

The Diamond Perfection of Wisdom Sûtra

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1.

Thus have I heard. One time the Buddha was staying at the Anàthapindada retreat in the Jeta Grove near Shràvastî, with a great congregation of 1,250 monks (bhikùu). At mealtime, the World Honored One put on his robes and took his alms bowl into the great city of Shràvastî to beg for alms. In the midst of that city, he begged successively and then returned to his personal dwelling to eat his meal. Having put away his robes and bowl, he washed his feet, prepared his seat, and sat.

2.

At that time, the venerable Subhûti was amidst the great congregation. He then rose from his seat, adjusted his robes, and kneeled his right knee to the ground. With his palms joined together respectfully, he addressed the Buddha, saying, "Extraordinary, World Honored One, is the Tathàgata's skillful mindfulness of the bodhisattvas and his skillful entrustment to the bodhisattvas. World Honored One, in what should good sons and good daughters engendering the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta dwell? How should they subdue their minds?"

The Buddha replied, "Excellent, excellent! Subhûti, as you have said, the Tathàgata is skillfully mindful of the bodhisattvas, and skillful is his entrustment to the bodhisattvas. If you now listen closely, I shall explain for you in what good sons and good daughters engendering the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta should thus abide, and how thus they should subdue their minds."

"Yes, World Honored One. Gladly, I shall listen."

3.

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, saying, "Bodhisattva-mahàsattvas should thus subdue their minds: 'Where there is every single sort of sentient being; whether egg-born, womb-born, water-born, or born of transformation; whether having form or formless; whether having thought or no thought; whether neither having thought nor no thought; I will cause all to enter the non-residual Nirvâna, liberating them. Thus liberating the measureless, countless, and boundless sentient beings, in reality there are no sentient beings attaining that liberation.' And why? Subhûti, if a bodhisattva has the image of a self, the image of a person, the image of beings, or the image of a soul; then he is not a bodhisattva

4.

"Furthermore, Subhûti, a bodhisattva in the Dharma should not dwell in the practice of charity (dàna) . I.e., he does not dwell in the forms of charity; does not dwell in the sounds, odors, tastes, tactile sensations, or ideas of charity. Subhûti, a bodhisattva should thus be charitable, not dwelling in such images. And why? If a bodhisattva does not dwell in the images of charity, his blessed virtue is incalculable.

"Subhûti, what do you think? To the East, the space can be calculated, no?"

"No, World Honored One."

"Subhûti, to the South, West, North, the four directions between, the Zenith and Nadir, the space can be calculated, no?"

"No, World Honored One."

"Subhûti, the blessed virtue of a bodhisattva who does not dwell in the images of charity is also so. It cannot be calculated. Subhûti, bodhisattvas should only dwell according to this teaching."

5.

"Subhûti, what do you think? One can see the Tathàgata by his bodily signs, no?"

"No, World Honored One. One cannot see the Tathàgata by his bodily signs. And why is that? The Tathàgata has explained that the bodily signs are not bodily signs."

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, saying, "The signs ordinary people possess are signs that are all empty and mistaken. If one sees that these signs are not signs, then one sees the Tathàgata."

6.

Subhûti said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, isn't it doubtful that there are sentient beings who will hear thus the words spoken in this discourse and become genuinely faithful?"

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, saying, "Do not say this. In the final five hundred year era after the Tathàgata's death, those who uphold the precepts and cultivate the blessed will be able to give rise to the faithful mind from these passages because they are true. It should be known that these people would not have been with one Buddha, two Buddhas, three, four, or five Buddhas and sown the good roots. They will have sown the good roots with a measureless hundreds of thousands of Buddhas. Hearing these passages, even for a single recitation, they shall give rise to a pure faith. Subhûti, the Tathàgata fully knows and fully sees that these sentient beings will attain thus such measureless blessed virtue. And why? These sentient beings will not return to the images of a self, images of a person, images of sentient beings, or images of a soul. They would have no images of the Dharma and also no images of the non-Dharma. And why? If these sentient beings' minds were to grasp such images, they would become attached to a self, a person, sentient beings, and a soul. If they were to grasp the images of the Dharma, they would become attached to a self, a person, sentient beings, and a soul. And why? If they were to grasp the images of the non-Dharma, they would become attached to a self, a person, sentient beings, and a soul. This is why one should not grasp the Dharma and why one should not grasp the non-Dharma. It is because of this meaning that the Tathàgata always says, 'You monks! Know that my spoken Dharma is like the bamboo raft. The Dharma that is honored must be relinquished. How much more so is it with what is not the Dharma?'

