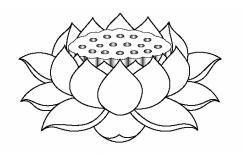
THE PLATFORM SUTRA OF THE SIXTH PATRIARCH HUI NENG CHAPTER II PRAJNA

六祖 壇 經 般 若 品 第 二



Translated by the Chung Tai Translation Committee October 2009 From the Chinese by The Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng, 8th Century

The following prior English translations were used as references: "The Sixth Patriarch's Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra" by The Buddhist Text Translation Society, "The Platform Scripture" by Wing-tsit Chan, "The Sutra of Hui-Neng Grand Master of Zen" by Thomas Cleary, "The Altar Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch" by Charles Luk, "The Platform Sutra the Zen Teaching of Hui-Neng" by Red Pine, and "Sutra Spoken by the Sixth Patriarch on the High Seat of the Treasure of the Law" by Wong Mou-Lam.

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Namo Fundamental Teacher Shakyamuni Buddha 南無本師釋迦牟尼佛

(3 times) (三稱)

Sutra Opening Verse

The Dharma, infinitely profound and subtle,
Is rarely encountered even in a million kalpas.
Now we are able to hear, study, and follow it,
May we fully realize the Tathagata's true meaning.

開經偈

六祖 壇經 般若品第二

次日,韋使君請益,師陞座,告大眾曰:「總淨心念摩訶般若波羅蜜多。」復云三,傳知識!菩提般若之智,世人本自有之之,以為心迷,不能自悟,須假大善知識,只緣迷悟不同,佛性本無差別,只緣迷悟不同,所以有愚有智。吾今為說摩訶般若波羅蜜法,使汝等各得智慧。志心諦聽!吾為汝說:

善知識!世人終日口念般若,不識自性般若,猶如說食不飽。口但說空,萬劫不得見性,終無有益。善知識!摩訶般若波羅蜜是梵語,此言大智慧到彼岸。此須心行,不在口念。口念心不行,如幻如化,如露如電;口念心行,則心口相應。本性是佛,離性無別佛。

THE PLATFORM SUTRA OF THE SIXTH PATRIARCH HUI NENG CHAPTER II PRAJNA

On the following day, upon Governor Wei's request, the Master took his seat and addressed the assembly, "Let us purify our thoughts and mindfully recite *Maha-prajna-paramita*." Then he said: Noble friends, *prajna*, the wisdom of enlightenment, is inherent in all people of the world. Only because their minds are deluded, they fail to realize it themselves. Therefore, they need the guidance of great masters to see their true nature. Know that Buddha nature is no different in the wise and in the ignorant. What separates them is whether one is enlightened or deluded. I will now teach the maha-prajna-paramita so that each of you may attain wisdom. Listen attentively! I will explain it to you.

Noble friends, people speak of prajna all day, yet they do not recognize the prajna inherent in their nature. Just as talking about food cannot appease your hunger, talking about emptiness for countless kalpas will not reveal your true nature; ultimately it is of no benefit. Noble friends, maha-prajna-paramita is a Sanskrit term meaning "the great wisdom leading to the other shore." It must be practiced from the mind and not merely spoken of. Prajna, only spoken of but not practiced, is like an illusion, a mirage, a dewdrop, or lightning. By doing both, our speech and mind are in mutual accord. Our original nature is Buddha, apart from this nature there is no other Buddha.

何名摩訶?摩訶是大。心量廣大,猶如虚空,無有邊畔,亦無方圓大小,亦非青黃赤白,亦無上下長短,亦無瞋無喜,無是無非,無善無悪,無有頭尾。

諸佛剎土,盡同虚空。世人妙性本空,無有 一法可得,自性真空亦復如是。

善知識!莫聞吾說空,便即著空!第一莫著空!若空心靜坐,即著無記空。

善知識!世界虚空,能含萬物色像:日月星宿,山河大地,泉源谿澗,草木叢林,惡人善人,惡法善法,天堂地獄,一切大海,須彌諸山,總在空中。世人性空亦復如是。

善知識!自性能含萬法是大,萬法在諸人性中。若見一切人『惡之與善』,盡皆不取不捨,亦不染著,心如虚空,名之為大,故曰摩訶。

What is "maha"? Maha means great. The mind is like the great empty space of the universe; it has no boundaries. It is neither square nor round, neither great nor small, neither blue yellow, red, nor white, neither above nor below, neither long nor short, neither angry nor happy, neither right nor wrong, neither good nor evil, has neither beginning nor end.

