

Introduction

Chapter 1

Thus I have heard, at one time the Buddha dwelt on Mount Grdhrakuta, near the City of the House of the Kings, together with a gathering of Great Bhikshus, twelve thousand in all. All were Arhats who had exhausted all outflows and had no further afflictions. Having attained self-benefit, they had exhausted the bonds of all existence and their hearts had attained self-mastery.

Their names were: Ajnatakaundinya, Mahakashyapa, Uruvilvakashyapa, Gayakashyapa, Nadikashyapa, Shariputra, Great Maudgalyayana, Mahakatyayana, Aniruddha, Kapphina, Gavampati, Revata, Pilindavatsa, Vakkula, Mahakaushthila, Nanda, Sundarananda, Purnamaitreyaniputra, Subhuti, Ananda, and Rahula--and other Great Arhats such as these, whom the assembly knew and recognized.

Moreover, there were those with further study and those beyond study, two thousand in all. There was the Bhikshuni Mahaprajapati with her retinue of six thousand, and Rahula's mother, Bhikshuni Yashodhara, also with her retinue.

There were eighty thousand Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas all irreversibly established in anuttarasamyaksambodhi. All had obtained dharani and the eloquence of delight in speech and turned the irreversible wheel of the Dharma. They had made offerings to limitless hundreds of thousands of Buddhas and in the presence of those Buddhas had planted the roots of myriad virtues. They were constantly receiving those Buddhas' praise. They cultivated themselves in compassion and were well able to enter the wisdom of the Buddhas. They had penetrated the great wisdom and arrived at the other shore. Their reputations extended throughout limitless world realms, and they were able to cross over countless hundreds of thousands of living beings.

Their names were: the Bodhisattva Manjushri, the Bodhisattva Who Contemplates the World's Sounds, the Bodhisattva Who Has Attained Great Might, the Bodhisattva Constant Vigor, the Bodhisattva Unresting,

the Bodhisattva Jeweled Palm, the Bodhisattva Medicine King, the Bodhisattva Courageous Giving, the Bodhisattva Jeweled Moon, the Bodhisattva Moonlight, the Bodhisattva Full Moon, the Bodhisattva Great Strength, the Bodhisattva Unlimited Strength, the Bodhisattva Who Has Transcended the Three Realms, the Bodhisattva Bhadrapala, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the Bodhisattva Jewel Accumulation, the Bodhisattva Guiding Master--and other Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas such as these, eighty thousand in all.

At that time, Shakra Devanam Indrah was present with his retinue of twenty thousand gods. Among them were the God Moon, the God Universal Fragrance, the God Jeweled Light, and the Four Great Heavenly Kings with their retinues, ten thousand gods in all. There was the God Comfort, and the God Great Comfort, with their retinues, thirty thousand gods in all.

There was the God King Brahma, ruler of the Saha world, as well as the Great Brahma Shikhi and the Great Brahma Brilliance, and others, with their retinues, twelve thousand gods in all.

There were eight Dragon Kings: The Dragon King Nanda, the Dragon King Upananda, the Dragon King Sagara, the Dragon King Vasuki, the Dragon King Takshaka, the Dragon King Anavatapta, the Dragon King Manasvin, and the Dragon King Utpalaka, and others, each with his retinue of several hundreds of thousand followers.

There were four kinnara kings: the Kinnara King Dharma, the Kinnara King Fine Dharma, the Kinnara King Great Dharma, and the Kinnara King Upholder of Dharma, each with his retinue of several hundreds of thousands of followers.

There were four gandharva kings: the Gandharva King Music, the Gandharva King Musical Sound, the Gandharva King Beautiful, and the Gandharva King Beautiful Sound, each with his following of several hundreds of thousands of followers.

There were four asura kings: the Asura King Balin, the Asura King Kharaskandha, the Asura King Vemachitrin, and the Asura King Rahu, each with his retinue of several hundreds of thousands of followers.

There were four garuda kings: the Garuda King Great Majesty, the Garuda King Great Body, the Garuda King Great Fullness, and the Garuda King As You Will, each with his own retinue of several hundreds of thousands of followers.