7.

"Subhûti, what do you think? The Tathàgata has attained the supremely unexcelled bodhi, no? The Tathàgata has a teaching of the Dharma, no?"

Subhûti replied, "As I have understood the meaning of the Buddha's discourse, there is no certain Dharma called 'the supremely unexcelled bodhi'. Also, there is no certain Dharma that the Tathàgata can expound. And why? The Dharmas expounded by the Tathàgata are intangible and inexpressible. They are neither Dharmas nor non-Dharmas. And why is that? All of the Sages make discriminations from the unconditioned Dharma."

8.

"Subhûti, what do you think? If a person filled the trichiliocosm with the seven treasures for the purpose of charity, this person's blessed virtue would become plentiful, no?"

Subhûti replied, "Very plentiful, World Honored One. And why? This blessed virtue then would not be of a blessed nature. This is why the Tathàgata has said that his blessed virtue would be plentiful."

"If, again, there is a person who receives and upholds just four lines of verse that is in this

Sûtra and explains it to another person, that person's blessedness would overcome the other's. And why? Subhûti, the Dharmas of all the Buddhas who have reached the Buddhas' supremely unexcelled bodhi are produced from this Sûtra. Subhûti, that is, those Buddhas' Dharmas, then, are not the Buddha's Dharma.

9.

"Subhûti, what do you think? The stream entrant (shrota-àpanna) is able to think, 'I have attained the stream entrant's reward', no?"

Subhûti replied, "No, World Honored One. And why? 'Stream entrant' is the name for entering the stream and for entering nowhere else: not entering forms, sounds, odors, tastes, tactile sensations, or ideas. This is called a 'stream entrant'."

"Subhûti, what do you think? The Once-returned (sakçdàgàmin) is able to think, 'I have attained the Once-returned's reward', no?"

Subhûti replied, "No, World Honored One. And why? 'Once-returned' is the name for one more arrival and really is without future arrival. This is called a 'Once-returned'."

"Subhûti, what do you think? The Non-returned (anàgàmin) is able to think, 'I have attained the Non-returned's reward', no?"

Subhûti replied, "No, World Honored One. And why? 'Non-returned' is the name for no further arrival, and really has no non-arrival. This is why he is called 'Non-returned'."

"Subhûti, what do you think? The Worthy (arhat) is able to think, 'I have attained the Worthy's enlightenment', no?"

Subhûti replied, "No, World Honored One. And why? Really, there is nothing called a 'Worthy'."

"World Honored One, if a Worthy were to think, 'I have attained the Worthy's enlightenment', then it would be because of attachment to a self, a person, sentient beings, and a soul. World Honored One, the Buddha has said that I have attained the samàdhi of non-dispute that among others is the best. It is the best because I am free of the desire to be a Worthy. I do not think, 'I am free of the desire to be a Worthy'. World Honored One, if I were to think, 'I have attained the Worthy's enlightenment', then the World Honored One would not have said that Subhûti is a happy woodland practitioner because Subhûti really practices nowhere. And so he is called 'Subhûti, the happy woodland practitioner'."

10.

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, saying, "What do you think? When the Tathàgata was formerly staying with the Buddha Dîpamkara, he had attained the Dharma that that Buddha possessed, no?"

"No, World Honored One. When the Tathàgata was staying with the Buddha Dîpamkara, really he did not attain that Dharma."

"Subhûti, what do you think? The bodhisattvas adorn the Buddha lands, no?"

"No, World Honored One. And why? The adorning of the Buddha lands is not an adornment. It is called an 'adornment'."

"This is why, Subhûti, the bodhisattva-mahàsattva should thus give rise to the pure mind. He should not dwell in forms when giving rise to that mind; nor should he dwell in sounds, odors, tastes, tactile sensations, or ideas when giving rise to that mind. They should dwell in no abode when giving rise to that mind."

"Subhûti, it is just like a person whose body is like Mount Sumeru. What do you think? This body would be great, no?"

