

Devadatta

Chapter 12

At that time, the Buddha told the Bodhisattvas, gods, humans, and the four assemblies, “In the past, throughout limitless eons, I sought The Dharma Flower Sutra without laxness or weariness.”

“For many eons, I was a king and vowed to seek supreme Bodhi with a non-retreating mind.”

“Wishing to perfect the Six Paramitas, I diligently practiced giving, my mind not begrudging elephants, horses, the seven precious things, countries, cities, wives, children, slaves, servants, even my head, eyes, marrow, brains, body, flesh, hands, and feet—not sparing even life itself.”

“The people of that time had a limitless life span. For the sake of the Dharma, I renounced the royal position, leaving the government to the crown prince. I beat upon the Dharma drum, announcing my search for Dharma in the four directions, saying, ‘whoever can speak the Great Vehicle for me, for him I will act as a servant for the rest of my life!’”

“At that time a seer came forth and spoke to the king saying, ‘I have a Great Vehicle scripture by the name of The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra. If you do not disobey me, I will expound it for you.’”

“When I, the king, heard the seer’s words, I jumped for joy. I then followed the seer, supplying

all of his needs: picking fruit, drawing water,
gathering firewood, and preparing food, even
offering my own body as a couch for him, feeling
no weariness in body or mind. I served him for a
thousand years, for the sake of the Dharma,
diligently waiting upon him so he lacked nothing.”

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

“I recall, in kalpas past, when seeking
Dharma,
Although I was a king at the time,
I had no greed to enjoy the five desires.
Ringing the bell, I announced in the four
directions,
‘If whoever has the great Dharma
Will explain it to me, I will be his servant.’

Then the seer Asita came and spoke to
me,
Saying, ‘I have the subtle, wonderful
Dharma,
Rare in all the world.
If you can cultivate it,
I will speak it for your sake.’

Hearing what the seer said,
My heart was filled with great joy.
I then followed the seer,
Supplying him with all his needs,
Gathering firewood, fruit and melons,
Respectfully presenting them at the
proper time.

Because I cherished the wonderful
Dharma,
I was neither lax nor tired in body or
mind.

I diligently sought the great Dharma
For the sake of all living beings.

And not for my own sake,
Or for the pleasures of the five desires.
Thus as king of a great realm,
I diligently sought to obtain this Dharma,
And accordingly achieved Buddhahood,
And now I speak it to you.”

The Buddha told the Bhikshus, “The king was I, myself, in a former life and the seer was the present Devadatta.”

“It is because of my Good and Wise Advisor, Devadatta, that I have perfected the Six Paramitas of kindness, compassion, joy, and giving, as well as the thirty-two marks and eighty fine characteristics, coloring of burnished purple gold. The Ten Powers, the Four Fearlessnesses, the Four Dharmas of Attraction, the Eighteen Unshared Dharmas, the power of the way of spiritual penetrations, the accomplishment of equal, proper enlightenment, and the vast rescue of living beings, all this came about because of my Good and Wise Advisor, Devadatta.”

“I announce to the four assemblies that, after limitless eons have passed, Devadatta will become a Buddha by the name of King of Gods Thus Come One, One Worthy of Offerings, One of Right and Universal Knowledge, One Whose Clarity and Conduct are Complete, Well-Gone One Who Understands the World, Supreme Lord, Regulating Hero, Teacher of Gods and Humans, Buddha, World Honored One. His world shall be called Pathway of the Gods.”

“He shall dwell in the world for twenty middle-

sized eons, broadly speaking the wonderful Dharma for living beings. Living beings in number like the Ganges sands shall attain the fruit of Arhatship. Limitless living beings will bring forth the resolve to Enlighten to Conditions. Living beings in number like Ganges sands will bring forth the supreme mind of the Path, attain patience with the non-production of Dharmas, and arrive at irreversibility.”

