**The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra**

Chapter 9: Bestowing Predictions Upon Those Studying and Those Beyond Study   
With Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

Bestowing predictions means they get predictions of Buddhahood. Previously, the great disciples, the five hundred Arhats received predictions, and the 1,250 disciples received predictions. Now those studying, that is those who have attained first, second and third stage Arhatship, receive predictions. "Studying" refers to those who are investigating the true principle and practicing it as well. It is not enough to simply study and understand. Unless you practice, you cannot cut off the coarse and fine delusions like dust and sand. As students, they yearn for the supreme understanding, something ordinary people do not have. Those at the stage of study are Srotrapanna of the first fruition, Sakridagamin of the second fruition, and Anagamin of the third fruition, the first three fruits of Arhatship. Those of the first fruit are said to be at the position of seeing the Way. Those of the second and third fruits are said to be at the position of cultivating the Way. Fourth fruit is said to be the stage beyond study.   
  
Those beyond study have exhaustively studied the truth and have cut off all delusions. In this chapter there are two thousand both studying and beyond study; they are not included as part of the twelve hundred fifty who received predictions in the last chapter. This is the ninth of the twenty-eight chapters in The Dharma Flower Sutra.   
  
**Sutra:**  
  
**At that time Ananda and Rahula had this thought, “We have often thought how happy we would be if we received predictions!”**Outline:  
  
G2. Predictions for the two thousand.   
H1. Requesting the prediction.   
I1. Two people make requests.   
J1. The silent request.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**At that time,** after Chapter Eight had been spoken, the Venerable **Ananda and** the Venerable **Rahula** got nervous. Seeing the other disciples get predictions, they could not wait anymore. You all know Ananda was foremost in learning. Why was this? Originally, he was a fellow-cultivator with Shakyamuni Buddha. They both made vows to cultivate at the same time under the Buddha, Emptiness-King. Shakyamuni Buddha cultivated the Six Perfections and Ten Thousand Conducts. He was vigorous and did not retreat. Ananda was fond of learning, and as a result, Shakyamuni Buddha became a Buddha and Ananda became his attendant, protecting his Dharma. Ananda's name means "rejoicing." It is because he was born on the day that the Buddha realized Buddhahood. The birth of Ananda and the Buddha's enlightenment were both causes for rejoicing.   
  
Rahula was the Buddha's son. Not only was he Shakyamuni Buddha's son, but he will be the son of all the thousand Buddhas to appear in this, the Worthy Kalpa. He made this vow to be the son of every Buddha. This is a result of his vow power. His name is also Sanskrit and means "covering obstacle". Rahula was in his mother's womb for six years before he was finally born. This is because in a past life, a long, long time ago, he tried to catch a mouse. This mouse ran very fast. He chased it until it finally ran into a mouse hole. He had a club and intended to club it to death.

Anyway, the mouse ran for about half an hour before it ran into a mouse hole. The hole was crooked, so he could not stick the club in to get the mouse. Then he had a dumb idea. He plugged up the hole with a brick. "If I cannot club you to death, I will just keep you prisoner in here." He kept the mouse in the hole for six days, before he finally had a compassionate thought. "That poor little mouse has suffered a lot in there for six days. Probably, he does not have anything to eat in there. I had better let him out." And he removed the brick and let the mouse out. Because the mouse was in the hole for six days, Rahula received the karmic retribution of being in his mother's womb for six years.   
  
You ask, "Will he have to be in the womb for six years every time he gets born as the son of the Buddha?" You should not worry about it. It was his retribution. He was not that put out about it. He still was pretty happy. Besides, karmic obstacles sometimes last for many lifetimes. One may receive a single retribution for many lives, receive many retributions for many lives, or many retributions in one life. It is sometimes possible to exhaust a particular retribution in a single lifetime. Sometimes people have to undergo many kinds of retribution throughout many lifetimes. Rahula may or may not have other karmic obstacles to undergo. It is not fixed. Such questions are not really any of our business, and we do not need to have false thinking about it anyway.   
  
So, Ananda and Rahula **had this thought,** struck up some false thinking, **“We have often thought how happy we would be if we received predictions!** Wouldn't that be great? We would be so happy!”   
  
I just said that they had a false thought, but you should not assume, "Oh, even the Arhats have false thinking. No wonder I do." The false thoughts of Arhats are a lot different from our false thoughts. You should not be so shameless and think it is okay for you to have false thinking. Arhats do not think at all. They might occasionally give rise to a thought, but it is based on the primary principle. They are not like us who just have one false thought after another all day long. Who knows how many millions of false thought we have? For them, you could say that even by giving rise to one thought they are false thinking, because they are always in samadhi and never give rise to thought. Their false thoughts are nothing like ours, let me tell you.   
  
