



International Journal of Sanskrit Research

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ISSN: 2394-7519

IJSR 2022; 8(2): 78-84

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www.anantaajournal.com

Received: 19-11-2021

Accepted: 23-12-2021

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A significant role of the vajracchedikā prajñāpāramitā sūtra in the Mahayana Buddhist literature

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Introduction

It is impossible not to mention the critical role of the ancient Silk Road linking China with Central Asia and the Western world. It has exciting attention because of the Thousand Buddha's cave and its vast collection of valuable manuscripts, documents, paintings, carved statues, and other artifacts that Dunhuang Cave (敦煌: a city in northwestern Gansu Province/甘肃省)¹ retained its influence as a religious site for several more centuries. This rich source has touched the curiosity of researchers who want to develop in all fields such as art, architecture, archaeology, history, philosophy, science, religious studies, culture, economics, literature, society, etc., hence the literature of the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is also not outside the scope of academic research.

Though the most important and as a literary production of high value among the Mahāyāna sūtras is *Sadharmapuṇḍarīka* (Lotus of Good Law), the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā* literature has a unique position in the Mahāyāna. Whatever might have been the original significance of the term *Prajñāpāramitā*, the text of Mahāyāna tradition has a clear Tantric leaning toward the cult of a female principle. Moreover, among texts belonging to this class of literature, the *Vajracchedikā*, also known as *Prajñāpāramitā* of 300 slokas. Remarkably, the wisdom (般若 - *Prajñā*), supreme excellence, consists in recognition of Śūnyavāda, or negativism which declares everything as 'void,' was advocated and fully developed later by the most famous Buddhist Indian philosopher Nāgārjuna and his eminent disciple Āryadeva.

On the other hand, speaking of the term *Prajñāpāramitā* in iconography, we must mention the trinities composed of the Buddha, representing *Buddha*, *Dharma*, and *Samgha* respectively, which were very popular in Nepal, and are often found in temples and on house altars. The *Prajñāpāramitā* is here considered as the quintessence of the doctrine, just as the compassion activity of Avalokiteśvara is the model for the duties of the monastic community. The same trinity frequently occurs in Khmer (Cambodia) sculpture and inscriptions of the 10th and 11th centuries, on many votive tablets, even in Siam (Thailand) and perhaps in Tibet, showing the Buddha in meditation on a *Nāga*, on his right a four-armed Avalokiteśvara, and on his left a two-armed *Prajñāpāramitā*.

Notably, the statue of *Prajñāpāramitā* of East Java is probably the most famous depiction of the goddess of transcendental wisdom. Since manuscript editions of the *Aṣṭasāhasrīka Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* circulating in *Sumātra* and *Jāva* instigated the cult of the 'Goddess of Transcendent Wisdom,' some of *Prajñāpāramitā*'s essential functions and attributes can be traced to those of the goddess *Tāra*. In addition, the Mahāyāna's veneration of the Buddhist goddess began with the cult of *Tāra* enshrined in the 8th century Kalasan temple in Central Java. Adherently, *Tāra* and *Prajñāpāramitā* are both referred to as mothers of all Buddhas, since according to Mahāyāna tradition, it holds that all Buddhas are born from the perfect wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*).

Furthermore, the goddess *Prajñāpāramitā* of East Java is regarded as the masterpiece of classical Javanese Hindu-Buddhist art in Indonesia. The goddess is in a perfect lotus position meditating, sitting on a lotus on a square pedestal. The goddess performs *dharmachakra-mūdra* (the *mūdra* symbolizing turning the wheel of *dharmā*).

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¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunhuang>.

Her left arm is placed around a blue lotus, on top of which sits the lontar palm leaf book *Prajñāpāramitā-sūtra*. The statue stands in front of a carved stele, and behind its head radiates a halo that suggests holiness that has reached the highest wisdom. The serene facial expressions and meditative postures and gestures evoke peace and wisdom, contrasted with intricate and rich jewelry and ornaments.

Therefore, the *Prajñāpāramitā* is inserted into the pantheon of mythological figures, becomes the object of a cult, and some Ritual Texts describe the methods by which her spiritual power can be evoked. The personification of the *Prajñāpāramitā* goes back to the fourth century. Statues of the *Prajñāpāramitā* are attested in India as early as 400 C.E. by Fa-xian's account. Since the contents of Mahāyāna literature are as varied as the degrees of mental and intellectual levels attained by different groups, and since much of such contents, especially regarding cults and rituals, have found better expression in later Matrayāna giving rise to various Tantric forms of Buddhism.

In Tibet, the ideas of the *Prajñāpāramitā* were first introduced by Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla about 750 C.E.² They played a significant part in the controversies which took place about 794 between Kamalaśīla and the Chinese (Zen) Ch'an monk, and both sides are fond of quoting the *Prajñāpāramitā*, either the large text or the *Vajracchedikā* (Diamond sūtra) in support of their views. Gradually, the *Prajñāpāramitā* was greatly esteemed, copied out, studied, and valued as a precious gift and for the magical powers believed to be inherent in it.

Correspondingly, the Ch'an (Zen in Japan) followers claimed to expound nothing but the "true principles of wisdom," and to achieve a state of "thoughtlessness in perfect wisdom," entirely in the spirit of the 8th century Ch'an, which had given the subtitle of *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsūtra* to Hui-Neng's Platform Sūtra, (Hui-Neng was the 6th Patriarch of Zen tradition) and which had placed the *Vajracchedikā* above all other sūtras. It is curious to note that the *Prajñāpāramitā* doctrine, which had in India led by natural stages to the scholasticism of the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* should on Chinese soil have brought forth the diametrically opposite quietism of the followers of the "sudden enlightenment" or sudden Zen Buddhism.

