**The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra**

Chapter 6: Conferring Predictions
With Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

When the Buddha confers a prediction he tells people when in the future they will become Buddhas, what their Buddha-name and what the name of the Buddhaland will be, what their country will look like, and how long their lifespans will be. He tells them how long the Proper Dharma Age will last in that country, and how long the Dharma-Resemblance Age will last.

The Buddha confers the prediction, and one receives it. His prediction is different for each person, because each person becomes a Buddha with his own individual name. Although they are all called Buddhas, each Buddha has his own special name, just like people. Everyone has a different name. A prediction means that one is certain to become a Buddha, beyond any doubt. Once you have got your prediction, you are certain to become a Buddha. Only the Buddha can bestow predictions, so this is the Sixth Chapter of The Dharma Flower Sutra.

**Sutra:**
 **At that time, following his expounding of the verses, the World Honored One spoke to the great assembly in this manner, “My disciple, Mahakashyapa, in a future age will serve and behold three hundred thousand million Buddhas, World Honored Ones, making offerings, paying reverence, venerating and praising them; he will broadly proclaim the limitless Great Dharma of all the Buddhas.”**Outline:F4. Bestowing predictions.
G1. Bestowing predictions to those of average dispositions.
H1. Prediction for Mahakashyapa.
I1. Prose.
J1. Causal practice.

**Commentary:**

**At that time,** right after Shakyamuni Buddha had finished speaking the Medicinal Herbs Chapter, **following his expounding of the verses, the World Honored One spoke to the great assembly in this manner.** He announced to them, **“My disciple, Mahakashyapa…”** You should all recognize him. He was over a hundred sixty years old at the time that the Buddha was in the world, and, is, in fact, still alive right now! He is probably over a few thousand years old by now. He went to live in Chicken Foot Mountain in Yunnan. He is meditating in samadhi there.

“Can I see him?” you ask.

Yes, if you are sincere. If you are not sincere, then you cannot see him. Buddhism is just a question of sincerity. No matter what it is, if you are sincere, then there is a way. If you are not sincere, then there is no way.

“What should I do?”

If you are sincere, things will work out. If not, they would not. So if you want to know what to do, you should just be sincere, that’s all. Be truly sincere and fear nothing. Do not fear that people would not make offerings to you. If no one makes offerings to you, you can end your suffering. The reason why no one makes offerings is because in the past you cultivated wisdom and did not cultivate blessings. Need you ask?

One who cultivates wisdom and neglects blessings is like an Arhat with empty bowl.

No one makes offerings to him. How does one go about cultivating blessings? By practicing merit and virtue and doing good things.

**In a future age will serve and behold three hundred thousand million Buddhas, World Honored Ones.** He will serve and make offerings to and reverently view all these Buddhas. When the great officials go to see the King, they “behold” him and report their business to him. Mahakashyapa will serve and revere three hundred thousand millions of Buddhas, World Honored Ones, **making offerings, paying reverence, venerating and praising them; he will broadly proclaim the limitless Great Dharma of all the Buddhas.

Sutra:

In his final body he will become a Buddha by the name of Light Brightness Thus Come One, one worthy of offerings, of proper and universal knowledge, one whose understanding and conduct are complete, a well-gone one who understands the world, an unsurpassed Lord, a taming and regulating hero, a teacher of gods and humans, a Buddha, a World Honored One.**Outline:

J2. Attaining the fruit.

**Commentary:**

**In his final body he will become a Buddha by the name of Light Brightness Thus Come One,** because his body will glow with golden light.

**Sutra:

His country will be called Light Virtue and his eon will be called Great Adornment.**Outline:

J3. Name of country.

**Commentary:**

Mahakashyapa’s Buddha **country will be called Light Virtue,** because the people of his country will have both light and virtuous practice. The **eon will be called Great Adornment.** It will be adorned by great Bodhisattvas, limitless and boundless in number.

**Sutra:

His life span as a Buddha will last for twelve minor eons.**Outline:

J4. Life span as a Buddha.

**Commentary:**

The life span of Light Brightness Thus Come One will last for twelve minor eons. A minor eon consists of one cycle increase and decrease. Twelve minor eons consist of twelve cycles of increase and decrease.

**Sutra:

The Proper Dharma will dwell there for twenty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age will also dwell there for twenty minor eons.**Outline:

J5. The length of the Proper and Image Ages of the Dharma.

**Commentary:**

The proper Dharma of the Buddha remains in the world for as long as twenty minor eons. The image Dharma also stays for twenty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age would seem to be more or less like the Proper Dharma Age; however, although it resembles it, that is merely a resemblance.

**Sutra:**
 **His realm will be adorned and free of any filth or evil, tiles or stones, thorns or brambles, excrement or other impurities. The land will be flat, without high or low places, gullies or hills. The land will be made of lapis lazuli, and set about with rows of jeweled trees. The roads will be bordered with golden ropes. Precious flowers will be scattered about, purifying it entirely. The Bodhisattvas in that land will number in the limitless thousand of millions, the assembly of Hearers will be likewise uncountable. No deeds of Mara will be done there, and although Mara and his subjects will exist there, they will all protect the Buddhadharma.**Outline:

J6. The six purities of the land.

**Commentary:**

**His realm,** the land of Light Virtue, **will be adorned and free of any filth or evil.** There will be no impurities; it will all be pure because the ground will be made of lapis lazuli. There will be no evil karma there, either, such as, **tiles or stones, thorns or brambles,** which scratch you and tear at your clothing. If you are not careful, they can draw blood. **Excrement or other impurities.** The people will not go to the bathroom. This is a mark of Chan samadhi.

**The land will be flat, without high or low places, gullies or hills. The land will be made of lapis lazuli, and set about with rows of jeweled trees,** trees adorned with the seven jewels. **The roads will be bordered with golden ropes,** like railings. **Precious flowers will be scattered about,** in the country all the time. **Purifying it entirely**. All places in it will be clean and pure.

**The Bodhisattvas in that land will number in the limitless thousand of millions.** There will be very many great Bodhisattvas adorning this land. **The assembly of Hearers will be likewise uncountable. No deeds of Mara will be done there**. There will be no demonic obstacles, which mean that there will be no afflictions, because in that land the people will always be cultivating Chan samadhi. Because they have samadhi power, the deeds of Mara vanish. **And although Mara and his subjects will exist there, they will all protect the Buddhadharma** . They may be demons, but here they will protect the Buddhadharma; they would not try to ruin the Buddhadharma. Why is this? This is because the Patriarch Kashyapa cultivated a lot of ascetic practices, and so he was victorious over all the demonic hoardes. He has subdued them all, thus they have become dharma protectors. Why do cultivators practice asceticism? Because through it one can turn the demons into dharma protectors. If you cultivate and truly have a measure of attainment, the demons will come to test you out. In the future, these same demons will be your best dharma protectors. If you have no measure of attainment in your cultivation, the demons will remain demons, and they will not turn into dharma protectors.

