

सद्धर्मपुण्डरीक
सूत्र

The Lotus Sutra

The Great Teacher
Kumārajīva

NMRKOB translation

THE LOTUS SUTRA

Preface to the Sacred Canon

This volume, translated by NMRKOB, contains the supreme scriptural foundation of Buddhism: the *Lotus Sutra of the Wonderful Law*. It presents the direct path to enlightenment for all living beings. Shakyamuni Buddha preached these words to enable all people to overcome suffering, revealing that the potential for Buddhahood exists within the life of every person.

The text contained herein is the **Myoho-rence-kyo**, the translation by the Great Teacher Kumārajīva. It consists of twenty-eight chapters. In this text, the Buddha reveals his original enlightenment, casting off his transient status to display his eternal life. This scripture is the King of Sutras. It proves that the Buddha nature is eternal and indestructible.

This specific translation is crucial. Many versions found online today rely on modern academic interpretations or surviving Sanskrit fragments that lack the transmission of the Law. They translate the linguistic shell but lose the spiritual kernel. Nichiren Daishonin declared that while other translators sought the shadow of the words, the Great Teacher Kumārajīva alone grasped the Buddha's true intent. He did not merely translate text; he transmitted the living spirit of enlightenment. To read Kumārajīva's words is to hear the Buddha's voice; to read others is merely to study history.

Nichiren Daishonin designated this Sutra as the only vehicle for salvation in the Latter Day of the Law. While the "Opening" and "Closing" sutras serve as the introduction and conclusion, the *Lotus Sutra* itself is the body and the heart of the Buddha. It contains the fullness of the Law.

Practitioners must view this text not merely as a book, but as the object of devotion itself. When one reads these words with faith, one gazes into the enlightened life of the Buddha. The text and the observer become non-dual. This is the realization of the Eternal Law.

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THE SUTRA OF THE LOTUS FLOWER OF THE WONDERFUL LAW (MYOHO-RENKE-KYO)

IMPERIAL PREFACE TO THE GREAT VEHICLE LOTUS SUTRA

In the past, the Tathagata was on Gridhrakuta Mountain. With a great assembly of Arhats, Ajnata-Kaundinya, Mahakasyapa, and innumerable others, He expounded the Great Vehicle True Scripture named Immeasurable Meanings. At that time, the heavens rained down jeweled flowers, scattering and filling the area. A light of wisdom appeared as an auspicious sign, illuminating the hidden and the manifest. The entire Buddha-world shook in six ways. All human and heavenly beings obtained what they had never had before, and all rejoiced and offered praise. They considered this Sutra to be the secret treasury of all Buddhas and Tathagatas, spiritually marvelous and unfathomable, vast and difficult to name. Therefore, it pulls those who are drowning out of the sinking flow, and it saves those who have lost their nature from confusion. Its merit is vast and far-reaching, with no visible shore.

Tracing its source, it originated in India and flowed to China. It was first translated by the Western Jin Sramana Dharmaraksa under the name Scripture of the Positive Dharma Flower. Later, in the Eastern Jin, the Tripitaka Master of Kucha, Kumarajiva, retranslated it under the name Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law. During the Sui Dynasty, the Northern Indian Sramana Jnanagupta also translated it, also naming it Wonderful Law. Although the text and principles of the three versions overlap and are displayed mutually, only Tripitaka Master Kumarajiva captured the essence uniquely. However, as generations have passed, errors have crept in. Without editing and correction, doubts would gradually multiply. Therefore, We have specially ordered a collation and commanded it to be carved into woodblocks to broaden its transmission.

Alas! The Tathagata, pitying all living beings who possess various natures, various desires, various actions, and various discriminatory thoughts, and who have been entangled for kalpas without a time of escape, appeared in the world for this One Great Causal Connection. He fully expressed the wondrous intent and created supreme expedient means, causing all to attain deliverance and ascend to Correct Enlightenment. This is truly the bridge to cross the ocean and the torch of wisdom to illuminate the darkness. Good men and good women, and all living beings, who can maintain their minds in utmost sincerity, uphold, recite, wear, embrace, bow to, and make offerings to this Sutra, will immediately separate from all suffering and distress, eliminate all karmic obstacles, and be released from the perils of birth and death. It is not merely like the hungry finding food, the thirsty finding drink, the cold finding fire, the heat finding coolness, the poor finding treasure, the sick finding a doctor, a child finding a mother, or a crosser of water finding a boat; the comfort and joy it brings are beyond words.

Ah! The Way cannot be lodged without the Sutra; the Dharma cannot be transmitted without the Sutra. Relying on the Sutra to seek the Dharma, and relying on the Dharma to realize the Way, one

then recognizes that the purport of this Sutra is pure, subtle, wonderful, and supremely rare. Those who follow it will physically attain health and peace, and their various good roots will be perfect and complete. Like a lotus flower rising from the water unstained by silt, they will immediately attain the emptiness of the five skandhas and the purity of the six sense organs, and it will not be difficult for them to quickly ascend to supreme goodness and achieve Correct Enlightenment. But if one sinks into confusion and obstinacy, willingly falling and extinguishing good roots, then one will physically suffer in the painful paths and revolve in the domain of birth and death; will there ever be a limit to it? Although the two paths of good and evil are pursued by humans, doing good brings auspiciousness and doing evil brings disaster; the retributions in the seen and unseen worlds do not err by a fraction. Those who view this Sutra, take heed! Exert yourselves!

PREFACE TO THE PROPAGATION OF THE LOTUS SUTRA

The Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law unites the fundamental cause of the Buddhas' descent into the world. It accumulated in the great summer of India and emerged after a thousand years. It was transmitted east to China over three hundred years. During the Yongkang era of Emperor Hui of the Western Jin, the Bodhisattva from Dunhuang residing at the Green Gate of Chang'an, Dharmaraksa, first translated this Sutra, naming it the Scripture of the Positive Dharma Flower. During the Long'an era of Emperor An of the Eastern Jin, under the Later Qin ruler Hongshi, the Sramana of Kucha, Kumarajiva, next translated this Sutra, naming it the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law. In the Renshou era of the Sui Dynasty, the Sramana of Northern India from Daxingshan Temple, Jnanagupta, translated it later, also naming it Wonderful Law. The three Sutras overlap, and their texts and purports are mutually displayed. The version that is revered and promoted by the times is the Qin text. As for the remaining chapters and separate verses, their circulation is not without merit; they are detailed in the catalogues and prefaces, so I will not recount them here.

Now, regarding the spiritual peak sending down its spirit, without a Great Sage there is no cause for enlightenment; regarding the reach of adapted transformation, without past conditions there is no way to guide the mind. Therefore, the proclamation in the Deer Park distinguished between the capacities of the small and the great; the final instructions at the Golden River separated the classifications of the half and the full. Is it not that the teaching covers the times, and there is no way to verify its high assembly? Thus we know that the five thousand who withdrew from the seat were a group who advanced in arrogance; the five hundred who received predictions were all traces of honoring the secret transformation. Therefore, emitting light and manifesting signs opened the source of the teaching that was requested; emerging from meditation and praising virtue expressed the vast strategy of the Buddha-wisdom. The Burning House communicates the tracks of the entering the Great; the Conjured City guides the past conditions so they do not fall; the Tied Pearl clarifies the eternal presence of the rational nature; the Dug Well displays the many methods of manifestation and realization. The words and meanings are apparent, but the metaphors are distant. Unless it were Great Compassion broadly saving, pulling the drowning out

of the sinking flow, and the One Extreme Pity, saving those who have lost their nature from confusion, how could this be? From the Han to the Tang, over six hundred years, totaling over four thousand scrolls of various scriptures, in terms of the prevalence of being upheld, none exceeds this Sutra. Is it not that the capacity and the teaching struck each other, combining with the remaining dust of Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Buddha? Hearing and deeply respecting, it matches the remaining merit of Sadaparibhuta. I have presumed to summarize it in a preface at the head of the Sutra. I hope we may quickly purify the six sense organs and look up to the excellent assembly of the Compassionate Honored One; quickly achieve the four virtues and proceed to the mysterious path of the Land of Bliss. The praise of its propagation is endless, leaving it forever to future generations. Thus it is said.

THE SUTRA OF THE LOTUS OF THE WONDERFUL LAW VOLUME ONE

INTRODUCTION

Thus have I heard. At one time the Buddha was staying in the City of Royal Palaces, on Mount Gridhrakuta, together with a gathering of great bhikshus, twelve thousand in all. All were Arhats, having exhausted all leaks, having no further defilements, having attained their own advantage, having annihilated the bonds of existence, and having minds that achieved independence. Their names were: Ajnata-Kaundinya, Mahakasyapa, Uruvilva-Kasyapa, Gaya-Kasyapa, Nadi-Kasyapa, Sariputra, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakatyayana, Aniruddha, Kapphina, Gavampati, Revata, Pilindavatsa, Vakkula, Mahakausthila, Nanda, Sundarananda, Purna Maitrayaniputra, Subhuti, Ananda, and Rahula. All were great Arhats such as these, known by the assembly.

There were also those with more to learn and those with nothing more to learn, two thousand in all. The Bhikshuni Mahaprajapati was there, together with her retinue of six thousand people. The Bhikshuni Yasodhara, Rahula's mother, was also there with her retinue.

There were Bodhisattva Mahasattvas, eighty thousand in all. All were non-regressing in Anuttarasamyaksambodhi. They had all obtained dharanis, delighted in eloquence and speaking, and turned the irreversible wheel of the Dharma. They had made offerings to measureless hundreds of thousands of Buddhas, and in the presence of those Buddhas had planted the roots of multitudinous virtues. They were constantly praised by the Buddhas. They cultivated themselves with compassion and were well entered into the Buddha-wisdom. They had penetrated great wisdom and reached the other shore. Their fame was universally heard throughout measureless worlds, and they were able to save countless hundreds of thousands of living beings. Their names were: The Bodhisattva Manjusri, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva Mahasthmaprapta, the Bodhisattva Nityoyukta, the Bodhisattva Anikshiptadhura, the Bodhisattva Ratnapani, the Bodhisattva Bhaishajyaraja, the Bodhisattva Pradasura, the Bodhisattva Ratnachandra, the Bodhisattva Chandratreya, the Bodhisattva Purnachandra, the Bodhisattva Mahavikramin, the Bodhisattva Anantavikramin, the Bodhisattva Trailokyavikramin, the Bodhisattva Bhadrakara, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Ratnakara, and the Bodhisattva Susartha. There were eighty thousand Bodhisattva Mahasattvas such as these.

At that time, Sakra Devanam Indra was there with his retinue of twenty thousand sons of gods. There were also the God Son Moon, the God Son Universal Fragrance, the God Son Jeweled Light, and the Four Great Heavenly Kings, with their retinues, ten thousand sons of gods. The God Son Freedom and the God Son Great Freedom were there with their retinues, thirty thousand sons of gods. The King of the Brahma Heaven, the Lord of the Saha World, the Great Brahma Sikhin, and the Great Brahma Light were there with their retinues, twelve thousand sons of gods.

There were Eight Dragon Kings: Nanda Dragon King, Upananda Dragon King, Sagara Dragon King, Vasuki Dragon King, Takshaka Dragon King, Anavatapta Dragon King, Manasvin Dragon King, and Utpalaka Dragon King, each with a retinue of several hundred thousand followers.

There were Four Kimnara Kings: Dharma Kimnara King, Wonderful Dharma Kimnara King, Great Dharma Kimnara King, and Upholding Dharma Kimnara King, each with a retinue of several hundred thousand followers.

There were Four Gandharva Kings: Music Gandharva King, Musical Sound Gandharva King, Beautiful Gandharva King, and Beautiful Sound Gandharva King, each with a retinue of several hundred thousand followers.

There were Four Asura Kings: Balin Asura King, Kharaskandha Asura King, Vemacitrin Asura King, and Rahu Asura King, each with a retinue of several hundred thousand followers.

There were Four Garuda Kings: Great Majesty Garuda King, Great Body Garuda King, Great Fullness Garuda King, and As-You-Will Garuda King, each with a retinue of several hundred thousand followers.

Ajatasatru, the son of Vaidehi, was there with a retinue of several hundred thousand followers. Each bowed to the Buddha's feet, retired, and sat to one side.

At that time, the World Honored One, surrounded by the four assemblies, received offerings, respect, honor, and praise. For the sake of the Bodhisattvas, He expounded a Great Vehicle Sutra named Immeasurable Meanings, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, one that is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas. After the Buddha finished expounding this Sutra, He sat cross-legged and entered into the Samadhi of the Place of Immeasurable Meanings, his body and mind unmoving. At that time, the heavens rained down Mandarava flowers, Maha-mandarava flowers, Manjushaka flowers, and Maha-manjushaka flowers, scattering them upon the Buddha and the great assembly. The entire Buddha-world shook in six ways.

At that time, the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, Devas, Dragons, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kimnaras, Mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, as well as the minor kings and the Wheel-Turning Holy Kings in the assembly, all attained what they had never had before. They rejoiced, joined their palms, and looked at the Buddha with a single mind.

Then the Buddha emitted a light from the white hair between his eyebrows, illuminating eighteen thousand worlds to the east. There was no place it did not pervade, down to the Avici Hell and up to the Akanishtha Heaven. Within this world, one could fully see the living beings in the six destinies of those lands. One could also see the Buddhas present in those lands and hear the Sutra-Dharmas expounded by those Buddhas. One could also see the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas, and those who practiced and attained the Way. One could also see the

Bodhisattva Mahasattvas, with various causes and conditions, various beliefs and understandings, and various appearances, practicing the Bodhisattva Way. One could also see the Buddhas entering Parinirvana. One could also see that after the Buddhas entered Parinirvana, towers of seven jewels were built for their relics.

At that time, the Bodhisattva Maitreya had this thought: "Now the World Honored One manifests signs of spiritual transformation. What is the cause and reason for this portent? Now that the Buddha, the World Honored One, has entered into Samadhi, this is an inconceivable and rare occurrence. Who should I ask? Who can answer this?" He further thought: "This Manjusri, the Prince of the Dharma, has previously drawn near and made offerings to measureless past Buddhas. He must have seen rare signs such as this. I shall ask him now."

At that time, the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, and the Devas, Dragons, and spirits all had this thought: "Regarding this ray of light and spiritual sign of the Buddha, who should we ask now?"

Then the Bodhisattva Maitreya, wishing to resolve his own doubts, and also observing the minds of the four assemblies of Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, and the Devas, Dragons, and spirits, questioned Manjusri, saying: "For what cause and reason is there this auspicious spiritual sign, this emission of great light that illuminates eighteen thousand lands to the east, so that the adornments of those Buddha-worlds are fully seen?"

Thereupon, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, wishing to restate this meaning, asked in verse:

"Manjusri!
Why does the Guide
Emit from the white hair between his brows
A great light that shines universally?
Why do Mandarava
And Manjushaka flowers rain down,
And a sandalwood fragrant breeze
Delight the hearts of the assembly?
By these causes and conditions,
The earth is entirely adorned and pure,
And this world
Shakes in six ways.
At this time, the four assemblies
Are all entirely joyful;
They are physically and mentally gladdened,
Attaining what they never had before.
The light from between the brows
Shines into the east,

Eighteen thousand lands
Are all the color of gold.
From the Avici Hell
Up to the Summit of Existence,
Within the various worlds,
The living beings of the six paths,
The places of birth and death to which they tend,
Their good and evil karmic conditions,
And the good or ugly retribution they receive,
Are all seen from here.
Also seen are the Buddhas,
The Holy Lords, the Lions,
Expounding the Sutras,
Subtle, wonderful, and foremost.
Their voices are pure and clear,
Producing soft and gentle sounds,
Teaching the Bodhisattvas,
Countless millions of them.
Their Brahma-sounds are profound and wonderful,
Causing people to delight in hearing them.
Each in his own world,
They lecture on the Correct Dharma.
With various causes and conditions
And measureless metaphors,
They illuminate the Buddha-dharma
And enlighten living beings.
If people encounter suffering,
Loathing aging, sickness, and death,
For them they speak of Nirvana,
To exhaust the limits of all suffering.
If people have blessings,
Having made offerings to Buddhas in the past,
And ambitiously seek the superior Dharma,
For them they speak of Conditioned Awakening.
If there are Buddha-disciples
Who cultivate various practices,
Seeking unsurpassed wisdom,
For them they speak of the Pure Way.
Manjusri!
Dwelling here, I
See and hear things such as these,
Reaching a thousand million things;

Such a multitude,
I shall now speak of briefly.
I see in those lands
Bodhisattvas like sands of the Ganges,
With various causes and conditions
Seeking the Buddha Way.
Some practice giving,
Offering gold, silver, and coral,
Pearls and mani jewels,
Mother-of-pearl, agate,
Diamonds and various gems,
Servants and carriages,
Jeweled palanquins and litters;
They give these with joy.
They dedicate this to the Buddha Way,
Wishing to obtain this Vehicle,
Which is foremost in the three realms
And praised by all Buddhas.
There are Bodhisattvas
Who give jeweled carriages drawn by four horses,
With railings and flowered canopies
And ornate decorations.
I also see Bodhisattvas
Giving their own flesh, hands, and feet,
And their wives and children,
Seeking the Unsurpassed Way.
I also see Bodhisattvas
Delightfully giving their
Heads, eyes, and bodies,
Seeking the Buddha's wisdom.
Manjusri!
I see various kings
Going to the Buddha's place
To ask about the Unsurpassed Way,
Then abandoning their pleasant lands,
Palaces, ministers, and concubines,
Shaving their beards and hair,
And donning Dharma robes.
Or I see Bodhisattvas
Who become Bhikshus,
Dwelling alone in quietude,
Delighting in reciting the Sutras.

I also see Bodhisattvas,
Courageous and zealous,
Entering deep mountains
To contemplate the Buddha Way.
I also see those who have left desire,
Constantly dwelling in empty stillness,
Deeply cultivating Dhyana concentration,
And obtaining the five spiritual penetrations.
I also see Bodhisattvas
Sitting in meditation with joined palms,
With a thousand million verses
Praising the Dharma Kings.
I also see Bodhisattvas,
With deep wisdom and firm resolve,
Able to question the Buddhas,
Hearing and accepting all.
I also see Buddha-disciples,
With complete concentration and wisdom,
Using measureless metaphors
To lecture on the Dharma to the multitudes.
Delighting in speaking the Dharma,
They transform the Bodhisattvas,
Defeating the armies of Mara
And beating the Dharma drum.
I also see Bodhisattvas
In silent stillness,
Revered by Devas and Dragons,
Yet not feeling joy because of it.
I also see Bodhisattvas
Emitting light in the forests,
Saving those suffering in hell,
Causing them to enter the Buddha Way.
I also see Buddha-disciples
Who have never slept,
Walking in the forest,
Diligently seeking the Buddha Way.
I also see those who keep the precepts,
With flawless conduct,
Pure as precious pearls,
Seeking the Buddha Way.
I also see Buddha-disciples
Dwelling in the power of patience;

When those of overbearing arrogance
Maliciously scold and beat them,
They are able to endure it all,
Seeking the Buddha Way.
I also see Bodhisattvas
Departing from all play and laughter
And foolish retinues,
Drawing near to wise ones,
Single-mindedly removing distraction,
Collecting their thoughts in the mountain forests
For billions of years
To seek the Buddha Way.
Or I see Bodhisattvas
Offering delicacies, food and drink,
And a hundred kinds of medicinal broths
To the Buddha and the Sangha.
Offering famous robes and superior garments
Worth thousands and millions,
Or priceless robes,
To the Buddha and the Sangha.
Offering thousands of millions of kinds
Of sandalwood jeweled dwellings
And varied wonderful bedding
To the Buddha and the Sangha.
Clean and pure gardens and groves,
With flowers and fruits flourishing,
Flowing springs and bathing pools,
Offered to the Buddha and the Sangha.
Offerings such as these,
Of various subtle and wonderful kinds,
Are given with joy and without weariness,
Seeking the Unsurpassed Way.
There are Bodhisattvas
Who speak of the Dharma of quiescence,
With various teachings and instructions
For countless living beings.
Or I see Bodhisattvas
Observing the nature of all dharmas
As having no dual characteristics,
Just like empty space.
I also see Buddha-disciples
With minds that have no attachments,

Using this wonderful wisdom
To seek the Unsurpassed Way.
Manjusri!
There are also Bodhisattvas
Who, after the Buddha's extinction,
Make offerings to the relics.
I also see Buddha-disciples
Building stupas and temples
As numerous as the sands of the Ganges,
Adorning the lands.
The jeweled stupas are tall and wonderful,
Five thousand yojanas high,
With length and width exactly equal,
Two thousand yojanas.
Each stupa and temple
Has a thousand banners and streamers,
Curtains of strung pearls,
And jeweled bells chiming in harmony.
All the Devas, Dragons, and Spirits,
Humans and non-humans,
With incense, flowers, and music,
Constantly make offerings.
Manjusri!
The Buddha-disciples
Adorn the stupas and temples
To make offerings to the relics;
The lands are naturally
Specially marvelous and fine,
Like the King of Heavenly Trees
When its flowers bloom.
The Buddha emits a single ray of light,
And I and the assembly
See these lands
With their various special wonders.
The spiritual power of the Buddhas
And their wisdom are rare;
Emitting a single pure light,
They illuminate measureless lands.
We, seeing this,
Attain what we have never had before.
Disciple of the Buddha, Manjusri!
Please resolve the doubts of the assembly.

The four assemblies look up with joy,
Gazing at you, humane one, and at me.
Why has the World Honored One
Emitted this light?
Disciple of the Buddha, answer now,
Resolve our doubts and cause us to rejoice.
For what benefit
Is this light put forth?
Does He wish to speak of the subtle Dharma
Attained when the Buddha sat at the Way-place?
Or will He give predictions?
Manifesting the Buddha-lands,
Adorned and pure with many jewels,
And seeing the Buddhas,
This is no small condition.
Manjusri, you should know,
The four assemblies, Dragons, and Spirits
Look to and observe you, humane one,
Wondering what will be said."

At that time, Manjusri spoke to the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya and the other great learned ones: "Good men! In my estimation, the Buddha, the World Honored One, now intends to speak the Great Dharma, rain down the Great Dharma rain, blow the Great Dharma conch, beat the Great Dharma drum, and expound the Great Dharma meaning. Good men! I have seen this portent among past Buddhas; after emitting this light, they immediately spoke the Great Dharma. Therefore, you should know that the manifestation of light by the Buddha now is also like this. He wishes to cause living beings to hear and know the Dharma that is difficult to believe for the whole world; therefore, He manifests this portent.

"Good men! In the past, countless, boundless, inconceivable asamkhyeya kalpas ago, there was a Buddha named Sun Moon Lamp Bright Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, Of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. He expounded the Correct Dharma, which was good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good in the end. Its meaning was deep and far-reaching, its language skillful and subtle, pure and unmixed, fully possessing the characteristics of pure Brahma conduct. For those seeking the Voice-Hearer vehicle, he responded with the Dharma of the Four Noble Truths, to deliver them from birth, old age, sickness, and death to ultimate Nirvana. For those seeking Pratyekabuddhahood, he responded with the Dharma of the Twelve Causes and Conditions. For the Bodhisattvas, he responded with the Six Paramitas, causing them to attain Anuttarasamyaksambodhi and achieve the Wisdom of All Modes.

"Next there was a Buddha also named Sun Moon Lamp Bright, and then another Buddha also named Sun Moon Lamp Bright. In this way, there were twenty thousand Buddhas all with the same name, Sun Moon Lamp Bright, and also the same surname, Bharadvaja. Maitreya, you should know that from the first Buddha to the last Buddha, they all had the same name, Sun Moon Lamp Bright, and were complete with the ten titles. The Dharma they spoke was good in the beginning, middle, and end. Before the last Buddha left home, he had eight princely sons. The first was named Having Intent, the second named Good Intent, the third named Immeasurable Intent, the fourth named Jeweled Intent, the fifth named Increasing Intent, the sixth named Doubt-Removing Intent, the seventh named Resounding Intent, and the eighth named Dharma Intent. These eight princes possessed dignity, virtue, and independence, and each ruled over four continents. When these princes heard that their father had left the home life and attained Anuttarasamyaksambodhi, they all renounced their royal positions and followed him to leave home. They generated the intention for the Great Vehicle, constantly cultivated Brahma conduct, and all became Dharma Masters, having already planted roots of goodness under thousands and tens of thousands of Buddhas.

"At that time, the Buddha Sun Moon Lamp Bright spoke a Great Vehicle Sutra named Immeasurable Meanings, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, one that is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas. After speaking this Sutra, he immediately sat cross-legged amidst the great assembly and entered the Samadhi of the Place of Immeasurable Meanings, his body and mind unmoving. At that time, the heavens rained down Mandarava flowers, Maha-mandarava flowers, Manjushaka flowers, and Maha-manjushaka flowers, scattering them upon the Buddha and the great assembly. The entire Buddha-world shook in six ways. At that time, the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, Devas, Dragons, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kimnaras, Mahoragas, humans, non-humans, and the minor kings and Wheel-Turning Holy Kings in the assembly all attained what they had never had before. They rejoiced, joined their palms, and looked at the Buddha with a single mind.

"At that time, the Tathagata emitted a light from the white hair between his eyebrows, illuminating eighteen thousand Buddha-lands to the east. It pervaded everywhere, just like what is seen now. Maitreya, you should know that in the assembly at that time, there were two billion Bodhisattvas who delighted in hearing the Dharma. When these Bodhisattvas saw this light universally illuminating the Buddha-lands, they attained what they had never had before and wished to know the cause and reason for this light. At that time, there was a Bodhisattva named Wonderfully Bright, who had eight hundred disciples. The Buddha Sun Moon Lamp Bright arose from Samadhi and, for the sake of the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright, expounded the Great Vehicle Sutra named the Lotus of the Wonderful Law, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, one that is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas. He did not rise from his seat for sixty small kalpas. The listeners in the assembly also sat in one place for sixty small kalpas with bodies and minds unmoving, listening to what the Buddha said as if it were only the time of a meal. At that time, within the assembly, there was not a single person who became physically or mentally weary.

"After the Buddha Sun Moon Lamp Bright had spoken this Sutra for sixty small kalpas, he immediately proclaimed amidst the host of Brahmas, Maras, Sramanas, Brahmans, Devas, humans, and Asuras: 'Tonight at midnight, the Tathagata shall enter Nirvana without remainder.' At that time, there was a Bodhisattva named Virtue Store, to whom the Buddha Sun Moon Lamp Bright gave a prediction. He told the Bhikshus: 'This Bodhisattva Virtue Store shall become a Buddha next, with the name Pure Body Tathagata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha.' After the Buddha gave this prediction, he entered Nirvana without remainder at midnight. After the Buddha's extinction, the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright upheld the Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law and expounded it to people for a full eighty small kalpas. The eight sons of the Buddha Sun Moon Lamp Bright all took Wonderfully Bright as their master. Wonderfully Bright taught and transformed them, causing them to be firm in Anuttarasamyaksambodhi. After these princes made offerings to measureless hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas, they all achieved the Buddha Way. The last one to become a Buddha was named Burning Lamp. Among the eight hundred disciples, there was one person named Seeker of Fame. He was greedily attached to profit and support; although he read and recited many scriptures, he did not penetrate them and forgot much, hence he was named Seeker of Fame. But because this person had also planted various good roots and causes, he was able to encounter measureless hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas, making offerings, respecting, honoring, and praising them. Maitreya, you should know, could the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright have been anyone else? He was I, myself. And the Bodhisattva Seeker of Fame was you, yourself. seeing this portent now, it is no different from the original one. Therefore, I estimate that today the Tathagata intends to speak the Great Vehicle Sutra named the Lotus of the Wonderful Law, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, one that is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas."

At that time, Manjusri, wishing to restate this meaning in the great assembly, spoke in verse:

"I recall in a past age,
Measureless, innumerable kalpas ago,
There was a Buddha, the most honored of men,
Named Sun Moon Lamp Bright.
The World Honored One expounded the Dharma,
Saving measureless living beings,
And countless millions of Bodhisattvas,
Causing them to enter the Buddha-wisdom.
Before that Buddha left the home life,
The eight princely sons born to him,
Seeing the Great Sage leave home,
Also followed him to cultivate Brahma conduct.
At that time the Buddha spoke the Great Vehicle,
A Sutra named Immeasurable Meanings,
And amidst the great assembly,
He made extensive distinctions for them.

After the Buddha spoke this Sutra,
Upon the Dharma seat,
He sat cross-legged in Samadhi
Named the Place of Immeasurable Meanings.
The heavens rained Mandarava flowers,
Heavenly drums sounded naturally,
And all the Devas, Dragons, and spirits
Made offerings to the Most Honored of Men.
All the Buddha-lands
Immediately shook greatly.
The Buddha emitted a light from between his brows,
Manifesting various rare things.
This light illuminated the east,
Eighteen thousand Buddha-lands,
Showing the places of the karmic retribution
Of the birth and death of all living beings.
Some saw Buddha-lands
Adorned with many jewels,
With the colors of lapis lazuli and crystal;
This was due to the illumination of the Buddha's light.
Also seen were Devas, humans,
Dragons, spirits, Yakshas,
Gandharvas and Kimnaras,
Each making offerings to their Buddha.
Also seen were Tathagatas
Naturally achieving the Buddha Way,
Their body color like a golden mountain,
Dignified and extremely subtle and wonderful.
Like pure lapis lazuli,
With a true gold image appearing within,
The World Honored One in the great assembly
Proclaimed and expounded the profound meaning of the Dharma.
In each and every Buddha-land,
The Voice-Hearer disciples were innumerable;
Due to the illumination of the Buddha's light,
That entire great assembly was fully seen.
Or there were Bhikshus
In the mountain forests,
Diligently maintaining pure precepts
As if protecting a bright pearl.
Also seen were Bodhisattvas
Practicing giving, patience, and so forth,

Their number like the sands of the Ganges;
This was due to the illumination of the Buddha's light.
Also seen were Bodhisattvas
Entering deeply into Dhyana concentrations,
With body and mind still and unmoving,
Seeking the Unsurpassed Way.
Also seen were Bodhisattvas
Who knew the mark of the quiescence of dharmas,
Each in his own land
Speaking the Dharma and seeking the Buddha Way.
At that time, the four assemblies
Saw the Buddha Sun Moon Lamp Bright
Manifest great spiritual powers,
And their hearts all rejoiced.
Each asked the other:
'What is the cause and reason for this?'
The Honored One worshiped by Devas and humans
Just then arose from Samadhi
And praised the Bodhisattva Wonderfully Bright:
'You are the eye of the world,
Believed in by all.
You are able to uphold the Dharma Treasury;
As for the Dharma I speak,
Only you can verify and know it!
After the World Honored One gave this praise,
Causing Wonderfully Bright to rejoice,
He spoke this Lotus Sutra
For a full sixty small kalpas,
Not rising from this seat.
The supreme wonderful Dharma he spoke
Was fully received and upheld
By the Dharma Master Wonderfully Bright.
After the Buddha spoke this Lotus Flower,
Causing the assembly to rejoice,
Immediately on that very day
He announced to the host of Devas and humans:
'The meaning of the True Aspect of all dharmas
Has already been spoken for you.
I now, at midnight,
Shall enter into Nirvana.
You must be single-minded and diligent,
And remove yourselves from laxity.

The Buddhas are very difficult to meet,
Encountered once in a billion kalpas!
The World Honored One's disciples,
Hearing that the Buddha was to enter Nirvana,
Each felt grief and distress,
That the Buddha's extinction was so quick.
The Holy Lord, the King of the Dharma,
Comforted the measureless multitude:
'When I reach extinction,
You should not worry or fear.
This Bodhisattva Virtue Store,
With regard to the leakless Real Mark,
Has already attained penetration in his mind.
He shall become a Buddha next,
With the title Pure Body,
And will also save measureless multitudes.'
The Buddha entered extinction that night,
Like a fire going out when the wood is exhausted.
They distributed the various relics
And built measureless stupas.
The Bhikshus and Bhikshunis,
Their number like the sands of the Ganges,
Doubled their diligence
To seek the Unsurpassed Way.
This Dharma Master Wonderfully Bright
Upheld the Buddha's Dharma Treasury,
And during eighty small kalpas,
Broadly proclaimed the Lotus Sutra.
Those eight princely sons
Were instructed by Wonderfully Bright.
They were made firm in the Unsurpassed Way,
And would see countless Buddhas.
After making offerings to the Buddhas,
They followed along and walked the Great Way,
Successively attaining Buddhahood,
Transmitting the prediction in turn.
The last one, a God among Gods,
Was named the Buddha Burning Lamp,
The Guide of all Sages,
Who delivered measureless multitudes.
This Dharma Master Wonderfully Bright
Had a disciple at that time

Whose heart constantly harbored laxity,
Who was greedily attached to fame and profit.
He sought fame and profit tirelessly,
Often visiting the houses of clansmen;
He discarded what he had studied and recited,
Forgetful and not fluent.
Because of these causes and conditions,
He was named Seeker of Fame.
But he also performed many good deeds,
Attained the sight of countless Buddhas,
And made offerings to the Buddhas,
Following along and walking the Great Way,
Completing the Six Paramitas.
Now he sees the Lion of the Sakyas.
Later he will become a Buddha
Named Maitreya,
Broadly saving living beings,
Their numbers beyond measure.
After that Buddha's extinction,
The lazy one was you;
The Dharma Master Wonderfully Bright
Is now myself.
I saw the Buddha Lamp Bright,
And his light and portents were like this.
By this I know that the present Buddha
Wishes to speak the Lotus Sutra.
The present signs are like the original portents;
This is the expedient method of the Buddhas.
Now the Buddha emits a bright light
To help reveal the meaning of the Real Mark.
All you people should know now,
Join your palms and wait with a single mind.
The Buddha will rain down the Dharma rain
To satisfy those who seek the Way.
Those who seek the three vehicles,
If they have doubts or regrets,
The Buddha will remove and cut them off,
Ending them completely with no remainder."

EXPEDIENT MEANS

At that time, the World Honored One arose serenely from Samadhi and told Sariputra: " The wisdom of the Buddhas is extremely profound and measureless. The gate to their wisdom is difficult to understand and difficult to enter. None of the Voice-Hearers or Pratyekabuddhas can know it. Why is this? The Buddha has previously drawn near to hundreds of thousands of millions of countless Buddhas, exhaustively practicing the measureless Ways and Dharmas of the Buddhas, courageous and diligent, his fame universally heard. He has achieved profound and never-before-had Dharmas, and what he preaches in accordance with appropriateness has intentions that are difficult to understand. Sariputra! Since I became a Buddha, I have used various causes and conditions and various metaphors to widely expound the verbal teachings, using countless expedient means to guide living beings and cause them to separate from their attachments. Why is this? The Tathagata is already fully possessed of expedient means and the Paramita of knowledge and vision. Sariputra! The knowledge and vision of the Tathagata is vast, great, profound, and far-reaching. His measurelessness, obstructionlessness, powers, fearlessnesses, Dhyana concentrations, and perceptions of liberation samadhis have deeply entered the boundless, and he has achieved all the never-before-had Dharmas. Sariputra! The Tathagata is able to make various distinctions and skillfully speak the dharmas; his words are soft and gentle, delighting the hearts of the assembly. Sariputra! To put it essentially, the Buddha has fully achieved all the measureless, boundless, never-before-had Dharmas.

"Stop, Sariputra! It requires no further speech. Why is this? The Dharma achieved by the Buddha is the foremost, rare, and difficult to understand. Only a Buddha and a Buddha can exhaustively fathom the Real Mark of all dharmas, that is to say, all dharmas are: such appearance, such nature, such substance, such power, such function, such primary cause, such environmental cause, such effect, such recompense, and such total equality from beginning to end."

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"The World Hero is unfathomable.
None of the Devas, worldly people,
Or any class of living beings
Can know the Buddha.
The Buddha's powers, fearlessnesses,
Liberations, and Samadhis,
And the Buddha's other Dharmas,
Are such that no one can measure them.
Originally, following countless Buddhas,
He fully practiced all the Ways;
The subtle and wonderful Dharma is extremely deep,
Difficult to see and difficult to comprehend.
Throughout measureless millions of kalpas,

Having practiced these Ways,
In the Way-place he achieved the fruit;
I have fully known and seen it.
Great fruit and rewards such as these,
The meanings of the various natures and marks,
Only I and the Buddhas of the ten directions
Are able to know these things.
This Dharma cannot be demonstrated;
Words and signs are quiescent.
Among the other classes of living beings,
None are able to understand it,
Except for the multitude of Bodhisattvas
Whose power of faith is firm.
The multitude of Buddha-disciples
Who have made offerings to the Buddhas,
Who have exhausted all leaks,
And dwell in this final body,
People such as these
Do not have the power to bear it.
Even if the whole world were full
Of people like Sariputra,
Though they exhausted their thoughts to measure it together,
They could not fathom the Buddha-wisdom.
Truly, even if the ten directions were full
Of people like Sariputra,
And the other disciples
Also filled the lands of the ten directions,
Though they exhausted their thoughts to measure it together,
They still could not know it.
Pratyekabuddhas with sharp wisdom,
In their final leakless bodies,
Even if they filled the worlds of the ten directions,
Their number like bamboo in a forest,
If these gathered together with one mind
For millions of measureless kalpas,
Wishing to contemplate the Buddha's real wisdom,
They could not know a small portion of it.
Newly resolved Bodhisattvas,
Having made offerings to countless Buddhas,
Understanding the various meanings and aims,
And able to speak the Dharma well,
Countous as rice, hemp, bamboo, and reeds,

Filling the lands of the ten directions,
With a single mind and wonderful wisdom,
For kalpas as numerous as Ganges sands,
If they all thought and measured together,
They could not know the Buddha-wisdom.
Non-regressing Bodhisattvas,
Their number like the sands of the Ganges,
Singlemindedly thinking and seeking together,
Could also not know it.
I also tell you, Sariputra:
The leakless, inconceivable,
Extremely profound, subtle and wonderful Dharma,
I have now fully attained.
Only I know this mark,
And the Buddhas of the ten directions are also like this.
Sariputra, you should know
That the words of the Buddhas are no different.
Toward the Dharma spoken by the Buddha,
You should generate great power of faith.
After the World Honored One's Dharma has been around a long time,
He must speak the truth.
I tell the assembly of Voice-Hearers
And those who seek the Pratyekabuddha vehicle:
'I have caused you to be released from the bonds of suffering
And to attain Nirvana.'
The Buddha, with the power of expedient means,
Demonstrates the teaching of the Three Vehicles;
Living beings are attached everywhere,
So he guides them to cause them to escape."

At that time in the great assembly, there were Voice-Hearers, leakless Arhats, Ajnata-Kaundinya and others, twelve hundred people, as well as Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas who had generated the thought of the Voice-Hearer and Pratyekabuddha, who all had this thought: "Why does the World Honored One now earnestly praise expedient means and speak in this way: 'The Dharma attained by the Buddha is extremely profound and difficult to understand; the meaning of what he says is difficult to know, and none of the Voice-Hearers or Pratyekabuddhas can reach it.'? The Buddha has spoken of the meaning of one liberation, and we have also attained this Dharma and reached Nirvana. But now we do not understand where this meaning tends."

At that time, Sariputra, knowing the doubts in the minds of the four assemblies and having not understood himself, addressed the Buddha, saying: "World Honored One! For what cause and what reason do you earnestly praise the foremost expedient means of the Buddhas and the

extremely profound, subtle, wonderful, and difficult-to-understand Dharma? Since times past I have never heard such a teaching from the Buddha; now the four assemblies all have doubts. I only pray the World Honored One will explain this matter. Why does the World Honored One earnestly praise the extremely profound, subtle, wonderful, and difficult-to-understand Dharma?"

At that time, Sariputra, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"Sun of Wisdom, Great Saint, Honored One,
Wait a long time and then speak this Dharma.
You say that you have attained such things as
Powers, fearlessnesses, Samadhis,
Dhyana concentrations, liberations, and so forth,
Inconceivable Dharmas.
Regarding the Dharma attained at the Way-place,
There is no one capable of asking questions;
My intention is difficult to measure,
And there is no one capable of asking.
Unmasked, you speak of your own accord,
Praising the Path you have walked
And the extremely subtle and wonderful wisdom
Attained by the Buddhas.
The leakless Arhats
And those who seek Nirvana
Have now all fallen into a net of doubt;
Why does the Buddha speak this way?
Those who seek Conditioned Awakening,
The Bhikshus, Bhikshunis,
Devas, Dragons, Spirits,
And Gandharvas and so forth,
Look at one another holding hesitation,
Gazing up at the Two-Legged Honored One.
What is the meaning of this matter?
We pray the Buddha will explain.
Among the assembly of Voice-Hearers,
The Buddha has said I am the foremost.
Yet now, regarding my own wisdom,
I have doubts and cannot understand.
Is this the ultimate Dharma?
Or is it the Path to be walked?
The sons born from the Buddha's mouth
Join their palms, gaze up, and wait.
Please emit a subtle and wonderful sound

And speak according to reality for our sake.
The Devas, Dragons, Spirits, and others,
Their numbers like the Ganges sands,
The Bodhisattvas seeking to be Buddhas,
Numbering fully eighty thousand,
And from thousands of millions of lands,
Wheel-Turning Holy Kings have arrived;
They join their palms with respectful minds,
Wishing to hear the complete Way."

At that time, the Buddha told Sariputra: "Stop, stop! There is no need to speak further. If this matter is spoken of, all the Devas and humans in the world will be startled and doubtful."

Sariputra again addressed the Buddha, saying: "World Honored One, I only pray that you will speak it! I only pray that you will speak it! Why is this? In this assembly there are countless hundreds of thousands of millions of asamkhyeyas of living beings who have seen Buddhas in the past, whose roots are sharp and whose wisdom is clear. If they hear what the Buddha says, they will be able to respect and believe it."

At that time, Sariputra, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"Dharma King, Unsurpassed Honored One,
Please speak, and do not worry.
In this assembly are measureless multitudes
Capable of respecting and believing."

The Buddha again stopped Sariputra: "If this matter is spoken of, everything in the world, Devas, humans, and Asuras, will be startled and doubtful, and Bhikshus of overbearing arrogance will fall into a great pit."

At that time, the World Honored One repeated this in verse:

"Stop, stop, it need not be spoken.
My Dharma is wonderful and difficult to conceive.
Those of overbearing arrogance,
If they hear it, will certainly not respect or believe it."

At that time, Sariputra again addressed the Buddha, saying: "World Honored One! I only pray that you will speak it! I only pray that you will speak it! In this assembly now, there are hundreds of thousands of millions of people like me who, in life after life, have received instruction from the Buddha. People such as these will certainly be able to respect and believe, and through the long night they will gain peace and security and much benefit."

At that time, Sariputra, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"Unsurpassed Two-Legged Honored One,
Please speak the foremost Dharma.
I am the Buddha's eldest son;
I only ask that you define and explain it.
In this assembly are measureless multitudes
Able to respect and believe this Dharma.
The Buddha has, for life after life,
Taught and transformed ones such as these.
All join their palms with a single mind,
Wishing to listen to and accept the Buddha's words.
We twelve hundred people
And the others who seek the Buddha,
Pray that for the sake of this assembly,
You will define and explain it.
When these people hear this Dharma,
They will generate great joy."

At that time, the World Honored One told Sariputra: "Since you have earnestly requested three times, how could I not speak? You must listen closely now and think on it well. I shall define and explain it for you."

When He spoke these words, five thousand people in the assembly, Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas, immediately rose from their seats, bowed to the Buddha, and withdrew. Why was this? These groups had deep and heavy roots of sin and overbearing arrogance; they imagined they had attained what they had not attained, and imagined they had realized what they had not realized. Because they had such faults, they did not stay. The World Honored One remained silent and did not restrain them.

Then the Buddha told Sariputra: "Now in this assembly of mine, there are no more branches or leaves; only the pure and true remain. Sariputra! It is excellent that such people of overbearing arrogance have withdrawn. Listen well now, and I will speak for you."

Sariputra said: "Yes, World Honored One! I desire joyfully to hear it."

The Buddha told Sariputra: "A wonderful Dharma such as this is spoken by the Buddha-Tathagatas only on occasion, just as the Udumbara flower appears only once in a great while. Sariputra! You should all believe what the Buddha says; his words are not false. Sariputra! The Buddhas expound the Dharma in accordance with appropriateness; the intention is difficult to understand. Why is this? I use countless expedient means, various causes and conditions, and metaphors and verbal

expressions to expound the dharmas. This Dharma is not something that can be understood through pondering or discrimination. Only the Buddhas can know it. Why is this? The Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, appear in the world only for one great causal connection. Sariputra! What do I mean by saying that the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, appear in the world only for one great causal connection? The Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, appear in the world because they wish to cause living beings to open the Buddha's knowledge and vision and gain purity. They appear in the world because they wish to demonstrate the Buddha's knowledge and vision to living beings. They appear in the world because they wish to cause living beings to realize the Buddha's knowledge and vision. They appear in the world because they wish to cause living beings to enter the Way of the Buddha's knowledge and vision. Sariputra! This is the one great causal connection for which the Buddhas appear in the world."

The Buddha told Sariputra: "The Buddha-Tathagatas only teach and transform Bodhisattvas. All their actions are always for one matter: simply to demonstrate and enlighten living beings with the Buddha's knowledge and vision. Sariputra! The Tathagata speaks the Dharma to living beings only by means of the One Buddha Vehicle; there are no other vehicles, neither a second nor a third. Sariputra! The Dharma of all the Buddhas of the ten directions is also like this.

"Sariputra! The Buddhas of the past, by means of measureless and countless expedient means, various causes and conditions, and metaphors and verbal expressions, expounded the dharmas for living beings. These dharmas were all for the sake of the One Buddha Vehicle. These living beings, hearing the Dharma from the Buddhas, all ultimately attained the Wisdom of All Modes.

"Sariputra! The future Buddhas who will appear in the world will also, by means of measureless and countless expedient means, various causes and conditions, and metaphors and verbal expressions, expound the dharmas for living beings. These dharmas will all be for the sake of the One Buddha Vehicle. These living beings, hearing the Dharma from the Buddhas, will all ultimately attain the Wisdom of All Modes.

"Sariputra! The present Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, in measureless hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddha-lands in the ten directions, who are greatly benefiting and gladdening living beings, these Buddhas also, by means of measureless and countless expedient means, various causes and conditions, and metaphors and verbal expressions, expound the dharmas for living beings. These dharmas are all for the sake of the One Buddha Vehicle. These living beings, hearing the Dharma from the Buddhas, all ultimately attain the Wisdom of All Modes.

"Sariputra! These Buddhas simply teach and transform Bodhisattvas, because they wish to demonstrate the Buddha's knowledge and vision to living beings, because they wish to enlighten living beings with the Buddha's knowledge and vision, and because they wish to cause living beings to enter the Buddha's knowledge and vision.

"Sariputra! I now am also like this. knowing that living beings have various desires and things to which they are deeply attached in their minds, I follow their basic natures and use various causes and conditions, metaphors, verbal expressions, and the power of expedient means to speak the Dharma for them. Sariputra! All of this is for the sake of attaining the One Buddha Vehicle and the Wisdom of All Modes.

"Sariputra! In the worlds of the ten directions, there are not even two vehicles, much less three. Sariputra! The Buddhas appear in the Evil World of the Five Turbidities, that is, the turbidity of the kalpa, the turbidity of defilements, the turbidity of living beings, the turbidity of views, and the turbidity of the life-span. Like this, Sariputra, when the kalpa is turbid and chaotic, living beings are heavy with dirt; they are stingy, greedy, jealous, and envious, and achieve various unwholesome roots. Therefore, the Buddhas, with the power of expedient means, make distinctions in the One Buddha Vehicle and speak of three. Sariputra! If any of my disciples call themselves Arhats or Pratyekabuddhas and do not hear or know the fact that the Buddha-Tathagatas simply teach and transform Bodhisattvas, they are not Buddha-disciples, not Arhats, and not Pratyekabuddhas.

"Furthermore, Sariputra! If there are Bhikshus or Bhikshunis who call themselves Arhats, dwelling in their final body and headed for ultimate Nirvana, and yet they do not resolve to seek Anuttarasamyaksambodhi, you should know that this group consists entirely of people of overbearing arrogance. Why is this? If there is a Bhikshu who has truly attained Arhatship, it is impossible that he would not believe this Dharma. This excludes the situation after the Buddha's extinction where there is no Buddha present. Why is this? After the Buddha's extinction, it will be difficult to find people who accept, uphold, read, recite, and understand the meaning of Sutras such as this one. If they encounter other Buddhas, they will attain decisive understanding in this Dharma. Sariputra! You should all single-mindedly believe, understand, accept, and uphold the Buddha's words. The words of the Buddha-Tathagatas are not false; there are no other vehicles, only the One Buddha Vehicle."

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"Bhikshus and Bhikshunis
Who harbor overbearing arrogance,
Upasakas with self-conceit,
Upasikas without faith;
A group of four assemblies such as this,
Their number was five thousand.
They did not see their own errors;
They were flawed and leaky in precepts
And protective of their blemishes.
These of small wisdom have already left;
The chaff within the assembly
Has departed through the Buddha's dignity and virtue.