All Buddha Lands are like empty space. Our inconceivable nature is originally empty; not a single dharma is tangible. Such is the true emptiness of our inherent nature.

Noble friends, when you hear me speak of emptiness, do not cling to it. First and foremost, you must not cling to the concept of emptiness. If you sit in meditation with a mind devoid of awareness; that is called clinging to idle emptiness.

Noble friends, the universe is empty therefore it can contain things of every color and form—the sun, moon, and stars; rivers, hills, and the plains; springs, streams, grasses, and forests; virtuous and evil people, good deeds and bad deeds, heaven and hell, all the oceans, mountain ranges, and Mount Sumeru. All these are possible because of emptiness. In the same way, our true nature is empty.

Noble friends, our inherent nature can contain myriads of things, that is 'greatness'. All things are within this nature. If we see evil or virtue in people without any grasping or rejection, without being defiled by any attachment, the mind will be like empty space. In this way, our mind is great and is therefore called 'maha'.

善知識!迷人口說,智者心行。又有迷人, 空心靜坐,百無所思,自稱為大;此一輩 人,不可與語,為邪見故。

善知識!心量廣大,遍周法界,用即了了分明,應用便知一切。一切即一,一即一切, 去來自由,心體無滯,即是般若。

善知識!一切般若智,皆從自性而生,不從外入,莫錯用意!名為真性自用。一真一切真。心量大事,不行小道。口莫終日說空,心中不修此行,恰似凡人自稱國王,終不可得,非吾弟子!

善知識!何名般若?般若者,唐言智慧也。一切處所,一切時中,念念不愚,常行智慧,即是般若行。一念愚即般若絕,一念智即般若生。世人愚迷,不見般若;口說般若,心中常愚。常自言我修般若,念念說空,不識真空。般若無形相,智慧心即是。若作如是解,即名般若智。

Noble friends, the wise cultivate the mind while the deluded merely talk about it. Then there are some who sit in meditation devoid of awareness, believing that to not think of anything is great. Because of their erroneous views, it is futile to discuss prajna with them.

Noble friends, the mind has great capacity, pervading the dharma realm; clear and perceiving all, it can understand anything wherever applied. Everything is one and one is everything. Coming and going freely, the mind is unobstructed. This is the state of prajna.

Noble friends, do not let your mind be misled! Prajna wisdom arises from our inherent nature and is not acquired externally. Prajna is the function of our true nature. When you understand this one truth, you can understand all truths. The mind is of great capacity; it does not take a narrow path. Do not just speak of emptiness all day while the mind fails to cultivate prajna. This is like an ordinary person who proclaims himself a king but can never be one. Such people are not my disciples.

Noble friends, what is "prajna"? It means wisdom. If at all times and in all places, we cultivate wisdom and every thought is free from ignorance, this is the practice of prajna. With one ignorant thought, prajna ceases; with one wise thought, prajna arises. Ordinary people are deluded and do not understand prajna. They speak of prajna but their minds remain ignorant. They always talk about emptiness and say that they practice prajna, but they do not understand the meaning of true emptiness. Prajna has neither shape nor form; it is the mind of wisdom. To have such understanding is prajna wisdom.

何名波羅蜜?此是西國語,唐言到彼岸,解義離生滅。著境生滅起,如水有波浪,即名為此岸;離境無生滅,如水常通流,即名為彼岸;故號波羅蜜。善知識!迷人口念為當念之時,有妄有非。念念若行,是名真性。怎也法者,是般若法;修此行者,是般若行。不修,即凡;一念修行,自身等佛。

善知識!凡夫即佛,煩惱即菩提。前念迷即 凡夫,後念悟即佛;前念著境即煩惱,後念 離境即菩提。

善知識!摩訶般若波羅蜜,最尊最上最第一,無住無往亦無來,三世諸佛從中出。當用大智慧,打破五蘊煩惱塵勞。如此修行, 定成佛道,變三毒為戒定慧。

善知識!我此法門,從一般若生八萬四千智慧。何以故?為世人有八萬四千塵勞,若無塵勞,智慧常現,不離自性。

What is "paramita"? It is a Sanskrit word for "reaching the other shore" which in Buddhism means to be free from birth and death. When we cling, birth and death result, like water that breaks into waves—this is called "this shore." When we are detached, birth and death cease, like water that flows freely and smoothly—this is paramita, "the other shore." Noble friends, the deluded merely recite prajna, while erroneous and deceptive [thoughts] continue to arise. When every thought is in accordance with prajna, that is our true nature. To understand this teaching is to understand prajna, to cultivate it is to apply prajna. If you do not apply it you are an ordinary person, but the moment you put prajna into practice you are equal to the buddhas.

