

Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita Sutra

Vajra Sutra (Diamond Sutra)

Translated into Chinese by Kumarajiva, Master of Tripitaka, during the Later Qin Dynasty

Translated into English by Hanifa and the True Buddha School Vajra Sutra Translation Team

One—The Setting of the Dharma Teaching

Thus have I heard. One time, the Buddha was staying at Anathapindika Monastery at Prince Jeta’s Grove, near the great city of Sravasti, with an assembly of 1,250 monks. When it was mealtime, the World-honored One donned his kasaya robe, took up his alms bowl, entered Sravasti, and went door to door asking for food. After the almsround, he returned to the monastery and ate his meal. He then put away his robe and bowl, washed his feet, prepared his seat, and sat down.

Two—Subhuti’s Request

At that time, the Venerable Elder Subhuti was present at the assembly. He rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, knelt on his right knee, and with palms joined, respectfully bowed and addressed the Buddha, saying, “World-honored One, the Tathagata’s sublime mindfulness of and entrustment to the bodhisattvas is indeed extraordinary.

“World-honored One, when good men and good women give rise to the mind of anuttara samyaksambodhi and strive for perfect enlightenment, how should they dwell in their minds, and how should they master their minds?”

The Buddha said, “Excellent, Subhuti. As you said, the Tathagata is mindful of the bodhisattvas and entrusts the bodhisattvas. Now listen carefully while I tell you how the minds of good men and good women should abide when they strive for the perfect enlightenment of anuttara samyaksambodhi and how they should master their minds.”

“Wonderful indeed is your teaching, World-honored One. I will pay heed to what you say.”

Three—The Right and Ultimate Meaning of the Great Vehicle

The Buddha told Subhuti, “All bodhisattvas should master their minds in the following way:

“All sentient beings—whether they are born from eggs or wombs, through moisture or transformations, whether they have forms or not, are with or without thoughts, or not completely with thoughts nor without thoughts—I will liberate and deliver to the ultimate nirvana. And yet, of the innumerable sentient beings being liberated and delivered, there really are no sentient beings that are liberated or delivered. Why is this, Subhuti?

“Because if a bodhisattva holds a view of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan, then he is not a bodhisattva.”

Four—Non-dwelling in Marvelous Conduct

“Furthermore, Subhuti, a bodhisattva should not dwell on anything. When performing acts of giving, he should not dwell on the form of giving, nor should he dwell on sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or anything at all.

“Subhuti, bodhisattvas should perform acts of giving in this way, without dwelling on any phenomena. Why? Because when a bodhisattva does not dwell on any phenomena, his merit becomes immeasurable.

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can space in the east be measured?”

“No, World-honored One.”

“Subhuti, can space in the west, north, south, above, and below in all dimensions be measured?”

“No, World-honored One.”

“So Subhuti, when a bodhisattva performs acts of giving without dwelling on any phenomena, his merits and virtues are likewise immeasurable. Subhuti, the bodhisattvas should abide in this way.”

Five—Real Seeing According to the Truth

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can one see the Tathagata through his physical appearance?”

“No, World-honored One. One cannot see the Tathagata through physical appearance. Why? Because the physical appearance as spoken by the Tathagata is not physical appearance.”

The Buddha told Subhuti, “All appearances are illusory. Only when one perceives all appearances as non-appearances does one see the Tathagata.”

Six—The Right Faith is Extremely Rare

Subhuti asked the Buddha, “World-honored One, if sentient beings hear words and phrases of this teaching, will they truly believe in it?”

The Buddha told Subhuti, “Do not speak this way. There will be precept-holding people who are blessed during the five hundred years after the Tathagata’s parinirvana. They will have faith in this truth and regard it as reality.

“Know that these people have planted good seeds not only with one buddha, two buddhas, or three, four, five buddhas, but countless buddhas. They will immediately give rise to pure faith when they hear these statements. Even if only for a moment, they will be seen and known by the Tathagata.

