

NOTHINGNESS

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DIAMOND  
WISDOMS  
OF  
BUDDHA

*Diamond Sutra  
in Modern  
Perspectives*

*Translated and Annotated*

*By E. Heng*

*Remainderless Nirvana*

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**Diamond**  
**Wisdoms**  
**of**  
**Buddha**

**Diamond Sutra**  
**Simplified**

**Translated and**  
**Annotated**  
**By**  
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October 7, 2021



## Framework of Understanding Diamond Sutra

*The Buddhist purpose in life is to seek enlightenment which is the spiritual release from cycles of life, death and sufferings. This is analogous to heaven in other religions.*

*Buddha says the ways to enlightenment cannot be defined or verbalized. They encompass all virtuous and benevolent practices. There is no definitive principle to use. But Buddha suggest a few approaches. He teaches us to free ourselves from the control and influence of self, people, beings and mortals, and also **free ourselves from the captivity of visual perceptions of self, people, beings and mortals**. To achieve that, we need to practice forbearance. We also need to achieve a clean and pure heart not corrupted by our senses and desires. That is why we should not dwell on our senses and gratifications and let our heart to be free. Buddha repeatedly teaches us to do three things: practicing charity, reciting Diamond Sutra abidingly and spreading the Diamond Sutra to other people. More importantly, Buddha teaches us not to be dogmatic about religious teachings because of our preconceived mindset and self centric behaviors that blind us from seeing the realities. In essence, Buddha teaches us to let go of all our desires, passions and obsessions and to have an unburdened heart and a free and open mind in order to achieve true **happiness, wisdom, freedom and purpose** in life.*

*Dedicated to those  
who are living out life  
without  
asking WHY.*

*This book is sold on  
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## What is Diamond Sutra?



Picture 1 - Diamond Sutra Scroll

*Diamond Sutra* (see Picture 1) was discovered in 1900 by a monk in *Dunhuang* (see Picture 2), China, which was an old Silk Road outpost on the edge of the Gobi Desert. *Diamond Sutra* is a Sanskrit text translated into Chinese, one of 40,000 scrolls hidden in “*The Cave of a Thousand Buddhas*” (see Picture 3 on Page 6). The cave was a secret library sealed up around the year 1,000 when the surrounding region was threatened by a neighboring kingdom.



Picture 2 - Map of Dunhuang



In 1907, British-Hungarian archaeologist Marc Aurel Stein was in the area to map out the ancient Silk Road. When he heard about the secret library, he bribed the abbot of the monastic group in charge of the cave and smuggled away thousands of documents, including Diamond Sutra.



*Picture 3 - The Cave of a Thousand Buddhas*

Diamond Sutra is relatively short, only 6,000 words in all. It is part of a larger collection of sacred texts in Mahayana Buddhism, the branch of Buddhism most prevalent in East Asia. Many believe that Buddha directly dictated the Diamond Sutra which takes the form of a dialog between him and his pupil Subhuti.

Diamond Sutra summarizes the key thoughts of Buddha and the main ideology of Buddhism. Constant reading will bring tremendous inspiration in life,

and make life more meaningful as a result. **This book aims to demystify Buddhism and make the Buddhist ideas clear to ordinary people so that they may gain benefits and blessings from practicing the Buddhist ideas in their lives.**

**“Science without religion is lame,  
religion without science is blind.”**

**— Albert Einstein**

**Before copying, reciting and reading  
sutra,**

1. Wash both hands clean
2. Sit upright
3. Renounce your body, mouth and heart intentions.

**BEST time to recite or read after getting up and cleaning yourself in the morning before breakfast.**

## Vajracchedikâ Prajñâpâramitâ Sutra (Diamond Sutra)



*Picture 4 - Jeta Grove in Sravasti, India.*

This is what I have heard. At one time, Buddha was in *Sravasti* (sixth largest city of Ancient India), staying in Anâthapiada's park of *Jeta Grove*, accompanied by many monks, twelve hundred and fifty of them. At that time, it was meal time for Buddha. Buddha put on his robe, carried his bowl, and entered the big city of *Sravasti* to beg for food. Within the city, Buddha took turn to beg for food. After finishing begging, and upon returning home, Buddha ate his meal. He then put away his robe and bowl, washed his feet, arranged his seat, and sat down.

At that time, Elder Subhûti rose from his seat in the midst of the crowd. He knelt down with his right knee on the ground, and with his right shoulder bare. He joined his palms in respect, and said to

Buddha, “Buddha has been well protecting the hearts of your disciples and advising them very well. However, for the kind men and women who set their hearts on enlightenment, would you tell them what to dwell on and how to surrender their hearts?”

“Very well, very well.” Buddha told Subhûti. “Like you say, I have been well protecting the hearts of my disciples and advising them very well. Please listen carefully. I will tell you now. For the kind men and women who set their hearts on enlightenment, this is what to dwell on and how to surrender their hearts,” continued Buddha. “Buddha, if that is the case, we all wish to hear,” said Subhuti.

Buddha told Subhuti: “To all my disciples, this is how you should surrender your heart. For all types of beings, no matter if they are born from eggs, or from wombs, or from moisture, or from transmutation; from visible things or non-visible things; thinking or non-thinking; without thoughts or not without thoughts, I will make them enter perfect Nirvana and deliver them from the cycle of life, death and sufferings. I will in such way deliver immeasurable, countless and boundless beings. As a matter of fact, no beings have

actually been delivered. Why is that so? If buddhists have the **visual perception** of self, people, beings and mortals, they are not buddhists.”

“Also, Subhuti, with respect to enlightenment principles, buddhists should not dwell on them. Instead, they should practice giving. I mean giving without dwelling on visual sensations, and also giving without dwelling on sensations of sound, smell and taste which are in conflict with enlightenment,” said Buddha.

“Subhuti, buddhists should in this way give without dwelling on visual sensations. Why is that so? If buddhists give without dwelling on visual sensations, their blessings will be inconceivable.”

“Subhuti, what does it mean? If eastern sky is all empty, can you imagine it?” asked Buddha. Subhuti replied, “No, Buddha.”

Buddha then asked, “Subhuti, if southern, western and northern skies, in all dimensions, are empty, can you imagine it?” Subhuti replied, “No, Buddha.”

Buddha then said, “Subhuti, if buddhists practice giving without dwelling on visual sensations, their blessings will be likewise and unimaginable. Subhuti, all buddhists should abide in such teaching.”

“Subhuti, what does it mean? Can you see Buddha in terms of visual images of body?” Buddha asked.

“No, Buddha. You cannot see Buddha in terms of visual images of body.” Subhuti answered.

Buddha then said, “Why is that so? When I speak of the visual images of body, they are really not the visual images of body.” Buddha then told Subhuti: “All visual images in reality are illusory. If you see visual images as non-existent, you will see Buddha.”