Noble friends, the ordinary person is Buddha. Affliction is enlightenment. A deluded thought makes you an ordinary person, an enlightened thought makes you a buddha. To have a clinging thought one moment is affliction, to be free from attachment the next is enlightenment.

Noble friends, the Maha-prajna-paramita is the most noble, most exalted, and foremost. It neither stays nor comes nor goes. Buddhas of the past, present, and future all emerge from it. We should use this great wisdom to break through the burdensome afflictions of the five skandhas. Practicing this way, one will certainly attain Buddhahood, transforming the three poisons into sila (precepts), samadhi, and prajna.

Noble friends, in my teaching, this prajna gives rise to 84,000 kinds of wisdom. Why? It is because people of the world have 84,000 defilements. If you are free from defilements, wisdom constantly manifests and you will not deviate from your inherent nature.

悟此法者,即是無念、無憶、無著,不起誑妄,用自真如性,以智慧觀照,於一切法不取不捨,即是見性成佛道。

善知識!若欲入甚深法界及般若三昧者,須 修般若行,持誦《金剛般若經》,即得見 性。當知此經功德,無量無邊,經中分明讚 歎,莫能具說。此法門是最上乘,為大智人 說,為上根人說。小根小智人聞,心生不 信。何以故?

譬如天龍下雨於閻浮提,城邑聚落,悉皆漂流,如漂棗葉。若雨大海,不增不減。若雨大海,如濡棗上乘人,聞說《金剛經》,若最上乘人,聞之智;自用智若之智,故知本性自有般若之智,不從天有,相照故,不假文字。譬如雨水,不從天有,不知其能,悉皆蒙潤。百川眾流卻入大海情無情,悉皆蒙潤。百川眾流卻人大海,合為一體。眾生本性般若之智亦復如是。

When you are awakened to this teaching, there is "no thought"— you are free from recollection and attachments, and do not give rise to delusions. From your own true suchness, illuminate and observe with wisdom, neither grasp nor reject anything—this is to see your true nature and attain Buddhahood.

Noble friends, if you wish to enter the most profound realm of reality (Dharma realm) and the samadhi of prajna, you must cultivate prajna paramita, uphold and recite the Diamond Sutra, then you will realize your true nature. You should know that the benefits of this sutra as clearly extolled in the text itself are boundless and immeasurable and cannot be fully conveyed in words. This is a teaching of the Supreme Vehicle and is spoken for the benefit of the very wise and those with superior faculties. When those with lesser faculties and little wisdom hear it, their minds give rise to doubts. Why?

Just as when the celestial dragon sends rain to Jambudvipa, the cities and villages will be flooded and drift about like leaves and twigs. But should it rain on the great ocean, the ocean water will neither increase nor decrease. When practitioners of the Great Vehicle or Supreme Vehicle hear the Diamond Sutra, their minds awaken and are open to true understanding. We therefore know that the wisdom of prajna is inherent in our nature. By always using this inherent wisdom to illuminate and observe clearly, we need not rely on words. Similarly, the rains do not originate from the sky but are brought forth from the ocean by the celestial dragon, to nourish all animates and inanimates, sentient beings, trees, and grasses. Hundreds of streams flow into the ocean and merge into one body. Such is the prajna wisdom of our intrinsic nature.