Subhûti replied, "Very great, World Honored One. And why? The Buddha has said that it is not a body that is called a great body."

11.

"Subhûti, suppose there were Ganges rivers equal in numbers to that of all the sands in the

Ganges river. What do you think? The sands of all those Ganges Rivers would be many, no?"  
"Very many, World Honored One. Merely all of those Ganges Rivers would be so many as to be countless. How much more so would be their sands?"

"Subhûti, I now will truthfully tell you, if there were good sons and good daughters, who themselves number like the sands of those Ganges Rivers and who filled the trichiliocosm with the seven treasures for the purpose of charity, they would attain many merits, no?"

Subhûti replied, "Very many, World Honored One."

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, "If a good son or good daughter receive and uphold just four lines of verse from within this Sûtra and for explain it another person, their blessed virtue would surpass the blessed virtue of the others'.

12.

"Furthermore, Subhûti, where what is said in this Sûtra is followed, even if it is just four lines of verse, it should be known that the gods, men, or asuras in all the worlds, should give offerings of support to that place as though it were a Buddhist pagoda or temple. How much more so if there is someone who is able to receive, keep, read, and recite it in its entirety?"

Subhûti, it should be known that this person consummate the supreme, best, most extraordinary Dharma. If this Sûtra resides in his abode, then it would be as though the Buddha were present there, if it is honored by the disciples."

13.

At that time, Subhûti said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, what shall be the name of this Sûtra? How are we to transmit and uphold it?"

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, "This Sûtra's name is the Diamond [Cutting] Perfection of Wisdom . With the words of this title, you should transmit and uphold it. And why is that?"

Subhûti, the Buddha says that it is the perfection of wisdom (prajñàpàramità), so it is not the perfection of wisdom.

"Subhûti, what do you think? The Tathàgata has an exposition of the Dharma, no?"

Subhûti said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, the Tathàgata has no exposition."

"Subhûti, what do you think? The atoms of the trichiliocosm are many, no?"

Subhûti replied, "Very many, World Honored One."

"Subhûti, the Tathàgata has said that atoms are not atoms. They are called 'atoms'. The Tathàgata has explained that the worlds are not worlds. They are called 'worlds'. Subhûti, what do you think? One can see the Tathàgata by the thirty-two signs, no?"

"No, World Honored One. One cannot see of the Tathàgata by the thirty-two signs.

And why? The Tathàgata has explained that the thirty-two signs are not signs. They are called the 'thirty-two signs'."

"Subhûti, suppose there are good sons and good daughters that give charity and whose lives are equal to the sands of the Ganges River. And suppose again there is a person who receives and keeps four lines of verse from within this Sûtra and explains it for another person. His merit would be much more."

14.

At that time Subhûti, having heard this Sûtra expounded, deeply understood its meaning suddenly. He wept and lamented, and then addressed the Buddha, saying, "It is extraordinary, World Honored One, that the Buddha expounds such a profound Sûtra as this. Since the time I have had the wisdom-eye, I have never before heard such a Sûtra. World Honored One, if again there is a person who hears this Sûtra with a faithful mind that is pure, then in them will arise the sign of the real. It should be known that this person will have consummated the best, most extraordinary virtue. World Honored One, this sign of the real then is the a non-sign. This is why the Tathàgata has said that it is called the 'sign of the real'. World Honored One,

thus having heard this Sûtra and faithfully understood it, receiving and upholding it is no longer difficult for me. If the sentient beings who come into the world in the last five hundred year era hear this Sûtra with faithful understanding, receive and uphold it, they then would be made most extraordinary. And why? These people would not have the images of a self, images of a person, images of sentient beings, or images of a soul. And why is that? The images of the self then are non-signs. The images of a person, images of sentient beings, and images of a soul then are non-signs. And why? Being free of all images therefore is what is called a Buddha."

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, saying, "So it is, so it is. If again there is a person who hears this Sûtra, and is not astonished, not alarmed, and not fearful; it should be known that this person would be most extraordinary. And why? Subhûti, the Tathàgata's exposition of the first perfection is not the first perfection. It is called the first perfection. Subhûti, the perfection of tolerance (kùànti-pàramità), that Tathàgata has explained, is not the perfection of tolerance. And why? Subhûti, I had formerly had my body cut to pieces by King Kaliïga and at that time was without the images of a self, without the images of a person, without the images of sentient beings, and without the images of a soul. And why? in that former time I had been cut apart limb from limb. If I had had the images of a self, images of a person, images of sentient beings, and the images of a soul, I would have become angry and indignant.

