

The Merit and Virtue of a Dharma Master

Chapter 19

At that time the Buddha told the Bodhisattva, Mahasattva, Ever Vigorous, “If a good man or a good woman receives and upholds The Dharma Flower Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining it to others or writing it out, that person will obtain eight hundred meritorious virtues of the eyes, twelve hundred meritorious virtues of the ears, eight hundred meritorious virtues of the nose, twelve hundred meritorious virtues of the tongue, eight hundred meritorious virtues of the body, and twelve hundred meritorious virtues of the mind. By means of these meritorious virtues he adorns his six faculties, causing them all to become pure.”

“This good man or woman, thus purifying the ordinary physical eyes which he or she was endowed with at birth, will see throughout the thousand cubed world system, inside and out, all the mountains, forests, rivers and seas, below to the Avici hells and above to the peak of existence. Such a person will also see all the living beings therein, as well as their karmic causes and conditions, rewards or retributions, and places of birth. All of this he will see and know.”

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

“If, within the Great Assembly,
One speaks this Dharma Flower Sutra,
With a heart free of fear,
Listen to me tell of his merit and virtue:

This person shall gain eight hundred
Supreme meritorious virtues of the eyes,

And because of this adornment,
His eyes shall be very clear and pure.

With the eyes given him from birth,
He shall see throughout the thousand
cubed world system,
Inside and out, Mount Meru,
Sumeru, and the Iron Ring Range,
As well as the other mountains and
forests,
The waters of the great seas, rivers, and
streams,
Below to the Avici hell,
Above to the peak of existence,
And all the living beings within--
All of this he shall completely see.

Although he has not yet gained the
Heavenly Eye,
His flesh eyes will have powers like
these.”

“Furthermore, Ever-Vigorous, if a good man or a
good woman receives and upholds this Sutra,
whether reading it, reciting it, explaining it to
others, or writing it out, that person will obtain
twelve hundred meritorious virtues of the ears.

With his pure ears he will hear throughout the
thousand cubed world system, inside and out,
below to the Avici hell and above to the peak of
existence, all the various sounds of speech,
sounds of elephants, sounds of horses, sounds
of cows, sounds of carriages, sounds of sobbing,
sounds of sighing, sounds of conches, sounds of
drums, sounds of gongs, sounds of bells, sounds
of laughter, sounds of speech, sounds of men,

sounds of women, sounds of young boys,
sounds of young girls, sounds of Dharma,
sounds of non Dharma, sounds of suffering,
sounds of happiness, sounds of common people,
sounds of sages, sounds of happiness, sounds
of unhappiness, sounds of gods, sounds of
dragons, sounds of yakshas, sounds of
gandharvas, sounds of asuras, sounds of
garudas, sounds of kinnaras, sounds of
mahoragas, sounds of fire, sounds of water,
sounds of wind, sounds of the hells, sounds of
animals, sounds of hungry ghosts, sounds of
Bhikshus, sounds of Bhikshunis, sounds of
Sound Hearers, sounds of Pratyekabuddhas,
sounds of Bodhisattvas, and sounds of Buddhas.

In general, although he has not yet obtained the
Heavenly Ear, he can, by using the pure ordinary
ear given him from birth, hear and know
whatever sounds there may be inside and
outside the thousand cubed world system. In this
way he distinguishes between all the various
sounds and still his ear organ is not harmed.”

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

“The ears on his physical body
Are pure and without filth.
With his ordinary ears he hears
Sounds of the thousand cubed world
system,
Sounds of elephants, horses, carriages
and cows,
Gongs, bells, conches and drums,
Sounds of lutes and harps,
Sounds of pipes and flutes, and
Sounds of clear, fine chants.

He hears these, but is not attached to

them.

Hearing sounds of countless kinds of people,

He can understand them all.

He also hears the sounds of the gods--

Their subtle, elegant voices raised in song.

He also hears the sounds of men and women,

The sounds of young boys and girls,

As well as the Kalavinka sound

Coming from the mountains, streams, and deep ravines.

He hears all the sounds

Of the Jiva -jivaka and other birds,

The bedlam of misery and pain in the hells--

The sounds of all the tortures there.

He hears the sounds of hungry ghosts, driven by hunger and by thirst,

As they seek for food and drink, and

The mighty roar put forth

By all of the asuras

As they dwell beside the sea

Bickering among themselves.

In this way, one who speaks the Dharma,

Can dwell securely there and hear

The faraway multitude of sounds,

And yet there is no damage to his ear.

Throughout all the ten directions,

Birds and beasts cry out to one another.

The one who speaks the Dharma,

Can hear them one and all.

As for the sounds and speech of the Brahma gods

The Light Sound gods and those of
Perfect Purity,
Up to the Heaven at the Peak of
Existence,
The Dharma Master here in the world
Can hear them one and all.