Therefore, the Mahāyānasamgraha,³ can refer to *Prajñāpāramitā* as 'nonconceptual awareness,' a gulf between conceptual and nonconceptual appears to have led certain traditions; notably, that of some Chan (Ch'an; Zen) practitioners in East Asia, to conclude that *prajñāpāramitā* can in no way result from analysis but instead is a natural response to cutting all analytic and conceptual thought. Moreover, in the context of meditation, *prajñāpāramitā* comes through non-conceptual and, therefore, non-dual awareness to equal the content or object of such an ultimate awareness, i.e., here emptiness itself.

It can be said that, because the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* comes from India, it has had more or less influence on the local culture, plus the selective absorption, improvement, and promotion to form a theoretical system that brings each country has its characteristics, but the meaning in the scriptures becomes rich. However, in terms of style, sentence, and language with high artistic quality, it is difficult to grasp, so it is for this reason that many literary genres based on this Sūtra were born, such as commentaries, poetry, prose,

philosophical thought to explain the meaning of the Scriptures to help readers understand and absorb them better.

In China, before the Tang dynasty, many famous poets and writers wrote a commentary on the Diamond Sutra, such as poet *Xie Lingyun* (385-433). They are passionate about studying and practicing Buddhism who has composed many poems about the profound meaning of this sutra, such as poet Quantangshi in "*Tongma Taishō Ting Jiusi Fashi Jiang Jingang Jing* - 同馬太守聽九思法師講金剛經,"⁴ especially distinguish the description of highest wisdom from the term *Prajñāpāramitā*. From here, many valuable words in the Buddha's sermon from the Diamond sutra influenced the customs and culture of the Chinese people at that time, and it spread and developed over the centuries.

Besides that, there is also a unique poet in the history of Chinese Buddhism; people often call him 'Hanshan' (寒山: 730-850/Cold Mountain).⁵ He wrote more than three hundred poems scattered across rocks, bamboo, trees, and even a stone wall. Moreover, there is a poem that shows the importance this unique hermit placed on the Diamond Sutra, even claiming that it has the power to prevent healing from a bodhisattva because of the profound meaning that if every all living beings are sick, a bodhisattva will also get sick because they do not know the one-pointed mind described as follows:

"People take their bodies as basic,
And in what is basic, it's the mind that's in control.
When the "basic" exists, the mind must not be depraved;
If the mind is depraved you'll lose your "basic" life.
If you cannot yet avoid this disaster,
Why speak of carelessly using a mirror?
Not reading the Diamond-sūtra.
Would make even a bodhisattva get ill."⁶

At the same time, there were other poets such as *XuYin* (徐夔) in his poetic work titled "*Zeng Yuejun* - 贈月君" or poet *GuanXiu* (貫休: 832-912 C.E.) in a collection of poems titled "*Song Seng Zhihuwai* - 送僧之湖外" that their poem suggests that the Buddha taught the Diamond Sutra and sent a capable disciple to preach the Diamond Sutra. Besides, according to the large collection of Tang dynasty literature, the more extensive prose shows the influence of the diamond sutras were preserved in *Quantangwen* (全唐文). There are several entries in the *Quantangwen* that discuss Emperor Xuanzong's comment on the Diamond Sutra. In addition, another text in the *Quantangwen* titled "*Qing Xuanshi Yuzhu Jingang Jing Zou* - 請宣示御注金剛經奏"⁷ referring to the questions in the Emperor's commentary by author *Siyou* (思有) is also recorded here, and many unique features of this Scripture, even the many details of the construction of stone sutras are still preserved.

It can be said that right from the title of the Sutra '*Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā*', in the term '*Vajracchedikā*' there is already a metaphor in literary grammar, this has been analyzed above. However, with the language of enlightenment, as long as they get rid of ignorance, craving, and delusion, enlightenment, happiness, and peace are right here and now, not waiting for the other shore. Therefore, 'Sūtra' means relation and insight like threads strung together.

⁴ *Quantangshi*, vol.3, fascicles 212, p.2207.

⁵ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanshan_\(poet\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanshan_(poet)).

⁶ "*The Poetry of Hanshan*", Robert G. Henrick's trans, Verse no. 139, New York: University of New York Press, 1990, p.205.

⁷ *Quantangwen* - 全唐文, vol.3, fascicle 289, p. 2935.

² *Perfect Wisdom: The Short Prajñāpāramitā Texts*, trans. E. Conze, London: Luzac & Co. Ltd, 1973: 25.

³ P. Williams, *Buddhist Thought, A Complete Introduction to the Indian Tradition*, London: Routledge, 2000: 50.

The interpretation that the Chinese Buddhists say about the meaning of the scriptures and its literary line consists of three meanings, five characteristics divided into twelve categories is the most common division among other schools, especially the Mahāyāna. Historically, this has been used by the Theravāda and Mahāsaṅghika school of the ancient ninefold division (nine *āṅgās* in Pāli).⁸ Several examples to give below to see the twelve categories represented in the Diamond Sutra are as following:

1. Sutta, or Sūtra (discourse): The Buddha's discourses were compiled in prose that are themselves the basis of the teaching, so-called Faben - 法本, which includes the *Vinaya* (monastic discipline). Nevertheless, the *Sutra* is distinguished from the *Vinaya*, so the prose limitation is omitted as such.

