

When Avalokitesvara, the bodhisattva who embodies compassion (also called Kwan Yin in Chinese or Kannon in Japanese), practiced the deepest intuitive wisdom he found that all five aggregates were empty and got over all suffering and distress. The five aggregates are form, feeling, perceptions, impulses to action, and consciousness. When you really get this, that's prajña (wisdom) itself. When you understand this, then "form is emptiness, emptiness is form." Furthermore form is form, and emptiness is emptiness. Every concrete thing is like that. Prajña is also the twelve classes of perception, which are the six sense organs and their objects.\* There are eighteen kinds of prajña in the form of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body/ skin mind; the prajñas of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, objects of mind; and the prajñas of the consciousness of these six. Prajña is also the Four Noble Truths Buddha spoke of in his very first sermon, which are suffering, accumulation (or craving), dissolution (or freedom from suffering and craving), and the path that leads to dissolution. There are also the six kinds of prajña, which include generosity or free giving, observance of the moral precepts, patience, perseverance, meditation, and prajña itself. Prajña also includes insight into the nature of the present moment. Plus there are the three kinds of prajña realized as past, present, and future. Prajña is also the six elements of earth, water, fire, wind, space, and consciousness. Prajña is the four classes of action, namely, walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. There's an old Chinese story that relates to this. A Buddhist monk vows to worship the profound pinnacle of prajña wisdom. The monk then rattles off all the various things that prajña is supposed to include, saying that each one of these things individually can be grasped. The Buddha hears him saying this and says, "That's right! The profound prajña wisdom is tricky and hard to understand." Nothing appears or disappears. This is what we as Buddhists worship. This is reality itself. At the moment of true worship all the various explanations of prajña can be understood. This prajña is called "emptiness." Here's another story. The Hindu god Indra asks the monk Subhuti how a bodhisattva should study the most profound prajña. Subhuti says they should study it as empty space. This means that "studying prajña" and "empty space" are the same thing. Then Indra turns to the Buddha and asks him how good men and women

who receive, recite, and proclaim about this highest prajña should guard it. Subhuti jumps back in here and asks Indra if he can see this thing he's asking about guarding. Indra says he can't. Subhuti says that when good men and women dwell in this profound wisdom they are guarding it. Even if every human and every nonhuman being tried to harm them, Subhuti says it would be impossible. So guarding those who dwell in prajña is like guarding empty space. My teacher Tendo Nyojo wrote a poem that goes:

The whole body's like a mouth hanging in space  
Not asking where the wind blows it's ringy thing  
It announces prajña all over the place  
Ring-a-ling, ding-a-ling, ching-a-ling, dingy-ding!

This ringing of prajña is the whole body, the whole self, and the whole wide world. The Buddha said that the Buddhas and honored ones are identical to the highest prajña wisdom, and vice versa, because they have totally relied on prajña to come into being, and because all virtuous conduct and physical/ mental states realized in zazen rely on prajña wisdom in order to come into being.

All these manifestations of prajña are emptiness and don't appear or disappear, aren't tainted or pure, and don't increase or decrease. The realization of prajña is the realization of the Buddhas and honored ones. To serve and revere prajña is the same as serving and revering the Buddhas and honored ones. — First preached during the summer retreat of 1233 and then copied on March 21, 1244

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