

The Vajra Cutter Sutra

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In the language of India:

*Arya Vajracchedikā Nāma Prajñāpāramitā
Mahāyāna Sutra*

In Tibetan:

*'Phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa rdo rje gcod
pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

In English:

*The Exalted Mahayana Sutra on the Wisdom Gone
Beyond called The Vajra Cutter*

I prostrate to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear. At one time the Bhagavan was dwelling at Shravasti, in the grove of Prince Jeta, in the garden of Anathapindada, together with a great Sangha of bhikshus of 1,250 bhikshus and a great many bodhisattva mahasattvas.

Then, in the morning, having put on the lower and upper Dharma robes and carried the begging bowl, the Bhagavan entered the great city of Shravasti to request alms. Then, having gone to the great city of Shravasti to request alms, the Bhagavan afterwards enjoyed the alms food, and having performed the activity of food,

since he had given up alms of later food, put away the begging bowl and upper robe. He washed his feet, sat upon the prepared cushion, and having assumed the cross-legged posture, straightened the body upright and placed mindfulness in front. Then, many bhikshus approached to the place where the Bhagavan was and, having reached there, bowing their heads to the Bhagavan's feet, circumambulated three times and sat to one side.

Also at that time, the venerable Subhuti, joining that very assembly, sat down. Then, the venerable Subhuti rose from the seat, placed the upper robe over one shoulder, set his right knee on the ground, bowed, joining the palms, toward the Bhagavan, and said this to the Bhagavan: "Bhagavan, the extent to which the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Enlightened Buddha has benefited the bodhisattva mahasattvas with highest benefit, the extent to which the Tathagata has entrusted the bodhisattva mahasattvas with highest entrustment – Bhagavan, it is astonishing; Sugata, it is astonishing. Bhagavan, how should one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle abide, how practice, how control the mind?"

That was said, and the Bhagavan said to the venerable Subhuti, "Subhuti, well said, well said. Subhuti, it is so; it is so. The Tathagata has benefited the bodhisattva mahasattvas with the highest benefit. The Tathagata has entrusted the bodhisattva mahasattvas with the highest entrustment. Subhuti, therefore, listen and properly retain it in mind, and I will explain to you how

one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle should abide, how practice, how control the mind."

Having replied, "Bhagavan, so be it," the venerable Subhuti listened in accordance with the Bhagavan, and the Bhagavan said this: "Subhuti, here, one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle should generate the mind of enlightenment thinking this: 'As many as are included in the category of sentient being – born from egg, born from the womb, born from heat and moisture, born miraculously; with form, without form, with discrimination, without discrimination, without discrimination but not without [subtle] discrimination – the realm of sentient beings, as many as are designated by imputation as sentient beings, all those I shall cause to pass completely beyond sorrow into the realm of nirvana without remainder of the aggregates. Although limitless sentient beings have thus been caused to pass completely beyond sorrow, no sentient being whatsoever has been caused to pass completely beyond sorrow.'

"Why is that? Subhuti, because if a bodhisattva engages in discriminating a sentient being, he is not to be called a 'bodhisattva.' Why is that? Subhuti, if anyone engages in discriminating a sentient being, or engages in discriminating a living being, or engages in discriminating a person, they are not to be called a 'bodhisattva.'

"Further, Subhuti, a bodhisattva gives a gift without abiding in a thing; gives a gift without abiding in any

phenomenon whatsoever. A gift should be given not abiding in visual form; a gift should be given not abiding in sound, smell, taste, tactility, or phenomenon either. Subhuti, without abiding in discriminating anything whatsoever as any sign, thus does a bodhisattva give a gift. Why is that? Subhuti, because the heap of merit of that bodhisattva who gives a gift without abiding, Subhuti, is not easy to take the measure of.

“Subhuti, what do you think about this? Do you think it is easy to take the measure of space in the east?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is not so.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, similarly, do you think it is easy to take the measure of space in the south, west, north, above, below, the intermediate directions, and the ten directions?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is not so.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, similarly, the heap of merit of that bodhisattva who gives a gift without abiding is also not easy to take the measure of.

“Subhuti, what do you think about this? Is one viewed as the Tathagata due to the perfect marks?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is not so; one is not viewed as the Tathagata due to the perfect marks. Why is that? Because, that itself which the Tathagata called perfect marks are not perfect marks.”