“Subhuti, they will obtain immeasurable blessings and merits. Why? Because they do not hold onto any phenomena of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan.

“There should be no view of dharma and no view of non-dharma. Why? Because if sentient beings hold onto any view, they are grasping at self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan.

“If they hold the view of dharma, they are attached to self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan. If they hold the view of non-dharma, then all the same, they are also attached to self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan. Why? Because one should not uphold dharma, and one should not uphold non-dharma either.

“The Tathagata often speaks the following profundity: ‘Bhikkus and all of you, know that my dharma teaching is like a raft. Even the dharma should be abandoned, let alone the non-dharma.’”

Seven—Nothing Gained, Nothing Spoken

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata attain anuttara samyaksambodhi? Does the Tathagata speak on the dharma?”

Subhuti replied, “In my understanding of the meaning of the Buddha’s teaching, there is no fixed dharma called anuttara samyaksambodhi, and there is no fixed dharma to be spoken by the Tathagata. Why?”

“Because all teachings of the Tathagata cannot be held and cannot be spoken. They are not dharma, and they are not non-dharma.

“Therefore, all sages are distinguished through the unconditioned dharma.”

Eight—Dharma Arising Accordingly

“Subhuti, what do you think? If one fills the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds with the seven kinds of precious jewels as an act of giving, would his merit and blessings be enormous?”

Subhuti replied, “Enormous, World-honored One! Why? The Tathagata says his merit is enormous because it has no characteristics of merit.”

The Buddha said, “Should there be someone who upholds this sutra, and furthermore, expounds it to others, even if it is only the four-line verse, his merit exceeds the former. Why? Subhuti! Because all buddhas and all anuttara samyaksambodhi dharma come from this sutra.

Subhuti, the so-called buddhadharma is not buddhadharma.”

Nine—All Phenomena are not Phenomena

The Buddha asked, “Subhuti, what do you think? Can a stream-enterer think this way: ‘I have attained the fruition of a stream-enterer?’”

Subhuti replied, “No, World-honored One! Why? Sotapanna is called the stream-enterer, yet he does not enter anything; he does not enter sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, nor anything at all. Sotapanna or stream-enterer is merely a name.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can a once-returner think this way: ‘I have attained the fruition of a once-returner?’”

Subhuti replied, “No, World-honored One. Why? Sakadagami is called the once-returner—to come and go once more—yet he does not come nor go. Sakadagami or once-returner is merely a name.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can a non-returner think this way: ‘I have attained the fruition of a non-returner?’”

Subhuti replied, “No, World-honored One. Why? Anagami is called the non-returner, yet he is not always non-returning. Anagami or non-returner is merely a name.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can an arhat think this way: ‘I have attained the fruition of an arhat?’”

Subhuti replied, “No, World-honored One. Why? Because there is no such thing called an arhat. World-honored One, if an arhat thinks that he has attained arhatship, then he is attached to self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan.

“World-honored One, the Buddha said that I have attained the samadhi of non-contention, that I am the first and foremost among all human beings, and that I am the leading arhat who has abandoned desire. But I do not think this way: ‘I am an arhat who has abandoned desire.’

“World-honored One, if I think that I have attained arhatship, the World-honored One will not say that Subhuti is the bliss aranya! Because Subhuti has not done anything, Subhuti is referred to as a bliss aranya.”

Ten—Magnificent Pureland

The Buddha asked Subhuti, “What do you think? Did the Tathagata gain anything at Dipamkara Buddha’s place?”

Subhuti replied, “No, World-honored One. He did not gain anything at Dipamkara Buddha’s place.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Do the bodhisattvas adorn the buddhaland?”

Subhuti replied, “No, World-honored One. Why? Because adorning is not adorning; it is merely called adorning.”