"You mean there are different kinds of false thinking?"   
  
If there were not, we could not call the Arhats, Arhats.   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **Then out of their seats, they went before the Buddha, bowed with their heads at his feet, and said, “World Honored One, we, too, should have a share in this, for it is only to the Thus Come One that we go for refuge.”**  
Outline:  
  
J2. The spoken request.   
K1. Leading up to the request.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**Then out of their seats, they went before the Buddha, bowed with their heads at his feet, and said,** they spoke in unison, **"World Honored One, we, too, should have a share in this.** We should share in these predictions, don't you suppose? We are here in this Dharma Assembly too, so we should get a prediction. **For it is only to the Thus Come One that we go for refuge.** We only trust in and rely upon the Buddha."   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **“Further, we are seen, known and recognized by the gods, people and asuras in all the worlds. Ananda is always your attendant, protecting and upholding the treasury of Dharma. Rahula is the Buddha's son. If the Buddha would see fit to bestow upon us a prediction for anuttarasamyaksambodhi, our wishes would be fulfilled and the hopes of the assembly would be satisfied.”**Outline:  
  
K2. Expressing their wish.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**Further, we are seen, known, and recognized by the gods, people, and asuras in all the worlds.** They all recognize us, Ananda and Rahula, and the two thousand studying and beyond study, as good knowing advisors. **Ananda is always your attendant, protecting and upholding the treasury of Dharma.** Ananda is always helping the Buddha and taking care of all the treasury of the Buddha's Dharma. **Rahula is the Buddha's son. If the Buddha would see fit to bestow upon us a prediction for anuttarasamyaksambodhi;** if the Buddha would be compassionate and predict our attainment of the utmost right and perfect enlightenment, the Buddha position, **our wishes would be fulfilled.** We would have obtained what we wanted, a prediction. **And the hopes of the assembly,** two thousand of us, **would be satisfied** as well.   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **Then, the two thousand Hearer disciples, those who were studying and those beyond study, all rose from their seats, bared their right shoulders, and went before the Buddha. Singlemindedly, they put their palms together and gazed at the World Honored One, expressing the same wish as Ananda and Rahula. Then they withdrew to one side.**Outline:  
  
I2. The two thousand make a request.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**Then,** after Ananda and Rahula had spoken to the Buddha, **the two thousand Hearer disciples, those who were studying and those beyond study,** those of the Two Vehicles, **all rose from their seats, bared their right shoulders, and went before the Buddha. Singlemindedly, they put their palms together.** They all had the same mind. Their minds had turned to one. They had no false thinking. They had one thought. That one thought was the same as Ananda and Rahula's thought. Putting their palms together represents their singlemindedness. It is also called "uniting the ten" (fingers).

**And gazed at the World Honored One.** They had the same wish as Ananda and Rahula, **expressing the same wish as Ananda and Rahula. Then they withdrew to one side.** They were silent, but their intent was the same as Ananda's and Rahula's. Their message got through even though they did not speak. If they had each spoken, it would have taken way too long for two thousand of them to make their requests, so they used Ananda and Rahula as their representatives. "We two thousand agree with them. We want what they want."   
  
**Sutra:**  
  
**At that time the Buddha told Ananda, “You in a future age shall become a Buddha by the name of “King of Self Mastery and Penetrations With Wisdom Like the Mountains and Seas Thus Come One,” One Worthy of Offerings, One of Right and Universal Knowledge, One Whose Clarity and Conduct are Complete, Well-Gone One Who Understands the World, Unsurpassed Lord, a Subduing and Taming Hero, Teacher of Gods and People, Buddha, The World Honored One. You shall make offerings to sixty-two million Buddhas, protecting and upholding their storehouses of Dharma.**

**After that, you shall obtain anuttarasamyaksambodhi. You shall teach and transform twenty thousand myriads of millions of Ganges’ sands of Bodhisattvas, causing them to accomplish anuttarasamyaksambodhi. Your country shall be called ‘Banner of Victory Always Raised.’**

**This land will be pure with lapis lazuli for soil. The kalpa shall be called ‘All Pervasive Wonderful Sound.’ This Buddha’s life span shall be limitless thousands of myriads of millions of asamkhyeyaeons. Were someone to attempt to reckon it through thousands of myriads of millions of limitless asamkhyeyaeons, they could not do so. The Proper Dharma shall dwell in the world for twice that length of time. The Dharma Image Age shall dwell twice the length of the Proper Dharma.”   
  
