

The Encouragement Of The Bodhisattva Universal Worthy

Chapter 28

At that time Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, renowned for his comfort, spiritual powers, and awesome virtue, came from the east together with uncountable, boundless, incalculable great Bodhisattvas. The countries they passed through quaked, and jeweled lotuses rained down, while uncountable hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of kinds of music played.

He was also accompanied by and surrounded by a great host of countless gods, dragons, yakshas, gandharvas, asuras, garudas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, non-humans and so forth. Each was manifesting the power of awesome virtue and spiritual penetrations.

Arriving at Mount Gridhrakuta in the Saha world, they bowed in obeisance to Shakyamuni Buddha, circumambulated him seven times to the right, and said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, in the country of the Buddha Superior King of Jeweled Awesome Virtue, I heard from afar that in the Saha world, the Dharma Flower Sutrawas being spoken. I have come with uncountable, boundless hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of Bodhisattvas to hear and receive it. I only pray that the World Honored One will speak it. After the passing of the Thus Come One, how is a good man or good woman to obtain the Dharma Flower Sutra?"

The Buddha told Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, "If a good man or a good woman accomplishes Four Dharmas, he will attain the Dharma Flower Sutra after the passing of the Thus Come One. First, he is the object of the Buddha's mindfulness and protection. Second, he amasses the roots of virtue. Third, he enters the collection of proper concentrations. Fourth, he brings forth the mind to rescue all living beings."

"If a good man or a good woman in this way accomplishes these Four Dharmas, he is certain to gain this Sutra after the passing of the Thus Come One."

Universal Worthy Bodhisattva then said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, in the last five hundred years, in the turbid, evil world, if there are

those who receive and uphold this Sutra, I shall protect them, keep them from harm, and cause them to be peaceful and secure. No being will be able to take advantage of them, be it a demon, a demon son, a demon daughter, a demon subject, or one possessed by a demon, a yaksha, rakshasa, kumbhanda, pishacha, kritya, putana, vetala, or any tormentor of human beings--none shall get at them.”

“If there is a person reading or reciting this Sutra, whether walking or standing, I will at that time mount my royal white elephant with six tusks, and, together with a host of Great Bodhisattvas go to that place, manifest my body, make offerings, protect him, and comfort his mind, and also make offerings to the Dharma Flower Sutra.”

“Should a person be sitting and pondering over this Sutra, I will at that time again mount my royal white elephant and manifest before him. If he should forget a line or a verse of the Dharma Flower Sutra, I will teach it to him, and read and recite it with him until he becomes fluent. Upon seeing me, the one who receives, upholds, reads, and recites the Dharma Flower Sutra, will rejoice greatly and increase his vigor. Having seen me, he will immediately obtain samadhis and Dharanis: a Dharani by the name of Revolution, a Dharani of a hundred thousand myriads kotis of revolutions, and a Dharani of the skill-in-means of Dharma sounds. He shall obtain Dharanis such as these.”

“World Honored One, if in the last five hundred years, in the turbid, evil world, there is a Bhikshu, Bhikshuni, Upasaka, or Upasika, who seeks, upholds, reads, recites, writes out, or wishes to cultivate the Dharma Flower Sutra, he or she should be single-minded and vigorous for twenty-one days. At the end of twenty-one days I will mount my white elephant with six tusks and, surrounded by uncountable Bodhisattvas, I will appear before that person in a body all living beings delight in seeing, and speak the Dharma for him, instructing, benefiting, and delighting him. I shall further give him a Dharani mantra. Once he obtains this Dharani mantra, no non-human will be able to hurt him, nor will he be confused by women. I will also personally protect this person forever. I only pray the World Honored One will allow me to speak this Dharani mantra.”

Then, in the presence of the Buddha, he spoke this mantra, saying:

“E tan di. Tan tuo po di. Tan tuo po di. Tan tuo jiu she li. Tan tuo xiu tuo li. Xiu tuo li. Xiu tuo luo po di. Fo tuo bo shan mi. Sa pe tuo luo ni e po duo ni. Sa po po sa e po duo ni. Xiu e po duo ni. Seng qie po lü cha ni.

Seng qie nie qie tuo ni. E seng qi. Seng qie po qie di. Di li e duo. Seng qie dou lüe. E luo di bo luo di. Sa po seng qie di san mo di qie lan di. Sa pe da mo xiu bo li cha di. Sa po sa duo lou tuo jiao she lü e nou qie di. Xin e pi ji li di di.”

“World Honored One, if there is a Bodhisattva who hears this Dharani , you should know that it is through the power of the spiritual penetrations of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva. If the Dharma Flower Sutra is circulating through Jambudvīpa, and if a person receives and upholds it, he should bring forth this thought, ‘This is all through the power of the awesome spirit of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva.’”

“If a person receives, upholds, reads, and recites it, properly recollects it, explains its doctrines, and cultivates according to its teachings, you should know that he is practicing the conduct of Universal Worthy. He has planted deep good roots in the presence of boundless, uncountable Buddhas. His head has been rubbed by the hands of the Thus Come Ones.”