“That is so, Subhuti. All bodhisattvas and mahasattvas should generate this pure mind; they should not give rise to the mind that dwells on forms, nor on sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or anything at all. Instead, they should give rise to the mind that does not dwell on anything.

“Subhuti, if someone has a body as big as Mount Meru, is his body big? What do you think?”

Subhuti replied, “Very big indeed, World-honored One. However, the Buddha says that only a non-body is called a big body.”

Eleven—Supreme Merits Without Condition

“Subhuti! What do you think? Should there be as many Ganges rivers as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, would the number of the grains of sand in those rivers be enormous?”

Subhuti replied, “Enormous, World-honored One. The number of those rivers would be countless, and even more so, the grains of sand in them.”

“Subhuti! I shall tell you truthfully, if there is a good man or good woman who fills as many billion-fold universes as those grains of sand with seven kinds of precious jewels as an act of giving, would their blessings be tremendous?”

Subhuti replied, “Tremendous indeed, World-honored One!”

The Buddha told Subhuti, “If there is a good man or good woman who upholds this sutra and expounds it to others, even if it is only the four-line verse, their blessings and merits will exceed the former.”

Twelve—Revering the Right Teaching

“Furthermore, Subhuti! If any person at any place teaches even only the four-line verse of this sutra, then all the worldly, celestial, human, and asura beings will make offerings to the place in the same way as to the buddhas, pagodas, and temples. Especially if the person can completely uphold and recite it.

“Subhuti! Know that this is the first and foremost, unexcelled, and rare dharma to allow one to reach attainment. Where there is this sutra, there is a buddha, and also respectful disciples.”

Thirteen—Upholding According to the Dharma

At this time, Subhuti asked the Buddha, “World-honored One, how shall we name this sutra? How shall we uphold it?”

The Buddha told Subhuti, “This sutra shall be called the Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita. You shall uphold this name. Why? Subhuti, the prajnaparamita as spoken by the Buddha is not prajnaparamita; it is merely called prajnaparamita.

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata speak on the dharma?”

Subhuti replied, “World-honored One, the Tathagata has not spoken.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Is there an infinite amount of dust particles in the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds?”

Subhuti replied, “Countless, World-honored One.”

“Subhuti, the Tathagata says that dust is not dust; it is merely named dust. The Tathagata also says that the world is not a world; it is merely called a world.

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can one see the Tathagata through the thirty-two marks of perfection of a buddha?”

“No, World-honored One! One cannot see the Tathagata through the thirty-two marks of perfection. Why? Because the Tathagata says that the thirty-two marks of perfection are non-phenomena; they are merely called the thirty-two marks of perfection.”

“Subhuti, in comparison to good men and good women who devote their lives as an act of giving amounting to the grains of sand in the Ganges River, a person who accepts and upholds this sutra, even if only the four-line verse, will still have greater blessings.”

Fourteen—Extinction Upon Abandoning Phenomena

Upon hearing this sutra, Subhuti understood its profundity and was moved to tears. He said to the Buddha, “World-honored One, it is rare indeed for the Buddha to speak on such a profound sutra. I have never heard of such a sutra ever since I attained my wisdom eyes.

“World-honored One, if someone generates pure faith upon hearing this sutra, they will give rise to real phenomena. This person will obtain the rarest of merit.

“World-honored One, the real phenomena are non-phenomena. Therefore the Tathagata calls it real phenomena.

“World-honored One, it is easy for me to believe, comprehend, accept, and uphold this sutra immediately upon hearing it. However, in the ensuing five hundred years, it would be most rare for sentient beings to hear, believe, understand, accept, and uphold the sutra. Why? Because it is extremely rare for a person not to have any view of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan. The phenomena of self are non-phenomena, and so are the phenomena of others, the phenomena of sentient beings, and the phenomena of lifespan; they are all non-phenomena. Those who abandon all phenomena are called buddhas.”

