

Happily Dwelling Conduct

Chapter 14

At that time, Dharma Prince Manjushri Bodhisattva Mahasattva said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, all these Bodhisattvas are extremely rare. Reverently complying with the Buddha, they have made great vows to protect, maintain, read, and speak this Dharma Flower Sutra in the future evil age.”

“World Honored One, how can the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas speak this Sutra in the future evil age?”

The Buddha told Manjushri, “If a Bodhisattva Mahasattva wishes to speak this Sutra in the future Evil Age, he should dwell securely in Four Dharmas. First, by Dwelling in a Bodhisattva's range of practice and a Bodhisattva's range of association, he will be able to speak this Sutra for living beings.”

“Manjushri, what is meant by a Bodhisattva Mahasattva's range of practice? If a Bodhisattva Mahasattva dwells on the ground of patience, is gentle and compliant, not impetuous or volatile; if his mind is not frightened; if, moreover, he does not practice in regard to any dharma, but contemplates the marks of all dharmas as they really are—not, however, practicing non-discrimination—that is called a Bodhisattva Mahasattva's range of practice.”

“What is meant by the Bodhisattva Mahasattva's range of association? Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas do not draw near to kings, princes, great

ministers, or officials.”

“They do not draw near to externalists, Brahmacharins, nirgranthas, and the like, or to writers of worldly literature, to those who sing praises of externalist writings, to lokayatas, or to the opponents of lokayatas.”

“They also do not draw near to violent amusements such as boxing and wrestling, to displays of martial arts that involve mutual attack, to natas, or to any entertainment that uses magic.”

“They do not draw near to chandalas, to those who raise pigs, sheep, chickens, and dogs, or to those who hunt, fish, or engage in any other evil activities. If such people should on occasion come to them, they speak the Dharma for them, but have no expectations.”

“They also do not draw near to those who seek to be Hearers, whether Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, or Upasikas, and they do not make a half bow to them. They do not remain in a room, a promenade, or a lecture hall with them. Should such people sometimes come to them, they speak Dharma as is appropriate, but seek nothing in return.”

“Manjushri, moreover Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas must not regard women's bodies as objects of desire, and speak Dharma for them. They do not take delight in looking at women. If they enter the homes of others, they do not speak with young girls, maidens, widows, and so forth.”

“Further, they do not draw near to the five kinds of unmanly men and become friends with them.”

“They do not enter others' houses alone. If for some reason they must enter alone, they single-mindedly recollect the Buddha.”

“If they speak the Dharma for women, they do not smile or laugh so their teeth show, nor do they expose their chests. Even for the sake of the Dharma, they do not become familiar with them, much less for the sake of other matters!”

“They take no delight in raising young disciples, Shramaneras, or children, and they do not take pleasure in sharing the same master with them.”

“They always delight in sitting in Dhyana, and in a quiet place cultivate collecting their thoughts. Manjushri, this is called the first range of association.”

“Further, Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas contemplate all Dharmas as empty, as characterized by actuality, as not upside down, as not moving, as not retreating, as not turning, as being like empty space, as without a nature, as having the path of language cut off, as not coming into being, as not coming forth, as not arising, as without a name, as without an appearance, as in reality non-existent, as measureless, as boundless, as unimpeded, and as unobstructed.”

“They only exist because of causes and conditions and are produced from inversion. Therefore, it is said that constantly delighting in contemplating the characteristics of Dharmas is called the second range of association of a Bodhisattva.”

“At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate his meaning, spoke the following verses:

“If there is a Bodhisattva,
In the latter evil age,
Who, with fearless mind,
Wishes to speak this Sutra,
He should enter the range of practice,
And the range of association.

He should always stay away
From kings, as well as princes,
Great ministers, and officials,
Brutal and dangerous performers;
From chandalas, along with
Externalists and Brahmacharins.

He should not draw near to
Those of overweening pride,
Who are attached to the small vehicle,
And study the Three Stores.
Nor should he draw near Bhikshus
Who are breakers of the precepts,
Arhats in name only,
Or to Bhikshunis
Who like to play and laugh,
Those deeply attached to the five
desires,
Or seeking quiescence in the present.