“If a person merely writes out the Sutra , at the end of his life, he will be born in the Trayastriṃśa Heaven. At that time, eighty-four thousand heavenly women will welcome him with all kinds of music. He shall immediately don a cap made of seven treasures and enjoy himself among the goddesses. How much the more will this be the case for one who receives, upholds, reads, and recites it, properly recollects it, explains its doctrines, and cultivates according to its teachings!

If a person receives, upholds, reads, recites, and explains its doctrines, at the end of his life, a thousand Buddhas will extend their hands towards him, so that he need not fear falling into the evil destinies. He will immediately be born in the Tushita Heaven in the presence of Maitreya Bodhisattva. Maitreya Bodhisattva has thirty-two marks, and is surrounded by a host of great Bodhisattvas and a retinue of hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of goddesses. Being born therein, he shall obtain merit and virtue and benefits such as these.”

“Therefore, one with wisdom should single-mindedly write it out himself,

employ others to write it out, receive, uphold, read, recite, and properly recollect it, and cultivate in accord with its teachings.”

“World Honored One, I, now, protect this Sutra with my spiritual powers,. After the passing of the Thus Come One, I shall propagate it widely in Jambudvipa so that it will never be cut off.”

At that time Shakyamuni Buddha praised him, saying, “Good indeed, good indeed, Universal Worthy, that you can protect and aid this Sutra and bestow happiness and benefit on many living beings. You have already accomplished inconceivable merit and virtue, and deep and great compassion. From the distant past you have brought forth the resolve for Anuttarasamyaksambodhi , and have been able to make this vow to protect this Sutra with spiritual penetrations. I shall now use the power of spiritual penetrations to protect those who can receive and uphold the name of Universal Worthy Bodhisattva.”

“Universal Worthy, if a person can receive and uphold, read, recite, properly recollect, cultivate, and write out the Dharma Flower Sutra , you should know that this person thereby sees Shakyamuni Buddha. It is as if he had heard this Sutra from the Buddha’s mouth. You should know that this person has made offerings to Shakyamuni Buddha. You should know that the Buddha has praised this person, saying, ‘Good indeed!’”

“You should know that this person’s head has been rubbed by Shakyamuni Buddha’s hand, and that he has been covered by Shakyamuni Buddha’s robe.”

“A person such as this will never again be greedily attached to worldly pleasures. He will never again be fond of the texts or manuscripts of externalist ways, nor will he enjoy drawing near such people, or other evil people, be they butchers, or keepers of pigs, sheep, fowl or dogs, or hunters, or panderers.”

“This person’s mind will be straightforward, and his memory proper. He will have the power of blessings and virtue. This person will not be tormented by the three poisons, nor will he again be tormented by jealousy, arrogance, deviant pride or overweening pride. This person will have few desires and will know contentment. He will be able to cultivate the conduct

of Universal Worthy.”

“Universal Worthy, if after the passing of the Thus Come One, in the last five hundred years, you see a person who can receive, uphold, read, and recite the Dharma Flower Sutra , you should think, ‘Before long, this person will go to the Way-place, and destroy the demon hordes. He will attain Anuttarasamyaksambodhi , turn the Dharma-wheel, beat upon the Dharma drum, blow the Dharma conch, let fall the Dharma rain, and soon sit on the Lion Dharma throne among the great hosts of gods and humans.”

“Universal Worthy, if in the later age, there is a person who can receive, uphold, read, or recite this Sutra , he will never again be greedy for clothing, bedding, food and drink, or any necessities of life. His vows will not be in vain and in his present life he shall obtain the reward of blessings.”

“If one ridicules and slanders this person, saying, ‘You’re insane! What you are doing is useless and will never amount to anything,’ his retribution will be such that in life after life he will have no eyes.”

“If a person makes offerings and gives praise, then in his present life he will obtain the fruits of his reward.”

“If, again, one sees a person receiving and upholding this Sutra and then speaks of his faults or evils, be they true or untrue, in his present life he will contract leprosy.”

“If one ridicules him and laughs, then in life after life his teeth will be sparse and missing, his lips ugly, his nose flat, his hands and feet contorted, his eyes pointed and askew, his body stinking and filthy. He will be covered with hideous sores, pus and blood. His belly will be full of water or he will be short of breath. He will be plagued with all manner of nasty and grave illnesses.”

“Therefore, Universal Worthy, if one sees a person who receives and upholds this Sutra , one should welcome him from afar and revere him as one would the Buddha.”

When this chapter, ‘The Encouragement of Universal Worthy’ had been

spoken, uncountable, boundless numbers of Bodhisattvas , as many as the Ganges sands obtained the Dharani of a hundred thousand myriads of kotis of revolutions. Bodhisattvas equal in number to the motes of dust in the three thousand great thousand worlds perfected the path of Universal Worthy.

When the Buddha had spoken this Sutra, Universal Worthy and all the other Bodhisattvas, Shariputra and all the Hearers, as well as the entire great assembly of gods, dragons, humans, non-humans, and so forth, all greatly rejoiced, received and upheld the Buddha's words, made obeisance and withdrew.