There was Vaidehi's son, the King Ajatashatru, with his retinue of several hundreds of thousands of followers. Each made obeisance to the Buddha's feet, withdrew to one side and sat down.

At that time, the World Honored One, having been circumambulated by the fourfold assembly, presented with offerings, honored, venerated, and praised, for the sake of the Bodhisattvas, spoke a Great Vehicle Sutra named The Limitless Principles, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas of which the Buddha is protective and mindful.

After the Buddha had spoken this Sutra, he sat in full lotus and entered the samadhi of the station of limitless principles, body and mind unmoving.

At that time there fell from the heavens a rain of mandarava flowers, mahamandarava flowers, manjushaka flowers, and mahamanjushaka flowers, which were scattered upon the Buddha and the entire great assembly.

All the Buddhas universes quaked in six ways.

At that time the entire great assembly of Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas, beings human and non-human, as well as the minor kings, the wheel-turning sage kings, all attained what they had never had before. They rejoiced and joined their palms and, with one heart, gazed upon the Buddha.

Then the Buddha emitted from between his brows a white hair-mark light which illumined eighteen thousand worlds to the east, omitting none of them, reaching below to the Avichi hells and above to the Akanishtha Heaven. From this world were seen all the living beings in the six destinies in those lands.

Further were seen all the present Buddhas in those lands and all the Sutras and Dharma spoken by the Buddhas was heard.

Also seen were the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas in those lands who cultivated and attained the Way.

Moreover were seen the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas, the various causes and conditions, the various beliefs and understandings, and the various appearances of their practice of the Bodhisattva Way.

Further were seen the parinirvana of the Buddhas and, after the parinirvana of the Buddhas, the building of stupas with the seven jewels to hold their sharira.

Then the Bodhisattva Maitreya had this thought: “Now, the World Honored One manifests signs of spiritual transformations. What is the reason for these portents? The Buddha, the World Honored One, has now entered Samadhi, yet these are inconceivable and rare events. Who should I ask concerning them? Who could answer?”

He further thought: “The Dharma Prince, Manjushri, has in the past drawn near and made offerings to limitless Buddhas. Surely he has seen such rare signs. I shall now ask him.”

Thereupon the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas, as well as the gods, dragons, ghosts, spirits, and others, all had this thought: “Who should now be asked concerning the Buddha’s bright light and signs of spiritual penetrations?”

At that time, the Bodhisattva Maitreya, wishing to resolve his own doubts, and further regarding the thoughts of the four-fold assembly of Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas, as well as the thoughts of the assembled gods, dragons, ghosts, and spirits and others, questioned Manjushri as follows:

“What are the reasons for these portents, these signs of spiritual penetrations, for the emanation of great light which illumines eighteen thousand lands to the east so that the adornments in all those Buddha worlds are fully seen?”

Thereupon, Maitreya Bodhisattva, wishing to restate his meaning, spoke verses asking:

“**M**anjushri, what is the reason
For the guiding master’s emanation
From the white hair between his brows
Of a great light which shines everywhere,
and for the rain of Mandaravas
and of Manjushaka flowers,
the breeze of fragrant Chandana which
delights the hearts of those assembled?

Through these causes and conditions,
the earth is all adorned and pure,
and within this world the earth
trembles in six different ways.

Then the four-fold multitude
rejoices altogether;
in body and in mind enraptured,
they obtain what they had never had.

The bright light from between the brows
shines into the eastern quarter,
causing eighteen thousand lands
all to become of golden hue.

And from the Avichi hell,
upwards to the peak of being,
within each of the worlds are seen
the beings within the six paths,
their destinies in birth and death,
their karmic conditions, good or evil,
their retributions, favorable or ill--
all of this is seen, herein.

Further seen are all the Buddhas,
the lions, the sagely masters,
expounding on the Sutra scriptures,
of foremost subtlety and wonder.

Clear and pure is the sound
of their soft, compliant voices,
teaching all the Bodhisattvas,
numbering in the countless millions.

The Brahma sound, profound and wondrous,
fills those who hear with joy
as, within his world, each one proclaims the proper
Dharma.