Subhuti then said to Buddha, “Buddha, there are many beings who have heard the words that you say, do they really believe in you?” Buddha then answered Subhuti: “Do not say like that. After Buddha has passed away for five hundred years, if there are people who abide in moral restraints and practice virtues to enhance their blessings, and develop true conviction of these words that I say, and treat my words as truths, you know they

are unlike one, two, three, four or five buddhas in terms of planting virtuous roots. In fact, they are like immeasurable millions of buddhas planting virtuous roots. After they have heard such words, they will wholeheartedly embrace clear and pure conviction. Subhuti, from what I know and see, they are the beings who will receive immeasurable merits and blessings.”

Buddha continued: “Why is that so? That is because those beings invariably do not have the visual perceptions of self, people, beings and mortals. Also they do not have the visual perceptions of principles and non principles. Why is that so? If their hearts accept visual perceptions, they are possessed (controlled and influenced) by self, people, beings and mortals. If they accept visual perceptions of principles, they are also possessed (controlled and influenced) by self, people, beings and mortals. Why is that so? If they accept visual perceptions of non principles, they are likewise possessed (controlled and influenced) by self, people, beings and mortals. That is why we should not accept visual perceptions of principles, and we should not accept visual perceptions of non principles either. I often say you monks who understand what I say are like

floating on a raft. Principles should be forsaken, what is more if they are non principles.”

Buddha then asked, “Subhuti, What does it mean? Now that I have achieved enlightenment, do I have anything to say about how to achieve it?” Subhuti replied, “If I understand Buddha correctly, there is no definitive principle to define enlightenment. Also there is no definitive principle to describe how to achieve it. Why is that so?” Buddha then said, “The enlightenment principle that I mention cannot be grasped and spoken. It is not a principle or a non principle. Why is that so? That is because all sages use no principles, but their teachings are all unique and distinct from one another.”

Buddha said to Subhuti, “Tell me what you think. If there are people filled with three thousand great thousand worlds of seven precious jewels and dedicated to giving, are the blessings that they receive plentiful?” Subhuti answered, “Yes, they are, Buddha.” Buddha then added, “Why is that so? It is because some blessings are in fact non-blessings in nature. That is why I say their blessings will be plentiful. And again if there are people who abide in this sutra and explain the verses to others,



they will receive more blessings than others. Why is it? Subhuti, all buddhas and their enlightenment ways originate from this sutra. Subhuti, it is called the Buddha way, not considered the Buddha way by some, but the Buddha way.”

Buddha then asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? If a srotaapanna (**new convert**) can make the intent to become one, can he obtain the fruits of srotaapanna?” Subhuti answered no. Buddha then said, “Why is it so? Srotaapanna is so named to enter but in reality they do not enter anything. They do not enter into sensual realms of vision, sound, smell and taste which are in conflict with the enlightenment methods. They are named srotaapanna as such.”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, What does it mean? If sakadagami (**partially enlightened person**) can make the intent to become one, can he obtain the fruits of sakadagami? Subhuti answered, “ No, Buddha.” Buddha then said, “Why is that so? Sakadagami is so named to return once to this world but in reality they have not returned at all. They are named Sakadagami as such.”

Buddha then asked, “Subhuti, What does it mean? If anagamin (advanced enlightened person) can make the intent to become one, can he obtain the fruits of anagamin?” Subhuti answered, “No, Buddha.” Buddha then said, “Subhuti, What does it mean? Anagamin is so named not to return to this world but in reality it is not that they have not returned. They are named anagamin as such.”

Buddha again asked, “Subhuti, What does it mean? If an arhat (a near Buddha) can make the intent to become one, can he obtain the arhat way?” Subhuti answered, “No, Bhagawan.” Buddha then said, “Why is that so? Really there is no method to define an arhat. If an arhat makes the intent to become one, he only obtains the arhat way because he is still possessed by self, people, beings and mortals.” Buddha continued, “From what I observe from the three personality traits of people (greed, hatred/anger and self-delusion), non-contention is the way to go, and it is foremost to depart from the intent to become an

arhat. “Buddha said, “If I do not make the intent to become one, I am departing from the intent to become an arhat. If I do make the intent to become one, I can only obtain the arhat way. This is not to mention Subhuti is a practicing aranya (a hermit) who actually does nothing and is named as such. Subhuti is indeed a practicing aranya.”

Buddha then asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? Last time when Buddha was with Dipakara Buddha (Buddha's mentor), did Buddha obtain any enlightenment principles from him?” Subhuti answered, “No, Buddha. Buddha actually did not obtain any enlightenment principles from Dipakara Buddha.” Buddha then asked, “What does it mean? Aren't the buddhists making the buddha land solemn? “ Subhuti answered, “No, Buddha.” Buddha then said, “Why is it so? People appearing to make the buddha land solemn are not solemn themselves, but are considered to be solemn.” Buddha then continued, “Subhuti, all buddhists as such should bear a clean and pure heart. Their hearts should not dwell on visual sensations to arouse desires. Their hearts should also not dwell on sensations of sound, smell and taste to arouse desires, which is in conflict with the enlightenment principles. In fact, their hearts should not dwell on

anything at all and let their hearts behave freely and naturally. Subhuti, suppose someone has the body like Mount Sumeru. What does that mean? Is his body gigantic?" asked Buddha. Subhuti replied, "Very much so. Buddha. Why is that so?" Buddha said, "That is not a body but it is named a huge body."

Buddha continued, "Subhuti, it is like all the sand in the Ganges River, and there are as many Ganges Rivers as there are grains of sand in the Ganges Rivers. What does that mean? Those grains of sand in the Ganges Rivers, are they numerous?" Subhuti answered, "Extremely numerous, Buddha." Buddha then said, "But the Ganges Rivers are numerous, let alone those grains of sand in them. Subhuti, I now tell you the truth. If there are kind men and women who practice giving using their seven precious jewels in quantities like the grains of sand in the Ganges Rivers in these three thousand great thousand worlds, are the blessings that they receive plentiful?" Subhuti replied, "Very plentiful, Buddha." Buddha then told Subhuti, "If those kind men and women abide in the verses of this sutra and preach the four line verses to other people, their blessings will surpass previous ones."

Buddha continued, “Again, Subhuti. I simply mention the sutra in passing and its four line verses therein. However, you all must know that by this sutra all the world of divine beings such as asuras should be sustained as if in temples. What is even more remarkable if there are people who abidingly recite this sutra. Subhuti, you know these people will make the foremost achievements after following this extraordinary way. Wherever this sutra is, there will be presence of Buddha if the students are respected.”

Meanwhile, Subhuti asked, “Buddha, what is this sutra named, and how do we uphold it?” Buddha told Subhuti: “This sutra is named Vajracchedikâ Prajñâpâramitâ (Diamond Sutra), and this is the name. You all should uphold it. Why is it? Subhuti, I say this is named Diamond Sutra, not considered Diamond Sutra by some, but is Diamond Sutra.” Subhuti then asked, “What is the meaning? Do you have anything to say about its principles?” Buddha answered: “No. I have nothing to say.”

