

Expedient Devices

Chapter 2

At that time the World Honored One arose serenely from samadhi and told Shariputra, “The wisdom of all the Buddhas is extremely profound and unlimited. The gateway to this wisdom is difficult to understand and difficult to enter. It cannot be known by any of the Hearers or Pratyekabudhas.

What is the reason? The Buddhas have, in the past, drawn near to countless hundreds of thousands of tens of thousands of millions of Buddhas, exhaustively practicing the unlimited dharmas of the Way of those Buddhas. They are forging ahead with courage and vigor and their names are known everywhere.”

“They have accomplished the most profound Dharma, one which has never been before, and speak of it according to what is appropriate, but its purport is difficult to understand.”

“Shariputra, from the time I realized Buddhahood, I have, by means of various causes and conditions and various analogies, extensively proclaimed the verbal teaching. With countless expedient devices, I have guided living beings, leading them to separate from all attachments.”

“Why is this? The Thus Come One has already perfected his expedient devices, his knowledge and vision, and the paramitas.”

“Shariputra, the knowledge and vision of the Thus Come One is vast, great, profound, and far-

reaching. He has profoundly entered, without boundary, the unlimiteds, the unobstructeds, the powers, the fearlessnesses, the dhyanaconcentrations, and the samadhis of liberation, accomplishing all those dharmas never had before.”

“Shariputra, the Thus Come One is able to make various discriminations, cleverly speaking all dharmas. His speech is gentle and delights the hearts of the multitudes.”

“Shariputra, essentially speaking, the Buddha has fully accomplished all of those unlimited, boundless dharmas which have never been before.”

“Stop.”

“Shariputra, there is no need to speak further. Why is this? As to that foremost, rare, and hard-to-understand Dharma accomplished by the Buddha—only the Buddhas and the Buddha can exhaust the Real Mark of all dharmas. That is to say with regard to all dharmas: the suchness of the marks, the suchness of the nature, the suchness of the substance, the suchness of the power, the suchness of the function, the suchness of the causes, the suchness of the conditions, the suchness of the effects, the suchness of the retributions, and the suchness of the ultimate equality from beginning to end.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses saying,

Illimitable are the heroes of the
world.
All the gods and people in the

world,
And all the classes of living
beings
Cannot know the Buddhas.

The Buddhas' powers,
fearlessnesses,
Liberations and samadhis,
And other dharma of the
Buddhas
Can be fathomed by no one.

Formerly, following countless
Buddhas,
I perfectly walked all the paths
Of the wonderful Dharma,
subtle and deep,
Hard to see and hard to
understand;
Through limitless millions of
eons,
I walked down all these paths.
In the Bodhimanda, I realized
the fruit,
And have fully known and seen
it all.

The great effect and retribution,
The various natures, marks, and
meanings,
Are such that I and the ten-
direction Buddhas
Alone can understand these
matters.

This Dharma cannot be
demonstrated,
The mark of language being still
and extinct;
Of all the kinds of living beings

There is none who can
understand it.
Except the host of Bodhisattvas,
Firm in the power of faith.

The host of the Buddha's
disciples
Who have made offerings to the
Buddhas
And who have exhausted all
outflows,
And dwell in their final bodies—
The strength of people such as
these
Also proves inadequate.

If the world were filled
With those like Shariputra,
Who together spent their
thoughts to measure it,
They could not fathom the
Buddha's wisdom.

Truly, suppose the ten
directions,
Were filled with those like
Shariputra,
And that the remaining disciples
filled
All the lands in the ten
directions,
And that together they spent
their thoughts to measure it,
They also could not know it.