The Buddha told Subhuti, “Just so, just so, Subhuti! It is extremely rare indeed for a person not to be shocked, frightened, or fearful upon hearing this sutra. Because Subhuti, the Tathagata says that the first

and foremost paramita is not the first and foremost paramita; it is merely named the first and foremost paramita.

“Subhuti, the Tathagata says that endurance paramita is not endurance paramita; it is merely named endurance paramita. Why? Subhuti, in the past, when King Kalinga dismembered my body, I was in the state of non-phenomena of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan. Why? Because if I had the notion of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan during the dismemberment of my limbs, I would have felt hatred.

“Subhuti! I also remember the past five hundred lifetimes wherein each lifetime, I lived as a sage who practiced endurance and held no phenomena of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan.

“Therefore, Subhuti, a bodhisattva should abandon all phenomena, generate the mind of anuttara samyaksambodhi, and give rise to the mind which does not dwell on sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or anything at all. Even if the mind dwells on something, it is regarded as non-dwelling.

“Therefore, the Buddha says that a bodhisattva should not dwell on form when they perform the acts of giving. Subhuti! A bodhisattva should perform the acts of giving to benefit all sentient beings. The Tathagata says, ‘All phenomena are non-phenomena. Also, all sentient beings are not sentient beings.’ Subhuti, the Tathagata speaks truthfully, realistically, accordingly, credibly, and absolutely.

“Subhuti, anything obtained by the Tathagata is neither real nor false. Subhuti, if a bodhisattva dwells on anything while performing acts of giving, it is as if he is in the dark; he will not see anything. If a bodhisattva does not dwell on anything when performing acts of giving, he is not blinded and will be able to see all sorts of forms as if the sun is shining.

“Subhuti! In future lives, should there be good men and good women who can accept and uphold, read or recite this sutra, they will be known and seen by the Tathagata through his wisdom, and they will attain vast and boundless merit.”

Fifteen—The Merit of Upholding the Sutra

“Subhuti, in comparison to good men and good women who devote their lives as an act of giving amounting to the grains of sand in the Ganges River, and they do so at sunrise, midday, and again at sunset for an infinite number of kalpas, a person, who generates a faith without resistance upon hearing this sutra will have blessings surpassing the former. It is even more so if he also writes, upholds, recites, and expounds it to others.

“Subhuti, in sum, this sutra has inconceivable, immeasurable, and infinite merit. It is spoken by the Tathagata for practitioners of the Great Vehicle and the Supreme Vehicle.

“Should there be a person who can uphold, recite, and extensively expound it, he will be recognized and known by the Tathagata, and he will attain immeasurable, incalculable, infinite, and inconceivable merit. This person will bear the anuttara samyaksambodhi of the Tathagata. Why? Subhuti, because a practitioner of the Small Vehicle who clings to a view of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan cannot hear, accept, recite, nor expound this sutra.

“Subhuti, all the worldly, celestial, human, and asura beings should make offerings to the place where the sutra exists. Know that this place is like a pagoda which should be respected, paid homage to, and circumambulated, in which all kinds of flowers and incense should be offered and sprinkled upon it.”

Sixteen—The Ability to Purify Karma

“Also, Subhuti, if a good man or good woman is belittled or ridiculed when upholding or reciting this sutra, it is due to their karmic retribution from past lives, which would have resulted in the lower realms. By being ridiculed in this lifetime, their karmic retribution will be eliminated, and they will attain anuttara samyaksambodhi.

“Subhuti, I recall during the countless asamkya kalpas, I made offerings and served without fail 84,000 million nayuta buddhas in front of Dipamkara Buddha. In comparison, if there is a person in the dharma-ending era who can uphold and recite this sutra, his merit will exceed my merit from offering to all the buddhas by more than a hundred times, a trillion times, or beyond any calculation and comparison.

“Subhuti, there may be someone—upon hearing my statement on the merit of a good man or good woman who upholds and recites this sutra in the dharma-ending era—who would become utterly confused, skeptical, and in disbelief.