Buddha continued: “Subhuti, what does it mean? All the minute dusts in these three thousand great thousand worlds, are they numerous?” Subhuti replied, “They are

pretty numerous.” Buddha then said, “Subhuti, for those minute dusts, I say they are not, but they are named minute dusts. For those worlds, I say they are not, but they are named the worlds.” Buddha asked Subhuti: “What does it mean? Can one see Buddha using thirty two visual images of physical perfections?” Subhuti replied, “No, Buddha. One cannot use thirty two visual images of physical perfections to see Buddha.” Buddha continued, “Why is it? I say the thirty two visual images of physical perfections are not images, but are named images. Subhuti, if there are kind men and women who give their body and life as numerous times as the grains of sand in the Ganges River, and if those people abide by this Sutra, and preach the four line verses to other people, their blessings will be plentiful.”

At that time, after hearing the Sutra and understanding its profound meaning, Subhuti broke down in tears. He said, “Buddha, the sutra that you preach is so profound, that we in the past with whatever wisdom we had did not have the opportunity to hear about such sutra. Again if there are people who hear about this sutra, and believe in it with a clean and pure heart, they will develop true

perception of reality. You know such people will be foremost successful in achieving extraordinary merits. I say it is true perception, not considered true perception by some, but is true perception. Now that we hear about such sutra, it is not difficult to understand and maintain conviction in it. However, five hundred years after Buddha passes away, if there are beings who hear about the sutra, understand it and maintain conviction in it, such people will be extraordinary. Why is that so? That is because these people do not have the *visual perception* of self, people, beings and mortals. Why is it? Because the visual perception of self is not a true perception, and so are the visual perceptions of people, beings and mortals. That is why we have to depart from all visual perceptions to become a buddha.” Buddha told Subhuti, “That is so true; that is so true.”

Buddha then said, “Again if there are people who hear about this sutra, and they are not surprised, nor fearful, nor intimidated, you know such people are rare. Why is it? I say the foremost paramita (*paradigm*), not considered the

foremost paradigm by some, but the foremost paradigm, is forbearance. I reiterate it is the forbearance paradigm, not considered the forbearance paradigm by some, but the forbearance paradigm. Why is that so? Subhuti, it was like I had in the past my body mutilated by King Kaliraja, and at that time I lack all visual perceptions of self, people, beings and mortals. How could it be? As time went past with my body slowly breaking apart, had I the visual perceptions of self, people, beings and mortals, I would have developed strong feeling of hatred. Subhuti, I also remember being a forbearance saint for the past five hundred years, as a result of my lacking visual perceptions of self, people, beings and mortals in this world. That is why, Subhuti, all buddhists should depart from visual perceptions to develop a heart for enlightenment. They should not dwell on visual sensations to arouse desire. Nor should they dwell on sensations of sound, smell and taste to arouse desires, which is in conflict with the enlightenment. They should let their hearts dwell on nothing and be free to behave. That is because



anything the heart dwells on, it is in fact not a real thing. I say all buddhists should practice giving with their hearts not dwelling on visual sensations. Subhuti, all buddhists should likewise practice giving in order to benefit all beings. I say all visual images are not images, and all beings are not beings. (meaning both images and beings are illusory). Subhuti, what I say is real and true, and as it is, and it is neither exaggerated nor distorted. The enlightenment principles that I obtain are intangible but real. Subhuti, if a buddhist's heart fixates on principles while practicing giving, he is like entering into a dark room and seeing nothing at all. On the other hand, if he does not fixate on principles while practicing giving, it is like he has eyes and will see all sorts of colors as if in bright daylight. Subhuti, in the coming generations, if there are kind men and women who abidingly recite this sutra, they will be like Buddha and will have Buddha's wisdom. What I know and see is that those people will achieve immeasurable and boundless merits. ”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, if there are kind men and women who practice giving in the morning as frequently as the sand grains in the Ganges River, and if they do so at noon time, and if they do so in the afternoon, and devote their physical bodies to practicing giving immeasurable millions and billions of times; and again if there are people who hear about this sutra with unwavering conviction, their blessings will be more than others, not to mention copying the sutra, abidingly reciting the sutra, and explaining the sutra to other people. Subhuti, in a nutshell, this sutra has inconceivable, immeasurable and boundless merits. I am talking to people not only in Supreme Vehicles (seeking enlightenment for others and self) but also in Great Vehicles (seeking enlightenment for self). If there are people who abidingly recite this sutra, and travel widely to preach it, what I can know and see is that such people will accomplish immeasurable, indescribable, boundless and inconceivable merits. Such people will help Buddha shoulder the responsibilities of spreading enlightenment. Why is it? Subhuti, if people are only interested in fundamental teachings (concerned only with personal enlightenment), they nevertheless possess the visual perceptions of self, people,

beings and mortals (*captive to visual simulated world*). As a result, they are not receptive to the sutra, and cannot recite and explain it to other people. Subhuti, wherever this sutra is, all the worldly and divine beings including asuras should be sustained. The place should be made known by pagodas and temples. Everyone should pay respect by obeisance and circumambulation, and burning incense to permeate the air with fragrance.”

Continued Buddha, “Again, Subhuti, for the kind men and women, if they abidingly recite this sutra but are despised by other people, that is because their sins in previous lives have caused them to descend into evil straits. However, if they are despised by people in this world, their sins in their former lives will be forgiven and they can obtain enlightenment. Subhuti, I remember many eons ago, I was with Dipakara Buddha (*Buddha's mentor*) and I had accumulated merits equivalent to sustaining 84 billion of multitudes of buddhas, and had no sins. But again, if there are people in the coming generations who abidingly recite this sutra, the merits that they obtain are incomparably more than the merits that I obtained from sustaining the

multitudes of Buddhas, which is not even a hundredth of a billion times in comparison. Subhuti, if kind men and women in the coming generations abidingly recite this sutra, this will amount to the merits that they will obtain. Even if I describe it completely, there still will be people who hear about it, get confused, and have great doubts. Subhuti, you must understand that the sutra is inconceivable, and so is its reward."

At that time, Subhuti asked, "Buddha, for the kind men and women who set their heart on enlightenment, what should they dwell on and how should they surrender their heart?" Buddha then told Subhuti: "For the kind men and women who set their hearts on enlightenment, this is how their hearts should behave. I will help deliver all beings to enlightenment. I will help deliver them but there are actually no beings that I can help achieve enlightenment. Why is that so? Subhuti, if a buddhist has the visual perceptions of self, people, beings and mortals, he is not a buddhist. As a result, Subhuti, there is really no definite way to develop the heart for enlightenment."

Buddha continued, "Subhuti, what does it

mean? When I was with Dipakara Buddha (Buddha's mentor), did I obtain any enlightenment methods from him?" Subhuti responded, "No. Buddha, if I understand correctly what you say, when you were with Dipakara Buddha, you did not obtain any definitive methods from him to accomplish enlightenment." Buddha said, "Indeed, indeed. Subhuti, there was indeed no definitive method that I attained enlightenment. If there were a definitive method that I utilized to obtain enlightenment, it would be that Dipakara Buddha did not allow me to take notes. You in the coming generations should make a Buddha sign named Úâkyamuni Buddha. That is because there is really no definitive way to achieve enlightenment. That is why Dipakara Buddha asked me to take note of his words: 'You in the coming generations should make a Buddha sign named Úâkyamuni Buddha.' Why is that so? That is because all those who have attained enlightenment will understand the meaning of enlightenment the way it is. If someone says Buddha achieves enlightenment, Subhuti, there is no clear and certain way for Buddha to achieve it. Subhuti, the enlightenment that I achieve in essence is neither

tangible nor fantasy. I say all enlightenment ways are the Buddhas' ways (*awakening, revelation*). Subhuti, I mean all ways, not considered all ways by some but all ways.”