If Pratyekabuddhas of sharp
wisdom
Without outflows, in their final
bodies,
Also filled the ten directions,
Their number like the bamboo in

the forest,
And if they put their minds
together,
Wishing to think about the
Buddha's real wisdom,
Throughout measureless
millions eons,
They could not know the
smallest part of it.
Suppose newly resolved
Bodhisattvas,
Who have made offerings to
countless Buddhas,
Who understand the principle
and the purport,
And are well able to speak the
Dharma,
Whose numbers are like rice,
hemp, bamboo, and reeds,
Filled the ten-direction lands,
And suppose with one mind and
with wondrous wisdom,
Throughout eons like the
Ganges' sands,
They were all together to think it
over,
Even they could not know the
Buddha's wisdom.
Suppose that non-retreating
Bodhisattvas,
Their number like the Ganges'
sands,
With one mind thought to seek
that wisdom
They also could not know of it.
And what is more, Shariputra,
That inconceivable, non-outflow,
Most profound and subtle

Dharma,
I have perfectly obtained,
And I alone know its mark,
Along with the ten-direction
Buddhas.

Shariputra, you should know
The words of the Buddhas do
not differ.

In the Dharma spoken by the
Buddhas
You should place the power of
great faith.

When the World Honored One's
Dharma is at its end,
The true and real must be
spoken.

I tell the assembly of Hearers
And those who seek the
Conditioned Enlightened
Vehicle,
That I will lead them to cast off
suffering's bond,
And arrive at Nirvana.

The Buddha uses the power of
expedients,
Demonstrating the teaching of
Three Vehicles,
So that living beings, attached
in many places,
May be guided to escape.

At that time in the assembly there were Hearers,
Arhats with outflows extinguished,
Ajnatakaundinya and others, twelve hundred
persons, as well as Bhikshus, Bhikshunis,
Upasakas, and Upasikas who had brought forth
the resolve to become Hearers and
Pratyekabuddhas. They all had the following

thought:

“Why, now, does the World Honored One repeatedly praise the expedient devices saying, ‘the Dharma obtained by the Buddha is so extremely profound and difficult to understand and the purport of his speech is so difficult to know, that none of the Hearers or Pratyekabuddhas can grasp it.’ The Buddha has spoken of but one principle of liberation and we have already obtained this Dharma and arrived at Nirvana. Now, we do not understand his intention.”

At that time Shariputra, knowing the doubts in the minds of the fourfold assembly, and himself not yet fully understanding, addressed the Buddha saying: “For what reason has the World Honored One repeatedly praised the foremost expedient devices of the Buddhas and the extremely profound and wonderful Dharma which is difficult to understand? From the past onwards I have never heard the Buddha speak in such a way. Presently, the fourfold assembly all has doubts. I only pray that the World Honored One will expound upon this subject: Why has the World Honored One repeatedly praised the Dharma, which is extremely profound, subtle, and hard to understand?”

At that time, Shariputra, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses saying,

Oh! Sun of Wisdom, Great
Honored Sage,
Long have you waited to speak
this Dharma;
Speaking of your attainments of
such

Powers, fearlessnesses, and
samadhis,
Dhyana samadhis and
liberations,
And other inconceivable
dharmas.

Concerning the Dharma
obtained in the Bodhimanda,
No one is able to raise a
question.

I find its meaning hard to
fathom,
And am also unable to ask
about it.

So you speak unasked,
Praising the path you have
walked

And that wisdom fine and
subtle,
Attained by all the Buddhas.

All the Arhats, without outflows,
And those who seek Nirvana,
Have fallen into a net of doubts.
“Why has the Buddha said
this?”

Those who seek Condition
Enlightenment,
The Bhikshus, the Bhikshunis,
Gods, dragons, ghosts, and
spirits,
Gandharvas and others,
Look at one another, perplexed,
And then gaze at the Doubly
Complete Honored One.
“What is the meaning of this
matter?”

“We pray that the Buddha will explain.”

Of the host of Hearers
The Buddha has declared me
foremost,

And yet now with my own
wisdom

I cannot resolve my doubts.

Is this Dharma ultimate?

Or is it the path to be walked?

Disciples born from the
Buddha’s mouth,

With joined palms wait,
expectantly.

Pray put forth the subtle sound,
For it is time to tell it as it really
is.

The gods, dragons, spirits, and
others

Their numbers like the Ganges’
sands,

Bodhisattvas seeking
Buddhahood,

Numbering a full eighty
thousand,

And, from myriads of millions of
lands,

Wheel-turning sage kings have
come,

With joined palms and reverent
minds

All wish to hear of the perfect
way.