“Subhuti, know that the meaning of this sutra is inconceivable, and karmic retribution is also inconceivable.”

Seventeen—Ultimate No Self

At that time, Subhuti asked the Buddha, “World-honored One, when good men and good women give rise to the mind of anuttara samyaksambodhi, how should they dwell in their minds and how should they master their minds?”

The Buddha replied, “When good men and good women give rise to the mind of anuttara samyaksambodhi, they should generate the mind to liberate and deliver all sentient beings; yet upon deliverance, not a single sentient being has actually been liberated and delivered. Why?”

“Subhuti, if a bodhisattva holds the phenomena of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan, he is not a bodhisattva. Therefore, Subhuti, there really is no one generating anuttara samyaksambodhi.

“Subhuti, what do you think? Did the Tathagata attain the dharma of anuttara samyaksambodhi at Dipamkara Buddha’s place?”

Subhuti replied, “No, World-honored One, as I understand it from the true meaning of the Buddha’s teaching, the Buddha did not attain the dharma of anuttara samyaksambodhi at Dipamkara Buddha’s place.”

The Buddha said, “Just so, Subhuti! There is no such thing as a tathagata attaining anuttara samyaksambodhi. Subhuti, if there is such a thing as the Tathagata attaining anuttara samyaksambodhi, then Dipamkara Buddha would not have prophesied: ‘In your future life, you will be a buddha named Sakyamuni.’

There is no such thing as attaining anuttara samyaksambodhi; hence Dipamkara Buddha endowed me with this prophecy: ‘In your future life, you will be a buddha named Sakyamuni.’ Why? A tathagata—The One Seemingly Coming—upholds this same notion for everything.

“Someone may say, ‘The Tathagata attained anuttara samyaksambodhi.’ Subhuti, there really is no such thing as the Tathagata attaining anuttara samyaksambodhi.

“Subhuti, the anuttara samyaksambodhi attained by the Tathagata is neither real nor unreal. Therefore, the Tathagata says: ‘Everything is buddhadharma!’ Subhuti, the so-called all-dharma is not all-dharma; it is merely called all-dharma.

“Subhuti, take the example of a tall and big human body.”

Subhuti said, “World-honored One, the Tathagata says, ‘A tall and big body is not a big body; it is merely called a big body.’”

“Subhuti, likewise if a bodhisattva says, ‘I will liberate and deliver innumerable sentient beings,’ then he is not a bodhisattva. Why? Subhuti, there is no such thing called a bodhisattva. Therefore, the Buddha says: ‘Everything has no phenomena of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan.’

“Subhuti, if a bodhisattva says, ‘I adorn the buddhaland,’ then he is not a bodhisattva. Why? The Tathagata says adorning is not adorning; it is merely called adorning.

“Subhuti, if a bodhisattva truly comprehends the notion of no-self, then according to the Tathagata, he is a true bodhisattva.”

Eighteen—The One and Same Notion for Everything

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata have physical eyes?”

“Yes, World-honored One! The Tathagata has physical eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata have celestial eyes?”

“Yes, World-honored One! The Tathagata has celestial eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata have wisdom eyes?”

“Yes, World-honored One! The Tathagata has wisdom eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata have dharma eyes?”

“Yes, World-honored One! The Tathagata has dharma eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Tathagata have buddha eyes?”

“Yes, World-honored One! The Tathagata has buddha eyes.”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Does the Buddha say that all the sand in the Ganges River is sand?”

“Yes, World-honored One! The Tathagata says that it is sand.”

“Subhuti! What do you think? Should there be as many Ganges rivers as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, and there are as many buddha-worlds as sand-grains of all these Ganges rivers, would the number of those worlds be many?”

Subhuti replied, “Very many, indeed, World-honored One.”