Buddha then said, “Subhuti, we can make the analogy of a person with a gigantic body.” Subhuti then commented, “Buddha, you say the person with a gigantic body, considered not gigantic by some but deemed gigantic by others”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, buddhas (*enlightened ones*) are also like that. If you say like that, I would deliver immeasurable beings to enlightenment without a problem and would not name them buddhas. Why is it so? Subhuti, there are really no definitive ways to achieve enlightenment, and that is why we name them buddhas. Therefore I say all enlightenment ways boil down to the idea of being devoid of self, people, beings and mortals (*free from control and influence of self, people, beings and mortals*). Subhuti, if a buddhist says like that, I consider it in the solemn buddha-land already enlightened, and not a buddhist on the way to enlightenment. I say solemn buddha-land, not considered

solemn buddha-land by some but solemn buddha-land. If a buddhist understands completely the idea of *self-less*, it is a true buddhist.”

Buddha asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? Do I have the eyes of the flesh?” Subhuti answered, “Yes. Buddha, you do.” Buddha then asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? Do I have the third (*inner*) eyes?” Subhuti answered, “Yes. Buddha, you do.” Buddha continued to ask Subhuti, “What does it mean? Do I have the wisdom eyes?” Subhuti answered, “Yes. Buddha, you do.” Buddha again asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? Do I have the eyes of enlightenment ways?” Subhuti answered, “Yes. Buddha, you do.” Buddha further asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? Do I have the buddha eyes?” Subhuti answered, “Yes. Buddha, you do.”

Buddha asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? Like all the sand in the Ganges River, I ask if they are sand. ” Subhuti answered, “Yes, Buddha. You say it is sand.” Buddha then said, “Subhuti, What does it mean? Like all the sand in one Ganges River, there are as many other

Ganges Rivers as there are sand in one Ganges River. The buddha worlds are like the sand grains in those Ganges Rivers (*The analogy of parallel universes in Quantum Theory*). Are the buddha worlds as numerous?” Subhuti answered, “Extremely numerous, Buddha.” Buddha then told Subhuti, “For all beings in all the lands of the worlds, they have all kinds of heart desires, and I know all about their heart desires. Why is that so? I say those are heart desires, not considered heart desires by some but they are heart desires. Why is it so? Subhuti, those heart desires could not be satisfied in the past, and cannot be at the present, and will not be in the future.”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, what does it mean? If there are people who are filled with seven precious jewels in these three thousand great thousand worlds (*parallel universes*), and if they practice giving, do they receive a lot of blessings from karma (*beliefs that good deeds bring good fortunes*) ?” Subhuti replied, “Indeed, Buddha. These people do receive a lot of blessings from karma.” Commented Buddha, “Subhuti, if such blessings are tangible, I do not say they are plentiful.



Because many blessings are for no reasons, I say they are plentiful.”

Continued Buddha, “Subhuti, what does it mean? Can you see Buddha by complete body images?” Subhuti answered, “No, Buddha. You should not be seen by complete body images. Why is it?” Buddha then said, “I say complete body images, not considered complete body images by some but complete body images. Again, Subhuti, what does it mean? Can you see Buddha in complete visual images?” Subhuti answered, “No, Buddha. You should not be seen in complete visual images. Why is that so?” Buddha replied, “Those visual images are complete, considered incomplete by some, but are complete visual images (*meaning visual images are subjective and open to interpretations*).”

Continued Buddha, ”Subhuti, you should not say that I should have thought of a way to explain the enlightenment principles verbally. Do not think like that. Why is that so? If some people say Buddha has a spoken enlightenment principle, this is considered a slander of Buddha. This is because they do not understand what I say. Subhuti, a speaker

of enlightenment principles who actually has no principles to speak of is called a speaker of enlightenment principles.” Meanwhile, Subhuti asked, “Buddha, if there are many beings in the coming generations who hear about what you say, will they become convinced?” Buddha then answered, “Subhuti, I consider such beings non-beings and not non-beings. Why is that so? Subhuti, some people consider all the beings beings, but I consider some non-beings also beings (*meaning everything we see and experience is subjective and open to interpretations*).” Subhuti then said, “Buddha, you obtain the enlightenment from no principles.” Buddha said, “Indeed, indeed. Subhuti, I obtain enlightenment from no principles, and such is named the enlightenment principle.

Again, Subhuti, such enlightenment way is fair and equitable, and it has no high or low ranking (*not preferential or arbitrary*), and is thus called the enlightenment way. It is based on the idea of being devoid of self, people, beings and mortals (*free from the control and influence of self, people and environments*), and it encompasses the

practice of all virtuous and benevolent ways. This will lead to enlightenment. Subhuti, when we mean virtuous and benevolent ways, I consider some non-virtuous and non-benevolent ways also virtuous and benevolent (*virtuousness and benevolence are subjective measures*).”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, if all the seven precious jewels in all the Mounts Sumeru in these three thousand great thousand worlds are gathered together and used by some people to steadfastly practice giving, and if they abidingly recite the four line verses from this Diamond Sutra and preach them to other people, the blessings they receive will be incomparably more than their previous ones, which is like a billion times to a hundred times in comparison (*exponentially greater*)”

Buddha then asked, “Subhuti, What does it mean? You all should not think I can arbitrarily deliver all beings to enlightenment. Subhuti, you should not think like that. Why is that so? Because there is no being that I can arbitrarily deliver to enlightenment. If there is a

being that I can arbitrarily deliver to enlightenment, it means that I still possess the notion of self, people, beings and mortals (*under the control and influence of self, people, beings and mortals*). Subhuti, I say I consider some with 'self' actually without 'self'. But ordinary people only think about 'self'. Subhuti, those ordinary people, I consider some of them not ordinary people, but deemed ordinary by others. (*All life experiences are subjective*)”

Buddha asked Subhuti, “What does it mean? Can you not use thirty two images of excellent traits to see Buddha?” Subhuti answered, “Like you say, like you say, we cannot use thirty two images of excellent traits to see Buddha.” Buddha then said, “Subhuti, If you can use thirty two images of excellent traits to see Buddha, it means by the wheel of destiny, a cakravartin king (*ideal universal ruler, virtuous and ideal human being endowed with 32 physical signs of excellent traits*) can become a buddha.” Subhuti then said, “Buddha, based on my understanding of what you say, we cannot use thirty two images of excellent traits to see Buddha.”

At that moment, Buddha spoke these verses:

*“If one uses visual images to see me, or uses sound to implore me, such person is practicing deviant way, and he cannot see me.”*

Buddha then continued, “Subhuti, if you think like that, I would not obtain enlightenment based on complete physical appearances of excellent traits. Subhuti, do not think like that. I have obtained enlightenment not from the complete physical appearances of excellent traits. Subhuti, if you think like that, all the people who set their heart on enlightenment will say all the enlightenment principles are obliterated. Do not think like that. Why is that so? Because people who set their heart on enlightenment will not speak of obliteration principles.”