Nor should he draw near Upasikas.
Should such people come
With good hearts
To the Bodhisattva
To hear of the Buddha Way,
The Bodhisattva, then, may
Without apprehension
And without expectations
Speak the Dharma for them.

He should not draw near
Widows, maidens
Or unmanly men,
Nor should he be familiar with
Or close to them.

He should also not draw near
Butchers, meat-cutters,
Hunters, or fishermen,
Or any who kill for profit
Or sell meat as their livelihood,
Or those who traffic in female flesh:

Such people as these
He should not draw near.
He should take care never
To draw near to those
Engaged in dangerous, violent sports,
Nor to actors and performers
Or prostitutes and the like.

He should not, while in a secluded
place,
Speak the Dharma for women.
While speaking the Dharma,
He should not joke or laugh.

When he enters the city to seek alms,
He should go with another Bhikshu,
Or, if there is no other Bhikshu,
He should single-mindedly recollect the
Buddha.

Those are what is called
The ranges of practice and association;
By resort to these two ranges
He can preach in peace and comfort.
Further, he does not practice

Higher, middle, or lower Dharmas;
Nor conditioned or unconditioned
Dharmas,
Real or unreal Dharmas.

He does not distinguish
Between men and women;
He does not obtain any Dharma
Nor does he know or perceive any.
This is what is known as
The Bodhisattva 's range of practice.

All the Dharmas whatsoever
Are empty, non-existent,
Without permanence,
Neither arising nor extinguished;
This is known as the Wise One's range
of association.

It is through inverted discrimination
That Dharmas exist or not exist,
Seem real or unreal,
Created or uncreated.

If, in a quiet place,
He cultivates and collects his thoughts
Peacefully dwelling, unmoved
Like Mount Sumeru,
Contemplating all Dharmas
As having no existence,
Like empty space,
With nothing firm or solid,
Uncreated, not coming forth,
Unmoving, not retreating,
Dwelling always in one mark,
This is called the range of association.

If a Bhikshu,
After my Nirvana,

Enters into this range of practice
And range of association,
When he speaks this Sutra,
He will have no fear.

When a Bodhisattva
Enters a quiet room
And with upright mindfulness
Contemplates Dharmas in accord with
principle,
Arising from Dhyana concentration
He may for the sake of kings,
Princes, ministers,
Brahmans and such
Teach, transform, and expound,
Speaking this Sutra
With a tranquil mind
And without fear.

Manjushri,
This is called the Bodhisattva's
Peaceful dwelling in the first Dharma,
And he may, in the future age,
Speak the Dharma Flower Sutra."

"Manjushri, after the Tathagata's Nirvana, in the
Dharma-ending Age, if one wishes to speak this
Sutra, one should dwell in this happily-dwelling
conduct. "

"Whether one is expounding upon the Sutra
orally or reading the Sutra itself, one should take
no delight in speaking of the faults of people or of
the Sutra, nor should one hold other Dharm a
Masters in contempt, nor speak of the good or
bad qualities, the strengths or weaknesses of
others. With regard to Hearers, one should not
mention them by name in order to speak of their
faults, nor should one speak of them by name to

praise their excellence. One should not harbor resentment or jealousy.”

“Because one skillfully cultivates such peaceful and happy thoughts, he will not oppose his listeners’ intentions. If asked difficult questions, he does not answer by resorting to the Small Vehicle Dharma, but uses only the Great Vehicle for his explanation, which causes his listeners to obtain the Wisdom of All Modes.”

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

“The Bodhisattva ever delights
In tranquilly speaking the Dharma;
On pure ground
He arranges his seat,
Smears his body with oil,
And washes away dust and filth.

Wearing fresh, clean clothing,
Completely pure, within and without,
Seated securely on the Dharma seat,
He responds to questions.

If there are Bhikshus
Or Bhikshunis,
Upasakas
Or Upasikas,
Kings, princes,
Ministers, scholars, or commoners,
By resorting to the subtle, wonderful
principle,
With harmonious mien he speaks for
them.

If there are difficult questions,
He answers in accord with principle.