"Furthermore, Subhûti, I recall that in the past five hundred incarnations I had been an ascetic practicing tolerance. In that incarnation, I was without the image of a self, without the image of a person, without the image of sentient beings, and without the image of a soul. This is why, Subhûti, the bodhisattva should be free of all images when engendering the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta. He should not dwell in forms when giving rise to that mind. He should not dwell in sounds, odors, tastes, tactile sensations, or ideas when giving rise to that mind. He should dwell nowhere when giving rise to that mind. If in that mind he has an abode, then it would be the non-abode. This is why the Buddha has said that the bodhisattva's mind should not dwell in the forms of charity. Subhûti, the bodhisattva who bestows blessings on all the sentient beings should thus be charitable. The Tathàgata has said that all images then are the non-images. Further, he has said that all sentient beings, therefore, are not sentient beings. Subhûti, the Tathàgata speaks truly, really, thus, not with trickery, and no with contradiction. Subhûti, the Dharma that the Tathàgata has attained is neither true nor false. Subhûti, if a bodhisattva's mind dwells in the Dharma while practicing charity, it would be like a person entering darkness and who sees nothing. If a bodhisattva's mind does not dwell in the Dharma while practicing charity, it would be like a person who has eyes to see the sunlight that illuminates all the various forms. Subhûti, in the future era there will be good sons and good daughters able to receive, uphold, read, and recite what is in this Sûtra. For the Tathàgata fully knows and fully sees these people with the Buddha's wisdom. I can say that they all shall attain the consummation of that measureless and boundless virtue.

15.

"Subhûti, suppose there are good sons and good daughters who, in the morning, in numbers equaling that of the sands of the Ganges, give themselves in charity; who, in the afternoon, in numbers equaling that of the sands of the Ganges, give themselves in charity; who, in the evening, in numbers equaling that of the sands of the Ganges, give themselves in charity; and thus for measureless billions of aeons (kalpas) give themselves in charity. Suppose, again, that there is a person who hears this Sûtra with a faithful mind that is not contrary, his blessedness would overcome theirs. How much more so would it be if he copies, receives, upholds, reads, and recites it, and then explains it for another person? Subhûti, essentially speaking, this Sûtra has a meaning that is inconceivable, inexpressible, and boundless in virtue. The Tathàgata expounds it for those of setting forth the great vehicle and expounds it for those setting forth the supreme vehicle. If there is a person who is able to receive, uphold, read, and recite this

Sûtra and widely explain it to another person, the Tathàgata fully knows and fully sees that such a person will attain the consummation of an unfathomable, inexpressible, boundless, and inconceivable virtue. Thus such a person therefore carries on the Tathàgata's supremely unexcelled bodhi. And why? Subhûti, if there is satisfaction found in the lesser Dharma, that is an attachment to the image of a self, the image of a person, the image of sentient beings, and the image of a soul. Therefore, there could not be the ability to receive, uphold, recite, or explain it for another person what is in this Sûtra. Subhûti, wherever it resides, in whatever place, if therein is this Sûtra, the gods, humans, and asuras of all of the worlds should give offerings there. It should be known that this place then is a pagoda. All should pay respect to it by circumambulating and scattering flowers and incense around it.

16.

"Furthermore, Subhûti, if good sons and good daughters who receive, uphold, read, and recite this Sûtra should be slighted or insulted, they would have committed evil deeds in prior lives and as a result fallen into that unpleasant path. Because of that, they are slighted and insulted in the present life by others. When the prior life's evil deeds then have been extirpated, they shall attain the supremely unexcelled bodhi. Subhûti, I recall that in the past, a measureless asaïkhya aeons ago, before I was with the Buddha Dîpamkara, I had met eighty-four quintillions of Buddhas, had given offerings to all of them, and had received their work without needless error. Suppose, again, there is someone in the later superficial era who is able to receive, uphold, read, and recite this Sûtra, and attain the merit of it. The merit of my giving offerings to all of those Buddhas would not compare to a hundredth of his merit. Even a trillionth of the his merit could not compare to it. Subhûti, if I were to fully enunciate the extent of the merit attained by that good son or good daughter in the later superficial era who shall receive, uphold, read, and recite this Sûtra, some of the people's minds in this audience would be confounded, become doubtful, and not believe it. Subhûti, it should be known that this Sûtra's meaning is inconceivable. The fruit of its reward is also inconceivable.