善知識!小根之人聞此頓教,猶如草木,根性小者,若被大雨,悉皆自倒,不能增長,小根之人亦復如是,元有般若之智,與大智人更無差別,因何聞法不自開悟?緣邪見障重,煩惱根深,猶如大雲覆蓋於日,不得風吹,日光不現。

般若之智亦無大小,為一切眾生自心迷悟不同。迷心外見,修行覓佛,未悟自性,即是小根。若開悟頓教,不執外修,但於自心常 起正見,煩惱塵勞常不能染,即是見性。

善知識!內外不住,去來自由,能除執心, 通達無礙。能修此行,與般若經本無差別。

善知識!一切修多羅及諸文字,大小二乘, 十二部經,皆因人置,因智慧性,方能建 立。若無世人,一切萬法本自不有。故知萬 法本自人興,一切經書因人說有。 Noble friends, people of lesser faculties who hear this teaching of Sudden Enlightenment are like plants with shallow roots; overwhelmed by heavy rains, their growth is stunted. The fundamental prajna wisdom in people of lesser faculties is no different from those who have great wisdom. Why are they not awakened when they hear the Dharma? It is because their mistaken views are hardened and their afflictions are deeply rooted. It is like dense clouds that obscure the sun; without winds to clear them away, the sunlight cannot shine through.

Likewise, prajna wisdom is neither great nor small. What makes the difference is whether one's mind is deluded or enlightened. Those with deluded views seeking Buddhahood outside of their minds do not realize their inherent nature; these are people of lesser faculties. Those who realize this teaching of Sudden Enlightenment do not cling to external practices. When the right view arises in their minds at all times, defilements and afflictions can never contaminate them. This is to see one's true nature.

Noble friends, abiding neither within nor without, coming and going freely, clearing the mind of attachments with thorough and unimpeded comprehension – being able to cultivate this way, one is in complete accord with the Prajna Sutra.

Noble friends, all the sutras and writings of the Greater and Lesser Vehicles, the twelve divisions of the Buddhist Canon, were established for the people. These teachings were possible because of the nature of people's wisdom. If it weren't for the people in the world, no dharma would exist. Therefore, we know that all dharmas originate from human beings and all sutras were spoken because of people's needs.

緣其人中有愚有智,愚為小人,智為大人。 愚者問於智人,智者與愚人說法。愚人忽然 悟解心開,即與智人無別。

善知識!不悟,即佛是眾生;一念悟時,眾生是佛。故知萬法盡在自心,何不從自心中頓見真如本性?《菩薩戒經》云:『我本元自性清淨,若識自心見性,皆成佛道。』《淨名經》云:『即時豁然,還得本心。』

善知識!我於忍和尚處一聞,言下便悟,頓 見真如本性。是以將此教法流行,令學道者 頓悟菩提,各自觀心,自見本性。

若自不悟,須覓大善知識,解最上乘法者, 直示正路。是善知識有大因緣,所謂化導令 得見性,一切善法因善知識能發起故。 Yet, some people are wise and some are ignorant. The ignorant are considered inferior and the wise superior. When the ignorant question the wise, the wise teach them the Dharma. When the ignorant suddenly awaken and are open to true understanding, they will be no different than the wise.

Noble friends, without enlightenment, buddhas are just sentient beings; the moment the mind is enlightened, sentient beings are buddhas. Therefore you should know that all dharmas are intrinsic to the mind. Why not immediately realize in your own mind the intrinsic nature of suchness? The Bodhisattva Sila Sutra says, "Our inherent nature is originally pure. If you realize your mind and see its true nature, you will attain Buddhahood." The Vimalakirti Sutra says, "Suddenly, seeing everything clearly, you return to your original mind."

Noble friends, when the Fifth Patriarch spoke to me in his quarters, I immediately attained enlightenment, realizing the true nature of suchness. Therefore, I pass down this teaching so that cultivators can attain sudden enlightenment. By contemplating their own mind, everyone can realize their intrinsic nature.

Should you fail to enlighten yourself, you must seek out great masters who understand this supreme doctrine; they can directly show you the right path. These masters are here for a great cause, that is, they will guide you toward the realization of your true nature; all wholesome dharmas arise because of them.