He replied thus, and the Bhagavan said this to the venerable Subhuti: "Subhuti, to the degree there are perfect marks, to that degree there is deception. To the degree there are no perfect marks, to that degree there is no deception. Thus, view the Tathagata as marks and no marks."

He said that and the venerable Subhuti replied to the Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, when the holy Dharma will totally perish, will any sentient beings produce correct discrimination upon the words of sutras such as this being explained?"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, do not say what you have said, '...in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, when the holy Dharma will totally perish, will any sentient beings produce correct discrimination upon the words of sutras such as this being explained..' Moreover, Subhuti, in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, when the holy Dharma will totally perish, there will be bodhisattva mahasattvas, endowed with morality, endowed with qualities, endowed with wisdom. Subhuti, those bodhisattva mahasattvas moreover will not have made homage to just a single buddha; they will not have produced roots of virtue to just a single buddha. Subhuti, there will be bodhisattva mahasattvas who have made homage to many hundred thousands of buddhas and produced roots of virtue to many hundred thousands of buddhas.

“Subhuti, those who will acquire merely a single mind of faith upon the words of such sutras as this being explained, Subhuti, the Tathagata knows. Subhuti, they are seen by the Tathagata; Subhuti, all those sentient beings will produce and perfectly collect an unfathomable heap of merit. Why is that? Subhuti, because those bodhisattva mahasattvas will not engage in discriminating a self and will not discriminate a sentient being, will not discriminate a living being, will not engage in discriminating a person. “Subhuti, those bodhisattva mahasattvas will not engage in discriminating phenomena nor discriminating non-phenomena; nor will they engage in discrimination or non-discrimination. Why is that? Subhuti, because if those bodhisattva mahasattvas engage in discriminating phenomena, that itself would be of them grasping a self and grasping a sentient being, grasping a living being, grasping a person. Because even if they engage in discriminating phenomena as non-existent, that would be of them grasping a self and grasping a sentient being, grasping a living being, grasping a person.

“Why is that? Further, Subhuti, because a bodhisattva should not wrongly grasp phenomena, nor grasp non-phenomena.”

Therefore, thinking of that, the Tathagata said, “If, by those who know this Dharma treatise as like a boat, even dharmas should be given up, what need is there to mention non-dharmas?”

Further, the Bhagavan said to the venerable Subhuti, "Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, exist whatsoever? Has any Dharma been taught by the Tathagata?"

He said that, and the venerable Subhuti replied to the Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, as I understand this meaning that was taught by the Bhagavan, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever. That dharma that was taught by the Tathagata does not exist whatsoever. Why is that? Because any dharma manifestly and completely realized or taught by the Tathagata is not to be grasped, not to be expressed; it is not dharma nor is it non-dharma. Why is that? Because arya beings are differentiated by the un compounded."

The Bhagavan said to the venerable Subhuti, "Subhuti, what do you think about this? If some son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage, completely filling this billion-fold world system with the seven types of precious things, were to give gifts, do you think that son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an immense heap of merit on that basis?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, immense. Sugata, immense. That son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an immense heap of merit on that basis. Why is that? Bhagavan, because that very

heap of merit is not a heap; therefore, the Tathagata says, 'Heap of merit, heap of merit.' "

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, compared to any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who, completely filling this billion-fold world system with the seven types of precious things, were to give gifts, if someone, having taken even as little as one stanza of four lines from this discourse of Dharma, also were to explain and correctly and thoroughly teach it to others, on that basis, the heap of merit produced would be much greater, incalculable, unfathomable.

Why is that? Subhuti, because the unsurpassed perfectly completed enlightenment of the Tathagata arhat perfectly completed buddhas arises from it; the buddha Bhagavans also are produced from it. Why is that? Subhuti, because the buddha dharmas called 'buddha dharmas,' are those buddha dharmas taught by the Tathagata as non-existent; therefore, they are called 'buddha dharmas.'

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the stream-enterer think, 'I have attained the result of stream-enterer'?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is not so. Why is that? Bhagavan, because one does not enter into anything whatsoever; therefore, one is called 'stream-enterer.' One has not entered into form, nor entered into sound, nor into smell, nor into taste, nor into tactility, nor entered into a phenomenon; therefore, one is called 'stream-enterer.' Bhagavan, if that stream-enterer were

to think 'I have attained the result of stream-enterer,' that itself would be a grasping of that as a self, grasping as a sentient being, grasping as a living being, grasping as a person."