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

**“I declare to the Bhikshus that By using my Buddha Eye I see that Kashyapa In a future age Countless eons from now Shall become a Buddha And that in the future he Shall make offerings to, revere and behold Three hundred tens thousands of millions Of Buddhas, World Honored Ones. And, for the sake of the Buddha’s wisdom He shall purely cultivate Brahman conduct. He shall make offerings to the highest Honored One, doubly complete and then Cultivate and practice all Unsurpassed Wisdom. In his final body He shall become a Buddha.**

Outline:

I2. Verse.
J1. Causal practice, resulting fruition.

**Commentary:**

**At that time, the World Honored One,** Shakyamuni Buddha, **wishing to restate this principle, spoke verses saying, I declare to the Bhikshus that.** He told the Bhikshus and the Bhikshunis. Not that Upasakas and Upasikas were excluded. Upasakas, Upasikas, and Bodhisattvas were also included. Hearers, Arhats, gods and dragons of the eightfold division were also addressed.

**By using my Buddha Eye** to contemplate, **I see that Kashyapa i n a future age,
countless eons from now shall become a Buddha.** Countless eons is much longer than 80,000 major eons. There are incomprehensibly many major eons. Who knows how long that will be? **And that in the future he shall make offerings to, revere and behold.** Before he becomes a Buddha he will make offerings to **three hundred tens thousands of millions of Buddhas, World Honored Ones.** He most sincerely and earnestly paid respects to, made offerings to, bowed, and praised all the Buddhas, World Honored Ones.

**And, for the sake of the Buddha’s wisdom, he shall purely cultivate Brahman conduct.** Why does he make such offerings? Why is he so reverent? He cultivates various kinds of ascetic practices because he seeks the Buddha’s wisdom. That is why **he shall make offerings to the highest Honored One, doubly complete.** The Buddha is doubly complete in blessings and wisdom. **And then cultivate and practice all Unsurpassed Wisdom.** The highest wisdom. **In his final body he shall become a Buddha.** He will realize Buddhahood.

**Sutra:**

**His land will be pure, With lapis lazuli for soil, And with many jeweled trees Lining the roadways, And with the roads set off by golden cords, Delighting all who see it. Fine fragrance will always issue forth, Rare flowers will be strewn about; With all manner of rare articles It shall be adorned. The land will be flat and even Without hills or gullies. The assembly of Bodhisattvas Will be unreckonable. Their minds will be gentle Having gained great spiritual powers; They will reverently uphold the Buddha’s Great Vehicle Sutras. The assembly of Hearers, Without outflows, in their last bodies, Sons of the Dharma King, Will also be beyond all count. So that, even with the Heavenly Eye, Their number shall not be known.**

Outline:

J2. Verses of purity of the land.

**Commentary:**

**His land will be pure, with lapis lazuli for soil.** Because he cultivated pure ascetic practices in the causal ground, as a result, the soil of his land will be made of lapis lazuli. **And with many jeweled trees, lining the roadways, and with the roads set off by golden cords, delighting all who see it. Fine fragrance will always issue forth.** Both the people and the country itself will always issue a fine scent. Both the Dependent and the Proper Retribution Worlds, then, will be fragrant. **Rare flowers will be strewn about;** heavenly maidens will constantly toss flowers from the sky **With all manner of rare articles it shall be adorned.

The land will be flat and even.** Why? Because in the causal ground, Mahakashyapa cultivated his mind-ground until it was level and even. Consequently, his Buddhaland will also be level and even. **Without hills or gullies.** Because in the cause ground, Mahakashyapa practiced equal compassion, his Buddhaland is level, too, without mountains of crevices.

**The assembly of Bodhisattvas w ill be unreckonable.** No one will be able to count them. No one will know where they came from; no one will know where they are going! There will be so many of them, they would not even recognize each other! If, with their wisdom, they cannot even keep each other’s names straight, how much the less will anyone else be able to keep track of them!

**Their minds will be gentle having gained great spiritual powers;** the Five Eyes and Six Spiritual Penetrations. **They will reverently uphold the Buddha’s Great Vehicle Sutras. The assembly of Hearers, without outflows, in their last bodies, sons of the Dharma King,** the Buddha, **will also be beyond all count. So that, even with the Heavenly Eye, their number shall not be known.** Even if you use your Heavenly Eye, you would not be able to count them.

**Sutra:**

**His life span as a Buddha will be Twelve minor eons, and His Proper Dharma will dwell in the world Twenty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age will dwell Also for twenty minor eons.**

Outline:

J4. The Proper and Image Ages.

**Commentary:**

**His life span as a Buddha will be twelve minor eons, and h is Proper Dharma will dwell in the world t wenty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age;** The Dharma Image is slightly more inferior than the Proper Dharma, **will dwell also for twenty minor eons.

Sutra:**

**The World Honored One, Light Brightness Shall have a history such as this.**

Outline:

J5. Conclusion.

**Commentary:**

**The World Honored One,** the Thus Come One, **Light Brightness shall have a history such as this.**

His Buddhaland will be called Light Virtue, but you should not think that this is just ordinary light. It is the light of wisdom, the virtue of prajna, and the virtue of offering up all good conduct. In his land everyone will be wise and intelligent. There would not be a single confused person there. Everyone’s mind will always be pure and manifesting wisdom. They will never be stupid. Everyone will have wisdom and virtuous conduct.

**Sutra:

At that time, Mahamaudgalyayana, Subhuti and Mahakatyayana were very agitated. They singlemindedly joined their palms, gazed upward at the World Honored One, not lowering their gaze for a moment, and with a single voice spoke these verses:**Outline:

H2. Predictions for three Arhats.
I1. Request.
J1. Request Proper.