Using causes and conditions and
parables,
He explains and makes distinctions,
Through his use of such expedients,
All are moved to bring forth the resolve,
Which gradually increases
As they enter into the Buddha Way.

Casting out thoughts of laziness
And slothful thinking,
Freeing himself from all worry,
He speaks Dharma with a
compassionate mind.

By day and night he ever speaks
The supreme teaching of the Way.
By means of causes and conditions
And limitless analogies
He instructs living beings,
Leading them to be joyful.
Clothing, bedding,
Food, drink, and medicine--
With respect to these
He harbors no expectations.

His single focus is to speak the Dharma
According to causal conditions;
His wish is to realize the Buddha Way
And lead living beings to do the same.
This, then, is the greatest benefit:
The offering of peace and comfort.

After my Nirvana,
If there is a Bhikshu
Who is able to expound
Upon The Wonderful Dharma Flower
Sutra
With no thought of envy or anger,
With no affliction or obstruction,

He will have no worries
And no detractors.
He also will not fear
Knives or staves,
Nor will he be exiled,
Because he is secure in his patience.

The wise one is thus:
Cultivating well his mind,
He is secure in peace and comfort.
As I have explained above,
This person's merit and virtue
Cannot be exhaustively described
By means of number or parable
Throughout ten of millions of eons."

Further, Manjushri, in the future ending age, when the Dharma is about to become extinct, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva who receives, upholds, reads, or recites this Sutra should harbor no thoughts of envy, flattery, or deceit. He should also not ridicule or malign those who study the Buddha Way, nor should he seek their strengths or weaknesses. If there are Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, those who seek to be Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, or those who seek the Bodhisattva Way, he should not torment them or cause them to have doubts by saying to them, "You are all very far from the Path, and you will never obtain the wisdom of all modes. Why not? Because you are careless and lax in the Way." Further, he should not frivolously discuss the Dharma for the sake of argument. "

"He should give rise to thoughts of great compassion towards all living beings and think of all the Tathagatas as compassionate fathers, all Bodhisattvas as great Masters. Always he should

deeply revere and pay respect to all the great Bodhisattvas of the ten directions. He should speak Dharma in equal measure for all living beings. In accord with Dharma, he should speak neither too much nor too little; even to those who deeply love the Dharma, he should not speak too much.”

“Manjushri, in the future age, when the Dharma is about to become extinct, it will be impossible to trouble or confuse a Bodhisattva Mahasattva who has accomplished this third happily-dwelling conduct when he is speaking the Dharma. He shall gain good fellow students with whom he may read and recite this Sutra. Large assemblies will gather to listen to and accept it. Having heard it, they will uphold it; having upheld it, they will recite it; having recited it, they will be able to speak it; having spoken it, they will be able to write it out; to cause others to write it out; to make offerings to it; to revere, honor, and praise it.”

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

“If one wishes to speak this Sutra
He should rid himself of envy, anger, and arrogance,
Flattery and deceitful thoughts.
His practice should be honest and straightforward;
He should not ridicule others
Or speak lightly of the Dharma,
Or cause others to have doubts
By telling them they shall not obtain Buddhahood.

When this son of the Buddha speaks the Dharma,
He is ever gentle, agreeable and patient,
Compassionate towards all
And never slack in his efforts.

The great Bodhisattvas of the ten directions
Take pity on the multitudes and so practice the Way.
He should bring forth a heart of reverence,
Thinking, "These are my great teachers."

With regard to all the Buddhas, World Honored Ones,
He should think of them as his supreme fathers.
He should break through all thoughts of arrogance
And then speak the Dharma without obstacle.

Such is the third dharma
Which the wise ones should always guard.
With the single-minded happily-dwelling conduct,
One is revered by limitless multitudes."

"Further, Manjushri, in the future Ending Age, when the Dharma is about to become extinct, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva who upholds the Dharma Flower Sutra, should give rise to thoughts of great kindness for those at home and those who have left home. He should give rise to thoughts of great compassion for those who are not Bodhisattvas."

"He should think, 'People like this are missing a great deal. Although the Tathagata speaks the Dharma expediently and appropriately, they do not hear, know, or awaken to it. They do not inquire into it, believe it, or understand it.'"

