

The Diamond Sutra

Supplement

Definition of “perception” or “perceive” from Webster’s Dictionary – 1. To grasp mentally; take note of, 2. To become aware of through one of the senses, 3. The understanding, knowledge, etc. gotten by perceiving, or a specific idea, concept, impression so formed.

The Six Paramitas (i.e. Virtues):

1. Generosity
2. Practicing the Precepts (living ethically)
3. Endurance (patience, perseverance)
4. Energy (vitality)
5. Concentration (meditation)
6. Understanding (wisdom)

How do we “practice” the Diamond Sutra?

- We read, recite, write down, accept, have confidence in, and explain the sutra to others. Practicing in this way brings immeasurable happiness. (compiled from various places in the sutra)
- We practice selflessness (emptiness), non-attachment, non-abiding (not relying on anything), interbeing, the Paramitas, and perceptions based on insight and understanding rather than on signs, concepts, or ideas. (compiled from various places in the sutra)
 - The way to avoid being caught by words and concepts (i.e. signs) is to see the nature of interbeing in everything. (commentary to verse 19)
- Formlessness is something concrete we can put into practice here and now. We can practice prajnaparamita in every aspect of our daily lives, in exactly the same way our right hand puts a bandage on our left hand, without discrimination. (commentary to verse 3)
- Whatever we are doing, if we can do it with a serene mind, our happiness will be boundless. This is already liberation. The words in the sutra are very much related to our daily lives. (commentary to verse 4)
- We practice all wholesome actions in the spirit of non-self, non-person, non-living beings, and non-life span. The fruit of the highest, most fulfilled, awakened mind is realized through practicing this way. (verse 23)
- We practice mindfulness. Mindfulness always gives birth to beautiful marks. The fruits of practice – serenity, peace, and happiness – are truly there, but they cannot be seen in the collection of views. They reveal themselves only in the wondrous reality. (commentary to verse 26)

The Theme of Happiness

- Because the practice of non-attachment as it is taught in the sutra can liberate us completely from wrong views, the happiness that results from this practice is far greater than any kind of happiness. Virtuous acts still based on the ground of self, person, living being, or life span may bring some happiness, but compared to the happiness of true liberation, it is still quite small. When a person is absolutely free from wrong views, his or her actions will greatly benefit the world. The practice of *The Diamond That Cuts Through Illusion* is thus the basis for all meaningful action. (verse 13)
- The happiness brought about by practicing this sutra is immeasurable. It is brought about when we understand and wholeheartedly accept the truth that all dharmas are of selfless nature and are able to live and bear fully this truth. (verse 28)

Inspirational Excerpts:

- *Studying and practicing the Diamond That Cuts Through Illusion will result in the kind of peace, joy, and action that will have the power to change the world. The happiness it produces is beyond all conception and discussion. Even if we are only washing dishes, the peace and joy experienced from the practice of the sutra while washing the dishes cannot be described – they are beyond conception and discussion. The merit produced by washing dishes will be immeasurable. (commentary to verse 16)*
- *The great heart of a bodhisattva mahasattva can be seen in small acts throughout his or her daily life. (commentary to verse 3)*
 - *[Eishin]: To me, this is similar to Dogen saying the great light of the moon is reflected in a dewdrop.*
- *The happiness brought about by practicing this sutra is immeasurable. (various places in the sutra)*
- *Whatever we are doing, if we can do it with a serene mind, our happiness will be boundless. (commentary to verse 4)*
- *“Arana” means absence of struggle. Practicing arana is to dwell in peaceful abiding. (commentary to verse 9)*
- *The Buddha teaches that the four erroneous perceptions of a self, a person, a living being, and a life span are at the root of our suffering. (commentary to verse 3)*
- *When we take refuge in something that is changing, we can never have peace. We need to abide in what is stable. All objects of our six senses are conditioned and continuously changing. If we abide in them, we will not have stability. The most stable is to abide in the non-abiding. A mind that abides in anything, ultimately, cannot have peace. (commentary to verse 14)*
- *As long as we are caught up in ideas and signs (concepts), we are blinded by them, and cannot see reality as it is. But when we are free of the concepts of signs – of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile objects, and objects of mind – we are like those with perfect vision walking in the midday sun. We can see directly into the world of “wondrous reality,” where everything reveals its true nature. (commentary to verse 14)*
- *Buddhas are called Buddhas because they are free of ideas. (verse 14)*
- *Even if our wounds are healed, we should see the Buddha in birth, sickness, old age, and death. Nirvana is made of the same substance as attachment, and awakening of the same substance as ignorance. We should be able to sow the seeds of awakening right here on Earth. The beautiful lotus grows out of the mud. Without afflictions and suffering, we cannot make a Buddha. (commentary to verse 26)*
- *The Buddha uses transcendent endurance, one of the six paramitas, as an example of the spirit of deep understanding. (commentary to verse 14)*