**Commentary:**

**At that time,** right after Shakyamuni Buddha had bestowed a prediction upon Mahakashyapa, **Mahamaudgalyayana, Subhuti and Mahakatyayana were very agitated.** They were all very nervous. “The Buddha gave Mahakashyapa a prediction! What about us? Will we get one? Do we have to ask for one?” They could not wait any longer, so Mahamaudgalyayana, foremost in spiritual powers, Subhuti, foremost at understanding emptiness, and Mahakatyayana, foremost in debate, were very agitated and upset. They were not exactly afraid, but their hair was standing on end. “Mahakashyapa got a prediction! What about us? Will we pass the test? Will we get our degrees?” They were very nervous. Then, they managed to calm down somewhat and **singlemindedly joined their palms** in respect, **gazed upward at the World Honored One, not lowering their gaze for a moment** , not blinking, like their eyes had entered samadhi and could not move! I have seen a lot of Americans do this. They stare at each other. Chinese do not do that. They do not consider it polite. If you stare at them, they might think you were crazy. **And with a single voice spoke these verses.

Sutra:**

**Great brave hero, the World Honored One, The Shakyan Dharma King, Out of pity for us all Bestow the Buddha Word!**

**Commentary:**

**Great brave hero, the World Honored One.** The Buddha is a hero both in and beyond the world. **The Shakyan Dharma King,** King of the Dharma, born of the Shakyan clan. **Out of pity for us all** living beings, **bestow the Buddha Word!**

**Sutra:**

**If, knowing our profoundest thoughts, You see that we gain predictions, It will be like a sprinkling of sweet dew, Dispelling heat and giving cool refreshment. It’ll be like a person from a famine-stricken land, Who suddenly encounters a royal feast: His mind holds doubt and fear, And he doesn’t dare go ahead and eat. But, if he gained the king’s permission, Then he would certainly dare to eat.**

Outline:

J2. Setting up parable.

**Commentary:**

**If, knowing our profoundest thoughts,** World Honored One, you should know what is deep in our minds. **You see that we gain predictions, it will be like a sprinkling of sweet dew, dispelling heat and giving cool refreshment. It’ll be like a person from a famine-stricken land, who suddenly encounters a royal feast:** a great king’s banquet!

**His mind holds doubt and fear, and he doesn’t dare go ahead and eat. But, if he gained the king’s permission, then he would certainly dare to eat.

Sutra:**

**We, in the same way, ever think Of the errors of the Small Vehicle And do not know how we are To gain the Buddha’s unsurpassed wisdom. Although we hear the Buddha’s voice Saying that we shall become Buddhas, Our minds hold worry and fear, Like one who dares not yet to eat. If we were favored by the Buddha’s prediction, Then we should be happy and at peace.**

Outline:

J3. Correlation with Dharma.

**Commentary:**

**We, in the same way, ever think of the errors of the Small Vehicle.** We keep thinking how we have the Small Vehicle disposition. **And do not know how we are to gain the Buddha’s unsurpassed wisdom. Although we hear the Buddha’s voice saying that we shall become Buddhas, our minds hold worry and fear, like one who dares not yet to eat.** We are so small and petty, we of the Small Vehicle. Can we really become Buddhas?

**If we were favored by the Buddha’s prediction.** See how nervous they are? Kashyapa got one! Now we want predictions, too! **Then we should be happy and at peace.**

**Sutra:**

**Great, brave hero, World Honored One, You who always wish peace for the World Please bestow predictions upon us Like giving the famished permission to eat!**

Outline:

J4. Conclusion of request.

**Commentary:**

**Great, brave hero, World Honored One, you who always wish peace for the World,** to bring peace to all living beings, **Please bestow predictions upon us.** We cannot wait any longer!! Please hurry and tell us. Can we become Buddhas? Do we have a chance? Aren’t we about the same as Mahakashyapa? He got one. Shouldn’t we? We hope you will hurry and give us one!” **Like giving the famished permission to eat,** to partake of the royal feast. Otherwise, we might die of hunger! Our stomachs might stage a revolution!

**Sutra:

At that time, the World Honored One, knowing the thoughts in the minds of his great disciples, told the Bhikshus, “Subhuti will in a future age serve and behold three hundreds of myriads of millions of nayutas of Buddhas, making offerings, paying reverence, venerating, and praising them, ever cultivating the Brahman conduct, and perfecting the Bodhisattva Way.**Outline:

I2. Bestowing predictions.
J1. Predictions for Subhuti.
K1. Prose.
L1. Causal practice.

**Commentary:**

**At that time,** after the three great disciples had asked in verse to receive predictions, **the World Honored One, knowing the thoughts in the minds of his great disciples.** He knew exactly what was on their minds. The Vajra Sutra says, “The Buddha fully knows and sees all the thoughts in the minds of all beings.” Living beings have various thoughts which the Buddha fully knows.

**Told the Bhikshus** in the Dharma Assembly, “**Subhuti**, ‘Born-of-Emptiness’, **will in a future age serve and behold three hundreds of myriads of millions of nayutas of Buddhas, making offerings** of the ten kinds of offerings: incense, flowers, lamps, beads, canopies, banners, clothing, food and fruit, music, and joined palms, **paying reverence, venerating, and praising them, ever cultivating the Brahman conduct, and perfecting the Bodhisattva Way,** the Six Penetrations and Ten Thousand Practices.

**Sutra:

In his final body, he will become a Buddha called Name Appearance Thus Come One, one worthy of offerings, of proper and universal knowledge, one whose understanding and conduct are complete, a well-gone one who understands the world, an unsurpassed lord, a taming and regulating hero, teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, World Honored One.**Outline:

L2. Obtaining the fruition.

**Commentary:**

**In his final body,** Subhuti **will become a Buddha called Name Appearance.** Subhuti was foremost in understanding emptiness. Knowing the emptiness of Dharmas is knowing the emptiness of names and appearances. So, as a Buddha he will be called “Name Appearance” **Thus Come One.** Riding on the Way which is “Thus,” “he Comes” to realize right enlightenment. **One worthy of offerings,** from gods and humans, one **of proper and universal knowledge.** Knowing that the mind produces the ten thousand dharmas and that the ten thousand dharmas are only the mind, **one whose understanding and conduct are complete,** the light of his wisdom and cultivation are complete. **A well-gone one who understands the world, an unsurpassed lord,** there is no one higher, **a taming and regulating hero,** subduing living beings in the three realms, **teacher of gods and humans,** beings in the three realms, **Buddha.**What is a Buddha? Let us review: The Buddha is just a person, and people are just Buddhas. But the Buddha is a Buddha and people are people. The Buddha was a person who cultivated and then became a Buddha. If people cultivate, they can become Buddhas. If they do not cultivate, they cannot. You cannot fail to cultivate and claim to be a Buddha. If in the beginning the Buddha had not cultivated, he would not have become a Buddha, either.