At that time the Buddha told Shariputra, “Stop!
Stop! There is no need to speak further. If this
matter were spoken of, the gods and humans in
all the worlds would be frightened and led to

doubts.”

Shariputra again addressed the Buddha saying, “World Honored One, I only pray that you will speak it. I only pray that you will speak it. What is the reason? In this assembly are countless hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of asankhyeyas of living beings who have, in the past, seen the Buddhas. Their roots are keen and their wisdom bright. Hearing what the Buddha says they will be able to revere and believe it.”

At that time, Shariputra, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke the following verses:

Dharma King, Supremely Honored One,
Do but speak; pray have no worries,
For, with in the limitless multitudes,
Are those who can revere and believe it.

The Buddha again stopped Shariputra, “If this matter were spoken of, the gods, humans, and asuras in all the worlds would be frightened and led to doubt, and those Bhikshus of overweening pride would fall into a big pit.”

Then the World Honored One restated his meaning in verse, saying,

Stop, stop. It must not be spoken.
My Dharma is wonderful beyond
conception,
And those of undue pride who heard it,
Surely would neither revere nor believe
it.

At that time, Shariputra further addressed the Buddha, saying, “World Honored One, I only pray that you will speak it. I only pray that you will speak it. Presently, within this assembly are

those who are my equal, hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of them. Life after life they have been transformed by the Buddha. People such as these will surely be able to revere and believe you. They will gain security and great benefit within the long night.”

At that time, Shariputra, wishing to restate his meaning, recited the following verses:

Supreme and Doubly Honored
One.
Pray speak the foremost
Dharma.
I, the Buddha’s eldest disciple,
Wish you will but speak it in
detail.

The limitless host here
assembled,
Can revere and believe this
Dharma,
For the Buddha has, for life
after life,
Taught and transformed such
ones as these.

With one mind, with palms
joined,
We all wish to hear the Buddha
speak.
Twelve hundred of us there are,
And more, seeking
Buddhahood.

Pray, for those assembled here,
Speak of it in detail;
Having heard this Dharma,
Great will our rejoicing be.

Thereupon the World Honored One told Shariputra, “Since you have earnestly requested three times, how can I not speak? You should now listen attentively, think upon it well, and be mindful of it; I will explain it in detail for your sake.”

As he said these words, five thousand Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas in the assembly rose from their seats, made obeisance to the Buddha and left. What was the reason? The roots of their offenses were deep and grave and they were of such overweening pride that they claimed to have obtained what they had not yet obtained and to have certified to that to which they had not yet certified to. With faults such as these they could not stay. The World Honored One remained silent and did not restrain them.

The Buddha then told Shariputra, “My assembly has now been cleared of its branches and leaves and only the trunks remain. Shariputra, it is excellent that those of overweening pride have left. You should now listen well and I shall speak it for you.”

Shariputra said, “So be it, World Honored One. I wish joyfully to hear it.”

The Buddha told Shariputra, “A wonderful Dharma such as this is spoken only occasionally by the Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, just as the udumbara flower appears but once in a great while.”

“Shariputra, you should all believe that which the Buddha says, for his words are not vain or false. Shariputra, all the Buddhas speak the Dharma in accord with what is appropriate, but its purport is

difficult to understand. What is the reason? I extensively speak all dharmas by means of countless expedient devices, various causes and conditions, analogies, and expressions. This Dharma cannot be understood through deliberation or discrimination. Only the Buddhas alone can know it. Why is this? All the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, appear in the world only because of the causes and conditions of the one great matter.”

“Shariputra, what is meant by ‘All Buddhas, World Honored Ones, appear in the world only because of the causes and conditions of the one great matter?’ The Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, appear in the world because they wish to lead living beings to open the knowledge and vision of the Buddhas and gain purity. They appear in the world because they wish to demonstrate to all living beings the knowledge and vision of the Buddhas. They appear in the world because they wish to lead living beings to awaken to the knowledge and vision of the Buddhas. They appear in the world because they wish to lead living beings to enter into the Path of the knowledge and vision of the Buddhas.”

“Shariputra, these are the causes and conditions of the one great matter for which all the Buddhas appear in the world.”