17.

At that time, Subhûti said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, in what should good sons and good daughters dwell when engendering the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta? How should they subdue their minds?"

The Buddha addressed Subhûti, saying, "Goods sons and good daughters engendering the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta will give rise to this thought, 'I shall liberate all sentient beings. Having liberated all of the sentient beings, there are really no sentient beings who are liberated.' And why? Subhûti, if a bodhisattva has the image of a self, the image of a person, the image of sentient beings, or the image of a soul, then he is not a bodhisattva. And why is that? Subhûti, really there is no one who has the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta. Subhûti, what do you think? When the Tathàgata was with the Buddha Dîpamkara, he possessed the Dharma and could attain the supremely unexcelled bodhi, no?"

"No, World Honored One. As I have understood the meaning of the Buddha's discourse, when the Buddha was with the Buddha Dîpamkara he did not possess the Dharma that could attain the supremely unexcelled bodhi."

The Buddha replied, "So it is, so it is. Subhûti, really there is no existent Dharma that the Tathàgata has attained in the supremely unexcelled bodhi. Subhûti, if there were a Dharma that the Tathàgata has attained in the supremely unexcelled bodhi, the Buddha Dîpamkara, then, would not have given me prediction, saying, 'You shall appear in a future life as a Buddha named Shàkyamuni.' Since in reality there is no existent Dharma in the attainment of supremely unexcelled bodhi, the Buddha Dîpamkara bestowed onto me prediction, saying, 'You shall appear in a future life as a Buddha named Shàkyamuni.' And why? 'Tathàgata' then is the thusness of things.

Suppose there is a person who says the Tathàgata has attained the supremely unexcelled bodhi. Subhùti, really there is no Dharma in the Buddha's attainment of the supremely unexcelled bodhi. Subhùti, in the Tathàgata's attainment of the supremely unexcelled bodhi there is no truth or falsehood. This is why the Tathàgata says that all of the Dharmas are the Buddha's Dharma. Subhùti, that which is called 'all of the Dharmas,' then, is not all of the Dharmas. This is why it is called 'all of the Dharmas.' Subhùti, for example, take the person whose body is huge."

Subhùti replied, "World Honored One, the Tathàgata has said that the person who has a body which is huge, then, does not have a great body. It is called a great body."

"Subhùti, the bodhisattva is also so. If one should say, 'I shall liberate the measureless sentient beings' then he is not called a bodhisattva. And why? Subhùti, really there is nothing thing is called is 'bodhisattva'. This is why the Buddha has said that all things are devoid of self, devoid of person, devoid of sentient beings, and devoid of a soul. Subhùti, if a bodhisattva were to say, 'I shall adorn the Buddha land'; he is not to be called a bodhisattva. And why? The Tathàgata has said that the adornment of the Buddha land, then, not an adornment. It is called 'adornment'. Subhùti, if a bodhisattva penetrates into the selflessness of things, the Tathàgata has said that he is genuinely called a bodhisattva."

18.

"Subhùti, what do you think? The Tathàgata possesses the flesh eye, no?"

"So it is, World Honored One. The Tathàgata possesses the flesh eye."

"Subhùti, what do you think? The Tathàgata possesses the heavenly eye, no?"

"So it is, World Honored One. The Tathàgata possesses the heavenly eye."

"Subhùti, what do you think? The Tathàgata possesses the wisdom eye, no?"

"So it is, World Honored One. The Tathàgata possesses the wisdom eye."

"Subhùti, what do you think? The Tathàgata possesses the Dharma eye, no?"

"So it is, World Honored One. The Tathàgata possesses the Dharma eye."

"Subhùti, what do you think? The Tathàgata possesses the Buddha eye, no?"

"So it is, World Honored One. The Tathàgata possesses the Buddha eye."

"Subhùti, what do you think? Regarding the sands possessed by the Ganges River, the Buddha has spoken of these sands, no?"

