

The Diamond Sutra

1. Question: Though all the sentient beings to be delivered by me are innumerable and without limit, / in reality, / there are no sentient beings to be delivered. / Why?

Answer: Because should there exist in the minds of Bodhisattvas / arbitrary conceptions of phenomena / such as the existence of one's self / or the self of another / or selfness as divided into beings / or selfness as unified into one universal self existing eternally, / they would be unworthy to be called Bodhisattvas.

2. Question: When the Buddha speaks of great universes / does he have in mind any definite idea?

Answer: No. When the Buddha uses the words *great universes* / he does not assert any definite idea. / He merely uses the words as words.

3. Question: Is this true for the words Buddha and Dharma?

Answer: There are no Buddhas and there are no Dharmas.

4. Question: Should a disciple strive to attain Buddhahood?

Answer: No. That would mean the disciple is striving to attain something limited, / as in *perfect-supreme-wisdom*; / but true Buddhahood, whose essence is identical with the essence of all things, / is inconceivable / and beyond all striving.

5. Question: How is it possible to explain this sutra without ideas of things and dharmas?

Answer: This sutra can only be explained / by keeping the mind in perfect oneness and tranquility.

6. Question: Should a Bodhisattva make an assertion / such as "I have entered the stream?

Answer: No. Because / he has not entered anything/ nor has his mind entered any idea / such as form, sound, taste, odor or touch.

7. Question: Because of his virtue / will Buddha be reborn either in this world or any other world?

Answer: No. / There will be no rebirth / either in this world / or in any other world. / It is because he knows this / the Buddha is called a Buddha.

8. Question: Is there any one who is a fully enlightened one?

Answer: No. Should a disciple cherish in his mind an idea such as / “I have become enlightened,” / he would soon be grasping after things / such as his own selfhood, / or other selves, *I* or a universal self.

9. Question: If there is no distinction between one’s own self and the selfhood of others, / how do we practice kindness?

Answer: We practice kindness / by giving not only objective gifts / but the selfless gifts of kindness and sympathy.

10. Question: Is there any merit for acts of kindness?

Answer: Bodhisattvas never seek merit / nor look upon kind acts as private possessions / but as the common possessions of all animate beings.

11. Question: What does it mean to say there is no such thing as *supreme-perfect-wisdom* / and that the Buddha does not teach any fixed dharma?

Answer: This means Bodhisattvas are not enlightened by any fixed teaching / but by an intuitive process / that is spontaneous and natural.

12. Question: What does it mean to say the Buddha has come or has gone?

Answer: This means the Buddha is never coming from anywhere / nor is he going anywhere. / The name Buddha is merely a word.

13. Question: Why does the Buddha use words and ideas in his teachings?

Answer: The Buddha uses words and ideas in his teachings / in resemblance to a raft, / of use only to cross a river. / As the raft is of no use after the river is crossed, / it should be discarded. / So too ideas about things should be given up as one attains enlightenment.

14. Question: Has the Buddha given us any definite teaching in this sutra?

Answer: No. The Buddha has not given us any definite teaching in this sutra.

Everyone *“Like a meteor, like darkness,
as a flickering lamp, an illusion,
like hoar frost, or a bubble,
like clouds, a flash of lightning,
or a dream.
So all conditioned existence is to be seen.” {Everyone}*

The Sutra of Perfection of Wisdom of the Diamond that Cuts through Illusion - Excerpts from the teaching dialogue in which the Buddha questions his disciple, Subhuti.