Continued Buddha, “Subhuti, if a buddhist steadfastly practices giving, using his world of seven precious jewels as plentiful as the sand grains filling up the Ganges River, and if he understands all

enlightenment principles are a result of self-less-ness and forbearance, then the merits of this buddhist will be more than those of previous buddhist. Why is that so? Because this buddhist is not receptive to blessings.” Subhuti then asked, “Buddha, why do you say he is not receptive to blessings?” Buddha replied, “Subhuti, this is because whatever blessings a buddhist receives, he should not crave for them. That is why I say the buddhist is not receptive to blessings.”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, if someone says it is like I have come, gone, sat down or lain down, he does not understand the meaning of what I say. Why is that so? This is because an enlightened person is omnipresent and omniscient (*all present and all knowing*), and is like he comes from nowhere and goes nowhere.”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, if the kind men and women in these three thousand great thousand worlds disintegrate into dusts, what does that mean? Are those

dusts not numerous?” Subhuti answered, “Yes. They are numerous. Buddha, why is that so?” Buddha then said, “If it is really true that the dusts are numerous, I would not say the dusts are numerous. Why is that so? I say those dusts are numerous, not considered numerous by some but are numerous. *(All visual observations are subjective)*” Subhuti then said, “ Buddha, you mention about the three thousand great thousand worlds, not considered the worlds by some but considered the worlds by you. *(All visual worlds are subjective and open to interpretations.)* Why is that so?” Buddha then answered, “If the worlds really exist, they must exist in unity. I mean unity, not considered unity by some but I consider it unity *(Quantum Field Theory)*. Subhuti, the concept of unity is hard to describe in words. However, ordinary people are too obsessed with their own things to understand it.”

Buddha continued, “Subhuti, if people say that Buddha says I see, people see, beings see and mortals see, What does it mean? Do they understand what I say?” Subhuti

replied, “ No. Buddha, those people do not understand what you say. Why is it?” Buddha answered, “ I see, people see, beings see and mortals see, not considered by some as I see, people see, beings see and mortals see, but I consider it as I see, people see, beings see and mortals see. (*Our observations and understanding of our world is subjective and open to different interpretations.*) Subhuti, all the people who set their heart on enlightenment should know all the enlightenment principles as they are, and understand them as they are, and should not be dogmatic. Subhuti, what I mean by dogmatic, may not be considered dogmatic by some but I consider it dogmatic.”

In closing, Buddha said, “Subhuti, if there are people filled with immeasurable and myriad worlds of seven precious jewels, and if they steadfastly practice giving, and if there are kind men and women who are compassionate and merciful, and who abide in this sutra and all the verses therein, and steadfastly recite this sutra, and speak to other people about it, then their blessings will be more than others, what is more if they speak to others not based on appearances and visual perceptions, which as a result cannot move or influence them.



Why is that so?

Everything is governed by principles;  
It may appear like a dream or a bubble;  
Like dew or like lightning;  
All should be observed as such. ”

Buddha has spoken a long time on the sutra. Elder Subhuti, and other monks and nuns, male and female followers of Buddha, all worldly and heavenly beings, and asuras, upon hearing Buddha's words, are all very happy. They faithfully receive Buddha's words and put them into practice.

**END OF DIAMOND SUTRA**

# Lessons Learned from Diamond Sutra in Modern Perspectives



What relevant lessons do we learn from Diamond Sutra?

## 1. A Clean, Pure and Peaceful Heart.

Buddha teaches us to possess a clean, pure and calm heart that is free of desires. We shall not let anything dwell in our heart. Our heart should be free to behave. We should let go of all desires of our heart. Calmness in our heart will bring perspicuity of our mind. Buddha preaches equanimity. Peace of heart brings clarity of mind and wisdom. Intelligence demands

clear and creative thinking to scope out the feasible set of alternatives; and wisdom requires clear and insightful analysis to make the right strategic choice from the set of feasible alternatives.

In life, sometimes we are overwhelmed by circumstances beyond our control, and maintaining a clean, pure and peaceful heart will help us weather any storm. Difficult situations most often inspire fear and desperation, and emotions cloud our thinking to find the best solutions. Moreover, emotions often cause rash actions which result in dire consequences.

When we let go of our heart desires, we feel free and unencumbered spiritually. Certainly we will feel carefree and stress free. Only after our hearts are free can we feel reinvigorated and empowered spiritually and mentally to lead a meaningful and successful life. Keeping a clean, pure and calm heart should not be misconceived as a passive approach to life. But rather it is a foundation to actively inspire meaningful visions in life. Integration and alignment of soul, heart, mind,

body, thought, speech and action should be our ultimate goal in life.

People often talk about letting go of baggage in life, emotional baggage in particular. If we cleanse our hearts of all desires, it is far easier for us to shed our baggage in life. This is because the emotional bond of our baggage will be broken by emptying our heart desires.

It is often said that success in life and career depends largely on positive attitudes. Positive attitudes often equate with meaning and doing good to yourselves and others. To do so we need to keep a clean, pure and peaceful heart which helps to demolish negative attitudes and nurture positive ones. The so-called "Zen" is in essence a meditative practice based on a clean, pure and peaceful heart in order to achieve a higher consciousness of mind. This higher consciousness may enhance physical health, mind awareness, intelligence and creativity.

In this age of internet, cell phones, cloud technology and social media, we are constantly bombarded and inundated with information. We become restless. This information

overload and noise unfortunately makes our life more stressful. As a result, it is difficult to maintain a calm and peaceful heart under those circumstances. It is therefore prudent for us to avoid information overload and noise in order to maintain our spiritual, mental and physical health.

## **2. Unconditional Charity.**

The most important theme of Diamond Sutra is that Buddha teaches us to give ourselves to unconditional charity which is free from visual perception. This means we should do charity without regard to sex, creed, religion, race and other discriminatory practices and personal motives. Our biases and social behaviors are a result of the insidious control and influences of our cultural and social milieu, through our own visual perceptions and preconditioned mindsets.

It is not known how much of our life is controlled by predestination and how much by self-determination, and how much is due to luck and how much due to our effort. However, it seems logical to think that a lot of things in life are due to circumstances beyond our

control. And doing unconditional charity will bring merits and blessings, according to Buddha.

Contrary to popular conception, Buddha advocates unconditional charity as the principal religious practice and not doctrine. Practice and not theory, says Buddha. If we practice giving without dwelling on doctrine, our spiritual power within us will be unleashed, and our mind will see the true reality around us. It seems ironic that the more wealth we give away, the more wealth we shall receive. That is exactly what Buddha preaches.

Unconditional charity also embraces the human values of empathy, care and love for others.