"Although these people do not inquire into, believe, or understand this Sutra, still, when I obtain anuttarasamyaksambodhi, wherever they happen to be, I will use the power of spiritual penetrations and the power of wisdom to lead them to abide within this Dharma."

"Manjushri, after the Nirvana of the Tathagata, the Bodhisattva Mahasattva, who accomplishes this, the fourth dharma, shall be free from error when he speaks this Dharma."

"He will always receive offerings from and be revered, honored, and praised by Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, kings princes, great ministers, common people, Brahmans, lay people and so on. The gods in

empty space will always follow and serve him in order to hear the Dharma. If, in villages and cities or in the wilds or forests, someone wishing to pose difficult questions approaches him, all the gods, for the sake of the Dharma, will protect him day and night, and he will cause the listeners to be joyful.”

“Why is this? This Sutra is protected by the spiritual powers of all the Buddhas of the past, present, and future.”

“Manjushri, throughout countless eons, it is not possible even to hear the name of the Dharma Flower Sutra, much less to see, receive, uphold, read, or recite it.”

“Manjushri, it is like a powerful wheel-turning sage king who wishes to subdue other countries by force. But all the lesser kings do not follow his commands. The wheel-turning king then mobilizes his various troops and goes to punish them. Seeing his troops successful in warfare, he is greatly delighted and rewards them, according to their merits, giving them fields, houses, villages, cities, countries or else clothing, personal ornaments, or various precious treasures of gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother-of-pearl, carnelian, coral, or agate: or elephants, horses, carriages, servants, or subjects.”

“Only the bright pearl on his cowl, that alone, he does not give away. Why not? Only the king can wear this pearl on his crown. If he gave it away, the king's retinue would surely be greatly astonished.”

“Manjushri, the Tathagata is also like this. Through the use of the powers of Dhyana samadhi and wisdom, he has gained the country of the Dharma and is king of the three realms. Still, the demon kings refuse to submit. The Tathagata's generals, the worthy ones and sages, do battle with them. With those who are successful, he is delighted. For the four assemblies, he speaks the Sutras, causing their hearts to rejoice. He confers upon them the Dhyana concentrations, the liberations, the lack of outflow, the roots, and the powers, and all the wealth of the Dharma. He further bestows upon them the city of Nirvana, telling them that they shall attain cessation. He guides their thoughts, causing them all to rejoice.”

“But he does not speak the Dharma Flower Sutra.”

“Manjushri, eventually the Wheel-turning king, seeing among his troops those who have been greatly successful, is overjoyed, and at last gives them the incredible pearl which he has long worn in his top-knot, and which he would never casually give away.”

“So, too, is it with the Tathagata. As the great king of the Dharma within the three realms, he uses Dharma to teach and transforms all living beings. Seeing the army of worthy ones and sages doing battle with the demons of the five skandhas, the demons of afflictions, and the demons of death, and being greatly successful extinguishing the three poisons, escaping the three realms, and rending the nets of the demons, the Tathagata is greatly pleased. He then speaks to them the Dharma Flower Sutra which can lead living beings to All-Wisdom, which meets with resentment and disbelief in all the world, and which he has never spoken of before.”

“Manjushri, the Dharma Flower Sutra is the foremost among the Tathagata's teachings. Among all the teachings it is the most profound, and it is only bestowed at the very end, just like that bright pearl which the powerful king long kept and then gave away. Manjushri, the Dharma Flower Sutra is the secret treasury of all the Buddhas, Tathagatas. Among all the Sutras it is the highest. In the long night of time it has been guarded and never recklessly expounded. Today, for the first time, I am speaking it for you.”

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

“Always practicing patience,
And being merciful to all,
One will then be able to proclaim
This Sutra praised by the Buddhas.

In the future Ending Age,
Those who uphold this Sutra,
Should bring forth kindness and compassion
For those at home, those who have left home,
And those who are not Bodhisattvas,

Thinking, “Those who do not hear

Or believe this Sutra
Suffer a great loss.