三世諸佛,十二部經,在人性中本自具有, 不能自悟,須求善知識指示方見。若自悟 者,不假外求;若一向執,謂須他善知識 得解脫者,無有是處。何以故?自心內有 識自悟。若起邪迷,妄念顛倒,外善知識 有教授,救不可得。若起正真般若觀照, 利那間,妄念俱滅;若識自性,一悟即至佛 地。

善知識!智慧觀照,內外明徹,識自本心。若識本心,即本解脫。若得解脫,即是無念。何名無念?若見一切法,即是無念。用即遍一切處,是為無念。用即遍出六門,於是一切處;但淨本心,使六識出六門,即之塵中無染無雜,來去自由,通用無滯,即是整若三昧,自在解脫,名無念行。若百物不思,當令念絕,即是法縛,即名邊見。

Buddhas of the past, present, and future and the twelve divisions of the Canon are fully present in our nature. If you cannot enlighten yourselves, you should seek out masters for guidance; if you can, you do not need to seek externally. Moreover, it is wrong to rely solely on a master for liberation. Why? Because the mind has a master within, it can enlighten itself. If you give in to erroneous, deluded, and distorted thoughts, even a great master's teaching would be futile. If you give rise to genuine prajna contemplation, in an instant all deluded thoughts will cease; if you realize your inherent nature, you awaken and you arrive at the stage of a buddha.

Noble friends, by observing and contemplating with wisdom, which illuminates within and without, we realize our original mind. Realization of the original mind is true liberation. To attain liberation is to attain prajna samadhi. Prajna samadhi is "no thought." What is "no thought"? To understand and perceive all dharmas, with a mind free from attachment and defilement, that is "no thought." When in use, this mind pervades everywhere, yet it does not cling to anything. We only have to purify our mind so that the six consciousnesses exit the six gates (senses) without being contaminated or defiled by the six dusts (sense objects). Coming and going freely, the mind functions without hindrances, that is prajna samadhi; that is to be free and liberated. That is the practice of "no thought." But if we suppress all thoughts and do not think of anything, that is Dharma bondage and is an extreme view.

善知識!悟無念法者,萬法盡通;悟無念法者,見諸佛境界;悟無念法者,至佛地位。

善知識!後代得吾法者,將此頓教法門,於同見同行,發願受持,如事佛故,終身而不退,定入聖位。然須傳授從上來默傳分付,不得匿其正法。若不同見同行,在別法中,不得傳付,損彼前人,究竟無益。恐愚人不解,謗此法門,百劫千生,斷佛種性。

善知識!吾有一無相頌,各須誦取,在家出家,但依此修。若不自修,惟記吾言,亦無有益。聽吾頌曰:

說通及心通,如日處虚空。 唯傳見性法。出世破邪宗。 法即無頓漸,迷悟有遲疾。 Noble friends, those who realize the doctrine of "no thought" thoroughly understand all dharmas; those who realize the doctrine of "no thought" perceive the realm of the buddhas; those who realize the doctrine of "no thought" attain Buddhahood.

Noble friends, future generations who grasp my doctrine, vow to uphold this teaching of the Sudden Enlightenment with others of the same view, cultivate together as if they were serving the Buddha, never regress, will surely attain the state of the saints. Without obscuring its true meaning, you should transmit this teaching which was passed down by the patriarchs independent of words and speech. To those who do not share the same view or practice, or hold other beliefs, the Dharma should not be taught, as this will bring no benefit and may even bring harm. This is because the ignorant may misunderstand this doctrine and slander it, which will hinder the seed of their Buddha nature for a thousand lifetimes or many kalpas.

Noble friends, I have a Verse of the Formless which all of you, layperson or monastic, should recite and practice accordingly. Merely memorizing my words without putting them into practice will be of no benefit. Now listen to my verse:

One who has mastery of the mind
And mastery in teaching the Dharma
Is like the sun shining in the sky;
Through teaching how to see one's nature
Such one emerges to abolish all false doctrines.
The Dharma is not inherently sudden or gradual;
Yet according to each person's delusion,
Enlightenment may come swiftly or slowly.

只此見性門,愚人不可悉。 說即雖萬般,合理還歸一。 煩惱暗宅中,常須生慧日。 邪來煩惱至,正來煩惱除。 邪正俱不用,清淨至無餘。 菩提本自性,起心即是妄。 淨心在妄中,但正無三障。 世人若修道,一切盡不妨。 常自見已過,與道即相當。 色類自有道,各不相妨惱。 離道別覓道,終身不見道。 波波度一生,到頭還自懊。 欲得見真道,行正即是道。 自若無道心,闇行不見道。 若真修道人,不見世間過。 若見他人非,自非卻是左。 This way of seeing into one's nature

Is beyond the comprehension of the ignorant.