How does one cultivate? First of all, wake up! This means, you yourself must wake up. It does not mean that you go demanding that other people wake up. The Buddha is awake, enlightened; living beings are confused. If you wake up, then you are a Buddha among living beings. While you are confused, you are a living being among Buddhas. Awakening or enlightenment just means that you gain true understanding. There are three kinds of enlightenment:

1. Self-enlightenment: This distinguishes the Buddha from common, unenlightened people. They are unenlightened. Unenlightened to what? To the fact that they have faults and bad karma. It is a lucky thing that the karma we have created has no physical shape. If it did, it would be big enough to break right through the entirety of empty space! It may not have a shape, so we do not have to worry about storing it anywhere, but it is still there; it never leaves you for a moment. The Buddha is enlightened, and so he is different from common people. Gaining enlightenment for oneself, however, is not establishing merit and virtue. Since the Buddha wants to set up merit, he goes on to teach others.

2. Enlightening Others. He uses the methods and principles he employed to gain enlightenment and teaches them to others, enlightening them all so that everyone can get enlightened together. This is the practice of the Bodhisattva path. It makes the Buddha different from those of the Small Vehicle who only care to enlighten themselves.

3. Perfection of enlightenment and practice. This means that the Buddha has perfected his own enlightenment and perfected the practice of bringing enlightenment to others.

These are the three kinds of enlightenment. We say,

Having perfected three kinds of enlightenment and ten thousand virtues,
He is, therefore, called a “Buddha”.

**World Honored One,** the most venerable one in the world and beyond the world.

**Sutra:**
 **His eon will be called Possessing-Jewels. His country will be called Giving Birth to Jewels, his land will be level, with crystal for soil, and jeweled trees for adornments. It will be without hills or gullies, stones, thorns, filth or excrement. Jeweled flowers will cover the ground, purifying it entirely. The people of his land will all dwell on jeweled terraces or in precious, fine towers. The assembly of Hearers will be limitless and boundless, so that they cannot be known by resort to number or analogy. The assembly of Bodhisattvas will number in the countless thousands of myriads of millions of nayutas.**Outline:

L3. Eons, land, and adornments.

**Commentary:**

Name Appearance Thus Come One will appear in an **eon called Possessing-Jewels.** What jewels? The Triple Jewel of the Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha. **His country will be called Giving Birth to Jewels** because the Triple Jewel will arise there. **His land will be level.** Why? Because Subhuti cultivated his mind ground until it was level. **With crystal for soil.** The light of the wisdom Subhuti cultivated gives him crystal soil in his Buddhaland. **And jeweled trees for adornments.** They grow naturally in his lands. **It will be without hills or gullies, stones, thorns, filth or excrement.** There will be nothing unclean there. **Jeweled flowers will cover the ground, purifying it entirely.** The entire land will be clean. **The people of his land will all dwell on jeweled terraces** made of the seven gems, **or in precious, fine towers.

The assembly of Hearers will be limitless and boundless, so that they cannot be known by resort to number or analogy. The assembly of Bodhisattvas will number in the countless thousands of myriads of millions of nayutas**.

**Sutra:**

**His life span as a Buddha will last for twelve minor eons.**Outline**:**L4. Life span.

**Commentary:**

**His life span as a Buddha will last for twelve minor eons.** He will live as a Buddha for twelve minor eons.

**Sutra:
The Proper Dharma will dwell there for twenty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age will also dwell there for twenty minor eons. This Buddha will constantly dwell in empty space, speaking Dharma for the multitudes and crossing over limitless Bodhisattvas and Hearers.**Outline:
L5. Proper and Image Ages.

**Commentary:**

**The Proper Dharma will** endure **for twenty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age will** last for just as long. **This Buddha,** Name Appearance Thus Come One, **will constantly dwell in empty space,** this represents the emptiness of the Primary Principle, **speaking Dharma for the multitudes and crossing over limitless Bodhisattvas and Hearers.

Sutra:

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

**“Assembled Bhikshus I shall now tell you, Listen singlemindedly To what I’m going to say.**

Outline:

K2 . Verse.
L1. Admonishment to listen.

**Sutra:**

**My great disciple, Subhuti, Will become a Buddha Called Name Appearance. After making offerings to countless Myriads of millions of Buddhas Following the Buddhas’ practices, He will gradually perfect the Great Way. In his final body he shall Obtain thirty two marks, Upright and beautiful Like a jeweled mountain.**

Outline:

L2. Causal practice and resulting fruition.

**Commentary:**

Everyone was warned! They had better listen well! Do not have false thinking; do not fall asleep. **My great disciple** here, my finest disciple, really good disciple, **Subhuti.** Everyone knows that he had three names. First, he was called “Empty-born” because, when he was born, all the treasures disappeared from his father’s one hundred and eight treasuries! Naturally, his father was rather nervous about this, wondering where they went. Had they been stolen? He went to a diviner to find out what had happened, and the diviner said that the whole thing was extremely auspicious. Hearing this, his father gave him the name “Good and Lucky.” After a week, all the treasures reappeared in his father’s one hundred and eight treasuries, and he was given the name, “Good Appearance”. The Buddha was quite fond of Subhuti and paid a lot of attention to him.

**Will become a Buddha.** Do not look down on him. He is going to become a Buddha, you realize? **Called Name Appearance.** His Buddha name will be Name Appearance Thus Come One. **After making offerings to countless myriads of millions of Buddhas following the Buddhas’ practices.** Why will he become a Buddha? This is very important. Because he follows the Buddha’s practices and practices just as the Buddha does. Whatever the Buddha does, he does. He practices just as the Buddha does and does not attempt to set himself up as different or better than the Buddha. **He will gradually perfect the Great Way.** The word “gradual” is important here. You should not think, “Oh, I cannot cultivate. I cannot get rid of my faults!” and get all nervous about it. “My desires make me nervous.” Do not be nervous. Work on it gradually. You have to work, and you have to cultivate, yes, but you should not get confused about it. The more confused you are, the more confused you will get. If you wake up, you are following the Buddha. If you do not wake up, you are following confusion, not the Buddha. So you see, Subhuti will cultivate and gradually become a Buddha. He will cultivate during the time of three hundred myriads of millions of Buddhas. How long do you think that took? A Buddha does not necessarily appear every eon, even. He will make offerings to that many Buddhas and, day by day, cultivate until he reaches his goal. **In his final body he shall.** In his last body, practicing the Bodhisattva Way, he will **Obtain thirty two marks,** and eighty minor characteristics. We also cultivate in order to attain the thirty-two marks. A Buddha has these marks and is beautifully adorned in blessings, **Uuright and beautiful like a jeweled mountain.** Everyone who sees him will honor him.