2. Geyyā, or Geya: This is the same way of narrating the meaning of the content of the *Sutra*, and at the same time, it is a combination of a mixture of prose and verse. It usually uses four sentences to make a poem, in which there are sometimes four words, five words, seven words, eight words, also known as *gāthā* (verses) combined suttas.

In chapter 26 of the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha's teaching is preached with a verse of the *Geyyā* literary genre as follows:

ये मां रूपेण चाद्राक्षुर्ये मां घोषेण चान्वगुः।

मिथ्याप्रहाणप्रसृता न मां द्रक्ष्यन्ति ते जनाः॥⁹

ye mām rūpeṇa cādrākṣur ye mām ghoṣeṇa cānvaguḥ |

mithyā-prahāṇa-prasṛtā na mām drakṣyanti te janāḥ |

若以色見我、

以音聲求我、

是人行邪道、

不能見如來。¹⁰ [什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

"Those who by my form did see me,

And those who followed me by voice

Wrong the efforts they engaged in,

Me those people will not see."¹¹

3. Veyyākaraṇa (explanation or prophecy): a category into which the sutra is written in a prophecy manner or explained. For example, the Buddha sealed the disciples *Śrāvaka* and *Bodhisattvas*, who would become Buddhas in the future. As the Text in chapter 15 describes as follows:

अयं च सुभूते धर्मपर्यायस्तथागतेन भाषितोऽग्रयानसंप्रस्थितानां सत्त्वानामर्थाय, श्रेष्ठयानसंप्रस्थितानां सत्त्वानामर्थाय। ये इमं धर्मपर्यायमुद्ग्रहीष्यन्ति धारयिष्यन्ति वाचयिष्यन्ति पर्यवाप्स्यन्ति, परेभ्यश्च विस्तरेण संप्रकाशयिष्यन्ति, ज्ञातास्ते सुभूते तथागतेन बुद्धज्ञानेन, दृष्टास्ते सुभूते तथागतेन बुद्धचक्षुषा, बुद्धास्ते तथागतेना सर्वे ते सुभूते सत्त्वा अप्रमेयेण पुण्यस्कन्धेना समन्वागता भविष्यन्ति। अचिन्त्येनातुल्येनामाप्येनापरिमाणेन पुण्यस्कन्धेन समन्वागता भविष्यन्ति। सर्वे ते सुभूते सत्त्वाः समांशेन बोधिं धारयिष्यन्ति वचयिष्यन्ति पर्यवाप्स्यन्ति।¹²

Ayaṃ ca subhūte dharmaparyāyas tathāgatena bhāṣito'grayaṇa-saṃprasthitānāṃ sattvānām arthāya śreṣṭha-yāna-saṃprasthitānāṃ sattvānām arthāya |ya imaṃ dharmaparyāyam udgrahīṣyanti dhārayiṣyanti vācayiṣyanti

⁸ Norman, Kenneth Roy (1983), *Pāli Literature*, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, pp. 70–71.

⁹ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), शांतिभिक्षु शास्त्री तथा संघसेन सिंह (ed. and trans. Professor Shantibhikshu Shashtri and Sanghsen Singh), बौद्ध विद्या विभाग, दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय, Published as a part of the Buddhist Studies, vol VI, 1979, p.24.

¹⁰ T. vol.8, p. 752a.

¹¹ *The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra* - translated and explained by Edward Conze, Dev Publishers & Distributors, N3.

¹² वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.18.

paryavāpsyanti parebhyaśca vistareṇa saṃprakāśayiṣyanti jñātās te subhūte tathāgatena buddha-jñānena dṛṣṭās te subhūte tathāgatena buddha-caḥṣuṣā buddhās te tathāgatena |sarve te subhūte sattvā aprameyeṇa puṇya-skandhena samanvāgatā bhaviṣyanti | acintyena atulyena amāpyena aparimāṇeṇa puṇya-skandhena samanvāgatā bhaviṣyanti | sarve te subhūte sattvāḥ samāṃśeṇa bodhiṃ dhārayiṣyanti vacayiṣyanti paryavāpsyanti|

如來為發大乘者說。為發最上乘者說。若有人能受持讀誦廣為人說。如來悉知是人悉見是人。皆得成就不可量不可稱無有邊不可思議功德。如是等則為荷擔如來阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。¹³[什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

"The Tathagata has taught it for the weal of beings who have set out in the best, in the most excellent vehicle. Those who will take up this discourse on Dharma, bear it in mind, recite, study, and illuminate it in full detail for others, the Tathagata has known them with his Buddha-cognition, the Tathagata has seen them with his Buddha-eye, the Tathagata has fully known them."¹⁴

4. Gāthā (verse): The sutra type is written in poems, and each verse has four lines. This is not the kind of *geyyā* used for repetition, but it forms each verse on its own, which works in poetic form. For instance, The poetry with the concluding meaning has been expressed in the last chapter of the Text. However, it is different from the above verse written in the *Geyyā* style.

