



**The Diamond Perfection of
Wisdom Sutra**
Also Known as
The "Diamond Sutra"
The "Diamond Cutter Sutra" and
"Vajracchedika-prajna-paramita Sutra"

**This is the text for the CD
“The Diamond Sutra Sung in English”
by Sharon Kumuda Janis**

Available on Audible.com and iTunes

**Compiled translation
by Sharon “Kumuda” Janis**

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1. CONVOCATION OF THE ASSEMBLY

Thus have I heard.

Once upon a time, the Buddha was staying in the monastery in Anatha-pindika's park in the Jeta Grove near Shravasti with a community of twelve hundred and fifty monks.

Near dawn, Buddha clothed himself, took up His bowl, and entered the great city of Shravasti to beg for His food. After going from house to house, He and the monks returned to the monastery to eat the midday meal.

After finishing, Buddha put away His robe and begging bowl, washed His feet, arranged His seat, and sat down.

2. SUBHUTI MAKES A REQUEST

In the midst of the assembly, the venerable Subhuti rose from his seat, uncovered his right shoulder, knelt upon his right knee, and folding his palms respectfully, bowed to the Buddha, saying:

Tathagata! World Honored One!

How wonderful and rare it is that by your compassion we are protected and instructed! You always support and show special confidence in the bodhisattvas.

O World Honoured One, when virtuous men and women want to give rise to the mind of enlightenment, how should their minds abide and what should they do to master their thinking?

The Buddha said: Very good, Subhuti! As you say, the Tathagata protects, cherishes and instructs Bodhisattvas so well.

Now listen attentively and take my words to heart as I tell you how the minds of virtuous men and women, seeking Incomparable Enlightenment, should abide, and how they should subdue their thoughts.

The Venerable Subhuti said, Lord, we are so happy to hear your teachings.

3. THE BODHISATTVA'S VOW

The Buddha said: Subhuti, all Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas should consider this:

All living beings, whether born from the womb or hatched from an egg, whether they transform like butterflies or arise miraculously, whether they have a body or are formless, with or without form, whether capable of profound thoughts, or of no thoughts at all, each of these I vow to lead to Nirvana for their liberation from reincarnation. Yet when this innumerable, immeasurable, infinite number of living beings has become liberated, it is the truth that not a single living being has been liberated.

Why is this so?

***In reality there is no I who liberates,
and no other who is liberated.***

***If a Bodhisattva holds on to the
notion that a self, a person, a being,
or a life exists, that person is not a
true Bodhisattva!***

4. HOW A BODHISATTVA PRACTICES CHARITY

When a Bodhisattva practices charity, his or her mind should not abide anywhere. A Bodhisattva should practice virtue without abiding in appearances, unmoved by sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, or things. A Bodhisattva should offer help without abiding in false notions of form.

Why?

If a Bodhisattva practices generosity without abiding in form, his merit will be inconceivable and immeasurable.

Subhuti, what do you think? The space in the easterly direction is immeasurable, is it not?

You are right, World Honoured One, it is not measurable.

***Subhuti, can space in the Western,
Southern, and Northern Quarters,
above and below, be measured?***

No, World Honoured One!

***When a Bodhisattva practises
generosity without a mind abiding in
form, then the merit resulting from
that virtuous act is as great and
immeasurable as space.***

***Subhuti, the Bodhisattva should thus
abide as taught.***

5. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF TATHAGATA

Subhuti, what do you think? Can the Tathagata be recognized by how his body looks?

No, Buddha, the Tathagata cannot be recognized by how he looks.

Why? Because when the Tathagata speaks of the form of his body, it is not real form.

The Buddha said to Subhuti:

Everything with form is unreal; if all forms are seen as unreal, the Tathagata will be perceived.

6. THE FUTURE OF THESE TEACHINGS

The Venerable Subhuti then asked Buddha: World Honoured One, in times to come, will there be sentient beings who are able, upon hearing these words and sentences, to believe them?

The Buddha said: Subhuti, do not utter such words! Five hundred lifetimes after I have passed away, there will be people who observe moral discipline and cultivate merit. When such people hear these words, they will have faith and confidence that these words embody the truth.