The Buddha told Shariputra, “All the Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, teach and transform only Bodhisattvas. All their actions are always for the one matter, and that is only to demonstrate and enlighten living beings to the Buddha’s knowledge and vision. Shariputra, in speaking Dharma to living beings, the Thus Come Ones use only the Buddha Vehicle. There are no other

vehicles, whether two or three. Shariputra, the Dharma of all the Buddhas of the ten directions is thus. Shariputra, the Buddhas of the past, by means of limitless, countless expedient devices, various causes and conditions, analogies and expressions, have proclaimed all the dharmas to living beings. These dharmas were all for the sake of the One Buddha Vehicle. All these living beings, hearing the Dharma from the Buddhas, ultimately attain the Wisdom of All Modes.”

“Shariputra, when the Buddhas of the future shall come into the world, they will also by means of limitless, countless expedient devices, various causes and conditions, analogies and expressions, proclaim all the dharmas to living beings. These dharmas will all be for the sake of the One Buddha Vehicle. Hearing the Dharma from the Buddhas, all these living beings will ultimately attain to the Wisdom of all Modes.

Shariputra, presently, all the Buddhas, World Honored Ones, throughout the ten directions in limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of millions of Buddhalands, greatly benefit living beings and bring them peace and happiness. These Buddhas also by means of limitless, countless expedient devices, various causes and conditions, analogies, and expressions, extensively proclaim all the dharmas to living beings. These dharmas are all for the sake of the One Buddha Vehicle. All these living beings, hearing the Dharma from the Buddhas, ultimately attain the Wisdom of All Modes.

Shariputra, all the Buddhas only teach and transform Bodhisattvas because they wish to demonstrate to living beings the Buddha’s knowledge and vision, because they wish to

awaken living beings to the Buddha's knowledge and vision, and because they wish to lead living beings to enter the Buddha's knowledge and vision."

"Shariputra, I, now, too am also like this. Knowing that living beings have various desires to which their hearts are deeply attached, according to their basic dispositions, and by means of various causes and conditions, analogies, expressions, and the power of expedient devices, I speak the Dharma to them."

"Shariputra, this is all done so that they may attain the One Buddha Vehicle and the Wisdom of All Modes."

"Shariputra, in the worlds of the ten directions, there are not even two vehicles, how much the less three. Shariputra, all Buddhas appear in the world of the five evil turbidities, that is, the kalpa turbidity, the affliction turbidity, the living beings turbidity, the view turbidity, and the life turbidity. So, Shariputra, it is that in the time of the confusion of the kalpa turbidity, living beings are heavy-laden with impurities. Because they are stingy, greedy, envious, and jealous, they develop unwholesome roots. For this reason, all the Buddhas, by means of the power of expedient devices, within the One Buddha Vehicle, make discriminations and speak of three.

Shariputra, if a disciple of mine calls himself an Arhat or Pratyekabuddha, but does not hear or know of the fact that all the Buddhas, the Thus Come Ones, only teach and transform the Bodhisattvas, he is not a disciple of the Buddha nor is he an Arhat, nor is he a Pratyekabuddha."

“Furthermore, Shariputra, it should be known that those Bhikshus and Bhikshunis who claim to have attained Arhatship and to dwell in their final bodies before ultimate Nirvana, but who do not further resolve to seek anuttarasamyaksambodhi, are people of overweening pride. Why is this? It is impossible that any Bhikshu who had actually attained Arhatship should not believe this Dharma, except in the case when the Buddha has passed into extinction and no Buddha is in existence. Why is this? After the Buddha has passed into extinction, those who accept, uphold, read, recite, and understand the meaning of Sutras such as this will be hard to find. If they encounter other Buddhas, they will then obtain thorough understanding of this Dharma.”