“After the parinirvana of the Buddha King of Gods, the proper Dharma will dwell in the world for twenty middle-sized eons. A stupa sixty yojanas high and forty yojanaswide, made of the seven jewels will be built to hold the sharira of his complete body. All the gods and humans shall make offerings to and worship the wonderful stupa of seven jewels, using various flowers, powdered incense, burning incense, paste incense, clothing, beads, banners, jeweled canopies, instrumental and vocal music.”

“Limitless living beings shall attain the fruit of Arhatship. Limitless living beings will awaken to Pratyekabuddhahood. An inconceivable number of living beings will bring forth the resolve for Bodhi and reach irreversibility.”

The Buddha told the Bhikshus that in the future if a good man or good woman hears the Devadatta chapter of The Wonderful Dharma Flower Sutra with a pure mind believes and reveres it, having no doubts, he will not fall into the hells, into the realm of hungry ghosts, or into the animal realm. He will be born in the presence of the Buddhas of the ten directions, always hearing this Sutra wherever he may be born. Should he be reborn among humans and gods, he will receive supreme and subtle bliss. If born in the presence

of a Buddha, he will be born by transformation from a lotus flower.

At that time, a Bodhisattva-attendant of Many Jewels, World Honored One, from the lower regions by the name of Wisdom Accumulation, spoke to the Buddha Many Jewels, saying, "Let's return to our own land."

Shakyamuni Buddha told Wisdom Accumulation, "Good man, wait a moment longer. There is a Bodhisattva named Manjushri. You should meet him and discuss the wonderful Dharma. Then you may return to your country."

Then Manjushri, sitting on a thousand-petalled lotus as large as a carriage wheel, along with the Bodhisattvas who accompanied him, also sitting on jeweled lotuses, spontaneously rose up out of the great sea from the Sagara Dragon Palace. They rose high into the air and went to Magic Vulture Mountain. Descending from his lotus, he went before the Buddhas and bowed in worship at the feet of the two World Honored Ones. Having paid his respects, he went up to Wisdom Accumulation and when they had inquired after each other's welfare, they moved to one side and sat down.

Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva asked Manjushri, "Humane One, how many living beings have you taught there in the Dragon Palace?"

Manjushri Bodhisattva replied, "An unlimited, unreckonable number, one that cannot be expressed in words or fathomed by the mind. Wait just a moment and you will have proof for yourself."

Before he had finished speaking, countless Bodhisattvas sitting upon jeweled lotuses rose up out of the sea, went to Magic Vulture Mountain and hovered there in space. These Bodhisattvas had been taught and crossed over by Manjushri Bodhisattva. All of them had perfected the Bodhisattva practices and were discussing among themselves the Six Paramitas. Those who had been Hearers were in empty space expounding upon the practices of Hearers. All of them were now cultivating the principle of emptiness of the Great Vehicle.

Manjushri Bodhisattva said to Wisdom Accumulation, "Such is the work of teaching and transforming that I have done within the sea."

At that time, Wisdom Accumulation spoke these verses of praise:

“O greatly wise, virtuous and
courageous one,
You have taught and saved countless
beings.
Now this great assembly and I have
seen this for ourselves.
Proclaiming the Real Mark’s principle,
Opening the Dharma of One Vehicle,
You are a guide for all living beings
Leading them quickly to Bodhi’s
realization.”

Manjushri said, “while in the sea, I have proclaimed and taught only The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra!”

Wisdom Accumulation asked Manjushri, “This Sutra is extremely profound and subtle. Among all the Sutras, it is a jewel rarely found in the

world. Is there any living being who can, through diligence and vigor, cultivate this Sutra and quickly gain Buddhahood?"

Manjushri said, "There is a dragon king's daughter who is just eight years old. She is wise, with sharp faculties. She well knows the faculties, conducts, and karmas of living beings and has attained Dharani. She is able to receive and uphold the entire storehouse of extremely profound secrets spoken by the Buddha.

