

# The Diamond Sutra



"Looking into a buddha, you see non-Buddha elements. If you do not see non-Buddha elements in the Buddha, you have not seen the Buddha. Don't imagine that the Buddha is an entity that is separate from us human beings. The safest place to look for a Buddha is in yourself."

~ Thich Nhat Hanh

# Fun Facts

- Likely emerged around 200 CE
- Earliest commentary known today is from 401 by the monk and translator Kumarajiva
- The oldest dated, printed book in the world is the Chinese translation of the sutra dated May 11, 868, found in the Mogul caves of Dunhuang in 1900 by Daoist monk Wang Yuanlu



以於讀經先念淨口業...  
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奉請白淨水金剛 奉請白淨水金剛 奉請白淨水金剛  
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奉請大神金剛 奉請大神金剛 奉請大神金剛

金剛般若波羅蜜經  
如是說聞一時佛在舍衛國祇樹給孤獨園與大  
比丘衆千二百五十人俱余時世尊食時者衣持  
鉢入舍衛大城乞食於其城中次第乞已還至本處  
飯食訖收衣鉢洗足已敷坐而坐時長老須菩提在大  
衆中即從坐起偏袒右肩右膝著地合掌恭敬而  
白佛言希有世尊如來善護念諸菩薩善付囑諸  
菩薩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佛言善哉善哉須菩  
提如決雨說如來善護念諸菩薩善付囑諸菩薩  
以令發心云何住云何降伏其心善男子善女人發阿耨多羅三  
藐三菩提心應如是住如是降伏其心唯然世尊

願樂欲聞  
佛告須菩提諸善男子諸善女人若有  
一切衆生之類善男子善女人若化三有  
有色善無色善有想善無想善非有想非無想  
我皆令入無餘涅槃而說之也是以度無量無數  
阿僧祇劫無量阿僧祇劫所以說者善哉善



凡欲讀經先念淨口業真言遍

循唎

循唎

摩訶循唎

循循唎

娑婆訶

奉請除災金剛

奉請辟毒金剛

奉請黃隨求金剛

奉請白淨水金剛

奉請赤聲金剛

奉請定除厄金剛

奉請紫賢金剛

奉請大神金剛

金剛般若波羅蜜經

# Vajracchedikāprajñāpāramitā

- "The Diamond that Cuts through Illusion"
- "Diamond-Cutter Perfection of Wisdom Sūtra"
- "The Perfection of Wisdom That Cuts like a Thunderbolt."
- Nirvana Sutra: "Prajna (wisdom) is like a diamond. While nothing is able to harm it, it can cut through all things."
- Key sutra in the development of Chan/Zen

- Likely one of the earliest Mahayana sutras, emphasizing the Bodhisattva ideal, yet closely follows format of the suttas of the Pali Canon
- Conversation between the Buddha & Subhuti about how to cultivate the mind of a bodhisttva, one who embodies the great aspiration to bring all beings to liberation along with the wisdom of nondiscrimination

# Tathāgata

- Term used by the Buddha to refer to himself
- Tathā: "thus" or "suchness," reality as it is
- Gata "gone" past passive participle of gam "go, travel," Āgata past passive participle "come"
- Scholarly: "The one who has gone to suchness" or "the one who has arrived at suchness"
- Diamond Sutra Ch 29: "does not come from anywhere and does not go anywhere"



# Key Concepts

- Anatman/anatta, no-separate self
- Non-discrimination, conventional designation
- Bodhisattva path
- “This sutra should be called The Diamond That Cuts through Illusion because it has the capacity to cut through all illusions and afflictions and bring us to the shore of liberation.”

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3: “This is how the bodhisattva mahasattvas master their thinking. However many species of living beings there are—whether born from eggs, from the womb, from moisture, or spontaneously; whether they have form or do not have form; whether they have perceptions or do not have perceptions; or whether it cannot be said of them that they have perceptions or that they do not have perceptions—we must lead all these beings to the ultimate nirvana so that they can be liberated. And when this innumerable, immeasurable, infinite number of beings has become liberated, we do not, in truth, think that a single being has been liberated.

“Why is this so? If, Subhuti, a bodhisattva holds on to the idea that a self, a person, a living being, or a life span exists, that person is not an authentic bodhisattva.”

5: “What do you think, Subhuti? Is it possible to grasp the Tathagata by means of bodily signs?”

“No, World-Honored One. When the Tathagata speaks of bodily signs, there are no signs being talked about.”

The Buddha said to Subhuti, “In a place where there is something that can be distinguished by signs, in that place there is deception. If you can see the signless nature of signs, then you can see the Tathagata.”

8: “What do you think, Subhuti? If someone were to fill the three thousand chiliocosms with the seven precious treasures as an act of generosity, would that person bring much happiness by this virtuous act?”

The Venerable Subhuti replied, “Yes, World-Honored One. It is because the very natures of virtue and happiness are not virtue and happiness that the Tathagata is able to speak about virtue and happiness.”

17: “Subhuti, a good son or daughter who wants to give rise to the highest, most fulfilled, awakened mind should do it in this way: ‘We must lead all beings to the shore of awakening, but, after these beings have become liberated, we do not, in truth, think that a single being has been liberated.’ Why is this so? Subhuti, if a bodhisattva is still caught up in the idea of a self, a person, a living being or a life span, that person is not an authentic bodhisattva. Why is that?

“Subhuti, in fact, there is no independently existing object of mind called the highest, most fulfilled, awakened mind.

32: “Subhuti, if someone were to offer an immeasurable quantity of the seven treasures to fill the worlds as infinite as space as an act of generosity, the happiness resulting from that virtuous act would not equal the happiness resulting from a son or daughter of a good family who gives rise to the awakened mind and reads, recites, accepts, and puts into practice this sutra, and explains it to others, even if only a gatha of four lines. In what spirit is this explanation given? Without being caught up in signs, just according to things as they are, without agitation. Why is this?

All composed things are like a dream,  
a phantom, a drop of dew, a flash of lightning.  
That is how to meditate on them,  
That is how to observe them.

# Dialectics of

## Prajñāparamitā

"If we look deeply into A and see that A is not A, we see A in its fullest flowering. At that time, love becomes true love, generosity becomes true generosity, practicing the precepts becomes truly practicing the precepts, and support becomes true support. This is the way the Buddha looks at a rose, and it is why he is not attached to the rose. When we are still caught in signs, we are still attached to the rose. A Chinese Zen master once said, "Before practicing Zen, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. While practicing Zen, mountains are no longer mountains and rivers are no longer rivers. After practicing, mountains are mountains again and rivers are rivers again." ~

Thich Nhat Hanh



# Moving Meditation

This is a dream, a phantom,  
a drop of dew, a flash of lightning

"\_\_\_\_\_ is not \_\_\_\_\_, that is why it is called  
\_\_\_\_\_."

(objects, situations, emotions, opinions, self)