You should know that these Bodhisattvas have sown seeds not only during the lifetime of one Buddha, or even two, three, four, or five Buddhas, but have, in truth, planted these seeds during the lifetimes of tens of thousands of Buddhas.

Such Bodhisattvas, coming to hear these teachings, will have an immediate arising of a single thought of pure faith.

Subhuti, the Tathagata, who knows and sees all, will recognize them, and these living beings will thus acquire immeasurable merits.

Why? Because they have wiped out false notions of a self, a person, a being and a life, and of Dharma and not-Dharma.

If their minds grasp at form, they will still cling to the notion of a self, a person, a being and a life.

And, if their minds grasp the Dharma, they will still cling to the notion of a self, a person, a being, and a life.

And, if their minds grasp what is not the Dharma, they will also cling to the notion of a self, a person, a being, and a life. Therefore, one should not grasp onto the Dharma or that which is not the Dharma.

This is the hidden meaning when the Tathagata says, "Monks, those who know that the teachings about dharma are like a raft, should cast aside the dharma, and so how much more, cast aside that which is not dharma."

7. NO ATTAINMENT, NO TEACHING

What do you think, Subhuti? Has the Tathagata attained peerless, perfect enlightenment? And does he have a teaching that he expounds?

Subhuti replied: As I understand the meaning of the Buddha's teaching, there is no Dharma called supreme enlightenment.

And there is also no set teaching that the Tathagata can expound.

Why? Because the Tathagata has said that the Dharma is inconceivable and inexpressible. It neither Dharma nor is it not the Dharma.

Why is this?

Because advanced practioners differ in their accounts of the eternalist dharma.

8. REAL MERIT HAS NO MERIT

"What do you think, Subhuti," Buddha asked, "if someone filled a thousand million worlds with the seven treasures and gave them away in charity, would his merit be great?"

Subhuti replied: Yes, World-Honored One. It is because the nature of merit is not merit that the Tathágata is able to speak about merit.

Then Buddha said, If someone understands and passes on even four lines of this sutra to another, his merit is even greater than that of the giver of treasure.

Why? Subhuti, all of the buddhas and all of their teachings of supreme enlightenment spring forth from this sutra. But Subhuti, that which are called the Buddhas and the Buddha dharma are not real Buddhas and dharmas.

9. THE FOUR LESSER VEHICLE REALIZATIONS

Subhuti, what do you think? Can a srota-apanna, one who has entered the stream, have this thought in his mind: I have obtained the fruit of entering the stream?

Subhuti replied: No, World Honoured One. Why? Because srota-apanna means entering the stream, but actually there is no stream to be entered. There is no entry into either form, sound, smell, taste, touch or dharma. Therefore, he is called srota-apanna.

Subhuti, what do you think? Can a Sakrdaa-gaamin, one who is subject to only one more rebirth say to himself, I have obtained the fruit of a Sakrdaa-gaamin?

Subhuti replied: No, World Honoured One. Why? Because Sakrdaa-gaamin means once more to come, but actually there is neither coming nor going. Therefore, he is called a Sakrdaa-gaamin.

Subhuti, what do you think? Does a Venerable One who is Anaa-gaamin, one who will never more be reborn as a mortal, say to himself, I have attained the realization of an Anaa-gaamin?

Subhuti replied: No, World Honoured One. Why? Because Anaa-gaamin means non-returning, but there is, in fact, no such thing as returning or non-returning. Therefore, he is called an Anaa-gaamin.

Subhuti, what do you think? Does an Arhat say within himself, I have obtained the perfect enlightenment of an Arhat?

Subhuti replied: No, World Honoured One. Why? Because there is no Dharma which is called Arhatship. . World Honoured One, if an Arhat thinks "I have obtained the enlightenment of an Arhat," he will still grasp and hold on to the notion of an ego, a personality, a being and a life.

World Honored One, you have said that I am the most proficient in terms of the attainment of the passionless samadhi, and that I am the arhat most free from the desire. But I do not give rise to the thought that I am an arhat who is free from desire. World Honored One, if I were to give rise to the thought that I have attained the level of the arhat, then you would not have said of me that I enjoy the practice of forest-dwelling, since there is in actuality nothing for me to practice. Therefore I am called Subhuti, the one who enjoys the practice of forest-dwelling.

