

Masters of the Dharma

Chapter 10

At that time the World Honored One, through Medicine King Bodhisattva, spoke to the eighty thousand great lords saying, “Medicine King, do you see within this great assembly the limitless gods, dragon kings, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas, and beings both human and non human, as well as the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, those seeking to be Hearers, those seeking to be Pratyekabuddhas, and those seeking the Buddha Path? Upon such ones as these, all in the presence of the Buddha, who hear but one verse or one sentence of The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra, or who have even one thought of rejoicing in it, I bestow predictions of their future attainment of anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”

The Buddha told the Medicine King:
“Furthermore, after the extinction of the Thus Come One, should there be one who hears but a single verse or a single sentence of The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra or who has even one thought of rejoicing in it, I bestow upon him as well a prediction of anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”

“Further, should there be one who receives and upholds, reads and recites, explains and teaches, or copies out The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra, be it even a single verse, looking upon the Sutra text with reverence as he would the Buddha himself, making various kinds of offerings of flowers, incense, beads, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, silk

canopies, banners, clothing and music, or who even join his palms in reverence, O Medicine King, you should know that such a person has in the past already made offerings to tens of myriads of millions of Buddhas, in the presence of those Buddhas, accomplishing great vows. It is out of pity for living beings that he is born among human beings.”

“O Medicine King, if someone should ask you what type of living beings shall in the future become Buddhas, you should point out to him that these very people in the future certainly shall become Buddhas, Why is this? If a good man or good woman receives and upholds, reads, recites, explains and teaches, or writes out even a single sentence of The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra, or makes various offerings to the Sutra text of flowers, incense, beads, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, silk canopies, banners, clothing, music, or reverently joined palms, that person should be looked up to in reverence by those in all worlds and should receive offerings befitting the Thus Come One. You should know that this person is a great Bodhisattva, one who has accomplished anuttarasamyaksambodhi. Out of pity for living beings, he has vowed to be born here and to expound upon The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra broadly and in detail.”

“How much the more does this apply to one who can receive and uphold it in its entirety and make various kinds of offerings to it.”

“Medicine King, you should know that this person has renounced his own pure karmic reward and, after my extinction, out of pity for living beings, has been born in the evil world to vastly proclaim

this Sutra.”

“If this good man or good woman after my extinction can secretly explain even so much as a single sentence of The Dharma Flower Sutra for a single person, you should know that this person is a messenger of the Thus Come One. This person is sent by the Thus Come One to do the Thus Come One’s work.”

“How much the more so is that the case for one who can in the midst of a great assembly extensively explain it to people.”

“O Medicine King, should an evil person with unwholesome mind appear before the Buddha, slandering and scolding him constantly for the length of an eon, his offenses would be relatively light compared to the offenses of a person who speaks even a single evil word reviling any Sanghan or layperson who reads or recites The Dharma Flower Sutra. That person’s offense would be very grave.”

“O Medicine King, you should know that one who reads and recites The Dharma Flower Sutra takes the Buddha’s adornments as his own adornments. He shall carry the Thus Come One on his shoulders. Wherever he goes, he should be welcomed with obeisance. Singlemindedly, and with palms joined, one should pay reverence, make offerings, honor, and praise him. He should receive the finest offerings among people, offerings of flowers, incense, beads, powdered incense, paste incense, burning incense, silk canopies, banners, clothing, fine food, and music. Heavenly jewels should be scattered over him, and clusters of the finest heavenly jewels offered to him.”

“What is the reason? When this person joyfully speaks the Dharma, those who hear it for but an instant shall directly achieve ultimate anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”

At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate these principles, spoke verses, saying:

“One wishing to dwell in the Buddha
Path
And to accomplish spontaneous wisdom
Should diligently make offerings
To those who receive and uphold The
Dharma Flower
One wishing quickly to gain
The Wisdom of All Modes
Should receive and uphold this Sutra
And make offerings to those who uphold
it.

One who can receive and uphold
The Wonderful Dharma Flower Sutra
You should know the Buddha sent him,
Out of pity for living beings.

Those who can receive and hold
The Wonderful Dharma Flower Sutra,
Have renounced their pure lands,
And, pitying beings, have been reborn
here.

You should know that such people,
Are free to be born wherever they wish,
And can, in this evil world
Vastly teach the supreme Dharma.

