</sup> “A bodhisattva is an ordinary person who takes up a course in his or her life that moves in the direction of Buddha. You and I, actually, anyone who directs their attention, their life, to practicing the way of life of a Buddha is a bodhisattva. The life that flows through each of us and through everything around us is actually all connected. To say that, of course, means that who I really am cannot be separated from all the things that surround me. Or, to put it another way, all sentient beings have their existence and live within my life. So needless to say, that includes even the fate of all mankind—that, too, lies within me. Therefore, just how mankind might truly live out its life becomes what I aim at as my direction. This aiming or living while moving in a certain direction is what is meant by vow. In other words, it is [the motivation for living](#) that is different for a bodhisattva. Ordinary people live thinking only about their own personal, narrow circumstances connected with their desires. In contrast to that, a bodhisattva, though undeniably still an ordinary human being like everyone else, lives by vow. Because of that, the significance of his or her life is not the same. For us as bodhisattvas, all aspects of life, including the fate of humanity itself, live within us. It is with this in mind that we work to discover and manifest the most vital and alive posture that we can take in living out our life.” [What Is A Bodhisattva?](#), <https://tricycle.org/magazine/what-bodhisattva>.

<sup>2</sup> See the Vows explained here: <https://tricycle.org/magazine/bodhisattva-vows>.