“Ananda, the merit and virtue of the “Buddha King of Self Mastery and Penetrations With Wisdom Like the Mountains and Seas” shall be praised by all the Buddhas of the ten directions equal in number to the sands of limitless thousands of myriads of millions of Ganges Rivers.”**Outline:  
  
H2. Bestowing the prediction.   
I1. Predictions for the two people.   
J1. Prediction for Ananda.   
K1. Prose.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**At that time the Buddha told Ananda: You in a future age shall become a Buddha by the name of “King of Self Mastery and Penetrations with Wisdom Like the Mountains and Seas Thus Come One.”** Because Ananda's wisdom is as high as a mountain and as vast as the sea, he will have this name. **One Worthy of Offerings, One of Right and Universal Knowledge**--he knows, as well, that the mind gives birth to all Dharma. That is right knowledge. He also knows that the ten thousand dharmas are but the mind, that is, universal knowledge.

**One Whose Clarity and Conduct are Complete**--his wisdom and cultivation are both perfect. **Well-Gone One Who Understands the World**--he has obtained liberation from the mundane. **Unsurpassed Lord**--the Buddha is the Unsurpassed Lord. There is no one higher than the Buddha is. The Bodhisattvas are called “surpassed lords”, because the Buddha is above them. **A Subduing and Taming Hero**--He subdues living beings throughout the three realms. He is a **teacher of Gods** in the heavens **and people** below, a **Buddha**. The Buddha has completed the three kinds of enlightenment: self-enlightenment, the enlightenment of others, and the perfection of enlightenment and practice. Of the Buddha it is said:

Having perfected three kinds of enlightenment,   
And complete with the myriad virtues,   
He is, therefore, called “The Buddha.”

**The World Honored One,** the Buddha, is honored both in and beyond the world.   
  
**You shall make offerings to sixty-two million Buddhas, protecting and upholding their storehouses of Dharma.** That is a big job. How will he do it? He will have many methods, not just one. The Dharma Storehouse means the Tripitika, the precious store of Buddhadharma. **After that, you shall obtain anuttarasamyaksambodhi,** the utmost right and perfect enlightenment. **You shall teach and transform twenty thousand myriads of millions of Ganges’ sands of Bodhisattvas, causing them to accomplish anuttarasamyaksambodhi.** They will all bring forth the Bodhi mind, cultivate the Bodhisattva Path, and certify to the sagely position. All the Bodhisattvas will gain the Buddha-position.   
  
**Your country shall be called “Banner of Victory Always Raised.”** In India, those who debated would carry a flag to show that they were always victorious. Seeing the flag, everyone was supposed to figure that they could not beat its carrier. Ananda was foremost in learning and skilled in debate. In The Shurangama Sutra we see evidence of Ananda's debating skills. Just when it would seem that the Buddha had straightened him out, he would think of another angle and ask another question. This happened again and again.   
  
**This land will be pure,** without any impurities. It will not be like our world, the world of the five turbidities, which is filled with filth. The five turbidities will not exist in this pure, clean land, **with lapis lazuli for soil.** We think that a plate glass window is very fine, but in Ananda's land the soil will be made of precious lapis lazuli. There will not be any dirt there at all. **The kalpa shall be called “All Pervasive Wonderful Sound.”** Ananda was foremost in erudition and had a beautiful voice too. When he talked everyone liked to listen. He is not like me. When I speak, some like to listen, others do not. Some people run away as soon as they hear my voice! Other people can stand it. But Ananda's voice sounds even better than music!   
  
We all know that music hath charms. Good musicians can put their listeners in a trance. People are so happy to hear them play or sing that they do not want to leave. It is as if they were drunk or on drugs--they just sit there, numb. You cannot get them to move if you try.   
  
Everybody liked to hear the sound of Ananda's voice. Men, women, bad, and good people, children and adults--all liked to listen to him talk. His "sound" was especially beautiful. That is why his eon will be called “All Pervasive Wonderful Sound” when he becomes a Buddha.   
  
**This Buddha's life span shall be limitless thousands of myriads of millions of asamkhyeya eons.** One asamkhyeya eon is a limitless duration of time, that is, thousands of myriads of millions of infinity. How long is that? I do not know. It is a long time.   
  
**Were someone to attempt to reckon it through thousands of myriads of millions of limitless asamkhyeya eons, they could not do so. The Proper Dharma shall dwell in the world for twice that length of time.** That Buddha's life will be an uncountable number of eons long, and the Proper Dharma will dwell twice that long. **The Dharma Image Age shall dwell twice the length of the Proper Dharma.** Ultimately, how long is that? Since I never studied higher math, I really cannot say. But, even a mathematician with the use of the most advanced computers could not figure it out.  
  