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the once-returner think, 'I have attained the result of once-returner'?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is not so. Why is that? Because the phenomenon of entry into the state of the once-returner does not exist whatsoever. Therefore, one says, 'once-returner.'"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the non-returner think, 'I have attained the result of non-returner'?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is not so. Why is that? Because the phenomenon of entry into the state of the non-returner does not exist whatsoever. Therefore, one says, 'non-returner.'"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the arhat think, 'I have attained the result of arhatship'?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is not so. Why is that? Because the phenomenon called 'arhat' does not exist whatsoever. Bhagavan, if the arhat were to think, 'I have attained the result of arhatship,' that itself would be a grasping of that as a self, grasping as a sentient being, grasping as a living being, grasping as a person.

“Bhagavan, I was declared by the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha as the foremost of those who abide without afflictions. Bhagavan, I am an arhat, free of attachment; but, Bhagavan, I do not think, ‘I am an arhat.’ Bhagavan, if I were to think, ‘I have attained arhatship,’ the Tathagata would not have made the prediction about me saying, ‘The son of the lineage, Subhuti, is the foremost of those who abide without afflictions. Since not abiding in anything whatsoever, he abides without affliction, he abides without affliction.’”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was received by the Tathagata from the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha Dipankara exist whatsoever?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is not so. That dharma that was received by the Tathagata from the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha Dipankara does not exist whatsoever.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, if some bodhisattva were to say, ‘I shall actualize arranged fields,’ they would speak untruly. Why is that? Subhuti, because arranged fields called ‘arranged fields,’ those arrangements are taught by the Tathagata as non-existent; therefore, they are called ‘arranged fields.’ Subhuti, therefore, the bodhisattva mahasattva thus should generate the mind without abiding, should generate the mind not abiding in anything. They should generate the mind not abiding in form, should generate the mind not

abiding in sound, smell, taste, tactility, or phenomenon.

“Subhuti, it is like this: If, for example, the body of a being were to become thus, were to become like this, as big as Sumeru, the king of mountains, Subhuti, what do you think about this? Would that body be big?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, that body would be big. Sugata, that body would be big. Why is that? Because it is taught by the Tathagata as not being a thing; therefore, it is called a ‘body.’ Since it is taught by the Tathagata as not being a thing; therefore, it is called a ‘big body.’”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? If there were also just as many Ganges Rivers as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, would their grains of sand be many?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, if those very Ganges Rivers were many, there is no need to mention their grains of sand.” The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, you should appreciate; you should understand. If some man or woman, completely filling with the seven kinds of precious things that many world systems as there are grains of sand of those rivers Ganges, were to offer that to the Tathagata arhat perfectly completed buddhas, Subhuti, what do you think about this? Would that man or woman produce much merit on that basis?” Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, much. Sugata, much. That man or woman would produce much merit on that basis.” The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, compared to someone who,

completely filling that many world systems with the seven types of precious things, were to give gifts to the Tathagata arhat perfectly completed buddhas, if someone, having taken even as little as a stanza of four lines from this discourse of Dharma, were to explain it and correctly and thoroughly teach it also to others, on that basis the merit that itself would produce would be much greater, incalculable, unfathomable.

“Furthermore, Subhuti, if, at whatever place on earth even a stanza of four lines from this discourse on Dharma is recited or taught, that place on earth is a real shrine of the world with devas, humans, and asuras, what need to mention that whoever takes up this discourse of Dharma, memorizes, reads, understands, and properly takes to mind will be most astonishing. At that place on earth [where] the Teacher resides; other levels of gurus also abide.”

He said that and the venerable Subhuti replied to the Bhagavan, “Bhagavan, what is the name of this discourse of Dharma? How should it be remembered?”

He said that and the Bhagavan replied to the venerable Subhuti, “Subhuti, the name of this Dharma discourse is the ‘wisdom gone beyond’; it should be remembered like that. Why is that? Subhuti, because the very same wisdom gone beyond that is taught by the Tathagata is not gone beyond; therefore, it is called ‘wisdom gone beyond.’

“Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the dharma that is taught by the Tathagata exist whatsoever?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, the dharma that is taught by the Tathagata does not exist whatsoever.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do think about this? Are the quantities of particles of earth that exist in a billion-fold world system many?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, the particles of earth are many. Sugata, they are many. Why is that? Bhagavan, because that which is a particle of earth was taught by the Tathagata as not being a particle; therefore, it is called ‘particle of earth.’ That which is a world system was taught by the Tathagata as not being a world system; therefore, it is called a ‘world system.’”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? Is one to be viewed as the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha due to those thirty-two marks of a great being?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is not so. Why is that? Bhagavan, because those thirty-two marks of a great being that are taught by the Tathagata are taught by the Tathagata as no marks; therefore, they are called ‘thirty-two marks of the Tathagata.’”

The Bhagavan said, “Further, Subhuti, compared with some man or woman completely giving up bodies numbering the grains of sand of the river Ganges, if someone, taking even as little as a stanza of four lines

from this discourse of Dharma, also were to teach it to others, they would produce on that basis many greater merits, incalculable, unfathomable.”

Thereupon, the venerable Subhuti, due to the impact of the Dharma, shed tears. Having wiped away the tears, he replied to the Bhagavan, “Bhagavan, this discourse on Dharma taught thus by the Tathagata, Bhagavan, is astonishing. Sugata, it is astonishing. Bhagavan, since my production of exalted wisdom, I have never before heard this discourse on Dharma. Bhagavan, those sentient beings who will produce correct discrimination upon this sutra being explained will be most astonishing. Why is that? Bhagavan, because that which is correct discrimination is not discrimination; therefore, correct discrimination was taught by the Tathagata saying ‘correct discrimination.’ Bhagavan, upon this Dharma discourse being explained, that I imagine and appreciate is not astonishing to me. Bhagavan, in the final time, in the final age, at the end of the five hundred, those sentient beings who take up this Dharma discourse, memorize, read, and understand it will be most astonishing. Furthermore, Bhagavan, they will not engage in discriminating a self; will not engage in discriminating a sentient being, discriminating a living being, discriminating a person. Why is that? Bhagavan, because that itself which is discrimination as a self, discrimination as a sentient being, discrimination as a living being, and discrimination as a person is not discrimination. Why is that? Because the buddha Bhagavans are free of all discrimination.”

He said that and the Bhagavan replied to the venerable Subhuti, "Subhuti, it is so; it is so. Upon this sutra being explained, those sentient beings who are unafraid, unterrified, and will not become terrified will be most astonishing. Why is that? Subhuti, because this highest wisdom gone beyond, taught by the Tathagata, the highest wisdom gone beyond that is taught by the Tathagata, was also taught by unfathomable buddha Bhagavans – therefore, it is called 'highest wisdom gone beyond.'

"Further, Subhuti, that itself which is the patience gone beyond of the Tathagata has not gone beyond. Why is that? Subhuti, because when the king of Kaliyuga cut off my limbs and appendages, at that time there did not arise in me discrimination as a self, discrimination as a sentient being, discrimination as a living being, nor discrimination as a person, and in me there was no discrimination whatsoever, yet there was also no non-discrimination. Why is that? Subhuti, because, if at that time there had arisen in me discrimination as a self, at that time there would also have arisen discrimination of malice; if there had arisen discrimination as a sentient being, discrimination as a living being, discrimination as a person, at that time there would also have arisen discrimination of malice.

"Subhuti, I know with clairvoyance that in the past period, during five hundred lifetimes, I was the rishi called 'Preacher of Patience'; even then there did not arise in me the discrimination as a self; there did not arise the discrimination as a sentient being,

discrimination as a living being, discrimination as a person. Subhuti, therefore, the bodhisattva mahasattva, completely abandoning all discrimination, should generate the mind for unsurpassed perfectly complete enlightenment. One should generate the mind not abiding in form. One should generate the mind not abiding in sound, smell, taste, tactility, or phenomena. One should generate the mind not abiding in non-phenomena either. One should generate the mind not abiding in anything whatsoever. Why is that? Because that itself which is abiding does not abide. Therefore, the Tathagata taught, 'The bodhisattva should give gifts not abiding.'