"So it is, World Honored One. The Tathàgata has spoken of these sands."

"Subhùti, what do you think? As there are sands in a single Ganges River, suppose there are Ganges Rivers equal in number to those sands, and that there are Buddha worlds numbering like those sands in each of those rivers. These worlds would be many, no?"

"Very many, World Honored One."

The Buddha addressed Subhùti, saying, "In those lands there are sentient beings possessing various kinds of minds, which the Tathàgata fully knows. And why? The Tathàgata has said that minds are not minds, and so are called 'minds'. And why is that? Subhùti, the past mind is unobtainable, the present mind is unobtainable, and the future mind is unobtainable."

19.

"Subhùti, what do you think? Suppose there is a person who filled the trichilocosm with the seven treasures for the purpose of charity. This person, with these causes and conditions, would obtain many merits, no?"

"So it is, World Honored One. This person, with these causes and conditions, would obtain very many merits."

"Subhùti, if that blessed deed were real, the Tathàgata would not have said that this person would obtain many merits. Since the blessed deed is non-existent, the Tathàgata says that the person would obtain many merits."

20.

"Subhûti, what do you think? The Buddha can be seen by the perfect form of his body, no?"

"No, World Honored One. The Tathàgata should not be seen by the perfect form of his body. And why? The Tathàgata has said that the perfect form of his body is not a perfect form of body. It is called a perfect form of body."

"Subhûti, what do you think? The Tathàgata can be seen by the perfect signs, no?"

"No, World Honored One. The Tathàgata should not be seen by the perfect signs. And why? The Tathàgata has said that the signs' perfection is not perfect. It is called the signs' perfection."

21.

"Subhûti, do not say that the Tathàgata composes this thought, 'I shall have an exposition of the Dharma.' Do not compose that thought. And why? If a person says that the Tathàgata has an exposition of the Dharma, then they have slandered the Buddha because they are unable to understand the reason for my speaking. Subhûti, the spoken Dharma lacks a Dharma which can be spoken. It is called a spoken Dharma." At that time, the Venerable Subhûti said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, isn't it doubtful that there will be sentient beings in future eras yet to come who will give rise to the faithful mind upon hearing of this Dharma?"

The Buddha replied, "Subhûti, they are not sentient beings, nor are they not sentient beings. And why? Subhûti, the 'sentient being' of a sentient being, the Tathàgata has said, is not a sentient being. It is called a sentient being."

22.

Subhûti said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, the Buddha's attainment of the supremely unexcelled bodhi is the attainment of nothing?"

The Buddha replied, "So it is, so it is. Subhûti, in my supremely unexcelled bodhi, there is not the slightest thing that can be attained. This is called the supremely unexcelled bodhi."

23.

"Furthermore, Subhûti, the Dharma is equanimous, lacking high or low. This is called the supremely unexcelled bodhi. By having no self, having no person, having no sentient beings, and having no soul, and cultivating of all the good things, therefore, attains the supremely unexcelled bodhi. Subhûti, the words 'good things', the Tathàgata has said, are not good things. They are called good things.

24.

"Subhûti, suppose that a person has accumulated mounds like the Mount Sumerus of the trichiliocosm of the seven treasures of such size and numbers as those Mount Sumerus for the purpose of charity. If a person receives, upholds, reads, and recites just four lines of verse in this Perfection of Wisdom Sûtra, and explains it for another person, the former's merit would not compare to a hundredth of his own. A trillionth part of his own, even, would be not be comparable to it.

25.

"Subhûti, what do you think? Would you say that the Tathàgata has this thought, 'I shall save the sentient beings'? Subhûti, he does not have that thought. And why? Really, there are no sentient beings for the Tathàgata to save. If there were sentient beings for the Tathàgata to save, the Tathàgata then would have a self, a person, sentient beings, and a soul. Subhûti, the Tathàgata has said that having a self then is not having a self. Yet, ordinary men take themselves as having a self. Subhûti, the Tathàgata has explained that ordinary men, then, are not mortal men. They are called 'ordinary men'."

26.

"Subhûti, what do you think? One can examine the Tathàgata by the thirty-two marks, no?" Subhûti replied, "So it is, so it is. One examines the Tathàgata by the thirty-two marks."