**Ananda, the merit and virtue of the “Buddha King of Self Mastery and Penetrations With Wisdom Like the Mountains and Seas” shall be praised by all the Buddhas of the ten directions equal in number to the sands of limitless thousands of myriads of millions of Ganges Rivers.** Ananda really liked to praise the Buddhas. He spoke highly of them all. Take a look at his verse in The Shurangama Sutra:

O wonderful deep Dharani, unmoving Honored One.   
The Foremost Shurangama King is seldom found in the world.   
May it melt away all my upside down thinking,   
So I don't have to pass through asamkhyeya eons to attain the Dharma body.

In these three sentences Ananda praises the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Since he praised all the Buddhas, when he becomes a Buddha, all the Buddhas will praise him.   
  
No wonder when people hear one sentence of praise it is sweeter than honey. If you say, "He is really bad," they feel as if they have been poisoned. If even the Buddhas like praise--and Ananda will be praised by many Buddhas--it is not surprising that people like praise. The Buddhas will say of Ananda, "This Buddha in the past protected the Buddha's Dharma storehouses. He made offerings to the Triple Jewel under countless Buddhas. When Shakyamuni Buddha was in the world, he was his attendant, and when all the Buddhas appeared after that, he was their attendant too. Now he has become a Buddha. You living beings should revere, make offering to, and praise him." That is what all the Buddhas throughout the ten directions will say to living beings to exhort them to believe in him. He will receive the Buddhas' praise, because in the past he praised them.   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **At that time the World Honored One, wishing to restate this principle, spoke verses saying:**

**“Now in the midst of the Sangha, I say, That Ananda, who upholds the Dharma, Shall make offerings to all the Buddhas And afterwards realize Right Enlightenment.His name will be The Buddha, King of Self Mastery and Penetrations With Wisdom Like the Mountains and Seas. His country shall be pure; Called “Banner of Victory Always Raised.”He shall teach and transform the Bodhisattvas, Uncountable in number. This Buddha shall have great awesome virtue, And his name shall be known throughout the ten directions. His life span shall be limitless in length, Because of his pity for living beings. The Proper Dharma shall dwell twice as long as his life span, And the Dharma Image Age will last twice that again. Countless living beings, Their number like the Ganges' sands, Shall plant the causal condition of the Buddha Path, Within this Buddha's Dharma.”**

Outline:  
  
K2 . The verse.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this principle, spoke verses, saying:**  
**Now, in the midst of the Sangha, I say.** I announce to all of you Bhikshus the causes and conditions of Ananda's prediction. **That Ananda, who upholds the Dharma,** the Dharma-storehouse of all the Buddhas, (The Venerable Ananda is a powerful Protector of the Dharma. He has amassed considerable merit and virtue) **shall make offerings to all the Buddhas.** He will serve them throughout his lifetime. This means that from birth he was trained in the Dharma, and he pursued the study of it all his life up until his death without ever changing his principles.

He was not like people of the present day who study the Dharma for two and a half days, find it boring, and run off. Running away is not exactly what you would call "serving the Buddhas throughout one's lifetime" or "protecting and upholding the Dharma treasury." The more you run, the further away you get from the Buddha Path, and eventually you will fall. Ananda served the Triple Jewel all his life. According to his vows, he served the Triple Jewel wherever he encountered it. He was able to put down all of his "other interests" to study the Dharma. Therefore, Ananda's features were very handsome. The Buddha had the thirty-two marks of a great man, and Ananda had thirty of them. He also had a wonderful voice. When he spoke he sounded more beautiful than the Kalavinka birds in the Land of Ultimate Bliss!   
  
**And afterwards realize Right Enlightenment,** become a Buddha. **His name will be the Buddha, King of Self Mastery and Penetrations With Wisdom Like the Mountains and Seas.** His wisdom will be even deeper than the seas and higher than the mountains.   
  
**His country shall be pure** without any filth. His country will be **called "Banner of Victory Always Raised." He shall teach and transform the Bodhisattvas, uncountable in number. This Buddha shall have great awesome virtue.** He will have mighty spiritual power, comfort, and penetrations. **And his name shall be known throughout the ten directions.** His Buddha name will fill the ten directions. The ten-direction Buddhas will be delighted with this Buddha. Now, you should understand why people in the world are so crazy about fame! People go nut seeking after name, seeking to imitate the Buddhas’ renown.   
  
**His life span shall be limitless in length because of his pity for living beings**. Why will he have such a long life? Does this mean that he has the mark of a life span? Does the Buddha want long life spans? No. This Buddha will live a long time because of his compassionate concern for living beings. **The Proper Dharma shall dwell twice as long as his life span. And the Dharma Image Age will last twice that again.**

**Countless living beings, their number like the Ganges' sands, shall plant the causal condition of the Buddha Path within this Buddha’s Dharma.** You and I may have a chance to be with Ananda when he is a Buddha. You should believe that you have great causal affinities with the Venerable Ananda. If you did not, you would not be able to hear The Dharma Flower Sutra and learn about how beautiful his voice is and how handsome he is. So, you certainly have great affinities with Ananda. Probably, in the future, we will get to meet him.   
  