“Shariputra, all of you should, with one heart, believe, understand, accept and uphold the speech of the Buddha, for in the words of all the Buddhas there is nothing vain or false. There are no other vehicles; there is only the One Buddha Vehicle.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate his meaning, spoke verses, saying,

Those Bhikshus and Bhikshunis,
Who harbor overweening pride.
The arrogant Upasakas,
Upasikas who do not believe,
In the fourfold host, such ones as these,
Numbering five thousand strong...
Who do not see their own mistakes,
Deficient in morality,
And guarding imperfections,
Those of paltry wisdom have left;
The chaff within the multitude is gone,

Thanks to the Buddha's awesome virtue.
These people, lacking blessings and virtue,
Are unworthy of receiving this Dharma.
The assembly is free of branches and leaves;
The trunks alone remain intact.

Shariputra, listen well:
The Dharma obtained by the Buddhas,
Is spoken for living beings
Through the power of limitless expedients,
The thoughts in living being's minds,
The various pathways they have walked,
The nature of their various desires,
Their karma, good or ill, from former lives,
The Buddha knows them all thoroughly.
Using conditions, analogies,
Expressions, and powerful expedients,
I cause them to rejoice.
I may speak the Sutras,
Gathas, or past events,
Of former lives, the unprecedented,
Causes and conditions,
Analogies or geyas,
Or the upadesha texts.

To dull-rooted ones who delight in lesser dharmas,
And who are greedily attached to birth and death,
Who, under limitless Buddhas,
Have not walked the deep and wondrous Path,
Oppressed by scores of sufferings,
For them I speak of Nirvana.

I have established these expedients
To cause them to enter the Buddha's wisdom.
Never did I say, "All of you
Will realize the Buddha Way."
I did not say as much because
The time to speak had not yet come.
The time, now, is exactly right,

To speak the Great Vehicle.

The nine division of my Dharma,
Are spoken to accord with living beings;
Intending to lead them into the Great Vehicle,
I therefore speak this Sutra text.

For the Buddha's disciples, pure in heart,
Who are compliant and have keen faculties,
Who, under countless Buddhas,
Have walked the deep and wondrous Path,
I speak the Sutra of the Great Vehicle.

I predict that such people
In the future will realize the Buddha Way,
For with profound thoughts they recollect the Buddha,
Cultivate and uphold pure morality.

When they hear that they will become Buddhas
Great will their rejoicing be.
The Buddha knows their thoughts and conduct,
And speaks the Great Vehicle for them.

If Hearers or Bodhisattvas,
Hear this Dharma that I speak,
Be it but a single verse,
They will become Buddhas, without a doubt.
In the Buddhalands of the ten directions,
There is only the Dharma of One Vehicle;
There are not two or three,
Except those spoken by the Buddhas as expedients,
And those are but false appellations
Used to induce living beings,
So that he may teach them the Buddha's wisdom.

The Buddhas appear in the world
Only for the sake of this One Real Matter;
The other two are not the truth;
To the end they would not use the Small Vehicle

To rescue living beings.

The Buddha himself dwells in the Great Vehicle,
And in accord with the Dharmas he has gained,
Adorned with the power of samadhi and wisdom,
He uses these to save living beings.

Having certified to the supreme path, myself,
The Great Vehicle's Dharma of equality,
Were I to teach by means of the Small Vehicle,
Even a single human being,
I would have fallen into stingy greed;
But such a thing could never be.

Should people rely, in faith, upon the Buddha,
The Thus Come One will not deceive them;
He has no thoughts of envy or greed,
And he has cut off all the evil in the dharmas.
Therefore, throughout the ten directions,
The Buddha alone has nothing to fear.

My body adorned with marks,
I brilliantly illumine the world.
Revered by countless multitudes
I speak the Seal of the Real Mark.
Shariputra, you should know,
That in the past I took a vow,
Wishing to lead the multitudes,
To be identical with me.

That vow, made long ago,
Now has been perfectly fulfilled,
For I have transformed all beings,
Leading them into the Buddha Path.
If, when I met with living beings,
I taught them just the Buddha Path,
Those lacking wisdom would be puzzled;
Confused, they would not accept the teaching.

I know that these living beings
Have never cultivated good roots.
They are firmly attached to the five desires,
And, out of stupidity and love, become afflicted.

Because of all their desires,
They fall into the three evil paths,
They turn on the wheel in the six destinies,
Suffering utter misery.