All the Bhikshus and Bhikshunis,
Reading or reciting Sutras,
Or explaining them for others--
The Dharma Master dwelling here
Can hear them one and all.

Further, all the Bodhisattvas,
Reading or reciting this Sutra-dharma,
Or speaking it to others,
Or compiling commentaries on its
meaning,
All such sounds as these,
He hears in detail.

All the Buddhas, great sagely honored
ones,
Teaching and transforming beings
In the midst of the great assemblies,
Expounding upon the subtle, wondrous
Dharma,
Can be heard by one who holds The
Dharma Flower.

All the sounds, inside and out,
In the thousand cubed world system,
Below to the Avici hell,
And above to the Heaven of the Peak of
Existence--
Can each and every one be heard
And still his ear is not harmed.

Since his ears are keen and sharp,
He can discern them one and all.

The one who upholds The Dharma
Flower,
Although he has not yet gained the
Heavenly Ear,
Merely using the ears he was born with,
Already has meritorious virtues such as
these.”

“Further, Ever-Vigourous, if a good man or a good woman receives and upholds this Sutra, whether reading it, reciting it, explaining it to others, or writing it out, he will accomplish eight hundred meritorious virtues of the nose. With his pure nose he will smell throughout the thousand cubed world system, above and below, inside and outside, all the various fragrances: the scents of the sumana, jatika, mallika, champaka, and patala flowers; scents of red, blue, and white lotus flowers; scents of flowering and fruit-bearing trees; scents of chandana, aloe-wood, tamalapatra, and tagara; and scents of a thousand myriad kinds mixed together, whether powdered, in lumps, or in paste. One who upholds this Sutra, dwelling in this place, can distinguish all of these.”

“Again, he can further distinguish the scents of living beings: the scents of elephants, horses, cows, sheep, and so forth; scents of men, women, boys, and girls; as well as scents of grasses, trees, thickets, and forests. All these scents, whether near or far, he can smell and distinguish without mistake.”

“Although one who upholds the Sutra dwells here, he can smell the scents of all the gods in the heavens, the scents of the parijataka and kovidara trees, as well as the scents of the mandarava, mahamandarava, manjushaka, and

mahamanjushakaflowers; the scents of chandana and aloe-wood powder and various kinds of powdered incense; and assorted floral scents. Of all these heavenly scents, or fragrances arising from the blending of them, there are none he will not smell and know.”

“Further he will smell the scents of the god’s bodies, the scent of Shakra Devanam Indra in his supreme palace as he enjoys the pleasures of the five desires, or his scent when, from the Wonderful Dharma Hall, he speaks the Dharma for the gods of the Trayastrimsha Heaven, or his scent when he plays in his gardens, as well as the scents of the bodies of other gods or goddesses. All these he can smell from afar.”

“In the same way, up to and including the Brahma realms and the Peak of Existence, he can smell the scents of all the gods and at the same time smell the incense burned by the gods, the scent of Hearers, the scent of the Pratyekabuddhas, the scent of the Bodhisattvas, and the scent of the Buddhas. All of these he can smell from afar and know where they are. Although he smells these fragrances, his sense of smell is not harmed and makes no mistakes. Should he wish to distinguish and explain them for others, his memory will not fail him.”

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

“This person’s nose is pure,
And within the world,
All odors, fragrant or fetid,
He can completely smell and know.

Sumana and jatika,
Tamala and chandana,

The scents of aloe-wood and cassia,
The scents of various flowers and fruits,
The scents of living beings,
The scents of men and women--
The speaker of Dharma, at a distance,
Smells them and knows where they are.

The great and mighty wheel-turning kings,
The minor wheel-turners and their sons,
Ministers and courtiers--
By their scents, he knows where they are.

The jewels worn on the body,
The jewel treasuries in the earth,
The Wheel-Turning King's jeweled women--
Smelling their scents, he knows where they are.

The ornaments adorning people's bodies,
Their clothing, beads,
Various kinds of perfumes--
Smelling their scents, he knows where they are.

The gods, whether walking or sitting
Or playing with their spiritual transformations--
The upholder of the Dharma Flower,
Having smelled their scents, knows them all.

The trees with their flowers and fruits,
The fragrance of clarified butter--
The one who holds the Sutra, dwelling here,
Knows the location of them all.

In the deep recesses of the mountains,
The chandana trees in bloom
And the beings dwelling therein--
Smelling their scents, he knows them all.

The living beings on Iron Ring Mountain,
In the great seas, or in the earth--
By their scents, the holder of this Sutra
Knows the location of them all.

The male and female asuras
And their retinues,

Their quarrels and their play--
By smelling their scents, he can know them.

In the wilds or ravines,
Lions, elephants, tigers and wolves,
Wild oxen, and water buffalo--
Smelling their scents, he knows where they are.