Hearing this passage of Sutra text, someone has been thinking, "What is with all these incalculable, uncountable numbers? Great eons like Ganges' sands. I have never heard such things before." I am not going to address my words to the problem of your disbelief. I am just going to tell a story by way of illustration:

-ONE WORD-

Long ago there was a very rich man who had a son. The son did not understand anything at all. None of his tutors had any success with him. They could not even teach him one single word, let alone teach him how to read. The rich man said, "I will hire a tutor to teach him to read one single word. If he can do that, I will pay him well." So he hired a teacher for the boy and told him, "You have one year's time to teach him to read one single word. Do not bother trying to teach him more than that; one word will be enough. If he can read a single word, I will give you double your salary."   
  
"Great!" the teacher thought.   
  
"Perhaps, but he has to be able to read that one word, otherwise you do not get paid."  
  
"Okay," said the teacher, and he signed the contract and set about trying to teach him the number "1". He taught it to him every single day. Everyday the boy read the number "1", wrote it out, read it again, and wrote it out again. The teacher kept teaching it to him for a whole year. "1,1,1,1,1." At the end of a year the boy knew the number very well. He was very clear about it.   
  
At the end of the year, the father invited the teacher to lunch. Then the three of them went for a walk in the garden. At what he felt an appropriate moment, the father, in a whisper, asked the teacher, "Say, can he read a word yet? Did you succeed?"   
  
"Sure!" he said.   
  
"Then let us test him out," said the father.   
  
The teacher then drew the number "1" with his foot in the dirt real big, about six feet tall. "What does that say?" he asked the boy.   
  
"That is not a word," the boy said, “that is a pole!"   
  
"BUT I HAVE TAUGHT YOU THIS WORD EVERY DAY FOR A WHOLE YEAR!" the teacher said.   
  
"That is not the word you taught me. The one you taught me was not that big!"   
  
The teacher ran off in great agitation, minus his salary. Would you say that the big number one and the one the teacher taught him were the same? It is the same with the astronomical figures in the Sutras. They are the same. You just do not understand them, because they are so big!   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **At that time, the eight thousand newly resolved Bodhisattvas within the Assembly all had this thought: “We have never heard even great Bodhisattvas receive predictions such as this. For what reasons have the Hearers received such directions?”**Outline:  
  
K3. Those newly resolved have a doubt.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
I mentioned above that someone had a doubt. It is no wonder. Look here in the text: The eight thousand Bodhisattvas all had doubts too. They all wondered why Shakyamuni Buddha was being so partial to his younger cousin, giving him a prediction, when they did not get one. So they had a doubt. **At that time, the eight thousand newly resolved Bodhisattvas** had a thought. "Newly resolved" means that they were young. How old were they? Oh, probably seven or eight thousand years old. These Bodhisattvas had already passed through several great eons, but they had just obtained the roaming and playing samadhi of the Bodhisattvas.

**Within the Assembly all had this thought,** a false thought. What was that? **We have never heard even great Bodhisattvas receive predictions such as this.** In saying "all the great Bodhisattvas" they are including themselves, of course. We never heard the Buddha give us predictions. **For what reason,** why? Why **have the Hearers received such directions?** Why have these little Hearers received predictions? They are called "little Hearers," but they are anywhere from seventy to one hundred sixty years old. They are called "little" because the state of a Hearer is very small compared with the state of a Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattvas can think of them as "little" Hearers. In speaking, they would still call them "great Bhikshus,” because the Buddha even calls them "great Bhikshus" after all. But they think of them as still being "wet behind the ears."   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **Then the World Honored One, knowing the thoughts in the minds of the Bodhisattvas, spoke to them, saying, “Good sons, Ananda and I, in the presence of the Buddha Emptiness King, simultaneously brought forth the thought of anuttarasamyaksambodhi. Ananda always took delight in learning, while I was always diligent and vigorous. Therefore, I have already realized anuttarasamyaksambodhi, and Ananda protects and upholds my Dharma. He will also protect the Dharma storehouses of all the Buddhas of the future, teaching, transforming and bringing to accomplishment the multitudes of Bodhisattvas. Since his past vow was such as this, he has therefore obtained this prediction.”**Outline:  
  
K4. The Thus Come One resolves the doubt.  
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**Then the World Honored One, knowing the thoughts in the minds of the Bodhisattvas;** he knew what false thinking they were having. "They all have doubts, so I will explain it to them." The Buddha had the knowledge of others' thoughts, and so he knew the Bodhisattvas were having false thoughts.   
  