These people lacked blessings and virtue
And were unable to receive this Dharma.
This assembly has no branches or leaves,
Only the pure and true remain.
Sariputra, listen well!
The Dharma attained by the Buddhas,
Through the power of measureless expedient means,
They expound for living beings.
Knowing the thoughts in living beings' minds,
The various paths they walk,
Their several distinct desires and natures,
And the good and evil karma of previous lives,
The Buddha fully knows these things,
And with various conditions, metaphors,
And verbal expressions and the power of expedients,
He causes them all to rejoice.
Sometimes he speaks Sutras,
Gathas, and Itivrittakas,
Jatakas, and Adbhutadharmas;
He also speaks Nidanas,
Aupamyas, and Geyas,
And Upadesa scriptures.
Those of dull roots delight in the Lesser Dharma;
Greedily attached to birth and death,
Under measureless Buddhas,
They do not practice the deep and wonderful Way.
Distressed and confused by many sufferings,
For them I speak of Nirvana.
I devised this expedient means
To cause them to enter the Buddha-wisdom;
I have never said to you,
'You shall attain the Buddha Way.'
The reason I have never said it
Is that the time for speaking had not arrived.
Now is precisely that time;
I decisively speak the Great Vehicle.
These nine divisions of my Dharma,
Spoken in accord with living beings,
Have entry into the Great Vehicle as their basis;
Therefore I speak this Sutra.
There are Buddha-disciples whose minds are pure,
Who are gentle and also sharp-rooted,

Who, under measureless Buddhas,
Practice the deep and wonderful Way.
For these Buddha-disciples,
I speak this Great Vehicle Sutra.
I predict that people such as these
In a future age will achieve the Buddha Way,
Because deeply in their minds they think of the Buddha
And cultivate and uphold pure precepts.
When these hear that they will attain Buddhahood,
Great joy fills their bodies.
The Buddha knows their mental conduct,
So for them he speaks the Great Vehicle.
Whether Voice-Hearers or Bodhisattvas,
If they hear the Dharma I speak,
Even a single verse,
They will all become Buddhas without doubt.
In the Buddha-lands of the ten directions,
There is only the Dharma of the One Vehicle,
There is no second, and no third,
Except for the provisional teachings of the Buddha.
He simply uses provisional names
To guide living beings;
It is to speak of the Buddha-wisdom
That the Buddhas appear in the world.
Only this one fact is true,
The other two are not real.
In the end, he does not use the Small Vehicle
To save and deliver living beings.
The Buddha himself dwells in the Great Vehicle;
In accordance with the Dharma he has attained,
Adorned with the power of concentration and wisdom,
By this he saves living beings.
Having himself certified the Unsurpassed Way,
The Great Vehicle Dharma of equality,
If he used the Small Vehicle to transform
Even one person,
I would fall into stinginess and greed,
But such a thing would be impossible.
If people believe and return to the Buddha,
The Tathagata does not deceive or delude them;
He also has no thoughts of greed or jealousy,
And has cut off the evils within the dharmas.

Therefore, the Buddha in the ten directions
Is alone and without fear.
I adorn my body with the marks,
And my light illuminates the world.
Revered by measureless multitudes,
I speak the seal of the Real Mark.
Sariputra, you should know
That I originally established a vow,
Wishing to cause all multitudes
To be just like me, with no difference.
Like my vow of old,
It is now already satisfied.
I transform all living beings,
Causing them all to enter the Buddha Way.
If I encountered living beings
And taught them all with the Buddha Way,
Those without wisdom would be confused and chaotic;
Bewildered, they would not accept the teaching.
I know that these living beings
Have never cultivated good roots,
But are firmly attached to the five desires,
Generating distress because of foolish love.
Because of the causes and conditions of various desires,
They fall into the three evil paths,
Revolving in the six destinies,
Suffering all manner of poison and pain.
Having received a tiny form in the womb,
Life after life constantly growing,
People of scant virtue and few blessings
Are oppressed by many sufferings.
They enter the dense forest of wrong views,
Debating existence and non-existence and such;
Relying on these views,
They complete the sixty-two.
Deeply attached to false and empty dharmas,
They firmly hold to them, unable to let go.
Arrogant and holding themselves high,
Flattering and crooked, their minds insincere,
For ten million million kalpas,
They do not hear the Buddha's name,
Nor do they hear the Correct Dharma;
People such as these are difficult to save.

Therefore, Sariputra,
I established expedient means for them,
Speaking of the Way to end suffering,
Showing them Nirvana.
Although I speak of Nirvana,
This is also not true extinction.
All dharmas from the beginning
Are constantly in the mark of quiescent extinction.
When the Buddha-disciples have practiced the Way,
In a future age they will become Buddhas.
I possess the power of expedient means
To open and demonstrate the Dharma of the Three Vehicles.
All the World Honored Ones
Preach the Way of the One Vehicle.
Now all of you in this great assembly
Should remove your doubts and delusions.
The words of the Buddhas are no different:
There is only One Vehicle, not two.
For countless kalpas in the past,
Measureless extinct Buddhas,
Hundreds of thousands of millions of kinds,
Their numbers beyond calculation;
World Honored Ones such as these,
Using various conditions and metaphors
And the power of countless expedient means,
Expounded the characteristics of the dharmas.
These World Honored Ones
All spoke the Dharma of the One Vehicle,
Transforming measureless living beings
And causing them to enter the Buddha Way.
Furthermore, the Great Holy Lords
Knew all that the worlds
Of Devas, humans, and living beings
Deeply desired in their hearts.
Using further, different expedients,
They helped reveal the Highest Meaning.
If there were classes of living beings
Who encountered past Buddhas,
And if they listened to the Dharma, practiced giving,
Or kept precepts, endured insults,
Were diligent, practiced Dhyana and wisdom,
And cultivated various blessings and wisdom,

People such as these
Have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
After the Buddhas entered extinction,
If people were of good and soft hearts,
Living beings such as these
Have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
After the Buddhas entered extinction,
Those who made offerings to the relics,
Raising ten thousand million kinds of stupas
Using gold, silver, and crystal,
Mother-of-pearl and agate,
Rose quartz and lapis lazuli gems,
Pure, vast, and strictly adorned,
Decorating the various stupas;
Or those who raised stone temples,
Or used sandalwood and aloeswood,
Hovenia and other timbers,
Bricks, tiles, mud, and earth;
If, in the open wilderness,
They piled up earth to make a Buddha shrine,
Or even children in play
Who gathered sand to make a Buddha stupa;
People such as these
Have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
If people, for the sake of the Buddha,
Established various images,
Carving and sculpting the multitudinous marks,
They have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
Or if they used the seven jewels,
Brass, red and white copper,
Pewter, lead, and tin,
Iron, wood, and mud,
Or used cloth soaked in glue and lacquer
To solemnly adorn and make Buddha images;
People such as these
Have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
Those who painted and drew Buddha images
With the hundred blessings adorning the marks,
Whether doing it themselves or employing others,
Have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
Even children in play,
If with grass, wood, or a brush,

Or with a fingernail,
They drew an image of the Buddha,
People such as these,
Gradually accumulating merit
And fully possessing the heart of great compassion,
Have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
They simply transform the Bodhisattvas
And deliver measureless multitudes.
If people, at stupas and temples,
Or to jeweled images and painted images,
With flowers, incense, banners, and canopies,
Made offerings with a respectful mind;
Or if they employed others to make music,
Beating drums, blowing horns and conchs,
Playing flutes, lutes, harps,
Pipas, cymbals, and gongs;
If countless wonderful sounds such as these
Were wholly held up as offerings;
Or if with a joyful mind
They sang songs praising the Buddha's virtue,
Even producing one small sound,
They have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
If people with scattered and confused minds,
With even a single flower,
Made an offering to a painted image,
They would gradually see countless Buddhas.
Or if there were those who bowed,
Or simply joined their palms,
Or even raised a single hand,
Or gave a slight nod of the head,
Making offerings to the images in this way,
They would gradually see measureless Buddhas.
Personally achieving the Unsurpassed Way,
Broadly delivering countless multitudes,
They enter Nirvana without remainder,
Like a fire going out when the wood is exhausted.
If people with scattered and confused minds
Entered into a stupa or temple
And said 'Namo Buddha' but once,
They have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
Under past Buddhas,
Whether present in the world or after extinction,

If there were those who heard this Dharma,
They have all already achieved the Buddha Way.
The future World Honored Ones,
Their numbers without measure,
These Tathagatas
Will also speak the Dharma via expedient means.
All the Tathagatas,
With measureless expedient means,
Deliver living beings
To enter the Buddha's leakless wisdom;
Of those who hear the Dharma,
There is not one who does not become a Buddha.
The original vow of the Buddhas is:
'The Buddha Way which I practice,
I universally desire to cause living beings
To also attain this same Way.'
Though the Buddhas of future ages
May speak hundreds of thousands of millions
Of countless Dharma gates,
In reality, they are for the One Vehicle.
The Buddhas, the Two-Legged Honored Ones,
Know that dharmas are constantly without a nature;
The Buddha-seed arises from conditions,
Therefore they speak of the One Vehicle.
This Dharma dwells in the Dharma-position;
The appearance of the world is constantly abiding.
Having known this at the Way-place,
The Guides speak it through expedient means.
The Buddhas of the ten directions presently
Receiving the offerings of Devas and humans,
Their numbers like the sands of the Ganges,
Have appeared in the world;
To give peace and security to living beings,
They also speak Dharma such as this.
Knowing the supreme quiescent extinction,
By the power of expedient means,
Although they demonstrate various paths,
In reality, they are for the Buddha Vehicle.
Knowing the conduct of living beings,
The thoughts deep in their minds,
The karma practiced in the past,
Their desires, natures, and power of diligence,

And the sharpness or dullness of their faculties,
By means of various causes and conditions,
Metaphors, and verbal expressions,
They speak expediently in accordance with appropriateness.
I now am also like this;
To give peace and security to living beings,
With various Dharma gates,
I proclaim and demonstrate the Buddha Way.
Using the power of my wisdom,
I know the natures and desires of living beings,
And expediently speak the dharmas,
Causing them all to attain joy.
Sariputra, you should know!
I observe with the Buddha-eye
And see the living beings of the six paths,
Impoverished and lacking blessings and wisdom,
Entering the dangerous path of birth and death,
Their continuous suffering unbroken.
Deeply attached to the five desires,
Like a yak loving its tail,
They cover themselves with greed and love,
Blind and in darkness, seeing nothing.
They do not seek the Buddha with his great power,
Nor the Dharma that cuts off suffering,
But deeply enter into wrong views,
Using suffering in an attempt to discard suffering.
For the sake of these living beings,
I generate a heart of great compassion.
When I first sat at the Way-place,
Looking at the tree and walking around it,
For three times seven days,
I contemplated matters such as these.
The wisdom I have attained
Is subtle, wonderful, and the most supreme.
But the faculties of living beings are dull;
They are attached to pleasure and blinded by foolishness.
A class of beings such as this,
How can they be saved?
At that time the Brahma Kings,
And the Lord Sakra of the Devas,
The Four Heavenly Kings who protect the world,
And the Great Freedom Heaven,

Together with the other heavenly multitudes,
Their retinues numbering millions,
Respectfully joined their palms and bowed,
Asking me to turn the Wheel of the Dharma.
I immediately thought to myself:
'If I simply praise the Buddha Vehicle,
Living beings, sunk in suffering,
Will not be capable of believing this Dharma.
Because they will slander the Dharma and not believe,
They will fall into the three evil paths.
It would be better that I not speak the Dharma,
But quickly enter into Nirvana.'
Then I recalled the past Buddhas
And the power of expedient means they practiced;
'The Way I have now attained
Should also be spoken as Three Vehicles.'
When I had this thought,
The Buddhas of the ten directions all appeared,
And with Brahma-sounds comforted me:
'Excellent, Sakyamuni!
Foremost of Guides,
Having attained this unsurpassed Dharma,
You follow all the Buddhas
In using the power of expedient means.
We also have all attained
The most wonderful, foremost Dharma,
But for the sake of the various classes of living beings,
We make distinctions and speak of Three Vehicles.
Those of little wisdom delight in the Lesser Dharma
And do not believe in themselves to become Buddhas;
Therefore, by means of expedient means,
We make distinctions and speak of various fruits.
Although we speak of Three Vehicles,
It is only for the purpose of teaching Bodhisattvas!
Sariputra, you should know!
When I heard the deep, pure, wonderful sounds
Of the Holy Lions,
I joyously hailed 'Namo Buddha'.
I further had this thought:
'I have emerged in a turbid and evil world;
As the Buddhas have spoken,
I too shall practice in accordance.'

Having thought on this matter,
I immediately proceeded to Varanasi.
The mark of the quiescent extinction of all dharmas
Cannot be expressed in words;
Therefore, using the power of expedient means,
I spoke for the five Bhikshus.
This was named Turning the Dharma Wheel.
Then there was the sound of 'Nirvana',
And the distinct names of Arhat,
Dharma, and Sangha.
From distant kalpas onward,
I have praised and demonstrated the Dharma of Nirvana,
Saying 'The suffering of birth and death is ended eternally';
I have constantly spoken like this.
Sariputra, you should know!
I see the Buddha-disciples,
Those who resolve to seek the Buddha Way,
Measureless thousands of millions of them,
All with respectful minds,
All coming to the Buddha's place,
Having heard from past Buddhas
The Dharma spoken through expedient means.
I immediately had this thought:
'The reason the Tathagata has appeared
Is to speak of the Buddha-wisdom;
Now is exactly the time!
Sariputra, you should know!
Those of dull roots and small wisdom,
Those attached to appearances and arrogant,
Are not capable of believing in this Dharma.
Now I rejoice and am fearless;
In the midst of the Bodhisattvas,
I honestly discard expedient means
And simply speak the Unsurpassed Way.
When the Bodhisattvas hear this Dharma,
The net of doubts will have been completely removed;
The twelve hundred Arhats
Will all also become Buddhas.
Just as the format of speaking the Dharma
Of the Buddhas of the three periods of time,
I now am also like this,
Speaking the undifferentiated Dharma.

The appearance of Buddhas in the world
Is distant and difficult to encounter;
And even when they appear in the world,
To speak this Dharma is difficult.
Throughout measureless countless kalpas,
To hear this Dharma is also difficult;
And those capable of listening to this Dharma,
Such people are also rare.
Like the Udumbara flower,
Which everyone loves and enjoys,
Which is rare among Devas and humans,
And appears only once in a long time;
Hearing the Dharma and rejoicing and praising it,
Even uttering a single word,
This is to have already made offerings
To all the Buddhas of the three periods of time.
Such people are extremely rare,
Surpassing the Udumbara flower.
You should have no doubts.
I am the King of the Dharmas;
I universally announce to the great assembly,
That simply by means of the Path of the One Vehicle,
I teach and transform the Bodhisattvas,
And have no Voice-Hearer disciples.
You, Sariputra,
And the Voice-Hearers and Bodhisattvas,
Should know that this wonderful Dharma
Is the secret essential of the Buddhas.
Because in the Evil World of the Five Turbidities,
Beings simply delight in attaching to desires,
Living beings such as these
Will never seek the Buddha Way.
Evil people of future ages,
Hearing the Buddha speak of the One Vehicle,
Will be confused and not believe or accept it;
Slandering the Dharma, they will fall into the evil paths.
However, for those with shame and purity
Who rely on seeking the Buddha Way,
You should, for ones such as these,
Broadly praise the Path of the One Vehicle.
Sariputra, you should know!
The Dharma of the Buddhas is like this:

With tens of millions of expedient means,
They speak the Dharma according to appropriateness;
Those who do not study and learn it
Cannot understand this.
Since you already know
The events of the expedient means in accord with appropriateness
Of the Buddhas, the Teachers of the World,
You have no further doubts or perplexities.
Your minds generate great joy,
Knowing that you will become Buddhas."

THE SUTRA OF THE LOTUS OF THE WONDERFUL LAW VOLUME TWO

SIMILES

At that time, Sariputra danced with joy. He immediately rose, joined his palms, gazed up at the Honored Face, and addressed the Buddha, saying: "Now, hearing this Dharma sound from the World Honored One, my heart is filled with joy and leaping; I have attained what I never had before. Why is this? In the past, I heard Dharma such as this from the Buddha and saw the Bodhisattvas receiving predictions of becoming Buddhas, but we were not part of this matter. I felt deeply hurt and sorrowful that I had lost the measureless knowledge and vision of the Tathagata. World Honored One! I constantly dwelt alone in mountain forests or under trees, whether sitting or walking, and I always had this thought: 'We have equally entered into the Dharma Nature, so why did the Tathagata save us by means of the Small Vehicle Dharma? This is our fault, not the World Honored One's. Why is this? If we had waited for that which was spoken to achieve Anuttarasamyaksambodhi, we would certainly have been delivered by means of the Great Vehicle. But we did not understand that the expedient means were spoken in accordance with appropriateness. When we first heard the Buddha-dharma, upon encountering it, we immediately believed, accepted, contemplated, and attained realization.' World Honored One! Since times past, I have constantly reproached myself all day and night. But now, hearing from the Buddha the never-before-heard Dharma, I have severed all doubts and regrets, my body and mind are at ease, and I have quickly attained peace and security. Today I finally know that I am truly a disciple of the Buddha, born from the Buddha's mouth, born by transformation from the Dharma, and that I have obtained a portion of the Buddha-dharma."

At that time, Sariputra, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"I hear this Dharma sound,
Attaining what I never had before.
My heart is filled with great joy,
The net of doubts has been completely removed.
Since times past I have received the Buddha's teaching
And have not lost the Great Vehicle.
The Buddha's sound is extremely rare,
Able to remove the distress of living beings.
I have already attained the exhaustion of leaks,
And hearing this also removes my sorrow and distress.
Dwelling in mountain valleys,
Or under forest trees,
Whether sitting or walking,
I constantly pondered this matter.
Alas, deeply reproaching myself,
Why have I deceived myself?"

We are also sons of the Buddha,
Having equally entered the leakless Dharma,
Yet we will not be able in the future
To expound the Unsurpassed Way.
The thirty-two golden features,
The ten powers and various liberations,
Are all within the same single Dharma,
Yet I have not attained these things.
The eighty wonderful characteristics,
The eighteen unshared dharmas,
Merits such as these,
I have completely lost.
When I walked alone,
I saw the Buddha in the great assembly,
His fame filling the ten directions,
Broadly benefiting living beings.
I thought I had lost this benefit,
And that I had deceived myself.
Constantly, day and night,
I pondered this matter,
Wishing to ask the World Honored One
Whether I had lost it or not.
I often saw the World Honored One
Praising the Bodhisattvas;
Therefore, day and night,
I calculated such matters.
Now I hear the Buddha's voice
Speaking the Dharma in accordance with appropriateness,
The leakless, inconceivable Dharma,
Leading the assembly to the Way-place.
I was originally attached to wrong views,
Acting as a teacher to Brahmans.
The World Honored One knew my heart,
Pulled out the wrong and spoke of Nirvana.
I completely removed my wrong views
And attained verification in the Dharma of emptiness.
At that time, my heart told itself
That I had attained extinction;
But now I realize
That it was not true extinction.
If the time comes when I become a Buddha,
Possessing the thirty-two marks,

Honored by Devas, humans, Yakshas,
Dragons, spirits, and others,
At that time, it can be said
That I have forever exhausted all and annihilated without remainder.
The Buddha, in the great assembly,
Has said that I will become a Buddha.
Hearing such a Dharma sound,
Doubts and regrets are completely removed.
When I first heard what the Buddha said,
My heart was filled with great surprise and doubt;
Is this not Mara pretending to be the Buddha,
Disturbing and confusing my mind?
But the Buddha, with various causes,
Metaphors, and skillful speech,
Makes my mind calm as the ocean;
Hearing him, the net of doubt is severed.
The Buddha says that in the past,
Measureless extinct Buddhas,
Resting in expedient means,
Also all spoke this Dharma.
Present and future Buddhas,
Their numbers without measure,
Also use various expedient means
To expound Dharma such as this.
Just as the present World Honored One,
From his birth and leaving home,
To obtaining the Way and turning the Dharma Wheel,
Also speaks through expedient means.
The World Honored One speaks the true path;
Papiyas has no such thing.
Therefore I definitely know
This is not Mara pretending to be the Buddha.
Because I fell into a net of doubt,
I said this was the work of Mara.
Hearing the Buddha's soft and gentle sound,
Profound, distant, and extremely subtle,
Expounding the pure Dharma,
My heart is filled with great joy.
Doubts and regrets are forever ended,
And I dwell in real wisdom.
I will definitely become a Buddha,
Revered by Devas and humans,

Turning the Unsurpassed Dharma Wheel,
And teaching and transforming the Bodhisattvas."

At that time, the Buddha told Sariputra: "I now declare in the midst of this great assembly of Devas, humans, Sramanas, and Brahmans: In the past, under two trillion Buddhas, for the sake of the Unsurpassed Way, I constantly taught and transformed you, and you, for a long night, followed me and received instruction. Because I used expedient means to guide you, you were born within my Dharma. Sariputra! In the past, I taught you to volunteer for the Buddha Way, but you have completely forgotten this, and so you told yourself that you had already attained extinction. Now, wishing to cause you to recall the Path practiced in your original vows, I speak for the Voice-Hearers this Great Vehicle Sutra named the Lotus of the Wonderful Law, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, one that is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas.

"Sariputra! In a future age, after measureless, boundless, and inconceivable kalpas, having made offerings to some thousands of millions of Buddhas, having upheld the Correct Dharma, and having completed the Path practiced by Bodhisattvas, you shall become a Buddha with the title Flower Light Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, Of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. Your land will be named Free From Defilement. The land will be flat and even, pure and adorned, secure and abundant, and flourishing with Devas and humans. The ground will be of lapis lazuli. There will be eight intersecting roads, bordered with ropes of gold. Beside each road will be rows of trees made of the seven jewels, constantly bearing flowers and fruits. The Flower Light Tathagata will also teach and transform living beings by means of the Three Vehicles.

"Sariputra! When that Buddha appears, although it will not be an evil age, due to his original vows he will speak the Dharma of the Three Vehicles. His kalpa will be named Adorned with Great Jewels. Why is it named Adorned with Great Jewels? Because in that land, Bodhisattvas are considered great jewels. Those Bodhisattvas will be measureless, boundless, inconceivable, beyond the reach of calculation or metaphor; without the power of the Buddha's wisdom, no one could know their number. When they wish to walk, jeweled flowers will receive their feet. These Bodhisattvas will not be those who have just generated the thought of enlightenment; they will all have long planted roots of virtue, purified their Brahma conduct under measureless hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas, and will be constantly praised by the Buddhas. They will constantly cultivate the Buddha-wisdom, possess great spiritual powers, know well the doors of all dharmas, be upright and without falseness, and have firm resolve and mindfulness. Bodhisattvas such as these will fill that land.

"Sariputra! The life-span of the Flower Light Buddha will be twelve small kalpas, not including the time he is a prince before becoming a Buddha. The life-span of the people of his land will be eight small kalpas. After twelve small kalpas, the Flower Light Tathagata will give a prediction of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi to the Bodhisattva Firm Fullness. He will tell the Bhikshus: 'This

Bodhisattva Firm Fullness shall become a Buddha next, with the title Flower Feet Safe Walking Tathagata, Arhat, Samyaksambuddha. His Buddha-land will also be like this!

"Sariputra! After this Flower Light Buddha enters extinction, the Correct Dharma will dwell in the world for thirty-two small kalpas, and the Semblance Dharma will also dwell in the world for thirty-two small kalpas."

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"Sariputra, in a future age,
Will become a Buddha, a Universally Wise Honored One,
Named Flower Light,
And will save measureless multitudes.
Having made offerings to countless Buddhas,
And completed the Bodhisattva practices,
The Ten Powers and other merits,
He will certify the Unsurpassed Way.
After measureless kalpas have passed,
There will be a kalpa named Adorned with Great Jewels,
And a world named Free From Defilement,
Pure and without flaw or filth.
With lapis lazuli for ground,
And gold ropes bordering the roads,
Trees of seven jewels and mixed colors
Will constantly bear flowers and fruits.
The Bodhisattvas of that land
Will be constantly firm in resolve and mindfulness;
Regarding the Paramita of spiritual powers,
They will all be fully complete.
Under countless Buddhas,
They will have learned the Bodhisattva Way well;
Great Knights such as these
Will be transformed by the Buddha Flower Light.
When that Buddha was a prince,
He abandoned his land and gave up worldly glory;
In his very last body,
He left home and achieved the Buddha Way.
The Flower Light Buddha will dwell in the world
For a life-span of twelve small kalpas;
The multitude of people in his land
Will have life-spans of eight small kalpas.
After that Buddha's extinction,

The Correct Dharma will dwell in the world
For thirty-two small kalpas,
Broadly saving living beings.
After the Correct Dharma is extinguished,
The Semblance Dharma will be thirty-two.
Relics will be widely distributed,
Universally worshipped by Devas and humans.
The deeds of the Buddha Flower Light,
His affairs will all be like this.
That Two-Legged Holy Honored One
Will be most victorious, without peer.
That person is you yourself;
You should rejoice and celebrate."

At that time, the four assemblies, Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, and the great assembly of Devas, Dragons, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kimnaras, Mahoragas, and others, seeing Sariputra receive the prediction of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi before the Buddha, were greatly joyful and measurelessly exuberant. Each removed the upper garments they were wearing and offered them to the Buddha. Sakra Devanam Indra, the Brahma Heaven King, and countless sons of gods also made offerings to the Buddha of wonderful heavenly garments, heavenly Mandarava flowers, and Maha-mandarava flowers. The heavenly garments they scattered stayed in the sky and whirled around on their own; hundreds of thousands of kinds of heavenly music played all at once in the sky, raining down numerous heavenly flowers. They spoke these words: "In the past, at Varanasi, the Buddha turned the Dharma Wheel for the first time. Now he turns the unsurpassed, greatest Dharma Wheel again."

At that time, the sons of gods, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"In the past at Varanasi,
You turned the Dharma Wheel of the Four Truths,
Distinguishing and speaking the dharmas,
And the arising and extinguishing of the five skandhas.
Now you turn the most wonderful,
Unsurpassed Great Dharma Wheel.
This Dharma is extremely deep and profound;
Few are able to believe it.
Since times past, we
Have often heard the World Honored One speak,
But we have never heard such
Deep, wonderful, and superior Dharma.
The World Honored One speaks this Dharma,
And we all rejoice and accord.

The Great Wise Sariputra
Has now received the Honored One's prediction.
We too are like this;
We will surely be able to become Buddhas.
In all the worlds,
The most honored and unsurpassed,
The Buddha Way is inconceivable;
Expedient means are spoken according to appropriateness.
All the blessed karma we possess,
In this life or past lives,
And the merit of seeing the Buddha,
We dedicate entirely to the Buddha Way."

At that time, Sariputra said to the Buddha: "World Honored One! I now have no further doubts or regrets. I have received the prediction of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi personally before the Buddha. But these twelve hundred ones whose minds have attained independence, who in the past dwelt in the stage of learning, were constantly taught by the Buddha, who said: 'My Dharma is able to depart from birth, old age, sickness, and death, and reach ultimate Nirvana.' These people, both those with more to learn and those with nothing more to learn, each considered themselves to be free from views of self, views of existence and non-existence, and to have attained Nirvana. Yet now, hearing from the World Honored One what they have never heard before, they have all fallen into doubt and confusion. Excellent, World Honored One! I pray that you will speak of the causes and conditions for the four assemblies, to cause them to leave behind doubt and regret."

At that time, the Buddha told Sariputra: "Did I not tell you before that when the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, use various causes and conditions, metaphors, and verbal expressions to preach the Dharma with expedient means, it is all for the sake of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi? Everything that is preached is for the sake of transforming Bodhisattvas. However, Sariputra, I will now make this meaning clear again with a metaphor. Those with wisdom will attain understanding through metaphors.

"Sariputra! Suppose in a country, city, or village, there is a great Elder. He is old and advanced in years, his wealth is measureless, and he possesses many fields, houses, and servants. His house is vast and great, but it has only one door. A great multitude of people, one hundred, two hundred, or even five hundred, dwell within it. The halls and chambers are rotting and old, the walls are crumbling and falling, the bases of the pillars are decaying and rotten, and the beams and ridgepoles are tilting and dangerous. Suddenly, all at once, fire breaks out on all sides, burning the house. The Elder's children, numbering ten, twenty, or thirty, are inside the house.

"The Elder sees the great fire rising from four sides and is greatly startled and terrified. He thinks: 'Although I am able to escape safely through this burning gate, my children are inside the burning house, happily attached to their games. They are unaware, ignorant, unstartled, and unafraid. The

fire is closing in on them and the pain will cut them, yet their hearts do not loathe the danger, and they have no intention of seeking escape.'

"Sariputra! This Elder has this thought: 'My body and hands are strong. I could use a garment bag or a bench to take them out of the house.' He further thinks: 'This house has only one door, and it is narrow and small. The children are young and immature, and they have no understanding. They are attached to their place of play; they might fall and be burnt by the fire. I must tell them of the terrifying matter, that this house is already burning, and that they must rush out immediately so as not to be burned and harmed by the fire.' Having thought this, he acts according to his thought and tells the children: 'You must come out quickly!' Although the father pities them and uses good words to induce and warn them, the children are happily attached to their play and are unwilling to believe or accept his words. They are neither startled nor afraid, and have no mind to leave. They do not even know what 'fire' is, what a 'house' is, or what 'loss' means. They merely run east and west in play, looking at their father.

"At that time, the Elder has this thought: 'This house is already burning with a great fire. If I and the children do not get out in time, we will surely be burned. I must now devise an expedient method to cause the children to escape this harm.' The father knows that the children have previously had various preferences and that their hearts are attached to various rare toys and strange objects. So he announces to them: 'The things you like to play with are rare and difficult to get. If you do not take them, you will surely regret it later. Things such as sheep carts, deer carts, and ox carts are now outside the gate, where you can play with them. You should come out of this burning house quickly! I will give you whatever you want.'

"At that time, when the children hear their father speak of the toys, because it suits their wishes, their hearts are emboldened. They push and shove one another, racing and competing to run out of the burning house. At that time, the Elder sees that his children have escaped safely and are all sitting on the open ground at the crossroads, no longer obstructed. His heart is at ease, and he dances with joy. Then the children all say to their father: 'Father, please give us the toys you promised earlier, the sheep carts, deer carts, and ox carts.'

"Sariputra! At that time, the Elder gives each of the children a Great Cart. The carriage is high and wide, decorated with a multitude of jewels, surrounded by railings, with bells hanging on all four sides. Further, a canopy is spread over the top, which is also severely adorned with rare and varied jewels. Jeweled cords twine around it, flowered tassels hang down, and layers of soft mats and red pillows are placed inside. It is yoked to a white ox, whose skin color is full and pure, whose form is beautiful, who has great muscular strength, whose step is flat and even, and whose speed is like the wind. There are also many servants and followers guarding it. Why is this? Because this Great Elder has measureless wealth, and his various storehouses are all full to overflowing. He thinks: 'My wealth and possessions are limitless. I should not give inferior small carts to the children. All these young children are my sons, and I love them without bias. I have these seven-jeweled great carts, their number measureless. I should give them to each one with an equal mind; I should not

differentiate. Why? Even if I gave these to the entire country, my wealth would not run out, how much less so for my children!' At that time, the children each mount a Great Cart, attaining what they had never had before, something beyond their original expectations.

"Sariputra! What do you think? When that Elder gives the jeweled great carts to his children equally, is he guilty of falsehood?"

Sariputra said: "No, World Honored One! The Elder simply caused his children to escape the disaster of fire and preserved their bodies and lives; this is not falsehood. Why? If they preserve their bodies and lives, they have already obtained a 'toy'. How much more so when he uses expedient means to save them from that burning house! World Honored One! Even if the Elder did not give them a single small cart, he would still not be false. Why? Because the Elder previously had this intention: 'I will use expedient means to cause the children to get out.' Because of this cause and condition, there is no falsehood. How much less so when the Elder, knowing his own wealth is measureless and wishing to benefit his children, gives them Great Carts equally!"

The Buddha told Sariputra: "Excellent, excellent! It is just as you say. Sariputra! The Tathagata is also like this. He is the Father of the entire world. He has forever completely exhausted all fear, decline, distress, worry, ignorance, and darkness, leaving no remainder. He has fully achieved measureless knowledge and vision, powers, and fearlessnesses. He has great spiritual power and the power of wisdom. He is complete in expedient means and the Paramita of wisdom. He is greatly kind and greatly compassionate. He is tireless, constantly seeking good matters to benefit all. He is born into the Three Worlds, which are like a rotting old burning house, in order to save living beings from the fires of birth, old age, sickness, death, worry, sorrow, suffering, distress, stupidity, darkness, and the three poisons, and to teach and transform them, causing them to attain Anuttarasamyaksambodhi. He sees all living beings burned and boiled by birth, old age, sickness, death, worry, sorrow, suffering, and distress. Also, because of the five desires and wealth and profit, they undergo various sufferings. Because of greedy attachment and pursuit, they undergo many sufferings in the present, and later undergo the suffering of hell, animals, and hungry ghosts. If born in the heavens or amongst humans, they undergo the suffering of poverty and distress, the suffering of separation from what they love, and the suffering of being joined with what they hate; sufferings such as these are of many kinds. Yet living beings are sunk within this, rejoicing and playing. They are unaware, ignorant, unstartled, and unafraid. They do not generate loathing, nor do they seek liberation. In this burning house of the Three Worlds, they run east and west. Although they encounter great suffering, they do not regard it as a disaster.

"Sariputra! Having seen this, the Buddha thinks: 'I am the father of living beings. I should rescue them from this suffering and difficulty, and give them the measureless, boundless joy of the Buddha-wisdom, allowing them to play with it.'

"Sariputra! The Tathagata further thinks: 'If I merely use spiritual power and the power of wisdom, discarding expedient means, and for the sake of living beings praise the Tathagata's knowledge,

vision, powers, and fearlessnesses, living beings will not be able to be saved by this. Why? These living beings have not escaped birth, old age, sickness, death, worry, sorrow, suffering, and distress, and are being burned by the burning house of the Three Worlds. How could they understand the Buddha's wisdom?'

"Sariputra! Just as that Elder, although he had body and hands with strength, did not use them, but simply used diligent expedient means to save the children from the disaster of the burning house, and afterwards gave each of them a jeweled Great Cart; the Tathagata is also like this. Although he has powers and fearlessnesses, he does not use them. He simply uses wisdom and expedient means to rescue living beings from the burning house of the Three Worlds, speaking to them of Three Vehicles: the Voice-Hearer, Pratyekabuddha, and Buddha Vehicle. He says to them: 'You should not delight in dwelling in the burning house of the Three Worlds. Do not be greedily attached to coarse and inferior forms, sounds, scents, tastes, and touches. If you are greedily attached and generate love, you will be burned. You must come out of the Three Worlds quickly, and you will attain the Three Vehicles: the Voice-Hearer, Pratyekabuddha, and Buddha Vehicle. I guarantee this matter for you now; it will not be false. You need only diligently cultivate essence and progress.' The Tathagata uses these expedient means to induce and advance living beings, and further says: 'You should know that these dharmas of the Three Vehicles are praised by the Sages. They are free and unbound, without reliance or seeking. Riding on these Three Vehicles, you will amuse yourselves with leakless roots, powers, limbs of enlightenment, ways, Dhyana concentrations, liberations, and Samadhis, and you will attain measureless peace, security, and happiness.'

"Sariputra! If there are living beings who are inwardly possessed of wise natures, and hearing the Dharma from the Buddha, the World Honored One, they believe and accept it, and are diligent and zealous, wishing to escape the Three Worlds quickly and seeking Nirvana for themselves, this is named the Voice-Hearer Vehicle. It is like those children who sought sheep carts to get out of the burning house. If there are living beings who, hearing the Dharma from the Buddha, the World Honored One, believe and accept it, and are diligent and zealous, seeking natural wisdom, delighting in solitary goodness and stillness, and deeply understanding the causes and conditions of dharmas, this is named the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle. It is like those children who sought deer carts to get out of the burning house. If there are living beings who, hearing the Dharma from the Buddha, the World Honored One, believe and accept it, and diligently cultivate essence and progress, seeking the Wisdom of All Modes, the Buddha-wisdom, the Natural Wisdom, the Wisdom Without a Teacher, and the Tathagata's knowledge, vision, powers, and fearlessnesses, who pity and comfort measureless living beings, benefiting Devas and humans and saving all, this is named the Great Vehicle. Because Bodhisattvas seek this vehicle, they are named Mahasattvas. It is like those children who sought ox carts to get out of the burning house.

"Sariputra! Just as that Elder, seeing that his children had safely escaped the burning house and reached a place of fearlessness, considered his own wealth to be measureless and gave Great Carts to his children equally; the Tathagata is also like this. He is the Father of all living beings.

When he sees measureless billions of living beings using the gate of the Buddha's teaching to escape the suffering of the Three Worlds and the fearful and dangerous path, and attain the joy of Nirvana, the Tathagata at that time has this thought: 'I possess measureless, boundless wisdom, powers, fearlessnesses, and other treasures of Buddha-dharma. All these living beings are my children. I will give the Great Vehicle to them equally; I will not allow anyone to attain extinction independently, but will cause them all to be extinguished by means of the Tathagata's extinction. To all those living beings who have escaped the Three Worlds, I give the toys of the Buddhas' Dhyana concentrations and liberations. These are all of one mark and one kind, praised by the Sages, and capable of producing pure, wonderful, and foremost joy!'

"Sariputra! Just as that Elder first used three carts to induce and guide his children and afterwards gave them only Great Carts adorned with treasures and supremely safe and secure, yet that Elder was not guilty of falsehood; the Tathagata is also like this. He has no falsehood. He first speaks of the Three Vehicles to guide living beings, but afterwards he delivers them using only the Great Vehicle. Why is this? The Tathagata possesses the treasury of dharmas of measureless wisdom, powers, and fearlessnesses, and is able to give the Dharma of the Great Vehicle to all living beings, but not all of them are able to receive it.

"Sariputra! Because of these causes and conditions, you should know that the Buddhas, using the power of expedient means, make distinctions in the One Buddha Vehicle and speak of three."

The Buddha, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"It is like an Elder
Who has a great house.
The house is old and decaying,
And has become very dilapidated.
The halls are high and dangerous,
The bases of the pillars are crumbling and rotten,
The beams and ridgepoles are tilting and slanted,
The foundations and steps are collapsing and ruined.
The walls are cracked and broken,
The plaster is peeling and falling,
The thatch is disordered and dropping,
The rafters and eaves are loose and detached.
The surrounding fences are bent and crooked,
And it is filled with miscellaneous filth.
There are five hundred people
Dwelling within it.
Owls, hawks, eagles, vultures,
Crows, magpies, pigeons, doves,
Newts, snakes, vipers, scorpions,

Centipedes, millipedes,
Geckos, galley-worms,
Weasels, raccoon dogs, mice, and rats,
Various evil insects and vermin,
Run back and forth in all directions.
Places with stench of feces and urine,
Uncleanliness flowing over;
Dung beetles and various bugs
Gather on top of it.
Foxes, wolves, and jackals
Chew, trample, and tread,
Gnawing and tearing at dead bodies,
Scattering bone and flesh.
Because of this, packs of dogs
Come racing to snatch and grab.
Gaunt with hunger and terrified,
They search for food everywhere.
Fighting, scrambling, and dragging,
Snarling and barking.
The terror of that house,
Its appearance is like this.
Everywhere there are
Goblins, ghosts, and mountain spirits,
Yakshas and evil ghosts,
Eating human flesh.
Various kinds of poisonous insects,
And evil birds and beasts,
Hatch and give birth,
Each hiding and protecting its own.
Yakshas race to come
And struggle to take and eat them.
Having eaten their fill,
Their evil hearts become more inflamed;
The sound of their fighting
Is extremely terrifying.
Kumbhanda ghosts
Crouch on earthen mounds,
Or sometimes leap from the ground
One or two feet,
Walking back and forth,
Indulging in play.
They seize dogs by two legs,

Beating them into silence,
Placing their feet on the dogs' necks,
Terrifying the dogs for their own amusement.
There are other ghosts,
Their bodies tall and large,
Naked, black, and thin,
Constantly dwelling therein,
Emitting great evil sounds,
Howling and begging for food.
There are other ghosts,
Their throats like needles.
There are other ghosts,
With heads like ox heads,
Or eating human flesh,
Or devouring dogs.
Their hair is disheveled and messy,
They are cruel, harmful, and dangerous.
Oppressed by hunger and thirst,
They scream and race about.
Yakshas and hungry ghosts,
Various evil birds and beasts,
Facing the four directions in urgent hunger,
Peek through the windows.
Suffering and difficulties such as these,
Fear and terror beyond measure.
This rotting old house
Belongs to one person.
That person had gone out
A short time ago,
When suddenly, in the rear of the house,
A fire broke out.
On all four sides at once,
The flames raged together.
Ridgepoles, beams, rafters, and pillars
Shook and cracked with explosive sounds,
Breaking apart and falling;
Walls and partitions collapsed.
The various ghosts and spirits
Raised their voices in great screams.
The eagles, vultures, and other birds,
And the Kumbhandas and such,
Were frantic with panic and terror,

Unable to get out.
Evil beasts and poisonous insects
Hid and scurried into holes.
Pisaca ghosts
Also dwelt therein;
Because of their scant blessings and virtue,
They were oppressed by the fire.
They ravaged and harmed one another,
Drinking blood and eating flesh.
The jackals and their like
Had already died;
The larger evil beasts
Raced to eat them.
Stinking smoke and flames
Filled and blocked the four sides.
The centipedes, millipedes,
And types of poisonous snakes,
Burned by the fire,
Struggled to run out of their holes.
Kumbhanda ghosts
Snatched them up and ate them.
Also, various hungry ghosts,
With fire burning on their heads,
Hungry, thirsty, and tormented by heat,
Ran about frantically in distress.
The house was like this,
Extremely terrifying;
Poison, harm, and fire disasters,
Multiple difficulties, not just one.
At that time the master of the house
Was standing outside the gate,
And heard someone say:
'All your children,
Because of their games earlier,
Came into this house.
Young, small, and ignorant,
They are enjoying themselves and attached to play.'
When the Elder heard this,
He was startled and entered the burning house.
He intended to save them,
So they would not be burned or harmed.
He told and warned the children,

Speaking of the many disasters and difficulties:

'Evil ghosts and poisonous insects,
Disastrous fire spreading,
Successive sufferings,
Continuous and unending.
Poisonous snakes, vipers, and cobras,
And various Yakshas,
Kumbhanda ghosts,
Jackals, foxes, dogs,
Eagles, vultures, owls,
And centipedes and such;
Hunger, thirst, and desperate torment,
Extremely terrifying.
This is a place of suffering and difficulty,
How much more so with the great fire!
The children were ignorant;
Although they heard their father's admonition,
They were still happily attached to it
And did not stop playing.
At that time the Elder
Had this thought:
'My children are like this,
Adding to my worry and distress.
Now this house
Has not a single enjoyable thing,
Yet the children,
Indulging in play,
Do not accept my teaching,
And will be harmed by the fire.'
He immediately thought,
Established various expedient means,
And told the children:
'I have various kinds
Of rare playthings.
Wonderful jeweled fine carts,
Sheep carts, deer carts,
And great ox carts,
Are now outside the gate.
You should come out,
For I have made these carts for you.
Whatever you desire and enjoy,
You can play with.'

When the children heard him speak
Of such carts as these,
They immediately raced and competed,
Running and scrambling out,
Reaching the open ground,
Away from the suffering and difficulty.
The Elder, seeing his children
Had escaped the burning house
And were waiting at the crossroads,
Sat on a lion seat
And congratulated himself, saying:
'I am now happy!
These children of mine
Were very difficult to raise and nurture.
Foolish, small, and ignorant,
They entered a dangerous house
With many poisonous insects
And terrifying goblins.
A great fire with fierce flames
Rose up on all four sides,
Yet these children
Were greedily attached to play.
I have saved them
And caused them to escape difficulty.
Therefore, everyone,
I am now happy!
At that time the children,
Seeing their father sitting safely,
All went to their father
And said to him:
'Please give us
The three kinds of jeweled carts.
Just as you promised before:
"Children, come out,
I will give you three carts
According to your wish."
Now is exactly the time;
Please give them to us.'
The Elder was greatly wealthy,
And his storehouses were numerous.
Gold, silver, lapis lazuli,
Mother-of-pearl, agate;

Using all kinds of precious things,
He made great carts.
Adorned and decorated,
Surrounded by railings,
With bells hanging on all four sides,
And gold ropes intertwined.
Nets of true pearls
Were spread over the top;
Golden flowers and various tassels
Hung down everywhere.
Decorations of mixed colors
Surrounded them.
Soft silk and cotton
Used for cushions and mats.
Superior wonderful fine felt,
Worth thousands of millions,
White, pure, and clean,
Covered them.
There were great white oxen,
Fat, strong, and powerful,
With beautiful forms,
Yoked to the precious carts.
Many attendants and followers
Guarded them.
He gave these wonderful carts
Equally to all his children.
At that time the children
Danced with joy,
Riding on these precious carts,
Roaming in the four directions,
Playing happily,
Free and unobstructed.
I tell Sariputra:
'I am also like this,
The Most Honored of all Sages,
The Father of the world.
All living beings
Are my children.
Deeply attached to worldly pleasure,
They have no mind of wisdom.
The Three Worlds are not safe,
Just like the burning house.

They are filled with many sufferings
And are extremely terrifying.
Constantly there are the distresses of birth, old age,
Sickness, and death;
Fires such as these
Burn incessantly.
The Tathagata has already left
The burning house of the Three Worlds
And dwells in tranquil silence,
Safe in the forest and fields.
Now these Three Worlds
Are all my possession,
And the living beings within them
Are all my children.
But now this place
Has many calamities and difficulties.
Only I alone
Am able to save and protect them.
Although I teach and instruct them,
They do not believe or accept,
Because of deep greedy attachment
To defiling desires.
By means of these expedient means,
I speak of the Three Vehicles,
Causing all living beings
To know the suffering of the Three Worlds,
And I open, demonstrate, and expound
The Way out of the world.
If these children
Have decisive hearts,
Are complete with the Three Clarities
And Six Spiritual Powers,
Or become Pratyekabuddhas,
Or Non-Regression Bodhisattvas.
Sariputra!
For the sake of living beings,
I use this metaphor
To speak of the One Buddha Vehicle.
If you are all able
To believe and accept these words,
All of you will
Achieve the Buddha Way.

This Vehicle is subtle and wonderful,
Pure and foremost.
In all the worlds,
There is nothing superior to it.
It is what the Buddhas delight in.
All living beings
Should praise,
Make offerings to, and bow to it.
Measureless thousands of millions
Of powers, liberations,
Dhyana concentrations, wisdoms,
And other dharmas of the Buddha
Are obtained in such a Vehicle.
I cause all my children,
Day and night for numbered kalpas,
To constantly play with it,
Together with the Bodhisattvas
And the assembly of Voice-Hearers,
Riding on this Jeweled Vehicle
Straight to the Way-place.
Because of this cause and condition,
Though one seeks throughout the ten directions,
There are no other vehicles,
Except for the Buddha's expedient means.'
I tell Sariputra:
'You and the others
Are all my children,
And I am the Father.
For accumulated kalpas,
You have been burned by various sufferings;
I have saved you all,
Causing you to leave the Three Worlds.
Although I said before:
"You have attained extinction,"
It was only the exhaustion of birth and death,
And not true extinction.
What you should do now
Is only the Buddha-wisdom.
If there are Bodhisattvas
In this assembly,
They can listen with a single mind
To the real Dharma of the Buddhas.

Although the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones,
Use expedient means,
The living beings transformed by them
Are all Bodhisattvas.
If people have small wisdom
And are deeply attached to love and desire,
For the sake of these,
The Buddha speaks the Truth of Suffering.
The living beings rejoice in their hearts,
Attaining what they never had before;
The Truth of Suffering spoken by the Buddha
Is true and without error.
If there are living beings
Who do not know the root of suffering,
Who are deeply attached to the causes of suffering
And cannot abandon them for a moment,
For the sake of these,
He expediently speaks of the Way.
The cause of all suffering
Is rooted in greedy desire.
If greedy desire is extinguished,
It has no support.
To extinguish all suffering
Is named the Third Truth.
For the sake of the Truth of Extinction,
One cultivates the Way.
Separating from the bonds of suffering
Is named attaining Liberation.
From what have these people
Attained liberation?
Simply separating from falsehood
Is named liberation;
In truth, they have not yet obtained
Total Liberation.
The Buddha says these people
Have not truly attained extinction.
Because these people have not obtained
The Unsurpassed Way,
My intention is not
To cause them to reach extinction yet.
I am the King of the Dharma,
With mastery over the Dharma.