तारका तिमिरं दीपो मायावश्याय बुद्बुदम्।

स्वप्नं च विद्युदभ्रं च एवं द्रष्टव्यं संस्कृतम्॥¹⁵

Tārakā timiraṃ dīpo māyāvāśyāya budbudam|

Svapnaṃ ca vidyudabhraṃ ca evaṃ draṣṭavya saṃskṛtam|

一切有為法、

如夢幻泡影、

如露亦如電、

應作如是觀。¹⁶ [什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

"As stars, a fault of vision, as a lamp,

A mock show, dew drops, or a bubble,

A dream, a lightning flash, or cloud,

So should one view what is conditioned."¹⁷

5. Udāna (inspired utterance), namely autobiography or autobiographical Question. The type of sutras recorded in an autobiographical way was judged by the Buddha at the right time or on the basis of his self-declared basis, not because of the questions of his disciples. Examples of works in the *Pāli Khuddaka Nikāya* (Short Collection).

6. Nidāna (translated as Cause and Condition): The type of *sutra* that talks about the meeting and hearing of the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha with the Buddhas of the past and between the ranks of disciples and their causes and conditions. Specifically, in the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha preached this Sutra at the request of Venerable Subhuti. Scripture passages recorded as follows:

तेन खलु पुनः समयेनायुष्मान् सुभुतिस्तस्यामेव पर्षदि सनिपतितोऽभूत्संनिषण्णः। अथ खल्वायुष्मान् सुभूतिरुत्थायासनादेकांसमुत्तरासङ्गं कृत्वा दक्षिणं जानुमण्डलं पृथिव्यां

¹³ T. vol.8, p. 750c.

¹⁴ *The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra*, op. cit., p.45.

¹⁵ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.26.

¹⁶ T. vol.8, p. 752c.

¹⁷ *The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra*, op. cit., p.58.

प्रतिष्ठाप्य येन भगवांस्तेनाञ्जलिं प्रणम्य भगवन्तमेतदवोचत् आश्चर्यं भगवन्, परमाश्चर्यं सुगत, यावदेव तथागतेनार्हता सम्यक्संबुद्धेन बोधिसत्त्वा महासत्त्वा अनुपरिगृहीताः परमेणानुग्रहेण आश्चर्यं भगवन् यावदेव तथागतेनार्हता सम्यक्संबुद्धेन बोधिसत्त्वा महासत्त्वाः परीन्दिताः परमया परीन्दनया। तत्कथं भगवन् बोधिसत्त्वयानसंप्रस्थितेन कुलपुत्रेण वा कुलदुहित्रा वा स्थातव्यं कथं प्रतिपत्तव्यं कथं चित्तं प्रप्रहीतव्यम्?¹⁸

tena khalu punaḥ samayenāyūṣmān subhutistasyāmeva parṣadi samṇipatito 'bhūtsamṇiṣaṇṇaḥ| atha khalvāyūṣmān subhūtirutthāyāsanādekāmsamuttarāsaṅgaṃ kṛtvā dakṣiṇaṃ jānumaṇḍalaṃ pṛthivyāṃ pratiṣṭhāpya yena bhagavāmsṭenāñjaliṃ praṇamya bhagavantametadavocāt| āścaryam bhagavan, paramāścaryam sugata, yāvadeva tathāgatenārhatā samyaksambuddhena bodhisattvā mahāsattvā anupariḡhītāḥ parameṇānugraheṇa| āścaryam bhagavan yāvadeva tathāgatenārhatā samyaksambuddhena bodhisattvā mahāsattvāḥ parīnditāḥ paramayā parīndanayā| tatkatham bhagavan bodhisattvayānasamprasthitena kulaputreṇa vā kuladuhitrā vā sthātavyam katham pratipattavyam katham cittam pragrahītavyam?

時長老須菩提在大眾中。即從座起偏袒右肩右膝著地。合掌恭敬而佛言。希有世尊。如來善護念諸菩薩。善付囑諸菩薩。世尊。善子善女人。發阿耨多羅三藐三菩提心。應云何住云何降伏其心?¹⁹ [什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

“At that time the Venerable Subhuti came to that assembly, and sat down. Then he rose from his seat, put his upper robe over one shoulder, placed his right knee on the ground, bent forth his folded hands toward the Lord, and said to the Lord: "It is wonderful O Lord, it is exceedingly wonderful, O Well-Gone, how much the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, have been helped with the greatest help by the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One. It is wonderful, O Lord, how much the Bodhisattvas, the great beings, have been favored with the highest favor by the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Fully Enlightened One. How then, O Lord, should a son or daughter of good family, who have set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle, stand, how progress, how control their thoughts?"²⁰

Besides, the literature in the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is also described in a unique Nidāna genre dynamic and exciting. For example, the Buddha explained the merit of practicing non-abiding behavior, which is also a critical thought in this *Sūtra*; the Buddha used the text in this genre as follows:

तत्किं मन्यसे सुभूते सुकरं पूर्वस्यां दिशि आकाशस्य प्रमाणमुद्ग्रहीतुम् ? सुभूतिराहा नो हीदं भगवन्। भगवानाहा एवं दक्षिणपश्चिमोत्तरासु अध ऊर्ध्वं दिग्विदिक्षु समन्ताद्दशसु दिक्षु सुकरमाकाशस्य प्रमाणमुद्ग्रहीतुम् ? सुभूतिराहा नो हीदं भगवन्। भगवानाहा एवमेव सुभूते यो बोधिसत्त्वोऽप्रतिष्ठितो दानं ददाति, तस्य सुभूते पुण्यस्कन्धस्य न सुकरं प्रमाणमुद्ग्रहीतुम्। एवं हि सुभूते बोधिसत्त्वयानसंप्रस्थितेन दानं दातव्यं यथा न निमित्तसंज्ञायामपि प्रतिष्ठेत्।²¹

tatkiṃ manyase subhūte sukaraṃ pūrvasyāṃ diśi akāśasya pramāṇamudgrahītum? Subhūtirāha| no hīdaṃ bhagavan| bhagavānāha| evaṃ dakṣiṇapaścimottarāsu adha ūrdhvaṃ digvidikṣu samantāddaśasu dikṣu sukaramākāśasya pramāṇamudgrahītum? subhūtirāha| no hīdaṃ bhagavan| bhagavānāha| evameva subhūte yo bodhisattvo'pratiṣṭhito dānaṃ dadāti, tasya subhūte puṇyaskandhasya na sukaraṃ pramāṇamudgrahītum| evaṃ hi subhūte bodhisattvayānasamprasthitena dānaṃ dātavyam yathā na nimittasamjñāyāmapī pratīṣṭhet ||

¹⁸ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.9.

¹⁹ T. vol.8, p. 748c.

²⁰ The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra, op. cit., p.9-10.

²¹ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.10.

須菩提。於意云何。東方虛空可思量不。不也世尊。須菩提。南西北方四維上下虛空可思量不。不也世尊。須菩提。菩薩無住相布施福德。亦復如是不可思量。須菩提。菩薩但應如所教住。²²[什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

“What do you think, Subhuti, is the extent of space in the East easy to measure? Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. The Lord asked: In like manner, is it easy to measure the extent of space in the South, West, or North, downward, upward, in the intermediate directions, in all the ten directions all round? Subhuti replied: No indeed, O Lord. The Lord said: Even so the heap of merit of that Bodhi-being who unsupported gives a gift is not easy to measure. That is why, Subhuti, those who have set out in the Bodhisattva-vehicle, should give gifts without being supported by the notion of a sign.”²³

7. Itivuttaka (thus it is said), Sanskrit - Itivṛttaka, refers to the Buddha's practice and his disciples introduced in the *Khuddaka Nikāya* with this title.

8. Jātaka (birth; see Jātaka): stories of the Buddha's past lives when he practiced the Bodhisattva's way and his disciples as well as all Bodhisattvas. This detail is presented in chapter 14 when the Buddha was a Rishi of forbearance for five hundred lifetimes who practiced the Bodhisattva path:

यदा मे सुभूते कलिराजा अङ्गप्रत्यङ्गमासायच्छैत्सीत्, नासीन्मे तस्मिन् समये आत्मसंज्ञा वा सत्त्वसंज्ञा वा जीवसंज्ञा वा पुद्गलसंज्ञा वा, नापि मे काचित्संज्ञा वा असंज्ञा वा बभूवा तत्कस्य हेतोः ? सचेन्मे सुभूते तस्मिन् समये आत्मसंज्ञा अभविष्यत्, व्यापादसंज्ञापि मे तस्मिन् समयेऽभविष्यत्। सचेत्सत्त्वसंज्ञा जीवसंज्ञा पुद्गलसंज्ञाभविष्यत्, व्यापादसंज्ञापि मे तस्मिन् समयेऽभविष्यत्। तत्कस्य हेतोः? अभिजानाम्यहं सुभूते अतीतेऽध्वनि पञ्च जातिशतानि यदहं क्षान्तिवादी ऋषिरभूवम् तत्रापि मे नात्मसंज्ञा बभूव, न सत्त्वसंज्ञा, न जीवसंज्ञा, न पुद्गलसंज्ञा बभूवा²⁴

Yadā me subhūte kalirājā aṅgapratyaṅgamāsaścchaitśīṭ, nāsīnme tasmin samaye ātmasamjñā vā sattvasamjñā vā jīvasamjñā vā pudgalasamjñā vā, nāpi me kācitsamjñā vā asamjñā vā babhūva| tatkasya hetoḥ ? sacenme subhūte tasmin samaye ātmasamjñā abhaviṣyat, vyāpādasamjñāpi me tasmin samaye'bhaviṣyat| sacetsattvasamjñā jīvasamjñā pudgalasamjñābhaviṣyat, vyāpādasamjñāpi me tasmin samaye'bhaviṣyat| tatkasya hetoḥ ? abhijānāmyaham subhūte atīte'dhvani pañca jātiśatāni yadahaṃ kṣāntivādī ṛṣirabhūvam| tatrāpi me nātmasamjñā babhūva, na sattvasamjñā, na jīvasamjñā, na pudgalasamjñā babhūva|

須菩提。如我昔為歌利王割截身體。我於爾時無我相無人相無眾生相無壽者相。何以故。我於往昔節節支解時。若有我相人相眾生相壽者相應生瞋恨。須菩提。又念過去於五百世作忍辱仙人。於爾所世無我相無人相無眾生相無壽者相。²⁵[什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

“Subhuti, when the king of Kalīngā cut my flesh from every limb, at that time I had no perception of a self, of a being, of a soul, or a person. And why? If, Subhuti, at that time I had had a perception of self, I would also have had a perception of ill will at that time. And so, if I had had a perception of a being, of a soul, or of a person. With my superknowledge I recall that in the past I have for five hundred births led the life of a sage devoted to patience. Then also have I had no perception of a self, a being, a soul, or a person.”²⁶

²² T. vol.8, p. 749a.