Should a woman be pregnant with a child
Whose sex has not yet been determined,
Nor is it known if it is a freak or non-human,
Smelling the scent, he can know.

By the power of his smelling,
He can know when she first conceived,
Whether the fetus is mature,
And if she will safely bear a blessed child.

By the power of his smelling,
He knows what men and women are thinking:
Their defiling desires, stupidity, and hateful thoughts.
He also knows those who cultivate goodness.

The gold, silver, and jewels
Hidden in the earth's storehouses,
Filling copper vessels--
Smelling the scents, he knows them all.

Various kinds of beads
Whose value cannot be known--
By smelling their scent, he knows their value,
Where they came from, and where they are now.

All the flowers in the heavens,
Mandarava and manjushaka,
The parijata trees--
Smelling their scents, he can know them.

The palaces in the heavens--
Superior, middling or inferior,
Adorned with many jewels and flowers--
Smelling their scents, he can know them all.

Heavenly gardens, groves, and supreme palaces;
Towers and wondrous Dharma Halls;

The amusements to be found therein--
Smelling their scents, he can know them all.

The gods, whether listening to the Dharma
Or enjoying the pleasures of the five desires,
Coming or going, walking, sitting, or reclining--
By the scents, he can know them completely.

The garments worn by the goddesses,
Their adornments of flowers and perfume
As they ramble around for pleasure--
By their scents, he knows them all.

Proceeding thus upward,
Reaching to the Brahma heavens,
Those who enter Dhyana and those who leave it--
Smelling their scents, he knows them all.

The Heavens of Light-Sound and Pervasive Purity,
On up to the Peak of Existence,
Those just born there and those sliding down--
Smelling their scents, he knows them all.

The host of Bhikshus,
Ever vigorous in the Dharma,
Whether sitting or walking;
Reading or reciting the Sutra;
Or in the woods beneath trees,
Concentrated, sitting in Dhyana--
The one who upholds the Sutra, smelling their scents,
Knows where they are.

Bodhisattvas of solid resolve,
Whether sitting in Dhyana or reading and reciting,
Or speaking the Dharma to others--
Smelling their scents, he knows them all.

In any place the World Honored One may be,
There revered by the multitudes,
As he pities them and speaks the Dharma--
By smelling the scent, he knows this completely.

Living beings in the Buddha's presence,
Hearing the Sutra and rejoicing,

Cultivate in accord with Dharma.

By smelling the scents, he completely knows them.

Even though he has not yet attained the Bodhisattva's

Non-outflow Dharma-nose,

Still, the upholder of this Sutra

Will first attain a nose with such characteristics."

"Moreover, Ever-Vigorous, if a good man or a good woman receives and upholds this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining it to others, or writing it out, he or she will gain twelve hundred meritorious virtues of the tongue. All things, whether good or bad tasting, savory or unsavory, bitter or astringent, when they come in contact with his tongue will change into things of superior flavor, like heavenly sweet dew. None will not be flavorful. If he lectures amidst the great assembly, his sound will be profound and wonderful, penetrating their minds and causing them all to be joyful and happy."

"Further, all the gods and goddesses, Shakra, Brahma, and all the gods, hearing these profound, wonderful sounds of his orderly exposition, will all come to listen. All the dragons, female dragons, yakshas, female yakshas, gandharvas, female gandharvas, asuras, female asuras, garudas, female garudas, kinnaras, female kinnaras, mahoragas, and female mahoragas, in order to hear the Dharma, will draw near him and reverently make offerings to him."

"The Bhikshus and Bhikshunis; Upasakas and Upasikas; kings, princes, ministers, and retainers; minor wheel-turning kings; and great wheel-turning kings with their seven treasures, thousands of sons, and their inner and outer retainers will all ride their palaces there to listen to the Dharma. Because this Bodhisattva skillfully speaks the Dharma, the Brahmans, laypeople, and citizens of the country will follow him for as long as he lives, serving and making offerings to him."

"Further, the Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, and Buddhas will always take delight in seeing him."

"Wherever this person is, the Buddhas are right in front of him speaking the Dharma. He is also able to receive and uphold all the Buddhadharma and to put forth the profound and wondrous Dharma-sound."

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

“This person’s tongue is pure
And will never taste foul flavors.
All of the food he eats
Turns into sweet dew.

Using the profound, pure, and wondrous sound,
He speaks the Dharma for the great assembly
Using causes, conditions, and analogies
To guide the minds of living beings,
Who, on hearing him, rejoice
And make superior offerings.

The gods, dragons, yakshas,
And asuras, and so forth,
All with reverent minds,
Come to hear the Dharma.

This person who speaks the Dharma,
Should he wish with a wondrous sound
To pervade three thousand worlds,
As he wishes, he will be able to do so.