To give peace and security to living beings,
Therefore I appear in the world.
Sariputra!
This Dharma Seal of mine,
I speak because I wish to benefit the world.
Wherever you travel,
Do not propagate it recklessly.
If there are those who hear it,
Rejoice, and receive it atop their heads,
You should know that such people
Are Avinivartaniya (Non-Regressing).
If there are those who believe and accept
This Sutra-Dharma,
These people have already
Seen past Buddhas,
Respected and made offerings to them,
And heard this Dharma.
If people are able
To believe what you say,
Then they have seen me,
And also seen you,
And the Bhikshu Sangha,
And the Bodhisattvas.
This Lotus Sutra
Is spoken for those of deep wisdom.
If those of shallow understanding hear it,
They will be confused and not understand.
All the Voice-Hearers
And Pratyekabuddhas,
Within this Sutra,
Their power cannot reach it.
Sariputra!
Even you, regarding this Sutra,
Gained entry through faith;
How much more so for the other Voice-Hearers.
The other Voice-Hearers,
Because they believe the Buddha's words,
Follow this Sutra;
It is not something their own wisdom can distinguish.
Furthermore, Sariputra!
To those who are arrogant and lazy,
Or who hold views of a self,

Do not speak this Sutra.
Common people of shallow understanding,
Deeply attached to the five desires,
Cannot understand if they hear it;
Do not speak it to them either.
If people do not believe
And slander this Sutra,
They cut off the seeds of Buddhahood
In all the worlds.
Or if they frown
And harbor doubt and confusion,
You should listen to
The recompense for such people's sins.
Whether the Buddha is in the world
Or after his extinction,
If there are those who slander
A Sutra such as this,
Or seeing those who read, recite,
Write, and uphold the Sutra,
Lightly despise, hate, and envy them,
And harbor grudges against them,
Listen now
To the recompense for such people's sins.
When these people's lives end,
They will enter the Avici Hell
For a full kalpa;
When the kalpa is exhausted, they will be reborn there again.
Like this, revolving in cycles
For countless kalpas.
Coming out of hell,
They will fall into the animal realm.
If they become dogs or jackals,
Their forms will be gaunt and thin,
Dark and spotted with scabies and sores,
Tormented by human touch.
Also, they will be
Loathed and despised by people,
Constantly suffering hunger and thirst,
Their bones and flesh dried up.
Alive, they undergo pain and poison;
Dead, they are covered by tiles and stones.
Because they cut off the Buddha-seeds,

They receive this sinful recompense.
If they become camels
Or are born among donkeys,
Their bodies will constantly carry heavy burdens
And be beaten with staffs and clubs.
Thinking only of water and grass,
They will know nothing else.
Because they slandered this Sutra,
They obtain sins such as this.
Some become jackals,
Coming into villages,
Their bodies covered with scabies and sores,
And lacking one eye.
They are beaten and thrown at
By boys,
Suffering all kinds of pain,
Or sometimes being beaten to death.
After dying in this way,
They again receive the body of a python.
Its form is long and huge,
Five hundred yojanas.
Deaf, stupid, and without feet,
It slithers on its belly,
Being bitten and eaten
By small insects.
Day and night receiving suffering,
Without rest.
Because they slandered this Sutra,
They obtain sins such as this.
If they attain a human form,
Their faculties will be dark and dull.
Dwarfed, ugly, crippled, lame,
Blind, deaf, and hunchbacked.
Whatever they say,
People will not believe or accept.
Their breath will constantly stink,
And they will be possessed by ghosts.
Poor, lowly, and servile,
Used by others.
Sickly and gaunt,
With no one to rely on.
Although they try to be close to people,

People will not care about them.
If they gain something,
They will immediately lose it.
If they practice medicine
And treat illness according to methods,
They will make the other's illness worse,
Or even cause death.
If they themselves are sick,
No one will save or treat them.
Even if they take good medicine,
It will make the pain worse.
If others rebel,
Plunder, or steal,
For sins such as these,
They will innocently receive the chaotic disaster.
Sinners such as these
Will never see the Buddha,
The King of All Sages,
Speaking Dharma and teaching.
Sinners such as these
Will constantly be born in places of difficulty,
Mad, deaf, and mentally confused,
Never hearing the Dharma.
For countless kalpas,
Like the sands of the Ganges,
Whenever they are born they will be deaf and mute,
With incomplete faculties.
They will constantly dwell in hell
As if enjoying a garden;
And in the other evil paths
As if they were their own homes.
Camels, donkeys, pigs, and dogs
Will be their walking places.
Because they slandered this Sutra,
They obtain sins such as this.
If they attain a human form,
Deafness, blindness, muteness,
Poverty, and various declines
Will be their adornments.
Edema, dry consumption,
Scabies, sores, carbuncles, and ulcers,
Diseases such as these

Will be their clothing.
Their bodies will constantly smell bad,
Filthy and unclean.
Deeply attached to views of self,
Increasing their anger and hatred,
With blazing lustful desires,
Not choosing between birds and beasts.
Because they slandered this Sutra,
They obtain sins such as this!
I tell Sariputra:
'Those who slander this Sutra,
If I were to speak of their sins,
I could not finish in a full kalpa.
Because of these causes and conditions,
I tell you:
"Among people without wisdom,
Do not speak this Sutra."
If there are those with sharp roots,
Wise and clear,
Of much learning and strong memory,
Who seek the Buddha Way,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
If there are people who have seen
Hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas,
Planted roots of goodness,
And whose deep hearts are firm,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
If there are people who are diligent,
Constantly cultivating a compassionate heart,
Not sparing their bodies or lives,
You may speak it.
If there are people who are respectful
And have no other mind,
Leaving behind common foolishness,
Dwelling alone in mountains and marshes,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
Also, Sariputra!
If you see people
Who abandon evil knowledge

And draw near to good friends,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
If you see Buddha-disciples
Holding precepts cleanly,
Like a pure bright pearl,
Seeking the Great Vehicle Sutra,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
If people are without anger,
Upright and soft,
Constantly pitying all,
Respecting the Buddhas,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
Again, if there are Buddha-disciples
Who, in the great assembly,
With pure hearts
And various causes and conditions,
Metaphors, and verbal expressions,
Speak the Dharma without obstruction,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
If there are Bhikshus
Who, for the sake of the Wisdom of All Modes,
Seek the Dharma in the four directions,
Join their palms and receive it atop their heads,
Only delighting in receiving and upholding
The Great Vehicle Sutras,
And not accepting
Even a single verse of other scriptures,
To people such as these,
You may speak it.
Like a person with a sincere heart
Seeking the Buddha's relics,
Seeking the Sutra in this way,
And having obtained it, receiving it atop the head,
That person no longer
Seeks other scriptures,
And has never thought about
The books of the external paths;
To people such as these,

You may speak it!
I tell Sariputra:
'I speak of the marks of these
Who seek the Buddha Way;
I could not finish in a full kalpa.
People such as these
Are able to believe and understand;
You should speak for them
The Sutra of the Lotus of the Wonderful Law."

BELIEF AND UNDERSTANDING

At that time, the life-possessing Subhuti, Maha Katyayana, Maha Kasyapa, and Maha Maudgalyayana, hearing from the Buddha the never-before-heard Dharma, and that the World Honored One gave a prediction of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi to Sariputra, generated rare hearts and danced with joy. They immediately rose from their seats, adjusted their robes, bared their right shoulders, knelt with their right knees on the ground, joined their palms with a single mind, bowed in respect, gazed at the Honored Face, and said to the Buddha: "We dwell as the heads of the Sangha, and we are all old and advanced in years. We told ourselves that we had already attained Nirvana and were incapable of any further task, so we did not proceed to seek Anuttarasamyaksambodhi. The World Honored One has been speaking the Dharma for a long time; we sat in our seats, our bodies weary and lax, only thinking of emptiness, formlessness, and non-action. Regarding the Bodhisattva Dharmas, playing with spiritual powers, purifying Buddha-lands, and perfecting living beings, our hearts took no joy. Why is this? The World Honored One caused us to leave the Three Worlds and attain the certification of Nirvana. Also, we are now old and advanced in years. When the Buddha instructed Bodhisattvas in Anuttarasamyaksambodhi, we did not generate a single thought of joy or delight. Now, in the presence of the Buddha, hearing the prediction of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi given to Voice-Hearers, our hearts are extremely joyful and we have attained what we never had before. We did not expect that now, suddenly, we would be able to hear this rare Dharma. We deeply congratulate ourselves on acquiring this great good benefit; measureless rare treasure has been obtained without being sought.

"World Honored One! We now wish to speak a metaphor to clarify this meaning. Suppose there is a person who, when young and immature, abandoned his father and ran away. He lived long in other lands, for ten, twenty, or fifty years. He became older and grew into an adult, but he was poor and destitute. He ran about in the four directions to seek clothing and food. Gradually wandering, he accidentally approached his native land. His father had searched for his son previously but could not find him, so he stopped in a city. His home was greatly wealthy, and his treasures were measureless, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, coral, amber, and crystal beads. His storehouses were all overflowing. He had many servants, ministers, assistants, and officials. His elephants, horses, carriages, cows, and sheep were countless. His profits from lending and trade extended to other countries, and his merchants and customers were also very numerous.

"At that time, the poor son wandered through various villages and passed through countries and cities, finally reaching the city where his father was staying. The father constantly thought of his son. He had been separated from his son for over fifty years, but he had never spoken of this matter to anyone. He simply pondered it himself, his heart filled with regret and resentment. He thought to himself: 'I am old and decaying. I have much wealth and property; gold, silver, and rare treasures fill my storehouses to overflowing. But I have no son. If I suddenly die, my wealth will be scattered and lost, for there is no one to entrust it to.' Therefore, he earnestly remembered his son.

He further thought: 'If I could get my son back and entrust my wealth to him, I would be content and happy, with no further worries!'

"World Honored One! At that time, the poor son, hiring himself out as a laborer, wandered in turn until he reached his father's house. Standing by the side of the gate, he saw his father in the distance sitting on a lion couch, his feet resting on a jeweled bench, respectfully surrounded by Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and householders. His body was adorned with necklaces of true pearls worth thousands of millions. Attendants and servants stood on his left and right holding white whisks. He was covered by a jeweled canopy with hanging flowered banners. Perfumed water was sprinkled on the ground, and various famous flowers were scattered. Precious objects were arranged in rows, and there was giving and taking, entering and exiting. With various adornments such as these, his dignity and virtue were specially honored. When the poor son saw his father possessed such great power and influence, he was immediately terrified and regretted coming to this place. He secretly thought: 'This must be a king, or someone equal to a king. This is not a place where I can hire out my labor to get things. It would be better to go to a poor village where there is space to use my strength and where food and clothing are easy to get. If I stay here long, I might be oppressed and forced to work.' Having thought this, he ran away quickly.

"At that time, the rich Elder, sitting on the lion seat, saw the son and recognized him immediately. His heart was filled with great joy, and he immediately thought: 'My wealth and storehouses now have someone to be entrusted to. I constantly think of this son, but had no way to see him. Now he has come on his own; this exactly suits my wish. Although I am old and decaying, I still care for my possessions! He immediately sent attendants to chase him urgently and bring him back. At that time, the messengers ran quickly and caught him. The poor son was startled and afraid; he cried out in resentment: 'I have committed no offense; why am I being seized?' The messengers held him even tighter and forced him back. Then the poor son thought he was innocent but would be imprisoned and surely die; he became even more terrified, fainted, and fell to the ground. The father saw this from a distance and told the messengers: 'I do not need this person. Do not force him to come. Sprinkle cold water on his face to wake him up, and do not speak to him anymore.' Why was this? The father knew his son's will and intent were inferior and lowly, and he knew that his own wealth and nobility were difficult for the son to accept. He truly knew this was his son, but using an expedient method, he did not tell others, 'This is my son.' The messenger told him: 'I am releasing you now; go wherever you wish.' The poor son was happy, having attained what he never had before. He rose from the ground and went to a poor village to seek food and clothing.

"At that time, the Elder, wishing to induce and lead his son, established an expedient method. He secretly sent two people whose appearance was haggard and who lacked dignity and virtue: 'You can go to that place and gently tell the poor son: "There is a place to work here; we will give you double wages." If the poor son agrees, bring him to work. If he asks: "What work is it?" you can tell him: "We are hiring you to clear away excrement. We two will also work with you.'" At that time, the two messengers went to seek the poor son. Having found him, they explained the matter in full.

"At that time, the poor son took his payment in advance and immediately joined them to clear away excrement. The father saw his son and felt pity and wonder. On another day, he saw his son's body from a window in the distance; he was emaciated, haggard, and covered with filth and dirt, unclean and impure. The Elder immediately removed his necklaces, soft fine upper garments, and adornments. He put on coarse, worn-out, dirty, and greasy clothes, smeared dust on his body, and held a tool for removing excrement in his right hand, looking fearful. He spoke to the laborers: 'You must work diligently; do not be lazy.' By means of this expedient, he was able to get close to his son. Later he spoke to him again: 'Hey, man! You should constantly work here; do not go elsewhere. I will increase your wages. Whatever you need, bowls, utensils, rice, flour, salt, vinegar, and the like, do not worry or hesitate. I also have an old, worn-out servant; if you need him, he will be given to you. You should be at ease. I am like your father; do not worry anymore. Why? I am old, and you are young and strong. When you work constantly, you never show deceit, laziness, anger, or resentment. I do not see you have any of these evils like the other laborers. From now on, you will be like my own son.' Immediately, the Elder gave him a name and called him 'Son'. At that time, although the poor son was happy about this encounter, he still considered himself a humble hireling. Because of this, for twenty years he was constantly ordered to clear away excrement. After this time, their hearts trusted each other, and he entered and exited without difficulty, but he still stayed in his original place.

"World Honored One! At that time, the Elder became ill and knew he would die before long. He told the poor son: 'I now have much gold, silver, and precious treasure, and my storehouses are overflowing. You are fully aware of the quantity of these and what should be taken in and given out. My heart is like this; you should understand my intention. Why? Now, you and I are no different. You should be careful and diligent, and let nothing be lost.' At that time, the poor son accepted the instruction and command, and took charge of all the goods, gold, silver, precious treasures, and storehouses, yet he had no intention of expecting even a single meal. He still stayed in his original place, and was unable to abandon his inferior mind. After a short time passed, the father knew the son's mind had gradually become broad and expansive, that he had achieved great resolve and despised his previous mind. Approaching the time of his death, he commanded his son to gather the relatives, the king, ministers, Kshatriyas, and householders. When they had all gathered, he proclaimed to them: 'Gentlemen, you should know! This is my son, born of me. In a certain city, he abandoned me and ran away, wandering in suffering and hardship for over fifty years. His original name was such-and-such. My name is such-and-such. In the past, in my original city, I worried and searched for him. Suddenly, in this place, I encountered and found him. This is truly my son; I am truly his father. Now, all the wealth I possess belongs to my son. What was previously paid out and taken in is known by this son.'

"World Honored One! When the poor son heard his father's words, he was greatly joyful, having attained what he never had before. He thought: 'I originally had no mind to seek or desire anything, yet now this treasury of jewels has come of itself!'

"World Honored One! The Great Rich Elder is the Tathagata. We are all like the Buddha's sons. The Tathagata has constantly said we are his sons. World Honored One! Because of the three sufferings, we have undergone burning distress in the midst of birth and death; we were deluded and ignorant, happily attached to the Small Dharma. Today, the World Honored One has caused us to ponder, to remove the dung of frivolous debate on the dharmas. We diligently exerted ourselves in this, and attained the price of a day's wages, Nirvana. Having attained this, our hearts were greatly joyful and we considered it sufficient. We told ourselves: 'Because we have been diligent and zealous in the Buddha-dharma, what we have attained is vast and much.' But the World Honored One knew beforehand that our minds were attached to inferior desires and that we delighted in the Small Dharma. So he let us be, and did not explain to us: 'You shall have a portion of the treasure of the Tathagata's knowledge and vision.' The World Honored One used the power of expedient means to speak of the Tathagata's wisdom. We attained the price of a day's wages, Nirvana, from the Buddha, and considered it a great attainment; we had no resolve to seek this Great Vehicle. Furthermore, because of the Tathagata's wisdom, we opened, demonstrated, and expounded it for the Bodhisattvas, but we ourselves had no desire for it. Why is this? The Buddha knew our minds delighted in the Small Dharma, so by means of expedient power, he spoke in accordance with us; but we did not know we were truly Buddha-sons. Now we finally know that the World Honored One is unsparing with regard to the Buddha-wisdom. Why? Since times past we have truly been Buddha-sons, but we simply delighted in the Small Dharma. If we had a mind that delighted in the Great, the Buddha would have spoken the Great Vehicle Dharma for us. In this Sutra, he speaks only of the One Vehicle. In the past, when he disparaged those Voice-Hearers who delighted in the Small Dharma in front of the Bodhisattvas, the Buddha was actually using the Great Vehicle to teach and transform. Therefore we say that we originally had no mind to hope or seek, but now the Great Jewel of the Dharma King has come of itself. That which Buddha-sons should obtain, we have already obtained."

At that time, Maha Kasyapa, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke in verse:

"We today,
Hearing the Buddha's voiced teaching,
Are joyful and leaping,
Attaining what we never had before.
The Buddha says the Voice-Hearers
Will attain Buddhahood;
This gathering of unsurpassed treasures
Is obtained without seeking.
It is like a young boy,
Immature and ignorant,
Who abandons his father and runs away,
Going far to other lands,
Wandering through various countries
For over fifty years.

His father, worried and thinking of him,
Searched in the four directions.
Exhausted from searching,
He stopped in a city
And built a house,
Amusing himself with the five desires.
His house was enormously wealthy,
With much gold and silver,
Mother-of-pearl, agate,
True pearls, and lapis lazuli;
Elephants, horses, oxen, sheep,
Palanquins and carriages;
Fields, properties, servants,
And a multitude of people.
His profits from lending and trade
Extended to other countries.
His merchants and customers
Were everywhere.
Thousands of millions of people
Surrounded and honored him.
He was constantly loved and mindful
Of the king.
All the ministers and powerful clans
Honored and weighted him heavily.
For these various reasons,
Those who came and went were many.
Wealthy like this,
He had great power and influence.
But his years were advanced and decaying,
And he worried and thought of his son more and more.
Day and night he pondered:
'The time of death is approaching.
My foolish son abandoned me
Over fifty years ago.
The goods in my storehouses,
What shall become of them?'
At that time the poor son
Was searching for food and clothing,
Going from city to city,
From country to country.
Sometimes getting something,
Sometimes getting nothing.

Hungry, starving, and gaunt,
His body covered with sores and ringworm.
Gradually wandering,
He arrived at the city where his father lived.
Hired out as a laborer in turn,
He finally reached his father's house.
At that time the Elder,
Within his gate,
Had set up a great jeweled curtain
And sat on a lion seat;
Surrounded by his retinue,
Various people guarding him.
Some were calculating
Gold, silver, and precious things,
Paying out and taking in property,
Noting and recording bonds and ledgers.
The poor son saw his father,
Wealthy, noble, and dignified.
He thought it was a king,
Or someone equal to a king.
Startled and afraid, he wondered
Why he had come here.
He thought to himself:
'If I stay long,
I might be oppressed
And forced to work.'
Having thought this,
He ran away quickly,
Asking about a poor village,
Wishing to go and hire out his labor.
At that time the Elder,
On the lion seat,
Saw his son from a distance
And silently recognized him.
He immediately commanded messengers
To chase and capture him.
The poor son cried out in alarm,
Fainted in confusion, and fell to the ground:
'These people have seized me;
I will surely be killed.
Why did food and clothing
Bring me to this?'

The Elder knew his son
Was foolish and inferior,
That he would not believe his words,
Nor believe he was his father.
Using expedient means,
He sent other people,
Squint-eyed, short, and ugly,
Lacking dignity and virtue:
'You can tell him,
"We will hire you
To clear away filth and dung,
And give you double wages."
When the poor son heard this,
He rejoiced and followed them,
Clearing away filth and dung
And cleaning the rooms and houses.
The Elder, from a window,
Constantly watched his son.
Thinking of his son as foolish and inferior,
Delighting in humble work.
Thereupon the Elder
Put on worn and dirty clothes,
Took up a dung-clearing tool,
And went to where his son was.
Expediently getting close to him,
He told him to work diligently:
'I have increased your wages,
And given you oil to anoint your feet,
Sufficiency of food and drink,
And thick warm mats.'
Using such harsh words as:
'You must work diligently.'
And also soft speech:
'You are like my son.'
The Elder had wisdom;
He gradually let him enter and exit.
After twenty years passed,
He managed the household affairs,
Showing him gold, silver,
True pearls, and crystal;
All the incoming and outgoing of goods,
He made him know.

But he still lived outside the gate,
Stopping in a straw hut.
He considered his own poverty:
'I have none of these things.'
The father knew the son's mind
Had gradually broadened and expanded,
And he wished to give him his wealth.
He gathered his relatives,
The king, ministers,
Kshatriyas, and householders.
In this great assembly,
He said: 'This is my son.
He abandoned me and went elsewhere
For fifty years.
Since I saw my son come back,
Twenty years have passed.
Long ago in a certain city,
I lost this son.
I traveled around searching for him,
And finally came here.
Everything I possess,
Houses and people,
I give entirely to him,
To use as he pleases.'
The son thought of his past poverty
And his inferior will and intent.
Now at his father's place,
He obtained great precious treasures,
Along with houses
And all the wealth.
He was extremely joyful,
Attaining what he never had before.
The Buddha is also like this;
Knowing we delight in the Small,
He never said:
'You will become Buddhas.'
Instead he said that we
Had attained the leakless state,
Achieved the Small Vehicle,
And were Voice-Hearer disciples.
The Buddha commanded us
To speak of the Most Supreme Way,

That those who practice this
Will attain Buddhahood.
We received the Buddha's teaching,
And for the sake of great Bodhisattvas,
Using various causes and conditions,
Metaphors, and verbal expressions,
We spoke of the Unsurpassed Way.
When the Buddha's children
Heard the Dharma from us,
Day and night they pondered,
Diligently and zealously cultivating it.
At that time the Buddhas
Immediately gave them predictions:
'You, in a future age,
Shall become Buddhas.'
Regarding the secret treasury of the Dharma
Of all the Buddhas,
We expounded its true matters
Only for the Bodhisattvas,
But not for ourselves
Did we speak this true essential.
Just as that poor son,
Getting close to his father,
Although he knew of the various goods,
Had no heart to hope for or take them.
We, although we spoke
Of the treasure store of the Buddha-dharma,
Had no resolve for it ourselves;
It was also like this.
We considered the inner extinction
To be sufficient;
Having understood this matter,
There was nothing else to do.
Even if we heard
Of purifying Buddha-lands
And teaching and transforming living beings,
We took no joy in it.
Why is this?
All dharmas
Are completely empty and silent,
Without arising, without extinguishing,
Without great, without small,

Leakless and unconditioned.
Thinking like this,
We did not generate joy.
Throughout the long night,
Regarding the Buddha-wisdom,
We had no greed and no attachment,
And no further resolve.
We considered ourselves, regarding the Dharma,
To be ultimate.
Throughout the long night,
We practiced the Dharma of emptiness,
Escaping the Three Worlds
And the suffering of distress,
Dwelling in the final body,
The Nirvana with remainder.
The teaching of the Buddha,
The Way attained is not false;
Thus we had already attained
Repayment of the Buddha's kindness.
Although, for the sake
Of the Buddha's children,
We spoke the Bodhisattva Dharma
By which they seek the Buddha Way,
Yet towards this Dharma,
We never had desire or joy.
The Guide saw and let us be;
Observing our minds,
He did not encourage us at first,
Saying there was real benefit.
Just as the rich Elder,
Knowing his son's will was inferior,
Used expedient power
To soften and subdue his mind,
And only then entrusted to him
All his wealth.
The Buddha is also like this;
Manifesting rare things,
Knowing those who delight in the Small,
He uses expedient power
To tame and subdue their minds,
And only then teaches great wisdom.
We today

Have attained what we never had before;
What we did not expect previously,
Now we have obtained of itself.
Like that poor son
Who obtained measureless treasure.
World Honored One! We now
Have obtained the Way and the Fruit,
And in the leakless Dharma,
Have obtained the pure eye.
Throughout the long night,
We upheld the Buddha's pure precepts;
Only today
Have we obtained the fruit and recompense.
In the Dharma of the Dharma King,
We long cultivated Brahma conduct;
Now we obtain the leakless,
Unsurpassed Great Fruit.
We are now
True Voice-Hearers;
We take the sound of the Buddha Way
And cause all to hear it.
We are now
True Arhats;
In all the worlds,
Among Devas, humans, Maras, and Brahmas,
Universally within them,
We are worthy of receiving offerings.
The World Honored One's great kindness,
Using rare things,
Pitying, teaching, and transforming,
Has benefited us.
Throughout measureless millions of kalpas,
Who could repay this?
Even offering hands and feet,
Bowing in respect with heads,
And making all kinds of offerings,
None could repay it.
If we carried him on our heads,
Or bore him on our shoulders,
For kalpas as numerous as Ganges sands,
Respecting him with all our hearts;
Or used delicious delicacies,

Measureless jeweled garments,
And various bedding,
Kinds of medicinal broths,
Ox-head sandalwood,
And various rare jewels,
To build stupas and temples,
And covered the ground with jeweled clothes;
If with such things as these
We made offerings
For kalpas as numerous as Ganges sands,
We still could not repay it.
The Buddhas are rare,
Measureless, boundless,
Inconceivable,
With great spiritual power.
They are leakless and unconditioned,
The Kings of all Dharmas.
Being able, for the sake of the inferior,
To endure these matters,
And for common people attached to appearances,
To speak in accordance with appropriateness.
The Buddhas, in the Dharma,
Attain the utmost mastery.
Knowing the various desires and pleasures
Of living beings,
And their resolve and strength,
According to what they can bear,
Using measureless metaphors,
They speak the Dharma.
According to the living beings'
Good roots from past lives,
Knowing the mature
And the immature,
Calculating in various ways,
And having distinguished and known this,
In the One Vehicle Way,
They speak of three in accordance with appropriateness."

THE PARABLE OF THE MEDICINAL HERBS

At that time the World Honored One said to Mahakasyapa and the other great disciples: Excellent, excellent! Kasyapa, you have well proclaimed the real merits of the Tathagata. Truly, as you have said, the Tathagata has immeasurable, boundless, asamkhyeya merits, which you and the others could not fully express even if you were to speak for immeasurable millions of kalpas. Kasyapa, you should know that the Tathagata is the King of all Dharmas. Whatever he says is never false. He expounds all laws by means of wise expedient devices, and the laws he preaches all lead to the ground of All-Knowledge. The Tathagata observes and knows the ultimate destination of all laws; he also knows the deep workings of the minds of all living beings, penetrating them without obstruction. Moreover, with regard to all laws, he has the utmost understanding and shows all wisdom to living beings.

Kasyapa, suppose that in the thousand-million-fold world, the mountains, rivers, valleys, and lands produce all manner of trees, forests, and medicinal herbs, of various kinds, with names and forms all different. A dense cloud spreads over and covers the entire thousand-million-fold world, raining down on every part of it equally at the same time. The moisture penetrates everywhere. The trees, forests, and medicinal herbs, whether they have small roots, small stalks, small branches, and small leaves; medium roots, medium stalks, medium branches, and medium leaves; or large roots, large stalks, large branches, and large leaves; and all trees, whether great or small, according to their upper, middle, or lower capacities, receive exactly what they need. From the rain of the one cloud, each grows according to its species and nature, blossoming and bearing fruit. Though they grow in the same earth and are moistened by the same rain, the plants and trees are all different.

Kasyapa, you should know that the Tathagata is also like this. He appears in the world like a great cloud rising up. With a loud voice, he pervades the world of gods, humans, and asuras, just as the great cloud covers the thousand-million-fold lands. In the midst of the great assembly, he proclaims these words: I am the Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. Those who have not yet been saved, I cause to be saved; those who have not yet understood, I cause to understand; those who have not yet been comforted, I cause to be comforted; those who have not yet attained Nirvana, I cause to attain Nirvana. I know the present world and the world to come as they really are. I am the All-Knowing One, the All-Seeing One, the Knower of the Way, the Opener of the Way, the Preacher of the Way. Come to me, all you gods, humans, and asuras, to hear the Dharma.

At that time, countless thousands of millions of species of living beings came to the Buddha to hear the Dharma. The Tathagata then observed the capacities of these beings, whether keen or dull, diligent or lazy, and according to what they could bear, he preached the Dharma for them. He

preached in infinitely many ways, causing them all to rejoice and obtain calm and excellent benefits. After hearing this Dharma, these living beings are comforted in the present life and will be born in good places in future lives, where they will enjoy happiness through the Way and act and also hear the Dharma. Having heard the Dharma, they are separated from all hindrances and, within the grand Dharma, according to their power and ability, they gradually gain entry to the Way. It is just like the great cloud raining upon all the trees, forests, and medicinal herbs; each according to its species and nature receives the moisture fully and grows.

The Dharma preached by the Tathagata is of one mark and one flavor, namely, the mark of deliverance, the mark of separation, the mark of extinction, leading ultimately to the Wisdom of All Modes. If there are living beings who hear the Dharma of the Tathagata and hold, read, recite, and practice it as preached, they will not themselves be aware of the merits they obtain. Why is this? Only the Tathagata knows the species, form, body, and nature of these living beings; he knows what they recall, what they think, what they practice; how they recall, how they think, how they practice; by what Dharma they recall, by what Dharma they think, by what Dharma they practice; and by what Dharma they obtain what Dharma. Living beings dwell in a variety of stages, and only the Tathagata sees them as they really are, clearly and without obstruction. Just as the trees, forests, and medicinal herbs do not know their own upper, middle, or lower natures, so the Tathagata knows this Dharma of one mark and one flavor, namely the mark of deliverance, the mark of separation, the mark of extinction, the mark of ultimate Nirvana, of constant tranquility and extinction, returning finally to emptiness. The Buddha, knowing this, observes the desires in the minds of living beings and guides and protects them; for this reason, he does not immediately preach the Wisdom of All Modes.

You, Kasyapa, are exceedingly rare, for you are able to know that the Tathagata preaches the Dharma according to what is appropriate, and you are able to believe and accept it. Why is this? Because the fact that the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, preach the Dharma according to what is appropriate is difficult to understand and difficult to know.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

The Dharma King who destroys existence
Appears in the world,
Following the desires of living beings,
Preaching the Dharma in various ways.
The Tathagata is worthy of reverence,
His wisdom is deep and far-reaching.
For a long time, he remained silent regarding this essential,
Not proceeding to speak of it in haste.
If those with wisdom heard it,
They would be able to believe and understand;
But those without wisdom would doubt and regret,

And thereby lose it forever.
Therefore, Kasyapa,
I preach according to their power,
Using various causes and conditions
To lead them to obtain right views.
Kasyapa, you should know,
It is like a great cloud
Rising up in the world
And covering all things everywhere.
A cloud of wisdom filled with moisture,
With lightning flashes shining and dazzling,
And the sound of thunder vibrating afar,
Causing the multitude to rejoice.
The sun's light is obscured,
The earth becomes cool and refreshing;
The cloud hangs low and dense,
As if one could reach out and touch it.
Its rain falls everywhere equally,
Coming down on all four sides.
Its flow and saturation are measureless,
Reaching every area of the land.
In the mountains, streams, and steep valleys,
In deep recesses, there grow
Plants, trees, and medicinal herbs,
Trees both great and small,
A hundred grains, seedlings, and harvests,
Sugar cane and grapevines.
Being moistened by the rain,
None fail to be filled with abundance.
The parched ground is everywhere saturated,
Herbs and trees grow thick together.
From this cloud comes forth
Water of one flavor,
And the grasses, trees, and forests,
According to their allotted share, receive moisture.
All the various trees,
Whether superior, medium, or inferior,
According to their size,
Each is able to grow.
Roots, stalks, branches, and leaves,
Flowers and fruits of brilliant color,
Are all made fresh and glossy

By the one rain.
According to their bodies and forms
And natures, they are divided into great and small,
Yet the moistening they receive is one,
Though each grows lush and thrives.
The Buddha is also like this,
Appearing in the world.
He is like a great cloud
Universally covering all things.
Having appeared in the world,
For the sake of all living beings
He distinctly elucidates and expounds
The reality of all Dharmas.
The Great Sage, the World Honored One,
Among all the multitudes
Of gods and humans,
Declares these words:
I am the Tathagata,
The Most Honored of Two-Legged Beings.
I appear in the world
Just like a great cloud,
Showering moisture upon all things.
Living beings who are withered and haggard,
I cause them all to leave suffering
And obtain the joy of peace and security,
Worldly joy,
And the joy of Nirvana.
All you multitudes of gods and humans,
Listen single-mindedly and well.
You should all come here
To behold the Unsurpassed Honored One.
I am the World Honored One,
There is none who can equal me.
To bring peace and security to living beings,
I have appeared in the world.
For the great assembly I preach
The sweet dew of the pure Dharma,
The Dharma of a single flavor,
Deliverance and Nirvana.
With a single wonderful sound
I proclaim and expound this meaning;
Usually, for the sake of the Great Vehicle,

I create causes and conditions.
I view all things
As universally equal,
Having no mind of
Favoritism or hatred, love or loathing.
I am without greed or attachment
And without limitation or hindrance.
Constantly, for all beings,
I preach the Dharma evenly.
As I would for one person,
So I do for many;
I constantly expound and preach the Dharma,
Never having other affairs.
Coming, going, sitting, and standing,
I never tire or grow weary,
Sufficing the world
Like the rain that universally moistens.
For the noble, the lowly, the superior, the inferior,
Those who keep precepts, those who break precepts,
Those whose bearing is perfect
And those whose bearing is not perfect,
Those of right views, those of wrong views,
Those of keen roots, those of dull roots,
I rain down the Dharma rain equally,
Never resting or becoming fatigued.
All living beings,
Hearing my Dharma,
Receive it according to their power
And dwell in their various grounds.
Some dwell in the ground of humans and gods,
Wheel-turning sage kings,
Sakra, Brahma, and other kings;
These are the small medicinal herbs.
Those who know the flawless Dharma,
Who are able to attain Nirvana,
Who cultivate the six transcendental powers
And obtain the three clear knowledges,
Who dwell alone in mountains and forests,
Constantly practicing meditation,
And obtain the proof of Pratyekabuddhahood;
These are the medium medicinal herbs.
Those who seek the place of the World Honored One,

Saying, I will become a Buddha,
And practice exertion and meditation;
These are the superior medicinal herbs.
Furthermore, there are children of the Buddha
Who devote their minds solely to the Buddha Way,
Constantly practicing compassion,
Knowing that they themselves will become Buddhas,
Decided and without doubt;
These are named the small trees.
Those who dwell peacefully in transcendental powers,
Turning the un-retreating wheel,
Saving immeasurable millions
Of hundreds of thousands of living beings,
Bodhisattvas such as these
Are named the great trees.
The Buddha preaches equally,
Like the rain of one flavor;
Depending on the nature of living beings,
The way in which they receive it is not same,
Just as those herbs and trees
Each take a different amount.
The Buddha uses this parable
To conveniently open and reveal,
With various words and phrases,
And expound the single Dharma.
Within the Buddha's wisdom,
This is but one drop in the sea.
I rain down the Dharma rain,
Filling the whole world.
The Dharma of one flavor
Is practiced according to the individual's power.
Just as those forests,
Medicinal herbs and trees,
According to their size,
Gradually grow lush and beautiful.
The Dharma of the Buddhas
Is constantly of a single flavor,
Causing all worlds
To universally attain fullness.
By gradually practicing,
All obtain the fruits of the Way.
The Voice-Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas,

Dwelling in mountains and forests,
Living out their final body,
Hear the Dharma and obtain the fruit;
These are named medicinal herbs,
And each obtains growth.
If there are Bodhisattvas,
Whose wisdom is firm and solid,
Who understand the Triple World
And seek the Supreme Vehicle,
These are named small trees,
And they attain growth.
Furthermore, those who dwell in meditation,
Attaining the power of transcendental faculties,
Hearing that all Dharmas are empty,
Greatly rejoicing in their hearts,
Emitting countless rays of light,
And saving all living beings,
These are named great trees,
And they attain growth.
Like this, Kasyapa,
The Dharma preached by the Buddha
Is like a great cloud,
With rain of a single flavor,
Moistening human flowers,
So that each attains fruition.
Kasyapa, you should know,
Through various causes and conditions
And various kinds of similes,
I open and reveal the Buddha Way;
This is my expedient device,
And all Buddhas are also like this.
Now, for your sakes,
I preach the most truthful matter:
All the multitudes of Voice-Hearers
Have not actually attained extinction.
That which you practice
Is the Bodhisattva Way;
By gradually cultivating and learning,
You will all become Buddhas.

BESTOWAL OF PROPHECY

At that time the World Honored One, having spoken these verses, addressed the great assembly, declaring thus: My disciple Mahakasyapa, in the future world, shall serve and behold three hundred myriad million Buddhas, World Honored Ones, making offerings, paying reverence, honoring and praising them, and broadly proclaiming the immeasurable Great Dharma of the Buddhas. In his final body, he will manage to become a Buddha named Radiance Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His land will be named Light Virtue, and his kalpa will be named Great Adornment. The lifespan of that Buddha will be twelve small kalpas. The True Dharma will remain in the world for twenty small kalpas, and the Semblance Dharma will also remain for twenty small kalpas. His realm will be adorned and majestic, free of all filth and evil, tiles, stones, thorns, brambles, and unclean excrement. The land will be level and straight, without high or low places, pits, or mounds. The ground will be made of lapis lazuli, with rows of jewel trees, and ropes of gold to mark the boundaries of the roads. Precious flowers will be scattered about, and everywhere will be pure. The Bodhisattvas of that country will be immeasurable thousands of millions, and the multitude of Voice-Hearers will likewise be innumerable. There will be no workings of Mara, and although Mara and Mara's people will be there, they will all protect the Buddha Dharma.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

I announce to the bhikshus:
With my Buddha eye
I see that this Kasyapa,
In the future world,
After innumerable kalpas have passed,
Will attain Buddhahood.
In the future world
He will make offerings to and behold
Three hundred myriad million
Buddhas, World Honored Ones.
For the sake of the Buddha wisdom,
He will purely cultivate translucent conduct.
Having made offerings to the highest,
Most Honored of Two-Legged Beings,
He will cultivate and practice all
Unsurpassed Wisdom.
In his final body,
He will attain Buddhahood.
His land will be pure,
With lapis lazuli for soil,

Many jeweled trees
Lined up along the roadsides,
And golden ropes marking the ways,
Delighting those who see it.
Constant fragrance will be emitted,
Scattering crowds of famous flowers,
And various curious and wonderful things
Will be used for adornment.
The land will be level and straight,
Without mounds or pits.
The multitude of Bodhisattvas
Will be beyond calculation;
Their minds will be tamed and gentle,
Having attained great transcendental powers,
And they will uphold the Great Vehicle scriptures
Of the Buddhas.
The multitude of Voice-Hearers,
Without outflows, in their final bodies,
Sons of the Dharma King,
Will also be beyond count,
So that even with the heavenly eye
One could not know their number.
That Buddha will live
For twelve small kalpas;
The True Dharma will remain in the world
For twenty small kalpas;
The Semblance Dharma will also remain
For twenty small kalpas.
Such will be the affairs
Of the World Honored One Radiance.

At that time, Maha-Maudgalyayana, Subhuti, and Maha-Katyayana, all trembling with awe, pressed their palms together single-mindedly and gazed up at the World Honored One's face, their eyes not leaving him for a moment. Immediately, with a shared voice, they spoke in verse:

Great Hero, Lion-like World Honored One,
Dharma King of the Sakyas,
Because you have compassion for us,
You grant us the Buddha voice.
If knowing our deepest minds,
You see fit to bestow a prophecy,
It would be like sweet dew sprinkling us,

Removing heat and bringing coolness.
It is as if someone coming from a famine-stricken land
Suddenly encounters a great king's feast;
His heart is still filled with doubt and fear,
And he does not dare to eat immediately;
But if he receives the king's instruction,
Only then does he dare to eat.
We are also like this;
Constantly considering the errors of the Lesser Vehicle,
We did not know how
To obtain the Buddha's unsurpassed wisdom.
Although we hear the Buddha's voice
Saying that we will become Buddhas,
Our hearts still hold anxiety and fear,
Like the one who dared not eat;
If we are favored with the Buddha's prophecy,
Then we will be happy and at peace.
Great Hero, Lion-like World Honored One,
Who constantly desires to comfort the world,
Please bestow upon us the prediction,
Like the starving person who needs the command to eat.

At that time the World Honored One, knowing the thoughts in the minds of his great disciples, said to the bhikshus: Subhuti here, in the future world, shall serve and behold three hundred myriad million nayutas of Buddhas, making offerings, paying reverence, honoring and praising them, constantly cultivating translucent conduct and perfecting the Bodhisattva Way. In his final body, he will attain Buddhahood. His name will be Name-Form Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His kalpa will be named Possessing Jewels. His country will be named Jewel Birth. The land will be level and straight, with crystal for soil, adorned with jewel trees, free of mounds, pits, gravel, thorns, and the filth of excrement. Jewel flowers will cover the ground, and everywhere will be pure. The people of that land will all dwell on jeweled terraces and in precious, wonderful towers. The Voice-Hearer disciples will be immeasurable and boundless, beyond the knowledge of calculation or metaphor. The multitude of Bodhisattvas will count in countless thousands of millions of nayutas. The Buddha's lifespan will be twelve small kalpas. The True Dharma will remain in the world for twenty small kalpas, and the Semblance Dharma will also remain for twenty small kalpas. That Buddha will constantly dwell in emptiness preaching the Dharma for the multitude, saving and liberating immeasurable Bodhisattvas and Voice-Hearers.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

Multitude of bhikshus,
I now announce to you,
You should all with a single mind
Listen to what I say:
My great disciple,
Subhuti,
Will become a Buddha
Named Name-Form.
He will make offerings to countless
Myriad millions of Buddhas,
Following the practices of the Buddhas,
Gradually perfecting the Great Way.
In his final body he will obtain
The thirty-two features,
Dignified and lovely,
Like a jeweled mountain.
His Buddha land
Will be pure and adorned foremost;
Living beings who see it
Will have none who do not love and delight in it.
The Buddha therein
Will save immeasurable multitudes.
Within that Buddha's Dharma
Will be many Bodhisattvas,
All of keen faculties,
Turning the un-retreating wheel.
That country will constantly be
Adorned with Bodhisattvas.
The multitude of Voice-Hearers
Will be beyond calculation;
All will obtain the three clear knowledges,
Possess the six transcendental powers,
Dwell in the eight deliverances,
And have great dignity and virtue.
The Dharma preached by that Buddha
Will reveal immeasurable
Transcendental powers and transformations
That are inconceivable.
The gods and people
Numerous as the sands of the Ganges
Will all press their palms together
And listen to and accept the Buddha's words.

That Buddha's lifespan
Will be twelve small kalpas;
The True Dharma will remain in the world
For twenty small kalpas;
The Semblance Dharma will also remain
For twenty small kalpas.

At that time the World Honored One again addressed the multitude of bhikshus: I now tell you that this Maha-Katyayana, in the future world, will make offerings and serve eight thousand million Buddhas with various offerings, honoring and respecting them. After the extinction of those Buddhas, he will erect stupas and temples for each, a thousand yojanas in height and five hundred yojanas in exact length and width, composed of the seven precious things, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, agate, pearl, and carnelian, and will make offerings to the stupas and temples with crowds of flowers, necklaces, paste incense, powdered incense, burning incense, silken canopies, banners, and streamers. After this, he will again make offerings to twenty thousand million Buddhas in the same manner. Having made offerings to these Buddhas, he will perfect the Bodhisattva Way and attain Buddhahood. His name will be Jambunada Gold Light Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His land will be level and straight, with crystal for soil, adorned with jewel trees, with golden ropes to mark the boundaries of the roads. Wonderful flowers will cover the ground, and everywhere will be pure, delighting those who see it. There will be no four evil paths, hell, hungry ghosts, animals, or asuras. There will be many gods, humans, Voice-Hearers, and Bodhisattvas, immeasurable myriads of millions, adorning that country. The Buddha's lifespan will be twelve small kalpas. The True Dharma will remain in the world for twenty small kalpas, and the Semblance Dharma will also remain for twenty small kalpas.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

Multitude of bhikshus,
Listen carefully with a single mind,
For what I say
Is true and explicitly distinct.
This Katyayana
Will, with various
Subtle and good offerings,
Make offerings to the Buddhas.
After the extinction of the Buddhas,
He will build stupas of the seven jewels
And also use flowers and incense
To make offerings to their relics.
In his final body,

He will obtain the Buddha wisdom
And achieve Equal and Right Enlightenment.
His land will be pure,
And he will save and liberate immeasurable
Myriad millions of living beings,
And be worshiped by all
From the ten directions.
The Buddha's radiance
Will have none who can surpass it.
That Buddha's name will be
Jambunada Gold Light.
Bodhisattvas and Voice-Hearers,
Cutting off all existence,
Immeasurable and innumerable,
Will adorn his country.

At that time the World Honored One again addressed the great assembly: I now tell you that this Maha-Maudgalyayana will make offerings to eight thousand Buddhas with various offerings, honoring and respecting them. After the extinction of those Buddhas, he will erect stupas and temples for each, a thousand yojanas in height and five hundred yojanas in exact length and width, composed of the seven precious things, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, agate, pearl, and carnelian, and will make offerings using crowds of flowers, necklaces, paste incense, powdered incense, burning incense, silken canopies, banners, and streamers. After this, he will again make offerings to two hundred myriad million Buddhas in the same manner. He will then attain Buddhahood. His name will be Tamalapattra Sandalwood Fragrance Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His kalpa will be named Joyful Fullness. His country will be named Intentional Delight. The land will be level and straight, with crystal for soil, adorned with jewel trees, scattering pearl flowers, everywhere pure, delighting those who see it. There will be many gods, humans, Bodhisattvas, and Voice-Hearers, their number immeasurable. The Buddha's lifespan will be twenty-four small kalpas. The True Dharma will remain in the world for forty small kalpas, and the Semblance Dharma will also remain for forty small kalpas.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

This disciple of mine,
Maha-Maudgalyayana,
After discarding this body,
Will see eight thousand,
Two hundred myriad million
Buddhas, World Honored Ones.

For the sake of the Buddha Way,
He will make offerings and pay reverence.
At the place of those Buddhas,
He will constantly cultivate translucent conduct,
And for immeasurable kalpas
Uphold the Buddha Dharma.
After the extinction of the Buddhas,
He will raise stupas of seven jewels,
Displaying golden spires afar,
And with flowers, incense, and music
Make offerings to
The stupas and temples of the Buddhas.
Having gradually perfected
The Bodhisattva Way,
In the land Intentional Delight
He will attain Buddhahood.
His name will be Tamalapattra
Sandalwood Fragrance.
That Buddha's lifespan
Will be twenty-four kalpas.
Constantly, for gods and humans,
He will expound the Buddha Way.
The Voice-Hearers will be immeasurable,
Like the sands of the Ganges,
With the three clear knowledges and six penetrations,
Possessing great dignity and virtue.
The Bodhisattvas will be countless,
Their will firm and diligent,
And regarding the Buddha wisdom
They will not retreat or turn back.
After the Buddha's extinction,
The True Dharma will remain
For forty small kalpas,
And the Semblance Dharma likewise.
My various disciples,
Perfect in dignity and virtue,
Five hundred in number,
Shall all receive such prophecy.
In the future world,
They will all attain Buddhahood.
Of the past causal connections
Between myself and you all,

I will now speak;
You should listen well.

THE PARABLE OF THE PHANTOM CITY

The Buddha said to the bhikshus: In the past, infinite, boundless, inconceivable asamkhyeya kalpas ago, there was a Buddha named Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His country was named Good City. His kalpa was named Great Form. Bhikshus, it has been a very great, long time since that Buddha entered extinction. Suppose, for example, someone were to grind all the earth of a thousand-million-fold world into ink. Passing through a thousand lands in the east, he drops one point the size of a mote of dust. Passing through another thousand lands, he drops another point. In this way, he proceeds until he has exhausted all the ink made from that earth. What is your opinion? As to these lands, could a mathematician or a mathematician's disciple find their limit and know their number?

No, World Honored One.

Bhikshus, regarding the lands this person has passed through, whether a point was dropped or not, suppose all were ground to dust. Let one mote of dust equal one kalpa. The time since that Buddha entered extinction until now exceeds that number by immeasurable, boundless, hundreds of thousands of millions of asamkhyeya kalpas. With the power of the Tathagata's knowledge and vision, I view that distant past as if it were today.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

I recall that in the past world,
Immeasurable, boundless kalpas ago,
There was a Buddha, the Most Honored of Two-Legged Beings,
Named Great Universal Wisdom Excellence.
Suppose a person used force to grind
The earth of a thousand-million-fold world,
Exhausting all these earth elements,
Making them entirely into ink.
Passing over a thousand lands,
He then lets fall one dust point.
Proceeding in this manner,
He exhausts all this dust-ink.
As for all these lands,
Those marked with a point and those not,
Suppose again they are all crushed to dust,
And one dust mote is one kalpa.
The number of those tiny dust motes,
The kalpas are even more than this,

Since that Buddha entered extinction,
Such is the measureless kalpas.
The Tathagata, with unobstructed wisdom,
Knows the extinction of that Buddha
And his Voice-Hearers and Bodhisattvas
As if seeing that extinction now.
You bhikshus should know,
The Buddha wisdom is pure, subtle, and wonderful,
Without outflow and without hindrance,
Penetrating immeasurable kalpas.

The Buddha said to the bhikshus: The lifespan of the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence was five hundred and forty myriad million nayuta kalpas. That Buddha originally sat in the place of enlightenment, and having crushed the armies of Mara, he was on the point of attaining Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, but the Dharmas of the Buddhas did not appear before him. Thus it continued for one small kalpa, and so on for ten small kalpas; he sat cross-legged, body and mind unmoving, yet the Dharmas of the Buddhas still did not appear before him. At that time, the gods of the Trayastrimsa Heaven had previously spread a lion seat under a Bodhi tree for that Buddha, one yojana in height, intending that the Buddha should sit on this seat and attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Just as he sat on this seat, the Brahma Heaven Kings rained down heavenly flowers over an area of a hundred yojanas. A fragrant wind came from time to time, blowing away the withered flowers, and they rained down fresh ones again. This continued incessantly for ten full small kalpas, offering them to the Buddha; continuing until his extinction, they constantly rained these flowers. The four Heavenly Kings, in order to make offerings to the Buddha, constantly beat heavenly drums, and the other gods made heavenly music, for ten full small kalpas; continuing until his extinction, it was also like this.

Bhikshus, after ten small kalpas had passed, the laws of the Buddhas finally appeared before the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence, and he attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Before that Buddha left the household life, he had sixteen sons, the first of whom was named Wisdom Accumulation. These sons each had various kinds of precious, unusual, and delightful toys. Hearing that their father had attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, they all discarded what they treasured and went to the Buddha's place. Their mothers, weeping, followed them. Their grandfather, a Wheel-Turning Sage King, along with a hundred ministers and a hundred thousand myriad million people, all surrounded them and followed them to the place of enlightenment. They all desired to draw near to the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata, to make offerings, pay reverence, honor, and praise him. Upon arriving, they bowed their heads to his feet, circumambulated the Buddha, and with single-minded palms pressed together, they gazed up at the World Honored One and praised him in verse, saying:

The World Honored One of great dignity and virtue,
In order to save living beings,

Spent immeasurable millions of kalpas
Before finally attaining Buddhahood.
All vows have been fulfilled;
Excellent, auspicious, and unsurpassed!
The World Honored One is exceedingly rare;
Sitting for ten small kalpas,
His body and limbs
Were quiet, secure, and unmoving.
His mind was constantly tranquil,
Never scattered or confused.
Ultimately eternally extinct,
He rests firmly in the non-outflow Dharma.
Now perceiving the World Honored One,
Who has peacefully attained the Buddha Way,
We obtain excellent benefits
And celebrate with great joy.
Living beings are constantly suffering and anguished,
Blind and in darkness, without a guide.
They do not recognize the way to end suffering,
They do not know to seek liberation.
Through the long night evil destinies increase,
Diminishing the multitude of gods.
From darkness they enter into darkness,
Never hearing the Buddha's name.
Now the Buddha has obtained the supreme,
Peaceful, non-outflow Way.
We and the gods and humans,
In order to obtain the greatest benefit,
Therefore all bow our heads
And take refuge in the Unsurpassed Honored One.