²³ The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra, op. cit., p.14.

²⁴ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.16-17.

²⁵ T. vol.8, p. 750b.

²⁶ The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra, op. cit., p.43-44.

9. Vedalla (perhaps meaning “subtle analysis”): like *Vaipulya* (वैपुल्य, “developed”), written in a symbolic language with far-reaching meanings behind that language. For example, the lectures are in the form of teachings, according to the Pāli system. Besides, some of the critical Mahāyāna works also include the *Lotus Sūtra*, the *Aṣṭasahasrikā-prajñāpāramitā*, and the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra*. Furthermore, especially in the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the Buddha's teachings are taught in many passages of this genre, here demonstrating a specific passage as follows:

भगवानस्यैतदवोचत्। इह सुभूते बोधिसत्त्वयानसंस्थितेनैव चित्तमुत्पादयितव्यम्-यावन्तः सुभूते सत्त्वाः सत्त्वधातौ सत्त्वसंग्रहेण संगृहीता अण्डजा वा जरायुजा वा संस्वेदजा वा औपपादुका वा रूपिणो वा अरूपिणो वा संज्ञिनो वा असंज्ञिनो वा नैवसंज्ञिनो नासंज्ञिनो वा, यावान् कश्चित्सत्त्वधातुः प्रज्ञप्यमानः प्रज्ञप्यते, ते च मया सर्वेऽनुपदिशेषे निर्वाणधातौ परिनिर्वापयितव्याः। एवमपरिमाणानपि सत्त्वान् परिनिर्वाप्य न कश्चित्सत्त्वः परिनिर्वापितो भवति। तत्कस्य हेतोः ? सचेत्सुभूते बोधिसत्त्वस्य सत्त्वसंज्ञा प्रवर्तेत, न स बोधिसत्त्व इति वक्तव्यः। तत्कस्य हेतोः ? न स सुभूते बोधिसत्त्वो वक्तव्यो यस्य सत्त्वसंज्ञा प्रवर्तेत, जीवसंज्ञा वा पुद्गलसंज्ञा वा प्रवर्तेत।²⁷

Bhagavānasyaitadavocati

Iha subhūte bodhisattvayānasamprasthitenaiva cittamutpādayitavyam| yāvantaḥ subhūte sattvāḥ sattvadhātau sattvasamgrahaṇa samgrhītā aṇḍajā vā jarāyujā vā saṃsvedajā vā aupapādukā vā rūpiṇo vā arūpiṇo vā saṃjñino vā asaṃjñino vā naivasamjñino nāsamjñino vā, yāvān kaścitsattvadhātuḥ prajñāpyamānaḥ prajñāpyate, te ca mayā sarve'nupadhiśeṣe nirvāṇadhātau parinirvāpayitavyāḥ| evamaparimāṇānapi sattvān parinirvāpya na kaścitsattvaḥ parinirvāpito bhavati| tatkasya hetoḥ ? sacetsubhūte bodhisattvasya sattvasamjñā pravarteta, na sa bodhisattva iti vaktavyaḥ| tatkasya hetoḥ ? na sa subhūte bodhisattvo vaktavyo yasya sattvasamjñā pravarteta, jīvasamjñā vā pudgalasamjñā va pravarteta||

佛告須菩提。諸菩薩摩訶薩應如是降伏其心。所有一切眾生之類。若卵生若胎生若濕生若化生。若有色若無色。我皆令入無餘涅槃而滅度之。如是滅度無量無數無邊眾生。實無眾生得滅度者。何以故。須菩提。若菩薩有我相人相眾生相壽者相。即非菩薩。²⁸ [什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

“The Lord said: Here, Subhuti, someone who has set out in the vehicle of Bodhisattva should produce a thought in this manner: "As many beings as there are in the universe of beings, comprehended under the term 'beings'- eggborn, born from a womb, moisture-born, or miraculously born; with or without form; with perception, without perception, and with neither perception nor nonperception, as far as any conceivable form of beings is conceived: all these I must lead to Nirvana, into that Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana." And why? If in a Bodhisattva the notion of a "being" should take place, he could not be called a "Bodhi-being." "And why? He is not to be called a Bodhi-being, in whom the notion of a self or of a being should take place, or the notion of a living soul or of a person."²⁹

10. Abhutatadhamma, or Adbhutadharmā (wondrous phenomena): The type of sutra that records the Buddha's thoughts or inconceivable powers while preaching and teaching, specifically stories about miracles and supernatural

events. According to this *āṅgās*, although used less frequently than other genres in the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, there is also a quote from the words of the Venerable Subhuti, which describes the rarity of the dharma as follows:

अथ खल्वयुष्मान् सुभूतिर्धर्मवेगेनाश्रूणि प्रामुञ्चत्। सोऽश्रूणि प्रमृज्य भगवन्तमेतदवोचत्। आश्चर्यं भगवन्, परमाश्चर्यं सुगत, यावदयं धर्मपर्यायस्तथागतेन भाषितोऽग्रयानसंस्थितानां सत्त्वानामर्थाय, श्रेष्ठयानसंस्थितानामर्थाय, यतो मे भगवन् ज्ञानमुत्पन्नम्। न मया भगवन् जात्वेवंरूपो धर्मपर्यायः श्रुतपूर्वः। परमेण ते भगवन् आश्चर्येण समन्वागता बोधिसत्त्वा भविष्यन्ति, ये इह सूत्रे भाष्यमाणे श्रुत्वा भूतसंज्ञामुत्पादयिष्यन्ति।³⁰