10. AROUSING THE PURE ASPIRATION WITHOUT ABIDING

The Buddha said to Subhuti: What do you think? In ancient times, when the Tathagata practiced under Dipamkara Buddha, did he gain any attainment in the Dharma?

No, World Honoured One. In ancient times, when the Tathagata was practiced under Buddha Dipamkara, He did not attain anything.

What do you think, Subhuti? Does a bodhisattva create sublime Buddha-lands?

No, he does not, World-Honored One. Why? Sublime Buddha-lands are not sublime. Therefore they are called sublime.

Subhuti, this is why all Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas should thus develop a pure and clean mind which should not abide in form, sound, smell, taste, touch and dharma. They should develop a mind which does not abide in anything.

Subhuti, it is like if there were a person with a body as large as Mt. Sumeru. What do you think? Would this body not be great?

Subhuti replied: Very great, World Honoured One. Why? Because the Buddha says it is not the real body but is (merely) called a great body.

11. MERITS OF MEMORIZING THIS SUTRA

Subhuti, if each of the sands in the Ganges river contained its own Ganges river, would not the number of sands contained in all those Ganges rivers be great?

Subhuti replied: Very great, World Honoured One! These rivers would be innumerable; how much more so would be their sand-grains.

Subhti, now I am going to tell you a truth. If a virtuous man or woman filled three thousand galaxies with the seven jewels equal to the number of grains of sand in all those Ganges rivers and gave them away charitably, would his or her merit not be great?

Subhuti replied: Extremely great, World Honoured One!

The Buddha said to Subhuti: If a virtuous man or woman receives and memorizes even four lines of this sutra and expounds them to others, his or her merit will be even greater than this almsgiver.

Furthermore, Subhuti, any plot of land on which this sutra is proclaimed, even if only one verse of four lines, will be a land where gods, men, and asuras will come to make offerings just as they make offerings to a shrine of the Buddha. If the plot of land is regarded as that sacred, how much more so the person who practices and recites this sutra.

Subhuti, you should know that this person attains something most rare and profound. Wherever this sutra is kept is a sacred site enshrining the presence of the Buddha or one of the Buddha's great disciples.

12. NAMING OF THE SUTRA

Subhuti then asked the Buddha: World Honoured One, what name should be given to this sutra and how should we receive and hold its teachings?

The Buddha replied: This sutra should be called The Diamond Perfection of Wisdom sutra, because it has the capacity to cut through illusions and bring us to the shore of liberation. This is how you should receive and hold it. Why? Because that which the Buddha calls wisdom is not wisdom.

Subhuti, what does this mean? Does the Tathagata have a teaching to explain?

Subhuti replied, World-Honored One, The Tathágata has no teaching to explain.

Subhuti, what do you think? Are there many particles of dust contained in the universe?

Subhuti replied: Many, World Honoured One!

Subhuti, the Tathagata teaches that these particles of dust are not real, but are merely called particles of dust. are not tiny particles.. The Tathagata teaches that the universe is not real, but is merely called the universe.

Subhuti, what do you think? Can the Tathagata be discerned by means of His thirty-two physical characteristics?

No, World Honoured One, he cannot. Why? Because the thirty-two bodily characteristics that are taught by the Tathagata are in fact not real. Therefore they are called the thirty-two physical characteristics.

Subhuti, if on the one hand, a virtuous man or woman, dedicates lifetimes as numerous as the sands in the Ganges river to charitable acts, and there were another person who memorized as much as a four-line verse of this scripture and taught it to others, the merit of the latter person would be by far greater.

13. TRUE CHARACTERISTICS ARE NOT CHARACTERISTICS

Then, Subhuti, having heard this sutra, deeply understood its profound meaning, and was moved to tears. He said to the Buddha: **How rare, O World Honoured One! The Buddha has expounded such a very profound sutra.**

Since I acquired the eye of special insight, I have never heard of such a teaching.

World Honoured One, if someone after listening to this sutra believes that his mind is clean and pure, he will realise reality. We should know that such a person will achieve the highest and rarest merit.