At that time the sixteen princes, having praised the Buddha in verse, entreated the World Honored One to turn the Dharma wheel, saying these words: May the World Honored One preach the Dharma and bring much peace, pity, and benefit to gods and humans. They spoke again in verse:

World Hero without peer,
Adorned with a hundred blessings,
Having obtained unsurpassed wisdom,
We pray you will preach for the world.
Save and liberate us
And all species of living beings.

Distinctly display it,
Causing us to obtain this wisdom.
If we can attain Buddhahood,
Other living beings will also be able to do so.
The World Honored One knows the deep thoughts
Within the minds of living beings;
He also knows the paths they walk,
And knows the power of their wisdom,
Their desires and cultivated blessings,
And the deeds performed in past lives.
The World Honored One, knowing all this,
Should turn the Unsurpassed Wheel.

The Buddha said to the bhikshus: When the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, in each of the ten directions, five hundred myriad million Buddha worlds trembled in six ways. The dark and obscure places between those lands, where the majestic light of the sun and moon could not shine, all became brightly lit. The living beings therein were all able to see one another, and they all said: How is it that living beings have suddenly been born in here? Also, the borders of those lands, the heavenly palaces, up to the Brahma palaces, trembled in six ways. A great light universally shone, filling the world, surpassing the light of the gods.

At that time, in five hundred myriad million lands in the east, the palaces of the Brahma Heaven shone with a light twice its normal brightness. The Brahma Heaven Kings each thought: Now the palaces are bright and shining as never before. What is the cause and condition for this phenomenon? At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings visited one another to discuss this matter. Among their group was a Great Brahma Heaven King named Savior of All, who spoke in verse for the multitude of Brahmas:

Our various palaces
Have a brilliance never before seen.
What is the cause and condition of this?
We should each seek to find out.
Is it because a great virtuous god is born,
Or because a Buddha has appeared in the world,
That this great light
Illuminates the ten directions everywhere?

At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings of five hundred myriad million lands, together with their palaces, each took a robe filled with heavenly flowers and went together to the west to seek out this sign. They saw the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata at the place of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, seated on a lion seat, reverently surrounded by gods, dragon kings, gandharvas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, and saw the sixteen princes

entreating the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. Immediately, the Brahma Heaven Kings bowed their heads to the Buddha, circumambulated him a hundred thousand times, and scattered heavenly flowers on the Buddha. The flowers they scattered were like Mount Sumeru. They also made offerings to the Buddha's Bodhi tree, which was ten yojanas high. Having offered the flowers, they each presented their palace to that Buddha, saying: We only beg you to show pity and bring benefit to us. Please accept the palaces we offer. At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, before the Buddha, with a single mind and shared voice, praised him in verse:

The World Honored One is exceedingly rare,
Difficult to meet.
Possessed of immeasurable merit,
Able to save and protect everything.
Great Teacher of gods and humans,
Showing pity to the world.
All living beings of the ten directions
Universally receive benefit.
We have come from
Five hundred myriad million lands,
Discarding the joy of deep meditation,
For the sake of making offerings to the Buddha.
Because of our blessings from former lives,
Our palaces are severely adorned.
We now present them to the World Honored One;
We only pray you will show pity and accept them.

At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, having praised the Buddha in verse, each said: We only pray that the World Honored One will turn the Dharma wheel, save and liberate living beings, and open the way to Nirvana. The Brahma Heaven Kings, with a single mind and shared voice, spoke in verse:

World Hero, Honored of Two-Legged Beings,
We only pray you will expound the Dharma.
With the power of great compassion,
Save suffering and anguished living beings.

At that time, the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata silently agreed.

Furthermore, bhikshus, the Great Brahma Kings of five hundred myriad million lands in the southeast each saw his own palace radiance shine with a brightness never before seen. Dancing with joy, generating a rare thought, they visited one another to discuss this matter. Among their assembly was a Great Brahma Heaven King named Great Compassion, who spoke in verse for the multitude of Brahmans:

What is the cause and condition of this affair,
That such a sign appears?
Our various palaces
Have a brilliance never before seen.
Is it because a great virtuous god is born?
Is it because a Buddha has appeared in the world?
We have never seen such a sign;
We should together single-mindedly seek it.
Passing millions of millions of lands,
Following the light, we will investigate it together.
Most likely a Buddha has appeared in the world
To save and liberate suffering living beings.

At that time, five hundred myriad million Brahma Heaven Kings, together with their palaces, each took a robe filled with heavenly flowers and went together to the northwest to seek out this sign. They saw the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata at the place of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, seated on a lion seat, reverently surrounded by gods, dragon kings, gandharvas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, and saw the sixteen princes entreating the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. Then the Brahma Heaven Kings bowed their heads to the Buddha, circumambulated him a hundred thousand times, and scattered heavenly flowers on the Buddha. The flowers scattered were like Mount Sumeru. They also made offerings to the Buddha's Bodhi tree. Having offered the flowers, they each presented their palace to that Buddha, saying: We only beg you to show pity and bring benefit to us. Please accept the palaces we offer. At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, before the Buddha, with a single mind and shared voice, praised him in verse:

Sage Lord, King among Gods,
With the voice of the Kalavinka bird,
One who pities living beings,
We now pay reverence to you.
The World Honored One is exceedingly rare,
Appearing only once in a long time.
One hundred and eighty kalpas
Have passed emptily without a Buddha.
The three evil paths were filling up,
And the multitude of gods was decreasing.
Now the Buddha has appeared in the world
To act as eyes for living beings.
The refuge to which the world turns,
Saving and protecting everything.
Father of living beings,

One who pities and brings benefit.
Through the blessing and fortune of our past lives,
Now we are able to meet the World Honored One.

At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, having praised the Buddha in verse, each said: We only pray that the World Honored One will show pity to everything and turn the Dharma wheel to save and liberate living beings. The Brahma Heaven Kings, with a single mind and shared voice, spoke in verse:

Great Sage, turn the Dharma wheel,
Reveal the characteristics of all laws,
Save suffering and anguished living beings,
Causing them to obtain great joy.
When living beings hear this Dharma,
They will gain the Way or be born in heaven;
The evil paths will decrease,
And those of patience and goodness will increase.

At that time, the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata silently agreed.

Furthermore, bhikshus, the Great Brahma Kings of five hundred myriad million lands in the south each saw his own palace radiance shine with a brightness never before seen. Dancing with joy, generating a rare thought, they visited one another to discuss this matter: For what reason do our palaces have this brilliance? Among their assembly was a Great Brahma Heaven King named Wonderful Dharma, who spoke in verse for the multitude of Brahmas:

Our various palaces
Shine with extremely brilliant light.
This is not without cause or condition;
We should seek the meaning of this sign.
Over a hundred thousand kalpas,
We have never seen such a sign.
Is it because a great virtuous god is born?
Is it because a Buddha has appeared in the world?

At that time, five hundred myriad million Brahma Heaven Kings, together with their palaces, each took a robe filled with heavenly flowers and went together to the north to seek out this sign. They saw the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata at the place of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, seated on a lion seat, reverently surrounded by gods, dragon kings, gandharvas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, and saw the sixteen princes entreating the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. Then the Brahma Heaven Kings bowed their heads to the Buddha, circumambulated him a hundred thousand times, and scattered heavenly flowers on the

Buddha. The flowers scattered were like Mount Sumeru. They also made offerings to the Buddha's Bodhi tree. Having offered the flowers, they each presented their palace to that Buddha, saying: We only beg you to show pity and bring benefit to us. Please accept the palaces we offer. At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, before the Buddha, with a single mind and shared voice, praised him in verse:

The World Honored One is very difficult to see,
The destroyer of all afflictions.
After one hundred and thirty kalpas,
Now at last we obtain one view of him.
Living beings who are hungry and thirsty
Are filled by the Dharma rain.
One never seen before in the past,
Possessor of Immeasurable Wisdom,
Like the Udumbara flower,
Today at last we encounter him.
Our various palaces,
Because they receive your light, are adorned.
World Honored One of Great Compassion,
We only pray you will accept them.

At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, having praised the Buddha in verse, each said: We only pray that the World Honored One will turn the Dharma wheel, causing all the world, gods, Maras, Brahmas, Sramanas, and Brahmins to obtain peace and security and be saved and liberated. The Brahma Heaven Kings, with a single mind and shared voice, praised him in verse:

We only pray, Honored of Gods and Humans,
Turn the Unsurpassed Dharma Wheel.
Beat the Great Dharma Drum,
And blow the Great Dharma Conch.
Rain down the Great Dharma Rain universally,
And save immeasurable living beings.
We all return and plead,
That you will produce the profound and far-reaching sound.

At that time, the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata silently agreed. It was also like this in the southwest and even to the downward direction.

At that time, the Great Brahma Kings of five hundred myriad million lands in the upper direction all saw the palaces where they stopped shine with a brilliant dignity never before seen. Dancing with joy, generating a rare thought, they visited one another to discuss this matter: For what reason do

our palaces have this light? Among their assembly was a Great Brahma Heaven King named Sikhin, who spoke in verse for the multitude of Brahmas:

Now, for what reason
Do our various palaces
Shine with dignified light,
Adorned as never before?
Such a wonderful sign as this
Has never been heard of or seen in the past.
Is it because a great virtuous god is born?
Is it because a Buddha has appeared in the world?

At that time, five hundred myriad million Brahma Heaven Kings, together with their palaces, each took a robe filled with heavenly flowers and went together to the lower direction to seek out this sign. They saw the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata at the place of enlightenment under the Bodhi tree, seated on a lion seat, reverently surrounded by gods, dragon kings, gandharvas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, and saw the sixteen princes entreating the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. Then the Brahma Heaven Kings bowed their heads to the Buddha, circumambulated him a hundred thousand times, and scattered heavenly flowers on the Buddha. The flowers scattered were like Mount Sumeru. They also made offerings to the Buddha's Bodhi tree. Having offered the flowers, they each presented their palace to that Buddha, saying: We only beg you to show pity and bring benefit to us. Please accept the palaces we offer. At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, before the Buddha, with a single mind and shared voice, praised him in verse:

Excellent indeed is seeing the Buddhas,
The Holy Honored Ones who save the world,
Who are able, in the prison of the Triple World,
To deliver living beings.
The All-Wise Honored of Gods and Humans,
Pitying the diverse kinds of beings,
Is able to open the sweet dew gate
And broadly save everything.
Throughout immeasurable past kalpas
Which passed emptily without a Buddha,
When the World Honored One had not yet appeared,
The ten directions were constantly dark.
The three evil paths increased,
And Asuras also flourished;
The multitude of gods shifted and decreased,
And when they died, most fell into evil paths.
Not hearing the Dharma from the Buddha,

They constantly performed unwholesome deeds;
Their physical strength and wisdom
All decreased.
Because of the causes and conditions of sinful karma,
They lost happiness and the thought of happiness.
Dwelling in false views and laws,
They did not know good rules of conduct.
Not receiving the Buddha's transformation,
They constantly fell into evil paths.
The Buddha is the eye of the world;
After a long time, he finally appears.
Out of pity for living beings,
He manifests in the world.
Transcending to attain Right Enlightenment,
We are extremely joyful and celebratory,
And we and all other multitudes
Rejoice and praise what has never been before.
Our various palaces,
Because they receive your light, are adorned.
Now we present them to the World Honored One;
We only pray for pity and acceptance.
We wish that by this merit,
It may extend universally to everything,
So that we and living beings
May all together attain the Buddha Way.

At that time the five hundred myriad million Brahma Heaven Kings, having praised the Buddha in verse, each said to the Buddha: We only pray that the World Honored One will turn the Dharma wheel, bringing much peace and much liberation. Then the Brahma Heaven Kings spoke in verse:

World Honored One, turn the Dharma wheel,
Beat the sweet dew Dharma drum,
Save suffering and anguished living beings,
Open and reveal the Nirvana Way.
We only pray you will accept our plea,
And with a great, subtle, and wonderful voice,
Show pity and spread
The Dharma practiced for immeasurable kalpas.

At that time, the Great Universal Wisdom Excellence Tathagata received the plea of the Brahma Heaven Kings of the ten directions and the sixteen princes. He immediately turned the Twelve-spoked Dharma Wheel three times, which no Sramana, Brahmin, god, Mara, Brahma, or

anyone else in the world could turn, saying: This is suffering, this is the accumulation of suffering, this is the extinction of suffering, this is the path to the extinction of suffering. And he broadly preached the Dharma of the Twelve Causes and Conditions: Ignorance conditions action; action conditions consciousness; consciousness conditions name and form; name and form condition the six entrances; the six entrances condition contact; contact conditions feeling; feeling conditions craving; craving conditions grasping; grasping conditions existence; existence conditions birth; birth conditions old age, death, worry, grief, suffering, and distress. If ignorance is extinguished, then action is extinguished; if action is extinguished, then consciousness is extinguished; if consciousness is extinguished, then name and form are extinguished; if name and form are extinguished, then the six entrances are extinguished; if the six entrances are extinguished, then contact is extinguished; if contact is extinguished, then feeling is extinguished; if feeling is extinguished, then craving is extinguished; if craving is extinguished, then grasping is extinguished; if grasping is extinguished, then existence is extinguished; if existence is extinguished, then birth is extinguished; if birth is extinguished, then old age, death, worry, grief, suffering, and distress are extinguished.

When the Buddha preached this Dharma in the midst of the great assembly of gods and humans, six hundred myriad million nayutas of people, because they did not accept any worldly dharmas, attained liberation from outflows in their minds. They all obtained deep and wonderful meditation, the three clear knowledges, the six transcendental powers, and perfected the eight deliverances. At the time of the second, third, and fourth preaching of the Dharma, living beings numbering thousands of millions of nayutas like the sands of the Ganges, also because they did not accept any worldly dharmas, attained liberation from outflows in their minds. From then on, the multitude of Voice-Hearers was immeasurable, boundless, and incalculable.

At that time the sixteen princes, all appearing as boys, having left home to become Sramaneras, with keen faculties and clear wisdom, having already made offerings to hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas, purely cultivating translucent conduct, and seeking Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, all spoke to the Buddha saying: World Honored One! These immeasurable thousands of millions of great virtuous Voice-Hearers have all achieved success. The World Honored One should now also preach the Dharma of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi for us. Once we hear it, we will all cultivate and learn it together. World Honored One! We aspire to the Tathagata's knowledge and vision. The deep thoughts we hold, the Buddha himself knows and verifies. At that time, in the multitude led by the Wheel-Turning Sage King, eight myriad million people saw the sixteen princes leave home and also requested to leave home. The King immediately permitted it.

At that time that Buddha, accepting the Sramaneras' request, after twenty thousand kalpas had passed, finally preached the Great Vehicle Sutra named "The Lotus of the Wonderful Law" to the four assemblies, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, one that is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas. After he finished preaching this Sutra, the sixteen Sramaneras, for the sake of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, all accepted, upheld, recited, and mastered it. While this Sutra was

being preached, the sixteen Bodhisattva Sramaneras all believed and accepted it; among the multitude of Voice-Hearers there were also those who believed and understood; but the rest of the living beings, thousands of millions of kinds, all gave rise to doubts and perplexities. The Buddha preached this Sutra for eight thousand kalpas without resting. Having preached this Sutra, he immediately entered a quiet room and dwelt in meditation for eighty-four thousand kalpas. At this time, the sixteen Bodhisattva Sramaneras, knowing that the Buddha had entered the room and was silently in meditation, each ascended a Dharma seat and, also for eighty-four thousand kalpas, broadly preached and distinguished the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra for the four assemblies. Each one saved six hundred myriad million nayutas of living beings equal to the sands of the Ganges, demonstrating, teaching, benefiting, and delighting them, causing them to generate the mind of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

After eighty-four thousand kalpas, the Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence arose from samadhi, went to the Dharma seat, and sat down calmly. He addressed the whole great assembly: These sixteen Bodhisattva Sramaneras are exceedingly rare. Their faculties are penetrating and keen, their wisdom clear. They have already made offerings to immeasurable thousands of millions of Buddhas. At the place of those Buddhas, they constantly cultivated translucent conduct, accepted and upheld the Buddha wisdom, and opened and revealed it to living beings, causing them to enter into it. You should all frequently draw near and make offerings to them. Why is this? If Voice-Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, or Bodhisattvas are able to believe the Sutra Dharma preached by these sixteen Bodhisattvas, and accept and uphold it without defaming it, such persons will all attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, the wisdom of the Tathagata.

The Buddha said to the bhikshus: These sixteen Bodhisattvas constantly take pleasure in preaching this Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra. The six hundred myriad million nayuta Ganges sands of living beings converted by each Bodhisattva, birth after birth, are born together with that Bodhisattva, hear the Dharma from him, and all believe and understand. Because of these causes and conditions, they have met four hundred myriad million Buddhas, World Honored Ones, and continue to do so up to the present.

Bhikshus! I tell you now: Those sixteen Sramaneras, disciples of that Buddha, have now all attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. In the lands of the ten directions, they are currently preaching the Dharma, with immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of Bodhisattvas and Voice-Hearers as their retinue. Two of these Sramaneras became Buddhas in the east: one named Akshobhya in the Land of Joy, the second named Sumeru Peak. Two Buddhas in the southeast: one named Lion Voice, the second named Lion Characteristic. Two Buddhas in the south: one named Space Dweller, the second named Constant Extinction. Two Buddhas in the southwest: one named Imperial Characteristic, the second named Brahma Characteristic. Two Buddhas in the west: one named Amitabha, the second named Saving All Worldly Suffering. Two Buddhas in the northwest: one named Tamalapattra Sandalwood Fragrance Transcendental Power, the second named Sumeru Characteristic. Two Buddhas in the north: one named Cloud Sovereign, the second named

Cloud Sovereign King. A Buddha in the northeast named Destroyer of All Worldly Fear. The sixteenth is I, Shakyamuni Buddha, who attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi in the Saha land.

Bhikshus! When we were Sramaneras, we each taught and converted immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of living beings equal to the sands of the Ganges. They heard the Dharma from us for the sake of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Of these living beings, there are those who even now dwell in the Voice-Hearer ground, but I constantly instruct them in Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. These people should gradually enter the Buddha Way through this Dharma. Why is this? Because the wisdom of the Tathagata is difficult to believe and difficult to understand. Those living beings equal to immeasurable Ganges sands who were converted at that time are you, the bhikshus, and the Voice-Hearer disciples in the future after my extinction. After my extinction, there will be disciples who do not hear this Sutra, and do not know or realize the practices of the Bodhisattvas, but conceive the idea of extinction for the merits they have obtained, and enter Nirvana. When I become a Buddha in another land, I will have a different name. Although those people are born with the idea of extinction and enter Nirvana, in that land they will seek the Buddha wisdom and get to hear this Sutra. Only by the Buddha Vehicle can one attain extinction; there is no other vehicle, except for the expedient preaching of the Tathagatas.

Bhikshus! If a Tathagata knows that the time of Nirvana has arrived, and the assembly is pure, their faith and understanding firm and solid, having comprehended the Dharma of emptiness and entered deep meditation, he then gathers the Bodhisattvas and the multitude of Voice-Hearers and preaches this Sutra for them. In the world there are not two vehicles for attaining extinction; there is only the One Buddha Vehicle for attaining extinction. Bhikshus, you should know! The Tathagata, with expedient devices, deeply enters the nature of living beings. Knowing that they delight in lesser Dharmas and are deeply attached to the five desires, for the sake of these people he preaches Nirvana. If such people hear this, they immediately believe and accept it.

It is like a dangerous and difficult road, five hundred yojanas long, remote, uninhabited, and terrifying. Suppose there is a large group wishing to pass along this road to reach a place of treasures. There is a guide, intelligent and wise, who knows the passable and blocked features of the perilous road well, and who is leading the group to cross this difficulty. The group he is leading becomes tired and retreats midway, saying to the guide: We are exhausted and also afraid; we cannot go any further. The road ahead is still far, and we want to turn back now. The guide, who has many expedients, thinks: These people are pitiable. How can they abandon the great treasure and wish to turn back? Having thought this, he uses his power of expedient devices to conjure a city in the middle of the perilous road, three hundred yojanas in, and says to the group: You should not fear, do not turn back. Here is a great city where you can stop and do as you please. If you enter this city, you will quickly be at peace. If you can proceed to the treasure place later, you may go then. At that time, the exhausted group rejoiced greatly and praised what they had never seen before: We have now escaped this evil road and will quickly find peace. Then the group proceeded into the conjured city, giving rise to the thought that they had been saved, the thought of peace and security. At that time, the guide, knowing that the people had rested and were no longer

weary, immediately dissolved the conjured city and said to the group: You should go now; the treasure place is near. The great city a moment ago was something I conjured to give you rest.

Bhikshus! The Tathagata is also like this. Now he acts as a Great Guide for you all. He knows that the evil road of the sorrows of birth and death is perilous, difficult, and long, and must be traveled and crossed. If living beings were only to hear of the One Buddha Vehicle, they would not wish to see the Buddha or draw near to him. They would think: The Buddha Way is long and far; only after enduring diligent suffering for a long time can it be achieved. The Buddha, knowing their minds are timid and weak, makes use of the power of expedient devices and preaches two Nirvanas to provide a resting place along the way. If living beings dwell in these two grounds, the Tathagata then says: What you have done is not yet done. The ground where you dwell is close to the Buddha wisdom. You should observe and consider that the Nirvana you have obtained is not real. It is only that the Tathagata, through the power of expedient devices, within the One Buddha Vehicle, distinguishes and speaks of three. He is like that guide who, in order to provide rest, conjured a great city. Once he knew they had rested, he told them: The treasure place is near; this city is not real, it is something I conjured.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

The Buddha Great Universal Wisdom Excellence,
For ten kalpas sat in the place of enlightenment,
But the Buddha Dharma did not appear before him,
And he did not attain the Buddha Way.
The gods, dragon kings,
And the multitude of Asuras
Constantly rained down heavenly flowers
To make offerings to that Buddha.
The gods beat heavenly drums
And made various kinds of music.
Fragrant winds blew away the withered flowers,
And they rained down new, beautiful ones.
After ten small kalpas had passed,
He finally attained the Buddha Way.
The gods and worldly people
All harbored jumping joy in their hearts.
That Buddha's sixteen sons
All, together with their retinues,
Thousands of millions surrounding them,
Went together to the Buddha's place.
Bowing their heads to the Buddha's feet,
They asked him to turn the Dharma wheel:
Holy Lion, let the Dharma rain

Fill us and everyone else.
The World Honored One is very difficult to encounter;
He appears once in a long time.
To awaken the flock of beings,
He shakes everything.
In the eastern worlds,
Five hundred myriad million lands,
The Brahma palaces shone with light
As never before in the past.
Seeing this sign, the Brahmas
Came seeking to the Buddha's place.
Scattering flowers to make offerings,
They also presented their palaces,
Asking the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel,
Praising him with verses.
The Buddha knew the time had not come;
He accepted their plea but sat silently.
In the three directions and four corners,
And the upper and lower, it was also like this.
Scattering flowers and presenting palaces,
Asking the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel:
The World Honored One is very difficult to encounter;
We pray that with great compassion
You will open wide the sweet dew gate
And turn the Unsurpassed Dharma Wheel.
The World Honored One of Immeasurable Wisdom
Accepted the plea of those multitudes.
For them, he proclaimed various laws:
The Four Truths, the Twelve Conditions,
From ignorance to old age and death,
All exist due to the condition of birth.
Such constitute the multitude of faults and evils;
You should all know this.
When he declared this Dharma,
Six hundred myriad million kotis
Ended the limits of all suffering
And all became Arhats.
At the time of the second preaching of the Dharma,
A multitude of a thousand myriad Ganges sands,
Not accepting worldly dharmas,
Also became Arhats.
Those who attained the Way after this

Were measureless in number;
Calculating for a myriad million kalpas,
One could not find their limit.
Then the sixteen princes
Left home to become Sramaneras.
Together they asked that Buddha
To expound the Great Vehicle Dharma:
We and our attendants
Should all attain the Buddha Way.
We wish to have, like the World Honored One,
The Wisdom Eye, foremost in purity.
The Buddha, knowing the boys' minds
And their practices in past lives,
Used immeasurable causes and conditions
And various kinds of similes
To preach the Six Paramitas
And matters of transcendental powers.
Distinguishing the true Dharma
And the path walked by Bodhisattvas,
He preached this Lotus Sutra,
With verses like the sands of the Ganges.
After that Buddha preached the Sutra,
He entered a quiet room in meditation,
Sitting with a single mind in one place
For eighty-four thousand kalpas.
Those Sramaneras,
Knowing the Buddha had not emerged from meditation,
For the sake of immeasurable millions of multitudes,
Preached the Buddha's unsurpassed wisdom.
Each sat on a Dharma seat
And preached this Great Vehicle Sutra.
After the Buddha's peaceful quietude,
They proclaimed and assisted the teaching.
The living beings saved
By each one of the Sramaneras
Were six hundred myriad million
Ganges sands of multitudes.
After that Buddha's extinction,
Those who heard the Dharma,
In whatever Buddha land they were,
Were constantly born together with their teachers.
Those sixteen Sramaneras

Have fully practiced the Buddha Way.
Now, in the ten directions,
They have each attained Right Enlightenment.
Those who heard the Dharma at that time
Are each at the place of those Buddhas.
Those who remain as Voice-Hearers
Are gradually taught the Buddha Way.
I am one of the sixteen;
I formerly preached for you.
Therefore, with expedient devices,
I lead you to the Buddha wisdom.
Because of this original cause and condition,
I now preach the Lotus Sutra,
To cause you to enter the Buddha Way.
Be careful not to harbor shock or fear.
Suppose there is a perilous evil road,
Remote and cut off, with many venomous beasts,
Also lacking water and grass,
A place feared by people.
Countless thousands of millions of people
Wish to cross this perilous road,
But the path is very far and extending,
Passing through five hundred yojanas.
At that time there is a guide,
Of strong memory and possessed of wisdom,
Clear and decided in mind,
Saving the multitude from difficulty in the danger.
The crowd is all exhausted
And says to the guide:
We are now utterly weary;
We want to turn back from here.
The guide thinks:
These people are very pitiable;
How can they wish to turn back
And lose the great treasure?
Immediately thinking of an expedient,
He exercises transcendental power
And conjures a great walled city,
Adorned with houses and residences,
Surrounded by gardens and groves,
Channels, streams, and bathing pools,
Double gates and high towers,

Filled with men and women.
Having created this conjuration,
He comforts the crowd, saying, Do not fear.
You should enter this city,
And each can enjoy himself as he pleases.
When the people entered the city,
Their hearts were all full of great joy.
They all generated thoughts of peace and security,
Considering themselves to have been saved.
The guide, knowing they had rested,
Gathered the crowd and announced:
You should go forward;
This is only a phantom city.
I saw that you were exhausted
And wanted to turn back midway,
Therefore, using the power of expedients,
I temporarily conjured this city.
You should be diligent and energetic,
And together proceed to the treasure place.
I am also like this,
Acting as the guide for all.
Seeing the seekers of the Way,
Who become weary and abandon it midway,
Unable to cross the perilous road
Of birth, death, and afflictions,
Therefore I use the power of expedients
And preach Nirvana for you to rest,
Saying: Your suffering is extinguished,
What you have done is all done.
Knowing you have reached Nirvana
And all attained Arhatship,
Only then do I gather the great assembly
And preach the True Dharma.
The Buddhas, with the power of expedients,
Distinguish and preach three vehicles;
There is only the One Buddha Vehicle,
But for the sake of a resting place, two are preached.
Now I tell you the truth:
What you have obtained is not extinction.
For the sake of the Buddha's All-Knowledge,
You should generate great zeal.
When you verify All-Knowledge,

The Ten Powers and other Buddha Laws,
And possess the thirty-two features,
That is true extinction.
The Guide of the Buddhas,
For the sake of rest, preaches Nirvana.
Knowing that they have rested,
He leads them into the Buddha wisdom.

FIVE HUNDRED DISCIPLES RECEIVE THE PROPHECY

At that time Purna Maitrayaniputra, having heard the Buddha preach the Dharma with wisdom and expedient devices according to what is appropriate, and having heard the prophecies of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi given to the great disciples, and having heard the matters of the causes and conditions of past lives, and having heard of the great unrestricted transcendental powers of the Buddhas, obtained what he had never had before. His heart was purified and he danced with joy. Immediately he rose from his seat, went before the Buddha, bowed his head to the Buddha's feet, and withdrew to stand to one side, gazing up at the Honored One's countenance without momentarily turning his eyes away.

He thought to himself: The World Honored One is very unique; what he does is rare. Following the various natures of worldly people, he uses expedient devices and knowledge and vision to preach the Dharma for them, pulling living beings out of their greed and attachments everywhere. We cannot express in words the merits of the Buddha. Only the Buddha, the World Honored One, is able to know the deep thoughts and original vows of our hearts.

At that time the Buddha said to the bhikshus: Do you see this Purna Maitrayaniputra? I have constantly praised him as the foremost among the preachers of the Dharma, and I have constantly extolled his various merits. He diligently safeguards, upholds, and assists in proclaiming my Dharma. He is able to demonstrate, teach, benefit, and delight the four assemblies, perfectly interpreting the True Dharma of the Buddha, and bringing great benefit to his fellow students of the pure life. Apart from the Tathagata, no one is able to fully appreciate his eloquence in discourse. You should not say that Purna is only able to safeguard, uphold, and assist in proclaiming my Dharma. He also safeguarded, upheld, and assisted in proclaiming the True Dharma of the Buddhas of the past ninety million Buddhas. Among the preachers of the Dharma of those Buddhas, he was also the foremost. Furthermore, regarding the Dharma of Emptiness preached by those Buddhas, he understood it clearly and thoroughly, obtained the four unhindered wisdoms, and was constantly able to preach the Dharma with discrimination and purity, free of doubt and perplexity, possessing the transcendental powers of a Bodhisattva. Throughout his allotted lifespans, he constantly cultivated purity. The people of those Buddhas' eras all said he was a true Voice-Hearer. Yet Purna, by such expedient devices, brought benefit to immeasurable hundreds of thousands of living beings, and converted immeasurable asamkhyeyas of people, causing them to stand in Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. In order to purify the Buddha lands, he constantly performed Buddha-deeds and taught living beings.

Bhikshus! Purna was also the foremost among the preachers of the Dharma under the Seven Buddhas. He is also the foremost among the preachers of the Dharma under me now. Among the preachers of the Dharma under the future Buddhas of this Worthy Kalpa, he will also be the foremost, and in all cases, he will safeguard, uphold, and assist in proclaiming the Buddha Dharma.

In the future, he will safeguard, uphold, and assist in proclaiming the Dharma of immeasurable, boundless Buddhas, teaching, converting, and benefiting immeasurable living beings, causing them to stand in Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. In order to purify the Buddha lands, he will constantly be diligent and energetic in teaching living beings, gradually perfecting the Bodhisattva Way.

After immeasurable asamkhyeya kalpas, he will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi in this land. His name will be Law Bright Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. That Buddha will have three thousand great thousand worlds equal to the sands of the Ganges as one Buddha land. The earth will be made of the seven jewels, level as the palm of a hand, without hills, ravines, gullies, or ditches. Towers and pavilions of the seven jewels will fill it. The heavenly palaces will be situated nearby in the void, so that humans and gods will intermingle and be able to see one another. There will be no evil paths, nor will there be any women. All living beings will be born by transformation and will be without sexual desire. They will obtain great transcendental powers, their bodies will emit light, and they will fly freely. Their will and mindfulness will be firm and solid, they will be energetic and wise, and all will be golden in color, adorned with the thirty-two marks. The living beings of that country will constantly consume two kinds of food: first, the food of Dharma-joy; second, the food of the delight of meditation. There will be a multitude of Bodhisattvas, immeasurable, asamkhyeya, thousands of millions of nayutas, who have attained great transcendental powers and the four unhindered wisdoms, capable of skillfully teaching living beings. The multitude of Voice-Hearers will be beyond what calculation or numbers can know, and all will possess the six transcendental powers, the three clear knowledges, and the eight deliverances. That Buddha land will be adorned and perfected with such immeasurable merits as these. The kalpa will be named Jewel Bright. The country will be named Good and Pure. That Buddha's lifespan will be immeasurable asamkhyeya kalpas, and the Dharma will remain for a very long time. After the Buddha's extinction, stupas of the seven jewels will be erected throughout the entire country.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

Bhikshus, listen carefully!
The Way practiced by the Buddha's sons,
Because they have learned expedient devices well,
Is inconceivable.
Knowing that the multitudes delight in lesser dharmas
And are fearful of great wisdom,
Therefore the Bodhisattvas
Act as Voice-Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas.
Using countless expedient devices,
They convert various kinds of living beings.
They say of themselves, We are Voice-Hearers,

And are very far from the Buddha Way.
They liberate immeasurable multitudes,
Causing them all to achieve success.
Even those of small desire who are lazy
Are gradually led to become Buddhas.
Inwardly, they hide their Bodhisattva conduct;
Outwardly, they appear as Voice-Hearers.
With few desires, weary of birth and death,
But in truth, they are purifying the Buddha lands.
They show the multitudes that they have the three poisons,
And appear to manifest the signs of wrong views.
My disciples are like this,
Saving living beings through expedient devices.
If I were to fully explain
The various transformed manifestations,
Living beings who heard it
Would harbor doubts and perplexities in their minds.
Now, this Purna,
Under thousands of millions of Buddhas in the past,
Diligently cultivated the Way he practiced,
Proclaiming and guarding the Dharma of the Buddhas.
In order to seek Unsurpassed Wisdom,
At the place of the Buddhas
He appeared as the head of the disciples,
Possessing much learning and wisdom.
What he preached was fearless,
Able to delight the calm assembly.
Never did he become fatigued or weary
In assisting the Buddha's work.
Having already passed into great transcendental powers,
Possessing the four unhindered wisdoms,
Knowing whether faculties were keen or dull,
He constantly preached the pure Dharma.
Expounding such principles,
He taught thousands of millions of multitudes,
Causing them to dwell in the Great Vehicle Dharma,
While he himself purified the Buddha lands.
In the future, he will also make offerings
To immeasurable, innumerable Buddhas,
Protecting, assisting, and proclaiming the True Dharma,
And also purifying his own Buddha land.
Constantly using various expedient devices,

He will preach the Dharma without fear,
Saving incalculable multitudes,
To achieve the Wisdom of All Modes.
Making offerings to the Tathagatas,
Guarding and upholding the Treasure Store of the Dharma,
After that, he will attain Buddhahood,
Named by the title Law Bright.
His country will be named Good and Pure,
Composed of the seven jewels.
The kalpa will be named Jewel Bright.
The multitude of Bodhisattvas will be very great;
Their number will be immeasurable millions,
All having passed into great transcendental powers,
Replete with dignity, virtue, and power,
Filling that country.
The Voice-Hearers will also be innumerable,
With the three clear knowledges and eight deliverances,
Obtaining the four unhindered wisdoms;
Such as these will constitute the Sangha.
The living beings of that land
Will have severed all sexual desire.
They will be born purely by transformation,
With bodies adorned with the marks.
Taking Dharma-joy and meditation delight as food,
They will not think of other food.
There will be no women,
Nor any evil paths.
The bhikshu Purna
Will complete and fulfill all merits,
And will obtain this Pure Land,
With a great multitude of sages and worthies.
Of such immeasurable matters,
I have now spoken only in brief.

At that time the one thousand two hundred Arhats, whose minds were free and independent, thought to themselves: We rejoice, having obtained what we never had before. If the World Honored One were to give a prophecy to each of us, as he did for the other great disciples, would that not be delightful?

The Buddha, knowing the thoughts in their minds, said to Mahakasyapa: Regarding these one thousand two hundred Arhats, I will now, in this assembly, confer the prophecy of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi upon them in sequence. Among this assembly, my great disciple, the

bhikshu Kaundinya, shall make offerings to sixty-two thousand million Buddhas, and afterwards will become a Buddha named Universal Brightness Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. The five hundred Arhats, Uruvilva Kasyapa, Gaya Kasyapa, Nadi Kasyapa, Kalodayin, Udayin, Aniruddha, Revata, Kapphina, Vakkula, Cunda, Svagata, and others, shall all attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, all with the same name, Universal Brightness.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

The bhikshu Kaundinya
Will see immeasurable Buddhas,
And after passing asamkhyeya kalpas,
Will attain Equal and Right Enlightenment.
Constantly emitting great light,
Possessing all transcendental powers,
His fame will spread throughout the ten directions,
Respected by all.
Always preaching the Unsurpassed Way,
Therefore his name will be Universal Brightness.
His land will be pure;
The Bodhisattvas will all be courageous,
All ascending wonderful towers,
Traveling to the lands of the ten directions
To present unsurpassed offerings
To the Buddhas.
Having made these offerings,
Their hearts filled with great joy,
They will return to their own land in a moment;
Such will be their spiritual power.
The Buddha's lifespan will be sixty thousand kalpas;
The True Dharma will dwell for twice the lifespan;
The Semblance Dharma will be twice that again;
When the Dharma is extinguished, gods and humans will grieve.
The five hundred bhikshus
Will become Buddhas in sequence,
All with the name Universal Brightness,
Receiving the prediction in turn.
After my extinction,
So-and-so shall become a Buddha.
The world in which he teaches
Will also be like mine today.

The adornment and purity of the land,
And the various spiritual powers,
The multitude of Bodhisattvas and Voice-Hearers,
The True Dharma and Semblance Dharma,
The lifespan and number of kalpas,
Will all be as stated above.
Kasyapa, you now know
Of the five hundred independent ones.
The remainder of the multitude of Voice-Hearers
Will also be like this.
As for those who are not in this assembly,
You should proclaim this to them.

At that time the five hundred Arhats, having received the prophecy before the Buddha, danced with joy. They rose from their seats immediately, went before the Buddha, bowed their heads to his feet, and repented of their errors, blaming themselves: World Honored One! We constantly thought that we had already attained ultimate extinction. Now we realize that we were like ignorant people. Why is this? We should have obtained the Tathagata wisdom, yet we were satisfied with merely little wisdom.

World Honored One! It is like a man who went to a close friend's house, got drunk on wine, and lay down to sleep. At that time, the friend had official business and had to leave. He sewed a priceless jewel inside the man's garment and departed. The man, being drunk and asleep, knew nothing of it. When he woke up, he traveled on to other countries. For the sake of clothing and food, he diligently exerted his strength seeking them, encountering very great difficulties. If he obtained a little, he was satisfied. Later, the close friend happened to meet him and said: Alas, sir! How is it you have come to this for the sake of clothing and food? In the past, wishing you to be peaceful and happy and able to satisfy your five desires, in such-and-such a year, month, and day, I sewed a priceless jewel into your garment. It is present now as before, yet you do not know it. You diligently suffer worry and distress to seek a livelihood; this is very foolish. You should now take this jewel and trade it for what you need. Then you can always have whatever you wish and be free from poverty and shortage.

The Buddha is also like this. When he was a Bodhisattva, he taught and converted us, causing us to generate the mind of All-Knowledge. But we soon discarded and forgot it, neither knowing nor perceiving. Having attained the Way of the Arhat, we told ourselves we had attained extinction. Finding it difficult to support our lives, we were satisfied with getting a little. However, our aspiration for All-Knowledge still remained and was not lost. Now the World Honored One awakens us, saying: Bhikshus! What you have obtained is not ultimate extinction. For a long time, I have caused you to plant Buddha roots; using expedient devices, I showed the characteristics of Nirvana, but you considered it to be true extinction.

World Honored One! We now know that we are actually Bodhisattvas and have received the prediction of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. For this reason, we rejoice greatly, having obtained what we never had before.

At that time Ajnata-Kaundinya and the others, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

We have heard the sound of the unsurpassed,
Comforting prophecy,
And rejoice as never before,
Worshipping the Buddha of Immeasurable Wisdom.
Now before the World Honored One,
We repent of our various errors and faults.
Regarding the immeasurable Buddha-treasure,
We obtained a small portion of Nirvana,
And like ignorant, foolish people,
We deemed it sufficient.
It is like a poor man
Who went to a close friend's house.
The friend's house was very wealthy,
And he served many delicacies.
He took a priceless jewel
And sewed it inside the inner robe,
Giving it silently, he then departed;
The man was asleep and did not know.
When the man had arisen,
He traveled to other countries.
Seeking food and clothing to sustain himself,
He found livelihood very difficult.
Whatever little he got, he was satisfied,
Not hoping for anything better,
Unaware that inside his inner robe,
There was a priceless jewel.
The close friend who gave the jewel
Later saw this poor man,
And after bitterly rebuking him,
Showed him the jewel that was sewn in.
When the poor man saw this jewel,
His heart was filled with great joy.
Rich with various wealth and goods,
He could satisfy his five desires.
We are also like this.

Throughout the long night, the World Honored One
Constantly pitied us, taught and converted us,
Causing us to plant the supreme vow.
Because we were without wisdom,
We did not perceive or know it.
Obtaining a small portion of Nirvana,
We were satisfied and sought no further.
Now the Buddha awakens us,
Saying this is not real extinction;
Only obtaining the Buddha's supreme wisdom
Is true extinction.
Now we have heard from the Buddha
Of the prophecy and majestic matters,
And received the prediction in turn;
Body and mind are universally filled with joy.

PROPHECIES CONFERRED ON LEARNERS AND ADEPTS

At that time Ananda and Rahula thought to themselves: We constantly think, if we could receive a prophecy, would that not be delightful? immediately they rose from their seats, went before the Buddha, bowed their heads to his feet, and together said to the Buddha: World Honored One! We should also have a share in this. We have only the Tathagata as our refuge. Moreover, we are seen and known by all the gods, humans, and asuras of all worlds. Ananda is constantly the attendant, guarding and holding the Dharma Store; Rahula is the Buddha's son. If the Buddha would grant us the prediction of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, our vows would be fulfilled and the hopes of the multitude would also be satisfied.

At that time, two thousand Voice-Hearer disciples, both learners and adepts, all rose from their seats, bared their right shoulders, went before the Buddha, pressed their palms together with a single mind, and gazed up at the World Honored One. Wishing for the same thing as Ananda and Rahula, they stood to one side.

At that time the Buddha said to Ananda: In a future world, you shall become a Buddha named Mountain Sea Wisdom Unfettered Power King Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. You shall make offerings to sixty-two million Buddhas and guard and hold their Dharma Stores, after which you will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. You will teach and convert twenty thousand myriad million Ganges sands of Bodhisattvas and others, causing them to accomplish Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Your country will be named Constantly Raising the Victorious Banner. The land will be pure, with lapis lazuli for soil. The kalpa will be named Wonderful Sound Pervading Everywhere. That Buddha's lifespan will be immeasurable thousands of millions of asamkhyeya kalpas. If a person were to calculate and count for thousands of millions of immeasurable asamkhyeya kalpas, they could not know the limit. The True Dharma will dwell in the world for twice the lifespan, and the Semblance Dharma will dwell for twice the True Dharma. Ananda! The Mountain Sea Wisdom Unfettered Power King Buddha will be praised together by immeasurable thousands of millions of Ganges sands of Buddhas, Tathagatas of the ten directions, who will extol his merits.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

I now say within the Sangha:
Ananda, holder of the Dharma,
Shall make offerings to the Buddhas,
And afterwards attain Right Enlightenment,
Named Mountain Sea Wisdom
Unfettered Power King Buddha.
His country will be pure,

Named Constantly Raising the Victorious Banner.
He will teach and convert Bodhisattvas
Numerous as the Ganges sands.
The Buddha will have great dignity and virtue;
His fame will fill the ten directions.
His lifespan will be without measure,
Because he pities living beings.
The True Dharma will be twice the lifespan,
The Semblance Dharma twice that again.
Countless living beings
Like the sands of the Ganges,
Within this Buddha's Dharma,
Will plant the causes and conditions of the Buddha Way.

At that time, eight thousand newly inspired Bodhisattvas in the assembly thought to themselves:
We have not yet heard of great Bodhisattvas obtaining a prediction such as this. For what reason
do these Voice-Hearers obtain such a prediction?

At that time the World Honored One, knowing the thoughts in the minds of the Bodhisattvas, said
to them: Good men! Ananda and I, at the place of Empty King Buddha, formerly generated the
thought of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi at the same time. Ananda constantly delighted in wide
learning, while I constantly was diligent and energetic. Therefore, I have already attained
Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, while Ananda guards and holds my Dharma, and will also guard the
Dharma Stores of the Buddhas of the future, teaching, converting, and perfecting the multitude of
Bodhisattvas. Such was his original vow, and therefore he receives this prediction.

Ananda, facing the Buddha, personally heard his prophecy and the adornments of his land. His
vows were fulfilled, and his heart was filled with great joy, obtaining what he never had before.
Immediately, he recalled the Dharma Stores of immeasurable thousands of millions of Buddhas of
the past, understanding them without obstruction, just as if he were hearing them now; he also
recognized his original vow.

At that time Ananda spoke in verse:

The World Honored One is very rare,
Causing me to recall the past,
The Dharma of immeasurable Buddhas,
Just as if hearing it today.
I now have no further doubts;
I dwell peacefully in the Buddha Way.
Skillfully acting as an attendant,
I will guard and hold the Dharma of the Buddhas.

At that time the Buddha said to Rahula: In a future world, you shall become a Buddha named Stepping on Seven Jewel Flowers Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. You shall make offerings to Buddhas, Tathagatas, equal in number to the dust motes of ten worlds. You will constantly act as the eldest son for those Buddhas, just as you do now. The adornments of the land, the lifespan and number of kalpas, the disciples converted, and the True and Semblance Dharmas of this Stepping on Seven Jewel Flowers Buddha will be no different from those of the Mountain Sea Wisdom Unfettered Power King Tathagata. You will also act as the eldest son for that Buddha. After that, you will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

When I was a Crown Prince,
Rahula was my eldest son.
Now that I have attained the Buddha Way,
He receives the Dharma to become a Dharma-son.
In future worlds,
He will see immeasurable millions of Buddhas.
For all of them, he will be the eldest son,
Single-mindedly seeking the Buddha Way.
The hidden conduct of Rahula,
Only I can know it.
He manifests as my eldest son
To show to living beings.
Immeasurable millions of thousands
Of merits, uncountable,
He dwells peacefully in the Buddha Dharma
To seek the Unsurpassed Way.

At that time the World Honored One saw the two thousand learners and adepts, their intentions gentle, quiet, and pure, single-mindedly observing the Buddha. The Buddha said to Ananda: Do you see these two thousand learners and adepts?

Yes, I see them.

Ananda! These people shall make offerings to Buddhas, Tathagatas, equal in number to the dust motes of fifty worlds, revering and respecting them, and guarding and holding their Dharma Stores. In the end, they will simultaneously attain Buddhahood in lands of the ten directions. They will all have the same name, Jewel Sign Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight,

Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. Their lifespan will be one kalpa. The adornments of their lands, their Voice-Hearers and Bodhisattvas, and their True Dharma and Semblance Dharma will all be equal.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

These two thousand Voice-Hearers
Standing before me now,
I give the prediction to them all:
In the future, they will become Buddhas.
The Buddhas they make offerings to
Will be as the dust numbers mentioned above.
Guarding and holding their Dharma Stores,
Later they will attain Right Enlightenment.
Each in lands of the ten directions,
They will all share the same name.
Sitting in the place of enlightenment at the same time,
To verify Unsurpassed Wisdom,
They will all be named Jewel Sign.
Their lands and disciples,
True Dharma and Semblance Dharma,
Will all be equal without difference.
All using transcendental powers,
They will save living beings of the ten directions.
Their fame will pervade everywhere,
And they will gradually enter Nirvana.

At that time the two thousand learners and adepts, hearing the Buddha's prophecy, danced with joy and spoke in verse:

World Honored One, Bright Lamp of Wisdom,
Hearing the voice of prediction,
Our hearts are filled with joy,
As if sprinkled with sweet dew.

THE TEACHER OF THE LAW

At that time the World Honored One, addressing the eighty thousand great men through the Bodhisattva Medicine King, said: Medicine King! Do you see in this great assembly the immeasurable gods, dragon kings, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans and non-humans, as well as bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, and upasikas, those seeking to be Voice-Hearers, those seeking to be Pratyekabuddhas, and those seeking the Buddha Way? To any such beings who are before the Buddha and hear one verse or one phrase of the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra, or even produce a single thought of rejoicing, I confer upon them all the prophecy that they shall attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

The Buddha said to Medicine King: Furthermore, after the extinction of the Tathagata, if there is anyone who hears the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra, even one verse or one phrase, and produces a single thought of rejoicing, I also confer upon them the prophecy of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. If there are people who receive and hold, read, recite, explain, and copy the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra, even one verse, looking upon this Sutra roll with reverence as if it were the Buddha, and making various offerings of flowers, incense, necklaces, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, silken canopies, banners, streamers, clothing, and music, or even simply pressing their palms together in reverence; Medicine King, you should know that such people have already made offerings to ten myriads of millions of Buddhas. At the place of those Buddhas, they fulfilled great vows, and out of pity for living beings, they have been born in this human world.

Medicine King! If anyone asks, What kind of living beings will become Buddhas in the future world? You should show them: These very people will definitely become Buddhas in the future world. Why is this? If good men and good women receive, hold, read, recite, explain, and copy even one phrase of the Lotus Sutra, and make various offerings to the Sutra roll with flowers, incense, necklaces, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, silken canopies, banners, streamers, clothing, music, and press their palms together in reverence, these people should be looked up to and served by all the world. They should be made offerings to just as one makes offerings to the Tathagata. You should know that these people are great Bodhisattvas who have accomplished Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Pitying living beings, they vowed to be born here to broadly expound and distinguish the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra. How much more so for those who can fully receive, hold, and make various offerings to it?

Medicine King! You should know that these people renounce the reward of their pure deeds and, after my extinction, out of pity for living beings, are born in the evil world to broadly expound this Sutra. If these good men or good women, after my extinction, are able to secretly preach the Lotus Sutra to one person, even one phrase, you should know that these people are envoys of the Tathagata, sent by the Tathagata to perform the Tathagata's work. How much more so for those who broadly preach to people in the great assembly?