Though it may be explained in ten thousand ways,

All return to one principle.

In the dark abode of afflictions,

Always bring forth the sun of wisdom.

False views give rise to afflictions,

Right views eliminate them.

When we discard both views,

Purity is absolute.

Bodhi is our inherent nature;

Giving rise to any thought is delusion.

The pure mind resides within delusion;

With right views, the three obstructions do not exist.

Nothing can hinder

Those who truly cultivate the Way.

Always reflect on your own faults

To be in accord with the Way.

All things in nature possess the Way;

They do not impede each other.

If you part from the Way and seek it elsewhere,

You will never find it.

Striving futilely all your life,

There is only remorse at the end.

To see the true Way,

Engage in the right practice.

Without the bodhi mind,

Walking in darkness, you are blind to the Way.

True cultivators of the Way

Seek not the faults of others.

If we find faults in others,

We ourselves are at fault.

他非我不非,我非自有過。 但自卻非心,打除煩惱破。 憎愛不關心,長伸兩腳臥。 欲擬化他人,自須有方便。 勿令彼有疑,即是自性現。 佛法在世間,不離世間覺; 離世覓菩提,恰如求兔角。 正見名出世, 邪見是世間; 邪正盡打卻,菩提性宛然。 此頌是頓教,亦名大法船。 迷聞經累劫,悟則剎那間。」

師復曰:「今於大梵寺說此頓教,普願法界 眾生言下見性成佛。」時韋使君與官僚道俗 聞師所說,無不省悟。一時作禮,皆歎: 「善哉!何期嶺南有佛出世!」 Do not condemn others for their faults,

Focus instead on your own wrongs.

Eliminate the fault-seeking mind

To shatter all afflictions.

Unconcerned with love and hate,

We sleep at ease with legs stretched out.

Employ expedient means

If you want to liberate beings.

Free others from their doubts,

And their inherent nature will manifest.

The Buddha Dharma exists for the world,

Apart from this world, there is no enlightenment.

To seek bodhi elsewhere,

Is as futile as looking for horns on a rabbit.

To have right views is to transcend the mundane world,

To have false views is to be in the mundane world.

Relinquish all right and false views,

Bodhi nature will manifest itself.

This verse is the teaching of Sudden Enlightenment,

Also called the great Dharma Ship.

Delusion lasts countless kalpas,

Enlightenment takes but an instant.

The Patriarch then said: "Now in this Da Fan Temple, I have delivered the teaching of Sudden Enlightenment. I hope that all sentient beings in the dharma realm who hear this will instantly see their true nature and attain Buddhahood. " At that time, after listening to the Patriarch's words, Governor Wei, officials and their subordinates, cultivators of the Way, and laypersons all attained some realization. They made obeisance and acclaimed: "This is wonderful! Who would have expected that a buddha would appear in Lingnan (South of the Five Ridges)?"

THREE REFUGES

三皈依

I take refuge in the Buddha, may all sentient beings Understand the Great Way profoundly, and bring forth the bodhi mind.

I take refuge in the Dharma, may all sentient beings Deeply enter the sutra treasury, and have wisdom vast as the sea.

I take refuge in the Sangha, may all sentient beings Form together a great assembly, one and all in harmony.

自皈依佛 當願眾生 體解大道 發無上心自皈依法 當願眾生 深入經藏 智慧如海自皈依僧 當願眾生 統理大眾 一切無礙和南聖眾

FOUR GREAT VOWS

四弘誓願

Countless are sentient beings, I vow to liberate; Endless are afflictions, I vow to eradicate; Measureless are the Dharmas, I vow to master; Supreme is the Buddha Way, I vow to attain.

眾生無邊誓願度 煩惱無盡誓願斷 法門無量誓願學 佛道無上誓願成

REPENTANCE

懺悔偈

All the harm I have ever done, since time immemorial, Are caused by greed, anger, and ignorance, And produced through my body, speech, and will, Now I confess and amend all.

往昔所造諸惡業 皆由無始貪瞋痴從身語意之所生 一切罪障皆懺悔

DEDICATION OF MERITS

回向偈

May the merits of our deeds Reach every part of the world; Sentient beings large and small All attain enlightenment. Maha-Prajna-Paramita

願以此功德 普及於一切 我等與眾生 皆共成佛道 摩訶般若波羅蜜

