

Nyogen's Gate Gate

F (D) Dm (Bm) Bb (G) F (D) Bb (G) F (D) Bb (G) C (A)

Ga- te Ga- - te pa- ra - Ga- - -te Pa- ra - Sam- ga- te Bo- dhi so- ha - -

Words traditional Buddhist from the Heart Sutra
 Music & Dance Wali & Ariënne van der Zwan
 Chords in brackets are for guitar with capo on III

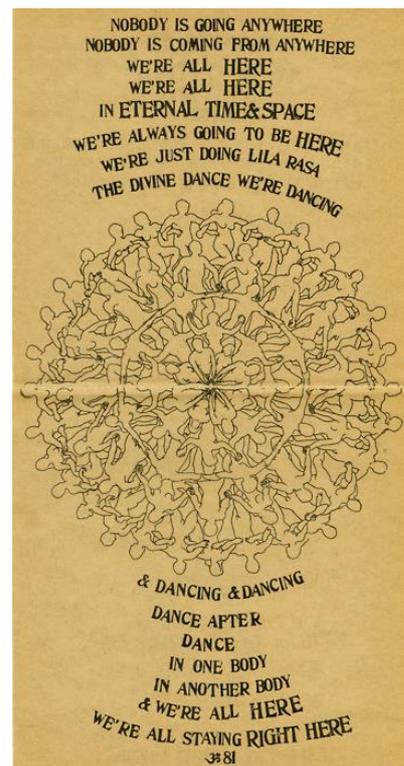
Gate Gate *Going, going*
Paragate *Going beyond the going*
Parasamgate *Going beyond the beyond*
Bodhi Soha *Into enlightenment. So be it.*

The Heart Sutra

The words of this chant come from the Prajnaparamita Heart Sutra, one of the best known Sutras in the Buddhist tradition. It is seen as the essence of Buddhism, which according to Thich Nhat Hanh is 'a clever way to enjoy life'.

In the new translation of Thich Nhat Hanh, which he completed and commented upon in September 2014, short before his stroke, the Heart Sutra. Both translation and commentary can be found on <http://plumvillage.org/news/thich-nhat-hanh-new-heart-sutra-translation/>.

In his commentary, Thay (as his students call him) goes deeper into the meaning of the most famous part of the Heart Sutra, namely form is emptiness, emptiness is form. Highly relevant for students on the spiritual path and bringing the Heart Sutra from mere theory to the earth level of experience (in short: Thay speaks about NO THING instead of NOTHING, leaving space for a higher energy, usually called GOD, to fill the void), but outside the scope of this dance.



Therefore Sariputra, it should be known that the Insight that Brings Us to the Other Shore is a Great Mantra, the most illuminating mantra, the highest mantra, a mantra beyond compare, the True Wisdom that has the power to put an end to all kinds of suffering. Therefore let us proclaim a mantra to praise

the Insight that Brings Us to the Other Shore.

Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha!
Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha!
Gate, Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha!

In his earlier book on the Heart Sutra (The Heart of Understanding, 1988), Thay interprets the SAM in SAMGATE as referring to everybody, the sangha, all beings, thus expressing the bodhisattva ideal. See the dance description of the 'Bodhisattva Ideal' and the 'Invocation Bismillah' for more on this.

Murshid SAM thought the Heart Sutra so important that he asked his students to learn it by heart. He himself learned a walking meditation with arm movements for the Gate Gate from his Buddhist Zen teacher Nyogen Senzaki (1876–1958). This walking meditation, which we learned through Murshid SAM's original student Wali Ali Meyer and through Saadi Neil Douglas-Klotz & Kamae Amrapali Miller, forms the basis of the movements to the mantra.

As four different melodies are given, this can also be done as a chant. We usually don't teach all melodies for the dance, but simply invite people to use the counter melodies or find their own ones.

Movements

As said, the movements go back to Nyogen Senzaki, Murshid SAM's Zen teacher. As such, we hope they may convey some of the *baraka* of our ancestors.

As this is a partner dance, first define partners.

The partner part can be called out at leader's discretion, after which the leader can either go back to part I or ask the group to do the movements to the center, coming nearer to the center at each repetition.

1. Gate Gate
2. Paragate
3. Para Sam Gathe
4. Bodhi Soha

Part I (no partners)

1. Stand in line of direction (clockwise). Step L of GA-, R on -TE, fingertips on the heart on GA- and opening slowly outward from the heart on -TE. Repeat for the second GATE.
2. Turn anticlockwise, keeping the same rhythm with the feet and opening the arms, starting with fingertips on the heart as in 1, now opening more fully.
3. Face center and describe wide halo, again starting the movement with fingertips on the heart.
4. Bow to the center in Namaste and come up again, in time to turn to line of direction for repeating 1 – 4.

Part II (with partners)

1. Face partner, standing on place. Same arm movements as 1. above.

2. Make a half turn clockwise with partner, same hand movements as 2. above.
3. Stand facing partner, movements as in 3. above.
4. Bow to partner with Namaste and come up on the first four counts.
Make a half turn through the center, keeping hands in Namaste, towards new partner on the last four counts.