"No wonder, Dharma Master, you said that I was having doubts about those big numbers. Probably you have the penetration of others' thoughts."   
  
I have the penetration of my own thoughts, but I do not have the penetration of others' thoughts. Ha!   
  
**Spoke to them, saying: Good Sons,** you good kids, **Ananda and I,** me Shakyamuni Buddha and Ananda who represents all the great Hearer Bhikshus, **in the presence of the Buddha Emptiness King,** that is limitless millions of millions of eons ago, **simultaneously brought forth the thought of anuttarasamyaksambodhi.**They made vows together. To bring forth the thought is to make vows, to make vows is to bring forth the thought. Thoughts are vows, as vows are thoughts. To make the resolve for anuttarasamyaksambodhi is to bring forth the thought for Bodhi, which is to bring forth the thought for the most supreme, right, and proper enlightenment.   
  
**Ananda always took delight in learning.** Ananda liked to read and study the Buddhadharma. **While I was always diligent and vigorous.** I was never lazy. I was constantly cultivating the Dharma-door of vigor. **Therefore, I have already realized anuttarasamyaksambodhi.** I became a Buddha before Ananda. **And Ananda protects and upholds my Dharma. He will also protect the Dharma storehouses of all the** limitless **Buddhas of the future, teaching, transforming, and bringing to accomplishment the multitudes of Bodhisattvas. Since his past vow** made during the time of the Buddha Emptiness King **was such as this, he therefore obtained this prediction** and had not yet become a Buddha. I have given him this prediction of Buddhahood.

**Sutra:**  
 **When, Ananda, facing the Buddha, heard this prediction and heard of the adornments of his Buddhaland, his wishes were fulfilled, and his heart was filled with joy, for he had obtained what he never had before. He immediately recollected the Dharma storehouse of limitless thousands of myriads of millions of past Buddhas, penetrating them without obstruction, as if he had just heard them now. He also recalled his past vow. At that time, Ananda spoke these verses:**

**“The World Honored One is extremely rare, Having caused me to remember, Limitless Buddhadharmas of the past, As if I had but heard them today. I now have no further doubts, But dwell securely in the Buddha Path, Acting expediently as his attendant, Protecting and upholding the Buddhas’ Dharmas.”**

Outline:  
  
K5. Ananda's declaration.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**When Ananda, facing the Buddha,** in his presence, **heard this prediction** of Buddhahood **and heard of the adornments of his Buddhaland,** with lapis lazuli for soil, and so on, **his wishes were fulfilled,and his heart was filled with** great **joy.** He was probably even more delighted than while dancing, like a child. **For he had obtained what he never had before.** He had never been so happy. **He immediately recollected,** remembered **the Dharma storehouse of limitless thousands of myriads of millions of past Buddhas, penetrating them without obstruction, as if he had just heard them now.** He remembered it all. "Ah ha! I remember hearing The Dharma Flower Sutra from that Buddha, and I remember hearing The Prajna Sutras from that Buddha, and I remember hearing The Avatamsaka, The Vaipulya Sutras...and now Shakyamuni Buddha is speaking the same Buddhadharma." That is why Ananda, although twenty years younger than the Buddha, could remember Dharmas that he had never even (in that life) heard the Buddha speak! **He also recalled his past vow.**  
  
**At that time, Ananda spoke these verses: The World Honored One is extremely rare, having caused me to remember** the events of limitless lifetimes, and **limitless Buddhadharmas of the past, as if I had but heard them today.** I remember them as clearly as I do hearing The Dharma Flower Sutra today. I had no idea that I had heard The Dharma Flower Sutra so many times! **I now have no further doubts.** I have absolutely no more doubts here in The Dharma Flower Sutra. It is all true! **But dwell securely in the Buddha path, acting expediently as his attendant,** I take care of and recite the storehouse of the Buddhadharma. **Protecting and upholding the Buddhas' Dharmas,** the storehouse of all Buddhas.   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **The Buddha then addressed Rahula saying, “You in a future age shall become a Buddha by the name of ‘One Who Steps Upon Flowers Made of the Seven Jewels Thus Come One,’ One Worthy of Offerings, One of Proper and Universal Knowledge, One Whose Clarity and Conduct are Complete, Well-Gone One Who Understands the World, Supreme Lord, A Subduing and Taming Hero, Teacher of Gods and People, A Buddha, The World Honored One. You shall make offerings to Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, in number as the dust motes in ten world systems, always acting as the eldest son of those Buddhas, just as you are now. ‘The Buddha Who Steps Upon Flowers Made of the Seven Jewels’ shall have an adorned land, and the number of eons of his life span, the number of disciples he shall teach, the length of the Proper Dharma, and the Dharma Image Age shall be the same as those of the ‘Thus Come One King of Self Mastery and Penetrations With Wisdom Like Mountains and Seas.’ He shall also be the eldest son of this Buddha and thereafter obtain anuttarasamyaksambodhi.”**Outline:  
  
