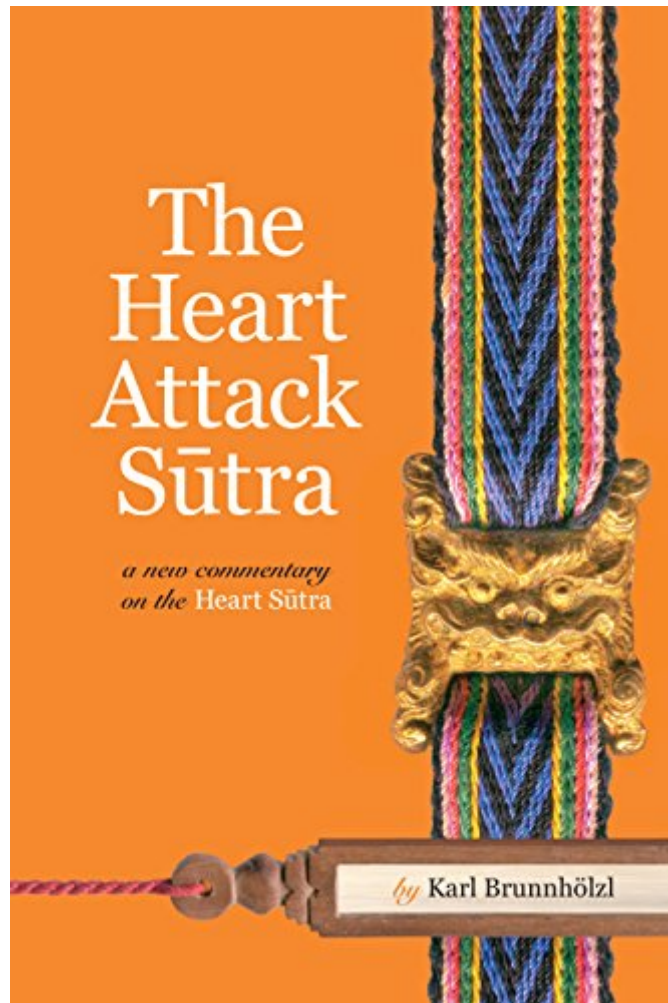




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The Heart Attack Sutra: A New Commentary On The Heart Sutra



Synopsis

The radical message of the Heart Sāstra, one of Buddhism's most famous texts, is a sweeping attack on everything we hold most dear: our troubles, the world as we know it, even the teachings of the Buddha himself. Several of the Buddha's followers are said to have suffered heart attacks and died when they first heard its assertion of the basic groundlessness of our existence—hence the title of this book. Overcoming fear, the Buddha teaches, is not to be accomplished by shutting down or building walls around oneself, but instead by opening up to understand the illusory nature of everything we fear—including ourselves. In this book of teachings, Karl Brunnhölzl guides practitioners through this 'crazy' sutra to the wisdom and compassion that lie at its core.

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Customer Reviews

Who knew the Heart Sutra would be so much fun to explore? The examples used in this book were easy to work with, like how the author talked in depth about how we misinterpret the word 'empty' and all the connotations we put on it, like 'empty wallet'. He did not dumb down this compact sutra,

but rather he elevated the way I think about it. I've loaned out my copy to a friend, and am thinking of buying another for my own reference in case I don't get it back. It is well worth reading, and more than once. I am delighted to find an explanation of the Heart Sutra that is both meaty and manageable.