Medicine King! If there is an evil person who, with an unwholesome mind, appears before the Buddha for a whole kalpa and constantly scolds and abuses the Buddha, his offense is still light. But if a person, with a single evil word, defames those at home or who have left home who read and recite the Lotus Sutra, his offense is extremely heavy.

Medicine King! As to those who read and recite the Lotus Sutra, you should know that these people adorn themselves with the Buddha's adornments, and they are carried on the shoulder of the Tathagata. Wherever they go, one should face them and salute, pressing palms together with a single mind, respecting and making offerings to them, honoring and praising them. Flowers, incense, necklaces, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, silken canopies, banners, streamers, clothing, delicacies, and various kinds of music, the finest offerings among humans, should be used to make offerings to them. Heavenly treasures should be scattered upon them, and heaps of heavenly treasures should be offered. Why is this? Because these people delight in preaching the Dharma, and if one hears it for a moment, one will immediately attain ultimate Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If one wishes to dwell in the Buddha Way
And accomplish spontaneous wisdom,
He should constantly and diligently make offerings
To those who receive and hold the Lotus Sutra.
If one wishes to quickly obtain
The Wisdom of All Modes,
He should receive and hold this Sutra
And make offerings to those who hold it.
If one is able to receive and hold
The Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra,
Know that he is the Buddha's envoy,
Thinking of and pitying living beings.
Those who are able to receive and hold
The Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra,
Discard the pure lands,
And out of pity for the multitudes are born here.
Know that such people
Are free to be born where they desire,
And are able, in this evil world,
To broadly preach the Unsurpassed Dharma.
One should use heavenly flowers and incense,
And heavenly jeweled clothing,
And heaps of wonderful heavenly jewels,
To make offerings to the preachers of the Dharma.

In the evil world after my extinction,
Those who can hold this Sutra
Should be worshipped with palms pressed together,
Just as one makes offerings to the World Honored One.
Superior delicacies and all things sweet and beautiful,
And various kinds of clothing,
Should be offered to these sons of the Buddha,
In hopes of hearing it for a moment.
If one is able in a future age
To receive and hold this Sutra,
I send him to be among people
To perform the Tathagata's work.
If, for one kalpa,
One constantly harbors an unwholesome mind,
And with an angry expression abuses the Buddha,
He incurs immeasurable heavy guilt.
But if someone reads, recites, and holds
This Lotus Sutra,
And one abuses him with evil words for a moment,
His guilt exceeds the former.
If there is someone seeking the Buddha Way
Who, for one kalpa,
Presses his palms together before me
And praises me with countless verses,
Because of this praise of the Buddha,
He obtains immeasurable merit.
But if one praises those who hold the Sutra,
His blessings exceed the former.
Throughout eighty million kalpas,
With the most wonderful forms and sounds,
And with scents, flavors, and touch,
Make offerings to those who hold the Sutra.
Having made such offerings,
If one can hear it for a moment,
Then he should rejoice and congratulate himself,
Saying, I have now gained great benefit.
Medicine King, I now tell you,
Of all the various sutras I have preached,
Among all these sutras,
The Lotus is the foremost.

At that time the Buddha again spoke to the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Medicine King: The classic sutras I preach are immeasurable thousands of millions; those already preached, those being preached now, and those to be preached in the future. Yet among them, this Lotus Sutra is the most difficult to believe and the most difficult to understand.

Medicine King! This Sutra is the secret essential storehouse of the Buddhas; it cannot be distributed or recklessly given to people. It is guarded by the Buddhas, World Honored Ones, and from the past until now has never been explicitly preached. And this Sutra, while the Tathagata is currently present, brings much enmity and jealousy; how much more so after his extinction?

Medicine King! You should know that after the Tathagata's extinction, those who are able to copy, hold, read, recite, make offerings to, and preach it for others, the Tathagata will cover them with his robe, and they will also be protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas of other directions currently present. These people possess great power of faith, the power of vows, and the power of goodness. You should know that these people share a lodging with the Tathagata, and the Tathagata rubs their heads with his hand.

Medicine King! In any place whatsoever, if it is preached, read, recited, copied, or wherever the Sutra roll dwells, one should erect a stupa of the seven jewels, making it extremely high, wide, and adorned. There is no need to place relics inside it. Why is this? Because the whole body of the Tathagata is already within it. This stupa should be made offerings to, revered, honored, and praised with all kinds of flowers, incense, necklaces, silken canopies, banners, streamers, music, and songs. If there are people who can see this stupa and bow and make offerings to it, know that they are all close to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Medicine King! There are many people, at home or left home, who practice the Bodhisattva Way. If they are not able to see, hear, read, recite, copy, hold, and make offerings to this Lotus Sutra, know that these people have not yet skillfully practiced the Bodhisattva Way. If there are those who get to hear this Sutra, then they are able to skillfully practice the Bodhisattva Way. If there are living beings seeking the Buddha Way who see or hear this Lotus Sutra, and having heard it, believe, understand, receive, and hold it, know that these people have gained nearness to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Medicine King! It is like a person who is thirsty and in need of water. He digs on a high plateau seeking it. As long as he sees dry earth, he knows the water is still far away. But if he exerts himself without ceasing, and eventually sees moist earth and gradually reaches mud, his mind is decided; he knows the water must be near. The Bodhisattva is also like this. If he has not heard, understood, or been able to cultivate this Lotus Sutra, know that this person is still far from Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. If he gets to hear, understand, ponder, and cultivate it, he certainly knows he is close to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Why is this? Because the Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi of all Bodhisattvas belongs to this Sutra. This Sutra opens the gate of expedient devices and reveals the characteristic of true reality. The storehouse of this Lotus Sutra

is deep, solid, hidden, and far-reaching; no one can reach it. Now the Buddha, teaching, converting, and perfecting Bodhisattvas, opens and reveals it.

Medicine King! If a Bodhisattva hears this Lotus Sutra and is startled, doubtful, or fearful, know that he is a newly inspired Bodhisattva. If a Voice-Hearer hears this Sutra and is startled, doubtful, or fearful, know that he is a person of overbearing arrogance.

Medicine King! If there are good men and good women who, after the Tathagata's extinction, wish to preach this Lotus Sutra for the four assemblies, how should they preach it? These good men and good women should enter the Tathagata's room, put on the Tathagata's robe, and sit on the Tathagata's seat; only then should they broadly preach this Sutra for the four assemblies. The Tathagata's room is the mind of great compassion for all living beings. The Tathagata's robe is the mind of gentleness and patience. The Tathagata's seat is the emptiness of all laws. Dwelling securely in these, then with an untiring mind, one should broadly preach this Lotus Sutra for the Bodhisattvas and the four assemblies.

Medicine King! I will send transformation people from other countries to gather an assembly of listeners for him, and I will also send transformation bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, and upasikas to listen to his preaching of the Dharma. These transformation people, hearing the Dharma, will believe and accept it, and conform to it without opposition. If the preacher is in a quiet, empty place, I will send gods, dragons, ghosts, spirits, gandharvas, asuras, and others to listen to his preaching. Although I am in another country, I will from time to time enable the preacher to see my body. If he forgets phrases or punctuation of this Sutra, I will tell him and enable him to possess it fully.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If you wish to discard all laziness,
You should listen to this Sutra.
This Sutra is difficult to get to hear,
And those who believe and accept it are also rare.
Like a person thirsty and needing water
Who digs on a high plateau;
Still seeing dry earth,
He knows the water is yet far away.
Gradually seeing wet earth and mud,
He decides and knows the water is near.
Medicine King, you should know!
People such as these,
If they do not hear the Lotus Sutra,
Are very far from the Buddha wisdom.
If they hear this profound Sutra,

Which determines the Dharma of the Voice-Hearer,
This is the King of Sutras;
Hearing it and pondering it carefully,
Know that such people
Are close to the Buddha wisdom.
If a person preaches this Sutra,
He should enter the Tathagata's room,
Put on the Tathagata's robe,
And sit on the Tathagata's seat.
Dwelling in the multitude without fear,
Broadly distinguishing and preaching it.
Great compassion is the room,
Gentleness and patience are the robe,
The emptiness of all laws is the seat;
Taking this position, preach the Dharma.
If, when preaching this Sutra,
Someone abuses him with evil mouth,
Or adds swords, staffs, tiles, and stones,
Thinking of the Buddha, he should endure it.
In thousands of millions of lands,
I manifest a pure, firm body,
And throughout immeasurable millions of kalpas,
Preach the Dharma for living beings.
If, after my extinction,
There is one who can preach this Sutra,
I will send the four transformation assemblies,
Bhikshus and bhikshunis,
And pure believing men and women,
To make offerings to the Dharma teacher,
Leading living beings
To gather and listen to the Dharma.
If someone wishes to add evil
With swords, staffs, tiles, and stones,
I will send transformation people
To act as guards and protection for him.
If the person who preaches the Dharma
Is alone in a quiet, empty place,
In silence with no human sound,
Reading and reciting this Sutra,
I will at that time manifest
My pure and radiant body.
If he forgets a chapter or sentence,

I will tell him so he can communicate it fluently.
If a person possesses such virtue,
Whether preaching to the four assemblies
Or reading and reciting the Sutra in an empty place,
He will be able to see my body.
If the person is in a quiet, empty place,
I will send gods and dragon kings,
Yakshas, ghosts, spirits, and others,
To act as an assembly listening to the Dharma.
This person will delight in preaching the Dharma,
Distinguishing it without obstruction.
Because the Buddhas protect and keep him in mind,
He is able to cause the great assembly to rejoice.
If one draws near to this Dharma teacher,
He will quickly obtain the Bodhisattva Way.
If one follows this teacher and learns,
He will see Buddhas numerous as the Ganges sands.

BEHOLDING THE JEWELLED STUPA

At that time, a stupa of the seven jewels, five hundred yojanas high and two hundred and fifty yojanas wide and deep, rose out of the earth before the Buddha and hung in the air, adorned with various kinds of precious objects. It had five thousand railings, ten million niches and chambers, and was decorated with countless banners and streamers. Jewel necklaces hung down, and ten thousand million jeweled bells were suspended from the top. From all four sides came the fragrance of Tamalapattra sandalwood, filling the world. The banners and canopies were composed of the seven jewels, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, agate, pearl, and carnelian, reaching up to the palaces of the Four Heavenly Kings. The gods of the Trayastrimsa Heaven rained down heavenly Mandarava flowers as an offering to the precious stupa. The other gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, non-humans, and others, a multitude of thousands of millions, made offerings to the precious stupa with all kinds of flowers, incense, necklaces, banners, canopies, and music, revering, honoring, and praising it.

At that time, a great voice issued from the precious stupa, praising and saying: Excellent, excellent! Shakyamuni, World Honored One! You are able to preach to the great assembly the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra, the Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, which is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas, using great wisdom of equality. Just so, just so! Shakyamuni, World Honored One! All that you preach is true.

At that time the four assemblies, seeing the great precious stupa dwelling in the air and hearing the voice issuing from the stupa, obtained Dharma-joy and marveled at what they had never had before. They rose from their seats, respectfully pressed their palms together, and withdrew to one side.

At that time there was a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva named Great Delight in Preaching, who knew the doubts in the minds of the gods, humans, and asuras of all the worlds. He said to the Buddha: World Honored One! For what cause and condition has this precious stupa risen from the earth, and why does this voice issue from within it?

At that time the Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Great Delight in Preaching: In this precious stupa is the whole body of a Tathagata. Long ago in the past, countless thousands of millions of asamkhyeya worlds to the east, there was a country named Jewel Pure. In that land was a Buddha named Many Treasures. When that Buddha was practicing the Bodhisattva Way, he made a great vow: If I become a Buddha, after my extinction, in any land in the ten directions where the Lotus Sutra is preached, my stupa shall rise up and appear before that place in order to listen to the Sutra, to offer proof, and to praise it, saying, Excellent!

After that Buddha attained the Way, when he was on the point of extinction, he said to the bhikshus in the great assembly of gods and humans: After my extinction, if anyone wishes to make offerings to my whole body, he should erect a great stupa. By that Buddha's supernatural power

and the power of his vow, throughout the worlds of the ten directions, wherever anyone preaches the Lotus Sutra, his precious stupa rises up and appears before them, with his whole body in the stupa, praising and saying: Excellent, excellent!

Great Delight in Preaching! Now, because the Many Treasures Tathagata stupa heard the preaching of the Lotus Sutra, it has risen up from the earth and praised, saying: Excellent, excellent!

At that time the Bodhisattva Great Delight in Preaching, relying on the spiritual power of the Tathagata, said to the Buddha: World Honored One! We earnestly wish to see this Buddha's body.

The Buddha said to the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Great Delight in Preaching: This Many Treasures Buddha has a profound and heavy vow: When my precious stupa appears before the Buddhas for the sake of listening to the Lotus Sutra, if there is anyone who wishes to show my body to the four assemblies, let the emanations of that Buddha, the Buddhas preaching the Dharma in the worlds of the ten directions, all return and gather in one place; only then shall my body appear.

Great Delight in Preaching! My emanation Buddhas, who are preaching the Dharma in the worlds of the ten directions, should now gather together.

Great Delight in Preaching said to the Buddha: World Honored One! We also earnestly wish to see the emanation Buddhas of the World Honored One, to bow and make offerings to them.

At that time the Buddha emitted a ray of light from the white tuft of hair between his eyebrows, immediately revealing five hundred myriad million nayuta Ganges sands of lands in the east. The earth of those lands was all made of crystal, adorned with jewel trees and jewel clothing. Countless thousands of millions of Bodhisattvas filled them. Jewel curtains were spread everywhere, and jewel nets covered the top. The Buddhas of those countries preached the Dharma with great, wonderful voices, and one could see immeasurable thousands of millions of Bodhisattvas filling those countries, preaching the Dharma for the multitudes. In the south, west, north, the four intermediate directions, and the upper and lower regions, wherever the light of the white hair-tuft shone, it was also like this.

At that time the Buddhas of the ten directions each addressed their multitude of Bodhisattvas, saying: Good men! I must now go to the Saha world, to the place of Shakyamuni Buddha, and make offerings to the precious stupa of Many Treasures Tathagata.

Then the Saha world immediately changed and became pure. The ground was lapis lazuli, adorned with jewel trees. Gold ropes marked the boundaries of the eight roads. There were no villages, towns, cities, oceans, rivers, mountains, streams, or forests. Great precious incense was burned, and Mandarava flowers were spread all over the ground. Jewel nets and curtains covered the top,

with precious bells suspended from them. Only the assembly gathered here remained; the other gods and humans were moved to other lands.

At that time, the Buddhas, each bringing one great Bodhisattva as an attendant, arrived in the Saha world and went to the foot of a jewel tree. Each jewel tree was five hundred yojanas high, adorned with branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits in proper order. Under all the jewel trees were lion seats, five yojanas high, also decorated with great jewels. At that time, the Buddhas each sat cross-legged on these seats. In this way, they filled the entire thousand-million-fold world, yet the emanations of Shakyamuni Buddha from just one direction were not yet exhausted.

Then Shakyamuni Buddha, in order to accommodate his emanation Buddhas, again transformed two hundred myriad million nayuta lands in each of the eight directions, making them all pure, without hells, hungry ghosts, animals, or asuras, and moving the gods and humans to other lands. The transformed lands also had lapis lazuli for soil and were adorned with jewel trees five hundred yojanas high, decorated with branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits in proper order. Under the trees were jeweled lion seats five yojanas high, adorned with various kinds of gems. There were also no great oceans, rivers, or any of the kingly mountains such as Mucilinda, Mahamucilinda, Iron Ring, Great Iron Ring, or Sumeru; all became one Buddha land. The jeweled earth was level and straight. Jeweled curtains covered the top, banners and canopies hung down, great precious incense was burned, and heavenly precious flowers covered the ground.

Shakyamuni Buddha, in order that the future Buddhas might sit, again transformed two hundred myriad million nayuta lands in each of the eight directions, making them all pure, without hells, hungry ghosts, animals, or asuras, and moving the gods and humans to other lands. The transformed lands also had lapis lazuli for soil and were adorned with jewel trees five hundred yojanas high, decorated with branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits in proper order. Under the trees were jeweled lion seats five yojanas high, adorned with great jewels. There were also no great oceans, rivers, or any of the kingly mountains such as Mucilinda, Mahamucilinda, Iron Ring, Great Iron Ring, or Sumeru; all became one Buddha land. The jeweled earth was level and straight. Jeweled curtains covered the top, banners and canopies hung down, great precious incense was burned, and heavenly precious flowers covered the ground.

At that time, the emanation bodies of Shakyamuni Buddha from the eastern direction, Buddhas in lands numbering hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas like the Ganges sands, having each preached the Dharma, came and gathered here. In like fashion, the Buddhas from the ten directions all came and gathered, sitting in the eight directions. At that time, each direction was filled with Buddhas, Tathagatas, in four hundred myriad million nayuta lands.

At that time, the Buddhas, each under a jewel tree sitting on a lion seat, sent attendants to inquire after Shakyamuni Buddha. Each carried a double handful of jewel flowers and was told: Good man! Go to Mount Gridhrakuta, to the place of Shakyamuni Buddha, and say as I say: Are your illness and worry slight? Is your energy and strength at ease? Are the Bodhisattvas and Voice-Hearers all

at peace? Scatter these jewel flowers as an offering to the Buddha and say: Such-and-such Buddha wishes to participate in opening this precious stupa. The other Buddhas also sent envoys in the same manner.

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha, seeing that his emanation Buddhas had all gathered and were each sitting on a lion seat, and hearing that the Buddhas all wished to participate in opening the precious stupa, immediately rose from his seat and stood in the air. The four assemblies all rose, pressed their palms together, and gazed at the Buddha with a single mind. Then Shakyamuni Buddha, with the fingers of his right hand, opened the door of the seven-jeweled stupa. A great sound issued forth, like the withdrawing of the bolt to open a great city gate. Immediately, the entire assembly saw Many Treasures Tathagata in the precious stupa, sitting on a lion seat, his whole body undissipated, as if he had entered meditation. And they heard him say: Excellent, excellent! Shakyamuni Buddha! You have joyfully preached this Lotus Sutra. I have come here in order to hear this Sutra.

At that time the four assemblies, seeing a Buddha who had passed into extinction immeasurable thousands of millions of kalpas ago speak such words, marveled at what they had never had before, and scattered heaps of heavenly jewel flowers upon Many Treasures Buddha and Shakyamuni Buddha.

At that time Many Treasures Buddha offered half of his seat in the precious stupa to Shakyamuni Buddha, saying: Shakyamuni Buddha! You may take this seat. Immediately Shakyamuni Buddha entered the stupa, sat on half the seat, and sat cross-legged.

At that time, the great assembly saw the two Tathagatas sitting cross-legged on the lion seat in the seven-jeweled stupa, and each thought: The Buddhas are sitting high and far away. We only pray that the Tathagata will use his spiritual power to enable all of us to dwell in the empty air. Immediately Shakyamuni Buddha used his spiritual power to receive the great assembly, so that they were all in the air. With a great voice, he universally addressed the four assemblies: Who is able to broadly preach the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra in this Saha world? Now is the proper time. The Tathagata will shortly enter Nirvana. The Buddha wishes to entrust this Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra so that it may continue to exist.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

The Holy Lord, the World Honored One,
Though extinct for a long time,
Within the precious stupa,
Still comes for the sake of the Dharma.
Why do people
Not diligently strive for the Dharma?
This Buddha entered extinction

Countless kalpas ago,
Yet in place after place he listens to the Dharma,
Because it is difficult to encounter.
That Buddha's original vow was:
After my extinction,
Wherever I go,
I will constantly listen to the Dharma.
Also, my emanations,
Immeasurable Buddhas
Like the sands of the Ganges,
Have come desiring to hear the Dharma;
And to see the extinct
Many Treasures Tathagata.
Discarding their wonderful lands,
And their multitudes of disciples,
Gods, humans, dragons, and spirits,
And all their offerings,
They have come here
To make the Dharma remain a long time.
In order to seat the Buddhas,
I used spiritual power
To move immeasurable multitudes,
Making the land pure.
The Buddhas each
Go to the foot of a jewel tree;
Like a pure pool
Adorned with lotuses.
Under those jewel trees,
Are various lion seats;
The Buddhas sit upon them,
Bright and adorned,
Like vast torches burning
In the darkness of the night.
Their bodies emit a wonderful fragrance,
Pervading the lands of the ten directions.
Living beings, covered by the scent,
Are unable to contain their joy.
Like a great wind
Blowing the branches of small trees.
By this expedient device,
The Dharma is made to remain a long time.
I say to the great assembly:

After my extinction,
Who is able to guard and hold,
Read and recite this Sutra?
Now in the presence of the Buddha,
Make your own vow.
The Many Treasures Buddha,
Though extinct for a long time,
Because of his great vow,
Roars the lion's roar.
Many Treasures Tathagata,
And I myself,
And the gathered emanation Buddhas,
Should know this intention.
All you Buddha-sons,
Whoever is able to protect the Dharma,
Should make a great vow
To cause it to remain a long time.
Whoever is able to protect
The Dharma of this Sutra,
Is thereby making offerings
To me and Many Treasures.
This Many Treasures Buddha,
Dwelling in the precious stupa,
Constantly travels the ten directions.
For the sake of this Sutra,
One also makes offerings
To the emanation Buddhas who have come here,
Who adorn and illuminate
All the worlds.
If one preaches this Sutra,
One then sees me,
Many Treasures Tathagata,
And the emanation Buddhas.
All good men!
Each of you consider carefully;
This is a difficult matter,
You should make a great vow.
The other classic sutras
Are as numerous as Ganges sands;
Though one preaches those,
It is not regarded as difficult.
If one were to pick up Sumeru

And hurl it to another direction
Across countless Buddha lands,
It would not be regarded as difficult.
If one used a toe
To move a Great Thousand World,
Throwing it far away to another land,
It would not be regarded as difficult.
If one stood on the Summit of Existence
And expounded for the multitudes
Immeasurable other sutras,
It would not be regarded as difficult.
But if after the Buddha's extinction,
In the midst of an evil world,
One is able to preach this Sutra,
This is indeed difficult.
Suppose there were a person
Who grasped the empty sky in his hand
And traveled around with it,
It would not be regarded as difficult.
But after my extinction,
If one writes and holds it oneself,
Or causes others to write it,
This is indeed difficult.
If one took the great earth,
Placed it on a toenail,
And ascended to the Brahma Heaven,
It would not be regarded as difficult.
After the Buddha's extinction,
In the midst of an evil world,
To read this Sutra for a moment,
This is indeed difficult.
Suppose in the fire at the end of the kalpa,
One carried a load of dry grass
And entered without being burned,
It would not be regarded as difficult.
After my extinction,
If one holds this Sutra
And preaches it for one person,
This is indeed difficult.
If one holds the eighty-four thousand
Storehouses of the Dharma,
And the Twelve Divisions of Sutras,

Expounding them to people,
Causing the listeners
To obtain the six transcendental powers,
Though one could do this,
It is not regarded as difficult.
After my extinction,
To listen to and accept this Sutra,
And ask about its meaning,
This is indeed difficult.
If a person preaches the Dharma,
Causing thousands of millions,
Immeasurable, innumerable,
Living beings like Ganges sands,
To become Arhats
Possessing the six transcendental powers,
Though one confers these benefits,
It is not regarded as difficult.
After my extinction,
If one is able to respect and hold
Such a Sutra as this,
This is indeed difficult.
I, for the sake of the Buddha Way,
In immeasurable lands,
From the beginning until now,
Have broadly preached many sutras,
But among them,
This Sutra is the foremost.
If one is able to hold it,
Then he holds the Buddha's body.
All good men!
After my extinction,
Who is able to receive and hold,
Read and recite this Sutra?
Now in the presence of the Buddha,
Make your own vow.
This Sutra is difficult to hold;
If one holds it for a moment,
I will rejoice,
And so will the other Buddhas.
A person such as this
Is praised by the Buddhas.
This is valor,

This is diligence,
This is named keeping the precepts,
And practicing dhuta austerities.
He will quickly obtain
The Unsurpassed Buddha Way.
He who in the future
Can read and hold this Sutra,
Is a true son of the Buddha,
Dwelling in the ground of pure goodness.
After the Buddha's extinction,
He who can understand its meaning,
Is the eye of the gods and humans
Of the world.
In the fearful age,
He who can preach it for a moment,
All gods and humans
Should make offerings to him.

DEVADATTA

At that time the Buddha said to the Bodhisattvas, gods, humans, and the four assemblies: In the past, throughout immeasurable kalpas, I sought the Lotus Sutra without laziness or fatigue. For many kalpas I was constantly a king, making vows to seek Unsurpassed Bodhi, my mind never retreating. Wishing to fulfill the Six Paramitas, I diligently practiced giving, with a mind ungrudging of elephants, horses, the seven precious things, countries, cities, wives, children, slaves, servants, head, eyes, marrow, brains, body, flesh, hands, and feet, not sparing my body or life. At that time the lifespan of the people was immeasurable. For the sake of the Dharma, I abandoned the royal throne, entrusted the government to the crown prince, and beat a drum to proclaim to the four directions, seeking the Dharma: Whoever can preach the Great Vehicle for me, I will serve as his servant for the rest of my life.

At that time a seer came and said to the king: I have a Great Vehicle text named the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra. If you do not disobey me, I will expound it for you. The king, hearing the seer's words, danced with joy. He immediately followed the seer, supplying all his needs, gathering fruit, drawing water, collecting firewood, preparing food, and even using his body as a bed and seat, serving him without fatigue of body or mind. He served in this way for a thousand years. For the sake of the Dharma, he diligently served him so that he lacked nothing.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

I recall the kalpas of the past,
When, to seek the Great Dharma,
Although I was a king of the world,
I did not covet the bliss of the five desires.
Striking a bell, I announced to the four directions:
Whoever possesses the Great Dharma,
If he will explain it to me,
I will be his servant.
At that time the seer Asita
Came and said to the great king:
I have a subtle, wonderful Dharma,
Rare in the world.
If you are able to practice it,
I will preach it for you.
When the king heard the seer's words,
His heart gave rise to great joy.
Immediately he followed the seer,
Supplying whatever was needed.
Gathering firewood, fruits, and melons,
Respectfully giving them at the proper time.

Because he cherished the Wonderful Law,
His body and mind were never weary.
Universally for the sake of living beings,
He diligently sought the Great Dharma,
Not for his own sake,
Nor for the bliss of the five desires.
Therefore, as a great king,
Through diligent seeking, he obtained this Dharma,
And eventually attained Buddhahood;
Therefore I now tell you this.

The Buddha said to the bhikshus: The king at that time was myself, and the seer was the present Devadatta. Because of the good friend Devadatta, I was able to perfect the Six Paramitas, benevolence, compassion, joy, and equanimity, the thirty-two marks, the eighty kinds of excellence, the purple-tinged golden color, the Ten Powers, the Four Fearlessnesses, the Four Methods of Guidance, the Eighteen Unshared Dharmas, and the power of the transcendental way, attaining Equal and Right Enlightenment and broadly saving living beings. All this is due to the good friend Devadatta.

He addressed the four assemblies: After immeasurable kalpas have passed, Devadatta will become a Buddha named God King Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His world will be named Heavenly Way. At that time, God King Buddha will dwell in the world for twenty intermediate kalpas, broadly preaching the Wonderful Dharma for living beings. Living beings numerous as the Ganges sands will obtain the fruit of Arhatship. Immeasurable living beings will generate the Pratyekabuddha mind. Living beings numerous as the Ganges sands will generate the aspiration for the Unsurpassed Way, attaining the Patience of the Non-Birth of Dharmas and reaching the stage of non-retrogression. After the Parinirvana of God King Buddha, the True Dharma will dwell in the world for twenty intermediate kalpas. A stupa of the seven jewels, sixty yojanas high and forty yojanas wide and deep, will be built for his whole-body relics. All the gods and people will make offerings to the wonderful seven-jeweled stupa with mixed flowers, powdered incense, burning incense, paste incense, clothing, necklaces, banners, streamers, jeweled canopies, music, and songs, bowing and paying reverence. Immeasurable living beings will obtain the fruit of Arhatship. Immeasurable living beings will awaken to Pratyekabuddhahood. Inconceivable numbers of living beings will generate the Bodhi mind and reach the stage of non-retrogression.

The Buddha said to the bhikshus: In future ages, if there are good men or good women who hear this Devadatta Chapter of the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra and, with pure hearts, believe and revere it without giving rise to doubt or delusion, they will not fall into the hells, or become hungry ghosts or animals. They will be born before the Buddhas of the ten directions, and in the place where they are born, they will constantly hear this Sutra. If they are born among humans or gods,

they will enjoy extraordinary and wonderful bliss. If they are before a Buddha, they will be born by transformation from a lotus flower.

At that time, a Bodhisattva attendant of Many Treasures World Honored One in the lower region, named Wisdom Accumulation, said to Many Treasures Buddha: We should return to our own land. Shakyamuni Buddha said to Wisdom Accumulation: Good man! Wait a moment. There is a Bodhisattva named Manjusri. You should meet with him and discuss the Wonderful Law, then return to your own land.

At that time Manjusri, sitting on a thousand-petaled lotus flower as large as a carriage wheel, accompanied by Bodhisattvas who also sat on jeweled lotus flowers, rose naturally out of the great ocean from the palace of the Sagara Dragon, and dwelt in the empty air. Proceeding to Mount Gridhrakuta, he descended from the lotus flower and went to the Buddha's place, bowing his head in reverence to the feet of the two World Honored Ones. Having completed his mutual respects, he went to Wisdom Accumulation's place, exchanged greetings, and sat to one side.

Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva asked Manjusri: While you went to the Dragon Palace, how many living beings did you convert?

Manjusri said: Their number is immeasurable, uncalculable; it is not something the mouth can express or the mind can fathom. Wait a moment, and there will be proof. Before he had finished speaking, countless Bodhisattvas sitting on jeweled lotus flowers rose from the ocean, proceeded to Mount Gridhrakuta, and dwelt in the empty air. These Bodhisattvas had all been converted and saved by Manjusri. Possessing the Bodhisattva practices, they discussed the Six Paramitas together. Those who were originally Voice-Hearers preached the practices of the Voice-Hearer in the empty air, but now they all cultivated the Great Vehicle principle of emptiness. Manjusri said to Wisdom Accumulation: Such is the work of teaching and converting in the ocean.

At that time Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva praised him in verse:

Great Wisdom, virtuous and courageous,
You have converted immeasurable multitudes.
Now this great assembly
And I have all seen it.
Expounding the principle of the Real Mark,
Opening and elucidating the One Vehicle Dharma,
Broadly guiding living beings,
Causing them to quickly attain Bodhi.

Manjusri said: Within the ocean, I only constantly proclaimed the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra.

Wisdom Accumulation asked Manjusri: This Sutra is extremely deep, subtle and wonderful, a jewel among sutras, rare in the world. Is there any living being who, by diligently and energetically practicing this Sutra, can quickly attain Buddhahood?

Manjusri said: There is the daughter of the Dragon King Sagara, just eight years old. She is wise and has keen faculties, knowing well the faculties and actions of living beings. She has attained dharani, and is able to receive and hold all the extremely profound secret storehouses preached by the Buddhas. She has deeply entered meditation and thoroughly penetrated all laws. In a kshana, she generated the Bodhi mind and attained the stage of non-retrogression. Her eloquence is unhindered. She pities living beings as if they were her newborn children. Her merits are complete. What she thinks in her mind and speaks with her mouth is subtle, wonderful, and vast. She is compassionate, benevolent, and yielding; her will and intention are harmonious and refined. She is capable of attaining Bodhi.

Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva said: I have seen Shakyamuni Tathagata, who for immeasurable kalpas practiced difficult and austere practices, accumulating merit and piling up virtue, seeking the Bodhi Way without ever resting. Observing the three thousand great thousand worlds, there is not a place the size of a mustard seed where he has not abandoned his body and life for the sake of living beings; only after that did he attain the Bodhi Way. I do not believe that this girl can achieve Right Enlightenment in the space of a moment.

Before the discussion was finished, the dragon king's daughter suddenly appeared in front of them, bowed her head in reverence, and withdrew to one side, praising in verse:

Deeply penetrating the signs of guilt and merit,
Illuminating the ten directions everywhere,
The subtle, wonderful, pure Dharma Body,
Possessing the thirty-two marks,
With the eighty kinds of excellence
Adorning the Dharma Body.
Honored and looked up to by gods and humans,
Revered by dragons and spirits,
Of all species of living beings,
None fail to respect and serve him.
Hearing that I will attain Bodhi,
Only the Buddha can testify to it.
I elucidate the Great Vehicle teaching
To save and liberate suffering living beings.

At that time Sariputra said to the dragon girl: You say that before long you will attain the Unsurpassed Way; this is difficult to believe. Why is this? The female body is defiled and is not a vessel for the Dharma. How can you attain Unsurpassed Bodhi? The Buddha Way is remote and

vast; only after diligent suffering and accumulating practices for immeasurable kalpas, completely cultivating the various paramitas, can it be attained. Moreover, a woman's body still has five obstacles: first, she cannot become a Brahma Heaven King; second, King Sakra; third, King Mara; fourth, a Wheel-Turning Sage King; fifth, a Buddha body. How can a woman's body quickly attain Buddhahood?

At that time the dragon girl had a precious jewel, worth the three thousand great thousand worlds, which she held up and offered to the Buddha. The Buddha immediately accepted it. The dragon girl said to Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva and the Venerable Sariputra: I offered the precious jewel, and the World Honored One accepted it; was this quick or not?

They answered: Very quick.

The girl said: Use your spiritual powers to watch me attain Buddhahood; it will be even quicker than that.

At that time, the entire assembly saw the dragon girl suddenly change into a man, perfect the Bodhisattva practices, immediately proceed to the Spotless World in the south, sit on a jeweled lotus flower, and attain Equal and Right Enlightenment, with the thirty-two marks and eighty kinds of excellence, universally preaching the Wonderful Dharma for all living beings in the ten directions.

At that time, in the Saha world, the Bodhisattvas, Voice-Hearers, gods, dragons, the eight divisions, humans, and non-humans all saw from afar that dragon girl become a Buddha and universally preach the Dharma to the humans and gods of that assembly. They rejoiced greatly and all paid reverence from afar. Immeasurable living beings, hearing the Dharma, understood and awakened, reaching the stage of non-retrogression. Immeasurable living beings received the prediction of the Way. The Spotless World trembled in six ways. In the Saha world, three thousand living beings dwelt in the stage of non-retrogression, and three thousand living beings generated the Bodhi mind and received the prediction. Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva, Sariputra, and the entire assembly silently believed and accepted.

ENCOURAGING DEVOTION

At that time the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Medicine King and the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Great Delight in Preaching, together with a retinue of twenty thousand Bodhisattvas, all made this vow before the Buddha: We only pray the World Honored One will not be concerned. After the Buddha's extinction, we will revere, hold, read, recite, and preach this classic. In the evil age to come, living beings will have fewer good roots; they will be extremely arrogant, greedy for profit and offerings, increasing their unwholesome roots, and distancing themselves from liberation. Although they are difficult to teach and convert, we will generate the power of great patience, read and recite this Sutra, hold, preach, and copy it, and make various offerings to it, not sparing our bodies or lives.

At that time, the five hundred Arhats in the assembly who had received the prediction said to the Buddha: World Honored One! We also make a vow ourselves, that in other lands we will broadly preach this Sutra.

Furthermore, eight thousand learners and adepts who had received the prediction rose from their seats, pressed their palms together facing the Buddha, and made this vow: World Honored One! We also will broadly preach this Sutra in other lands. Why is this? In this Saha country, people are mostly corrupt and evil, harboring overbearing arrogance, their merits shallow and thin, angry, turbid, flattering, and crooked, their hearts untrue.

At that time the Buddha's maternal aunt, the Bhikshuni Mahaprajapati, together with six thousand bhikshunis, both learners and adepts, rose from their seats, pressed their palms together with a single mind, and gazed up at the Honored One's countenance without turning their eyes away. At that time the World Honored One said to Gautami: Why do you look at the Tathagata with a sorrowful expression? Are you not thinking that I have not mentioned your name to confer the prophecy of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi? Gautami! I previously made a general statement that all Voice-Hearers had received the prediction. Now if you wish to know your prediction, in a future age, within the Dharma of sixty-eight thousand million Buddhas, you will be a great Dharma teacher, and the six thousand learners and adept bhikshunis will all accompany you as Dharma teachers. You will thus gradually perfect the Bodhisattva Way and become a Buddha named Looking with Joy on All Living Beings Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. Gautami! This Looking with Joy on All Living Beings Buddha and the six thousand Bodhisattvas will receive the prediction of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi in sequence.

At that time Rahula's mother, the Bhikshuni Yasodhara, thought: The World Honored One, in bestowing predictions, has left only my name unsaid.

The Buddha said to Yasodhara: In a future age, within the Dharma of hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas, you will cultivate the Bodhisattva practices, become a great Dharma teacher, and gradually perfect the Buddha Way. In the country Good, you will become a Buddha named Replete with Ten Million Radiant Marks Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. The lifespan of that Buddha will be immeasurable asamkhyeya kalpas.

At that time the Bhikshuni Mahaprajapati and the Bhikshuni Yasodhara, together with their retinues, all rejoiced greatly, attaining what they never had before. Immediately, before the Buddha, they spoke in verse:

World Honored One, Guide and Teacher,
Bring peace and security to gods and humans.
We have heard the prediction,
And our hearts are peaceful and satisfied.

Having spoken this verse, the bhikshunis said to the Buddha: World Honored One! We are also able to broadly proclaim this Sutra in lands in other directions.

At that time the World Honored One looked upon the eighty myriads of millions of nayutas of Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas. These Bodhisattvas were all Avaivartikas, who turned the un-retreating Dharma wheel and had obtained various dharanis. They immediately rose from their seats, went before the Buddha, pressed their palms together with a single mind, and thought: If the World Honored One commands us to hold and preach this Sutra, we will broadly proclaim this Dharma according to the Buddha's teaching. They further thought: The Buddha is silent now and gives no command. What shall we do? Then the Bodhisattvas, reverently complying with the Buddha's will and wishing to fulfill their own original vows, roared the lion's roar before the Buddha and made a vow, saying: World Honored One! After the Tathagata's extinction, we will travel round and round the worlds of the ten directions to enable living beings to copy this Sutra, receive, hold, read, and recite it, explain its meaning, practice it according to the Dharma, and keep it properly in mind; all this by the awesome power of the Buddha. We only pray the World Honored One, dwelling in other directions, will watch over and protect us from afar.

Immediately the Bodhisattvas raised their voices together and spoke in verse:

We only pray you will not be concerned.
After the Buddha's extinction,
In the dreadful evil age,
We will broadly preach it.
There will be ignorant people
Who will abuse and curse us with evil mouths,

And even beat us with knives and staffs;
We will endure all of this.
Bhikshus in the evil age
Will be wildly wise, their hearts flattering and crooked,
Claiming to have attained what they have not,
Their minds full of arrogance.
Or there may be those in the aranya,
Wearing patched robes in empty places,
Claiming they walk the true path,
Looking down on the human world.
Because they are greedy for profit and support,
They preach the Dharma to white-robed laymen,
And are respected by the world
Like Arhats with the six transcendental powers.
These people protect evil thoughts,
Constantly thinking of worldly affairs,
Assuming the name of aranya,
Delighting in exposing our faults.
They will say things like this:
These bhikshus,
Because of greed for profit and support,
Preach the doctrines of heretics;
They have composed this sutra themselves
To deceive and confuse the people of the world;
For the sake of seeking fame,
They make distinctions about this sutra.
Constantly in the great assemblies,
Wishing to ruin and defame us,
Before kings and ministers,
Brahmins and householders,
And the other multitudes of bhikshus,
They will slander and speak evil of us,
Saying, These are people of wrong views
Who preach the doctrines of heretics.
Because we respect the Buddha,
We will endure all these evils.
Though we will be mocked with words like,
You are all Buddhas!
All such words of scorn and arrogance,
We will endure and accept.
In the muddy kalpa, the evil age,
There will be many fearful things.

Evil ghosts will enter their bodies
To curse, abuse, and insult us.
We, respecting and believing the Buddha,
Will put on the armor of patience.
For the sake of preaching this Sutra,
We will endure these difficult things.
We do not cherish bodily life,
We only regret the Unsurpassed Way.
In the future age,
We will guard and hold the Buddha's entrustment;
The World Honored One himself must know.
The evil bhikshus of the muddy world,
Not knowing the Buddha's expedient devices,
Or the Dharma preached according to what is appropriate,
Will frown and scold with evil mouths,
And repeatedly banish us,
Far away from the stupas and temples.
All such diverse evils,
Thinking of the Buddha's command,
We will endure all these things.
Wherever there are those who seek the Dharma,
In villages, cities, and towns,
We will all go to that place
And preach the Dharma entrusted by the Buddha.
We are the envoys of the World Honored One,
Dwelling in the multitude without fear.
We will skillfully preach the Dharma;
We wish the Buddha to dwell in peace.
Before the World Honored One,
And the Buddhas who have come from the ten directions,
We make such a vow as this;
The Buddha himself knows our hearts.

PEACEFUL PRACTICES

At that time the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Manjusri, the Dharma Prince, said to the Buddha: World Honored One! These Bodhisattvas are extremely rare. Because they respectfully obey the Buddha, they have made great vows to guard, hold, read, and recite this Lotus Sutra in the evil age hereafter. World Honored One! How are the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas to preach this Sutra in the evil age hereafter?

The Buddha said to Manjusri: If a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva wishes to preach this Sutra in the evil age hereafter, he should dwell securely in four dharmas. First, by dwelling in the Bodhisattva's sphere of action and sphere of intimacy, he will be able to expound this Sutra for living beings.

Manjusri! What is the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva's sphere of action? If a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva dwells in the ground of patience, is gentle and agreeable, capable of adhering to goodness without impetuosity or volatility, and if his mind is unalarmed; furthermore, if he performs no action regarding the dharmas, but observes the true reality of all dharmas, neither acting nor making discriminations; this is named the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva's sphere of action.

What is the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva's sphere of intimacy? A Bodhisattva-Mahasattva does not approach kings, princes, ministers, or senior officials. He does not approach externalist Brahmins, Nirgranthas, and the like, nor does he compose worldly literature, verses praising externalist writings, nor the Lokayatas or anti-Lokayatas. He does not approach those involved in dangerous games, boxing, wrestling, or the various plays of natas and others. He does not approach chandalas, or those who keep pigs, sheep, chickens, or dogs, or those who hunt or fish, or those involved in other evil distinct lifestyles. If such people come to him, he preaches the Dharma for them but expects nothing. He does not approach bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, or upasikas who seek to be Voice-Hearers, nor does he greet them. He does not dwell with them in a room, on a walking path, or in a lecture hall. If they come to him, he preaches the Dharma according to what is appropriate, but seeks nothing.

Manjusri! Furthermore, a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva should not preach the Dharma to a woman by manifesting an appearance capable of arousing desire, nor should he delight in seeing her. If he enters another's house, he does not speak with young girls, maidens, or widows. He also does not draw near to the five kinds of unmanly men to become close friends with them. He does not enter another's house alone; if there are causes and conditions whereby he must enter alone, he should single-mindedly think of the Buddha. If he preaches the Dharma for a woman, he does not smile with bared teeth or expose his chest; he should not even become intimate for the sake of the Dharma, how much less for other matters. He does not delight in keeping young disciples, sramaneras, or children, nor does he delight in sharing a master with them. He constantly delights

in sitting in meditation, and in a quiet place he cultivates and collects his mind. Manjusri! This is named the first sphere of intimacy.

Furthermore, a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva views all dharmas as empty, as the true aspect, not inverted, not moving, not retreating, not turning, like empty space, without distinct nature. All paths of language are cut off; they are unborn, unappearing, unarising, without name, without mark, in reality non-existent, immeasurable, boundless, without hindrance, and without obstruction. They exist only through causes and conditions and are born from inversion; therefore, he speaks. He constantly delights in observing such characteristics of dharmas. This is named the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva's second sphere of intimacy.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If there are Bodhisattvas,
In the evil age hereafter,
With fearless minds,
Wishing to preach this Sutra,
They should enter the sphere of action
And the sphere of intimacy.
Constant separation from kings,
And princes of kingdoms,
Ministers and senior officials,
Performers of dangerous games,
And chandalas,
Externalist Brahmins.
They should also not draw near
To people of overbearing arrogance,
Those who greedily attach to the Lesser Vehicle,
Scholars of the Tripitaka,
Bhikshus who break the precepts,
Arhats in name only,
And bhikshunis
Who delight in playful laughter,
Who are deeply attached to the five desires,
Seeking extinction in the present.
All such upasikas,
They should not draw near.
If these people
Come with good hearts
To the Bodhisattva's place
To hear the Buddha Way,
The Bodhisattva then,

With a fearless mind,
Harboring no expectation,
Should preach the Dharma for them.
Widows and maidens,
And all unmanly men,
He should not draw near to,
Nor become close friends with.
He likewise should not draw near
To butchers and flesh-mincers,
Those who hunt or fish,
Killing and harming for profit,
Those who sell meat for a living,
Or those who display and sell female beauty;
All such people as these,
He should not draw near.
Dangerous wrestlers,
Various kinds of plays and games,
And all prostitutes,
He should strictly not draw near.
He should not, in a screened-off place,
Preach the Dharma alone for a woman.
When preaching the Dharma,
He should not jest or laugh.
When entering a village to beg for food,
He should take a bhikshu along;
If there is no bhikshu,
He should single-mindedly think of the Buddha.
These are named
The sphere of action and sphere of intimacy.
By means of these two spheres,
He is able to preach with peace and delight.
Furthermore, he does not practice
Superior, medium, or inferior dharmas,
Conditioned or unconditioned,
Real or unreal dharmas.
He also does not discriminate
Whether it is man or woman.
Not obtaining any dharmas,
Not knowing and not seeing,
This is named
The Bodhisattva's sphere of action.
All dharmas

Are empty, without existence,
Without permanence,
And without arising or extinction.
This is named the place of intimacy
For the wise one.
Inverted discrimination,
That dharmas exist or do not exist,
Are real or not real,
Are born or not born.
Dwelling in a quiet place,
Cultivating and collecting his mind,
Resting securely and unmoving,
Like Mount Sumeru.
Observing all dharmas
As having no existence,
Like empty space,
Without any solidity,
Unborn, unappearing,
Unmoving, unretreating,
Constantly abiding as a single mark,
This is named the sphere of intimacy.
If there is a bhikshu,
After my extinction,
Who enters this sphere of action
And sphere of intimacy,
When he preaches this Sutra,
He will have no cowardice or weakness.
The Bodhisattva at times
Enters a quiet room,
And with correct mindfulness,
Observes dharmas according to their meaning.
Arising from meditation,
For the sake of kings,
Princes, ministers, and people,
Brahmins and others,
He enlightens, converts, and expounds,
Preaching this classic Sutra.
His mind is peaceful and secure,
Without cowardice or weakness.
Manjusri!
This is named the Bodhisattva
Resting securely in the first dharma,

Able, in the future age,
To preach the Lotus Sutra.

Furthermore, Manjusri! After the Tathagata's extinction, if one wishes to preach this Sutra in the degenerate age of the Dharma, one should dwell in the practice of peace and delight. Whether preaching orally or reading the Sutra, one should not delight in speaking of the faults of people or the classics. One should not hold other Dharma teachers in light esteem, nor speak of others' good or evil, strengths or weaknesses. Regarding Voice-Hearers, one should not call them by name to speak of their faults or evils, nor should one call them by name to praise their beauty. One should also not generate thoughts of resentment or jealousy. Because one cultivates such a peaceful and delightful mind, those who listen will not oppose one's intent. If there are difficult questions, one should not answer with the Dharma of the Small Vehicle, but explain using only the Great Vehicle, causing them to obtain the Wisdom of All Modes.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

The Bodhisattva constantly delights
In preaching the Dharma peacefully.
In a clean and pure ground,
He sets out his seat and bed.
Anointing his body with oil,
Washing away dust and filth,
Wearing new, clean clothes,
Clean both inside and out.
Sitting peacefully on the Dharma seat,
He preaches in response to questions.
If there are bhikshus
And bhikshunis,
Upasakas
And upasikas,
Kings and princes,
Ministers, scholars, and common people,
With subtle and wonderful meanings,
And a harmonious countenance, he preaches for them.
If there are difficult questions,
He answers according to the meaning,
Using causes, conditions, and similes
To expound and make distinctions.
By these expedient devices,
He causes them all to generate the mind,
Gradually increasing their benefits,
And entering the Buddha Way.

Eliminating lazy thoughts
And ideas of negligence,
Separating from all worries and afflictions,
He preaches the Dharma with a compassionate mind.
Day and night he constantly expounds
The teachings of the Unsurpassed Way,
Using various causes and conditions
And immeasurable similes
To open and show them to living beings,
Causing them all to rejoice.
Clothing and bedding,
Drink, food, and medicine;
Among such things,
He has no expectation.
He only single-mindedly thinks
Of the causes and conditions for preaching the Dharma,
Wishing to attain the Buddha Way,
And causing the multitude to do likewise.
This is the great benefit,
The offering of peace and delight.
After my extinction,
If there is a bhikshu
Who is able to expound this
Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra,
His mind free of jealousy and anger,
Without the hindrance of afflictions,
Also without sorrow or worry,
And without those who abuse him,
Having no fear
Of swords, staffs, and the like,
And no banishment,
Because he dwells in patience.
A wise person such as this
Cultivates his mind well,
And is able to dwell in peace and delight,
As I have described above.
That person's merit,
Over thousands of millions of kalpas,
Calculated or described with similes,
Could not be exhausted.

Furthermore, Manjusri! In the future evil age when the Dharma is about to perish, the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva who receives, holds, reads, and recites this classic Sutra should not harbor a mind of jealousy, flattery, or deceit. He should also not slight or abuse those who study the Buddha Way, seeking their strengths and weaknesses. If there are bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, or upasikas seeking to be Voice-Hearers, seeking to be Pratyekabuddhas, or seeking the Bodhisattva Way, he should not torment them, causing them to doubt and regret, saying to them: You are very far from the Way, and you will never be able to obtain the Wisdom of All Modes. Why is this? Because you are dissolute people who are lazy in the Way. Furthermore, he should not engage in frivolous debates about the dharmas, leading to contention. He should generate thoughts of great compassion for all living beings, thoughts of a compassionate father for the Tathagatas, and thoughts of a great teacher for the Bodhisattvas. Regarding the great Bodhisattvas of the ten directions, he should constantly harbor deep reverence and pay homage to them. He should preach the Dharma equally to all living beings. In accordance with the Dharma, he should not preach too much or too little; even for those who deeply love the Dharma, he should not preach too much.