Atha khalvayūsmān subhūtir dharmavegeṇāśrūṇi prāmuñcat| so'srūṇi pramrjya bhagavantametadavocati-āścaryam bhagavan, paramāścaryam sugata, yāvadayam dharmaparyāyastathāgatena bhāṣito'grayānasamprasthitānām sattvānāmarthāya, śreṣṭhāyānasamprasthitānāmarthāya, yato me bhagavan jñānamutpannam| na mayā bhagavan jātvevamrūpo dharmaparyāyaḥ śrutapūrvah| paramena te bhagavan āścaryeṇa samanvāgatā bodhisattvā bhaviṣyanti, ye iha sūtre bhāṣyamāṇe śrutvā bhūtasamjñāmutpādayiṣyanti| 爾時須菩提聞說是經深解義趣。涕淚悲泣而白佛言。希有世尊。佛說如是甚深經典。我從昔來所得慧眼。未曾得聞如是之經。世尊。若復有人得聞是經。信心清淨則生實相。當知是人成就第一希有功德。³¹ [什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

“Thereupon the impact of Dharma moved the Venerable Subhuti to tears. Having shed tears, he thus spoke to the Lord: It is wonderful, O Lord, it is exceedingly wonderful, O Well-Gone, how well the Tathagata has taught this discourse on Dharma. Through it cognition has been produced in me. Not have I ever before heard such a discourse on Dharma. Most wonderfully blest will be those who, when this Sutra is being taught, will produce a true perception.”³²

11. Avadāna (Noble Deeds): It is translated as an 'example'. Because the teaching of the Buddha is profound and transcendent, it is necessary to use examples that the listener can understand. It is possibly from the Buddha's stories about people's good deeds in previous lives and their present results (see *Apadāna*). In a quote from the Diamond Sutra, the Buddha used this parable genre to describe the merit of a person who hears, believes, reads, recites, and uphold this sutra very nicely as follows:

यश्च खलु पुनः सुभूते स्त्री वा पुरुषो वा पूर्वाह्नकालसमये गङ्गानदीवालुकामानात्मभावान् परित्यजेत्, एवं मध्याह्नकालसमये गङ्गानदीवालुकामानात्मभावान् परित्यजेत्, सायाह्नकालसमये गङ्गानदीवालुकामानात्मभावान् परित्यजेत्, अनेन पर्यायेण बहूनि कल्पकोटिनियुतशतसहस्राण्यात्मभावान् परित्यजेत्, यश्च धर्मपर्यायं श्रुत्वा न प्रतिक्षिपेत्, अयमेव ततोनिदानं बहुतरं पुण्यस्कन्धं प्रसुनयादप्रमेयमसंख्येयम्, कः पुनर्वादो यो लिखित्वा उद्गृहीयाद्धारयेद्वाचयेत्पर्यवाप्नुयात्, परेभ्यश्च विस्तरेण संप्रकाशयेत्।³³

yaśca khalu punaḥ subhūte strī vā puruṣo vā purvāhṇakālasamaye gaṅgānadīvalūkaśamānātmabhāvān parityajet, evaṃ madhyāhṇakālasamaye gaṅgānadīvalūkaśamānātmabhāvān parityajet, sāyāhṇakālasamaye gaṅgānadīvalūkaśamānātmabhāvān parityajet, anena paryāyeṇa bahūni kalpakotiṇiyutaśatasahasrāṇyātmabhāvān parityajet, yaścemaṃ dharmaparyāyaṃ śrutvā na pratikṣipet, ayameva tatonidānaṃ bahutaraṃ puṇyaskandhaṃ prasunuyādaprameyamasamkhyeyam, kaḥ punarvādo yo

²⁷ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.10.

²⁸ T. vol.8, p. 749a.

²⁹ The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra, op. cit., p.12.

³⁰ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.16.

³¹ T. vol.8, p. 750ab.

³² The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra, op. cit., p.42.

³³ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्रज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.17-18.

likhitvā udgrhñīyāddhārayedvācayetparyavāpnuyāt, parebhyaśca vistareṇa samprakāśayet|
 須菩提。若有善男子善女人。初日分以恒河沙等身布施。中日分復以恒河沙等身布施。後日分亦以恒河沙等身布施。如是無量百千萬億劫以身布施。若復有人聞此經典信心不逆其福勝彼。何況書寫受持讀誦為人解說。³⁴[什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

“And if, Subhuti, a woman or man should renounce in the morning all their belongings as many times as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, and if they should do likewise at noon and in the evening, and if in this way they should renounce all their belongings for many hundreds of thousands of millions of millions of aeons; and someone else, on hearing this discourse on Dharma, would not reject it; then the latter would on the strength of that beget a greater heap of merit, immeasurable and incalculable. What then should we say of him who, after writing it, would learn it, bear it in mind, recite, study, and illuminate it in full detail for others?”³⁵

