

Thunderous Silence: A Formula for Ending Suffering

Dosung Yoo

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The vital Buddhist *Heart Sutra* is a slight two-page text, but it somehow encapsulates a vast storehouse of wisdom and guidance. Despite its brevity, the principles have proven to be impenetrable to many. In an accessible and charming exploration, Dosung Yoo seeks to take readers to the heart of this teaching.

Reverend Dosung Yoo was ordained in the Won Buddhist Order in Korea after changing his path from Christianity. In this simple, revealing, yet still comprehensive analysis of the *Heart Sutra*, Reverend Yoo effectively draws analogies with a vast range of other learning—everything from Dickens to quantum physics, with fascinating digressions concerning Korean folklore along the way. In doing so, he builds on an extensive array of source works in both Korean and English.

Exploring the Buddhist philosophy on life could perhaps be summed up in the simple phrase, “know thyself.” To do so, the Buddha taught that we should quiet our restlessly questing minds and set aside distractions of status, money, and recognition to find what has always been within—a clear, calm, contemplative state where we won’t just strive for happiness, think about the nature of happiness, and strategize relentlessly to “get happy,” but will at last make peace with ourselves and simply “be” happy.

This volume is approachable and welcoming to the curious newcomer to Buddhism while offering advanced practitioners extensive knowledge and much reflection with which they can further refine their practices—and their lives. It seems the needle is not to be found in the haystack, or anywhere else on the farm for that matter, but within the soul and mind of every individual, from the farm laborer to the lord of the manor. It’s our perceptions that dictate the nature and quality of events—not the events themselves. Our five senses can convey information to us through seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and listening, but it is our consciousness that builds the narrative—and this dictates what really happens. Readers of all faiths and traditions (and of none) will find much to consider and reflect upon in this clear, evocative, and ultimately hopeful book. Irrespective of our past experiences, circumstances, or the condition of our bodies, Yoo offers a chance to end suffering. In doing so, he assumes no foreknowledge of the *Heart Sutra* or of Buddhism, yet he somehow never descends into 101-style lectures or simplistic discourse.

SEAMUS MULLARKEY (Winter 2013)

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