The Buddha told Subhuti, “The Tathagata knows the myriad minds of sentient beings in all these worlds. Why? The Tathagata says, ‘Any mind is not a mind; it is merely called a mind.’ Therefore, Subhuti, the mind of the past is unattainable, the mind of the present is unattainable, and the mind of the future is also unattainable.”

Nineteen—Across All Dharma Realms

“Subhuti, what do you think? If one fills the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds with the seven kinds of precious jewels as an act of giving, this person has the causes and conditions to obtain enormous merit, does he not?”

Subhuti replied, “Yes, World-honored One! This person has the causes and conditions to obtain enormous merit.”

“Subhuti, the Tathagata says that merit is enormous when it is unconditional, but if it is conditional, the merit is not enormous.”

Twenty—Abandoning All Forms and Phenomena

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can the Buddha be perceived through his physical appearances?”

“No, World-honored One! The Tathagata cannot be perceived through his physical appearances. Why? The Tathagata says, ‘Having physical forms is equivalent to not having physical forms; it is merely called having physical forms.’”

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can the Tathagata be perceived through any kind of phenomena?”

“No, World-honored One! The Tathagata cannot be perceived through any kind of phenomena. Why? The Tathagata says, ‘Having all kinds of phenomena is the same as not having any phenomena; it is merely called having all kinds of phenomena.’”

Twenty-One—The Unspeakable and the Spoken

“Subhuti, do not say that the Tathagata thinks, ‘I have spoken the dharma.’ Do not think in this way. Why? Anyone saying that the Buddha has spoken the dharma slanders the Buddha, as he does not understand what I have been saying.

“Subhuti, the speaker has no dharma to speak of! Speaking the dharma is merely a name called speaking the dharma.”

Then, the wise Subhuti asked the Buddha, “World-honored One, can sentient beings who hear this teaching in the future believe and generate faith upon it?”

The Buddha replied, “Subhuti, they are not sentient beings. Why? Subhuti, the Tathagata says that sentient beings are not sentient beings; they are merely named sentient beings.”

Twenty-Two—No Dharma is Ever Attained

Subhuti asked the Buddha, “World-honored One, there is no such thing as the Buddha attaining anuttara samyaksambodhi. Is that so?”

The Buddha responded, “It is so, Subhuti! I have not attained anuttara samyaksambodhi or any dharma at all; it is merely called anuttara samyaksambodhi.”

Twenty-Three—Doing Good with a Pure Heart and Mind

“Furthermore, Subhuti, in anuttara samyaksambodhi, everything is equal without any distinction. Practicing all good dharma without any notion of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan will result in anuttara samyaksambodhi.

“Subhuti, the Tathagata states that the so-called good dharma is not good dharma; it is merely named good dharma.”

Twenty-Four—Incomparable Merit and Wisdom

“Subhuti, in comparison to the act of giving seven precious jewels amounting to all the biggest Mount Merus in the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds, a person who accepts, upholds, recites, and expounds the Prajnaparamita Sutra, even if only the four-line verse, will have much greater merit, by more than a hundred times, a trillion times, or beyond any calculation and comparison.”

Twenty-Five—Manifesting All Illusions

“Subhuti, what do you think? One should not say that the Tathagata holds the notion, ‘I am delivering sentient beings.’ Subhuti, do not hold such a view. Why? Because there are no sentient beings to be delivered by the Tathagata. If sentient beings were to exist, it means that the Tathagata still has a notion of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan.

“Subhuti, the Tathagata states, ‘The self has no self, yet mundane people believe that they have a self.’

“Subhuti, the Tathagata says that mundane beings are not mundane beings; they are merely named mundane beings.”

Twenty-Six—Dharmakaya Has No Phenomena

“Subhuti, what do you think? Can one perceive the Tathagata through the thirty-two marks of perfection?”

Subhuti replied, “Yes, World-honored One! One can perceive the Tathagata through the thirty-two marks of perfection.”