They take a tiny form in the womb;
Life after life, it continues to grow.
With scanty virtue and few blessings,
They are oppressed by scores of sufferings,
They enter the dense forest of deviant views,
Those of existence, non-existence, and the like.
They become dependent on those views—
Sixty-two of them in all.

Deeply attached to illusory dharmas,
They cling to them firmly and cannot let them go.
Arrogant, they brat of their loftiness;
They are flatterers, their hearts insincere.

Throughout ten billion eons,
They never hear the Buddha's name,
Nor do they hear the proper Dharma.
Such people are difficult to save.

Therefore, Shariputra,
I set forth expedients for them,
Speak of the way to suffering's end,
And demonstrate Nirvana.
Although I speak of Nirvana,
It is not true extinction.

All dharmas from their origin,
Are ever marked by still extinction.
When the Buddhas's disciples have walked the Path,

In a future age they will become Buddhas.

I possess the power of expedients,
And demonstrate the Dharma of Three Vehicles.
All the World Honored Ones,
Speak the Dharma of One Vehicle.

Now all of you assembled here,
Should cast your doubts aside.
The speech of all Buddhas is the same:
There is only One Vehicle, not two.

Throughout countless eons in the past,
Innumerable extinct Buddhas,
Hundreds of thousand of myriads of millions of them,
A number beyond all calculation,
World Honored Ones such as these,
Used various conditions, analogies,
And the power of countless expedients,
To proclaim the marks of all dharmas.

All of those World Honored Ones,
Spoke the Dharma of One Vehicle,
Transforming beings without limit,
Leading them to the Buddha Path.

Further, all great Sagely Lords,
Know the deep desires in the hearts
Of all the gods, humans, and other beings
Within all the worlds.

Using different expedients,
Which help to reveal the foremost principle.
If there are living beings
Who have met with Buddhas in the past
Heard the Dharma, practiced giving,
Morality, patience, and vigor
Dhyanasamadhi, wisdom, and so on,
Cultivating blessings and wisdom,

Persons such as these
Have all realized the Buddha path.

When those Buddhas have become extinct
If there are those with compliant hearts,
Beings such as these
Have attained the Buddha Way.

After the extinction of those Buddhas,
Those who have made offerings to their shariras,
Building millions of kinds of stupas,
Made of gold, silver, or of crystal,
Mother-of-pearl, carnelian,
Rose quartz, lapis lazuli, and other gems,
Clear, pure and most ornate,
Worked to grace the stupas,
Or should there be those who have built temples
Out of stone, chandana, or aloeswood,
Hovenia, or other timbers,
Bricks, clay, and the like,
Or those who, in the barren waste,
Have piled up earth into a Buddha-shrine,
Or even children who, at play,
Have piled up sand to make a stupa,
All persons such as these,
Have realized the Buddha Way.

Those who, for the Buddhas,
Have erected images,
Carving all their myriads of marks,
Have realized the Buddha Way.

They may have used the seven gems,
Or bronze or copper, white or red,
Wax, lead, or tin,
Iron, wood, or clay,
Or, perhaps, lacquered cloth,
In making Buddha images;
Persons such as these

Have realized the Buddha Way.

Those who painted bright Buddha images,
Adorned with the marks of their hundreds of blessings,
Whether they did it themselves or employed others,
Have realized the Buddha Way.

Even children who, at play,
Who with a straw, a stick, or pen,
Or even with their fingernails,
Drew images of the Buddha,
People such as these,
Gradually accumulated merit and virtue,
Perfected the heart of great compassion,
And have realized the Buddha Way.

They teach only Bodhisattvas,
And rescue countless multitudes.
Should persons, in stupas or in temples,
Make offerings with a reverent heart,
To jeweled or painted images,
With flowers, incense, banners, or canopies,
Or should they cause others to make music,
With drums, horns, or conches,
Pan-pipes, flutes, lutes or bamboo lyres,
Guitars, cymbals, or brass gongs,
With many wondrous sounds as these,
Played solely as offerings...
Or if, with happy hearts, with songs
And chants they praised the Buddha's virtues,
With even just one small sound,
They have realized the Buddha Way.

If people with scattered minds
Have given but a single flower
As an offering to a painted image,
They shall gradually see numberless Buddhas.