She has deeply entered dhyana samadhi and thoroughly penetrated all Dharmas. In the space of a kshana she brought forth the Bodhi mind and attained to irreversibility. Her eloquence is unobstructed and she is compassionately mindful of all living beings as if they were her children. Her merit and virtue is complete. The thoughts of her mind and the words from her mouth are subtle, wonderful, and expansive. She is compassionate, humane, and yielding; harmonious and refined in mind and will, and she is able to arrive at Bodhi."

Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva said, "I have seen the Thus Come One Shakyamuni practicing difficult ascetic practices throughout limitless eons, accumulating merit and virtue as he sought Bodhi without ever resting. As I observe the three thousand great thousand worlds, there is no place, not even one the size of a mustard seed, where as a Bodhisattva he did not renounce his life for the sake of living beings. Only after that did he attain the Bodhi Way. I do not believe that this girl can accomplish Proper Enlightenment in the space of an instant."

They had not yet finished their discussion when

the dragon king's daughter suddenly appeared
before them, bowed with her head at their feet,
and withdrew to one side to speak these verses:

“Having deeply understood the marks of
offenses and blessings,
By shining throughout the ten directions,

Now the wondrous, pure Dharma body
Is complete with the thirty-two marks
And the eighty minor characteristics.

The adorned Dharma body is honored
And looked up to by gods and humans
And revered by all the dragons and
spirits.
Of all the varieties of beings,
None fail to respect and revere it.

Hearing about the realization of Bodhi,
Which only a Buddha can certify to,
I proclaim the Great Vehicle Teaching,
Which liberates suffering living beings.”

At that time, Shariputra spoke to the Dragon Girl,
saying, “You claim quick attainment to the
supreme path. This is difficult to believe. Why?
The body of a woman is filthy and not a vessel
for the Dharma. How can you attain to supreme
Bodhi? The Buddha Path is remote and distant.
Only after one has passed through limitless
eons, diligently bearing suffering and
accumulating one's conduct, perfecting one's
cultivation of all Paramitas, can one then attain
realization. What is more, a woman's body has
five obstacles: one, she cannot become a
Brahma Heaven King; two, she cannot become
Shakra; three, she cannot become a Mara King;
four, she cannot become a Wheel-turning sage
king; five, she cannot become a Buddha. How

can a woman quickly realize Buddhahood?”

Now the Dragon Girl had a precious pearl, its worth equal to the entire system of three thousand great thousand worlds, which she took before the Buddha and presented to him. The Buddha immediately accepted it. The Dragon Girl said to Wisdom Accumulation and the Venerable Shariputra, “I just offered up this precious pearl and the World Honored One accepted it. Was that quick or not?”

“Very quick!” they answered.

The girl said, “With your spiritual powers, watch as I become a Buddha even more quickly than that!” At that moment, the entire assembly saw the Dragon Girl suddenly transform into a man and perfect the Bodhisattva conduct. Instantly she went off to the south, to The World Without Filth, where, seated on a jeweled lotus, she accomplished equal and proper enlightenment and embodied the thirty-two marks and eighty minor characteristics. There, for the sake of all living beings throughout the ten directions, she proceeded to proclaim the wonderful Dharma.

While the Bodhisattvas, Hearers, gods, dragons, and the rest of the eightfold division, both humans and non-humans in the Saha World all watched from a distance as the Dragon Girl became a Buddha and spoke the Dharma for all the gods and humans. They rejoiced exceedingly and reverently made obeisance from afar. Hearing that Dharma, limitless living beings understood and awoke, attaining to irreversibility. Countless living beings received predictions of the Way. The World Without Filth quaked in six ways, while in the Saha World, three thousand

living beings came to dwell on the ground of irreversibility, and three thousand living beings brought forth the Bodhi mind and gained predictions.

Wisdom Accumulation Bodhisattva, Shariputra, and the entire assembly silently believed and accepted.