"Further, Subhuti, the bodhisattva should thus totally give away gifts for the welfare of all sentient beings. However, that itself which is discrimination as a sentient being is non-discrimination. Those themselves who were taught by the Tathagata saying 'all sentient beings' also do not exist. Why is that? Subhuti, because the Tathagata teaches reality, teaches truth, teaches what is; the Tathagata teaches what is without error.

"Further, Subhuti, the dharma that is manifestly and completely realized or shown by the Tathagata has neither truth nor falsity. Subhuti, it is like this, for example: if a man with eyes has entered darkness, he does not see anything whatsoever; likewise should one view the bodhisattva who totally gives up a gift by falling into anything.

"Subhuti, it is like this, for example: upon dawn and the sun rising, a man with eyes sees various kinds of forms;

likewise should one view the bodhisattva who totally gives up a gift by not falling into anything.

“Further, Subhuti, those sons of the lineage or daughters of the lineage who take up this Dharma discourse, memorize, read, understand, and correctly and thoroughly teach it to others in detail are known by the Tathagata, they are seen by the Tathagata. All those sentient beings will produce an unfathomable heap of merit.

“Further, Subhuti, compared to some man or woman, at the time of dawn, totally giving up bodies numbering the grains of sand of the river Ganges – also totally giving up bodies numbering the grains of sand of the river Ganges at the time of midday and evening, in such number totally giving up bodies for many hundred thousands of ten million, hundred billion eons – if someone, having heard this Dharma discourse, would not reject it, if they themselves would produce much greater merit on that basis, incalculable, unfathomable, what need to mention someone who, having written it in letters, takes it up, memorizes, reads, understands, and correctly and thoroughly teaches it to others in detail?

“Further, Subhuti, this Dharma discourse is unimaginable and incomparable. This Dharma discourse was taught by the Tathagata for the benefit of sentient beings who have correctly entered into the supreme vehicle, the welfare of sentient beings who have correctly entered into the best vehicle. Those who take up this Dharma discourse, memorize, read,

understand, and correctly and thoroughly teach it to others in detail are known by the Tathagata; they are seen by the Tathagata. All those sentient beings will be endowed with an unfathomable heap of merit. Being endowed with an unimaginable heap of merit, incomparable, immeasurable, and limitless, all those sentient beings will hold my enlightenment on the shoulder. Why is that? Subhuti, this Dharma discourse is unable to be heard by those who appreciate the inferior, by those viewing a self, by those viewing a sentient being, by those viewing a living being; those viewing a person are unable to hear, to take up, to memorize, to read, and to understand because that cannot be.

“Further, Subhuti, at whatever place on earth this sutra is taught, that place on earth will become worthy to be paid homage by the world with devas, humans, and asuras. That place on earth will become worthy as an object of prostration and worthy as an object of circumambulation. That place on earth will become like a shrine.

“Subhuti, whatever son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage takes up the words of a sutra like this, memorizes, reads, and understands, they will be tormented; will be intensely tormented. Why is that? Subhuti, because whatever non-virtuous actions of former lifetimes that were committed by those sentient beings that would bring rebirth in the lower realms, due to torment in this very life, those non-virtuous

actions of former lifetimes will be purified, and they will also attain the enlightenment of a buddha.

“Subhuti, I know with clairvoyance that in the past period, in even more countless of countless eons, much beyond even beyond the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha Dipankara, there were eighty-four hundred thousands of ten million, hundred billion buddhas whom I pleased, and having pleased, did not upset. Subhuti, from whatever I did, having pleased and not having upset those buddha Bhagavans and in the future period, at the end of the five hundred, from someone taking up this sutra, memorizing, reading, and understanding, Subhuti, compared to this heap of merit, the former heap of merit does not approach even a hundredth part, a thousandth part, a hundred-thousandth part; does not withstand enumeration, measure, calculation, similarity, equivalence, or comparison.

“Subhuti, at that time, the sons of the lineage or daughters of the lineage will receive a quantity of heap of merit that, if I were to express the heap of merit of those sons of the lineage or daughters of the lineage, sentient beings would go mad, would be disturbed.

“Further, Subhuti, this Dharma discourse being unimaginable, its maturation indeed should also be known as unimaginable.”