If they bowed in worship,

Or merely placed their palms together,
Or even raised a single hand,
Or gave a slight nod of the head,
As an offering to the images,
They shall gradually see countless Buddhas,
And have, themselves, realized the Buddha Way.

They will rescue countless multitudes,
And enter Nirvana without residue,
As a fire goes out when the fuel has been consumed.
If people with scattered minds,
Enter stupas or temples,
And say but once, "Namo Buddha,"
They have realized the Buddha Way.

Be it from Buddhas of the past,
While existent, or after their extinction,
Those who have heard this Dharma,
Have realized the Buddha Way.
The World Honored Ones of the future,
Are limitless in number;
All of these Thus Come Ones,
Will also speak the Dharma of expedient devices.

All of the Thus Come Ones,
By means of limitless expedients,
Help all living beings
To enter the Buddha's non-outflow wisdom.

Of those who have heard the Dharma,
None will fail to become Buddhas.
All the Buddhas have made this vow
"As to the Buddha Way which I have walked,
I wish to lead all living beings
Alike to obtain this Path."

And although the Buddhas of the future
Will speak a hundred thousand million,
Countless Dharma-doors,

They are, in fact, for the sake of One Vehicle.

All Buddhas, Doubly Perfect Honored Ones,
Know the Dharmas are eternally without a nature.
The Buddha-seed arises from conditions;
Thus they speak of the One Vehicle.

This Dharma abides in the Dharma's position,
Dwelling forever in worldly marks.
Having understood this in the Bodhimanda,
The Guiding Master teaches it expediently.

Those who receive the offerings of gods and humans,
The Buddhas of the present in the ten directions,
Their number like the Ganges' sands,
Manifest within the world
To bring peace and comfort to living beings,
And also speak Dharma such as this.

Knowing the foremost still extinction,
They use the power of expedients
To demonstrate the various paths,
In reality, for the sake of the Buddha Vehicle.
Knowing the conduct of living beings,
The thoughts deep within their minds,
Their habitual actions in the past,
The nature of their desire, the power of their vigor,
And their faculties, keen or dull,
They employ various causes and conditions,
Analogies and verbal expressions,
To teach them the appropriate expedients.
Now I, too, am like them.

Using various Dharma-doors,
I proclaim the Buddha Way
To bring peace and comfort to living beings.
I use the power of my wisdom,
To know the nature of beings' desires;
I speak all dharmas expediently,

To lead them all to happiness.
Shariputra, you should know,
As I regard them with my Buddha Eye,
I see living beings in the six paths,
Impoverished, lacking blessings and wisdom,
Entering the dangerous path of birth and death,
Where they suffer unremittingly.

They are deeply attached to the five desires,
Like a yak caring for its tail,
They smother themselves with greed and love,
Blind, and in darkness, seeing nothing.
They do not seek the mighty Buddha,
Or the Dharma which cuts off suffering,
But instead they deeply enter into deviant views;
With suffering, they wish to cast off suffering.

For the sake of these beings,
I give rise to the great compassion heart.
When first I sat in the Bodhimanda,
In contemplation, or walking about the tree,
For a full three times seven days,
I thought over matters such as these:
The wisdom which I have obtained,
Is subtle, wonderful, and foremost,
But living beings are dull-rooted,
Attached to pleasure, blinded by delusion;
Beings such as these,
How can they possibly be saved?

Just then the Brahma Heaven Kings,
As well as the God Shakra,
The Four World-Protecting God Kings,
The god of the Heaven of Great Comfort,
And the other heavenly multitudes,
With retinues numbering in the billions
Reverently placed their palms together,
And requested me to turn the Dharma-wheel.

I then thought to myself,
“Were I to praise only the Buddha Vehicle,
Beings sunk in suffering
Would be unable to believe this Dharma.
They would slander it out of disbelief,
And fall into the three evil paths.
It is better that I do not speak the Dharma,
But quickly enter into Nirvana.”

Then I recalled that the Buddhas of the past
Practiced powerful expedients,
And as I now have obtained the Path,
It is fitting that I also teach Three Vehicles.