World Honoured One, this Reality is not Reality but the Tathagata calls it Reality. World Honoured One, as I now listen to this sutra I have no difficulty in believing, understanding, receiving and holding it.

But in 500 years time, a person who hears this sutra and understands it, comprehends it, and embraces it as I do will be very rare. Why? Because he will no longer think in terms of an ego, a personality, a being and a life. Why? Notions are called buddhas. Because the forms of an ego, a personality, a being and a life are not real. Why? Because when he has rejected all forms as real he is called a Buddha.

The Buddha said: Just so! Subhuti, just so! If someone hears this sutra and is not terrified or afraid, he or she is rare. Why? Subhuti, what the Tathágata calls the greatest transcendence is not the greatest transcendence. Therefore, it is called the greatest transcendence.

Subhuti, what is called transcendent endurance is not transcendent endurance. That is why it is called transcendent endurance. Why?

Subhuti, thousands of lifetimes ago when my body was cut into pieces by King Kalinga, I was not caught in the notion of a self, a person, a being, or a life. If I had been holding to the notions of a self, a person, a being, or a life, I would have felt anger and hatred toward Kalinga.

But for five hundred lives I have been a renunciant sage suffused with patience, having no sense of self, no conception of person, or being or life.

Therefore, Subhuti, Bodhisattvas should leave behind all distinctions of appearance as real and awaken the thought of Supreme Enlightenment by not allowing the mind to abide in sounds, odors, flavors, sensations of touch, or any other qualities. Their minds should abide nowhere. If minds abide somewhere, it will be in falsehood.

This is why the Buddha says that the Bodhisattvas' minds should not abide taking form as real when practising charity.

Subhuti, when a bodhisattva wants to make offerings to benefit all sentient beings, he or she should practice charity like this. I teach that all forms are not forms. I also teach that all sentient beings are not sentient beings.

Subhuti, my words are true and correspond to reality. My words are neither deceitful nor erroneous. Subhuti, the dharma that I have attained, is neither real nor unreal. Subhuti, if a bodhisattva practices charity while abiding in forms as real, then it is like a person in the dark who cannot see anything.

If a bodhisattva practices charity while not abiding in forms as real, it is like a person with eyes wide open in the sunlight, who sees everything in the bright light. Subhuti, if, in a future time there are practitioners who are able to memorize this scripture and recite it, then I will, with my buddha-wisdom, be fully aware of them, seeing each attain limitless merit.

14. THE SUTRA IS NOT FOR LESSER VEHICLE PRACTITIONERS

Subhuti, if a virtuous man or woman sacrifices in the practice of charity, as many lives as the sand-grains of the Ganges in the morning, at midday and again in the evening, and continues so doing throughout numberless aeons; and if, on the other hand, a person after listening to this sutra believes it in his own mind without further contradiction, the latter's merit will surpass that of the former. How much more so if this sutra is written, received, held, read, recited and expounded to others!

Subhuti, to sum up, the merits resulting from this sutra are inconceivable, inestimable and without limit. The Tathagata expounds it to those initiated into the Mahayana and the Supreme Yana.

If they are able to receive, retain, read and recite it and expound it widely to others, the Tathagata will know and will see that they will achieve inexpressible and inconceivable merits that are without measure or limit. They will bear responsibility for the Tathagata's Supreme Enlightenment.

Why? Because, Subhuti, those who take delight in the Hinayana and hold the view of an ego, a personality, a being and a life, cannot listen to, receive, retain, read and recite this sutra and explain it to others.

Subhuti, wheresoever this sutra may be found, all worlds of devas, men and asuras should make offerings, for you should know that such a place is just a stupa which should be revered, worshipped and circumambulated, with offerings of flowers and incense.

15. PURGATION THROUGH SUFFERING OF BAD KARMA

Furthermore, Subhuti, if a virtuous man or woman receives, retains, reads and recites this sutra and is despised by others, this person who is bound to suffer from evil destinies in retribution for his past sins, and whose karmic Sins are now eradicated by the others' contempt, will attain Supreme Enlightenment.

Subhuti, I remember that in the past countless aeons before the advent of Dipamkara Buddha, I met 84,000 billions of Buddhas to whom I made offerings and whom I served faultlessly.