The Buddha said, "Subhûti, if one examines the Tathàgata by the thirty-two marks, then a wheel-turning noble king is this Tathàgata."

Subhûti said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, as I understand the meaning of the Buddha's discourse, the Tathàgata should not be examined by the thirty-two signs."

At that time, the World Honored One proclaimed this verse (gàthà),

"If by form one looks for the Tathàgata  
Or by the sound of the voice seeks me,  
This person walks the wrong path  
And is unable to see the Tathàgata.

27.

"Subhûti, suppose you were to compose this thought, 'It is not by the perfect signs that the Tathàgata has attained the supremely unexcelled bodhi'. Subhûti, do not compose that thought, 'It is not by the perfect signs that the Tathàgata has attained the supremely unexcelled bodhi'. Subhûti, suppose you were to compose this thought, 'Engendering the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta is said to be the Dharma of cessation'. Do not form that thought. And why? Engendering the supremely unexcelled bodhicitta cannot be said to be the Dharma of cessation.

28.

"Subhûti, suppose a bodhisattva filled worlds numbering like the sands of the Ganges River with the seven treasures for the purpose of charity. Suppose, again, there is a person who knows every thing is selfless and so attains the complete tolerance of them. This bodhisattva would overcome the former bodhisattva's attainment of virtue. Subhûti, it is because bodhisattvas do not receive blessed virtue." Subhûti addressed the Buddha, saying, "World Honored One, how is it bodhisattvas do not receive blessed virtue?"

"Subhûti, the bodhisattva's performance of blessed deeds should not be subject to craving or attachment. This is why I say they do not receive blessed virtue.

29.

"Subhûti, if there is a person who says the Tathàgata comes, goes, sits, or lies down. This person does not understand the meaning of my discourse. And why? A 'Tathàgata' is without a place from whence to come and also is without a place to which to go. That is why he is called a Tathàgata."

30.

"Subhûti, suppose a good son or good daughter were to grind a trichiliocosm to atoms. What do you think? These atoms would be many, no?"

"Very many, World Honored One. And why? If these atoms were really existent, the Buddha then would not say the atoms are myriad. And why is that? The Buddha has said the atoms then are not atoms. These are called atoms. World Honored One, the Tathàgata has said that the trichiliocosm of worlds then is not worlds. These are called worlds. And why? If the worlds were really existent, then these would appear as a single entity. The Tathàgata has said that the appearance of a single entity is not the appearance of a single entity. This is called a single entity."

"Subhûti, the appearance of a single entity, then, is inexpressible. Only ordinary men crave and are attached to their own doings.

31.

"Subhûti, suppose someone says the Buddha has spoken of a view of self, a view of a person, the view of sentient beings, or the view of a soul. Subhûti, what do you think? This person understands the meaning of my discourse, no?"

"No, World Honored One. This person would not understand the meaning of the Tathàgata's discourse. And why? The World Honored One has said the view of a self, the view of a person, the view of sentient beings, and the view of a soul; then, are not the views of a self, view of a person, view of sentient beings, and the view of a soul. These are called the view of a self, the view of a person, the view of sentient beings, and the view of a soul."

"Subhûti, in the supremely unexcelled bodhi all things thus should be known, thus be viewed, and thus be faithfully understood as the marks of the unarisen Dharma. Subhûti, the Tathàgata has said the words 'mark of the Dharma,' then, are not mark of the Dharma. This is called the mark of the Dharma.

32.

"Subhûti, suppose there is a person who fills the measureless asaïkhya of worlds with the seven treasures for the purpose of charity. And suppose there is a good son or good daughter who engenders the bodhicitta, upholding just four lines of verse in this Sûtra; receiving, upholding, reading, reciting, and giving extensive explanations of it for others. That blessed virtue would overcome the other's. And how would they give extensive explanations for other people? By not taking up the images of the absolute, the unmoving. And why?"

"All conditioned things  
Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, shadows;  
Like dew and also like lightning.  
Thus should they be contemplated."

Once the Buddha had expounded this Sûtra, the venerable Subhûti, the monks, nuns (bhikùunîs), laymen (upàsakas), and laywomen (upàsikàs), and the gods, humans, and asuras in all the worlds who had heard the Buddha's discourse were all greatly elated. Faithfully did they accept and hand down the practice of the Diamond Perfection of Wisdom Sûtra.