

# The Diamond Sutra

## The sutra of transparent wisdom

1. At one time the Buddha was staying in the park Anata-pindika. He was there together with a gathering of 1250 monks. After putting on robes, begging for food and eating, Subhuti addressed the Buddha respectfully:
2. "Which path must Bodhisattvas, motivated men and women who seek for enlightenment, follow? How can they learn to control their thoughts?"
3. The Buddha replied: "They must always keep in mind: 'through me all living beings are destined to obtain the unconditional freedom of nirvana'. And yet, when this infinite number of living beings has been liberated, in truth not even a single being has finally been liberated. Since wise people do not attach to the existence of a self, a personality, an entity or a separate ego."
4. "If a Bodhisattva has no attachment when he practices compassion, his blessings will be limitless."
5. "Someone who understands that all forms in the material world are in fact false forms, can see Buddha."
6. Subhuti asks: "World Honored One, will there always be people who believe and understand your words?" Buddha replied: "Certainly Subhuti, do not doubt it! But we must all strive for more than words. We must not cling, neither to words, nor to things. My words are like a raft, built to cross over a river: once the goal has been achieved, the raft should be left behind!"
7. "Tell me, Subhuti. Have I attained the ultimate knowledge?" "No, World Honoured One, in the end, the truth cannot be grasped in words nor can it be understood by thinking."
8. "Tell me, Subhuti. When someone is very generous and gives away much, will he obtain many blessings?" "Yes, World Honored One. His blessings will be enormous. " To which the Buddha said: "Indeed, but if a person understands my message and passes it on to others, his blessings would be even greater."
9. "Tell me, Subhuti, would someone who has obtained absolute enlightenment, say about himself: I have attained absolute enlightenment?" Subhuti answers: "No, such a person would not say that, because 'absolute enlightenment' is not something which exists. If someone would say about himself 'I am this or that' then this would mean that he still has the idea of a separate self. Just because I do not say of myself 'I am this or that' I am said to be happy and not afraid of loneliness."
10. "Subhuti, do I speak the truth when I say that Bodhisattvas make the world better and more beautiful?" "No, World Honored One, better and more beautiful are just illusions." "Well spoken, Subhuti. Bodhisattvas must free their mind from all illusion, all attachment and all resentment. And Subhuti, do realize that when you are in the company of someone who has attained the utmost truth, you must behave as if the Buddha was there." Then Subhuti asked the Buddha: "World Honored One, how shall we call this teaching?" The Buddha replied: "Call it: The Diamond Sutra of perfect transparent wisdom. Just like a diamond, this teaching slashes through all concepts. Even the world is not a world, we only call it this way."
11. When Subhuti understood the meaning this teaching he was very moved, thanked the Buddha and asked: "Can one call all people, who have left behind all kinds of distinctions of phenomena, Buddha's?" To which the Buddha answered: "Indeed! If someone on hearing this teaching will not be full of fear, worries or confusion, one can easily say that he has achieved quite a lot. Besides, one must also exercise the fulfillment of patience. Let me give you an example. When, in a previous life, King Kali cut my body and dismembered my body limb by limb, at that moment I was free of an idea of self, of a separate individuality and free of feelings, of anger and hate. When one strives after enlightenment one must not let the mind dwell in concepts. If one does, one has lost focus of the essence. Subhuti, even this ultimate truth which I have explained here is neither true nor untrue. The one who reads, recites and understands this, will thus acquire unlimited blessings."
12. " Furthermore, Subhuti, if, after receiving and upholding this teaching, something bad happens

to someone, then that is the inevitable consequence of previous actions. By being aware of and carrying this old karma one will be able to reach the incomparable enlightenment.”

13. “Subhuti, brave people who really wish to attain enlightenment, must be resolved to bear in mind the wish to liberate all living beings but also, that when all beings have been liberated, in truth not even a single being has been liberated. There are different paths through which one can attain enlightenment and there are no different paths, they are only called this way. A Bodhisattva who says: ‘I shall liberate all living beings’, is not a real Bodhisattva, because in truth there is no Bodhisattva, we only call it this way. Only Bodhisattvas who are completely free from any concepts of a separate self are worthy of being called real Bodhisattvas.”

14. “Subhuti, there are no different modes of consciousness, they are only called this way. It is impossible to know the past, it is even impossible to know this moment and it is impossible to know the future. We only call it this way.”

15. “What do you think Subhuti, can the Buddha with his perfect physical body be recognized or can the Buddha be recognized through a certain characteristic?” “No, because the Buddha tells us that characteristics are in truth not characteristics, we only call them this way.”

16. “Subhuti, the truth cannot be expressed through words and so an exposure about the truth can only be called ‘the truth’.”

17. Subhuti asks: “So, when achieving enlightenment, in truth one does not achieve anything at all?” Buddha replied: “Exactly, Subhuti, it is only called enlightenment.”

18. “Everything is always infinitely present and this all can be received by being free of an individual self and by practicing charity, even though charity does not exist, for charity we only call it this way.

19. “Subhuti, although ordinary persons think that there is a real individual self, I say that the individual is not different from the non-individual. As a matter of fact, ordinary people in truth are not ordinary people, they are only called this way.”

20. “He who seeks me in forms and sounds has wandered off the path. Such a person would be mistaken, not recognizing the Buddha.”

21. “Subhuti, do not encourage the thought that everything will perish and disappear into nothingness. An enlightened person would not claim such a thing.”

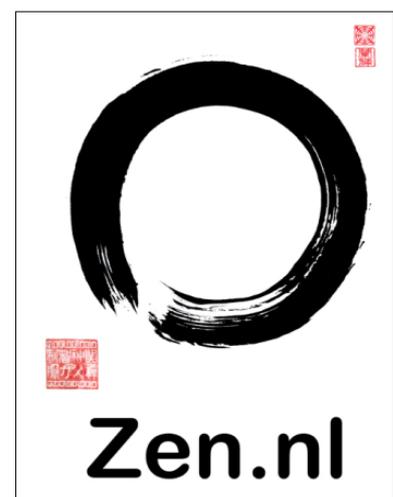
22. “Subhuti, Bodhisattvas may not be attached to the blessings they receive from their charities.”

23. “Listen, Subhuti, a Buddha is neither coming nor going anywhere, that is precisely why such a person is called a Buddha.”

24. “Subhuti, know that the smallest elements do not exist, they are only called this way. Words cannot comprise the true nature of the universe.”

25. Finally, Buddha says: learn to see that:

everything is like a fading star in the morning,  
everything is like a flash of lightening from the blue sky,  
everything is like bubbles in water,  
everything is like a dream in the night.



This short version of The Diamond Sutra is made by Rients Ritskes, spring 2014. Sources consulted:

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