When I have gained the Buddha Way
I shall use expedients
To speak this Dharma for them
So they may abide within it.”

It is like a powerful
Wheel-turning king
Who bestows rewards
Upon soldiers successful in battle:
Elephants, horses, carriages,
Personal ornaments,
As well as fields, houses,
Villages, cities and countries.
Or he may give clothing
Or various rare treasures,
Servants or other valuables,
Giving them joyfully.

Should there be a hero
Who can do difficult deeds,
The king will take from his top-knot
His bright pearl, and give it to him.

The Thus Come One is also thus.
As king of all the Dharmas,
With patience, great power
And the precious store of wisdom,
With great kindness and compassion,
He transforms the world according to the Dharma.

He sees all people
Suffering pain and agony,
Seeking liberation,
And battling with the demons.
For these living beings
He speaks various Dharmas.

Using great expedients,
He teaches them the Sutras.
Once he knows that living beings
Have become strong,
Then at the very end
He speaks the Dharma Flower for them.
This is like the king who unties his top-knot
And gives away his bright pearl.

Highest among the host of Sutras,
This Sutra is venerable.
I always guard and protect it,
And never speak it recklessly.
But now the time is exactly right
To speak it for all of you.

After my extinction,
Those who seek the Buddha Way,
Who wish to gain peace and ease,
And to proclaim this Sutra
Should draw near
Such Dharmas as these four.

Those who read this Sutra
Will have no worries or afflictions;
They will be free from the pain of sickness,
With a countenance fresh and clear.
They would not be born poor,
Lowly, or ugly.

Living beings will be happy to see them,
As if they were longed-for sages.
All the children of the gods
Will act as their messengers.

Knives and staves will not hurt them,
Poisons will not harm them,
And should someone revile them,

His mouth will be stopped up.
They shall roam fearlessly
Like the lion king.

The light of their wisdom
Will shine like the sun.
In dreams they will see
Only wonderful things.
They may see the Tathagatas
Seated on their lion thrones,
Surrounded by a host of Bhikshus
As they speak the Dharma.

They will also see the dragons, spirits,
Asuras, and so forth,
In number like the Ganges' sands
Reverent, with palms joined.

They will see themselves appearing
To speak the Dharma for them.
Further, they will see all the Buddhas,
Their bodies of golden hue
Emitting limitless lights,
Illumining all,
And proclaiming all the Dharmas
With the Brahma sound.

The Buddhas, for the four-fold host,
Will speak the supreme Dharma.
They shall see themselves there, too,
With palms joined, praising the Buddhas.
Hearing the Dharma, they will rejoice
And make offerings.

They will gain the Dharanis,
And certify to non-retreating wisdom.
The Buddhas, knowing their minds
Have deeply entered the Buddha Way,

And will then bestow upon them a prediction
For the realization of the most proper enlightenment.

Saying, "You, Good Men,
Shall in the future age,
Attain limitless wisdom,
And the Great Way of the Buddha.

Your lands shall be adorned and pure,
Vast and incomparable,
And the four assemblies there
Will listen to the Dharma with palms joined."

They will also see themselves
Dwelling in the mountain forests,
Practicing wholesome dharmas,
Certifying to the Real Mark,
Deeply entering Dhyana concentration,
And seeing the Buddhas of the ten directions.

The Buddhas, with golden bodies,
Will be adorned with the marks of a hundred blessings.
Hearing their Dharma, they will speak it to others.
And always have good dreams like these.

They will also dream of being a king
Who, forsakes his palace and retinue,
As well as fine objects of the five desires,
To enter a Bodhimanda.

There, beneath the Bodhi tree,
They sit upon the lion throne,
Seeking the Way for seven days,
And gaining the Buddha's wisdom.

After realizing the supreme Way,
They rise and turn the Dharma wheel,
And speak the Dharma for the four-fold host.
Throughout thousands of myriads of millions of eons,
They speak the non-outflow wondrous Dharma,
And saves limitless living beings.

Later they enter Nirvana,
As a lamp goes out when its fuel is gone.
If, in the future evil age,
They can speak this foremost Dharma,
They shall gain great benefit,
Merit, and virtue as told above.”