### **3. Reciting and Preaching Diamond Sutra.**

Coupled with that, by reciting Diamond Sutra daily and preaching Diamond Sutra constantly, we also accumulate merits and blessings. Reading Diamond Sutra daily will help us develop virtuous roots and moral behaviors crucial to a meaningful and successful life, and eventually it will

lead to personal enlightenment. By preaching Diamond Sutra, we are helping other people to practice virtuous and meritorious life, to gain enlightenment, and to bring about a better humanity as a result.

#### **4. Free From Visual Perceptions**

Buddha also tries to make us understand that we are all captive to our own visual perception of self, people, beings and mortals around us. This means that our mind and behaviors have been unconsciously pre-programmed and inculcated by our social environments since birth. Buddha teaches us to free ourselves from the habit of visual perception and aim for complete objectivity. The information from our bodily senses has been filtered through the unconsciously preconditioned mindset, and the biased information processing could result in emotions and actions of undesirable consequences.

The notion of freedom from visual perception is important to foster creativity. So often our mind is closed because of our preconceived ideas

which lead to illogical conclusions and actions. Freeing our mind from biased visual perception will be the first step. We need to let our mind roam freely to be able to think outside the box. visual perception only serves to stymie our ability to see realities from completely objective perspectives. We have to be aware of our cognitive habits, preconception and predisposition as a result of our visual perception. These are the stumbling blocks to our creativity. Removing the preconception and predisposition is therefore imperative. Even more so is freeing ourselves from the bondage of visual perception. We understand we all morph slowly as we go through life under the influence of our environments. Mostly these changes are beyond our control because of our habit of visual perception. To a certain degree these changes may influence our destiny and the course of our life. Hence to change our destiny requires controlling these changes in our life, physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally and socially. If we are



free from the captivity of visual perception, it is easier for us to unlearn and learn these behavioral changes with conscious effort. Of course many of the behavioral changes require underlying attitudinal changes based on the idea of no visual perception.

We often attribute what we see as right or wrong; good or bad, based on our preconception. This usually results in negative thought, speech and action. It is not uncommon for us to instinctively misconstrue other people's ideas and actions as wrong if they do not jive with our own preconceived ideas. Bear in mind that the concept of right or wrong, and good or bad is not absolute but relative because they are all based on visual perception. Therefore, it is meaningless and futile to argue right or wrong; good or bad for that matter. In order to avoid the pitfall, we need to habitually question our visual perception, and uncover and challenge our hidden assumptions. In this context, if we can get rid of the pitfalls of visual perception, we can help create a

more harmonious world by fostering better cross-cultural understanding and communication.

When Buddha teaches us to free ourselves from the shackles of visual perception, he basically reminds us that what we see is not the reality but a perception. Unfortunately the perception is constrained by our physical faculties and the limits of our senses. More importantly the perception is biased by the social pre-programming in our earlier life. The social and political conflicts that we see today can be largely attributed to this preconceived cultural divide. Human creativity is the main engine of human progress. The power of human creativity can be unleashed if we can free ourselves from the shackles of visual perception. That may involve a cyclical process of unlearning and learning based on no visual perception. Free and unconventional thinking entails removing presumptions from our mindset that forces us into a particular mode of thought, and not relying on visual perception will help remove those presumptions.

## **5. Forbearance**

Forbearance means forgiving others of trespassing on your rights. It also means forgoing the standard of justice of tit for tat. In a way it can mean repaying others with kindness and goodwill in return for harm and injury done unto you. In a larger context, forbearance means accepting adverse circumstances with equanimity. It is note-worthy that forbearance is hard to achieve without first ridding ourselves of the habit of visual perception. When we are wronged, we feel vindictive to avenge the wrong we suffer. This is the standard of justice our society has forced upon us. Buddha explains that because of visual perception, we are predisposed to feel and act that way. Forbearance will bring merit and fortune in life. Buddha preaches magnanimity and not vengeance.

Forbearance also means the ability to take hits from adverse environments without retribution. This attitude will promote spiritual, mental, emotional and physical well-being. It is easier for us to practice

forbearance toward our fellow beings if we understand that some of our attitudes have been preprogrammed in our earlier life without our awareness.

### **6. Do not Dwell on Senses of Sight, Sound, Smell and Taste.**

Buddha admonishes us not to rely on and indulge in our senses because it is against enlightenment. What we see is not what it appears to be. We all filter sensory information through our mindset which is unconsciously molded by our social environments beyond our control since birth. Our perception is therefore distorted based on biased selective reception of sensory information. In addition, our senses also bring pleasure and pain which can lead to emotions and actions that harm ourselves and others.

The main threat to our spiritual well beings comes from material excesses. Overindulgence in sensual pleasures will crimp our desire to gain spiritual enlightenment. Also sensual pleasures encourage vice and vile behaviors, leading to immoral life. That is contrary to the teaching of Buddha advocating a virtuous and benevolent life.

## **7. Do not Be Dogmatic**

Buddha teaches us not to hold fast to religious practices and doctrines because they are the results of visual perception of self, people, beings and mortals. He says we should focus on practice and not on theory; and internally on cultivating a clean and pure heart, and not on external religious appearances. Because of the limits of our faculties, and also our preconditioned mindset, we constantly misconceive the physical reality around us. That is why Buddha teaches us to perceive the physical reality as it is without over-construing it, regardless of how perplexing and surprising it appears to be. The physical environment can be sometimes chaotic and sometimes peaceful; and sometimes tumultuous and sometimes still. None the less we must always remain calm and composed. We must always see the reality around us as it is without being inflexible and rigid about our perception.

Buddha preaches flexibility. He asks us not to hold fast to any doctrine or principle because of human limits. What we see is not real but what we

do not see is real. That is why Buddha repeatedly emphasizes the importance of having no visual perception to blind us from the reality. More importantly, dogmatism breeds religious extremism, causing social unrest and strife that threatens human society. Buddha explains that dogmatism is a result of visual perception of self, people, beings and mortals, leading to misconception and eventually fanaticism. Anything of perception is subjective and relative, and it involves the arbitrary judgment of good or bad, or right or wrong depending on the captive mindset that we acquire unconsciously from our social milieu since birth.

### **8. Unity with Universe**

Buddha reminds us that we all consists of precisely the same atoms that make up the whole universe. We all belong to the same energy field with our universe, and follow the same universal principles in spite of the confounding occurrences that we witness around us. Therefore we do not live in our own cocoon. We should rise above our own self to see

life in a larger perspective. We all should strive to relate meaningfully to our fellow humanity and other beings because we all belong to the same universe in essence. All differences are a result of our biased visual perception.

Enlightenment is a way to reconnect back with our universe.

### **9. Nothingness**

Buddha says all sages produce ideas out of nothing. The concept of nothingness is difficult to grasp. Buddha uses *nothingness* as the principle of enlightenment. *Nothing* dwells in our heart. *Nothing* stirs our heart. Our heart expects *nothing*. Our heart wishes *nothing*. When there is *nothing* in our heart, something is produced, which is revelation. Let *nothing* of sight, sound, smell and taste stir us. No visual perception influences us. No religious practices and teachings control us. Charity is based on *no* visual perception. Nirvana is based on “no remainder”. In a nutshell, all enlightenment principles boil down

to the concept of nothingness. Nothingness in our heart enhances creativity and awareness of mind, leading to higher stages of consciousness. Some people use Zen or meditative practices to experience nothingness and higher consciousness.