Through various causes and conditions,
and limitless analogies,
they clarify the Buddhadharma
to enlighten living beings.

To those who've encountered suffering,
weary of sickness, aging, death,
they speak about Nirvana,
which brings all suffering to an end.

To those possessed of blessings who've
made offerings to past Buddhas and
resolved to seek the superior Dharma
they speak of enlightening to conditions.

To those who are the Buddha's sons,
who cultivate various practices,
seeking wisdom unsurpassed,
they speak of the way of purity.

Manjushri, while dwelling here,
I see and hear such things as these,
reaching to a thousand million things;
such a multitude of them
which I shall now explain in brief.

I see in other lands
Bodhisattvas like Gange's sands,
through various causes and conditions
seeking the Buddha Way.

Perhaps they practice giving,

with gifts of silver, gold, and coral
of true pearls, and of mani,
mother-of-pearl, carnelian,
of vajra and of other gems,
of servants and of carriages,
jeweled hand drawn carts and palanquins.

These they offer up with joy,
in dedication to the Buddha Way,
vowing to obtain the vehicle
foremost in the triple realm,
the one which all the Buddhas praise.

There are Bodhisattvas who
give a jeweled coach -and-four,
with rails and flowered canopies,
richly ornamented carriages.

Again are Bodhisattvas seen
who give their flesh, hand, and feet,
who even give their wives and children,
seeking for the utmost Way.

Again are Bodhisattvas seen
whose heads, eyes, and bodies whole
are offered up most joyfully,
seeking the Buddha's wisdom.

Manjushri,
I see royal monarchs who
visiting those Buddhas' courts
ask about the utmost Way,
and then forsake their pleasant lands,
palaces, ministers, concubines,
and, cutting off their beards and hair,
clothe themselves in Dharma robes.

Seen are Bodhisattvas who
becoming Bhikshus, dwell alone
within the wilds, in quietude,
reciting Sutra texts with joy.

Again are Bodhisattvas seen,
striving with heroic vigor,
entering the mountains deep,
to ponder on the Buddha Way.

Seen, too, are those who've left desire,
who dwell in constant solitude,
deeply cultivating Dhyana Samadhi
and attaining five spiritual penetrations.

Again are Bodhisattvas seen
in the peace of Dhyana, with palms joined,
who, with a thousand ten thousand lines,
sing praises of the Dharma kings.

Again are Bodhisattvas seen,
of profound wisdom and solid will,
able to question the Buddhas and
accept and hold all they have heard.

Further seen are Buddha's disciples,
with wisdom and samadhi perfect,
who, with limitless analogies,
preach Dharma to the multitudes.

Joyfully they preach the Dharma,
transforming all the Bodhisattvas,
defeating thus the troops of Mara,
and beating on the Dharma drum.

Seen too are Bodhisattvas
in silence and tranquility;
though worshipped by the gods and dragons,
they do not find it cause for joy.

Also seen are Bodhisattvas
dwelling in forests, emitting light,
relieving those suffering in the hells,
and leading them to the Buddha Way.

Also seen are Buddha's disciples
who have not slept, but walk at ease,
within the forest groves; they seek
with diligence the Buddha Way.

Seen too are those with perfect precepts
intact, with awe-inspiring manner,
their purity like precious pearls,
with which they seek the Buddha Way.

Also seen are the Buddha's disciples
abiding in the strength of patience;
though by those of overweening pride
maliciously rebuked and beaten,
they are able to endure it all,
seeking for the Buddha Way.

Again are Bodhisattvas seen,
apart from all frivolity,
and from stupid followers,
drawing near to those with wisdom.

Singlemindedly casting out confusion,
collecting their thoughts in the mountain forests,
for tens of thousands of millions of years
in quest of the Way of the Buddha.

Bodhisattvas there are seen,
who, with fine food and drink and with
a hundred kinds of broths and herbs
make offerings to the Buddha and the Sangha.

Who, with fine robes and superior garments,
of value in the millions,
or with in valuable robes
make offerings to the Buddha and the Sangha.