12. Upadeśa (instruction): As argument works, they are recording disputation and answers. In the volume "Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its relation to Hinayāna Buddhism," scholar N. Dutt argues that, in a sutra, there can always be each passage considered a *Geyyā* or a *Gāthā*, a *Udāna*, a *Veṃyākaraṇa* ... and so on. Thus, discussions of doctrine, sometimes esoteric teachings, often form questions and answers. The term has also been used for the Abhidhamma (the scholarly part of the scriptures), for philosophical treatises, tantric writings, and commentaries.³⁶ As for this type of argumentative text, the Buddha and Venerable Subhuti used a lot of questions and answers in *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, as well as the argument of "非 - 是" which consider a propositional form: "A is not A; therefore it is A" to describe the nature of *Prajñāpāramitā*. The famous Japanese Buddhist logician Hajime Nakamura calls it the 'logic of not; S: *na pṛthak*.' *Na pṛthak* (न पृथक्) in Sanskrit, Japanese translated as '*Sokuhibao*,' includes meanings such as non-separately, non-singly for contradiction negation 'non,' and 'other' for a field opposite case. Therefore, this characteristic in the language of emptiness logic must manifest through '是 - this, that, to be' which itself is revealed through '非 - न, not, non-.' And thanks to *Prajñāpāramitā* expressing reality through '非' that realize of reality is equal to '是,' and that '是' is '非.' This is the unique discourse style of the Diamond Sutra, which can be cited in a few passages to comprehend:

भगवानाह। यः कश्चित्सुभूते बोधिसत्त्व एवं वदेत्-अहं क्षेत्रव्यूहान् निष्पादयिष्यामीति, स वितथं वदेत्। तत्कस्य हेतोः ? क्षेत्रव्यूहाः क्षेत्रव्यूहा इति सुभूते अव्यूहास्ते तथागतन भाषिताः। तेनोच्यन्ते क्षेत्रव्यूहा इति³⁷

bhagavānāha-yaḥ kaścitsubhūte bodhisattva evaṃ vadet-aham kṣetravyūhān niṣpādayiṣyāmīti, sa vitatham vadet| tatkaśya hetoḥ ? kṣetravyūhāḥ kṣetravyūhā iti subhūte avyūhāste tathāgatena bhāṣitāḥ| tenocyante kṣetravyūhā iti|

³⁴ T. vol.8, p. 570c.

³⁵ *The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra*, op. cit., p.45.

³⁶ *Kinh Kim Cang (Vajra Sūtra)*, translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva; Introduction-Translation-Commentary into Vietnamese by the Most Venerable Thái Hòa, Hồng Đức, 1990, pp. 158-161 (translated from Vietnamese to English by Bhikkhunī Tuệ Trī).

³⁷ वज्रच्छेदिकाप्राज्ञापारमितासूत्र (Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra), op. cit., p.14.

須菩提。於意云何。菩薩莊嚴佛土不。不也世尊。何以故。莊嚴佛土者則非莊嚴。是名莊嚴。³⁸[什譯 - Kumārajīva translated]

“The Lord said: If any Bodhisattva would say, "I will create harmonious Buddhafields," he would speak falsely. And why? "The harmonies of Buddhafields, the harmonies of Buddhafields," Subhuti, as no-harmonies have they been taught by the Tathagata. Therefore he spoke of "harmonious Buddhafields."³⁹

According to the above analysis, it can be said that especially for this *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, the Buddha used twelve types of genre to describe his teachings. However, the division of sutras into 12 categories has no definiteness; for example, in the Lotus Sutra (*Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra*) of chapter two - Skillful Means classifies nine. This difference depends on the Buddha's preaching art to the audience, so there are sutras he uses all twelve *aṅgās* of literature to present the doctrine, while some sutras only use nine or eight.

Therefore, going from organization to content, some specific examples above show the initial literary features of the Sutra to the profound development in philosophical, ontological, and logical aspects in the literature that has shown us how beneficial the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* is for humanity in establishing a happy life for oneself. However, even though we know that the actual value of Buddhist scriptures can only be found in the experience, not in the concept. But for the study of this issue will help us more or less to understand the Buddha teachings, the importance of the Diamond Sutra for practitioners who want to seek liberation and attain Bodhi. Besides, we also have the opportunity to learn more about the art of Buddhist writing to realize the harmony of Buddhist language in human life and the profound influence of Mahāyāna Buddhist literature, significantly not apart from the characteristic of *Prajñāpāramitā*, is always a practical tool for people to transform themselves.

To further, let base upon the philosophical background, the great theme of the *Prajñāpāramitā* thus becomes 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*) - the emptiness of all things that we might be tempted to think truly and ultimately exist of and in themselves. To see any dharma as existing in itself is to grasp it, to try to catch it, but dharmas are like dreams, magical illusions, echoes, reflections, mirages, space; like the moon reflected in the water, a fairy tale castle, a shadow, or a magical creature; like the stars, dewdrops, a bubble, a flash of lightning, or a cloud - they are there, but they are not there, and if we reach out for them, we find nothing to hold on to.

Adherently, in short, there are two points of importance closely relating to the *Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* that are remarkable to note here. Firstly, we are concerned here with the *Prajñāpāramitā*, how the world of phenomena is seen and recognized by the awakened mind. Secondly, the perfection of wisdom texts presents what they have to say about the theory of wisdom (*śūnyatā*) is not considered an innovation but simply a restatement of the Buddha's original teachings. What is analyzed here is the value of this sutra's role in the Mahāyāna Buddhist literature that we need to pay attention to for study and absorption.

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³⁹ *The Diamond Sutra and The Heart Sutra*, op. cit., p.36.

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