

The Spiritual Powers of the Thus Come One

Chapter 21

At that time the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas equal in number to the motes of dust in a thousand worlds, who had welled forth out of the earth, in the presence of the Buddha, single-mindedly, with palms joined, gazed up at the Buddha and spoke to him, saying, “World Honored One, after the Buddha’s passing, in countries where there are division bodies of the Buddha, in places where he has passed into stillness, we shall extensively speak this Sutra. Why? Because we also wish to obtain this true, pure, and great Dharma; to receive, uphold, read and recite, explain, write out, and make offerings to it.”

At that time, in the presence of Manjushri and the others, limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas who had long resided in the Saha world, as well as the Bhikshus, Bhikshunis, Upasakas, Upasikas, gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, non-humans, and so forth, the World Honored One manifested great spiritual powers.

He put forth his vast and long tongue which reached upward to the Brahma worlds. From all of his hair pores, he emitted lights of limitless, countless colors, all of which pervasively illuminated the worlds of the ten directions. In the same way, all the Buddhas seated on lion thrones beneath jeweled trees also put forth their vast and long tongues and emitted limitless lights.

When Shakyamuni Buddha and the Buddhas beneath the jeweled trees had manifested their spiritual powers for a full hundred thousand years, they withdrew their tongues.

Then they coughed and snapped their fingers, and those two sounds pervaded the Buddha worlds of the ten directions.

The earth quaked in six ways and the living beings in those worlds—the gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, non-humans, and so forth—by means of the Buddha’s spiritual powers, all saw, in the Saha world, the limitless, boundless, hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of Buddhas seated on lion thrones beneath jeweled trees. They also saw Shakyamuni Buddha, together with the Thus Come One Many Jewels, seated on the lion throne within the jeweled stupa.

They further saw limitless, boundless, hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas, as well as the four assemblies, reverently circumambulating Shakyamuni Buddha. Having seen this, they greatly rejoiced, having gained what they had never had.

Just then the gods in space called out in a loud voice: “Passing from here through limitless, boundless, hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of asamkhyeyas of worlds, there is a country called Saha. Within it is a Buddha named Shakyamuni who now, for the sake of all the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas, proclaims a Great Vehicle Sutra by the name of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower, a Dharma for teaching Bodhisattvas, of whom the Buddha is protective

and mindful. You should all rejoice deep within your hearts, bow, and make offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha.”

Hearing this sound in space, all the living beings placed their palms together, faced the Saha world, and said, “Namo Shakyamuni Buddha! Namo Shakyamuni Buddha!”

And then from afar, they scattered all kinds of flowers, incense, beads, banners, canopies, ornaments for the body, and precious and rare objects on the Saha world. The objects they scattered came from the ten directions like clouds gathering, and turned into jeweled canopies, completely covering the Buddhas in that region.

Then the worlds of the ten directions interpenetrated without obstruction, as if they were one Buddhaland.

At that time the Buddha told Superior Conduct and all the great assembly of Bodhisattvas, “The spiritual power of all the Buddhas is limitless, boundless, and inconceivable like this. If, using these spiritual powers, I were to speak of the meritorious virtues of this Sutra for limitless, boundless, hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of asamkhyeya eons by way of entrustment, I could not finish.”

“In general, all the Dharmas of the Thus Come One, all the sovereign spiritual powers of the Thus Come One, all the secret storehouses of the Thus Come One, all the extremely profound deeds of the Thus Come One are all proclaimed and revealed in this Sutra.”

“Therefore, all of you, after the passing of the Thus Come One, should with a single mind receive, uphold, read, recite, and explain it, write it out, and cultivate it as spoken. Those who receive, uphold, read, recite, explain, write out, and cultivate it as spoken, in whatever land they may be, in a place where the Sutra is kept, whether in a garden, in a forest, or beneath a tree; in a Sangha dwelling; in the dwelling of the white-robed; in a palace or hall; or in the mountains, valleys, or wilderness—in all of these places they should build a stupa and make offerings.”

“For what reason? You should know that this place is a Way-place wherein all Buddhas gain Anuttarasamyaksambodhi, wherein all Buddhas turn the Dharma-wheel, and wherein all Buddhas enter Nirvana.”

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

“The Buddhas, ones who save the
world,
Dwelling in great spiritual penetrations,
In order to delight living beings,
Manifest limitless spiritual powers.

Their tongues reach to the Brahma
Heavens,
Their bodies emit countless lights.
They make appear these rare events
For the sake of those who seek the
Buddha Way.

The sounds made when the Buddhas
cough
And the sounds made when they snap

their fingers
Are heard throughout the lands of the
ten directions
As the earth quakes in six ways.

Since after the Buddha's passing
One can uphold this Sutra,
All Buddhas rejoice
And display limitless spiritual powers.

In order to bequeath this Sutra,
He praises those who receive and hold
it.
Doing so throughout limitless eons,
Still he cannot finish.

The merit and virtue of these people
Is boundless and infinite,
Like space in the ten directions,
Without any boundary.

Those who can uphold this Sutra
Have already seen me
And also seen the Buddha Many Jewels
And all of the division-bodies.

They also see me on this day
Teaching and transforming the
Bodhisattvas.
Those who can uphold this Sutra
Cause me and my division-bodies
And the previous Buddha, Many Jewels,
To all rejoice.

They shall also see and make offerings
To the Buddhas of the ten directions—in
the present,
The past, and the future—
Causing them to rejoice as well.

The secret and essential Dharma
obtained
By the Buddhas seated in their Way-
places
Will also be gained before too long
By those who can uphold this Sutra.

Those who can uphold this Sutra
Will take delight in speaking, without
end,
The meaning of the Dharmas,
Their names and expressions,
Like the wind blowing through space,
Without obstacle.

After the Thus Come One's passing,
They will understand the Sutras spoken
by the Buddha,
The causes and conditions in sequence,
And speak them truly, according with
their meanings.

Like the light of the sun and moon
Dispelling all darkness,
These people walk through the world
Dispersing the darkness of living beings,
Teaching limitless Bodhisattvas
Ultimately to dwell in the One Vehicle.

Therefore, those with wisdom,
Hearing the advantages of this merit and
virtue,
Should, after my passing,
Receive and uphold this Sutra.
These people most certainly and without
a doubt
Will attain the Buddha Way."