Who, with a million different kinds
of dwellings of precious sandalwood
and with much fine bedding
make offerings to the Buddha and the Sangha.

Who, with gardens and groves, clear and pure,
with flowers and fruits in abundance
with flowing springs and bathing ponds,
make offerings to the Buddha and the Sangha.

Offerings such as these,
of many kinds, extremely fine,
do they give with joy untiring,
seeking for the utmost Way.

There are Bodhisattvas who
speak of still extinction's Dharma
with various instructions teaching
living beings without number.

Seen are Bodhisattvas who
contemplate all Dharmas' nature
as lacking the mark of duality,
like empty space.

Also seen are Buddha's disciples
whose minds have no attachments and
who use this wondrous wisdom,
seeking for the utmost Way.

Manjushri,
Again are Bodhisattvas who,
after the Buddhas cross into extinction,
make offerings to the Sharira.

Again are seen Buddha's disciples,
building stupas, building temples,
countless as the Ganges sands,
to adorn those realms and lands.

The Jeweled stupas, tall and fine,
are five thousand Yojanas in height,
two thousand Yojanas in breadth.
Each stupa and temple is adorned
with a thousand curtains and banners
circling around and wrought with gems,
and jeweled bells which harmoniously chime.

All the gods, dragons, and spirits,
humans and non-humans,
with incense, flowers, and instrumental music,
constantly make offerings.

Manjushri,
All the Buddhas' disciples,
adorn the stupas and the shrines
making offerings to the Shariras;
spontaneously, the realms and lands
are superbly fine and exquisite,
like the king of heavenly trees
when its flowers bloom.

The Buddha sends forth this single ray,
and I and those assembled here
view within those realms and lands,
the various special wonders.

The spiritual might of the Buddhas
and their wisdom is most rare,
emitting a single, pure light,
they can illumine limitless lands.
Seeing this, we have all
obtained what we have never had.
Disciple of the Buddha, Manju,
pray resolve the assembly's doubts.

The Four-fold multitude with joy
looks up to you, humane one, and to me.
Why has the World Honored One
emitted such a brilliant light?
Disciple of the Buddha, answer now;
resolve our doubts, so we may rejoice.
What benefit is to be gained
by putting forth this brilliant light?
That wondrous Dharma the Buddha gained
as he sat in the field of the Way --
Does he wish, now, to preach it?

or is he going to give predictions?
The manifesting of the Buddha-lands,
adorned with many jewels, and pure,
as well as the vision of the Buddhas
does not betoken small conditions.

Manju, it should be known,
the four assemblies, dragons and spirits,
look to you, humane one, hopefully;
what is it that is to be said?

At that time, Manjushri addressed the Bodhisattva Mahasattva Maitreya and all the great lords, saying, “Good men, in my estimation, the Buddha, the World Honored One, now wishes to speak the great Dharma, to let fall the great Dharma rain, to blow the great Dharma conch, to beat the great Dharma drum, and to proclaim the great Dharma doctrine.”

“Good men, I have, in the past, in the presence of other Buddhas, seen such portents. Having emitted this light, they immediately spoke the great Dharma. Therefore, it should be known that the manifestation of light by the present Buddha is also thus. Because he wishes to lead all living beings to hear and understand this Dharma which in the whole world is hard to believe, he therefore manifests these portents.”

“Good men, it is just as in the past, limitless, boundless, inconceivable Asankhyeya aeons ago, there was at that time a Buddha named Brightness of Sun-Moon-Lamp Thus Come One, One Worthy of Offerings, One of Proper and Universal knowledge, One of Perfect Clarity and Conduct, Well-Gone One, an Unsurpassed Knight who Understands the World, a Hero Who Subdues and Tames, a Teacher of Gods and People, the Buddha, the World Honored One who expounded the proper Dharma, good at its beginning, good in its middle, and good at its end, its meaning profound and far-reaching, its words clever and subtle, pure and unadulterated, complete with the marks of pure, white Brahman conduct.”