Then, the venerable Subhuti replied to the Bhagavan, “Bhagavan, how should one who has correctly entered

the bodhisattva's vehicle abide, how practice, how control the mind?"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, here, one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle should generate the mind thinking this: 'I shall cause all sentient beings to pass completely beyond sorrow into the realm of nirvana without remainder of the aggregates. Although sentient beings were caused to pass completely beyond sorrow like that, no sentient being whatsoever was caused to pass beyond sorrow.' Why is that? Subhuti, because if a bodhisattva engages in discriminating a sentient being, he is not to be called a 'bodhisattva.' Also, if he engages in discriminating a person, he is not to be called a 'bodhisattva.' Why is that? Subhuti, because the dharma called 'one who has correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle' does not exist whatsoever.

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata from the Tathagata Dipankara, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, exist whatsoever?"

He said that and the venerable Subhuti replied to the Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata from the Tathagata Dipankara, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever."

He said that and the Bhagavan replied to the venerable Subhuti, "Subhuti, it is so. It is so, that dharma that was

manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata from the Tathagata Dipankara, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever. Subhuti, if that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata were to exist at all, the Tathagata Dipankara would not have made the prediction to me, saying, 'Young brahmin, in a future period you will become the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha called Shakyamuni.' Subhuti, thus, since that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever, therefore, the Tathagata Dipankara made the prediction to me, saying, 'Young brahmin, in a future period you will become the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha called Shakyamuni.' Why is that? Because, Subhuti, 'Tathagata' is an epithet of the suchness of reality.

"Subhuti, if someone were to say, 'The Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha manifestly and completely realized unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment,' they would speak wrongly. Why is that? Subhuti, because that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever. Subhuti, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata has neither truth nor falsity. Therefore, 'all dharmas are buddha dharmas' was taught by the Tathagata. Subhuti, 'all dharmas', all those are non-dharmas. Therefore, it is said that 'all dharmas are buddha dharmas.' Subhuti, it

is like this, for example: like a human endowed with a body and the body became large.”

The venerable Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, that taught by the Tathagata, ‘a human endowed with a body and a large body,’ is taught by the Tathagata as not being a body. Therefore, ‘endowed with a body and a large body’ is said.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, it is so; if some bodhisattva were to say, ‘I shall cause sentient beings to completely pass beyond sorrow,’ he should not be called ‘bodhisattva.’ Why is that? Subhuti, does the dharma that is called ‘bodhisattva’ exist whatsoever?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it does not.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, therefore, it was taught by the Tathagata that ‘all dharmas are without a sentient being, without a living being, without a person.’

“Subhuti, if some bodhisattva were to say, ‘I shall actualize arranged fields,’ he too should be expressed similarly. Why is that? Subhuti, because the arranged fields called ‘arranged fields’ are those taught by the Tathagata as non-arranged. Therefore, they are called ‘arranged fields.’ Subhuti, whatever bodhisattva appreciates that dharmas are selfless, saying ‘dharmas are selfless,’ he is expressed by the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha as a bodhisattva called a ‘bodhisattva.’

“Subhuti, What do you think about this? Does the Tathagata possess the flesh eye?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is so; the Tathagata possesses the flesh eye.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathagata possess the divine eye?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is so; the Tathagata possesses the divine eye.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathagata possess the wisdom eye?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is so; the Tathagata possesses the wisdom eye.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathagata possess the dharma eye?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is so; the Tathagata possesses the dharma eye.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does the Tathagata possess the buddha eye?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is so; the Tathagata possesses the buddha eye.”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, what do you think about this? If, there being also just as many Ganges Rivers as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, there were just as many world systems as there are grains of sand of those, would those world systems be many?”

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is so; those world systems would be many."

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, as many sentient beings as exist in those world systems, I totally know their continua of consciousness of different thoughts. Why is that? Subhuti, because a so-called 'continuum of consciousness' is that taught by the Tathagata as a non-continuum. Therefore, it is called a 'continuum of consciousness.' Why is that? Subhuti, because past consciousness does not exist as an observable, nor does future consciousness exist as an observable, nor does present consciousness exist as an observable.

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? If someone, completely filling this billion-fold world system with the seven types of precious things, were to give gifts, do you think that son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an enormous heap of merit on that basis?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, enormous. Sugata, enormous."