**Sutra:**

**His Buddhaland will be Foremost in purity and adornment. Living beings who see it All will take delight in it. And as a Buddha therein He will save limitless multitudes. Within his Buddha Dharma Will be many Bodhisattvas, All of sharp faculties, Turning the non-retreating wheel. This land will ever be Adorned with Bodhisattvas; The assembly of Hearers Will be beyond all reckoning. All having gained the Three Clarities, And perfected the Six Spiritual powersAbiding in the Eight Liberations And possessing great awesome virtue. When this Buddha speaks the Dharma He will manifest limitless Spiritual powers and transformations, Inconceivable. The people, both gods and humans, Their numbers like the Ganges sands, All will join their palms To hear and accept that Buddha’s words.**

Outline:

L3. Verse of purity of land.

**Commentary:**

**His Buddhaland will be foremost in purity and adornment.** The Buddhaland of Name Appearance Thus Come One is adorned and pure. **Living beings who see it,** who go there, **all will take delight in it.** They will really like it.

**And as a Buddha therein, he will save limitless multitudes,** limitless, countless living beings. **Within his Buddhadharma w ill be many Bodhisattvas, all of sharp faculties, turning the non-retreating wheel.** They will all be extremely intelligent. They will turn the Dharma-wheel, to teach and transform living beings and purify the Buddhalands.

**This land will ever be adorned with Bodhisattvas; the assembly of Hearers will be beyond all reckoning. All having gained the Three Clarities,** the Heavenly Eye, the knowledge of past lives, and the extinction of outflows. **And perfected the Six Spiritual powers a biding in the Eight Liberations a nd possessing great awesome virtue. When this Buddha speaks the Dharma, he will manifest limitless spiritual powers and transformations, inconceivable. The people, both gods and humans, their numbers like the Ganges sands, all will join their palms to hear and accept that Buddha’s words.**

**Sutra:**

**That Buddha’s lifespan will be Twelve minor eons,**

Outline:

L4. Life span.

**Commentary:**

**That Buddha’s lifespan will be.** The Buddha, Name Appearance, will live for **twelve minor eons.

Sutra:**

**The Proper Dharma will dwell in the world For twenty minor eons; The Dharma Image Age will dwell For twenty minor eons, also.**

Outline:

L5. Proper and Dharma Image Ages.

**Commentary:**

**The Proper Dharma will dwell in the world for twenty minor eons; the Dharma Image Age will dwell for twenty minor eons, also.**

**Sutra:**
 **At that time, the World Honored One further addressed the assembly of Bhikshus saying, “I will now tell you: In a future age, Mahakatyayana will make offerings of various articles to, and will reverently serve eight thousand million Buddhas, honoring and venerating them. After the extinction of those Buddhas, he will erect a stupa for each, one thousand yojanas in height, five hundred yojanas in breath, and made of the seven jewels: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother of pearl, carnelian, pearls, and agate. He will make offerings of many flowers, beaded necklaces, paste incense, powdered incense, burning incense, silk canopies and banners to the stupa. After that, he will further make offerings to twenty thousand million Buddhas in the same manner. Having made offerings to those Buddhas, he will perfect the Bodhisattva Way.**Outline:

J2. Prediction for Mahakatyayana.
K1. Prose.
L1. Causal practice.

**Commentary:**

**At that time,** right after Subhuti had received his prediction, **the World Honored One further addressed the assembly of Bhikshus saying, “I will now tell you** something. Relax, and pay close attention. **I will now tell you: In a future age, Mahakatyayana** whose name means literary elegance because he is such an accomplished writer and foremost of the Buddha’s disciples in debate, **will make offerings of various articles to, and will reverently serve eight thousand million Buddhas.** Articles refer to things one can offer to the Buddha, like lamps, flowers, flower vases, and so on. **honoring and venerating them,** with his body-karma, he will honor the Buddhas, and with his mouth-karma he will venerate and praise them.

**After the extinction of those Buddhas, he will erect a stupa for each, one thousand yojanas in height.** In the future, we will build a stupa to hold the relics of the Elder Master Hsu Yun. Although we did not meet up with the Buddha appearing in the world, Elder Master Hsu Yun, such a great Bodhisattva, was here, and we should make a stupa to honor him. **Five hundred yojanas in breath.** A large yojana is 80 miles, a middle-sized yojana is 60 miles, and a small yojana is 40 miles. **And made of the seven jewels: gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother of pearl, carnelian, pearls, and agate. He will make offerings of many flowers, beaded necklaces, paste incense, powdered incense, burning incense, silk canopies and banners to the stupa.

After that, he will further make offerings to twenty thousand million Buddhas in the same manner. Having made offerings to those Buddhas, he will perfect the Bodhisattva Way**. **Sutra:

He will then become a Buddha called Jambunada Gold Light Thus Come One, one worthy of offerings, of proper and universal knowledge, one whose understanding and conduct are complete, a well-gone one who understands the world, unsurpassed lord, a taming and regulating hero, teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, World Honored One.**Outline:L2. Attaining the Fruit.

**Commentary:**

**He will then become a Buddha called Jambunada Gold Light Thus Come One.** “Jambu” is the name of a tree, “Nada” means “continent.” This is the Southern Continent, the one we live in. In this continent there is a tree called the Jambu Tree. It is said that when this tree bears its glistening fruit, the fruit falls into the river and turns the sand into gold. Other people say that the fruit itself turns into gold. Still others say that the leaves turn into gold when they fall in the river.

So, this Buddha’s name was Jambunanda Gold Light Thus Come One, because his wisdom-light made him extremely sharp and invincible. **One worthy of offerings, of proper and universal knowledge, one whose understanding and conduct are complete, a well-gone one who understands the world, unsurpassed lord, a taming and regulating hero, teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, World Honored One.

Sutra:

The land will be flat and even with crystal for soil and jeweled trees as adornments. The roads will be bordered with golden ropes, and the ground covered with fine flowers, purifying it entirely, so that those who see it are delighted. The four evil paths will not exist there, that is, the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, and asuras. There will many gods, humans, assembled Hearers and Bodhisattvas who will number in the limitless myriads of millions, and all adorning that land.**Outline:L3. Purity of the lands.