Now if in the last period in the Buddha kalpa someone is able to receive, retain, read and recite this sutra, his merits will far exceed mine which resulted from my offerings made to Buddhas, for mine cannot be reckoned as one hundredth, one thousandth, one ten thousandth or one hundred thousandth part thereof; in fact no computation or comparison is possible.

Subhuti, in the last period of the Buddha kalpa, if a virtuous man or woman is able to receive, retain, read and recite this sutra, my full statement of this person's merits will create derangement, doubt and disbelief in the minds of all listeners. Subhuti, you should know that as the meaning of this sutra is inconceivable, so is the fruit of its reward.

16. DEFINING THE BODHISATTVA

At the time, Subhuti asked the Buddha: World Honoured One, if a virtuous man or woman is determined to develop the Supreme Enlightened Mind, how should his or her mind abide and how should it be subdued?

The Buddha said to Subhuti: A virtuous man or woman who is determined to develop the Supreme Enlightened Mind, should thus develop it: I have to lead all living beings to put a stop to rebirth and escape suffering. And when they have been so led, not one of them in fact stops reincarnating or escapes suffering. Why? Because, Subhuti, if a Bodhisattva clings to the notion of an ego, a personality, a being and a life, he is not a true Bodhisattva.

Why? Because, Subhuti, there is not really a Dharma which can develop the Supreme-Enlightenment-Mind.

Subhuti, what do you think? When the Tathagata was with Dipamkara Buddha, did He have any Dharma by means of which He attained Supreme Enlightenment?

No, World Honoured One. As I understand the meaning of the Buddha's teaching, when He was with Dipamkara Buddha, He had no Dharma by means of which He attained Supreme Enlightenment.

The Buddha said: Just so! Subhuti, just so! There was really no Dharma by means of which the Tathagata attained Supreme Enlightenment.

Subhuti, if there had been, Dipamkara Buddha would not have predicted: "In your next life, you will be a Buddha named Sakyamuni." Why is it? Because Tathagata means the suchness of all Dharmas.

If someone still says: "The Tathagata obtained Supreme Enlightenment," I tell you, Subhuti, there is no Dharma by means of which the Buddha did so, because, Subhuti, that Enlightenment was by itself neither real nor unreal.

This is why the Tathagata says that all Dharmas are Buddha's Dharmas. Subhuti, these so-called Dharmas are not, but are expediently called all Dharmas. Subhuti, supposing there is a man whose body is great.

Subhuti said: World Honoured One, the great body of which the Tathagata speaks is not great, but is expediently called a great body.

Subhuti, in like manner, if a Bodhisattva says: "I should lead uncountable living beings to put a stop to rebirth and escape from suffering," he cannot be called a Bodhisattva. Why? Because there is really no dharma called the Bodhisattva stage.

Therefore, the Buddha says: "Of all dharmas, there is not a single one which possesses an ego, a personality, a being and a life."

Subhuti, if a Bodhisattva says: "I should adorn Buddha lands," he cannot be called a Bodhisattva.

Why? Because when the Tathagata speaks of such adornment it is not, but is expediently, called adornment.

Subhuti, if a Bodhisattva is thoroughly versed in the doctrine of the unreality of ego and of all things, the Tathagata will call him a true Bodhisattva.

17. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL FACULTIES ARE UNOBTAINABLE

Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata possess human eyes?

Yes, World Honoured One, the Tathagata possesses human eyes.

Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata possess deva eyes?

Yes, World Honoured One, the Tathagata possesses deva eyes.

Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata possess wisdom eyes?

Yes, World Honoured One, the Tathagata possesses wisdom eyes.

Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata possess Dharma eyes?

Yes, World Honoured One. The Tathagata possess Dharma eyes

Subhuti, What do you think? Does the Tathagata possess Buddha eyes?

Yes, World Honoured One, the Tathagata possesses Buddha eyes.

Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata say that the sand-grains in the Ganges are sand-grains?

Yes, World Honoured One, the Tathagata says they are sand-grains.