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, it is so. It is so; that son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage would produce an enormous heap of merit on that basis. Subhuti, if a heap of merit were a heap of merit, the Tathagata would not have taught a heap of merit called a 'heap of merit.'

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? Should one be viewed as the Tathagata due to total achievement of the form body?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is not so; one should not be viewed as the Tathagata due to total achievement of the form body. Why is that? Bhagavan, because 'total achievement of the form body' is that taught by the Tathagata as not being total achievement; therefore, it is called 'total achievement of the form body.'"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, what do you think about this? Is one to be viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is not so; one is not to be viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks. Why is that? Because that which was taught by the Tathagata as perfect marks was taught by the Tathagata as not being perfect marks; therefore, they are called 'perfect marks.'"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, what do you think about this? If it is thought that the Tathagata considers, 'the dharma is demonstrated by me,' Subhuti, do not view it like that, because the dharma that is demonstrated by the Tathagata does not exist whatsoever. Subhuti, if someone were to say 'the dharma is demonstrated by the Tathagata,' Subhuti, he would deprecate me since nonexistent and wrongly seized. Why is that? Subhuti, because that demonstrated dharma called 'demonstrated dharma,' which is referred to saying 'demonstrated dharma,' does not exist whatsoever."

Then, the venerable Subhuti said to the Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, in the future period, will there be any

sentient beings who, having heard this demonstration of such a dharma as this, will clearly believe?"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, they are not sentient beings nor non-sentient beings. Why is that? Subhuti, so-called 'sentient beings,' because they were taught by the Tathagata as non-sentient beings, therefore are called 'sentient beings.'

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? Does that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, exist whatsoever?"

The venerable Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, that dharma that was manifestly and completely realized by the Tathagata, unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment, does not exist whatsoever."

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, it is so; it is so. For it, even the least dharma does not exist and is not observed; therefore, it is called 'unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment.'

"Further, Subhuti, that dharma is equivalent since, for it, inequivalence does not exist whatsoever; therefore, it is called 'unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment.' That unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment – equivalent as selfless, without sentient being, without living being, without person – is manifestly and completely realized through all virtuous dharmas. Subhuti, virtuous dharmas called 'virtuous dharmas,' they, taught by the Tathagata as

just non-dharmas, are therefore called 'virtuous dharmas.'

"Further, Subhuti, compared to any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage collecting a heap of the seven types of precious things about equaling whatever Sumeru, king of mountains, exist in a billion world systems, and giving gifts, if someone, having taken up even as little as a stanza of four lines from this wisdom gone beyond, were to teach it to others, Subhuti, compared to this heap of merit, the former heap of merit having not approached even a hundredth part, does not withstand comparison.

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? If it is thought that the Tathagata considers, 'Sentient beings are liberated by me,' Subhuti, do not view it like that. Why is that? Subhuti, because those sentient beings who are liberated by the Tathagata do not exist whatsoever. Subhuti, if some sentient being were to be liberated by the Tathagata, that itself would be, of the Tathagata, grasping a self, grasping a sentient being, grasping a living being, grasping a person. Subhuti, so-called 'grasping a self,' that is taught by the Tathagata as non-grasping, yet that is grasped by childish ordinary beings. Subhuti, so-called 'childish ordinary beings,' they were taught by the Tathagata as just non-beings; therefore, they are called 'childish ordinary beings.'

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? Is one to be viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks?"

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it is not so; one is not viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks."

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, it is so; it is so. One is not viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks. Subhuti, if one were viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks, even a chakravartin king would be the Tathagata; therefore, one is not viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks."

Then, the venerable Subhuti said to the Bhagavan, "Bhagavan, as I understand the meaning of what the Bhagavan has said, one is not viewed as the Tathagata due to perfect marks."

Then, these verses were spoken by the Bhagavan at that time:

"Whoever sees me as form, whoever knows me as sound, has wrongly engaged by abandoning, those beings do not see me.

The buddhas are dharmata viewed; the guides are the dharmakaya. Since dharmata is not to be known, it is unable to be known."

"Subhuti, what do you think about this? If one grasps that 'the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha is due to perfect marks,' Subhuti, you should not view so for, Subhuti, the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha does not manifestly and completely realize unsurpassed perfect and complete enlightenment due to perfect marks.