Wheel-turning kings, great and minor,
Their thousands of sons and their retinues,
With palms joined and reverent minds,
Always come to hear and receive the Dharma.

The gods, dragons, yakshas,
Rakshasas and pishacas,
Also, with happy hearts,
Always delight in coming to make offerings.

The god king Brahma, King Mara,
Self-Mastery, and Great Self-Mastery,
And all the hosts of gods
Always come to where he is.

All the Buddhas and their disciples,
Hearing his sound as he speaks the Dharma,

Are ever mindful and protective,
And sometimes manifest in person.”

“Further, Ever-Vigorous, if a good man or a good woman receives and upholds this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining it to others, or writing it out, he will obtain eight hundred meritorious virtues of the body. He will obtain a pure body, as pure as vaidurya, which living beings will be delighted to see, because of the purity of his body.

Living beings in the three thousand great thousand world system, whether at the time of birth or at the time of death, above or below, fair or ugly, whether born in good place or born in an evil place, will all manifest within it.

The Iron Ring Mountain, the Great Iron Ring Mountain, Meru Mountain, Mahameru Mountain, and the other mountains, and all the living beings in their midst will appear within it. Below to the Avici hells and above to the Peak of Existence, all living beings will manifest therein. If Hearers, Pratyekabuddhas, Bodhisattvas, or Buddhas speak the Dharma, they will all manifest their physical images within his body.”

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

“If a person holds the Dharma Flower,
His body will be extremely pure,
Like that of pure vaidurya,
And living beings will all take delight in seeing him.

Also, as in a pure, bright mirror
All images are seen,
The Bodhisattva, within his pure body,
Sees everything in the world.

He alone has clear perception,
For these things are not seen by other people.
Within three thousand worlds,
All the multitudes of living beings--
Gods, humans, asuras,
Hell-beings, ghosts, and animals:
All such images as these--
Appear within his body.

The palaces of the gods
Up to the Peak of Existence,
The Iron Ring and Meru
And Mahameru Mountains,
And the waters of all the great seas
All appear within his body.

The Buddhas and Hearers,
Disciples of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas,
Whether singly or in a multitude,
Speaking Dharma, all manifest.

Although he has not yet gained the non-outflow,
Wondrous body of the Dharma-nature,
Within his pure, ordinary body,
All things manifest.”

“Further, Ever-Vigorous, if a good man or a good woman, after the passing into stillness of the Thus Come One, receives and upholds this Sutra, whether reading, reciting, explaining it to others or writing it out, he will obtain twelve hundred meritorious virtues of the mind. With his pure mind, by hearing so much as a single verse or a single sentence, he will comprehend limitless, boundless meanings.

Having understood these meanings, he will then be able to expound on a single sentence or a single verse for as long as a month, four months, or up to a year. All the Dharma he speaks will accord with the meaning and purport, and none of it will contradict the Real Mark.

If he speaks on worldly texts, expounds on the principles of government, or follows an occupation to make a living, it will all accord with the proper Dharma. In the three thousand great thousand world system, all the living beings of the six destinies, their mental processes, their mental activities, the frivolous assertions in their minds, all these he completely knows. Although he has not yet gained the non-outflow wisdom, still his mind is as pure as this. All of this person’s thoughts, calculations, or pronouncements are Buddhadharma, and none are not true and real, and all have been spoken in the Sutras of former Buddhas.”

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

“This person’s mind is pure,
Bright, sharp, and immaculate.
With this wonderful mind,
He knows superior, middle and inferior Dharmas.

If he hears but a single verse,
He comprehends limitless meanings
And speaks them in good order according to Dharma,
For a month, four months, or a year.

Inside and outside this world,
All the living beings,
Be they gods, dragons, or humans,
Yakshas, ghosts, or spirits,
All those in the six destinies,
All of their different thoughts,
The upholder of the Dharma Flower,
As a reward, knows all at once.

The countless Buddhas in the ten directions,
Adorned with the marks of a hundred blessings,
Speak the Dharma for living beings.
He hears it all and can receive and hold it.

He ponders limitless meanings
And speaks limitless Dharmas, too,
Without a mistake or omission from beginning to end,
Because he upholds the Dharma Flower.

He completely knows the marks of all Dharmas,
And recognizes their meaningful sequence.
Knowing the names and words,
He expounds on them as he understands them.

What this person says
Is all the Dharma of former Buddhas.
And because he expounds on this Dharma,
He is fearless in the assembly.

The one who upholds the Dharma Flower
Has a pure mind like this.
Although he has not yet attained to no-outflows,
He already has such marks as these.

This person, upholding the Sutra,
Dwells securely on rare ground,
And all living beings
Delight in him, cherish and revere him.

He can, with a thousand myriads of kinds
Of skillful, clever words,
Speak the Dharma in detail,
Because he upholds the Dharma Flower.”