“To those who sought to be Hearers, he responded with the Dharma of the Four Truths, by which one crosses over birth, aging, sickness, and death to the ultimate Nirvana; to those who sought to be Pratyeka Buddhas, he responded with the Dharma of the Twelve Conditioned Causes; for the sake of the Bodhisattvas, he responded with the Six Paramitas, causing

them to attain Anuttarasamyaksambodhi and realize the wisdom of all modes.”

“Then, there was another Buddha, also named Brightness of Sun-Moon-Lamp, and then another Buddha, also named Brightness of Sun-Moon-Lamp, and so forth for twenty-thousand Buddhas all of the same name, Brightness of Sun-Moon-Lamp, and also of the same surname, Bharadvaja.”

“Maitreya, it should be known that all of those Buddhas, from the first to the last, had the same name, Brightness of Sun-Moon-Lamp, and were complete with the ten titles, and that the Dharma they spoke was good at its beginning, middle, and end.”

“Before the last Buddha left the home-life, he had eight royal sons. The first was named Intention, the second, Good Intention, the third, Limitless Intention, the fourth Jeweled Intention, the fifth, Increasing Intention; the sixth, Intention Rid of Doubt, the seventh, Resounding Intention, and the eighth, Dharma Intention. The eight princes were of awesome virtue and self-mastery and each ruled over four continents.”

“When the princes heard that their father had left the home-life and attained Anuttarasamyaksambodhi, they all renounced their royal positions and left home as well. They brought forth the resolve for the Great Vehicle and constantly cultivated Brahman conduct. All became Dharma Masters, having already, in the presence of ten million Buddhas, planted the roots of goodness.”

“At that time, the Buddha Sun-Moon-Lamp Brightness spoke a Great Vehicle Sutra named The Limitless Principles, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas of which the Buddhas are protective and mindful. When he had finished speaking that Sutra, he then, in the midst of the assembly, sat in full lotus and entered the Samadhi of the Station of Limitless Principles; his body and mind were unmoving.

“Then from the heavens there fell a rain of Mandarava flowers, Mahamandarava flowers, Manjushaka flowers, and Mahamanjushaka flowers, which were scattered upon the Buddha and the entire great assembly. All the Buddhas' universes quaked in six ways. At that time the

entire great assembly of Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, gods, dragons, Yakshas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garudas, Kinnaras, Mahoragas, beings human and non-human as well as the minor kings and the wheel-turning sage kings and so forth, all attained what they had never had before. They rejoiced and joined their palms and, with one heart, gazed upon the Buddha.

"Then the Thus Come One emitted from between his brows a white hair-mark light which illumined eighteen thousand Buddha-worlds to the east, omitting none of them. Just like all the Buddha lands now seen."

"Maitreya, it should be known that there were at that time in the assembly twenty million Bodhisattvas who took delight in listening to the Dharma. Upon seeing this bright light illumine all the Buddha lands, all the Bodhisattvas obtained what they had never had and wished to know the causes and conditions for this light."

"There was at that time a Bodhisattva by the name of Wondrous Light who had eight hundred disciples. The Buddha Brightness of Sun-Moon-Lamp then arose from Samadhi and, for the sake of the Bodhisattva Wondrous Light, spoke a Great Vehicle Sutra called the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas of which the Buddha is protective and mindful."

"For sixty small aeons he did not rise from his seat. Those assembled listening also sat in one place for sixty small aeons with bodies and minds unmoving, listening to what the Buddha said as if it were but the space of a meal. At that time, in the assembly, there was not a single person who grew weary, either physically or mentally."

"At the end of sixty small aeons, having finished speaking the Sutra, the Buddha Sun-Moon-Lamp Brightness immediately announced to the assembly of Brahma, Mara, Shramanas, Brahmans, gods, humans, and Asuras, 'Today, at midnight, the Thus Come One will enter Nirvana without residue.'"

"There was at that time a Bodhisattva by the name of Virtue Treasury to whom the Buddha Sun-Moon-Lamp Brightness transmitted a prediction, telling all the Bhikshus, 'The Bodhisattva Virtue Treasury will next become

a Buddha with the name of Pure-Body-Tathagato'rhan, Samyaksambuddhah.' After that Buddha had transmitted the prediction, at midnight he entered Nirvana without residue."