“Subhuti, if one grasps that ‘some dharma has been designated as destroyed or annihilated by those who have correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle,’ Subhuti, it should not be viewed so; those who have correctly entered the bodhisattva’s vehicle have not designated any dharma whatsoever as destroyed or annihilated.

“Further, Subhuti, compared to any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who, completely filling with the seven kinds of precious things as many world systems as there are grains of sand of the rivers Ganges, were to give gifts, if any bodhisattva attained forbearance that dharmas are selfless and unproduced, on that basis the heap of merit they themselves would produce would be much greater. Further, Subhuti, a heap of merit should not be acquired by the bodhisattva.”

The venerable Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, should not a heap of merit be acquired by the bodhisattva?”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, acquire, not wrongly grasp; therefore, it is called ‘acquire.’

“Subhuti, if someone says, ‘The Tathagata goes or comes or stands or sits or lies down,’ he does not understand the meaning explained by me. Why is that? Subhuti, because ‘the Tathagata’ (‘the One Gone Thus’) does not go anywhere nor has come from anywhere; therefore, one says, ‘the Tathagata Arhat Perfectly Completed Buddha.’

“Further, Subhuti, if some son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage were to render as many atoms of earth as exist in a billion-fold world system, like this for example, into powder like a collection of subtlest atoms, Subhuti, what do you think about this? Would that collection of subtlest atoms be many?”

Subhuti replied, “Bhagavan, it is so. That collection of subtlest atoms would be many. Why is that? Bhagavan, because if there were a collection, the Bhagavan would not have said ‘collection of subtlest atoms.’ Why is that? Because that ‘collection of subtlest atoms’ that was taught by the Bhagavan was taught by the Tathagata as no collection; therefore, one says ‘collection of subtlest atoms.’ That ‘billion-fold world system’ that was taught by the Tathagata was taught by the Tathagata as no system; therefore, one says ‘billion-fold world system.’ Why is that? Bhagavan, because if there were to be a world system, that itself would be grasping a solid thing. That taught by the Tathagata as grasping a solid thing was taught by the Tathagata as no grasping; therefore, one says ‘grasping a solid thing.’”

The Bhagavan said, “Subhuti, grasping a solid thing is itself a convention; that dharma does not exist as expressed, yet it is grasped by ordinary childish beings. Subhuti, if someone were to say, ‘Viewing as a self was taught by the Tathagata and viewing as a sentient being, viewing as a living being, viewing as a person was taught by the Tathagata,’ Subhuti, would that be spoken by right speech?”

Subhuti replied, "Bhagavan, it would not. Sugata, it would not. Why is that? Bhagavan, because that which was taught by the Tathagata as viewing as a self, was taught by the Tathagata as no viewing; therefore, one says, 'viewing as a self.'"

The Bhagavan said, "Subhuti, those who have correctly entered the bodhisattva's vehicle should know, should view, should appreciate all dharmas like this; they should appreciate like this, not abiding whatsoever in any discrimination as a dharma. Why is that? Subhuti, because discrimination as a dharma, called 'discrimination as a dharma,' is taught by the Tathagata as non-discrimination; therefore, one says 'discrimination as a dharma.'

"Further, Subhuti, compared to any bodhisattva mahasattva who, completely filling unfathomable and incalculable world systems with the seven kinds of precious things, were to give gifts, if any son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage who, having taken as little as a stanza of four lines from this perfection of wisdom, were to memorize or read or understand or correctly and thoroughly teach it to others in detail, on that basis the merit he himself would produce would be more, incalculable, unfathomable.

"How should one correctly and thoroughly teach? Just how one would not correctly and thoroughly teach; therefore, one says, 'correctly and thoroughly teach.'

“As a star, a visual aberration, a lamp, an illusion, dew, a bubble, a dream, lightning, and a cloud – view all the compounded like that.”

That having been said by the Bhagavan, the elder Subhuti, those bodhisattvas, the fourfold disciples – bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas and upasikas – and the world with devas, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, overjoyed, highly praised that taught by the Bhagavan.

The Exalted Mahayana Sutra on the Wisdom Gone Beyond called The Vajra Cutter is concluded.