**Commentary:**

**The land will be flat and even with crystal for soil** because in the past he cultivated and leveled the mind-ground, in the result, his Buddhaland, the dependent retribution world, will be level. **And jeweled trees as adornments,** trees made up of the seven jewels. **The roads will be bordered with golden ropes.** We make railings out of metal or wood, but in Katyayana’s Buddhaland they will be made of gold. **And the ground covered with fine flowers.** The heavenly maidens will scatter heavenly flowers, covering the ground. When the petals wilt and fall, a light breeze will blow them away, and new buds will fall. **Purifying it entirely.** It is purified because in the causal ground this Buddha did no evil and offered up all good conduct. **So that those who see it are delighted.** All who see this country--to say nothing of seeing this Buddha--will be happy. **The four evil paths will not exist there, that is, the hells.** Where do the hells come from? Hatred. If you have no hatred, then there are no hells. If you wonder whether or not you are going to fall into the hells, ask yourself whether or not you are hateful. If you are hateful, then you have a line into the hells. **Hungry ghosts.** Where do they come from? Greed. If you are greedy, you can turn into a ghost. For example, if you always want to eat and can never get your fill and just think about eating all the time, in the future you may turn into a hungry ghost. Since you were so afraid of going hungry, you may just turn into a hungry ghost!

How does one turn into an **animal** ? By being stupid. Why are you stupid? Out of ignorance. Ignorance results in stupidity. If you are not ignorant, you would not be stupid. So, those who study the Buddhadharma should never be jealous of others. Do not be jealous of others’ beauty. If you are jealous of the way they look, you will become even uglier. The more jealous you are, the weirder you will look, until you do not even look human anymore. Ugly people should return the light and realize that they are ugly because they were jealous of others in the past.

If someone is smarter than you, if they remember the Sutras and teachings after hearing them only once, take care that you do not get jealous. Do not be jealous of their good memories. The more jealous you are, the stupider you will get. Some people see others cultivating the Way, and they get very upset. “Hey! Look at that little novice. He recites and bows and kneels there all day. He works so hard...” If you are jealous of him, you would not be able to cultivate in the future. Why not? Because you were jealous. It does not matter whether you are working or going to school, or whatever, just do not be jealous. You should hope that others are better than you. That is the resolve of the Bodhisattva. If you hope that others are not as good as you are, that is the resolve of a demon! A ghost! And an animal!

If you see everyone as a Buddha, then you are a Buddha. If you see everyone as an asura, then you are an asura. So, do not look at people’s faults.

**Asuras** are beings who are hostile and like to fight. They insist on fighting with everyone. In our present day world, people fight with people, families fight with families, and nations battle nations. This is the age of the asura. In this Buddha’s land, the Four Evil Ways will not exist. **There will many gods, humans, assembled Hearers** of the Small Vehicle, **and Bodhisattvas** who practice the Bodhisattva Path, teaching and transforming all living beings, purifying Buddhalands, **who will number in the limitless myriads of millions, and all adorning that land.

Sutra:

His life span as a Buddha will be twelve minor eons.**Outline:

L4. Lifespan.

**Commentary:**

His life as a Buddha will last **twelve minor eons.

Sutra:

His Proper Dharma will dwell in the world twenty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age will dwell also for twenty minor eons.**Outline:

L5. Proper and Image Ages.

**Commentary:**

The **Proper Dharma** will last **twenty minor eons,** and then the **Dharma Image Age** will last for the same amount of time.

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

**“O Bhikshus, all of you, Listen with a single mind, For that which I say Is true, real, and without error.**

Outline:

K2 . Verses.
L1. Admonishment to listen.

**Commentary:**

**At that time, the World Honored One,** Shakyamuni Buddha, feared that some people had not heard him clearly the first time, or else had already forgotten what he said. He used simple verses to restate the principles. **Wishing to restate this principle spoke verses saying, O Bhikshus, all of you, listen with a single mind.** Listen to me with one heart, unconfused. Do not strike up so much false thinking. **For that which I say is true, real, and without error.** The Dharma which I speak is true, real, and not false. It does not change throughout the three periods of time.

**Sutra:**

**Katyayana, shall With a variety Of fine and subtle articles Make offerings to the Buddhas. After the extinction of those Buddhas He will build stupas of the seven jewels And also, with flowers and incense Make offerings to their sharira.**

Outline:

L2. Causal practice.

**Commentary:**

**Katyayana, shall.** Katyayana, with his unobstructed eloquence and his first-rate debating skills, **with a variety o f fine and subtle articles.** The finest, most beautiful things, **Make offerings to the Buddhas. After the extinction of those Buddhas he will build stupas of the seven jewels and also, with flowers and incense make offerings to their sharira.**

**Sutra:**

**In his final body He will attain the Buddha wisdom And realize proper enlightenment.**

Outline:

L3. Attaining the Fruit.

**Commentary:**

**In his final body, he will attain the Buddha wisdom,** become a Buddha, **and realize proper enlightenment,** accomplishing anuttarasamyaksambodhi, the unsurpassed enlightenment.

**Sutra:**

**His country will be pure And he will cross over limitless Myriads of millions of beings; From the ten directions He will receive offerings. His Buddha light Will be unsurpassed As a Buddha his name will be Jambunada Gold Light. Bodhisattvas, and Hearers Having severed all existence Unlimited and innumerable Will adorn his land.**

Outline:

L4. Purity of the land.

**Commentary:**

**His country will be pure** without any filth, **and he will cross over limitless myriads of millions of beings; from the ten directions he will receive offerings. His Buddha light will be unsurpassed, a s a Buddha his name will be Jambunada Gold Light. Bodhisattvas and Hearers having severed all existence, unlimited and innumerable will adorn his land;** having severed the bond of existence in the desire, form, and formless realms.

**Sutra:**
 **At that time, the World Honored One, further spoke to the assembly. “I now tell you that Mahamaudgalyayana will in the future, with various articles, make offerings to eight thousand Buddhas, honoring and venerating them. After the extinction of those Buddhas, he will erect for each of them a stupa one thousand yojanas in height and five hundred yojanas in breadth, and made of the seven jewels, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother of pearl, carnelian, pearls, and agate. He will make offerings to it of many flowers, beaded necklaces, paste incense, powdered incense, burning incense, silk canopies and banners. After that, he will further make offerings to two hundred myriads of millions of Buddhas in the same manner.**Outline:

J3. Prediction for Mahamaudgalyayana.
K1. Prose.
L1. Causal practice.