"Following the Buddha's crossing over into extinction, the Bodhisattva Wondrous Light upheld the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra for a full eighty small aeons, expounding it to others. The eight sons of the Buddha Sun-Moon-Lamp Brightness all served Wondrous Light as their master. Wondrous Light taught and transformed them, causing them to become firmly established in Anuttarasamyaksambodhi."

"The princes, having made offerings to limitless hundreds of thousands of tens of thousands of millions of Buddhas, all realized the Buddha Way. The very last to become a Buddha was one named Burner of the Lamp."

"Among the eight hundred disciples was one named Seeker of Fame, who was greedily attached to profit and offerings. Although he read and recited many scriptures, he did not comprehend them and forgot most of what he learned. For that reasons he was called Seeker of Fame. Because he had also planted good roots, he was able to encounter limitless hundreds of thousands of tens of thousands of millions of Buddhas, making offerings to them and honoring them, venerating and praising them."

"Maitreya, it should be known, could the Bodhisattva Wondrous Light have been anyone else? I, myself, was him. And the Bodhisattva Seeker of Fame was you, yourself!"

"The portents now seen do not differ from those, and so, in my estimation, today the Thus Come One is about to speak a Great Vehicle Sutra called The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower, a Dharma for instructing Bodhisattvas of which the Buddha is protective and mindful."

At that time Manjushri, in the midst of the assembly, wishing to restate his meaning, spoke verses, saying:

I recall that in ages past,
Limitless, countless aeons ago,
There appeared a Buddha, one honored among people,

By the name of Brightness of Sun-Moon-Lamp,
That World Honored One proclaimed the Dharma,
Taking limitless living beings across,
Causing countless millions of Bodhisattvas
To enter the wisdom of the Buddhas.

Before that Buddha had left home,
The eight royal sons born to him,
Seeing the Great Sage leave him home,
Also followed him to practice Brahman conduct.

The Buddha then spoke a Great Vehicle
Sutra by the name of Limitless Principles;
Amidst the assembly, and for their sake,
He set it forth in extensive detail.

When the Buddha had finished speaking the Sutra,
Seated in the Dharma-seat,
He sat in full lotus and entered the Samadhi
Called the Station of Limitless Principles.

From the heavens fell a rain of Mandarava flowers,
And heavenly drums of themselves did sound,
While all the gods, dragons, ghosts and spirits,
Made offerings to the Honored One;
And, within all the Buddha lands,
There occurred a mighty trembling.
The light emitted from between the Buddha's brows
Manifested all these rare events.

The light illumined to the east
Eighteen thousand Buddha lands,
Revealing the places of living beings'
Karmic retributions of birth and death.

Seen, too, were Buddha lands adorned
With a multitude of gems,
The color of lapiz lazuli and crystal,
Illumined by the Buddha's light.

Seen as well were gods and people,
Dragons, spirits, and Yaksha hordes,
Gandharvas and Kinnaras,
Each making offerings to the Buddha.

Thus come ones, too, all were seen
As they naturally accomplished the Buddha Way,
Their bodies' hue like mountains of gold,
Upright, serene, subtle, and fine,
As, within pure lapis lazuli
Would appear an image of real gold.

The World Honored Ones in those assemblies
Proclaimed the profound principle of the Law.
In all the Buddhas' lands,
Were Shravaka hosts, uncountable;
Through the illumination of the Buddha's light
Those assemblies all were fully seen.

There were also Bhikshus who,
Dwelt within the mountain groves,
Vigorously upholding the pure precepts
As if guarding brilliant pearls.

Also seen were Bodhisattvas
Practicing giving, patience, and so forth,
Their number like the Ganges' sands,
Illumined by the Buddha's light.

Seen too were Bodhisattvas who
Had deeply entered Dhyana Samadhi,
With bodies and minds still and unmoving
They sought the Way unsurpassed.

Bodhisattvas, too, were seen who knew
The Mark of Dharmas' still extinction;
Each one within his Buddhaland
Spoke Dharma, seeking the Buddha's path.