Subhuti, what do you think? If there were as many Ganges rivers as sand-grains in the Ganges, and if there were as many Buddha realms as sandgrains of all these Ganges rivers, would there be many world systems?

Many, World Honoured One!

The Buddha said the living beings in all these world systems have many different minds which are all known to the Tathagata. Why? Because the minds the Tathagata speaks of are not minds, but are (expediently) called minds. And why? Because, Subhuti, neither the past, the present nor the future mind can be found.

18. NO MERIT IS GREAT MERIT

Subhuti, what do you think? If someone filled the universe with the seven treasures and gave all away in his practice of charity, would this good cause enable the giver to gain a great merit?

Yes, World Honoured One, because of this good cause, the giver would gain a great merit.

Subhuti, if the merit was real, the Tathagata would not say it was great. He says so because there is no merit.

19. DISCERNING THE BUDDHA IN FORM

Subhuti, what do you think? Can the Buddha be perceived by His completely perfect physical body?

No, World Honoured One, the Tathagata should not be so perceived.

Why? Because the Buddha says the completely perfect body is not, but is called the completely perfect body.

Subhuti what do you think? Can the Tathagata be perceived by His completely perfect forms?

No, World Honoured One, the Tathagata should not be so perceived, because the Tathagata says the completely perfect forms are not, but are called completely perfect forms.

20. NO DHARMA IS DHARMA, NON-LIVING BEINGS ARE LIVING BEINGS

Subhuti, do not say that the Tathagata thinks: "I must expound the Dharma." Do not have such a thought.

Why? Because if someone says so, he will really slander the Buddha and be unable to understand my teaching. Subhuti, when the Tathagata expounds the Dharma, there is really no Dharma to teach: but this is expediently called teaching the Dharma.

Then the wise Subhuti said to the Buddha: World Honoured One, will there be in future ages living beings who will believe this Dharma when they hear it?

The Buddha said: Subhuti, the living beings you mention are neither living nor not living beings. Why? Because, Subhuti, the Tathagata says these living beings are not real, but they are expediently, called living beings.

21. THE ATTAINABILITY OF PEERLESS PERFECT ENLIGHTENMENT

Subhuti said to the Buddha: World Honoured One, does your own attainment of Supreme Enlightenment mean that you have not gained anything whatsoever?

The Buddha replied: Just so, Subhuti, just so. I have not gained even the least Dharma from Supreme Enlightenment, and this is called Supreme Enlightenment.

22. THE ROLE OF GOOD FACTORS

Furthermore, Subhuti, this Dharma is universal and impartial; wherefore it is called Supreme Enlightenment.

The practice of all good virtues, free from attachment to an ego, a personality, a being and a life, will result in the attainment of Supreme Enlightenment.

Subhuti. the so-called good virtues, the Tathagata says, are not good, but are expediently called good virtues.

23. MERITS OF TRANSMITTING THE SUTRA ARE FAR GREATER THAN THOSE OF CHARITY

Subhuti, if, on the one hand, a man, in his practice of charity gives away the seven treasures piled up in a heap as great as all the Mounts Sumeru in the Universe put together, and on the other hand, another man receives, retains, reads and recites even a four-line stanza of this Sutra, and expounds it to others, the merit resulting from the former's charity will not be worth one-hundredth, one-thousandth, one-ten-thousandth and one-hundred thousandth part of that obtained by the latter, as no conceivable comparison can be made between the two.

24. NO SENTIENT BEINGS FOR THE TATHAGATA TO SAVE

Subhuti, what do you think? You should not say the Tathagata has this thought in His mind: "I should liberate living beings."

Subhuti, you should not think so. Why?

Because there are really no living beings whom the Tathagata can liberate. If there were, the Tathagata would hold the concept of an ego, a personality, a being and a life.

Subhuti, when the Tathagata speaks of an ego, there is in reality no ego, although common men think so.

Subhuti, the Tathagata says common men are not, but are expediently called, common men.

25. TRYING TO DISCERN THE BUDDHA BY HIS BODILY CHARACTERISTICS

Subhuti, what do you think? Can the Tathagata be recognised by His thirty-two physical characteristics?

Subhuti replied: **Yes, yes, He can.**

The Buddha said: Subhuti, if the Tathagata can be recognised by His thirty-two physical characteristics, a world ruler would be the Tathagata.

