



Postgraduate/Distance Learning Assignment coversheet & feedback form

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For completion by the student:		
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Assignment Mark	
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Agreed Internal Mark:	
External Examiner's mark (if relevant)	
Final Mark	
NB. All marks are provisional until confirmed by the Final Examination Board. For completion by Marker 1 : Comments:	
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The Explanation of the title of

The Diamond Sūtra

(Sanskrit: *Vajracchedikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā Sūtra*)

The name of the Diamond Sūtra (Sanskrit: *Vajracchedikā-Prajñā-Pāramitā Sūtra*) consists of four parts.

1. Vajracchedikā means diamond cutting. Vajra is harder than any metals. It is durable, luminous, and able to cut. It can destroy anything, and yet is itself indestructible. The light of a certain kind of vajra has the power to light up all darkness. Here light is the characteristic manifestation of vajra, while cutting is its function. Vajra is used as a metaphor to describe the fact that wisdom (*Prajñā*) can overcome all obstacles and will not be overcome by anything.

Vajra with characteristics of hardness, sharpness and radiance is a metaphor of wisdom which breaks the darkness of afflictions and observes the reality of everything in the universe.

2. The Sanskrit *prajñā*, which means wisdom, is transliterated into 「般若」 (bō rě). Although *prajñā* could be translated into “wisdom” (「智慧」 zhìhuì), ancient translators did not do so, because *prajñā* is more sublime than wisdom. *Prajñā* is the knowledge and vision of the Buddha. The Buddha has

thoroughly realized the truth and reality of all living beings and the universe.

There are three kinds of prajñā--- prajñā through the written word, prajñā through contemplation, prajñā through reality.

(1) Prajñā through the written word (literary Prajñā) - the teachings of the Buddha and the writings of the patriarchs and accomplished practitioners, which are able to inspire the wisdom of sentient beings.

Prajñā through the written word is just like the finger which points out the direction of the moon (reality, Prajñā in its essence). We should not mistake the finger for the moon. We cannot understand the reality of the universe through wondering thoughts, but we can do it through Prajñā.

(2) Prajñā through contemplation (contemplative Prajñā) - studying and contemplating the true nature of phenomena in one's daily life according to the doctrine and methods of the sūtras.

(3) Prajñā through reality (reality Prajñā) – is about the ultimate truth of all phenomena in the universe; the true nature of all Buddhas and sentient beings.

- All beings possess the wisdom and virtues of the Buddha but cannot attain them due to their wandering thoughts and attachments. Innate wisdom is like the sun while our wandering thoughts and attachments are like clouds which block out the sun-light.

Blinded by selfishness, greed for personal gain, jealousy, and etc, our minds have become very limited. We see only what is immediately in front of us and fail to understand far-reaching principles. That's why we cannot return to the origin.

- *The Vajracchedika-prajna-paramita Sūtra* tells us that everything with form is unreal. Neither the past, the present nor the future mind can be found. All compound phenomena of the universe, including our body and mind, are transient and impermanent and cannot be grasped.
- The essential meaning of Prajñā in *the Vajracchedika-prajna-paramita Sūtra* is to develop a mind which does not abide in anything.

We should develop a pure and clean mind which does not abide in form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and dharma. We should not cling to the notion of an ego, a personality, a being and a life. We should not hold the view of an ego, a

personality, a being and a life. We should develop a mind which does not abide in anything. If minds abide somewhere, it will be in falsehood.

- We shouldn't be affected by external circumstances. Any situation or condition, whether favorable or adverse, we should see all phenomena as a dream, an illusion, a bubble and a shadow, like dew and lightning. Regarding them in this way, we will be able to see through them and let go of the attachment toward them. We should relinquish our attachments to pleasant as well as unpleasant events. We can be truly free only when every last bit of attachment is gone. Once ignorance and afflictions are gone, wisdom (prajñā) will manifest and the brightness of the inherent nature will shine forth.
- All phenomena are manifested by the true mind, altered by the consciousness. Therefore, we should give rise to good thoughts. We should deeply believe in and enjoy practising the method of Mindfulness of Amitabha Buddha.

3. Pāramitā (「波羅密多」 bō luó mì duō), which in Chinese is translated as 「到彼岸」 dào bǐ àn; —to reach the further shore, which is Nirvāṇa state 「涅槃」 ni è pán, meaning ultimate liberation. At present we are on “this shore” of birth and death.

By crossing the sea of suffering, we can arrive at the further shore of Nirvāṇa. This is also “Pāramitā”.

Nirvāṇa state (「涅槃」ni èp án) is not arising nor ceasing, which is the Buddha’s definitive nirvāṇa state.

4. Sūtra (「經」jīng): A preaching of the Buddha as recorded in documents.

The word Sūtra has many meanings. The four meanings commonly seen are: stringing together, attracting, constant, and dharma.

(1) The Sūtra “stringing the principles taught by the Buddha together” like a string of beads.

(2) The Sūtra “attracting” living beings in the way similar to a magnet drawing iron filings. Living beings drawn to the Sūtras come to have a thorough understanding of the Buddha dharma.

(3) Sūtra is also called “constant” because it surpasses time. Whether in the past, present or future, the Sūtra applies all the time. Not one word can be taken out, not one added.

(4) Sūtras contain the Dharma delivered by Buddha. Sūtras provide a path of cultivation which leads sentient being from birth and death to no birth and no death, from the worldlings to Buddhahood. One who wishes to travel the path must abide by the Dharma recorded in Sūtras.