Then the four-fold multitudes
Seeing the Buddha Sun-Moon-Lamp
Manifest great and powerful spiritual penetrations,

In their hearts all rejoiced,
And inquired, each of the other,
"What is the reason for these events?"

The Honored One, revered by gods and humans,
Just then from Samadhi did arise,
And praised the Bodhisattva Wondrous Light:
"You act as eyes for the world,
All return to you in faith; you are
Able reverently to hold the Dharma-store.

Dharma such as I do speak--
You alone can certify to its understanding."
The World Honored One having praised him,
And caused Wondrous Light to rejoice,
Then spoke the Sutra of the Dharma Flower.

For a full sixty minor aeons
He did not rise from his seat.
The supreme and wondrous Dharma that he spoke,
The Dharma Master Wondrous Light
Was fully able to receive and hold.

The Buddha, having spoken The Dharma Flower,
And caused the assembly to rejoice,
Later, on that very day,
Announced to the host of gods and humans;
"The meaning of the real mark of all Dharmas
Has already been spoken for all of you,
And now at midnight, I
shall enter into Nirvana.
You should single-heartedly advance with vigor,
And avoid laxness, for
Buddhas are difficult indeed to meet,
Encountered but once in a million aeons."

All of the disciples of the World Honored One
Hearing of the Buddha's entry into Nirvana,
Each harbored grief and anguish,

"Why must the Buddha take extinction so soon?"
The sagely Lord, the Dharma King,
Then comforted the limitless multitude:
"After my passage into extinction,
None of you should worry or fear,
For the Bodhisattva Virtue Treasury,
With respect to the non-outflow mark of reality,
In heart has penetrated it totally;
He will next become a Buddha,
By the name of Pure Body, and
Will also save uncounted multitudes.

That night the Buddha passed into extinction,
As a flame dies once its fuel has been consumed.
The Sharira were divided up,
And limitless stupas built.

The Bhikshus and Bhikshunis,
Their number like the Gange's sands,
Redoubled their vigor in advancing
In their quest for the unsurpassed path.

The Dharma Master Wondrous Light
Reverently kept the store of the Buddha's Law;
For eighty minor aeons, he
Widely spread the Sutra of the Dharma Flower.

All of the eight royal sons
Taught and led by Wondrous Light,
Became solid in the unsurpassed path,
And met with Buddhas beyond all count.

Having presented them offerings,
They accordingly practiced the Great Way,
And in succession, became Buddhas,
Transmitting prophecies in turn.

The last of these, a god among gods,
Was a Buddha by the name of Burner of the Lamp,
A guiding master of all the immortals,
Who brought release to countless multitudes.

The Dharma Master Wondrous Light
Had a disciple at that time
Whose heart harbored laxness, and who
Was greedily attached to fame and gain.

Seeking fame and gain untiringly,
He often visited the great clans;
He cast aside his recitations
Neglected, forgot, and failed to comprehend them.

These, then, were the reasons why
He was given the name "Seeker of Fame."
Yet he also practiced many good deeds,
Enabling him to meet uncounted Buddhas,
And make offerings to all of them.

Accordingly he walked the great path,
And perfected the Six Paramitas.
Now he meets the Shakyam Lion;
Later, He will become a Buddha
By the name of Maitreya,
Who will broadly take all beings over--
Their number far beyond all count.

After that Buddha had passed into extinction,
The indolent one was you,
And the Dharma Master Wondrous Light,
Was I, myself, now present here.

I saw the Buddha Brightness of Lamp;
His light and portents were like these.
Thus I know the present Buddha,
Wishes to speak The Dharma Flower Sutra.

The present marks are like the portents past,
Expedient devices of the Buddhas.
The Buddha now puts forth bright light,
To help reveal the real mark's meaning.
All of you now should understand, and
With one heart, join your palms, and wait;

The Buddha will let fall the Dharma rain,
To satisfy all those who seek the Way.

Those who seek three vehicles,
Should they have doubts or regrets,
The Buddha will remove them now,
So that they vanish and none remain.