### **10. Power of Awakening**

Buddha says all sages create something out of nothing. He must be talking about revelation and awakening. It is a great mystery in life how revelation and awakening come about. It is not surprising that enlightenment does depend on revelation and awakening, and not on any rigid regimen. Therefore Buddha tries to make his disciples understand that enlightenment methods could not be passed from one person to another, very much contrary to popular conception. The only thing Buddha can do was to teach his disciples the approaches to enlightenment as explained above, and let enlightenment take its course.

We know a free heart and mind will help revelation and awakening, and



a heart that is clean, pure, calm and free from desires, emotions and external influences; and a mind that is free from shackles of visual perception and preconceived mindset. Overindulgence of our senses of sight, sound, smell and taste will only dull our power of revelation and awakening.

### **11. A Happy Life**

Buddha lays down the principle of a happy life which is to serve all beings. We will live a happy life if we are virtuous and benevolent. We will also live happily if we do not over-indulge in sensual pleasure of sight, sound, smell and taste. Happiness means letting go of all heart intents and ambitions. Happiness also means being forgiving and generous, and practice unconditional charity. Nurturing a clean, pure, peaceful heart free from desires and external perturbations through our visual perceptions is the key to a happy and carefree life.

In a modern society, human relationship is governed mostly by special or monetary interests to the neglect of human values. Maintaining a clean and pure heart is the first step in re-instilling meaningful human values into our social relationships. As a result, social harmony and cohesion is achieved despite cultural, religious and political chasms. Furthermore, once we understand that we are all captive to our own preconceived mindset, we will be more tolerant and forgiving of other people's conduct that offends us. We understand that we are predisposed to judging other people's speech and conduct in terms of right or wrong, and good or bad. The judgment is based on our preconceived mindset which is incorrect. Liberating ourselves from this shackle of preconception will help us communicate positively and effectively with our fellow human beings, smoothing out ruffles in relationship and leading to a happier life.

## **12. Science, Reason and Logic**

In his conversation with his student Subhuti, Buddha often asks the question why. This shows Buddha wants his students to think through what he says instead of accepting it blindly. In other words, he wants them to apply reason and logic. Buddha also often uses the expression: it is something, and it is not something, and it is something. At first glance, this seems confusing, illogical and contradictory. However, on second thought, this makes sense if it is something subjective and relative, and solely a matter of perception. Unfortunately, the perception is based on our captive preconception. Therefore, Buddha teaches complete objectivity, and the main hurdle will be our preconceived mindset.

More importantly, Buddha reveals some truths about our natural universe. He says we human beings are in unity with our natural universe. In spite of confounding chaos and calmness in the observed universe, there are principles governing the phenomena. Because of our limits,

we should observe and understand the natural phenomena as such, and should not be obsessed with it to the extent of distracting us from living our normal lives.

When we apply reason and logic, we must be aware of subjective traps. Reason and logic goes hand in hand with objectivity. So often we are ensnared in our individual perception of reality that we lose the objectivity to use reason and logic correctly. It is not surprising that Buddha again and again asks us to remove the blind of subjective perception and open our heart and mind to the true reality in life.

### **13. Learning**

Learning is an important process in life. We constantly learn how to adapt in order to survive in our environment. We learn how to make a living in our career and profession. We learn how to manage our health and wealth. We learn how to manage family and relationships. In other words, learning is a lifelong process. Those who have mastered the art and science of learning are more likely

to succeed in life than those who have not.

What is learning? Learning is acquiring knowledge and skill, as defined in a dictionary. Learning involves assimilation of ideas through the process of visual perception. Invariably, learning is therefore influenced by our preconceived mindset. The preconception may either help or obstruct learning in a particular circumstance. Most people are slow or unable to learn and adapt because of their preconception. Uncovering and removing such constipating preconceptions is the key to learning. In this vein, learning actually involves unlearning. It is critically important that we unlearn the fallacies in our preconceived mindset and free up our mind to be able to understand and internalize the ideas we are trying to learn. We need to empty our cup of stale coffee before filling it up with fresh one. Just a metaphor.

*Science is the brain; religion is the heart; life is the journey. So why don't we make our journey more meaningful using our brain and heart?*

## **14. Longevity and Health**

It has been proven scientifically that mental and spiritual well being has a significant influence on our physical health. First, charity creates a sense of happiness which helps strengthen our body defenses against diseases. This jives with Buddha's teaching of unconditional charity. Second, Buddha teaches forbearance which helps foster human interaction and relationships. Harmonious and meaningful human relationships also promote our physical health. An 80-year old study by Harvard University proves beyond doubt that stable personal and social relationships are the key to longevity and good health. Third, Buddha teaches us not to indulge in our senses. We all know that eating right and doing exercise are imperatives for good health, and it takes a lot of will power and discipline to implement a healthy lifestyle. That is why Buddha teaches self-restraints and discipline for a moral and healthy lifestyle away from indulgence, material excesses and gratification of our senses. Fourth, Buddha asks us to maintain a calm and peaceful heart. We should let nothing dwell in our

heart. A carefree and stress-free life is a healthy life. Stress weakens our body defenses in many ways. In order to have serenity in our hearts, Buddha teaches us to empty our hearts of desires, fears and worries because they create stresses in life. Too often we are caught up in the rat race of relentlessly pursuing material wealth and celebrity status that not only our health is adversely impacted but also happiness in life eludes us. We attain material successes and ephemeral sensual gratification at the expense of health. In most cases, our heart desires may not be good for us and cannot be realized. It is therefore important that we take our circumstances in stride, and put our life in the right perspectives. Seeing our lives beyond ourselves in a large humanity perspective is necessary to inject meaning into our lives.

### **15. Meaning and Purpose in Life**

Buddha says our life would be meaningful and purposeful if we live a virtuous and benevolent life to help all beings in general and human beings in particular without fixating on visual perception,

bodily sensations and religious teachings and practices.

## **15. Quantum Sciences and Buddhism**

Human beings have made phenomenal progress in understanding the universe and lives on earth since the Enlightenment period in late 17th century when reason and logic as well as liberty and scientific methods began to take root. We have progressed from classical Newtonian physics to Einstein's Relativity to Quantum Mechanics; from atoms, electrons and neutrons to quarks to bosons; from Quantum Mathematics to Quantum Physics to Quantum Chemistry to Quantum Biology to Quantum Psychology. Quantum Mechanics has indeed revolutionized the ways we understand our universe and lives on earth. As we relentlessly venture into the unknowns, we also encountered more questions and uncertainties about what we have known. This is an important paradox in our quest for knowledge.

Advances in Quantum Sciences seem to point to the fact that the reality we perceived around us is an illusion and constructed reality. This is confirmed by an odd space experiment whereby photons are bounced off satellites to allow the researchers to confirm that an observer



can make the decision even after a photon has made its way almost completely through the experiment. This view of reality is what Buddha has been saying, "What we see is not real, but what we do not see is real." That is the reason why Buddha teaches us not to be dogmatic about our perception of realities around us. They are illusory and deceptive.

