

How to Cultivate the Bodhicitta as Taught in the Diamond Sutra

I. Introduction

II. Sutra Title: " Vajracchedika-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra "

III. Subhuti's two questions

According to Prince Zhao Ming of the Liang Dynasty (one of the Six Dynasties), the Diamond Sutra can be divided into 32 chapters.

In the second chapter, Subhuti asks the Buddha:

世尊。善男子善女人、發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心、應云何住，云何降伏 其心。

World Honored One, when good sons and good daughters seek peerless perfect enlightenment, in what should they abide, and how should they subdue their thoughts?"

In the seventeenth chapter, the Venerable Subhūti asks the same question again.

Why does Subhuti ask the Buddha the same question twice?

IV. Ven. Yin-shun answers the above-mentioned questions in the scheme of two paths in five bodhis.

The path of prajna: 1. bodhi of generating a bodhicitta

2. bodhi of subduing one's mind

3. bodhi of illuminating one's mind.

The path of skillful means: 1. bodhi of generating a bodhicitta on the basis of the achievement of the path of prajna. 2. bodhi of departing from the three realms and fixing one's mind in the fruit of buddhahood. 3. bodhi of ultimate truth.

III. A cross-reference of the passage of the Sutra with the path of prajna in the three gradual developments of bodhi.

1. Bodhi of generating a bodhicitta

長老須菩提...白佛言...世尊，善男子、善女人，發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心，應云何住？云何降伏 其心？

The elder Subhūti... addressed the Buddha, saying: " World Honored One, when good sons and good daughters seek peerless perfect enlightenment, in what should they abide, and how should they subdue their thoughts?"

佛告須菩提、諸菩薩摩訶薩應如是降伏 其心。所有一切衆生之類。若卵生若胎生若

濕生若化生。若有色若無色。若有想若無想。若非有想非無想。我皆令入無餘涅槃而滅度之。如是滅度無量無數無邊衆生、實無衆生得滅度者。何以故。須菩提、若菩薩有我相人相衆生相壽者相。即非菩薩

The Buddha said to Subhūti: "The bodhisattvas and mahāsattvas should subdue their thoughts like this: 'All the different types of sentient beings, whether they be born from eggs, born from a womb, born from moisture or born spontaneously; whether or not they have form; whether they abide in perceptions or no perceptions; or without either perceptions or non-perceptions, I save them by causing them to enter nirvana without remainder. And when these immeasurable, countless, infinite number of sentient beings have been liberated, in actuality, no sentient being has attained liberation.' Why is this so? Subhūti, If a bodhisattva abides in the signs of self, person, sentient being, or life-span, she or he is not a bodhisattva."

2. Bodhi of subduing one's mind

復次須菩提、菩薩於法應無所住行於布施。所謂不住色布施。不住聲香味觸法布施。須菩提、菩薩應如是布施不住於相。何以故。若菩薩不住相布施。其福德不可思量。須菩提、於意云何。東方虛空可思量不。不也世尊。須菩提、南西北方四維上下虛空可思量不。不也世尊。須菩提、菩薩無住相布施福德、亦復如是不可思量。須菩提、菩薩但應如所教住。

"Furthermore Subhūti, when bodhisattvas practice charity, they should not abide [in the notion that they are practicing charity]. This is what is called 'practicing charity while not abiding in form,' and 'practicing charity while not abiding in sound, odor, taste, touch, or conceptions.' Why? If bodhisattvas practice charity while not abiding in signs of charity, their merit will be incalculable. Subhūti, what do you think? The space in the easterly direction is incalculable, is it not?"

"You are right, World Honored One, it is not calculable."

"Subhūti, is all of the space in the four cardinal directions, the four intermediate directions, the zenith, and the nadir calculable?"

"It is incalculable, World Honored One."

"Subhūti, the merits attained by bodhisattvas who practice charity without abiding in its signs are also incalculable like this. Subhūti, the bodhisattvas need only focus themselves on this teaching."

3. Bodhi of illuminating one's mind

須菩提、於意云何。可以身相見如來不。不也世尊。不可以身相得見如來。何以故。如來所說身相即非身相。佛告須菩提、凡所有相皆是虛妄。若見諸相非相則見如來。

"Subhūti, what do you say? Can one discern the Tathāgata by means of his bodily

characteristics?"

"No, World Honored One. One cannot see the Tathāgata by means of bodily characteristics. Why not? The bodily characteristics taught by the Tathāgata are actually not bodily characteristics." The Buddha said to Subhūti: "All things that have characteristics are false and ephemeral. If you see all characteristics to be non-characteristics, then you see the Tathāgata."

般若道三階：發心菩提重於願，伏心菩提重在行，明心菩提重在證。又，初是住菩提心，中是修悲濟行，後是悟如實義。初以般若扶大悲願，中以般若導六度行，後是般若現證。雖各有所重，而菩提願、悲濟行與性空見，實是不可離的。

立菩提願——發菩提心	註：左邊三項除對應右邊之實線關係外，與其他二項亦有虛線之關係。如：立菩提願應用虛線與伏心菩提及明心菩提相連
修悲濟行——伏心菩提	
住性空見——明心菩提	

IV. Conclusion

菩薩之所乘，菩提心相應，慈悲為上首，空慧是方便。依此三要門，善修一切行；一切行皆入，成佛之一乘。

“The vehicle of the bodhisattvas
 Corresponds with bodhi mind,
 Is guided by kindness and compassion,
 And has the wisdom that comes from emptiness as its skillful means.
 Enter by these three important gates,
 And cultivate all practices skillfully,
 For they all lead to the One Vehicle to become a Buddha.”

V. 120 of <<The Way to Buddhahood>>