Subhuti said to the Buddha: **World Honoured One, as I understand your teaching, the Tathagata cannot be recognised by His thirty-two physical characteristics.**

Thereupon, the World Honoured One recited the following gatha:

***He who sees me by outward
appearance***

And seeks me in sound,

Treads the heretical path

And cannot perceive the Tathagata.

26. ATTAINMENT OF ENLIGHTENMENT BASED ON BODILY CHARACTERISTICS

Subhuti, if you have in your mind this thought: "The Tathagata does not rely on His possession of characteristics to obtain supreme Enlightenment," Subhuti, banish that thought.

Subhuti, if you think that while developing the Perfect Enlightenment Mind, you will advocate the annihilation of all forms. Do not have such a thought.

Why? Because one who develops the Supreme Enlightenment Mind, does not advocate the annihilation of things.

27. BODHISATTVAS DO NOT APPROPRIATE MERIT

Subhuti, if on the one hand a Bodhisattva gave in his practice of charity, all the seven treasures in quantities sufficient to fill worlds as many as sand-grains in the Ganges, and on the other hand, another man comprehended that all dharmas were egoless and thereby achieved perfection of patience, the latter's merit would surpass that of the former.

Why? Because, Subhuti, all Bodhisattvas do not receive reward for their merits.

Subhuti asked the Buddha: **World Honoured One, why do Bodhisattvas not receive reward for their merits?**

Subhuti, Bodhisattvas should have no longing and no attachment when they practise meritorious virtues; therefore, they do not receive a reward.

28. THE TATHAGATA DOES NOT COME OR GO

***Subhuti, if someone says the
Tathagata comes or goes, sits or lies,
he does not understand what I mean.***

***Why? Because the Tathagata has
neither a where to come from nor a
where to go to; therefore, He is
called the Tathagata, the Thus-come.***

29. THE STATUS OF COMPOSITE THINGS

Subhuti. what do you think? If a virtuous man or woman reduced to dust all the worlds in the Universe, would those particles of dust many?

Subhuti replied: Many, World Honoured One. Why?

Because if they really existed, the Buddha would not say they were particles of dust. And why? Because when the Buddha speaks of particles of dust, they are not, but are expediently called, particles of dust.

World Honoured One, when the Tathagata speaks of worlds, they are not, but are expediently called, worlds. Why? Because if they really exist, they are just a jumbled mass. The Tathagata speaks of jumbled masses which are not, but are expediently called, jumbled masses.

***Subhuti, that which is called an
jumbled mass cannot be spoken of,
but the vulgar man has longing for
and attachment to such things.***

30. WRAPPING UP THE FOUR VIEWS

Subhuti, what do you think? If someone says: "The Buddha speaks of the view of an ego, a personality, a being and a life," Subhuti, does that person understand what I mean?

No, World Honoured one, that person does not understand.

Why? Because when the Tathagata speaks of the view of an ego, a Personality, a being and a life, it is not really, but is expediently called the view of an ego, a personality a being and a life.

Subhuti, he who develops the Supreme Enlightenment Mind, should thus know, see, believe and comprehend all things; he should not set up the perception of things as real in his mind.

***Subhuti, the so-called form of things,
the Tathagata says is not real, but is,
expediently called the form of things.***

31. CONCLUSION

Subhuti, if on the one hand, someone gave away in charity the seven treasures in quantities sufficient to fill all the worlds in uncountable aeons, and if on the other hand, a virtuous man or woman developed the Bodhi-mind, and received, retained, read and recited even a four-line stanza of this sutra and expounded it to others, the latter's merit would surpass that of the former.

In what manner should it be taught to others? By teaching it without attachment to form with the immutability of the absolute.

Why is it? Because:

All phenomena are like a dream, an illusion, a bubble and a shadow,

Like dew and lightning.

Thus should you contemplate them.

When the Buddha had finished expounding this sutra, the elder Subhuti, together with bhiksus, bhiksunis, upasakas, upasikas, and all the worlds of devas, men and asuras who had listened to His teaching, were filled with joy and believed, received, and observed it.

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