When seeing this book, one might perhaps have two mistaken ideas. One is saying: "Why another commentary on the Heart Sutra? Aren't there many already?" Another mistaken thought could be: "The books by Khenpo Karl BrunnhÃfÃ¶llz are too technical, too difficult; this is not for me." When you open the Heart Attack Sutra book, you will find for yourself that both of these expectations are false. The author chose a masterful balance in writing this commentary. On one hand, it is lively, experiential, humorous, and full of practical instructions on how to engage the Heart Sutra as a contemplative manual: how to take the words of the sutra to one's heart on the meditation cushion and how to use the message the ancient sutra conveys in everyday life in today's world. The essence of this approach is captured in this quote from p. 142: "The Heart Sutra is not primarily about all phenomena (be they skandhas or the four noble truths) as objects, but it is always pointing back to our mind as the subject and how it deals with all these objects. How do we deal with our eyes, our ears, our nose, our tongue, and our body? How do we deal with our sense perceptions? How do we deal with our suffering? How do we deal with the causes of suffering? How do we deal with our path?" On the other hand, this is no dharma-lite booklet for bedtime reading. Khenpo Karl brings into his narrative the vast knowledge of the PrajÃfÃ¶ aparamita sutras commentarial tradition, skillfully quoting definitions, classifications, etymologies and meanings of the technical terms quoted in or associated with the sutra, accompanied by present-day examples elucidating the meaning. The author based his Heart Sutra commentary on the Indian commentaries, selected Tibetan commentaries as well as Chinese and contemporary Western commentaries and he refers to them throughout. He is also relying on his extensive study of the commentaries on both explicit and hidden meaning of PrajÃfÃ¶ aparamita as evidenced by his voluminous publications of Center of the Sunlit Sky, Gone Beyond I & II and Groundless Paths. As for the content, the book consists of the meaning commentary in the Introduction followed by the word commentary going through each passage. Khenpo Karl comments on a word or a sentence of the sutra from the technical point of view and then illustrates how this passage can be readily used for contemplation, for practice, for spiritual transformation. Finally, the book also includes an instruction on the practice of the PrajÃfÃ¶ aparamitahridaya Sadhana by Mahasiddha Darika. Even though this sadhana has been translated and commented upon elsewhere (Elaborations on Emptiness, Donald Lopez), without

Khenpo Karl's clear practice instructions, it is difficult if not impossible to put this lovely visualization - which is enacting the story of the Heart Sutra, very much like a theatre play - into practice. In sum, when enjoying such balance between precision and readability, a miracle of a sort happens: while reading this book, you are drawn into the narrative as if wanting to finish it in one sitting - like a detective story with a humorous undertone - and at the same time you are being served the dharma without compromise, gems of traditional scholarship, which in other contexts would put most people to sleep. But here both approaches not only can coexist side by side, but are even enhancing each other, feeding the fire of prajñā arising from such delightful reading. And so one can rightfully ask a question: Isn't the Heart Attack Sutra book an evidence of the genuine western Buddhism actually taking root, where the western approach to narration is employed without compromising on the precision of the traditional discourse? It is, for me. For that reason this is not yet another, redundant commentary, this is a unique masterpiece and is worth reading for all who aspire to be followers of the genuine tradition of the Heart Sutra. This Heart Attack Sutra is truly the attack for the ego's heart and therefore it is a delight for the heart aspiring for freedom.

Life changing book, because it changes your view of "reality." It delves into the heart sutra, and explains "emptiness". It was recommended by Pema Chodron, otherwise I never would have chosen it bc of the odd title.

It was just what I needed for the class I am taking.

If you are a student of Buddhism, who is on the path this is an important book to have. Mr. Brunnhoiz takes a very complex concept in Buddhism and allow individuals to understand and work with them

This is a great book, but beware that it unravels a lot of the thread of conventional Buddhist practice. This book focuses on what matters the most-- emptiness, and how to understand what it truly is. This book is small, but it packs a punch and will give you years of things to think about. If you need the courage to make a big decision in your life, this may help give you additional perspective to make the best choice. This is a powerful book.

EXCELLENT read about the Heart Sutra, looking into every possible aspect of this traditional chant of the Buddhist practitioner. Nirvana is already here.

This is a wonderful book. I feel fortunate to be reading it. This is the best introduction to prajnaparamita that I'm aware of in print. It summarizes and provides context for the expanse of prajnaparamita literature (sutras and commentaries). It positions the Heart Sutra as an entryway into the world of prajnaparamita worship and thought. This small book also makes Karl Brunnholz's "Gone Beyond" books more accessible. Well done! Thank you!

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