The Buddha said, “If a tathagata is perceived through the thirty-two marks of perfection, then a cakravartin would be a tathagata.”

Subhuti said to the Buddha, “World-honored One, I understand. One should never perceive a tathagata through the thirty-two marks of perfection.”

The World-honored One then spoke this verse:

“Anyone who sees me as form
or seeks me in sound
is on the wrong path
and cannot perceive the Tathagata.”

Twenty-Seven—No Severance and No Annihilation

“Subhuti, do not ever think that the Tathagata attains anuttara samyaksambodhi due to the absence of the marks of perfection or any phenomena.

“Subhuti, do not regard anuttara samyaksambodhi as severance and annihilation of all phenomena; do not think in this way! Why? Because the one with the mind of anuttara samyaksambodhi does not sever or annihilate all phenomena.”

Twenty-Eight—Not Accepting and Not Seizing

“Subhuti, in comparison to a bodhisattva who performs an act of giving seven treasures that amount to the multitude of worlds as countless as the sand-grains in the Ganges River, another bodhisattva who does good deeds without any notion of self will have more merit.

“Why, Subhuti? Because all bodhisattvas are not subjected to merits and blessings.”

Subhuti asked the Buddha, “World-honored One, why do you say that the bodhisattvas are not subjected to merits and blessings?”

“Subhuti, because the bodhisattvas are free from greed and desire when generating merit, therefore, it is said that the bodhisattvas are not subjected to merits and blessings.”

Twenty-Nine—Serene Dignity

“Subhuti, if someone says that a tathagata seemingly comes and goes and seemingly sits and lays down, this person does not understand my teaching. Why? Because a tathagata never comes and goes, thus, he is called a tathagata.”

Thirty—The Concept of Aggregates

“Subhuti, if a good man or good woman shatters the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds into dust particles, will there be innumerable dust particles?”

Subhuti replied, “Innumerable, indeed, World-honored One. Why? Because were the innumerable dust particles real, the Buddha would not have said innumerable dust particles. The Buddha says, ‘Dust particles are not dust particles; they are merely called dust particles.’”

“World-honored One, the three-thousand-great-thousand worlds spoken by the Buddha are not worlds; they are merely called worlds. Why? Because even if the worlds are real, they are only aggregates. The Tathagata has said, ‘The aggregate is not an aggregate; it is merely called an aggregate.’”

“Subhuti, the so-called aggregate is unspeakable. However, mundane beings grasp and cling onto it.”

Thirty-One—Unborn Perception

“Subhuti, if someone claims that the Buddha ever speaks on the perception of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan, do you think they understand my teaching?”

“No, World-honored One! This person does not understand your teaching. Why? Because the World-honored One says, ‘A perception of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan is not a perception of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan; it is merely called a perception of self, others, sentient beings, and lifespan.’”

“Subhuti, the one generating anuttara samyaksambodhi should know, perceive, believe, and understand that everything is as such, and therefore, should not give rise to any dharma phenomena.”

“Subhuti, the Tathagata says that the so-called dharma phenomena are not dharma phenomena; they are merely called dharma phenomena.”

Thirty-Two—All Manifestations Lack Reality

“Subhuti, in comparison to an act of giving that fills the infinite asamkya worlds with seven treasures, a good man or a good woman who generates bodhicitta and accepts, upholds, reads, recites, and expounds this sutra—even if it is only the four-line verse—will generate superior merit.

“When one does not grasp onto any phenomenon, one remains unperturbed. Why?

Everything conditional
Is a dream, an illusion, a bubble, a shadow.
It is like a dewdrop or a flash of lightning.
Always keep this in mind!

Upon completion of the Buddha’s teaching, the Venerable Elder Subhuti, bhikkus, bhikkunis, upasakas, upasikas, and all beings in the human, heaven, and asura realms experienced great joy, and thereafter, faithfully practiced according to what they had heard.

End of the Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita Sutra