When I had been thinking thus,
The Buddhas of the ten directions all appeared,
And with the Brahma sound encouraged me, saying,
“Good indeed, O Shakyamuni,
Foremost Guiding Master.
Having attained the supreme Dharma,
You follow the precedent of all Buddhas,
To employ the power of expedient devices.
We have all obtained as well,
That foremost Dharma, most wonderful.
For the various kinds of living beings,
We discriminate and teach Three Vehicles.

Those of little wisdom who delight in lesser dharmas,
Would not believe that they could become Buddhas.
That is why we use expedient means,
To discriminate and teach the various fruits.
Although Three Vehicles are taught,
It is only for the sake of teaching Bodhisattvas.”

Shariputra, you should know,
That when I heard the Sagely Lions’
Deep, pure, and wondrous sound,
I called out “Homage to all Buddhas.”
And further had this thought,

“I have come into a turbid, evil world;
As the Buddhas speak,
I should follow in accord.”

Having thought upon this matter,
I went straightaway to Varanasi.
Since the still and extinct mark of all dharmas,
Cannot be expressed in words,
I used the power of expedients,
To instruct the five Bhikshus.
This was called the turning of the Dharma-wheel.

Then came the sound of Nirvana,
As well as “Arhatship,”
“Dharma,” and the “Sangha,” various names.
From remote eons onward,
I have praised and shown Nirvana’s dharma,
As the final end of birth and death’s sufferings;
Always have I spoken thus.

Shariputra, you should know,
I see disciples of the Buddha,
Resolutely seeking the Buddha Way,
Limitless thousands of myriads of millions of them,
All with hearts of reverence,
All coming before the Buddha.
They had heard, from former Buddhas,
Expedient teachings of the Dharma.

This causes me to think,
“The reason why the Thus Come One appears,
Is to teach the wisdom of the Buddha,
And now the time is exactly right.”
Shariputra, you should know,
Those with dull faculties and slight wisdom,
Those attached to marks, the arrogant,
Cannot believe this Dharma.

I now rejoice and have no fear,

And among the Bodhisattvas,
I shall cast expedients aside and be straightforward,
Speaking only of the supreme Path.
When the Bodhisattvas have heard this Dharma,
The network of their doubts will be rent (destroyed);
Twelve hundred Arhats
Will all attain to Buddhahood.

As the Buddhas of the three periods of time
In such a manner spoke the Dharma,
So do I likewise now expound
The undiscriminated Dharma.
All Buddhas come into the world
But rarely, and are hard to meet;
And when they appear in the world,
It is hard for them to speak the Dharma.
Throughout countless eons, too,
It is difficult to hear this Dharma.

And those who can hear this Dharma—
Such people too, are rare,
Like the udumbara flower,
In which all take delight,
Which the gods and humans prize,
For it blooms but once in a long, long time
So one who hears this Dharma, gives joyful praise,
With even just a single word,
Has thereby made offerings,
To all the Buddhas of the three periods of time.

Such people are extremely rare,
Rarer than the udumbara flower.
All of you should have no doubts,
For I am the Dharma King;
I declare to the assembly:
I use only the path of One Vehicle,
To teach and transform Bodhisattvas.

There are no Hearer Disciples.

Shariputra, all of you,
The Hearers and Bodhisattvas,
Should know that this wondrous Dharma
Is the secret essence of all Buddhas.

In the evil world of five turbidities,
Beings who are blissfully attached
To pleasures and desires,
Will never seek the Buddha Way.

Evil people of the future,
Hearing the Buddha speak of One Vehicle,
In their delusion will not accept or believe it,
But will slander it and fall into the evil paths.

Still, those with shame and purity,
Who resolutely seek the Buddha Way,
For such ones as these I praise
The path of One Vehicle, extensively.

Shariputra, you should know,
The Dharma of all Buddhas is like this:
By means of millions of expedients,
I speak Dharma in accord with what is appropriate.

But those who do not study it,
Will never come to understand it.
Since all of you already know
All Buddhas, Masters of the World,
Work by means of appropriate expedients,
You should have no further doubts.
Let your hearts be filled with joy;
You know you will reach Buddhahood.