One should make offerings of heavenly
flowers
Incense and heavenly jeweled
garments,

And heaven's finest, most marvelous
gems,
To the teachers of this Dharma.

One who can uphold this Sutra
After my extinction, in the evil age,
Should be worshipped with palms joined

As if making offerings to the World
Honored One.

Fine food and many sweet delicacies
And various kinds of clothing,
Should be offered to this disciple of the
Buddha,
Hoping to hear him speak even for a
moment.

One who can, in the latter age.
Receive and uphold this Sutra,
Has been sent by me into the human
realm,
To carry out the Thus Come One's work.

If for the space of an eon,
One were to harbor an unwholesome
mind
And scowling, scold the Buddha,
He would incur measureless offenses.
But if one were, but for a moment, to
speak ill
Of one who reads, recites, or upholds
The Dharma Flower Sutra,
His offenses would exceed the former's.

If one who seeks the Buddha Path
Were for the length of an eon
To stand before me with palms joined,
Praising me with countless verses,
Because of his praise of the Buddha,

He would gain limitless merit and virtue.

But one who praises the upholder of this
Sutra

Would gain blessings exceeding that.
One who, throughout eighty million eons

Made offerings to the upholder of this
Sutra
Of the finest forms, sounds,
Fragrances, tastes, and tangible objects,

And having made such offerings,
Gets to hear it for but an instant,
He should be filled with rejoicing
Thinking, "I have gained great benefit!"

Medicine King, I tell you now,
Of all the sutras I have spoken,
The Dharma Flower is foremost."

At that time, the Buddha further told the Bodhisattva, Mahasattva
Medicine King, "Of all the limitless thousands of myriads of millions of
Sutras I have spoken, am speaking, or will speak, The Dharma Flower is
the hardest to believe and the hardest to understand."

"Medicine King, this Sutra is the treasury of the Buddhas' secrets and
essentials. It must not be distributed or falsely presented to people. That
which the Buddhas, the World Honored Ones, have guarded from the
distant past until now, has never been explicitly taught. This sutra incurs
much hatred and jealousy even now, when the Thus Come One is present.
How much the more so will this be the case after his extinction!"

"Medicine King, you should know that after my extinction, those who can
write out, uphold, read, recite, make offerings to and explain it for others,
shall be covered with the Thus Come One's robes and shall also be
protected and held in mind by the Buddhas present in other directions.
These people have great powers of faith, powers of resolution and vows
and the power of good roots. Know that these people shall dwell together

with the Thus Come One and shall have their heads rubbed by the hand of the Thus Come One.”

“Medicine King, in any place where this Sutra is spoken, read, recited, written out, or stored, one should build a Stupa of the seven jewels, making it high, broad, and adorned. It is not necessary to place sharira in it. Why is this? Within it already is the complete body of the Thus Come One. To this Stupa one should make offerings of all kinds of flowers, incense, beads, silk canopies, banners, vocal and instrumental music, honoring and praising it. If people should see this Stupa, bow before it, and make offerings to it, you should know that they are close to anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”

“Medicine King, many people, both at home and left home, practice the Bodhisattva Path. If they are unable to see, hear, recite, write out, uphold, or make offerings to The Dharma Flower Sutra, know that these people have not yet skillfully practiced the Bodhisattva Path. If they are able to hear this Sutra, then they will be able to skillfully practice the Bodhisattva Path.”

“If living beings that seek the Buddha Path get to see or hear The Dharma Flower Sutra and, having done so, receive and uphold it with faith and understanding, know that these people have drawn near to anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”

“Medicine King, it is like a person who is thirsty and in need of water. Although he digs for it on a high plain, all he sees is dry earth, and he knows the water is still far off. He continues efforts without cease and eventually sees moist earth and then mud. He is then certain that water must be close at hand.”

“The Bodhisattvas are also like this. Know that those who have not yet heard, not yet understood, or not yet put into practice The Dharma Flower Sutra, are still far from anuttarasamyaksambodhi. Those who have heard and understood, thought upon, and put it into practice certainly should be known as coming near to anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”

“What is the reason? The anuttarasamyaksambodhi of all the Bodhisattvas belongs to this Sutra. This sutra opens the expedient Dharma doors. It

demonstrates the true, real mark. The storehouse of the Dharma Flower Sutra is deep, solid, recondite, and far-reaching. No one could reach it except that now, the Buddha, in teaching and transforming the Bodhisattvas and bringing them to accomplishment, demonstrates it for their sakes.”