**Commentary:**

**At that time,** when **the World Honored One,** Shakyamuni Buddha had finished the verses, he decided to bestow a prediction upon Mahamaudgalyayana. **Further spoke to the assembly. “I now tell you that Mahamaudgalyayana will in the future.** Maudgalyayana means descendant of bean-gatherers. He was foremost in spiritual powers. **With various articles, make offerings to eight thousand Buddhas, honoring and venerating them. After the extinction of those Buddhas, he will erect for each of them a stupa one thousand yojanas in height and five hundred yojanas in breadth, and made of the seven jewels, gold, silver, lapis lazuli, mother of pearl, carnelian, pearls, and agate. He will make offerings to it of many flowers, beaded necklaces, paste incense, powdered incense, burning incense, silk canopies and banners. After that, he will further make offerings to two hundred myriads of millions of Buddhas in the same manner.** So now, when you cultivate, you want to become a Buddha right away! You want to get enlightened right away! And you still have not gotten rid of your jealousy and contrariness. If you became a Buddha now, you would be a jealous and contrary Buddha! No one would make offerings to you. When you cultivate, the first thing is to develop a compassionate mind, a patient, generous, vigorous, concentrated, and wise mind. If you have not developed your mind in accord with the Six Perfections, how can you expect to become a Buddha? Mahamaudgalyayana will be making offerings to eight thousand Buddhas and then, later, to two hundred myriads of millions of Buddhas.

**Sutra:**

**He will then become a Buddha called Tamalapattracandana Fragrance Thus Come One, one worthy of offerings, of proper and universal knowledge, one whose understanding and conduct are complete, a well-gone one who understands the world, an unsurpassed lord, a taming and regulating hero, teacher of gods and humans, Buddha, World Honored One.**Outline:

L2. Attaining the Fruit.

**Commentary:**

What is **“Tamalapattracandana”?** Tamalapattra means “worthy one whose nature is without filth”. One who has attained the position of a worthy sage has no filth in his self-nature. Candana, called “Ox-headed Candana”, is a kind of incense that can be smelled at a distance of forty miles. He will be complete with the ten titles of a Buddha.

Time passes quickly. October has gone and November is here. Next Wednesday, five left-home people are going to Taiwan to take the complete precepts of the Great Vehicle. It is a historical first. Never before have so many gone from the West to seek the Dharma. Because it is the first time, it is not easy. It is most difficult and entails the most demonic-obstacles. So these five people must be solid, sincere, and persevering. You must be as solid as a diamond, able to destroy all the heavenly demons and outside ways and not be turned by them. You must also be very sincere. You must also persevere. You are bound to run into a lot of demonic-obstacles and demonic tests. If you want to cultivate, demons will certainly come around. They are your indirect helpers. They are afraid that you would not cultivate, so they make sure that you do. There are demons who were even former friends. They may have been your friends, but as soon as they heard that you were going to leave home, they decided to give you a hard time to test you out. If you do not understand what is going on, you are going to think, “Oh, we were such good friends. Why have you turned on me like this?” Actually, they are helping you.

Others run into the demons of sickness. Before they decided to cultivate, they were not bothered by sickness in the book. Their head is confused, their eyes get blurry, their ears grow deaf, and their teeth start hurting! Sick, sick sick! Just to see if they can take it. If they can stand it, they will come to realize that this body is nothing but a stinking bag of skin. What is with all this pain? There is no pain in the self-nature. In this way, they will overcome their demonic obstacles.

Others run into the demon of poverty. The more they cultivate, the poorer they get. Soon they are so poor they cannot afford a pair of socks or a handkerchief! They start thinking, “What is the good of leaving home? I do not have any money. I cannot buy anything!”

In general, all the various demons attack: wealth demons, sex demons, human demons, ghostly demons, heavenly demons, earthly demons. But all these demons are not as harmful as the demon of your own mind. Take care that the demon of your own mind does not get control. It will cause you to think things like, “Leaving home is really stupid. It is meaningless. Once you leave home you cannot do anything anymore. It is entirely too restrictive”.

Take care to remain in control of the situation. You are going to seek the precepts. When it is time to work, work. When it is time to study, study. Maintain the awesome comportment like the Bhikshu Asvajit, who impressed Maudgalyayana so much that he, too, wanted to leave home. Do not bounce around and get upset at every little thing. When you return, you should have a very special manner. What is that? You will find out when you return. Basically, there were not enough money even to buy your plane tickets, but I recited a mantra and the money came.

**Sutra:

His eon will be called full of joy. His country will be called full of joy. His country will be called Delighted Mind. His land will be flat and even with crystal for soil, and jeweled trees for adornments. Real pearl flowers will be scattered about, purifying it entirely, so that those who see it rejoice. There will be many gods, humans, Bodhisattvas and Hearer, limitless and uncountable in number.**Outline:

L3. The eon and the country.

**Commentary:**

When the Venerable Mahamaudgalyayana becomes a Buddha, **His eon will be called full of joy;** everyone there will be happy, filled with the happiness of Dharma. All the citizens of that land will delight in the Buddhadharma, and the land **will be called Delighted Mind. His land will be flat and even.** The soil would not be dirt, it will be crystal. It will have **jeweled trees for adornments,** trees made of the seven jewels. In our world, there are coral trees. They are made in the ocean by little creatures. I saw them when I went to Thailand. There was one coral tree that was about three feet tall. I do not know how much it was worth. Priceless, I am sure. Long ago in China, there was a very wealthy person. An official invited him to lunch. After lunch, he showed him one of his coral trees and said, “Do you see this coral tree? It is incredibly expensive and fine.” The person reached out and grabbed it. It was about two feet tall. Anyway, he threw it on the ground and smashed it. The official was very upset, but the man said, “Do not worry, I have lots. I will bring you one tomorrow.” The next day he sent him more than a dozen that were three feet tall. Actually, he was just trying to show off how wealthy he was and make the official think he had all kinds of precious things.

The trees in this Buddhaland were made of the seven jewels. **Real pearl flowers will be scattered about, purifying it entirely.** Flowers made of real pearls will constantly be falling through space, covering the land. **So that those who see it rejoice.** Everyone who visits this land has no desire to leave, they choose to stay forever instead. **There will be many gods, humans, Bodhisattvas and Hearer, limitless and uncountable in number.** Although the text does not say it specifically, the four evil paths will not exist there, either.