Manjusri! In the future evil age when the Dharma is about to perish, if a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva accomplishes this third peaceful practice, when he preaches this Dharma, no one will be able to trouble or confuse him. He will find good fellow students to read and recite this Sutra with him. He will also attract a large assembly to come and listen and accept it; having listened, they will be able to hold it; having held it, they will be able to recite it; having recited it, they will be able to preach it; having preached it, they will be able to copy it or cause others to copy it, and make offerings to the Sutra roll, revering, honoring, and praising it.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If one wishes to preach this Sutra,
He should discard jealousy, anger, arrogance,
Flattery, deceit, and false minds,
And constantly cultivate honest conduct.
He should not slight or look down on others,
Nor frivolously debate the Dharma,
Nor cause others to doubt or regret,
Saying, You will not become a Buddha.
This son of the Buddha, when preaching the Dharma,
Should constantly be gentle, harmonious, and patient,
Compassionate to all,
Not generating a lazy mind.
The great Bodhisattvas of the ten directions,
Who practice the Way out of pity for the multitude,
He should generate a respectful mind toward them,
Thinking, These are my great teachers.

Regarding the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones,
He should generate the thought of a supreme father.
Breaking the mind of arrogance,
He preaches the Dharma without obstruction.
The third dharma is like this;
The wise one should guard it.
With this single-minded peaceful practice,
He is respected by immeasurable multitudes.

Furthermore, Manjusri! In the future evil age when the Dharma is about to perish, the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva who holds this Lotus Sutra should generate a mind of great kindness for those at home and those who have left home, and generate a mind of great compassion for those who are not Bodhisattvas. He should think: These people have suffered a great loss. The Tathagata expounded the Dharma with expedient devices according to what was appropriate, but they do not hear, do not know, do not perceive, do not ask, do not believe, and do not understand. Although these people do not ask, believe, or understand this Sutra, when I attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, wherever I am, I will use the power of spiritual penetrations and the power of wisdom to lead them to abide in this Dharma. Manjusri! If, after the Tathagata's extinction, that Bodhisattva-Mahasattva accomplishes this fourth dharma, when he preaches this Dharma, he will be free from error. He will constantly be made offerings to, revered, honored, and praised by bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, upasikas, kings, princes, ministers, people, Brahmins, and householders. The gods of the empty sky will also constantly follow and serve him in order to hear the Dharma. If he is in a village, city, town, or quiet forest, and someone comes wishing to pose difficult questions, the gods, day and night, will constantly guard and protect him for the sake of the Dharma, and will be able to cause the listeners to rejoice. Why is this? Because this Sutra is protected by the spiritual power of all Buddhas of the past, future, and present. Manjusri! Throughout immeasurable lands, even the name of this Lotus Sutra cannot be heard, how much less can one see, receive, hold, read, and recite it?

Manjusri! Suppose there is a powerful Wheel-Turning Sage King who wishes to use his might to subdue other countries, but the petty kings do not obey his command. The Wheel-Turning King then raises various armies to go and punish them. When the King sees soldiers who have gained merit in battle, he is greatly delighted and grants rewards according to their merit. He may give fields, houses, villages, cities, or towns; or give clothing and personal adornments; or give various kinds of precious things: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, agate, coral, amber, elephants, horses, carriages, slaves, and people. Only the bright jewel in his topknot he does not give. Why is this? Only the King has this one jewel on the crown of his head. If he were to give it, the King's retinue would surely be greatly startled and amazed.

Manjusri! The Tathagata is also like this. With the power of meditation and wisdom, he has gained the Dharma kingdom and is King of the Triple World. But the Demon Kings are unwilling to submit. The Tathagata's generals, the wise and holy ones, fight against them. With those who gain merit, he

is also delighted. In the midst of the four assemblies, he preaches various sutras, causing their hearts to be pleased. He bestows upon them meditation, liberation, roots and powers free from outflows, and the wealth of all dharmas. He also bestows the city of Nirvana, saying they have attained extinction, guiding their minds and causing them all to rejoice, but he does not preach this Lotus Sutra for them.

Manjusri! Just as the Wheel-Turning King, seeing soldiers with great merit, is exceedingly delighted and now gives them this incredible jewel which has long been in his topknot and which he would not recklessly give to anyone; so too is the Tathagata. In the Triple World he acts as the Great Dharma King, teaching and converting all living beings with the Dharma. Seeing the army of wise and holy ones fighting against the demons of the five skandhas, the demons of afflictions, and the demon of death, and gaining great merit, extinguishing the three poisons, leaving the Triple World, and breaking the demon's net, the Tathagata at that time is also greatly delighted. This Lotus Sutra is able to lead living beings to All-Knowledge; it meets with much resentment in the world and is difficult to believe. He has not preached it before, but now he preaches it. Manjusri! This Lotus Sutra is the foremost teaching of the Tathagatas. Among all teachings, it is the most profound. It is bestowed at the very end, just as that powerful King guarded the bright jewel for a long time and only now gives it away. Manjusri! This Lotus Sutra is the secret storehouse of the Buddhas, Tathagatas. Among all sutras, it is the highest. Through the long night, it has been guarded and not recklessly proclaimed. Only today, for the first time, do I expound it for you.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

Constantly practicing patience,
And pitying all beings,
Only then can one expound
The Sutra praised by the Buddha.
In the future evil age,
Those who hold this Sutra,
Regarding those at home, left home,
And those who are not Bodhisattvas,
Should generate kindness and compassion.
Those who do not hear
Or believe this Sutra
Suffer a great loss.
When I attain the Buddha Way,
With various expedient devices,
I will preach this Dharma for them,
Causing them to dwell within it.
It is like the powerful
Wheel-Turning King.
When soldiers gain merit in battle,

He rewards them with various things:
Elephants, horses, carriages,
Personal adornments,
And fields and houses,
Villages, cities, and towns;
Or he gives clothing,
Various kinds of precious things,
Slaves and goods,
Giving them with joy.
If there is one who is gallant and sturdy,
Able to accomplish difficult deeds,
The King unties the bright jewel
From his topknot and gives it to him.
The Tathagata is also like this.
Acting as the King of all Dharmas,
With patience and great power,
And the treasure store of wisdom,
With great kindness and compassion,
He transforms the world according to the Dharma.
Seeing all people
Suffering various pains and distress,
Seeking to obtain liberation,
Fighting against the demons,
For these living beings,
He preaches various dharmas.
Using great expedient devices,
He preaches these various sutras.
Knowing that living beings
Have obtained their power,
At the very end,
He preaches this Lotus.
Like the King untying his topknot
And giving the bright jewel.
This Sutra is the most honored,
Superior among the multitude of sutras.
I have constantly guarded it,
Not recklessly revealing it.
Now is the proper time
To preach it for you all.
After my extinction,
Those who seek the Buddha Way,
Wishing to attain peace and security,

And to expound this Sutra,
Should draw near to
These four dharmas.
Those who read this Sutra
Will constantly be free of worry and distress,
And free of pain and illness;
Their countenance will be fresh and white.
They will not be born poor,
Lowly, or ugly.
Living beings will delight in seeing them,
As if longing for a worthy sage.
Heavenly boys
Will act as their messengers.
Swords and staffs will not touch them,
Poison cannot harm them.
If anyone abuses them maliciously,
Their mouth will be closed shut.
They will travel fearlessly,
Like a lion king.
The light of their wisdom
Will be like the shining of the sun.
If they dream,
They will see only wonderful things.
They will see the Tathagatas
Sitting on lion seats,
Surrounded by a multitude of bhikshus,
Preaching the Dharma.
They will also see dragons, spirits,
Asuras, and others,
Numerous as the Ganges sands,
Respectfully pressing their palms together.
They will see their own bodies
Preaching the Dharma for them.
They will also see the Buddhas,
Their bodies golden in color,
Emitting immeasurable light,
Illuminating everything,
And with the Brahma voice,
Expounding the various dharmas.
The Buddha preaches the Unsurpassed Dharma
For the four assemblies.
They will see themselves amidst them,

Pressing their palms together and praising the Buddha.
Hearing the Dharma and rejoicing,
They make offerings.
Obtaining dharanis,
They verify the Wisdom of Non-Regression.
The Buddha, knowing their minds
Have deeply entered the Buddha Way,
Immediately gives them a prediction
Of attaining the Most Right Enlightenment:
You, good man,
Shall in a future age
Obtain immeasurable wisdom,
The Great Way of the Buddha.
Your land will be adorned and pure,
Vast and incomparable;
There will also be the four assemblies,
Pressing their palms together to listen to the Dharma.
They also see themselves
In the mountains and forests,
Practicing the good Dharma,
Verifying the true aspect of things.
Deeply entering meditation,
They see the Buddhas of the ten directions.
The Buddhas' bodies are golden,
Adorned with a hundred blessings and marks.
Hearing the Dharma and preaching it to others,
They constantly have such good dreams.
Again, they dream of becoming kings,
Discarding palaces and retinues,
And the superior, wonderful five desires,
Traveling to the place of enlightenment.
Under the Bodhi tree,
Sitting on a lion seat,
Seeking the Way for seven days,
They obtain the wisdom of the Buddhas.
Having attained the Unsurpassed Way,
They rise and turn the Dharma wheel,
Preaching the Dharma for the four assemblies
For thousands of millions of kalpas,
Preaching the wonderful Non-Outflow Dharma,
Saving immeasurable living beings.
Later they will enter Nirvana,

Like a lamp going out when the smoke is exhausted.
If, in the future evil age,
One preaches this foremost Dharma,
That person will obtain great benefits,
And merits such as these.

EMERGING FROM THE EARTH

At that time the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas who had come from lands in other directions, numerous as the sands of eight Ganges Rivers, rose in the midst of the great assembly, pressed their palms together, bowed, and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! If you will permit us, after the Buddha's extinction, to diligently exert ourselves in this Saha world to guard, hold, read, recite, copy, and make offerings to this Sutra, we will broadly preach it in this land.

At that time the Buddha said to the multitude of Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas: Stop, good men! There is no need for you to guard and hold this Sutra. Why is this? In my Saha world there are Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the sands of sixty thousand Ganges Rivers, and each of these Bodhisattvas has a retinue equal to the sands of sixty thousand Ganges Rivers. These people are able, after my extinction, to guard, hold, read, recite, and broadly preach this Sutra.

When the Buddha spoke these words, the earth of the three thousand great thousand countries of the Saha world all trembled and split open, and from within, immeasurable thousands of millions of Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas emerged simultaneously. These Bodhisattvas all had golden bodies, the thirty-two marks, and immeasurable light. They had previously been dwelling in the space beneath this Saha world. These Bodhisattvas, hearing the sound of the voice of Shakyamuni Buddha, sprang forth from below. Each of these Bodhisattvas was the leader of a great assembly, bringing a retinue equal to the sands of sixty thousand Ganges Rivers. Moreover, there were those bringing retinues equal to the sands of fifty thousand, forty thousand, thirty thousand, twenty thousand, or ten thousand Ganges Rivers. Moreover, there were those bringing retinues equal to one Ganges River's sands, half a Ganges River's sands, one fourth, down to one part in a thousand, ten thousand, or a million nayutas. Moreover, there were those bringing thousands of millions of nayutas of followers; those bringing millions of followers; those bringing thousands, hundreds, or even ten thousands; those bringing one thousand, one hundred, or even ten; those bringing five, four, three, two, or one disciple; and those coming alone, delighting in solitary practice. Such as these were immeasurable and boundless, beyond what calculation or analogy could know.

After these Bodhisattvas emerged from the earth, they each went to the wondrous tower of seven jewels in the sky, to the place of Many Treasures Tathagata and Shakyamuni Buddha. Upon arriving, they bowed their heads to the feet of the two World Honored Ones. They also went to the places of the Buddhas on lion seats under the jewel trees, made obeisance, circumambulated them three times to the right, and with palms pressed together in reverence, praised them with various Bodhisattva methods of praise. Then they withdrew to one side, delightedly gazing at the two World Honored Ones. From the time these Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas first emerged and praised the Buddhas with various Bodhisattva methods of praise, fifty small kalpas passed. During this time, Shakyamuni Buddha sat silently, and the four assemblies were also silent for fifty small kalpas. Because of the Buddha's spiritual power, the great assembly felt it was like half a day.

At that time the four assemblies, also through the Buddha's spiritual power, saw the Bodhisattvas filling the empty space of immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of lands. Among this multitude of Bodhisattvas were four guides: the first named Superior Practice, the second named Boundless Practice, the third named Pure Practice, and the fourth named Firmly Established Practice. These four Bodhisattvas were the foremost leaders and guides of the assembly. Before the great assembly, they each pressed their palms together, looked at Shakyamuni Buddha, and inquired: World Honored One! Are your illness and worry slight? Are you peaceful and happy in your practice? Are those who should be saved receiving the teaching easily? Do they not cause the World Honored One to generate fatigue and weariness?

At that time the four great Bodhisattvas spoke in verse:

Is the World Honored One peaceful and happy,
With slight illness and slight worry?
In teaching and converting living beings,
Is he free from fatigue?
And regarding the living beings,
Do they receive conversion easily?
Do they not cause the World Honored One
To generate fatigue and weariness?

At that time the World Honored One spoke in the midst of the great assembly of Bodhisattvas: Just so, just so! Good men! The Tathagata is peaceful and happy, with little illness and little worry. All living beings are easy to convert and save, and there is no fatigue or weariness. Why is this? All these living beings, for lifetimes, have constantly received my instruction. They have also made offerings and paid respect to past Buddhas, planting various good roots. When these living beings first saw my body and heard what I preached, they all immediately believed and accepted, entering the Tathagata's wisdom; except for those who had previously practiced and learned the Small Vehicle. But even such people as these, I now cause to hear this Sutra and enter the Buddha wisdom.

At that time the great Bodhisattvas spoke in verse:

Excellent, excellent!
Great Hero, World Honored One!
All the living beings
Are easy to convert and save.
They are able to ask the Buddhas
About profound wisdom;
Hearing it, they believe and practice.
We rejoice accordingly.

At that time the World Honored One praised the leaders, the great Bodhisattvas: Excellent, excellent! Good men! You are able to generate a heart of rejoicing regarding the Tathagata.

At that time Maitreya Bodhisattva and the multitude of Bodhisattvas equal to the sands of eight thousand Ganges Rivers all thought: From of old we have never seen or heard of such a multitude of great Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas emerging from the earth, standing before the World Honored One, pressing their palms together, making offerings, and inquiring after the Tathagata.

Then Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, knowing the thoughts in the minds of the Bodhisattvas equal to the sands of eight thousand Ganges Rivers, and wishing also to resolve his own doubts, pressed his palms together facing the Buddha and asked in verse:

Immeasurable thousands of millions,
A vast assembly of Bodhisattvas,
Never seen before in the past.
May the Honored of Two-Legged Beings explain,
Where have they come from?
For what cause and condition have they gathered?
Huge bodies, great transcendental powers,
Wisdom inconceivable,
Their will and mindfulness firm and solid,
Possessing great power of patience,
Those whom living beings delight to see;
Where have they come from?
Each one of these Bodhisattvas
Brings a retinue
Boundless in number,
Like the sands of the Ganges.
Some great Bodhisattvas
Bring six myriad Ganges sands;
Such a great assembly
Single-mindedly seeks the Buddha Way.
These great teachers,
Six myriad Ganges sands,
Come together to make offerings to the Buddha,
And to guard and hold this Sutra.
Those bringing five myriad Ganges sands,
Their number exceeds the former.
Those with four myriad, three myriad,
Two myriad, down to one myriad,
One thousand, one hundred, and so on,
Down to one Ganges sand,

Half, one third, one quarter,
Only one part in a billion,
One thousand ten thousand nayutas,
Myriad millions of disciples,
Down to half a million,
Their number exceeds the former again.
Those with a million down to ten thousand,
One thousand and one hundred,
Fifty and ten,
Down to three, two, one,
And those alone without a retinue,
Delighting in solitary places,
Coming together to the Buddha's place,
Their numbers exceed the former even more.
Such a great assembly as this,
If someone were to count them
For kalpas exceeding the Ganges sands,
He still could not know them all.
This multitude of Bodhisattvas,
Possessing great dignity, virtue, and diligence,
Who preached the Dharma for them,
Teaching, converting, and perfecting them?
From whom did they first generate the mind?
Which Buddha's Dharma do they praise?
Which Sutra do they receive, hold, and practice?
Which Buddha Way do they cultivate?
These Bodhisattvas,
With powers of spiritual penetration and great wisdom,
The earth of the four directions trembles and splits,
And they all emerge from within.
World Honored One, from of old,
I have never seen such a thing.
I pray you will speak of the name of the land
From whence they come.
I have constantly traveled through various lands,
But never have I seen this multitude.
In this assembly,
I do not recognize a single person.
Suddenly they emerge from the earth;
I pray you will explain the cause and condition.
In this great assembly now,
Immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions

Of Bodhisattvas

All wish to know this matter.

Regarding the beginning and end causes and conditions

Of this multitude of Bodhisattvas,

World Honored One of Immeasurable Virtue,

We only pray you will resolve the assembly's doubts.

At that time the emanation Buddhas of Shakyamuni Buddha, who had come from immeasurable thousands of millions of lands in other directions, were sitting on lion seats under the jewel trees in the eight directions. The attendants of those Buddhas all saw this great assembly of Bodhisattvas emerge from the earth in the four directions of the three thousand great thousand world and dwell in the air. Each said to his Buddha: World Honored One! Where has this great assembly of immeasurable, boundless, asamkhyeya Bodhisattvas come from?

At that time the Buddhas each said to their attendants: Good men! Wait a moment. There is a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva named Maitreya, upon whom Shakyamuni Buddha has conferred a prediction that he will be the next to become a Buddha, who has asked about this matter. The Buddha is now about to answer him. You too naturally will get to hear it for this reason.

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha said to Maitreya Bodhisattva: Excellent, excellent! Ajita! You are able to ask the Buddha about such a great matter. You should all, with a single mind, put on the armor of diligence and generate a firm and solid intention. The Tathagata now wishes to display, reveal, and proclaim the wisdom of the Buddhas, the power of the free and unrestricted spiritual penetrations of the Buddhas, the power of the lion-sprint of the Buddhas, and the power of the majestic, fierce, and great force of the Buddhas.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

Be diligent and single-minded;

I wish to speak of this matter.

Do not harbor doubt or regret;

The Buddha's wisdom is inconceivable.

You should now bring forth the power of faith,

Abiding in patience and goodness.

A Dharma never heard before in the past,

You will all now get to hear.

I now comfort you;

Do not harbor doubt or fear.

The Buddha has no false words;

His wisdom is immeasurable.

The supreme Dharma he has obtained

Is extremely profound and difficult to discriminate.

Such as it is, I will now speak;
You should listen with a single mind.

At that time the World Honored One, having spoken this verse, said to Maitreya Bodhisattva: I now announce to you all in this great assembly. Ajita! These immeasurable, innumerable asamkhyeya great Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas who have emerged from the earth, whom you have never seen before in the past, after I attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi in this Saha world, I taught, converted, and guided these Bodhisattvas, tamed their minds, and caused them to generate the intent for the Way. These Bodhisattvas all dwell in the space beneath this Saha world. They read, recite, and master all the classics, ponder, discriminate, and remember them correctly. Ajita! These good men do not delight in being in the crowd engaging in much talk. They constantly delight in quiet places, diligently practicing exertion without ever resting. Nor do they dwell dependent on humans or gods. They constantly delight in deep wisdom without obstruction, and they also constantly delight in the Dharma of the Buddhas, single-mindedly diligent, seeking unsurpassed wisdom.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

Ajita, you should know!
These great Bodhisattvas,
For countless kalpas,
Have practiced the Buddha wisdom.
They were all converted by me,
Causing them to generate the Great Way mind.
These are my sons;
Dependent on this world,
They constantly practice dhuta deeds,
Delighting in quiet places,
Discarding the clamor of the great assembly,
Not delighting in much talk.
Such sons as these
Study and practice my Way and Dharma.
Day and night constantly diligent,
For the sake of seeking the Buddha Way,
They dwell in the empty space
Beneath the Saha world.
Their will, mindfulness, and power are firm and solid;
They constantly and diligently seek wisdom,
Preaching various wonderful dharmas,
Their minds without fear.
When I was at the city of Gaya,
Sitting under the Bodhi tree,

And attained the Most Right Enlightenment,
Turning the Unsurpassed Dharma Wheel,
Only then did I teach and convert them,
Causing them to first generate the mind for the Way.
Now they all dwell in non-retrogression,
And all will become Buddhas.
I now speak the true words;
You should believe with a single mind.
From the long distant past,
I have taught and converted this multitude.

At that time, Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahasattva and the countless Bodhisattvas generated doubts and perplexities in their minds, marveling at what they had never had before, and thought: How could the World Honored One, in such a short time, have taught and converted such an immeasurable, boundless, asamkhyeya number of great Bodhisattvas, causing them to dwell in Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi? Immediately they said to the Buddha: World Honored One! When the Tathagata was a Crown Prince, you left the Shakya palace, sat in the place of enlightenment not far from the city of Gaya, and attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. From that time until now, only forty-some years have passed. World Honored One! How, in this short time, could you have done such great Buddha work? Using the Buddha's power and the Buddha's merit to teach and convert such an immeasurable multitude of great Bodhisattvas to attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi?

World Honored One! Regarding this multitude of great Bodhisattvas, even if a person counted them for thousands of millions of kalpas, he could not exhaust them or find their limit. From the long distant past, they have planted good roots under immeasurable, boundless Buddhas, accomplished the Bodhisattva Way, and constantly cultivated pure conduct. World Honored One! Such a matter is difficult for the world to believe. It is like a man of beautiful appearance and black hair, twenty-five years old, pointing to hundred-year-old men and saying: These are my sons. And the hundred-year-old men point to the youth and say: This is our father, who begot and raised us. This matter is hard to believe. The Buddha is also like this. It has not been long, in truth, since he attained the Way. Yet this great assembly of Bodhisattvas has, for immeasurable thousands of millions of kalpas, for the sake of the Buddha Way, diligently exerted themselves, skillfully entering, exiting, and dwelling in immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of samadhis, obtaining great spiritual powers, cultivating pure conduct for a long time, skillfully practicing various good dharmas in sequence, clever in questions and answers, jewels among humans, exceedingly rare in all the world. Yet today the World Honored One says: When I attained the Buddha Way, I caused them to first generate the mind, taught, converted, and guided them, causing them to proceed toward Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. The World Honored One attained Buddhahood not long ago, yet he has been able to do this work of great merit. Although we believe that the Buddha preaches according to what is appropriate, that the words spoken by the Buddha are never false, and that what the Buddha knows is entirely penetrating, nevertheless, the newly

inspired Bodhisattvas, if they hear these words after the Buddha's extinction, may not believe or accept them, and this will give rise to causes and conditions for the crime of destroying the Dharma. Indeed, World Honored One! We pray you will explain and resolve our doubts, so that good men in future ages, hearing of this matter, will not generate doubts.

At that time Maitreya Bodhisattva, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

The Buddha in the past left the Shakya clan,
Left home and drew near to Gaya,
Sitting under the Bodhi tree;
Since then it has not been long.
These Buddha-sons,
Their number immeasurable,
Have practiced the Buddha Way for a long time,
Dwelling in spiritual powers.
Skillfully learning the Bodhisattva Way,
Untainted by worldly dharmas,
Like the lotus flower in the water,
Emerging from the earth.
All generating respectful minds,
Standing before the World Honored One.
This matter is inconceivable;
How can it be believed?
The Buddha attained the Way very recently,
Yet those he has perfected are very many.
We pray you will remove the multitude's doubts,
And distinguish and explain according to reality.
Like a young, strong man,
Only twenty-five years old,
Pointing to hundred-year-old sons,
With white hair and wrinkled faces,
Saying, These are my offspring;
And the sons also saying, This is our father.
The father is young and the sons are old;
The whole world does not believe it.
The World Honored One is also like this;
It has been very recently that he attained the Way.
Yet these Bodhisattvas,
Their wills solid, without cowardice or weakness,
From immeasurable kalpas
Have practiced the Bodhisattva Way.
Clever at difficult questions and answers,

Their minds without fear,
Determined in their patient minds,
Upright and possessed of dignity and virtue,
Praised by the Buddhas of the ten directions.
Skillfully able to distinguish and preach,
Not delighting in being among crowds,
Constantly liking to be in meditation,
For the sake of seeking the Buddha Way,
Dwelling in the space below.
We, hearing it from the Buddha,
Have no doubts about this matter.
We pray the Buddha will, for the future,
Expound and cause understanding.
If there are those who, regarding this Sutra,
Generate doubt and do not believe,
They will immediately fall into the evil paths.
We pray you will now explain,
How these immeasurable Bodhisattvas,
In such a short time,
Were taught and converted to generate the mind,
And dwell in the stage of non-retrogression?

THE LIFESPAN OF THE TATHAGATA

At that time, the Buddha said to the Bodhisattvas and the entire great assembly: Good men! You should believe and understand the sincere and truthful words of the Tathagata. He addressed the great assembly again: You should believe and understand the sincere and truthful words of the Tathagata. He addressed the great assembly once more: You should believe and understand the sincere and truthful words of the Tathagata.

At that time the Bodhisattvas and the great assembly, with Maitreya at their head, pressed their palms together and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! We earnestly pray you will speak. We will believe and accept the Buddha's words. Having spoken thus three times, they said again: We earnestly pray you will speak. We will believe and accept the Buddha's words.

At that time the World Honored One, knowing that the Bodhisattvas requested continuously without stopping, said to them: Listen carefully to the Tathagata's secret spiritual power. All the gods, humans, and asuras of the world say that the present Shakyamuni Buddha left the palace of the Shakyas, sat in the place of enlightenment not far from the city of Gaya, and attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. However, good men! In truth, it has been immeasurable, boundless, hundreds of thousands of millions of nayuta kalpas since I became a Buddha. Suppose there were five hundred thousands of millions of nayutas of asamkhyeyas of three thousand great thousand worlds. Suppose someone ground them to dust, and after passing five hundred thousands of millions of nayutas of asamkhyeyas of lands in the east, he dropped one particle of dust. Proceeding in this way eastward until all those particles were exhausted. Good men! What is your opinion? As to those worlds, is it possible to imagine, calculate, and know their number?

Maitreya Bodhisattva and the others said to the Buddha: World Honored One! Those worlds are immeasurable and boundless, beyond what can be known by calculation, and beyond the reach of the mind's power. All Voice-Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas, with their non-outflow wisdom, could not imagine or know that number. Although we dwell in the stage of Avaivartika, we cannot comprehend this matter. World Honored One! Such worlds as these are immeasurable and boundless.

At that time the Buddha said to the multitude of great Bodhisattvas: Good men! I now clearly announce to you. Suppose all those worlds, whether a particle was dropped in them or not, were all ground to dust. Let one particle equal one kalpa. The time since I became a Buddha exceeds this by hundreds of thousands of millions of nayuta asamkhyeya kalpas. Since then, I have constantly been in this Saha world preaching the Dharma and teaching, and also elsewhere in hundreds of thousands of millions of nayuta asamkhyeya lands, guiding and benefiting living beings.

Good men! During that interval, I spoke of the Buddha Burning Lamp and others, and also said that they entered Nirvana. Such things were all distinguished by means of expedient devices.

Good men! If living beings come to my place, I use the Buddha eye to observe the keenness or dullness of their faculties, such as faith. According to what they should be saved by, I preach in various places, using different names and different lifespans, and sometimes I manifest that I will enter Nirvana. Also, using various expedient devices, I preach the subtle and wonderful Dharma, causing living beings to generate joy.

Good men! The Tathagata, seeing living beings who delight in lesser dharmas, whose virtue is thin and whose defilements are heavy, preaches to these people: In my youth I left home and attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. However, since I actually attained Buddhahood, it has been extremely long and distant, as I have said. It is only by expedient devices to teach and convert living beings, causing them to enter the Buddha Way, that I speak like this.

Good men! The scriptures expounded by the Tathagata are all for the sake of saving and liberating living beings. Sometimes I speak of my own body, sometimes another's body; sometimes I show my own body, sometimes another's body; sometimes I show my own affairs, sometimes another's affairs. Everything I say is true and not false. Why is this? The Tathagata knows and sees the character of the Triple World as it really is: there is no birth or death, no retreating or emerging, no being in the world and no extinction. It is not real, not false, not thus, not different. It is not like the Triple World seeing the Triple World. The Tathagata sees such matters clearly, without mistake. Because living beings have various natures, various desires, various behaviors, and various thoughts and discriminations, intending to cause them to generate good roots, I preach the Dharma in various ways using diverse causes, conditions, analogies, and words. The Buddha work I perform has never ceased for a moment. Thus, since I became a Buddha, an extremely long time has passed. My lifespan is immeasurable asamkhyeya kalpas, eternally enduring and never extinguished.

Good men! The lifespan I attained by originally practicing the Bodhisattva Way is not yet exhausted even now, and is twice the number mentioned above. Yet, although I do not actually enter extinction, I announce that I will adopt the way of extinction. The Tathagata uses this expedient device to teach and convert living beings. Why is this? If the Buddha stays in the world for a long time, people of thin virtue will not plant good roots; they will be poor and lowly, greedily attached to the five desires, and caught in the net of memories and false views. If they see that the Tathagata is constantly present and not extinct, they will become arrogant and selfish, feeling weary and neglectful, unable to generate the thought that he is difficult to encounter or a mind of reverence. Therefore, the Tathagata uses expedient devices to say: Bhikshus, you should know! The appearance of Buddhas in the world is difficult to encounter. Why is this? Among those people of thin virtue, over the course of immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas, some may see a Buddha and some may not. Because of this, I say: Bhikshus! The Tathagata is difficult to see. When these living beings hear such words, they will surely generate the thought that he is difficult to encounter, harboring adoration and a thirsty longing for the Buddha, thereby planting good roots. Therefore, although the Tathagata does not actually enter extinction, he speaks of extinction.

Furthermore, good men! The Dharma of all Buddhas, Tathagatas, is like this. In order to save living beings, it is all true and not false. It is like a good physician, wise and clever, skilled in prescriptions and medicines, and good at curing various diseases. This man has many sons, perhaps ten, twenty, or even a hundred. Because of some matter, he travels far away to another country. Afterwards, the sons drink another's poison medicine; the medicine causes delirium and confusion, and they roll on the ground. At that time the father returns home. The sons who drank the poison, some having lost their minds and some not, seeing their father from afar, are all greatly delighted. They bow, kneel, and ask: It is good that you have returned safely. We were foolish and mistakenly took poison medicine. We pray you will save and heal us, and restore our lives. The father, seeing his sons suffering like this, seeks good medicinal herbs according to prescriptions. They are perfect in color, fragrance, and flavor. He pounds, sifts, and mixes them, and gives them to his sons to take, saying: This is excellent medicinal herb, perfect in color, fragrance, and flavor. You should take it; it will quickly remove your suffering, and you will have no more trouble. Among the sons, those who have not lost their minds, seeing this good medicine with its fine color and fragrance, immediately take it, and their illness is entirely cured. The others who have lost their minds, seeing their father come, are also happy and ask him to cure their illness, but when given the medicine, they are unwilling to take it. Why is this? The poison has penetrated deeply, and they have lost their original minds. Therefore, regarding this medicine of good color and fragrance, they say it is not good. The father thinks: These sons are pitiable. They have been struck by poison, and their minds are all inverted. Although they are happy to see me and ask for a cure, they are unwilling to take such good medicine. I must now set up an expedient device to make them take this medicine. Immediately he says: You should know! I am now old and decrepit, and the time of my death has arrived. This good medicinal herb I will leave here. You may take it; do not worry that you will not recover. Having instructed them thus, he goes again to another country and sends a messenger back to announce: Your father is dead. At that time the sons, hearing that their father has passed away, are greatly distressed and think: If our father were here, he would pity us and be able to save and protect us. Now he has abandoned us and died far away in another country. Thinking of themselves as orphans with no one to rely on, they constantly harbor grief. Their minds then awaken, and they realize that the medicine has excellent color, flavor, and fragrance. They immediately take it, and their poisonous disease is completely healed. The father, hearing that the sons have all recovered, immediately returns and causes them all to see him.

Good men! What is your opinion? Is there anyone who can say this good physician has committed the offense of falsehood?

No, World Honored One!

The Buddha said: I am also like this. Since I became a Buddha, immeasurable, boundless, hundreds of thousands of millions of nayuta asamkhyeya kalpas have passed. For the sake of living beings, I use the power of expedient devices to say that I will enter extinction. There is no one who can lawfully say that I have committed the error of falsehood.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

Since I attained Buddhahood,
The number of kalpas that have passed
Is immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions
Of trillions of asamkhyeyas.
Constantly I have preached the Dharma and taught
Countless millions of living beings,
Causing them to enter the Buddha Way.
Since then, through immeasurable kalpas,
In order to save living beings,
I expediently manifest Nirvana,
Yet truly I am not extinct,
But constantly dwell here preaching the Dharma.
I constantly dwell here,
But with various spiritual powers,
I cause living beings who are inverted,
Though near, not to see me.
The multitudes see me as extinct,
And broadly make offerings to my relics.
All harboring adoration,
They generate a mind of thirsty longing.
When living beings have become faithful and yielding,
Upright and gentle in mind,
Single-mindedly wishing to see the Buddha,
Not begrudging their own bodies or lives,
At that time I and the assembly
Appear together on Mount Gridhrakuta.
I then tell living beings:
I am constantly here, not extinct;
By the power of expedient devices,
I manifest extinction and non-extinction.
If in other lands there are living beings
Who are respectful and delight in faith,
I am also among them,
Preaching the Unsurpassed Dharma.
You, not hearing this,
Only say I have entered extinction.
I see all living beings
Sinking in the midst of suffering and distress;
Therefore I do not show my body,

To cause them to generate thirsty longing.
Because their hearts harbor adoration,
I then appear to preach the Dharma.
My spiritual power is like this;
Throughout asamkhyeya kalpas,
I am constantly on Mount Gridhrakuta
And in other dwelling places.
When living beings see the kalpa ending,
And being consumed by a great fire,
This land of mine is peaceful and secure,
Constantly filled with gods and humans.
Gardens and groves, halls and pavilions,
Adorned with various kinds of gems;
Jewel trees with many flowers and fruits,
Where living beings enjoy themselves.
The gods strike heavenly drums,
Constantly making all kinds of music,
Raining Mandarava flowers,
Scattering them on the Buddha and the great assembly.
My Pure Land is not destroyed,
Yet the multitude sees it as consumed by fire,
Filled with sorrow, fear,
And various sufferings.
These living beings with offenses,
Because of the causes and conditions of evil karma,
Pass through asamkhyeya kalpas
Without hearing the name of the Three Jewels.
Those who cultivate merit,
Who are gentle and upright,
All see my body
Existing here and preaching the Dharma.
Sometimes for this multitude
I say the Buddha's lifespan is immeasurable.
For those who see the Buddha after a long time,
I say the Buddha is difficult to encounter.
My power of wisdom is like this,
My wisdom light shines immeasurably,
My lifespan is countless kalpas,
Obtained from long cultivation of karma.
You who have wisdom,
Do not generate doubt about this.
You should cut it off so it is ended forever;

The Buddha's words are true, not false.
Like the physician who used good expedients
To cure his delirious sons,
Being alive yet saying he was dead,
No one could say he spoke falsely.
I am also the father of the world,
Who saves those suffering from various afflictions.
Because ordinary people are inverted,
Though I am alive, I say I am extinct.
Because if they constantly see me,
They will generate arrogance and selfishness,
Being dissolute and attached to the five desires,
Falling into the evil paths.
I constantly know living beings,
Those who practice the Way and those who do not.
According to what they should be saved by,
I preach various Dharmas for them.
I am constantly thinking this:
How can I cause living beings
To enter the Unsurpassed Wisdom
And quickly acquire the Buddha body?

DISTINCTION OF MERITS

At that time, hearing the Buddha speak of the lifespan and number of kalpas being so long and distant, infinite, boundless asamkhyeya living beings in the great assembly obtained great benefit. At that time the World Honored One said to the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Maitreya: Ajita! When I spoke of the long duration of the Tathagata's lifespan, living beings equal to the sands of six hundred eighty myriad million nayuta Ganges Rivers attained the Patience of the Non-Birth of Dharmas. A thousand times that many Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas obtained the dharani gate of hearing and holding. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of a world obtained the eloquence of unhindered delight in preaching. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of a world obtained hundreds of thousands of millions of immeasurable dharanis of revolution. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of a three thousand great thousand world became able to turn the un-retreating Dharma wheel. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of two thousand middle lands became able to turn the pure Dharma wheel. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of a small thousand lands will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi after eight births. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of four four-continent worlds will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi after four births. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of three four-continent worlds will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi after three births. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of two four-continent worlds will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi after two births. Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of one four-continent world will attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi after one birth. Living beings equal to the dust motes of eight worlds all generated the mind of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

When the Buddha said that these Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas had obtained great Dharma benefits, Mandarava flowers and Maha-Mandarava flowers rained down from the sky, scattering over the immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas on lion seats under the jewel trees, and scattering over Shakyamuni Buddha and the long extinct Many Treasures Tathagata on the lion seat in the seven-jeweled stupa, and also scattering over all the great Bodhisattvas and the four assemblies. Finely powdered sandalwood and aloe wood incense also rained down. In the empty sky, heavenly drums sounded of themselves with wonderful, deep, and far-reaching tones. A thousand kinds of heavenly garments rained down, with necklaces, pearl necklaces, mani-jewel necklaces, and wish-fulfilling gem necklaces hanging down, filling the nine directions. Precious incense burners burned priceless incense, naturally moving everywhere to make offerings to the great assembly. Above each Buddha, there were Bodhisattvas holding banners and canopies, rising in sequence up to the Brahma Heaven. These Bodhisattvas, with wonderful sounds, sang immeasurable verses praising the Buddhas.

At that time Maitreya Bodhisattva rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, pressed his palms together facing the Buddha, and spoke in verse:

The Buddha preaches a rare Dharma,

Never heard before in the past.
The World Honored One has great power,
And his lifespan is immeasurable.
Countless Buddha-sons,
Hearing the World Honored One distinguish
And speak of the benefits of obtaining the Dharma,
Are filled with joy throughout their bodies.
Some dwell in the stage of non-retrogression,
Some obtain dharanis,
Some unhindered delight in preaching,
And myriads of millions of revolving dharanis.
Bodhisattvas equal to the dust motes
Of a great thousand world,
Are each able to turn
The un-retreating Dharma wheel.
Bodhisattvas equal to the dust motes
Of a middle thousand world,
Are each able to turn
The pure Dharma wheel.
Bodhisattvas equal to the dust motes
Of a small thousand world,
Have eight more births remaining,
And will then attain the Buddha Way.
Those equal to the dust motes
Of four, three, or two four-continent worlds,
According to the number, will become Buddhas
After that many lives.
Bodhisattvas equal to the dust motes
Of one four-continent world,
Have one life remaining,
And will then attain All-Knowledge.
Living beings such as these,
Hearing the Buddha's long lifespan,
Obtain immeasurable, non-outflow,
Pure fruits and rewards.
Living beings equal to the dust motes
Of eight worlds,
Hearing the Buddha speak of his lifespan,
Have all generated the Unsurpassed Mind.
The World Honored One preaches immeasurable,
Inconceivable Dharmas,
Bringing much benefit,

Boundless as empty space.
Rain of heavenly Mandarava
And Maha-Mandarava flowers;
Shakra and Brahma, like Ganges sands,
Have come from countless Buddha lands.
Rain of sandalwood and aloe wood,
Falling in confused profusion,
Like birds flying down from the sky,
Scattered as offerings to the Buddhas.
Heavenly drums in the empty sky
Naturally emit wonderful sounds.
Heavenly garments, thousands of millions of kinds,
Come revolving down.
Wonderful incense burners of many gems
Burn priceless incense,
Naturally pervading everywhere,
Making offerings to the World Honored Ones.
The multitude of great Bodhisattvas
Hold banners and canopies of the seven jewels,
High and wonderful, of a trillion kinds,
Arranged in order up to the Brahma Heaven.
Before each of the Buddhas,
Jeweled flags and victorious banners hang.
With thousands of millions of verses,
They sing the praises of the Tathagatas.
Various matters such as these
Have never been before in the past.
Hearing the Buddha's immeasurable lifespan,
All rejoice.
The Buddha's fame is heard in the ten directions,
Broadly benefiting living beings.
All possess good roots,
To assist the Unsurpassed Mind.

At that time the Buddha said to the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Maitreya: Ajita! If there are living beings who hear that the lifespan of the Buddha is of such long duration and can generate even a single thought of belief and understanding, the merit they obtain is without limit or measure. If there are good men or good women who, for the sake of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, practice the five paramitas, dana-paramita, sila-paramita, ksanti-paramita, virya-paramita, and dhyana-paramita, excluding the prajna-paramita, for eighty myriads of millions of nayuta kalpas; if the merit of this is compared to the merit of the former person, it does not equal one hundredth part, one thousandth part, or one part in hundreds of thousands of millions of billions, nor can it be

known by calculation or analogy. If good men or good women possess such merit as this, there is no way they can retreat from Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If a person seeking the Buddha wisdom,
For eighty myriads of millions
Of nayuta kalpas,
Practices the five paramitas;
During those kalpas,
He makes offerings to the Buddhas,
To Pratyekabuddha disciples,
And to the multitude of Bodhisattvas,
With rare and exquisite drink and food,
Superior clothing and bedding,
Building monasteries of sandalwood,
Adorned with gardens and groves;
Making such offerings as these,
All subtle and wonderful,
Throughout all those kalpas,
Transferring the merit to the Buddha Way.
Furthermore, if he keeps the pure precepts,
Clean and without flaw or leak,
Seeking the Unsurpassed Way,
Praised by the Buddhas.
Furthermore, if he practices patience,
Dwelling in the stage of gentleness,
Even if many evils come to him,
His mind does not move.
Those who have obtained the Dharma,
Who harbor overbearing arrogance,
Who slight and vex him,
Even this he is able to endure.
Furthermore, if he is diligent and energetic,
His will and mindfulness constantly firm,
Throughout immeasurable millions of kalpas,
Single-mindedly without resting.
And for countless kalpas,
He dwells in a quiet, empty place,
Whether sitting or walking,
Eliminating sleep and constantly concentrating his mind.
Because of these causes and conditions,

He is able to produce various meditations,
And for eighty millions of myriads of kalpas,
Abide with mind unconfused.
Holding the blessing of this single-mindedness,
He vows to seek the Unsurpassed Way:
May I attain All-Knowledge,
Exhausting the limits of meditation.
This person, for hundreds of thousands
Of millions of billions of kalpas,
Practices these merits,
As described above.
But if good men and women,
Hearing me speak of my lifespan,
Believe it for even a single moment,
Their blessings exceed his.
If a person is entirely free
Of all doubts and regrets,
And believes for a moment with a deep mind,
His blessings will be like this.
If there are Bodhisattvas
Who have practiced the Way for immeasurable kalpas,
And hear me speak of my lifespan,
They are able to believe and accept it.
People such as these
Will accept this Sutra on the crown of their heads,
Vowing: May I in the future,
With long life save living beings,
Just like the present World Honored One,
King of the Shakyas,
Roaring the lion's roar in the place of enlightenment,
Preaching the Dharma without fear.
May I in the future age,
Respected by all,
When sitting in the place of enlightenment,
Speak of lifespan in the same way.
Those with deep minds,
Pure and upright,
Who have heard much and can hold it all,
Understanding the Buddha's words according to the meaning;
People such as these
Will have no doubts about this.

Furthermore, Ajita! If there is one who hears of the long duration of the Buddha's lifespan and understands the import of the words, the merit this person obtains is without limit or measure, and he is able to generate the supreme wisdom of the Tathagata. How much more so for one who broadly hears this Sutra, or causes others to hear it; or holds it himself, or causes others to hold it; or writes it himself, or causes others to write it; or makes offerings to the Sutra roll with flowers, incense, necklaces, banners, streamers, silken canopies, fragrant oil, and ghee lamps? This person's merit is immeasurable and boundless, and he is able to generate the Wisdom of All Modes.

Ajita! If good men and good women hear me speak of the long duration of my lifespan and believe and understand with a deep mind, they will see the Buddha constantly on Mount Gridhrakuta, surrounded by great Bodhisattvas and the multitude of Voice-Hearers, preaching the Dharma. They will also see this Saha world, its ground of lapis lazuli, level and straight, with the eight roads marked by jambunada gold, lined with jewel trees, and all the towers, pavilions, and observatories made of jewels, with the multitude of Bodhisattvas dwelling in their midst. If there is one who is able to observe like this, know that this is the mark of deep faith and understanding.

Furthermore, after the Tathagata's extinction, if one hears this Sutra and does not defame it but generates a mind of joy, know that this is already the mark of deep faith and understanding; how much more so for one who reads, recites, receives, and holds it? This person carries the Tathagata on his head.

Ajita! These good men and good women need not build stupas and temples for me, nor build monks' quarters, nor make offerings of the four necessities to the Sangha. Why is this? These good men and good women, by receiving, holding, reading, and reciting this Sutra, have already built stupas, constructed monks' quarters, and made offerings to the Sangha. They have built seven-jeweled stupas for the Buddha's relics, high and wide, tapering up to the Brahma Heaven, hung with banners, canopies, and myriad jewel bells, and made offerings of flowers, incense, necklaces, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, drums, music, pipes, flutes, harps, various dances and plays, and wonderful voices singing verses of praise; they have already made such offerings for immeasurable thousands of millions of kalpas.

Ajita! If after my extinction, one hears this Sutra and is able to receive and hold it, or write it himself, or cause others to write it, he has thereby built monks' quarters, creating thirty-two halls of red sandalwood, eight tala trees high, lofty, spacious, and beautifully adorned, accommodating hundreds of thousands of bhikshus. Gardens, groves, bathing pools, walking paths, meditation caves, clothing, drink, food, bedding, medicine, and all articles of comfort fill them. Such monks' quarters, halls, and pavilions number in the hundreds of thousands of millions, their number immeasurable, and with these he makes offerings before me and the bhikshu Sangha. Therefore I say: After the Tathagata's extinction, if there is one who receives, holds, reads, recites, and preaches for others, or writes it himself, or causes others to write it, and makes offerings to the Sutra roll, he need not build stupas and temples, nor construct monks' quarters and make offerings to the Sangha. How much more so if someone is able to hold this Sutra and at the same time

practice giving, keeping precepts, patience, diligence, single-mindedness, and wisdom? His virtue is most victorious, immeasurable and boundless. Like empty space, extending to the east, west, south, north, the four intermediate directions, and the upper and lower regions, immeasurable and boundless; this person's merit is also immeasurable and boundless, and he will quickly reach the Wisdom of All Modes. If a person reads, recites, receives, and holds this Sutra, preaches it for others, writes it himself, or causes others to write it, and furthermore is able to build stupas and construct monks' quarters, make offerings to and praise the Voice-Hearer Sangha, and also praise the merits of the Bodhisattvas with hundreds of thousands of millions of methods of praise; and also for the sake of others, with various causes and conditions, explain this Lotus Sutra according to its meaning; and furthermore is able to purely keep the precepts, dwelling together with those who are gentle and harmonious, patient and without anger, with firm and solid intent, constantly valuing meditation and attaining deep concentrations, diligent and courageous, embracing all good dharmas, with keen faculties and wisdom, skilled in answering questions and difficulties.

Ajita! If after my extinction, good men and good women receive, hold, read, and recite this Sutra, and possess such good merits as these, know that these people have already proceeded toward the place of enlightenment, are close to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, and are sitting under the Tree of the Way.

Ajita! Wherever these good men and good women sit, stand, or walk, in that place a stupa should be built, and all gods and humans should make offerings to it as if it were the stupa of the Buddha.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If, after my extinction,
One can respect and hold this Sutra,
This person's blessings are immeasurable,
As described above.
This is to have completely performed
All kinds of offerings.
Building stupas for relics,
Adorned with the seven jewels,
With spires extremely high and wide,
Tapering up to the Brahma Heaven,
With thousands of millions of jewel bells,
Moved by the wind to emit wonderful sounds.
And for immeasurable kalpas,
Making offerings to this stupa,
With flowers, incense, and necklaces,
Heavenly garments and music,
Burning fragrant oil and ghee lamps,
Constantly illuminating all around.

In the evil age of the Dharma's end,
One who can hold this Sutra,
Has already performed all offerings
As described above.
If one can hold this Sutra,
It is as if the Buddha were present,
And he used ox-head sandalwood
To build monks' quarters as an offering.
With thirty-two halls,
Eight tala trees high,
With superior delicacies and wonderful clothes,
And bedding all complete,
Dwelling places for hundreds of thousands,
Gardens, groves, and bathing pools,
Walking paths and meditation caves,
All beautifully adorned with various things.
If one has a believing and understanding mind,
Receives, holds, reads, recites, and writes,
Or causes others to write,
And makes offerings to the Sutra roll,
Scattering flowers, incense, and powdered incense,
And constantly burning
Sumana, campaka,
And atimuktaka oil;
One who makes offerings like this
Obtains immeasurable merit;
Like empty space is boundless,
His blessings are also like this.
How much more so if one holds this Sutra,
And also practices giving and keeping precepts,
Patience and delight in meditation,
Not angry or speaking ill,
Respectful to stupas and temples,
Humble before bhikshus,
Far removed from arrogance,
Constantly contemplating wisdom,
Not angry when asked difficult questions,
But explaining compliantly;
If one can practice such conduct,
His merit is immeasurable.
If you see a Dharma teacher
Who has accomplished such virtues,

You should scatter heavenly flowers,
Cover his body with heavenly garments,
Bow your head to his feet in homage,
And generate a mind as if thinking of the Buddha.
You should also think:
Before long he will go to the Tree of the Way,
Attain the non-outflow and unconditioned,
And broadly benefit humans and gods.
In the place where he dwells,
Walks, sits, or lies down,
Or even speaks one verse,
In that place a stupa should be built,
Adorned and made wonderful,
And offered to in various ways.
When a Buddha-son dwells in this ground,
It is the Buddha's enjoyment;
He is constantly within it,
Walking, sitting, and lying down.