“Medicine King, if a Bodhisattva upon hearing The Dharma Flower Sutra is frightened or afraid, you should know that he is a Bodhisattva of newly resolved mind. If a Hearer, upon hearing this sutra is frightened or afraid, you should know that he is one of overweening arrogance.”

“Medicine King, if there is a good man or a good woman, after the extinction of the Thus Come One, who wishes to speak The Dharma Flower Sutra for the sake of the four assemblies, how should they speak it? This good man or good woman should enter the Thus Come One’s room, put on the Thus Come One’s robe, sit on the Thus Come One’s throne, and only then expound upon this Sutra for the sake of the four assemblies.”

“The Thus Come One’s room is the mind of great compassion towards all living beings. The Thus Come One’s robes are the mind of gentleness and patience. The Thus Come One’s throne is the emptiness of all Dharmas.”

“Established securely in these one may then, with an unflagging mind expound upon The Dharma Flower Sutra for the sake of the Bodhisattvas and the four assemblies.”

“Medicine King, from another country, I will send transformed people to gather an assembly of Dharma listeners. I will also send transformed Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, and Upasikas to listen to the Dharma being spoken. All these transformed people, hearing the Dharma, will believe it and accept it, and comply with it without objection. If one speaks the Dharma in an uninhabited place, I will send gods, ghosts, spirits, gandharvas, asuras, and so forth, to listen to him speak the Dharma. Although I am in another country, I will at all times cause the speaker of Dharma to be able to see me. Should he forget a single punctuation mark of the Sutra, I will remind him of it, causing his knowledge to be perfected.”

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

“One who wishes to get rid of laxness,
Should listen to this Sutra.
This Sutra is hard to hear,
And those who believe it and accept it are also rare.

It is like a person thirsty and in need of water
Who digs for it on a high plain,
And sees only dry, parched earth,
And knows that water is still far off.
Gradually he sees moist earth and then mud,
And knows for sure that water is near.

Medicine King, you should know
In this way, those people
Who do not hear The Dharma Flower Sutra
Are very far from the Buddha’s wisdom.

Those who hear this profound Sutra,
Will thoroughly understand the Hearer Dharmas.
This is the king of Sutras
And as to those who hear it and ponder upon it,
You should know that such people,
Have drawn close to the Buddhas’ wisdom.

One who speaks this Sutra
Should enter the Thus Come One’s room
Put on the Thus Come One’s robes,
And sit on the Thus Come One’s throne,
And fearlessly, in the assembly,
Expound it to them in detail.

Great compassion is the Thus Come One’s room,
Gentleness and patience are the Thus Come One’s robes,
The emptiness of all Dharmas is the Thus Come One’s throne.
Dwelling in this, one should speak the Dharma.

If, when one speaks this Sutra
Someone would slander him with evil mouth,
Or hit him with knives, sticks, tiles or stones
Recollecting the Buddha, he should endure this.

In a thousand myriads of millions of lands
I manifest a pure, solid body,
Throughout limitless millions of eons,
Speaking Dharma for the sake of living beings.

If after my extinction,
There is one who can speak this Sutra,
I will send by transformation the four assemblies,
Bhikshus and Bhikshunis,
As well as men and women of purity,
To make offerings to that Dharma Master.
I will gather living beings there
To listen to the Dharma.

Should someone wish to harm him,
With knives, sticks, tiles, or stones,
I will send transformed people,
To surround and protect him.

Should the speaker of Dharma
Be alone in an uninhabited place
Where it is lonely without a human sound,
And there be reading and reciting this Sutra,
I will then manifest
A pure and radiant body.

Should he forget a single passage or sentence,
I will remind him so he recites it smoothly.
Should persons of such virtue
Preach for the four assemblies,
Or recite the Sutra in a deserted place,
They shall all see me.

Should one be dwelling in an empty place

I will send gods and dragon kings,
Yakshas, ghosts, spirits and so forth
To be listeners in the Dharma assembly.

This person will delight in speaking the Dharma,
And explain it in detail without obstruction.
Because the Buddhas are protective and mindful of him,
He can cause the assembly to rejoice greatly.

One who draws near this Dharma Master
Will quickly gain the Bodhisattva Path.
One who follows this master in study
Will see Buddhas as countless as the Ganges' sands.