Quantum Mechanics also confirms the existence of parallel and multi universes. That is why Buddha has frequently mentioned three thousand great thousand worlds in his discourse.

Quantum Mechanics also brings forth a strange phenomenon of Quantum entanglement when groups of particles have dependent quantum states even they are separated by long distances. This confirms Buddha's view that this universe must exist in unity as in ubiquitous quantum field.

In addition, Quantum Mechanics also revolutionized our understanding of time. Our concept of time as a progressive continuum is called into question. Maybe Einstein was right in saying, "...the distinction between past, present and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion." That is why Buddha says when a

person is enlightened, he is omnipresent and omniscient.

## **16. Devoid of Self, People, Beings and Mortals**

What does it mean to be devoid of self, people, beings and mortals? Self is an individual person as the object of his or her own reflective consciousness. Thus self is a reference of a subject to the same subject. We attempt to find meaning and make sense of our world by invariably establishing a frame of reference from ourselves and from our own perspectives and perceptions. The self frame of reference will determine our perceptions and interactions with other people, beings and mortals. In other words, we are held captive to our own self whether we are aware of it or not. Unless we break free from this captivity of self, we can never achieve enlightenment. The way to do it is to go beyond oneself and see things without conscious reference to self. The other way is the refusal to find meaning and purpose in our thoughts, words and actions because meaning and purpose inextricably entangled with self. We need to see our world as it is without reading too much into it.

We need to live our lives as they are without dwelling too much on them. Just let life flow us by, free of care, worry and burden.

### **17. In Praise of Agnosticism**

What does agnosticism mean? It is neither the belief nor the disbelief in divine or supernatural which is unknown and unknowable. It can also mean indifference, not liking or disliking. The emotion of liking or disliking certain thing will not only bias our thinking but also cloud our judgment. Therefore it is important to maintain an indifference attitude in all things so that we see things in an unbiased perspective. Additionally, we also tend to exercise moral judgment of right or wrong in whatever we encounter. This moral judgment is based on our preconditioned mindset and cultural upbringing. As a result, our emotions of righteousness could be mis-directed. To be truly objective and rational, knowing our limitations, therefore it is only wise of us to be agnostic and indifferent, not seeing everything with like or dislike, or with right or wrong.

## Buddha's Gems for Thoughts

"For all types of beings, no matter if they are born from eggs, or from wombs, or from moisture, or from transmutation; or from substance or non-substance; thinking or non-thinking; without thoughts or not without thoughts, I will lead them to enter Remainderless Nirvana in order to expire and deliver them. Actually not a being is expired and delivered. Why is it so?"



"If bodhisattvas possess the visual perception of self, people, beings and mortals, they are not bodhisattvas."



"In regard to dharmas or religious teachings, bodhisattvas should never dwell on them. They must practice giving. I mean giving without dwelling on visual sensation, and also giving without dwelling on senses of sound, smell and taste which are in conflict with enlightenment. "

"If bodhisattvas give without dwelling on visual perception, their blessing will be inconceivable."



“Any possession of physical form is not real. If you see physical form as non-physical form, you will see Buddha.”



After Buddha has passed away for five hundred years, if there are people who steadfastly exercise self-restraints in order to enhance their karma, and develop true conviction of these words that I say, and treat my words as truths, you know they are unlike one, two, three, four and five buddhas in terms of planting virtuous roots. In fact, they are like immeasurable millions of buddhas planting virtuous roots. After they have heard such words, they will wholeheartedly develop clear and pure conviction.

"All Bodhisattvas as such should bear a clean and pure heart. Their heart should not dwell on visual sensation to arouse desires. Their heart should also not dwell on sensation of sound, smell and taste to arouse desires, which is in conflict with the enlightenment way. Their heart should not dwell on anything at all and let it be free to behave."



"If those virtuous and benevolent men and women maintain conviction in the verses of this sutra and preach the four line gathas to other people, their blessings will surpass previous ones"



"Again if there are people who hear about this sutra, and believe with a clean and pure heart, they will develop true perception of reality. You know such people will be foremost successful in achieving extraordinary merits. I say true perception, not considered true perception by some, but is named true perception."

"Because the perception of self is not a true perception, and so are the perceptions of people, beings and mortals. That is why you have to depart from all visual perceptions to become a buddha."



"I say the foremost paramita, not considered the foremost paramita by some, but the foremost paramita, is forbearance."



"That is why, Subhuti, all bodhisattvas should depart from visual perception to develop an enlightening heart. They should not dwell on visual sensation to arouse desire. They should also not dwell on sensations of sound, smell and taste which are in conflict with enlightenment. They should let their hearts dwell on nothing and be free to behave. That is because if there is any dwelling of the heart, it is in fact not a real dwelling. I say the heart of a bodhisattva should practice giving without dwelling on visual sensation."

"Subhuti, if a bodhisattva's heart dwells on doctrine while practicing giving, he is like entering into a dark room and seeing nothing at all. On the other hand, if he does not dwell on doctrine while practicing giving, it is like he has eyes and will see all sorts of colors as if in bright daylight."



"Subhuti, in the coming generations, if there are virtuous and benevolent men and women who steadfastly recite this sutra, they will be like Buddha and have Buddha's wisdom. What I know and see is that those people will achieve immeasurable and boundless merits."



"If someone says I achieve enlightenment, Subhuti, there is no clear way to achieve it. Subhuti, the enlightenment that I achieve in essence is intangible but real. I say all enlightenment ways are the Buddha ways. "



"Subhuti, those heart desires could not be satisfied in the past, and cannot be now, and will not be in the future."



"Again, Subhuti, such way is fair and equitable, and is thus called enlightenment way. It is based on the idea of devoid of self, people, beings and mortals, and encompasses all the kind, virtuous and benevolent ways. This will lead to enlightenment."



"If one uses visual manifestations to see me, or uses sound to implore me, such person is practicing deviant way, and he cannot see me."



"I have obtained enlightenment not from the complete physical appearances of excellence. Subhuti, if you think like that, all the people who set their heart on enlightenment will say all the enlightenment ways are obliterated. "



"If someone says it is like I have come, have gone, have sat down or have lain down, he does not understand the meaning of what I say. Why is that so? This is because an enlightened person is omnipresent and omniscient, and is like he comes from nowhere and goes nowhere."



"If the world really exists, it must be perceived as if it exists in unity."



"Subhuti, all the people who set their heart on enlightenment should know all the enlightenment ways as they are, and understand them as they are, and should not be dogmatic."



“Subhuti, if there are people filled with immeasurable and myriad worlds of seven precious jewels, and if they steadfastly practice giving, and if there are kind, virtuous and benevolent men and women who are compassionate and merciful, abide in this sutra and all the verses therein, steadfastly recite this sutra, and speak to other people about it, then their blessings will be more than others, what is more if they speak to others not based on appearances and visual perception which as a result cannot move or influence them.”



***"Everything is governed by  
principles;  
It may appear like dream or  
bubble;  
Like dew or like lightning;  
All should be observed as such."***