THE MERITS OF REJOICING

At that time Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahasattva said to the Buddha: World Honored One! If there are good men or good women who, upon hearing this Lotus Sutra, rejoice, how much merit will they obtain?

He then spoke in verse:

After the World Honored One's extinction,
If there are those who hear this Sutra
And are able to rejoice,
How much merit will they obtain?

At that time the Buddha said to Maitreya Bodhisattva-Mahasattva: Ajita! After the Tathagata's extinction, suppose there are bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, upasikas, and other wise people, young or old, who, having heard this Sutra and rejoiced, leave the Dharma assembly and go to another place, whether a monastery, a quiet place, a city, a street, a town, or a village, and expound what they have heard, according to their ability, to their fathers, mothers, relatives, good friends, and acquaintances. And suppose these people, having heard it, rejoice and in turn teach others; and those others, having heard it, also rejoice and teach others. In this way, it proceeds in turn to the fiftieth person.

Ajita! Regarding the merit of this fiftieth good man or good woman who rejoices, I will now explain it; you should listen well. Suppose there were four million myriads of millions of asamkhyeya worlds filled with living beings of the six paths and the four kinds of birth, born from eggs, wombs, moisture, or transformation; with form or without form; with thought or without thought; or with neither thought nor no thought; footless, two-footed, four-footed, or many-footed; all such as are included in the number of living beings, and someone seeking merit were to provide them with whatever objects of amusement they desired. To each living being, he gives gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, agate, coral, amber, and all kinds of wonderful gems filling Jambudvipa, as well as elephants, horses, carriages, and palaces and towers made of the seven jewels. This great almsgiver practices charity in this way for a full eighty years. Then he thinks: I have given these living beings objects of amusement according to their desires. However, these living beings have grown old and decrepit, being over eighty years of age, with white hair and wrinkled faces; they will die before long. I should instruct and guide them with the Buddha Dharma. Immediately he gathers these living beings and proclaims the Dharma instruction, demonstrating, teaching, benefiting, and delighting them, so that at once they all attain the way of the Srotapanna, the way of the Sakrdagamin, the way of the Anagamin, and the way of the Arhat, exhausting all outflows, attaining freedom in deep dhyana concentrations, and perfecting the eight deliverances. What is your opinion? Is the merit obtained by this great almsgiver much or not?

Maitreya said to the Buddha: World Honored One! This person's merit is very much, immeasurable and boundless. Even if this almsgiver had only given all those objects of amusement to living beings, his merit would be immeasurable; how much more so when he causes them to attain the fruit of Arhatship!

The Buddha said to Maitreya: I will now tell you clearly. The merit obtained by this person, who gave all those objects of amusement to the living beings of the six paths in four million myriads of millions of asamkhyeya worlds and also caused them to attain the fruit of Arhatship, is not equal to one hundredth part, one thousandth part, or one part in hundreds of thousands of millions of billions of the merit of that fiftieth person who hears one verse of the Lotus Sutra and rejoices; nor can it be known by calculation or analogy.

Ajita! If the merit of even the fiftieth person who hears the Lotus Sutra in turn and rejoices is immeasurable, boundless, and asamkhyeya like this, how much more so is the merit of the one who is the first to hear it in the assembly and rejoice? His blessings are even more supreme, immeasurable, boundless, and asamkhyeya, beyond comparison.

Furthermore, Ajita! If a person, for the sake of this Sutra, goes to a monastery, and whether sitting or standing listens to it for even a moment, because of this merit, in the place where he is reborn he will obtain superior and wonderful elephants, horses, carriages, jeweled palanquins, and ascend to heavenly palaces. If someone sits in a place where the Dharma is lectured, and another person comes, and he persuades him to sit and listen, or shares his seat with him, the merit of this person is such that in his next rebirth he will attain the seat of Shakra, the seat of a Brahma King, or the seat of a Wheel-Turning Sage King.

Ajita! If a person says to another, There is a sutra named the Lotus; let us go together to listen to it, and the other person accepts the instruction and goes to listen, even for a moment, the merit of this person is such that in his next rebirth he will be born in the same place as Bodhisattvas who possess dharani. He will have keen faculties and wisdom. For hundreds of thousands of millions of lifetimes he will never be mute. His breath will not smell foul. His tongue will be constantly free of disease, and his mouth will be free of disease. His teeth will not be stained or black, not yellow or sparse, nor will they be missing or fall out, nor crooked or curved. His lips will not droop, nor curl back or shrink, nor be rough or chapped, nor have sores or pustules, nor be misshapen, nor crooked or slanted, nor thick or large, nor dark or black, and he will have no disagreeable features. His nose will not be flat or crooked. His face will not be dark, nor long and narrow, nor sunken and crooked. He will have no unpleasant appearances whatsoever. His lips, tongue, and teeth will all be dignified and fine. His nose will be long, high, and straight. His face will be round and full. His eyebrows will be high and long, and his forehead broad and flat. His human features will be perfect and complete. Life after life wherever he is born, he will see the Buddha, hear the Dharma, and believe and accept the teachings.

Ajita! Just observe this: the merit of exhorting one person to go and listen to the Dharma is like this; how much more so the merit of one who listens, preaches, reads, and recites with a single mind, and in the great assembly makes distinctions for people and practices according to the teaching?

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If a person in the Dharma assembly
Gets to hear this classic Sutra,
Even just one verse,
And rejoicing, preaches it for others,
And in this way the teaching proceeds in turn
Until it reaches the fiftieth person,
The blessings obtained by that last person
I will now distinguish.
Suppose there is a great almsgiver
Who supplies an immeasurable multitude,
For a full eighty years,
With whatever they desire.
Seeing their signs of decay and old age,
Their hair white and faces wrinkled,
Their teeth sparse and bodies withered,
He thinks, They will die before long;
I should now teach them
To obtain the fruit of the Way.
Immediately, using expedient devices,
He preaches the true Dharma of Nirvana:
The world is not firm or durable,
Like water bubbles or a mirage;
You should all quickly
Generate a mind of aversion and detachment.
When the people hear this Dharma,
They all become Arhats,
Possessing the six transcendental powers,
The three clear knowledges, and eight deliverances.
The last person, the fiftieth,
Who hears one verse and rejoices,
His blessings exceed the former person's,
Beyond comparison by analogy.
If listening in turn like this
Brings such immeasurable blessings,
How much more so for the one in the Dharma assembly

Who first hears it and rejoices?
If one exhorts a single person
To go and listen to the Lotus,
Saying, This Sutra is profound and wonderful,
Difficult to encounter in thousands of millions of kalpas,
And that person accepts the instruction and goes to listen,
Hearing it for even a moment,
The blessed reward of this person
I will now distinguish and explain.
Life after life, he will have no mouth diseases,
His teeth will not be sparse, yellow, or black,
His lips will not be thick, curled, or missing portions,
And he will have no hateful appearances.
His tongue will not be dry, black, or short.
His nose will be high, long, and straight.
His forehead will be broad, flat, and upright.
His face and eyes will be dignified and solemn.
He will be someone people delight to see.
His breath will have no foul odor;
The fragrance of Utpala flowers
Will constantly come from his mouth.
If one purposefully goes to a monastery
Wishing to listen to the Lotus Sutra,
And hearing it for a moment, rejoices,
I will now speak of his blessings.
In later lives among gods and humans,
He will obtain wonderful elephants, horses, and carriages,
Palanquins of precious jewels,
And ascend to heavenly palaces.
If in a place where the Dharma is lectured,
One exhorts a person to sit and listen to the Sutra,
Because of the merit of this blessing,
He will obtain the seats of Shakra, Brahma, and Wheel-Turning Kings.
How much more so for one who listens single-mindedly,
Explains its meaning and import,
And practices according to the teaching?
His blessings are beyond measure.

THE MERITS OF THE TEACHER OF THE LAW

At that time the Buddha said to the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Constant Exertion: If good men or good women receive and hold this Lotus Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining, or writing it, such people will obtain eight hundred eye merits, one thousand two hundred ear merits, eight hundred nose merits, one thousand two hundred tongue merits, eight hundred body merits, and one thousand two hundred mind merits. With these merits they will adorn their six faculties, making them all pure. These good men and good women, with the pure physical eyes produced by their parents, will see all the mountains, forests, rivers, and seas within and without the three thousand great thousand world, down to the Avici Hell and up to the Summit of Existence. They will also see all the living beings within it, and fully see and know the causes and conditions of their karma and the places of their rebirth and reward.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

If in the great assembly,
With a fearless mind,
One preaches this Lotus Sutra,
Listen to his merits.
This person obtains eight hundred
Supreme merits of the eye;
Because of this adornment,
His eyes are extremely pure.
With the eyes produced by parents,
He fully sees the three thousand worlds,
The interior and exterior Meru Mountains,
Sumeru and the Iron Ring,
And all the other mountains and forests,
Great seas, rivers, and waters,
Down to the Avici Hell,
Up to the Summit of Existence.
Within them, all living beings,
Everything is fully seen.
Though he has not yet obtained the divine eye,
The power of his physical eyes is like this.

Furthermore, Constant Exertion! If good men or good women receive and hold this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining, or writing it, they will obtain one thousand two hundred ear merits. With these pure ears, they will hear all the various kinds of languages and sounds within and without the three thousand great thousand world, down to the Avici Hell and up to the Summit of Existence, sounds of elephants, sounds of horses, sounds of cattle, sounds of carriages, sounds of weeping and wailing, sounds of sorrow and lamentation, sounds of conches, sounds of drums,

sounds of bells, sounds of chimes, sounds of laughter, sounds of speech, male sounds, female sounds, boys' sounds, girls' sounds, Dharma sounds, non-Dharma sounds, sounds of suffering, sounds of pleasure, sounds of ordinary people, sounds of sages, happy sounds, unhappy sounds, sounds of gods, sounds of dragons, sounds of yakshas, sounds of gandharvas, sounds of asuras, sounds of garudas, sounds of kimnaras, sounds of mahoragas, sounds of fire, sounds of water, sounds of wind, sounds of hells, sounds of animals, sounds of hungry ghosts, sounds of bhikshus, sounds of bhikshunis, sounds of Voice-Hearers, sounds of Pratyekabuddhas, sounds of Bodhisattvas, and sounds of Buddhas. In short, all sounds whatsoever within and without the three thousand great thousand world, though they have not yet obtained the divine ear, they hear and know them all with the pure, ordinary ears produced by their parents; distinguishing various sounds in this way without damaging their ear faculties.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

With the ears produced by parents,
Pure and without turbidity or filth,
With these ordinary ears one hears
The sounds of the three thousand worlds.
Sounds of elephants, horses, carriages, and cattle,
Sounds of bells, chimes, conches, and drums,
Sounds of lutes, harps, and konghou,
Sounds of pipes and flutes,
Sounds of pure and beautiful singing;
Hearing them without attachment.
Numerous kinds of human sounds,
Hearing, one can understand them all.
Also hearing the sounds of gods,
Subtle and wonderful song tones,
And hearing the sounds of men and women,
And the sounds of boys and girls.
In the mountains, rivers, and steep valleys,
The sounds of Kalavinka,
Jivajivaka, and other birds;
All their sounds are heard.
The multitude of pains and sufferings in hell,
Sounds of various torments and poisons;
Hungry ghosts driven by hunger and thirst,
Sounds of seeking drink and food;
Various Asuras and others,
Dwelling by the great ocean,
When they speak to one another,
Emitting loud voices;

The one who preaches the Dharma like this,
Dwelling safely here,
Hears all these sounds from afar,
Without damaging his ear faculty.
In the worlds of the ten directions,
Birds and beasts crying and calling to one another;
The person who preaches the Dharma
Hears them all from here.
Above in the Brahma Heavens,
The Light Sound and Pervasive Purity Heavens,
Up to the Heaven of the Summit of Existence,
The sounds of their speech;
The Dharma teacher dwelling here
Can hear them all.
All the multitude of bhikshus,
And the bhikshunis,
Whether reading and reciting the scriptures,
Or preaching for others;
The Dharma teacher dwelling here
Can hear them all.
Furthermore, there are Bodhisattvas
Reading and reciting the sutra dharmas,
Or preaching for others,
Compiling and explaining their meanings;
All such sounds as these
Can be heard.
The Buddhas, Great Sage Honored Ones,
Who teach and convert living beings,
In the midst of the great assemblies
Expounding the subtle and wonderful Dharma;
One who holds this Lotus
Can hear them all.
Within and without the three thousand great thousand worlds,
All the various sounds,
Down to the Avici Hell,
Up to the Heaven of the Summit of Existence,
He hears all their sounds
Without damaging his ear faculty.
Because his ears are sharp and keen,
He can distinguish and know them all.
One who holds this Lotus,
Though he has not yet obtained the divine ear,

But merely uses the ears he was born with,
His merit is already like this.

Furthermore, Constant Exertion! If good men or good women receive and hold this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining, or writing it, they will achieve eight hundred nose merits. With this pure nose faculty, they will smell all the various kinds of fragrances within and without, above and below the three thousand great thousand world, scents of sumana flowers, jati flowers, mallika flowers, campaka flowers, patala flowers, red lotus flowers, blue lotus flowers, white lotus flowers, flowering trees, fruit trees, sandalwood, aloe wood, tamalapattra, tagara, and thousands of millions of kinds of mixed incense, whether powdered, in pills, or paste incense. One who holds this Sutra, while dwelling here, can distinguish them all. He will also distinguish the scents of living beings, scents of elephants, horses, cattle, sheep, and others; scents of men, women, boys, girls, and grass, trees, and thickets. Whether near or far, all such scents he will smell and distinguish without error. One who holds this Sutra, although dwelling here, also smells the scents of the gods in the heavens, the scent of parijata and kovidara trees, the scent of Mandarava flowers, Maha-Mandarava flowers, Manjusaka flowers, Maha-Manjusaka flowers, sandalwood, aloe wood, various powdered incenses, and mixed flower scents. All such heavenly scents produced by mixing, he smells and knows them all. He also smells the body scents of the gods, the scent of Shakra Devanam Indra when in his supreme palace enjoying the five desires and amusing himself; or the scent when he is in the Hall of the Wonderful Law preaching the Dharma for the gods of the Trayastrimsa Heaven; or the scent when he is playing in the gardens; and the body scents of the other gods, men, and women; he smells them all from afar. In this way, extending up to the Brahma world and to the Summit of Existence, he smells the body scents of all the gods, and also smells the incense burned by the gods. And the scents of Voice-Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, and the body scents of Buddhas, he also smells from afar and knows where they are. Though he smells these scents, his nose faculty is not damaged or mistaken. If he wishes to distinguish them and describe them for others, his memory will not fail.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

This person's nose is pure;
In this world,
Whatever fragrant or foul things,
He smells and knows them all.
Sumana and jati,
Tamalapattra and sandalwood,
Aloe wood and cassia,
Scents of various flowers and fruits;
And knowing the scents of living beings,
Scents of men and women;
The preacher of the Dharma dwelling far away,
Smelling the scents, knows where they are.

Great powerful Wheel-Turning Kings,
Small Wheel-Turning Kings and their sons,
Ministers and palace attendants;
Smelling their scent, he knows where they are.
The precious jewels worn on the body,
And the treasure troves in the earth,
The Wheel-Turning King's jewel-woman;
Smelling the scent, he knows where they are.
People's adornments for the body,
Clothing and necklaces,
Various kinds of ointments;
Smelling the scent, he knows their bodies.
When the gods walk or sit,
Play or perform spiritual transformations,
One who holds this Lotus,
Smelling the scent, can know them all.
The flowers, fruits, and seeds of all trees,
And the fragrance of ghee;
The holder of the Sutra dwelling here
Knows where they all are.
In the deep and steep places of the mountains,
Sandalwood trees are blooming;
Living beings in their midst,
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
Iron Ring Mountains, great seas,
And living beings in the earth;
The holder of the Sutra, smelling the scent,
Knows where they all are.
Asura men and women,
And all their retinues,
When they fight or play,
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
In the wilderness and dangerous narrow passes,
Lions, elephants, tigers, wolves,
Wild cattle, water buffalo, and the like;
Smelling the scent, he knows where they are.
If there is a pregnant woman,
Whose child's sex is not yet distinguished,
Whether without male organ or non-human,
Smelling the scent, he can know it all.
Because of the power of smelling scents,
He knows if she is newly pregnant,

Whether it will be successful or not,
And if she will peacefully give birth to a blessed child.
Because of the power of smelling scents,
He knows the thoughts of men and women,
Minds of desire, stupidity, and anger,
And also knows those who cultivate goodness.
Hoards hidden in the earth,
Gold, silver, and various gems,
Contained in copper vessels;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
Various kinds of necklaces,
Whose value no one can recognize;
Smelling the scent, he knows their value,
Their origin, and where they are.
All the flowers in the heavens,
Mandarava, Manjusaka,
Parijata trees;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
All the palaces in the heavens,
Distinguished as high, medium, and low,
Adorned with many precious flowers;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
The heavenly gardens, groves, and superb palaces,
Observatories and Halls of the Wonderful Law,
Those amusing themselves within them;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
When the gods listen to the Dharma,
Or enjoy the five desires,
Coming and going, walking, sitting, or lying down;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
The clothing worn by heavenly women,
Adorned with fine flowers and perfumes,
When they whirl about in play;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
Thus extending upwards
To the Brahma world,
Those entering dhyana and exiting dhyana;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
Light Sound and Pervasive Purity Heavens,
Up to the Summit of Existence,
Those newly born and those fading away;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.

The multitude of bhikshus,
Constantly diligent in the Dharma,
Whether sitting or walking,
Or reading and reciting sutras and dharmas,
Or under the forest trees,
Concentrated and practicing meditation;
The holder of the Sutra, smelling the scent,
Knows where they all are.
Bodhisattvas with solid will,
Sitting in meditation or reading and reciting,
Or preaching the Dharma for others;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
The World Honored Ones in every direction,
Respected by all,
Pitying the multitude and preaching the Dharma;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
Living beings before the Buddha,
Hearing the Sutra and all rejoicing,
Practicing according to the Dharma;
Smelling the scent, he can know them all.
Though he has not yet obtained the Bodhisattva's
Non-outflow Dharma-born nose,
Yet this holder of the Sutra
First obtains a nose mark such as this.

Furthermore, Constant Exertion! If good men or good women receive and hold this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining, or writing it, they will obtain one thousand two hundred tongue merits. Whether things are good or ugly, delicious or not delicious, even bitter or astringent things, when they touch his tongue faculty, they all change into superior tastes, like heavenly sweet dew; there is nothing that is not delicious. If with his tongue faculty he expounds something in the great assembly, he emits a deep, wonderful voice capable of entering their hearts, causing them all to rejoice and be happy. Furthermore, the heavenly sons and daughters, Shakra, Brahma, and the gods, hearing this profound and wonderful sound and the orderly sequence of his speech, will all come to listen. And dragons, dragon daughters, yakshas, yaksha daughters, gandharvas, gandharva daughters, asuras, asura daughters, garudas, garuda daughters, kimnaras, kimnara daughters, mahoragas, mahoraga daughters, for the sake of listening to the Dharma, will all come to draw near, respect, and make offerings. And bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, upasikas, kings, princes, ministers, retainers, Small Wheel-Turning Kings, Great Wheel-Turning Kings, their seven treasures, thousand sons, and inner and outer retainers, riding their palaces, will all come to listen to the Dharma, because this Bodhisattva speaks the Dharma well. Brahmins, householders, and the people of the country will serve and make offerings to him for the rest of their lives. Also, Voice-Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Buddhas will constantly delight to see him. In

whatever direction this person is, the Buddhas will all face that direction to preach the Dharma, and he will be able to receive and hold all the Buddha Dharma, and also emit the profound and wonderful sound of the Dharma.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

This person's tongue faculty is pure,
Never receiving evil tastes.
Whatever he eats or chews,
All becomes sweet dew.
With a deep, pure, wonderful voice,
He preaches the Dharma to the great assembly.
Using various causes, conditions, and similes
To guide the minds of living beings,
Those who hear all rejoice,
And set out superior offerings.
Gods, dragons, yakshas,
And asuras and others,
All with respectful minds,
Come together to listen to the Dharma.
This person who preaches the Dharma,
If he wishes with his wonderful voice
To fill the three thousand worlds,
He can reach everywhere at will.
Small and Great Wheel-Turning Kings,
And their thousand sons and retainues,
With palms pressed together and respectful minds,
Constantly come to listen to and accept the Dharma.
Gods, dragons, yakshas,
Rakshasas and pisacas,
Also with joyful minds,
Always delight in coming to make offerings.
Brahma King and Demon King,
Self-Mastery and Great Self-Mastery,
All such heavenly multitudes
Constantly come to his place.
The Buddhas and disciples,
Hearing the sound of his preaching,
Constantly keep him in mind and protect him,
And sometimes manifest their bodies for him.

Furthermore, Constant Exertion! If good men or good women receive and hold this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining, or writing it, they will obtain eight hundred body merits. They will obtain a pure body, like pure lapis lazuli, which living beings delight to see. Because their body is pure, the living beings of the three thousand great thousand world, at the time of birth and death, high and low, beautiful and ugly, born in good places or evil places, all appear within it. And the Iron Ring Mountains, Great Iron Ring Mountains, Meru Mountains, Mahameru Mountains, and other mountains, and the living beings in their midst, all appear within it. Down to the Avici Hell and up to the Summit of Existence, all things and living beings appear within it. If Voice-Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, or Buddhas preach the Dharma, they all manifest their forms and images within that body.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

One who holds the Lotus,
His body is extremely pure,
Like that pure lapis lazuli;
Living beings all delight to see it.
Also like a pure bright mirror,
In which all forms and images are seen,
The Bodhisattva in his pure body
Sees everything in the world;
Only he understands it clearly,
While others do not see.
Within the three thousand worlds,
All the multitudes of beings,
Gods, humans, asuras,
Hells, ghosts, and animals;
All such forms and images
Appear within his body.
The palaces of the various gods,
Up to the Summit of Existence;
Iron Ring and Meru,
Mahameru Mountains,
And the waters of the great seas,
All appear within his body.
The Buddhas and Voice-Hearers,
Buddha-sons and Bodhisattvas,
Whether alone or in the multitude,
Preaching the Dharma, all appear.
Though he has not yet obtained the non-outflow,
Wonderful body of Dharma nature,
Because of his pure, ordinary body,

Everything appears within it.

Furthermore, Constant Exertion! If good men or good women, after the Tathagata's extinction, receive and hold this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining, or writing it, they will obtain one thousand two hundred mind merits. With this pure mind faculty, upon hearing even one verse or one phrase, they will penetrate immeasurable and boundless meanings. Having understood these meanings, they will be able to expound that one phrase or one verse for a month, four months, or even a year. All the Dharma they preach, according to its meaning and import, will not contradict the mark of reality. If they speak of worldly classics, maxims for governing the world, or occupations for sustaining life, all will conform to the True Dharma. Regarding the living beings of the six paths in the three thousand great thousand world, they will know all the workings of their minds, the movements of their minds, and the idle theories of their minds. Although they have not yet obtained non-outflow wisdom, their mind faculty is pure like this. Whatever this person thinks, calculates, or speaks is all Buddha Dharma; there is nothing that is not true, and it is also what has been preached in the sutras of former Buddhas.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

This person's mind is pure,
Bright and sharp, without filth or turbidity.
With this wonderful mind faculty,
He knows superior, medium, and inferior dharmas.
Hearing even one verse,
He penetrates immeasurable meanings,
And preaches them in order according to the Dharma,
For a month, four months, or a year.
Inside and outside this world,
All the various living beings,
Whether gods, dragons, humans,
Yakshas, ghosts, spirits, and others,
Within the six paths,
Whatever varied thoughts they have,
As a reward for holding the Lotus,
He knows them all at once.
The countless Buddhas of the ten directions,
Adorned with the marks of a hundred blessings,
Preaching the Dharma for living beings;
He hears it all and can receive and hold it.
Thinking on immeasurable meanings,
Preaching the Dharma likewise immeasurably,
From beginning to end never forgetting or erring,
Because of holding the Lotus.

Knowing the characteristics of all dharmas,
Recognizing the sequence according to meaning,
Mastering names and languages,
He expounds according to what he knows.
Whatever this person speaks
Is all the Dharma of former Buddhas.
Because he expounds this Dharma,
He is fearless in the assembly.
One who holds the Lotus Sutra,
His mind faculty is pure like this.
Though he has not yet obtained outflowslessness,
He already has such characteristics.
This person holding this Sutra
Dwells in a rare ground,
Rejoiced in and loved and respected
By all living beings.
Able to use thousands of millions of kinds
Of skillful languages
To make distinctions and preach the Dharma,
Because he holds the Lotus Sutra.

BODHISATTVA SADAPARIBHUTA

At that time the Buddha said to the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Mahasthamaprapta: You should know! If bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, or upasikas hold the Lotus Sutra, and anyone curses, abuses, or slanders them with an evil mouth, that person will incur great heavy guilt and retribution, as described before. The merits obtained by those who hold the Sutra, as just described, are purity of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

Mahasthamaprapta! Long ago in the past, innumerable, boundless, inconceivable asamkhyeya kalpas ago, there was a Buddha named Awesome Sound King Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His kalpa was named Free From Decay. His country was named Great Achievement. That Awesome Sound King Buddha, in that world, preached the Dharma for gods, humans, and asuras. For those seeking to be Voice-Hearers, he preached the Dharma of the Four Truths corresponding to their needs, to cross over birth, old age, sickness, and death to ultimate Nirvana. For those seeking to be Pratyekabuddhas, he preached the Dharma of the Twelve Causes and Conditions corresponding to their needs. For the Bodhisattvas, because of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, he preached the Dharma of the Six Paramitas corresponding to their needs, to attain ultimate Buddha wisdom.

Mahasthamaprapta! The lifespan of this Awesome Sound King Buddha was forty myriad million nayuta Ganges sands of kalpas. The number of kalpas the True Dharma remained in the world was equal to the dust motes of one Jambudvipa. The number of kalpas the Semblance Dharma remained in the world was equal to the dust motes of four four-continent worlds. That Buddha, having benefited living beings, afterwards entered extinction. After the True Dharma and Semblance Dharma had totally perished, another Buddha appeared in that land, also named Awesome Sound King Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. In this sequence there were twenty thousand million Buddhas, all with the same name.

After the first Awesome Sound King Tathagata had entered extinction, and the True Dharma had perished, during the Semblance Dharma, bhikshus of overbearing arrogance possessed great power. At that time there was a Bodhisattva bhikshu named Sadaparibhuta (Constant Non-Slighting). Mahasthamaprapta! For what reason was he named Constant Non-Slighting? This bhikshu, whenever he saw anyone, whether bhikshu, bhikshuni, upasaka, or upasika, would bow and praise them, saying: I deeply respect you all; I dare not slight or despise you. Why is this? You all practice the Bodhisattva Way and will become Buddhas. This bhikshu did not devote himself to reading and reciting the scriptures, but simply practiced bowing. Even when he saw members of the four assemblies from afar, he would go to them, bow, and praise them, saying: I dare not slight you; you will all become Buddhas. Among the four assemblies, there were those who gave rise to

anger and impure minds, who scolded and abused him, saying: Where does this ignorant bhikshu come from? He says of himself, I do not slight you, and bestows predictions on us saying we will become Buddhas. We have no use for such false predictions. Thus he passed many years, constantly being scolded and abused, but he did not generate anger, always saying: You will become Buddhas. When he spoke these words, people would sometimes beat him with staffs, wood, tiles, or stones. He would run away and stand at a distance, yet still shout in a loud voice: I dare not slight you; you will all become Buddhas. Because he constantly spoke these words, the bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, and upasikas of overbearing arrogance called him Constant Non-Slighting.

When this bhikshu was nearing the end of his life, he heard in the empty sky fully twenty thousands of millions of verses of the Lotus Sutra that had been preached by the Buddha Awesome Sound King. He was able to receive and hold them all. Immediately, he obtained the purity of the eye faculty and the purity of the ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind faculties as described above. Having obtained the purity of these six faculties, his lifespan was increased by two hundred myriad million nayuta years, and he broadly preached this Lotus Sutra for people. At that time, the four assemblies of overbearing arrogance, bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, and upasikas, who had slighted and despised him and given him the name Non-Slighting, seeing that he had obtained great spiritual powers, the power of joyful eloquence, and the power of great good tranquility, and hearing what he preached, all believed, submitted, and followed him. This Bodhisattva converted thousands of millions of multitudes, causing them to dwell in Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. After his life ended, he met two thousand million Buddhas, all named Sun Moon Lamp Bright, and within their Dharma, he preached this Lotus Sutra. Because of this cause and condition, he again met two thousand million Buddhas, all with the same name, Cloud Sovereign Lamp King. Within the Dharma of these Buddhas, he received, held, read, and recited this Sutra and preached it for the four assemblies; therefore he obtained the purity of his ordinary eyes, and purity of his ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind faculties, and preached the Dharma in the four assemblies with a fearless mind.

Mahasthamaprapta! This Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Constant Non-Slighting made offerings to such numerous Buddhas, revered, honored, and praised them, and planted various good roots. Afterwards he again met thousands of millions of Buddhas, and within the Dharma of those Buddhas he also preached this scripture. His merits perfected, he attained Buddhahood.

Mahasthamaprapta! What is your opinion? Was the Bodhisattva Constant Non-Slighting at that time someone else? He was none other than myself. If in my past lives I had not received, held, read, and recited this Sutra and preached it for others, I would not have been able to quickly attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Because in the presence of former Buddhas I received, held, read, and recited this Sutra and preached it for people, I quickly attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Mahasthamaprapta! At that time, the four assemblies, bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, and upasikas, because they slighted and despised me with angry minds, for two hundred million kalpas

did not meet a Buddha, did not hear the Dharma, and did not see the Sangha. For a thousand kalpas they underwent great suffering and distress in the Avici Hell. After expiating their offenses, they again encountered the Bodhisattva Constant Non-Slighting, who taught and converted them to Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Mahasthamaprapta! What is your opinion? Were the four assemblies at that time who constantly slighted this Bodhisattva someone else? They are the five hundred Bodhisattvas in this assembly headed by Bhadrápala, the five hundred bhikshus headed by Lion Moon, and the five hundred upasakas headed by Sugata-cetana, all of whom are non-retrogressing in Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi.

Mahasthamaprapta! You should know that this Lotus Sutra greatly benefits the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas, enabling them to reach Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Therefore, after the Tathagata's extinction, the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas should constantly receive, hold, read, recite, explain, and write this Sutra.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

In the past there was a Buddha
Named Awesome Sound King.
With immeasurable spiritual wisdom,
He guided everyone.
Gods, humans, dragons, and spirits
All made offerings to him.
After this Buddha's extinction,
When the Dharma was about to end,
There was a Bodhisattva
Named Constant Non-Slighting.
At that time the four assemblies
Were attached to the dharmas.
The Bodhisattva Non-Slighting
Would go to their place
And speak to them, saying:
I do not slight you;
You practicing the Way
Will all become Buddhas.
When those people heard this,
They slighted, slandered, and abused him;
The Bodhisattva Non-Slighting
Was able to endure it all.
When his offenses were expiated,
And his life was drawing to a close,

He got to hear this Sutra,
And his six faculties were purified.
Because of spiritual powers,
His lifespan was increased,
And again for the sake of people,
He broadly preached this Sutra.
The multitude attached to dharmas
Were all taught and perfected
By this Bodhisattva,
Causing them to dwell in the Buddha Way.
When Non-Slighting's life ended,
He met countless Buddhas.
Because he preached this Sutra,
He obtained immeasurable blessings,
Gradually perfected his merit,
And quickly attained the Buddha Way.
The Non-Slighting of that time
Was none other than myself.
The four kinds of multitudes then,
Those attached to dharmas,
Who heard Non-Slighting say:
You will become Buddhas;
Through these causes and conditions,
Met countless Buddhas.
The multitude of five hundred Bodhisattvas
In this assembly,
And the four assemblies
Of pure believing men and women
Who are now before me
Listening to the Dharma, are they.
In previous lives,
I exhorted these people
To listen to and accept this Sutra,
The foremost Dharma.
Opening, showing, and teaching people
To dwell in Nirvana,
Life after life receiving and holding
Scriptures such as this.
Only after millions of millions of myriads of kalpas,
Inconceivable in number,
Can one get to hear
This Lotus Sutra.

Only after millions of millions of myriads of kalpas,
Inconceivable in number,
Do the Buddhas, World Honored Ones,
Preach this Sutra.
Therefore, the practitioner,
After the Buddha's extinction,
Hearing such a Sutra as this,
Should not generate doubts or perplexities.
He should single-mindedly
Broadly preach this Sutra,
Life after life meeting Buddhas,
And quickly attaining the Buddha Way.

THE SPIRITUAL POWERS OF THE TATHAGATA

At that time, the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas equal to the dust motes of a thousand worlds, who had emerged from the earth, all pressed their palms together with a single mind before the Buddha, gazed up at the Honored One's countenance, and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! After the Buddha's extinction, in whatever land the emanations of the World Honored One enter extinction, we will dwell there and broadly preach this Sutra. Why is this? Because we also wish to obtain this true, pure Great Dharma, to receive, hold, read, recite, explain, write, and make offerings to it.

At that time the World Honored One, in the presence of Manjusri and the other immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas who had long dwelt in the Saha world, as well as the bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, upasikas, gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, non-humans, and everyone else, manifested great spiritual power. He extended his broad, long tongue upward to the Brahma world. From all his pores, he emitted immeasurable, countless rays of colored light, illuminating all the worlds of the ten directions. The Buddhas seated on lion seats under the various jewel trees did likewise, extending their broad, long tongues and emitting immeasurable light. While Shakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhas under the jewel trees manifested their spiritual powers, fully a hundred thousand years passed. Afterwards, they retracted their tongues. At the same time, they coughed and snapped their fingers. These two sounds pervaded the Buddha worlds of the ten directions, and the earth in all of them trembled in six ways. The living beings in those worlds, gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, by the Buddha's spiritual power, all saw this Saha world with its immeasurable, boundless, hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas sitting on lion seats under the various jewel trees; and saw Shakyamuni Buddha together with Many Treasures Tathagata sitting on a lion seat in the precious stupa; and also saw the immeasurable, boundless, hundreds of thousands of millions of Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas and the four assemblies respectfully surrounding Shakyamuni Buddha. Seeing this, they all rejoiced greatly, attaining what they never had before. Immediately, the gods in the empty sky sang out in loud voices: Beyond this immeasurable, boundless, hundreds of thousands of millions of asamkhyeya worlds, there is a country named Saha. In it is a Buddha named Shakyamuni. He is now preaching the Great Vehicle Sutra named "The Lotus of the Wonderful Law," a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas, which is protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas, for the sake of the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas. You should all rejoice with deep hearts, and also bow and make offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha. Those living beings, having heard the voice in the sky, pressed their palms together facing the Saha world and said: Namo Shakyamuni Buddha! Namo Shakyamuni Buddha! With various flowers, incense, necklaces, banners, canopies, personal adornments, jewels, and wonderful things, they all scattered them from afar toward the Saha world. The scattered objects came from the ten directions like gathering clouds, transforming into a jeweled canopy completely covering the Buddhas in this place. At that time, the worlds of the ten directions were open and unobstructed, like a single Buddha land.

At that time the Buddha said to Superior Practice and the other Bodhisattvas in the great assembly: The spiritual power of the Buddhas is immeasurable, boundless, and inconceivable like this. If I were to use these spiritual powers for immeasurable, boundless, hundreds of thousands of millions of asamkhyeya kalpas to speak of the merits of this Sutra for the sake of entrustment, I still could not exhaust them. In summary, all the Dharmas possessed by the Tathagata, all the自在 spiritual powers of the Tathagata, all the secret essential storehouses of the Tathagata, and all the extremely profound matters of the Tathagata are all proclaimed, demonstrated, and revealed in this Sutra. Therefore, after the Tathagata's extinction, you should single-mindedly receive, hold, read, recite, explain, write, and practice it as preached. In whatever land, if there is one who receives, holds, reads, recites, explains, writes, or practices it as preached; or wherever the Sutra roll dwells, whether in a garden, in a forest, under a tree, in a monastery, in a white-robed layman's house, in a palace or hall, or in a mountain valley or wilderness, in all these places one should erect a stupa and make offerings. Why is this? You should know that this place is the place of enlightenment. The Buddhas attained Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi here; the Buddhas turned the Dharma wheel here; the Buddhas entered Parinirvana here.

At that time the World Honored One, wishing to proclaim this meaning again, spoke in verse:

The Buddhas, Saviors of the World,
Dwelling in great spiritual penetrations,
In order to delight living beings,
Manifest immeasurable spiritual powers.
Their tongue appearance reaches the Brahma Heaven,
Their bodies emit countless lights.
For those seeking the Buddha Way,
They manifest this rare matter.
The sound of the Buddhas coughing,
And the sound of snapping fingers,
Are heard throughout the lands of the ten directions;
The earth in all of them trembles in six ways.
Because after the Buddha's extinction
One is able to hold this Sutra,
The Buddhas all rejoice
And manifest immeasurable spiritual powers.
Because of entrusting this Sutra,
They praise the one who receives and holds it;
Throughout immeasurable kalpas,
They still cannot exhaust it.
This person's merit
Is boundless and inexhaustible,
Like the empty space of the ten directions,
Which has no boundary.

One who can hold this Sutra
Has already seen me,
And also seen Many Treasures Buddha,
And the emanation Buddhas;
And sees me today
Teaching and converting the Bodhisattvas.
One who can hold this Sutra
Causes me and my emanations,
And the extinct Many Treasures Buddha,
All to rejoice.
The present Buddhas of the ten directions,
And those of the past and future,
He also sees and makes offerings to,
And causes them to obtain joy.
The secret essential Dharmas obtained
By the Buddhas sitting in the place of enlightenment,
One who can hold this Sutra
Will also obtain before long.
One who can hold this Sutra,
Regarding the meaning of all dharmas,
Names and terminologies,
Will delight in preaching them inexhaustibly,
Like the wind in the empty sky,
Without any obstacle or hindrance.
After the Tathagata's extinction,
He knows the Sutras preached by the Buddha,
Their causes, conditions, and sequence,
And preaches them according to reality and meaning.
Like the light of the sun and moon
Able to remove all darkness,
This person moving through the world
Can extinguish the darkness of living beings,
Teaching immeasurable Bodhisattvas
To ultimately dwell in the One Vehicle.
Therefore, one with wisdom,
Hearing the benefit of this merit,
After my extinction,
Should receive and hold this Sutra.
This person, in the Buddha Way,
Determinedly has no doubts.

ENTRUSTMENT

At that time, Shakyamuni Buddha rose from his Dharma seat and manifested great spiritual power. With his right hand he rubbed the crowns of the heads of the immeasurable Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas and said: For immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of asamkhyeya kalpas, I have practiced this difficult-to-attain Dharma of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Now I entrust it to you. You should single-mindedly propagate this Dharma, causing it to increase and spread widely.

In this way he rubbed the crowns of the heads of the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas three times and said: For immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of asamkhyeya kalpas, I have practiced this difficult-to-attain Dharma of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Now I entrust it to you. You should receive, hold, read, recite, and broadly proclaim this Dharma, causing all living beings universally to hear and know it. Why is this? The Tathagata has great kindness and compassion, is free from stinginess, and has no fear. He is able to give living beings the Buddha's wisdom, the Tathagata's wisdom, and spontaneous wisdom. The Tathagata is the great almsgiver to all living beings. You should also follow and learn the Tathagata's Dharma; do not generate stinginess. In the future age, if there are good men or good women who believe in the Tathagata's wisdom, you should preach this Lotus Sutra for them, enabling them to hear and know it, in order to cause them to obtain the Buddha wisdom. If there are living beings who do not believe or accept it, you should show, teach, benefit, and delight them with the other profound Dharmas of the Tathagata. If you are able to do this, then you will have repaid the grace of the Buddhas.

When the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas heard the Buddha speak thus, they were all filled with great joy throughout their bodies. With increased reverence, they bowed, lowered their heads, pressed their palms together facing the Buddha, and together raised their voices saying: We will carry out all the World Honored One's commands. Yes, World Honored One! We pray you will not be concerned. The multitude of Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas repeated this three times, raising their voices together saying: We will carry out all the World Honored One's commands. Yes, World Honored One! We pray you will not be concerned.

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha ordered the emanation Buddhas from the ten directions to each return to their own lands, saying: Buddhas, each dwell in peace. The stupa of Many Treasures Buddha may return to its original state.

When he spoke these words, the immeasurable emanation Buddhas from the ten directions sitting on lion seats under the jewel trees, and Many Treasures Buddha, and the boundless asamkhyeya multitude of Bodhisattvas including Superior Practice, and the four assemblies of Voice-Hearers such as Sariputra, and all the gods, humans, and asuras of the world, hearing what the Buddha said, all rejoiced greatly.

THE FORMER DEEDS OF MEDICINE KING BODHISATTVA

At that time the Bodhisattva Constellation King Flower said to the Buddha: World Honored One! Why does the Medicine King Bodhisattva wander in the Saha world? World Honored One! What are the several hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of difficult and austere practices of this Medicine King Bodhisattva? Excellent, World Honored One! We pray you will explain a little. The gods, dragons, spirits, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, and the Bodhisattvas who have come from other lands, and this multitude of Voice-Hearers, hearing it, will all rejoice.

At that time the Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Constellation King Flower: Long ago in the past, immeasurable Ganges sands of kalpas ago, there was a Buddha named Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. That Buddha had eighty million great Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas and seventy-two Ganges sands of great Voice-Hearers. The Buddha's lifespan was forty-two thousand kalpas, and the lifespan of the Bodhisattvas was the same. In that country there were no women, hells, hungry ghosts, animals, asuras, or any difficulties. The ground was level as the palm of a hand, made of lapis lazuli, adorned with jewel trees, covered with jeweled curtains, hung with jeweled flower banners, and jeweled vases and incense burners pervaded the country. There were towers of seven jewels, one tower for each tree, the trees separated from the towers by an arrow's flight. Under all these jewel trees sat Bodhisattvas and Voice-Hearers. On each of the jewel towers were ten billion gods playing heavenly music and singing praises to the Buddha as an offering.

At that time that Buddha preached the Lotus Sutra for the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings and the multitude of Bodhisattvas and Voice-Hearers. This Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings delighted in practicing asceticism. Within the Dharma of the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue, he diligently practiced exertion, single-mindedly seeking Buddhahood for a full twelve thousand years. He then obtained the Samadhi of Manifesting All Forms. Having obtained this samadhi, his heart rejoiced greatly, and he thought: My obtaining the Samadhi of Manifesting All Forms is entirely due to the power of hearing the Lotus Sutra. I should now make offerings to the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue and the Lotus Sutra. Immediately he entered that samadhi, and in the empty sky rained down Mandarava flowers, Maha-Mandarava flowers, and fine powdered hard black sandalwood, filling the sky and falling like clouds. He also rained down the incense of sandalwood from the near shore of the sea, six zhu of this incense is worth the entire Saha world, as an offering to the Buddha.

Having made this offering, he arose from samadhi and thought to himself: Although I have made offerings to the Buddha with spiritual powers, it is not as good as making an offering of my body. Immediately he swallowed various incenses, sandalwood, kunduruka, turushka, prikka, aloe wood, and resin incense, and drank the oil of campaka and other flowers for a full one thousand two

hundred years. He then anointed his body with fragrant oil, and in the presence of the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue, wrapped himself in heavenly jeweled garments, poured fragrant oil over himself, and with the power of spiritual vows burned his own body. The light shone everywhere throughout worlds equal to the sands of eighty million Ganges Rivers. Within them, the Buddhas simultaneously praised him, saying: Excellent, excellent! Good man! This is true diligence. This is called a true Dharma offering to the Tathagata. Offerings of flowers, incense, necklaces, burning incense, powdered incense, paste incense, heavenly banners, canopies, and sandalwood incense from the near shore of the sea, various material offerings such as these cannot equal it. Even giving one's country, city, wife, and children cannot equal it. Good man! This is named the foremost donation. Among all donations, it is the most honored and supreme, because it is offering the Dharma to the Tathagatas. Having spoken these words, they all became silent. His body burned for one thousand two hundred years. After that time passed, his body was consumed.

The Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings, having made this Dharma offering and his life having ended, was born again in the country of the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue, suddenly appearing by transformation, seated cross-legged in the house of King Pure Virtue. immediately he spoke in verse to his father:

Great King, you should now know,
I practiced in that place,
And immediately obtained the samadhi
Of manifesting all forms.
Diligently practicing great exertion,
I discarded the body I loved,
Making an offering to the World Honored One,
To seek Unsurpassed Wisdom.

Having spoken this verse, he said to his father: The Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue is still present even now. I first made offerings to that Buddha, obtained the dharani of understanding the language of all living beings, and moreover heard this Lotus Sutra with its eight hundred thousands of millions of nayutas of kankaras, bimbaras, and aksobhyas of verses. Great King! I should now return and make offerings to this Buddha. Having said this, he sat on a tower of seven jewels, rose up into the empty sky to the height of seven tala trees, went to the Buddha's place, bowed his head to his feet, put his ten fingers together, and praised the Buddha in verse:

Countenance most rare and wonderful,
Light illuminating the ten directions.
I formerly made offerings,
And now return to behold you again.

At that time, the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings, having spoken this verse, said to the Buddha: World Honored One! The World Honored One is still in the world.

At that time the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue said to the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings: Good man! The time of my Nirvana has arrived; the time of extinction has come. You may arrange my seat; tonight I shall enter Parinirvana. He further commanded the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings: Good man! I entrust the Buddha Dharma to you, and to all the Bodhisattvas and great disciples, and the Dharma of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. I also entrust to you the three thousand great thousand seven-jeweled worlds, the jewel trees, jewel towers, and the attendant gods. After my extinction, I also entrust my relics to you. You should distribute them and broadly arrange for offerings, erecting several thousand stupas.

In this way, the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue, having commanded the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings, entered Nirvana in the last watch of the night.

At that time, the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings, seeing the Buddha pass into extinction, was deeply saddened and distressed, longing for the Buddha. He immediately used sandalwood from the near shore of the sea as a pyre to cremate the Buddha's body. After the fire was extinguished, he collected the relics, made eighty-four thousand jeweled urns, and erected eighty-four thousand stupas, high as three worlds, adorned with spires, hung with banners and canopies, and suspended with many jewel bells.

At that time the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings thought to himself: Although I have made these offerings, my heart is not yet satisfied. I should now make further offerings to the relics. He then said to the Bodhisattvas, great disciples, gods, dragons, yakshas, and all the great assembly: You should pay attention single-mindedly, for I am now going to make offerings to the relics of the Buddha Sun Moon Pure Bright Virtue. Having spoken these words, before the eighty-four thousand stupas, he burned his arms, which were adorned with a hundred blessings, for seventy-two thousand years as an offering. This caused countless multitudes seeking to be Voice-Hearers and immeasurable asamkhyeya people to generate the mind of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, and enabled them all to dwell in the Samadhi of Manifesting All Forms.

At that time, the Bodhisattvas, gods, humans, and asuras, seeing him without arms, were sorrowful and distressed, saying: This Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings is our teacher who instructed and converted us. Now he has burned his arms and his body is incomplete. At that time, the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings made this vow in the midst of the great assembly: Having discarded both my arms, I shall certainly obtain the Buddha's golden body. If this is true and not false, let my two arms be restored as before. As soon as he made this vow, his arms were naturally restored. This came about through the Bodhisattva's pure and thick merit and wisdom. At that time, the three thousand great thousand world trembled in six ways, the heavens rained down jewel flowers, and all gods and humans obtained what they never had before.

The Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Constellation King Flower: What is your opinion? Was the Bodhisattva Seen with Joy by All Living Beings someone else? He was the present Medicine King Bodhisattva. His discarding of his body as an offering numbers in immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas like this.

Constellation King Flower! If there is one who generates the mind wishing to obtain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, and can burn a finger or even a toe as an offering to a Buddha stupa, he surpasses one who uses countries, cities, wives, and children, and the mountains, forests, rivers, pools, and various precious objects of a three thousand great thousand land as offerings. If furthermore there is a person who fills the three thousand great thousand world with the seven jewels and offers it to the Buddha, great Bodhisattvas, Pratyekabuddhas, and Arhats, the merit obtained by this person is not equal to that of receiving and holding this Lotus Sutra, even one four-line verse, whose blessings are the most.

Constellation King Flower! Just as among all streams, rivers, and bodies of water, the ocean is the foremost; so too is this Lotus Sutra. Among the sutras preached by the Tathagatas, it is the most profound and greatest. Just as among all mountains, earth mountains, black mountains, Small Iron Ring Mountains, Great Iron Ring Mountains, and the ten jewel mountains, Mount Sumeru is the foremost; so too is this Lotus Sutra. Among all sutras, it is the highest. Just as among all stars, the Moon God is the foremost; so too is this Lotus Sutra. Among thousands of millions of kinds of sutra dharmas, it is the most illuminating. Just as the Sun God is able to dispel all darkness; so too is this Sutra. It is able to destroy the darkness of all unwholesomeness. Just as among all petty kings, the Wheel-Turning Sage King is the foremost; so too is this Sutra. Among all sutras, it is the most honored. Just as Shakra is king among the thirty-three gods; so too is this Sutra. It is the king of all sutras. Just as the Great Brahma Heaven King is the father of all living beings; so too is this Sutra. It is the father of all sages and worthies, those with learning and those without learning, and those who have generated the Bodhisattva mind. Just as among all ordinary people, the Srotapanna, Sakrdagamin, Anagamin, Arhat, and Pratyekabuddha are the foremost; so too is this Sutra. Among all the sutra dharmas preached by the Tathagatas, preached by Bodhisattvas, or preached by Voice-Hearers, it is the foremost. One who can receive and hold this classic Sutra is also like this; among all living beings, he is the foremost. Among all Voice-Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas, the Bodhisattva is the foremost; so too is this Sutra. Among all sutra dharmas, it is the foremost. Just as the Buddha is the King of Dharmas; so too is this Sutra. It is the King of Sutras.