**Sutra:**
 **His life span as a Buddha will last for twenty-four minor eons.**Outline:

L4. Lifespan

**Commentary:**

As a Buddha he will live for **twenty-four minor eons.** Of the four great disciples, he will live the longest as a Buddha. The other live for twelve minor eons, so his lifespan is twice as long.

**Sutra:**
 **The Proper Dharma will dwell there for forty minor eons. The Dharma Image Age will dwell also for forty minor eons.”**Outline:

L5. Proper and Image Ages.

**Commentary:**

**The Proper Dharma** age and the **Dharma Image Age** will also last twice as long as that of the other disciples mentioned.

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

**“My disciple Great Maudgalyayana Having cast aside this bodyWill view eight thousand Two hundred myriads of millionsOf Buddhas, World Honored Ones. And, for the sake of the Buddha WayWill honor and make offerings to them.In the presence of those Buddhas, He will always practice Brahman conduct,Throughout limitless eons, Reverently upholding the Buddhadharma. After the extinction of those Buddhas, He will build stupas of the seven jewels, Displaying golden spires And with flowers, incense, and instrumental musicHe will make offerings To the Buddhas’ stupas.**

Outline:

K2 . Verse.
L1. Causal practice.

**Commentary:**

Having finished the prose passage, Shakyamuni Buddha **The World Honored One,** wanted to re-tell the causes and conditions surrounding Mahamaudgalyayana, so he used **verses** and said, **my disciple.** The Buddha is obviously very fond of him. **Great Madgalyayana, having cast aside his body,** after he has gotten rid of his present Hearer Body, **will view eight thousand two hundred myriads of millions of Buddhas, World Honored Ones. And, for the sake of the Buddha Way will honor and make offerings to them. In the presence of those Buddhas, He will always practice Brahman conduct** If one conduct is pure, all his conducts will be pure. **Throughout limitless eons, reverently upholding the Buddhadharma** in every life, life after life.

**After the extinction of those Buddhas, he will build stupas of the seven jewels, displaying golden spires.** Stupas of Buddhas made of seven jewels will adorn this golden kshetra. Kshetra is Sanskrit word that means ground and field; in other words, it means “land” **and with flowers, incense, and instrumental music h e will make offerings to the Buddhas’ stupas.**

**Sutra:**

**Gradually, having perfected The Bodhisattva Path, In a land called Delighted Intent, He will become a Buddha Called Tamala Candana Fragrance.**

Outline:

L2. Attaining the fruit and the name of the land.

**Commentary:**

**Gradually, having perfected,** gradually having practiced **the Bodhisattva Path,** that is, the Six Perfections and the Ten Thousand Conducts, **in a land called Delighted Intent, he will become a Buddha called Tamala Candana Fragrance,** “worthy one whose nature is free of filth”. He will emit a fragrance like Candana Ox-head Incense.

**Sutra:**

**His life span as a Buddha will be Twenty four minor eons.**

Outline:

L3. Lifespan

**Commentary:**
His lifespan is twice that of the other great disciples mentioned.

**Sutra:**

**Always, for gods and humans He will expound and proclaim the Buddha Way.There will be limitless Hearers In number like the Ganges sands, With the Three Clarities and Six Penetrations And great, awesome virtue. There will be uncountable Bodhisattvas Vigorous and of solid resolve And who, with regard to the Buddhas’ wisdom Are irreversible.**

Outline:

L4. Purity of land.

**Commentary:**

**Always, for gods and humans he will expound and proclaim the Buddha Way,** he will observe the potential of the beings and speak the Dharma accordingly. He will speak whatever dharma is necessary in order to cross them over. He will proclaim the pathway towards the realization of Buddhahood.

**There will be limitless Hearers in number like the Ganges sands, with the Three Clarities and Six Penetrations and great, awesome virtue. There will be uncountable Bodhisattvas, vigorous and of solid resolve and who, with regard to the Buddhas’ wisdom, are irreversible.** They will have obtained the three kinds of irreversibility: irreversibility of position, irreversibility of thought, and irreversibility of conduct.

**Sutra:**

**After that Buddha’s extinction The Proper Dharma will dwell For forty minor eons, And the Dharma Image Age will be the same.**

Outline:

L5. Proper and Image Ages.

**Commentary:**
**After that Buddha’s extinction,** after he has entered Nirvana, **the Proper Dharma will dwell** in the world **for forty minor eons and the Dharma Image Age will be the same** as the Proper Dharma Age.

Now, having given this prediction concerning Mahamaudgalyayana, the Buddha saw that his other disciples had grown nervous, wondering when they would get predictions. Did they have a chance to become Buddhas? So he gives them all predictions here.

**Sutra:**

**All my disciples Having perfected their awesome virtue, All five hundred of them Shall be given predictions And in a future age Will become Buddhas. Of my own and your former Causes and conditions I now will tell: All of you, listen well!**

Outline:

G2. Speaking of former lives for those of inferior dispositions.

**Commentary:**

**All my disciples having perfected their awesome virtue, all five hundred of them shall be given predictions and in a future age will become Buddhas.

Of my own and your former causes and conditions.** From former lives we have causal affinities in common, and so we meet here in this Dharma assembly, and I speak the Dharma for you. In the future, you shall receive your predictions of Buddhahood and become Buddhas. Were it not for these affinities, even though the Buddha spoke the Dharma, you would not be able to come and listen.

We are all presently gathered in this Dharma Flower Sutra Assembly because of causal conditions from former lives. If it were not for that causal affinity, we would not have met here. **I now will tell: All of you, listen well!** Pay attention. Like right now, I am lecturing the Dharma Flower Sutra for you and you should listen. The situation is the same. You should all listen well. Shakyamuni Buddha spoke the Dharma on Vulture Peak. We did not have the opportunity to hear it right then. Now, however, we can look at the portraits of all the Patriarchs. You should not look at the pictures of Han Shan and Shi De and think they are so funny looking. They are Bodhisattvas who deliberately manifested that special style. So, as you meet each patriarch, they will meet you. You will recognize one another because of former causes and conditions.

Speaking of pictures, I remember that when I was in Hong King there was a young child who had heart disease. The doctor told him he had to stay in bed and sleep for five years, without getting out of bed. Somehow, he got hold of my biography and saw my picture in it. For some strange reason, he pulled up in full-lotus, placed the picture in front of him, put his palms together and began to recite my name. Everyone else in the house would recite Namo Amitabha Buddha, but he recited my name! He recited this way, morning to night, for seventy days. Then he saw me come out of the picture and rub him on the head. After that, his heart disease was cured.