J2. Prediction for Rahula.   
K1. Prose.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**The Buddha then addressed Rahula, saying: You in a future age shall become a Buddha by the name of “One Who Steps Upon Flowers Made of the Seven Jewels Thus Come One.”** Wherever you walk, there will be lotus flowers of the seven jewels. **One Worthy of Offerings** from gods and people, **One of Proper and Universal Knowledge**—your wisdom is proper and pervasive. **One Whose Clarity and Conduct Are Complete.** You have perfected your cultivation and your brilliance. **Well-Gone One Who Understands the World.** You can go to a good place. You are most powerful in understanding. **Supreme Lord** means no one is more noble than you. This is one of Buddha’s titles. **A Subduing and Taming Hero** who can regulate and steer gods and humans. A great hero among gods and humans. **Teacher of Gods and People.** You can be the teacher to heavenly immortals and human beings. **A Buddha** who has perfected enlightening oneself and others. He is called the Buddha because his enlightened conduct is perfect. **The World Honored One** who transcends the world.   
  
Before you become a Buddha, **you shall make offerings to Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, in number as the dust motes in ten world systems, always acting as the eldest son of those Buddhas, just as you are now.** You will do this because in the past you made a vow that whenever a Buddha accomplished Buddhahood, you would be his eldest son.   
  
**“The Buddha Who Steps Upon Flowers Made of the Seven Jewels” shall have an adorned land,** very beautiful. Were the adornments of this land gained through greed? No. They came as a result of cultivation. In the causal ground, he always made offerings of the seven jewels. Therefore, when he becomes a Buddha, his land will be adorned with the seven jewels. **And the number of eons of his life span, the number of disciples he shall teach, the length of the Proper Dharma and the Dharma Image Age shall be the same as those of the “Thus Come One King of Self Mastery and Penetrations With Wisdom Like The Mountains and Seas.”** So now, Ananda and Rahula are brothers in cultivation. **He shall also be the eldest son of this Buddha.** In the future, when Ananda becomes a Buddha, Rahula will be his eldest son, according to his vow. Hearing this, we should not be attached and think, "This life, this person is my father. This is my mother. Or, this is my brother, or friend, or whatever." Your father in this life may have been your son in your last life. There is nothing fixed about it. Your big sister in this life might have been your wife in your last life. Past causes and latter effects work in this way.   
  
Whatever cause you plant, you reap a corresponding result. For example, you might think of your wife, "Wouldn't it be great if she were my big sister!" Next life, sure enough, she might be your big sister! Or, you might think, "I am more filial to my little son than I am to my father!" And then, next life, you will be your son's child! Your son will be your father. There is nothing for sure about it. Now, we have all met here in this lecture hall because of special causal affinities, affinities that run very, very deep. Therefore, sometimes I scold you, and you do not get angry. Sometimes you scold me, and I do not get mad, Right? Ha! Sometimes we put on this play, and everyone plays his or her part. Why do you all bow to me? It is because in the past, I bowed to you all many, many times. Did I not tell you that this life when I was twelve, I bowed to all living beings? Everyday I bowed eight hundred thirty-seven times in the morning and eight hundred and thirty-seven times in the evening. Think about that! As a result, all of you, who would not normally bow to anyone, bow to me. It is because I bowed to you before.   
  
So, those of you who have good feelings about me, it is not a result of just one lifetime. Those who do not like me—it is also not a result of one lifetime. And the feelings you have towards one another work the same way, good and bad. It is all a matter of cause and effect. If you plant a good cause, you reap a good fruit. If you plant an evil cause, you reap an evil fruit.   
  
You say, "Dharma Master, I do not believe your theories on this subject."   
  
I do not care if you believe me or not. I am still going to say these things. It is none of my concern whether you believe or not. Besides, I know that eventually the day will come when you do believe. Why? Unless you believe them, you will be at a complete dead end. There will be no other way for you to go. We revolve around and around in the six paths of rebirth according to the laws of cause and effect. People, with their ordinary eyes, cannot discern all the various causes and effects. The sages however, have the Dharma Eye, know the various causes and effects. Some people may think they know former causes and latter effects, but it is really just their own false thinking. Although they have opened their "eyes”, they have too much false thinking, and so what they see becomes false. It is all very wonderful, you see. If you have a lot of false thinking, what you see will also be false. If you have no false thinking, then when one thought is not produced, the entire substance manifests, and everything you see will be true. So we say,

In one truth,   
Is all truth.   
The Bodhi fruit,   
Ripens of itself.