Constellation King Flower! This Sutra can save all living beings. This Sutra can cause all living beings to be free from suffering and distress. This Sutra can greatly benefit all living beings and fulfill their desires. Like a cool pool able to satisfy all those who are thirsty, like the cold obtaining fire, like the naked obtaining clothing, like a merchant finding a leader, like a child finding its mother, like a crossing finding a boat, like a sick person finding a doctor, like darkness finding a lamp, like the poor finding a jewel, like the people finding a king, like a trader finding the sea, like a torch dispelling darkness; this Lotus Sutra is also like this. It can cause living beings to leave all suffering and all sickness and pain, and can untie all the bonds of birth and death. If a person hears

this Lotus Sutra, writes it himself, or causes others to write it, the merit obtained cannot be calculated even by the Buddha's wisdom. If one writes this Sutra roll and makes offerings with flowers, incense, necklaces, burning incense, powdered incense, paste incense, banners, canopies, clothing, and various kinds of lamps, ghee lamps, oil lamps, fragrant oil lamps, campaka oil lamps, sumana oil lamps, patala oil lamps, varsika oil lamps, navamalika oil lamps, the merit obtained is also immeasurable.

Constellation King Flower! If a person hears this Chapter on the Former Deeds of Medicine King Bodhisattva, he will also obtain immeasurable, boundless merit. If there is a woman who hears this Chapter on the Former Deeds of Medicine King Bodhisattva and is able to receive and hold it, after this female body ends, she will not receive one again. If, in the last five hundred years after the Tathagata's extinction, there is a woman who hears this Sutra and practices according to the teaching, at the end of this life she will immediately go to the World of Peace and Bliss, where Amita Buddha and the multitude of great Bodhisattvas surround and dwell. She will be born on a jeweled seat within a lotus flower, no longer tormented by greed, no longer tormented by anger and stupidity, and no longer tormented by the filth of arrogance and jealousy. She will obtain the Bodhisattva's spiritual powers and the Patience of the Non-Birth of Dharmas. Having obtained this patience, with pure eyes she will see seven million two thousand billion nayuta Ganges sands of Buddhas, Tathagatas. At that time the Buddhas will praise her from afar, saying: Excellent, excellent! Good man! You have been able to receive, hold, read, recite, and ponder this Sutra within the Dharma of Shakyamuni Buddha, and preach it for others. The blessed merit obtained is immeasurable and boundless; fire cannot burn it, water cannot wash it away. Your merit is such that a thousand Buddhas speaking together could not exhaust it. You have now been able to destroy the mara thieves, wreck the army of birth and death, and crush all other enemies. Good man! A hundred thousand Buddhas, with their spiritual powers, together guard and protect you. Among all gods and humans in the world, there is no one like you. Except for the Tathagata, among the Voice-Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, and even Bodhisattvas, there is no one equal to you in wisdom and meditation. Constellation King Flower! Such is the power of merit and wisdom achieved by this Bodhisattva.

If a person hears this Chapter on the Former Deeds of Medicine King Bodhisattva and is able to rejoice and praise it, from this person's mouth in the present life will constantly emit the fragrance of blue lotus flowers, and from the pores of his body will constantly emit the fragrance of ox-head sandalwood. His accumulated merit will be as described above. Therefore, Constellation King Flower, I entrust this Chapter on the Former Deeds of Medicine King Bodhisattva to you. In the last five hundred years after my extinction, you must spread it widely in Jambudvīpa and not allow it to be cut off, nor allow evil demons, demon people, gods, dragons, yakshas, kumbhandas, and others to get the advantage.

Constellation King Flower! You should use your spiritual powers to guard and protect this Sutra. Why is this? This Sutra is a good medicine for the sicknesses of the people of Jambudvīpa. If a person is sick and gets to hear this Sutra, his sickness will immediately be extinguished, and he will

not grow old or die. Constellation King Flower! If you see someone who receives and holds this Sutra, you should scatter blue lotus flowers filled with powdered incense over him as an offering. Having scattered them, you should think: This person before long will take up the grass and sit in the place of enlightenment, break the armies of demons, blow the Dharma conch, beat the great Dharma drum, and liberate all living beings from the ocean of old age, sickness, and death. Therefore, one who seeks the Buddha Way, seeing someone who receives and holds this Sutra, should generate a respectful mind like this.

When this Chapter on the Former Deeds of Medicine King Bodhisattva was preached, eighty-four thousand Bodhisattvas obtained the dharani of understanding the language of all living beings. Many Treasures Tathagata in the precious stupa praised the Bodhisattva Constellation King Flower, saying: Excellent, excellent! Constellation King Flower! You have achieved inconceivable merit, being able to ask Shakyamuni Buddha about such matters as these, benefiting immeasurable numbers of all living beings.

THE BODHISATTVA WONDROUS SOUND

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha emitted a light from the flesh knot characteristic of a great man on the crown of his head, and emitted a light from the white hair-tuft characteristic between his eyebrows, universally illuminating one hundred and eight myriads of millions of nayutas of Ganges sands of Buddha worlds in the east. Beyond this number, there is a world named Pure Light Adornment. In that land there is a Buddha named Pure Flower Constellation King Wisdom Tathagata, Worthy of Offerings, of Right and Universal Knowledge, Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed Knight, Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. He was respectfully surrounded by an immeasurable, boundless multitude of Bodhisattvas, for whom he preached the Dharma. The white hair-tuft light of Shakyamuni Buddha universally illuminated that country.

At that time, in the land of Pure Light Adornment, there was a Bodhisattva named Wondrous Sound (Gadgadasvara), who had long planted the roots of many virtues, and had made offerings to and drawn near immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas, attaining profound wisdom. He had obtained the Samadhi of the Wondrous Banner Mark, the Samadhi of the Lotus of the Law, the Samadhi of Pure Virtue, the Samadhi of the Constellation King's Play, the Samadhi of No Conditions, the Samadhi of the Wisdom Seal, the Samadhi of Understanding the Languages of All Living Beings, the Samadhi of Collecting All Merits, the Samadhi of Purity, the Samadhi of Supernatural Play, the Samadhi of the Wisdom Torch, the Samadhi of the King of Adornment, the Samadhi of Pure Light, the Samadhi of the Pure Store, the Samadhi of the Unique, and the Samadhi of the Sun's Revolution. He had obtained hundreds of thousands of millions of Ganges sands of such great samadhis as these.

When the light of Shakyamuni Buddha shone upon his body, he immediately said to the Buddha Pure Flower Constellation King Wisdom: World Honored One! I must go to the Saha world to bow to, draw near to, and make offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha, and to see the Bodhisattva Manjusri, Prince of the Dharma, the Bodhisattva Medicine King, the Bodhisattva Courageous Giver, the Bodhisattva Constellation King Flower, the Bodhisattva Superior Practice Mind, the Bodhisattva King of Adornment, and the Bodhisattva Medicine Superior.

At that time the Buddha Pure Flower Constellation King Wisdom said to the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound: Do not look lightly upon that country or generate a thought of inferiority. Good man! That Saha world is uneven, high and low, filled with earth, stones, and mountains, and full of filth and evil. The Buddha's body is small and short, and the multitudes of Bodhisattvas are also small in form. But your body is forty-two thousand yojanas high, and my body is six million eight hundred thousand yojanas high. Your body is foremost in uprightness and dignity, with hundreds of thousands of millions of blessings and wonderfully distinct brightness. Therefore, when you go,

do not look lightly upon that country, or generate thoughts of inferiority regarding the Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, or the land.

The Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound said to his Buddha: World Honored One! That I now go to the Saha world is all due to the Tathagata's power, the Tathagata's supernatural play, and the adornment of the Tathagata's merit and wisdom.

Thereupon the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound, without rising from his seat and with his body unmoving, entered into samadhi. By the power of samadhi, at Mount Gridhrakuta, not far from the Dharma seat, he transformed and created eighty-four thousand jeweled lotus flowers. Their stems were of jambunada gold, their leaves of white silver, their filaments of diamond, and their pedestals of kimsuka jewels.

At that time, Manjusri, Prince of the Dharma, seeing these lotus flowers, said to the Buddha: World Honored One! For what cause and condition does this sign first appear? There are several thousands of millions of lotus flowers with stems of jambunada gold, leaves of white silver, filaments of diamond, and pedestals of kimsuka jewels.

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha said to Manjusri: This represents the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Wondrous Sound, who desires to come from the country of the Buddha Pure Flower Constellation King Wisdom, surrounded by eighty-four thousand Bodhisattvas, to this Saha world to make offerings to, draw near to, and bow to me, and also to make offerings to and listen to the Lotus Sutra.

Manjusri said to the Buddha: World Honored One! What roots of goodness has this Bodhisattva planted, and what merits has he cultivated, that he is able to have such great spiritual power? What samadhi does he practice? I pray you will tell us the name of this samadhi. We also wish to diligently practice it, for by practicing this samadhi, we may be able to see that Bodhisattva's physical appearance and size, and his majestic bearing and behavior. We only pray the World Honored One will use spiritual power to cause that Bodhisattva to come, so that we may see him.

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha said to Manjusri: The long extinct Many Treasures Tathagata shall manifest the sign for you.

Then the Buddha Many Treasures said to that Bodhisattva: Good man! Come. Manjusri, Prince of the Dharma, wishes to see your body.

Thereupon the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound disappeared from that country and set out together with the eighty-four thousand Bodhisattvas. The countries they passed through trembled in six ways, and rained down lotus flowers of the seven jewels; hundreds of thousands of heavenly instruments sounded without being played. This Bodhisattva's eyes were like broad, large blue lotus leaves. Even if a hundred thousand million moons were combined, his facial features would

be even more upright and dignified. His body was pure gold in color, adorned with immeasurable hundreds of thousands of merits. His dignity and virtue were blazing, his light shone brightly, and he possessed all the marks, his body firm and solid like that of Narayana. He entered a tower of seven jewels, rose up into the empty space seven tala trees above the earth, and surrounded by the multitude of Bodhisattvas, came to Mount Gridhrakuta in this Saha world.

Upon arriving, he descended from the tower of seven jewels. Holding a necklace worth hundreds of thousands, he went to the place of Shakyamuni Buddha, bowed his head to the Buddha's feet, presented the necklace, and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! The Buddha Pure Flower Constellation King Wisdom inquires after the World Honored One: Are your illness and worry slight? are your daily activities light and easy? are you peaceful and happy in your practice? are the four elements harmonized? can you endure the affairs of the world? are living beings easy to save? are they free from excessive greed, anger, stupidity, jealousy, stinginess, and arrogance? are they not unfilial to parents, disrespectful to shramanas, holding wrong views, unwholesome in mind, and unrestrained in the five emotions? World Honored One! Are living beings able to conquer the demons and enemies? Is the long extinct Many Treasures Tathagata in the stupa of seven jewels coming to hear the Dharma? He also inquires of the Many Treasures Tathagata: Are you peaceful, secure, and with slight worry? can you endure remaining for a long time? World Honored One! We now wish to see the body of the Buddha Many Treasures. We only pray the World Honored One will show him and allow us to see.

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha said to the Buddha Many Treasures: This Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound wishes to see you.

Then the Buddha Many Treasures said to Wondrous Sound: Excellent, excellent! That you have been able to come here to make offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha, to listen to the Lotus Sutra, and to see Manjusri and the others.

At that time the Bodhisattva Flower Virtue said to the Buddha: World Honored One! What good roots has this Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound planted, and what merits has he cultivated, to possess such spiritual power?

The Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Flower Virtue: In the past, there was a Buddha named Cloud Thunder Sound King Tathagata, Arhat, Samyak-Sambuddha. His country was named Manifesting All Worlds, and his kalpa was named Joyful Sight. For twelve thousand years, the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound made offerings to the Buddha Cloud Thunder Sound King with one hundred thousand kinds of music, and presented eighty-four thousand bowls of seven jewels. Because of this causal retribution, he has now been born in the country of the Buddha Pure Flower Constellation King Wisdom and possesses such spiritual power.

Flower Virtue! What is your opinion? Was the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound at that time, who made offerings of music and presented jeweled vessels, someone else? He was none other than

the present Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Wondrous Sound. Flower Virtue! This Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound has already made offerings to and drawn near immeasurable Buddhas, planting roots of virtue for a long time, and encountering hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of Buddhas equal to the sands of the Ganges.

Flower Virtue! You see only the body of the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound which is present here. But this Bodhisattva manifests all kinds of bodies and preaches this Sutra for living beings in various places. Sometimes he manifests as a Brahma King, sometimes as Shakra, sometimes as Isvara, sometimes as Mahesvara, sometimes as a Great Heavenly General, sometimes as the Heavenly King Vaisravana, sometimes as a Wheel-Turning Sage King, sometimes as a Petty King, sometimes as an Elder, sometimes as a Householder, sometimes as an Official, sometimes as a Brahmin, sometimes as a bhikshu, bhikshuni, upasaka, or upasika, sometimes as the wife of an Elder or Householder, sometimes as the wife of an Official, sometimes as the wife of a Brahmin, sometimes as a young boy or young girl, sometimes as a god, dragon, yaksha, gandharva, asura, garuda, kimnara, mahoraga, human, or non-human, and preaches this Sutra. He is able to rescue those in hells, hungry ghosts, animals, and those in difficult circumstances, even transforming into a woman's body within the king's inner palace to preach this Sutra.

Flower Virtue! This Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound is one who can save and protect the living beings of the Saha world. This Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound transforms and manifests in such various bodies in this Saha land to preach this Sutra for living beings, yet his spiritual powers, transformations, and wisdom suffer no decrease or loss. This Bodhisattva illuminates the Saha world with various wisdoms, causing all living beings to obtain knowledge; and in worlds numerous as the Ganges sands in the ten directions, he does likewise. If living beings should be saved by the form of a Voice-Hearer, he manifests the form of a Voice-Hearer to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the form of a Pratyekabuddha, he manifests the form of a Pratyekabuddha to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the form of a Bodhisattva, he manifests the form of a Bodhisattva to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the form of a Buddha, he immediately manifests the form of a Buddha to preach the Dharma. In this way, he manifests various forms according to what is appropriate for their salvation, even manifesting extinction for those who should be saved by extinction.

Flower Virtue! The Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Wondrous Sound has accomplished the power of great spiritual penetrations and wisdom; his affairs are like this.

At that time the Bodhisattva Flower Virtue said to the Buddha: World Honored One! This Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound has deeply planted good roots. World Honored One! In what samadhi does this Bodhisattva dwell, that he is able to transform and manifest in this way to save living beings?

The Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Flower Virtue: Good man! That samadhi is named Manifesting All Physical Forms. The Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound dwells in this samadhi and is thus able to benefit immeasurable living beings.

When this Chapter on the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound was preached, the eighty-four thousand people who had come with the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound all obtained the Samadhi of Manifesting All Physical Forms; and immeasurable Bodhisattvas of this Saha world also obtained this samadhi and dharani.

At that time the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Wondrous Sound, having made offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha and the stupa of Many Treasures Buddha, returned to his own land. The countries he passed through trembled in six ways, rained jeweled lotus flowers, and performed hundreds of thousands of millions of kinds of music. Upon arriving at his own country, surrounded by the eighty-four thousand Bodhisattvas, he went to the Buddha Pure Flower Constellation King Wisdom and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! I went to the Saha world and benefited living beings. I saw Shakyamuni Buddha and the stupa of Many Treasures Buddha, and bowed and made offerings to them. I also saw the Bodhisattva Manjusri, Prince of the Dharma, as well as the Bodhisattva Medicine King, the Bodhisattva Attaining the Power of Diligent Exertion, the Bodhisattva Courageous Giver, and others. I also caused these eighty-four thousand Bodhisattvas to obtain the Samadhi of Manifesting All Physical Forms.

When this chapter on the coming and going of the Bodhisattva Wondrous Sound was preached, forty-two thousand Sons of Heaven obtained the Patience of the Non-Birth of Dharmas, and the Bodhisattva Flower Virtue obtained the Lotus Samadhi.

THE BODHISATTVA AVALOKITESVARA

At that time the Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intention rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, pressed his palms together facing the Buddha, and said: World Honored One! For what reason is the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara named Avalokitesvara?

The Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intention: Good man! If immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of living beings undergo various sufferings and hear of this Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and single-mindedly call upon his name, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara will immediately observe their voices and they will all be liberated. If one holds the name of this Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, even if he enters a great fire, the fire cannot burn him; this is due to the awesome spiritual power of this Bodhisattva. If one is washed away by a great flood and calls upon his name, he will immediately reach a shallow place. If hundreds of thousands of millions of living beings enter the great ocean seeking gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, agate, coral, amber, pearls, and other treasures, and a black wind blows their ship toward the land of raksasa ghosts, if there is even one person among them who calls upon the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, all of them will be liberated from the difficulty of the raksasas. For this reason he is named Avalokitesvara.

If a person is about to be harmed, and he calls upon the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, the swords and staves held by the attackers will immediately break into pieces, and he will be liberated. If the three thousand great thousand lands are filled with yakshas and raksasas wishing to harass people, hearing them call upon the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, these evil ghosts will not even be able to look at them with evil eyes, much less harm them. If a person, whether guilty or innocent, is bound with fetters, pillories, or chains, and he calls upon the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, they will all break and fall off, and he will be liberated. If the three thousand great thousand lands are filled with bandits and enemies, and there is a merchant leader guiding merchants carrying heavy treasures along a dangerous road, and one person among them says: Good men! Do not be afraid! You should all single-mindedly call upon the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. This Bodhisattva is able to bestow fearlessness upon living beings. If you call upon his name, you will be liberated from these bandits. If the merchants hear this and raise their voices together saying, Namó Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, because they call upon his name, they will immediately be liberated.

Inexhaustible Intention! The awesome spiritual power of the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Avalokitesvara is巍巍 lofty and majestic like this. If living beings have much lust, and they constantly revere and think of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, they will be able to separate from lust. If they have much anger, and they constantly revere and think of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, they will be able to separate from anger. If they have much stupidity, and they constantly revere and think of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, they will be able to separate from stupidity.

Inexhaustible Intention! The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara has such great awesome spiritual power and confers many benefits. Therefore living beings should constantly keep him in mind. If a woman wishes to give birth to a male child, and she bows and makes offerings to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, she will give birth to a son of merit, virtue, and wisdom. If she wishes to give birth to a daughter, she will give birth to a daughter with upright and correct features, who has planted roots of virtue in the past and is loved and respected by many.

Inexhaustible Intention! The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara has power such as this. If living beings revere and bow to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, their blessings will not be discarded in vain. Therefore living beings should all accept and hold the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.

Inexhaustible Intention! If a person accepts and holds the names of Bodhisattvas numerous as the sands of sixty-two hundred million Ganges rivers, and also makes offerings of drink, food, clothing, bedding, and medicine for the rest of his life, what is your opinion? Is the merit of this good man or good woman much or not?

Inexhaustible Intention said: Very much, World Honored One!

The Buddha said: If a person accepts and holds the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, and bows and makes offerings even for a moment, the blessings of these two people are exactly equal and no different; they cannot be exhausted in hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas. Inexhaustible Intention! Accepting and holding the name of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara brings benefits of immeasurable and boundless merit such as this.

The Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intention said to the Buddha: World Honored One! How does the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara wander in this Saha world? How does he preach the Dharma for living beings? What is the nature of his power of expedient devices?

The Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intention: Good man! If living beings in a land should be saved by the body of a Buddha, the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara immediately manifests the body of a Buddha to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a Pratyekabuddha, he immediately manifests the body of a Pratyekabuddha to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a Voice-Hearer, he immediately manifests the body of a Voice-Hearer to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a Brahma King, he immediately manifests the body of a Brahma King to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of Shakra, he immediately manifests the body of Shakra to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of the God of Self-Mastery, he immediately manifests the body of the God of Self-Mastery to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of the Great God of Self-Mastery, he immediately manifests the body of the Great God of Self-Mastery to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a Great Heavenly General, he immediately manifests the body of a Great Heavenly General to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of Vaisravana, he immediately manifests the body of Vaisravana to preach the Dharma. If

they should be saved by the body of a Petty King, he immediately manifests the body of a Petty King to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of an Elder, he immediately manifests the body of an Elder to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a Householder, he immediately manifests the body of a Householder to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of an Official, he immediately manifests the body of an Official to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a Brahmin, he immediately manifests the body of a Brahmin to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a bhikshu, bhikshuni, upasaka, or upasika, he immediately manifests the body of a bhikshu, bhikshuni, upasaka, or upasika to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of the wife of an Elder, Householder, Official, or Brahmin, he immediately manifests the body of a wife to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a young boy or young girl, he immediately manifests the body of a young boy or young girl to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of a god, dragon, yaksha, gandharva, asuras, garuda, kimnara, mahoraga, human, or non-human, he immediately manifests all of these to preach the Dharma. If they should be saved by the body of the Vajra-holding spirit, he immediately manifests the body of the Vajra-holding spirit to preach the Dharma.

Inexhaustible Intention! This Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara has accomplished merit such as this, and with various forms wanders through the lands saving and liberating living beings. Therefore you should all single-mindedly make offerings to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. This Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Avalokitesvara is able to bestow fearlessness in the midst of fear and urgent difficulties; therefore in this Saha world everyone calls him the Bestower of Fearlessness.

The Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intention said to the Buddha: World Honored One! I will now make an offering to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. He then unfastened a necklace of many precious pearls from his neck, worth a hundred thousand taels of gold, and gave it to him, saying: Benevolent One! Please accept this Dharma-gift of a precious pearl necklace. At that time the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara was unwilling to accept it. Inexhaustible Intention spoke again to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara saying: Benevolent One! Out of pity for us, please accept this necklace.

At that time the Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara: You should pity this Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intention and the four assemblies, as well as the gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, and accept this necklace.

Immediately the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, pitying the four assemblies and the gods, dragons, humans, and non-humans, accepted the necklace and divided it into two parts: one part he offered to Shakyamuni Buddha, and one part he offered to the stupa of Many Treasures Buddha.

Inexhaustible Intention! The Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara has such unhindered spiritual power as this, wandering through the Saha world.

At that time the Bodhisattva Inexhaustible Intention asked in verse:

World Honored One, possessed of wonderful marks,

I now ask again:

For what cause is this Buddha-son

Named Avalokitesvara?

The Honored One of Perfect Wonderful Marks

Answered Inexhaustible Intention in verse:

Listen to the practice of Avalokitesvara,

Which responds well to all places.

His vast oath is deep as the ocean,

Passing through inconceivable kalpas.

He has served many thousands of millions of Buddhas,

And generated a great pure vow.

I will tell you briefly:

Hearing his name and seeing his body,

And keeping him in mind not in vain,

Can extinguish the sufferings of existence.

If someone with harmful intent

Pushes you into a great fire pit,

Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,

And the fire pit will become a pool.

If floating in the vast ocean,

Menaced by dragons, fish, and ghosts,

Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,

And the waves cannot drown you.

If on the peak of Mount Sumeru,

Someone pushes you off,

Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,

And you will hang in space like the sun.

If pursued by evil men,

And falling from Diamond Mountain,

Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,

And not a hair will be harmed.

If surrounded by vengeful bandits,

Each holding a knife to harm you,

Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,

And they will all generate compassion.

If suffering the difficulty of the king's law,

Facing execution and about to die,

Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,

And the sword will break into pieces.

If imprisoned in cage and lock,
Hands and feet bound by fetters,
Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,
And you will be released and liberated.
If cursed by mantras and various poisons,
By one wishing to harm your body,
Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,
And the harm will return to the originator.
If you encounter evil raksasas,
Poisonous dragons, and ghosts,
Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,
And none will dare to harm you.
If evil beasts surround you,
Their sharp teeth and claws terrifying,
Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,
And they will run away to infinite distances.
Lizards, snakes, and vipers,
Scorching with poisonous breath like fire,
Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,
And at the sound of your voice they will depart.
Clouds thunder and lightning flashes,
Hail falls and great rain pours,
Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,
And immediately they will disperse.
Living beings are trapped in difficulties,
Immeasurable pain oppressing their bodies;
The wonderful wisdom power of Avalokitesvara
Can save the world from suffering.
Perfect in spiritual powers,
Broadly practicing wisdom and expedients,
In the lands of the ten directions,
There is no realm where he does not manifest his body.
Various evil destinies,
Hells, ghosts, and animals,
The sufferings of birth, old age, sickness, and death,
Are gradually all extinguished.
True contemplation, pure contemplation,
Broad and great wisdom contemplation,
Compassionate contemplation and kind contemplation;
Constantly desire and look up to him.
Undefined pure light,
The sun of wisdom breaking through the darkness,

Able to subdue the wind and fire of disaster,
Universally illuminating the world.
The thunder of precepts of the compassionate body,
The wonder-cloud of the kind mind,
Raining the sweet dew of the Dharma rain,
Extinguishing the flames of affliction.
In disputes and cases before officials,
In fear within the military array,
Think on the power of Avalokitesvara,
And all enemies will retreat and scatter.
The Wondrous Voice, the Regarder of the World's Voice,
The Brahma Voice, the Sea Tide Voice,
Surpassing all worldly sounds;
Therefore one should constantly think of him.
Think on him in thought after thought without doubt.
Avalokitesvara, the pure sage,
In pain, distress, and the peril of death,
Can act as a refuge and reliance.
Perfect in all merits,
With compassionate eyes viewing living beings,
An ocean of blessings immeasurable;
Therefore one should bow in homage.

At that time the Bodhisattva Earth Holder rose from his seat, went before the Buddha, and said:
World Honored One! If there are living beings who hear this Chapter of the Bodhisattva
Avalokitesvara, his unhindered works, and the power of his universal manifestation of spiritual
penetrations, know that the merit of these people is not small.

When the Buddha preached this Universal Gate Chapter, eighty-four thousand living beings in the
assembly all generated the mind of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, which has no equal.

DHARANI

At that time the Bodhisattva Medicine King rose from his seat, bared his right shoulder, pressed his palms together facing the Buddha, and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! If there are good men or good women who are able to receive and hold the Lotus Sutra, whether reading and reciting it fluently, or writing out the Sutra roll, how much blessing do they obtain?

The Buddha said to Medicine King: If there are good men or good women who make offerings to eight hundred myriads of millions of nayutas of Ganges sands of Buddhas, what is your opinion? Is the blessing they obtain much or not?

Very much, World Honored One.

The Buddha said: If there are good men or good women who are able, regarding this Sutra, to receive and hold even one four-line verse, read and recite it, understand its meaning, and practice according to its teaching, their merit is extremely much.

At that time the Bodhisattva Medicine King said to the Buddha: World Honored One! I will now give a dharani mantra to the preachers of the Dharma, in order to guard and protect them. immediately he spoke the mantra:

Anyi, manyi, mane, mamane, cire, carite, same, samita vi, sante, mukte, muktatame, same, avisame, samasame, jaye, ksaye, aksaye, aksine, sante, same, dharani, alokabha se, pratyaveksani, nidhiru, abhyantara nivi ste, abhyantara parisuddhi, utkule, mukule, arade, parade, sukanksi, asamasame, buddhavigokite, dharmapariksiti, samghanirghosani, nirghosani, bhayabhaya sodhani, mantre, mantraksayate, rute, ruta kausalye, aksare, aksaravanataya, abalo, amanyanataya.

World Honored One! This dharani spirit-spell has been spoken by Buddhas numerous as the sands of sixty-two hundred million Ganges rivers. If anyone attacks or destroys this Dharma teacher, he will have attacked and destroyed these Buddhas.

Then Shakyamuni Buddha praised the Bodhisattva Medicine King, saying: Excellent, excellent! Medicine King! Out of pity and a wish to protect this Dharma teacher, you have spoken this dharani, which will bring great benefit to living beings.

At that time the Bodhisattva Courageous Giver said to the Buddha: World Honored One! I also, in order to protect those who read, recite, receive, and hold the Lotus Sutra, will speak a dharani. If this Dharma teacher possesses this dharani, then yakshas, raksasas, putanas, krtyas, kumbhandas, and hungry ghosts who seek to find his weakness will not be able to get the advantage. immediately he spoke the mantra before the Buddha:

Jvale, mahajvale, ukke, tukke, mukke, ade, adavati, nrtye, nrtyavati, itini, vitini, citini, nrtyani, nrtyavati.

World Honored One! This dharani spirit-spell has been spoken by Buddhas numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and they all rejoice in it. If anyone attacks or destroys this Dharma teacher, he will have attacked and destroyed these Buddhas.

At that time the World-Protecting Heavenly King Vaisravana said to the Buddha: World Honored One! I also, out of pity for living beings and to protect this Dharma teacher, will speak this dharani. immediately he spoke the mantra:

Atte, tatte, natte, vanatte, anade, nadi, kunadi.

World Honored One! With this spirit-spell I protect the Dharma teacher; I will also protect those who hold this Sutra myself, causing them to be free from all decay and worry within a hundred yojanas.

At that time the Heavenly King Virudhaka was present in the assembly, respectfully surrounded by thousands of millions of nayutas of gandharvas. He went before the Buddha, pressed his palms together, and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! I also will use a dharani spirit-spell to protect those who hold the Lotus Sutra. immediately he spoke the mantra:

Agane, gane, gauri, gandhari, candali, matangi, pukkasi, sankule, vrusali, sisi.

World Honored One! This dharani spirit-spell has been spoken by forty-two hundred million Buddhas. If anyone attacks or destroys this Dharma teacher, he will have attacked and destroyed these Buddhas.

At that time there were Raksasa daughters, the first named Lamba, the second named Vilamba, the third named Crooked Teeth, the fourth named Flower Teeth, the fifth named Black Teeth, the sixth named Many Hairs, the seventh named Insatiable, the eighth named Necklace Holder, the ninth named Kunti, and the tenth named Stealer of the Vital Spirit of All Living Beings. These ten Raksasa daughters, together with the Mother of Demon Children, her children, and their retinue, all went to the Buddha's place and spoke with one voice to the Buddha: World Honored One! We also wish to protect those who read, recite, receive, and hold the Lotus Sutra, and remove their decay and worry. If anyone seeks the weakness of the Dharma teacher, we will prevent them from getting the advantage. immediately they spoke the mantra before the Buddha:

Iti me, iti me, iti me, ati me, iti me, nime, nime, nime, nime, nime, ruhe, ruhe, ruhe, ruhe, ruhe, stuhe, stuhe, stuhe, stuhe.

Rather climb upon our heads than trouble the Dharma teacher. Whether yaksha, raksasa, hungry ghost, putana, krtya, vetala, ghantha, umaraka, apasmara, yaksha-krtya, or human-krtya; or fever sickness for one day, two days, three days, four days, up to seven days; or constant fever; whether in male form, female form, young boy form, or young girl form; even in dreams, do not torment him.

Immediately they spoke in verse before the Buddha:

If one does not obey my spell,
And troubles the preacher of the Dharma,
May his head break into seven pieces,
Like the branch of the Arjaka tree.
Like the crime of killing parents,
Or the calamity of pressing oil,
Or cheating people with measures and scales,
Or Devadatta's crime of breaking the Sangha;
One who offends this Dharma teacher
Will incur a calamity such as this.

After the Raksasa daughters spoke this verse, they said to the Buddha: World Honored One! We ourselves will also protect those who receive, hold, read, recite, and practice this Sutra, causing them to obtain peace and security, be free from all decay and worry, and neutralizing all poison herbs.

The Buddha said to the Raksasa daughters: Excellent, excellent! Just protecting those who receive and hold the name of the Lotus brings merit that is immeasurable; how much more so protecting those who fully receive, hold, and make offerings to the Sutra roll with flowers, incense, necklaces, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, banners, canopies, and music; and burn various kinds of lamps: ghee lamps, oil lamps, fragrant oil lamps, sumana flower oil lamps, campaka flower oil lamps, varsika flower oil lamps, and utpala flower oil lamps; making hundreds of thousands of kinds of offerings like this. Kunti! You and your retinue should protect such Dharma teachers.

When this Dharani Chapter was preached, sixty-eight thousand people obtained the Patience of the Non-Birth of Dharmas.

THE FORMER DEEDS OF KING WONDERFUL ADORNMENT

At that time the Buddha said to the great assembly: Long ago in the past, immeasurable, boundless, inconceivable asamkhyeya kalpas ago, there was a Buddha named Cloud Thunder Sound Constellation King Flower Wisdom Tathagata, Arhat, Samyak-Sambuddha. His country was named Light Adornment, and his kalpa was named Joyful Sight. Within the Dharma of that Buddha there was a king named Wonderful Adornment (Subhavyuha). The king's wife was named Pure Virtue. They had two sons, one named Pure Store, the second named Pure Eye. These two sons possessed great spiritual power, merit, and wisdom, having long cultivated the way practiced by Bodhisattvas, namely the Dana-paramita, Sila-paramita, Ksanti-paramita, Virya-paramita, Dhyana-paramita, Prajna-paramita, Upaya-paramita, kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity, and even the thirty-seven aids to the Way; they had thoroughly understood all of these. They had also obtained the Bodhisattva's Pure Samadhi, Sun Star Constellation Samadhi, Pure Light Samadhi, Pure Color Samadhi, Pure Illumination Samadhi, Long Adornment Samadhi, and Great Dignity Virtue Store Samadhi, and had thoroughly penetrated these samadhis.

At that time, that Buddha, wishing to guide King Wonderful Adornment and pitying living beings, preached the Lotus Sutra. The two sons, Pure Store and Pure Eye, went to their mother's place, put their ten fingers together, and said: We beg our mother to go to the place of the Buddha Cloud Thunder Sound Constellation King Flower Wisdom. We also will attend, draw near, make offerings, and bow to him. Why is this? This Buddha is preaching the Lotus Sutra in the midst of all the multitude of gods and humans; we should go and listen.

The mother told her sons: Your father believes in non-Buddhist doctrines and is deeply attached to the Brahmin dharma. You should go and tell your father, so that we can go together.

Pure Store and Pure Eye put their ten fingers together and said to their mother: We are Dharma Princes, yet we have been born into this house of wrong views.

The mother told her sons: You should care for your father and manifest spiritual transformations for him. If he sees them, his mind will surely be purified and he may permit us to go to the Buddha.

Thereupon the two sons, thinking of their father, rose up into the empty space to the height of seven tala trees and manifested various spiritual transformations, walking, standing, sitting, and lying down in the empty space; emitting water from the upper body and fire from the lower body, or emitting water from the lower body and fire from the upper body; manifesting a large body filling the empty space, then becoming small again; becoming small and then becoming large again; disappearing in the sky and suddenly appearing on the ground; entering the earth as if it were water, walking on water as if it were earth. Manifesting such various spiritual transformations, they caused their father the King's mind to become pure and faithfully accept them.

When the father saw his sons' spiritual powers like this, he was greatly delighted and attained what he never had before. He pressed his palms together and said to his sons: Who is your teacher? Whose disciples are you?

The two sons said: Great King! The Buddha Cloud Thunder Sound Constellation King Flower Wisdom is now sitting on a Dharma seat under the seven-jeweled Bodhi tree, broadly preaching the Lotus Sutra in the midst of the multitude of all worldlings, gods, and humans. He is our teacher, and we are his disciples.

The father said to his sons: I also wish to see your teacher. We can go together.

Thereupon the two sons descended from the sky, went to their mother's place, pressed their palms together, and said to their mother: Father the King has now believed and understood, and is capable of generating the mind of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. We have done the Buddha's work for our father. We pray that Mother will permit us to leave home and practice the Way under that Buddha.

At that time the two sons, wishing to proclaim their meaning again, spoke in verse to their mother:

We pray Mother will release us,
To leave home and become Shramanas.
The Buddhas are very difficult to encounter;
We wish to follow the Buddha and learn.
Like the Udumbara flower,
Meeting a Buddha is even more difficult;
To escape all difficulties is also hard;
We pray you will allow us to leave home.

The mother then said: I permit you to leave home. Why is this? Because the Buddha is difficult to encounter.

Then the two sons said to their parents: Excellent, Father and Mother! We pray you will go immediately to the place of the Buddha Cloud Thunder Sound Constellation King Flower Wisdom to draw near and make offerings. Why is this? The Buddha is as difficult to encounter as the Udumbara flower, or as a one-eyed turtle meeting a floating log with a hole in it. But we possess deep blessings from former lives and have been born in an age when the Buddha Dharma can be met. Therefore, Father and Mother, you should allow us to leave home. Why is this? The Buddhas are difficult to encounter, and the time is also hard to meet.

At that time, the eighty-four thousand people of King Wonderful Adornment's inner palace were all capable of receiving and holding this Lotus Sutra. The Bodhisattva Pure Eye had long ago thoroughly understood the Dharma Flower Samadhi. The Bodhisattva Pure Store had, for

immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of kalpas, thoroughly understood the Samadhi of Separating from All Evil Destinies, because he wished to cause all living beings to leave the evil destinies. The King's wife had obtained the Samadhi of Gathering the Buddhas and was able to know the secret storehouse of the Buddhas.

Thus the two sons, with the power of expedient devices, skillfully converted their father, causing his mind to believe, understand, and delight in the Buddha Dharma. Thereupon King Wonderful Adornment and his ministers and retinue, Queen Pure Virtue and her inner palace ladies and retinue, and the King's two sons and their retinue of forty-two thousand people, all went together to the Buddha's place. Upon arriving, they bowed their heads to his feet, circumambulated the Buddha three times, and withdrew to one side.

At that time that Buddha preached the Dharma for the King, demonstrating, teaching, benefiting, and delighting him. The King was greatly pleased. Then King Wonderful Adornment and his wife unfastened pearl necklaces worth hundreds of thousands from their necks and scattered them over the Buddha. In the empty space, they transformed into a jeweled tower with four pillars. In the tower was a great jeweled couch covered with hundreds of thousands of millions of heavenly garments, upon which sat a Buddha, cross-legged, emitting great light. At that time King Wonderful Adornment thought: The Buddha's body is rare, dignified, and extraordinary, accomplishing the foremost subtle and wonderful form.

Then the Buddha Cloud Thunder Sound Constellation King Flower Wisdom said to the four assemblies: Do you see this King Wonderful Adornment standing before me with palms pressed together? In my Dharma, this King will become a bhikshu, diligently cultivating and practicing, assisting the Buddha Way and Dharma. He will become a Buddha named Sal Tree King, his country named Great Light, his kalpa named Great High King. The Buddha Sal Tree King will have an immeasurable multitude of Bodhisattvas and immeasurable Voice-Hearers. His country will be level and straight. His merit will be like this.

The King immediately gave his country to his younger brother, and together with his wife, two sons, and retinue, left home to practice the Way within the Buddha Dharma.

Having left home, the King diligently and energetically practiced the Wonderful Law Lotus Sutra for eighty-four thousand years. After that, he obtained the Samadhi of the Adornment of All Pure Merits. He immediately rose up into the empty space to the height of seven tala trees and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! These two sons of mine have already performed the Buddha's work, using spiritual transformations to turn my deviant mind, causing me to dwell safely in the Buddha Dharma and see the World Honored One. These two sons are my Good Friends. Wishing to awaken the good roots of my past lives and benefit me, they came to be born in my house.

At that time the Buddha Cloud Thunder Sound Constellation King Flower Wisdom said to King Wonderful Adornment: Just so, just so! It is as you say. If good men and good women plant good

roots, life after life they will obtain Good Friends. These Good Friends can perform the Buddha's work, demonstrating, teaching, benefiting, and delighting them, causing them to enter Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Great King! You should know that a Good Friend is a great cause and condition, for he guides and converts, enabling one to see the Buddha and generate the mind of Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi. Great King! Do you see these two sons? These two sons have already made offerings to sixty-five hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of Ganges sands of Buddhas, drawing near with reverence. In the presence of those Buddhas, they received and held the Lotus Sutra, pitying living beings with wrong views and causing them to dwell in right views.

King Wonderful Adornment immediately descended from the sky and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! The Tathagata is extremely rare. Because of his merit and wisdom, the flesh knot on the crown of his head shines with light; his eyes are long and broad and dark blue in color; the white hair-tuft between his eyebrows is white like the pearly moon; his teeth are white, even, close, and constantly shine with light; his lips are red and beautiful like the bimba fruit.

At that time King Wonderful Adornment, having praised the Buddha's immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of merits, pressed his palms together with a single mind before the Tathagata and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! This is unprecedented. The Dharma of the Tathagata possesses the complete accomplishment of inconceivable, subtle, and wonderful merits. The practice of the precepts he teaches is peaceful, comforting, and quick to goodness. From this day forth, I will no longer follow the workings of my own mind, nor generate evil thoughts of wrong views, arrogance, or anger. Having spoken these words, he bowed to the Buddha and departed.

The Buddha said to the great assembly: What is your opinion? Was King Wonderful Adornment someone else? He is the present Bodhisattva Flower Virtue. The Queen Pure Virtue is the Bodhisattva Light Shining Adornment Marks now before the Buddha; out of pity for King Wonderful Adornment and his retinue, she was born in their midst. The two sons are the present Bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Superior. These Bodhisattvas Medicine King and Medicine Superior have accomplished such great merits as these, having planted roots of virtue under immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of Buddhas, and achieved inconceivable good merits. If there is anyone who recognizes the names of these two Bodhisattvas, all the gods and people of the world should bow to him.

When this Chapter on the Former Deeds of King Wonderful Adornment was preached, eighty-four thousand people were separated from dust and removed from defilement, obtaining the Pure Dharma Eye with regard to all dharmas.

THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE BODHISATTVA SAMANTABHADRA

At that time the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, with unrestrained spiritual power and dignity and virtue renowned everywhere, arrived from the east together with immeasurable, boundless, incalculable great Bodhisattvas. The countries they passed through all trembled, jeweled lotus flowers rained down, and immeasurable hundreds of thousands of millions of kinds of music were performed. Also surrounded by a great assembly of countless gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kimnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans, each manifesting the power of dignity, virtue, and spiritual penetrations, he arrived at Mount Gridhrakuta in the Saha world. He bowed his head to Shakyamuni Buddha, circumambulated him seven times to the right, and said to the Buddha: World Honored One! While in the country of the Buddha King of Jeweled Dignity and Virtue, I heard from afar that the Lotus Sutra was being preached in this Saha world. I have come with immeasurable, boundless hundreds of thousands of millions of Bodhisattvas to listen and accept it. I only pray the World Honored One will preach it. If good men and good women, after the Tathagata's extinction, wish to obtain this Lotus Sutra, how can they obtain it?

The Buddha said to the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra: If good men and good women accomplish four dharmas, they will obtain this Lotus Sutra after the Tathagata's extinction. First, they must be protected and kept in mind by the Buddhas. Second, they must plant the roots of many virtues. Third, they must enter the collection of correct concentration. Fourth, they must generate the mind to save all living beings. If good men and good women accomplish these four dharmas, they will certainly obtain this Sutra after the Tathagata's extinction.

At that time the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra said to the Buddha: World Honored One! In the chaotic and evil world of the last five hundred years, if there are those who receive and hold this classic Sutra, I will guard and protect them, remove their decay and worry, and cause them to be peaceful and secure, so that no one seeking to find their weakness can take advantage of them. Whether a demon, a demon's son, a demon's daughter, a demon's subject, or one possessed by a demon; whether a yaksha, raksasa, kumbhanda, pisaca, krtya, putana, or vetala; none of these tormentors of men shall get the advantage. If such a person is walking or standing while reading and reciting this Sutra, I will at that time mount a six-tusked white elephant king and, together with a multitude of great Bodhisattvas, go to his place, manifest my body, make offerings, guard and protect him, and comfort his mind, all for the sake of making offerings to the Lotus Sutra. If such a person is sitting and pondering this Sutra, I will again mount the white elephant king and appear before him. If he forgets a phrase or a verse of the Lotus Sutra, I will teach it to him, reading and reciting it with him until he is fluent again. At that time, the one who receives, holds, reads, and recites the Lotus Sutra, being able to see my body, will be filled with great joy and will increase his diligence. Because he sees me, he will immediately obtain samadhis and dharanis: the dharani of revolution, the dharani of hundreds of thousands of millions of revolutions, and the dharani of the skill of Dharma sounds. He will obtain such dharanis as these.

World Honored One! In the chaotic and evil world of the last five hundred years in the future, if there are bhikshus, bhikshunis, upasakas, or upasikas, seekers, holders, readers, reciters, or copiers who wish to cultivate and practice this Lotus Sutra, they should practice with a single mind and diligence for twenty-one days. After twenty-one days are fulfilled, I will mount a six-tusked white elephant, surrounded by immeasurable Bodhisattvas, and appear before that person in a body that all living beings delight to see. I will preach the Dharma for him, demonstrate, teach, benefit, and delight him, and also give him a dharani mantra. Because he obtains this dharani, no non-human can destroy him, nor can he be confused by women. I myself will also constantly protect this person. I only pray the World Honored One will permit me to speak this dharani mantra.

Then, before the Buddha, he spoke the mantra:

Adande, dandapati, dandavarte, dandakusale, dandasudhare, sudhare, sudhapati, buddhapasyani, sarvadarani-avartani, sarvabhasyavartani, su-avartani, samghapariksani, samghanirghatani, asamge, samghapagate, tri-adhvasamghatulya-arate-prappte, sarvasamghasamatikrante, sarvadharmasupariksate, sarvasattvarutakausalyanugate, simhavikridite.

World Honored One! If there is a Bodhisattva who hears this dharani, he should know it is due to the power of Samantabhadra's spiritual penetrations. If the Lotus Sutra is practiced in Jambudvīpa, and there are those who accept and hold it, they should think: This is all due to the power of the awesome spirit of Samantabhadra. If there are those who receive, hold, read, recite, correctly remember, understand its meaning and import, and practice as preached, know that these people practice the conduct of Samantabhadra. They have planted deep good roots under immeasurable, boundless Buddhas, and their heads are rubbed by the hands of the Tathagatas. If they only copy it, when their lives end, they will be born in the Trayastimsa Heaven. At that time, eighty-four thousand heavenly nymphs will welcome them with various kinds of music. They will immediately put on crowns of seven jewels and enjoy themselves among the ladies-in-waiting. How much more so for those who receive, hold, read, recite, correctly remember, understand its meaning, and practice as preached? If there is one who receives, holds, reads, recites, and understands its meaning, when his life ends, a thousand Buddhas will extend their hands to him, so that he will not fear or fall into the evil destinies, but will immediately go to the Tushita Heaven, to the place of Maitreya Bodhisattva. Maitreya Bodhisattva possesses the thirty-two marks and is surrounded by a multitude of great Bodhisattvas and hundreds of thousands of millions of heavenly nymph attendants. He will be born there. Such are the merits and benefits. Therefore, the wise person should single-mindedly copy it himself, or cause others to copy it, receive, hold, read, recite, correctly remember, and practice as preached.

World Honored One! I now use my spiritual power to protect this Sutra, so that after the Tathagata's extinction, it will spread widely in Jambudvīpa and not be cut off.

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha praised him saying: Excellent, excellent! Samantabhadra! You are able to protect and assist this Sutra, causing peace, happiness, and benefit to many living beings. You have already accomplished inconceivable merit and deep, great compassion. From the distant past you have generated the intention for Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, and have been able to make this vow of spiritual power to protect this Sutra. I will use my spiritual power to protect those who are able to receive and hold the name of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

Samantabhadra! If there are those who receive, hold, read, recite, correctly remember, cultivate, and write this Lotus Sutra, know that these people see Shakyamuni Buddha just as if hearing this Sutra from the Buddha's mouth. Know that these people make offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha. Know that the Buddha praises these people as excellent. Know that these people have their heads rubbed by the hand of Shakyamuni Buddha. Know that these people are covered by the robe of Shakyamuni Buddha. Such people as these will no longer be greedy for worldly pleasures, nor fond of non-Buddhist scriptures or writings, nor will they delight in drawing near to such people or to evil doers, whether butchers, keepers of pigs, sheep, chickens, or dogs, hunters, or those who sell female beauty. These people will have upright intentions and correct mindfulness, and possess the power of merit and virtue. These people will not be tormented by the three poisons, nor tormented by jealousy, arrogance, evil pride, or overbearing arrogance. These people will have few desires and be content, able to cultivate the practice of Samantabhadra.

Samantabhadra! If, in the last five hundred years after the Tathagata's extinction, you see someone who receives, holds, reads, and recites the Lotus Sutra, you should think: This person will before long go to the place of enlightenment, destroy the armies of demons, attain Anuttara-samyak-sambodhi, turn the Dharma wheel, beat the Dharma drum, blow the Dharma conch, and rain down the Dharma rain, sitting on the lion Dharma seat amidst the great assembly of gods and humans.

Samantabhadra! If in later ages there are those who receive, hold, read, and recite this classic Sutra, they will no longer be greedy for clothing, bedding, drink, food, or necessities of life. Their vows will not be in vain, and they will obtain happy rewards in the present existence. If anyone slights or slanders them, saying: You are just crazy people; you engage in this practice in vain and will never gain anything; the retribution for such a sin is to be blind in every life. If anyone makes offerings and praises them, he will obtain visible rewards in this world. If anyone sees those who accept and hold this Sutra and speaks of their faults or evils, whether true or not, this person in the present life will suffer from white leprosy. If anyone laughs at them, in every life his teeth will be sparse and missing, his lips ugly, his nose flat, his hands and feet crooked, his eyes squinting, his body foul and stinking, with evil sores, pus and blood, dropsy, and shortness of breath, and all manner of severe and malignant diseases. Therefore, Samantabhadra, if you see one who receives and holds this classic Sutra, you should rise and greet him from afar, respecting him just as you would the Buddha.

When this Chapter on the Encouragement of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra was preached, Bodhisattvas equal to the sands of the Ganges obtained hundreds of thousands of millions of revolving dharanis, and Bodhisattvas equal to the dust motes of a three thousand great thousand world perfected the Way of Samantabhadra.

When the Buddha preached this Sutra, Samantabhadra and the other Bodhisattvas, Sariputra and the other Voice-Hearers, and the gods, dragons, humans, and non-humans of the entire great assembly all rejoiced greatly, received and held the Buddha's words, bowed, and departed.