If you are one part of falseness, then it is all falseness. What is one part? I have not told you before, but I will tell you now: It is ignorance, just that one thing you do not understand. If you come to understand what you do not understand, that is enlightenment. There is a lot you could say about these principles, but all of you should think them over. "Last life what was I? A mouse? A cow? Is that why I am so unruly?" Or, "Last life was I a Bodhisattva? The more I listen to the Dharma Master lecture on the Sutras, the more I like to listen. Just what is going on here, huh? I would even rather go without food or drink than miss a lecture. Certainly I must have great causal affinity with the Buddha. I do not have to ask to know."   
  
You do not need to have the penetration of past lives. You do not need the knowledge of others' thoughts. It is very simple. If you like the Buddhadharma now, you can figure that your "foundation" is pretty good. You do not necessarily need the knowledge of past lives to know these things. If you like studying the Dharma now, you can know that you have causal affinities with the Buddhadharma.   
  
So, Rahula was the eldest son of Shakyamuni Buddha. In the future, he will be the eldest son of all the Buddhas in as many dust motes as there are in ten worlds. Why? It is because he made that vow. For example, why do you like to listen to my lectures on the Sutras? After all, I lecture in Chinese and you all speak English. This is probably because in the past you made vows, "We would not care if we understand what this Dharma Master says, we are still going to listen to his Dharma." So, you young Americans come to listen to the Dharma, and you are just a handful in number. Compared to all the young people in this country, you who come to hear the lectures are like the moon compared to all the stars in the sky. There is no way a great number of people could listen to the lectures anyway. Everyone in the world cannot be wealthy, you know. There are always more poor people than rich ones. That you are able to come and hear the Buddhadharma means that, within your self-nature, you are truly wealthy.   
  
I remember, once before, when I explained these principles, there was a very intelligent child who had come to listen to the lecture. He went home and told his father, "Last life you were my son!"   
  
His father said, "How do you know?"   
  
The child said, "That is what the Dharma Master said at the lecture!"   
  
The father flew into a rage, "That Dharma Master is teaching you all kinds of trash! I am your father. How can you say I am your son!" And he spanked the child. The child told me that his father would not admit that he was formerly his child's son. He denied the whole thing and even spanked him.   
  
"He was right to spank you," I said. "He should spank you again! Why? Because, when you were his father, you spanked him! So now your dad spanks you."   
  
The child went home and told his father, "No wonder you spanked me, dad. Last life, when I was your father, I always spanked you!" Gees, his father did not know whether to laugh or cry. Would you say this child was smart or not? Actually, he was really stupid. Even if that was the case, he should not have gone home and told his father. Of course, his father got angry.   
  
In Los Angeles, Guo You’s father was upset when someone took him to be Guo You’s brother. "I am his father!" he shouted. Actually, if you understand the principle, what is the big deal? So what if you are the father, or the brother, or the son? You should see through these things and put them down. Do not be attached to them.   
  
**And thereafter obtain anuttarasamyaksambodhi,** realize the utmost right and perfect enlightenment.   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **Then, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke these verses:**

**“When I was a crown prince, Rahula was my eldest son. Now I have realized the Buddha Path, He has received the Dharma and is my Dharma-son. In a future age, He shall see limitless millions of Buddhas,And be the eldest son of each of them, Singlemindedly seeking the Buddha Path. Rahula's secret practices, Only I can know. He manifests as my eldest son. So manifesting himself to living beings. His limitless thousands of myriads of millions Of merits cannot be counted. He abides securely in the Buddhadharma, And thereby seeks the Supreme Path.”**

Outline:  
  
K2 . Verse.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**Then, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning,** to reiterate the principles, **spoke these verses: When I was a crown prince,** the son of King Shudodhana, **Rahula was my eldest son. Now I have realized the Buddha Path, he has received the Dharma and is my Dharma-son.** I have transmitted the Dharma to him, and he is my left-home disciple. **In a future age, he shall see limitless millions of Buddhas,** as many Buddhas as the dust motes in ten worlds. **And be the eldest son of each of them, singlemindedly seeking the Buddha Path.** He will act as the eldest son of all those Buddhas, so that he can seek the Buddha Way.   
  
**Rahula's secret practices** nobody knows about them. Rahula could enter samadhi anywhere, anytime. He could enter samadhi even on the toilet! The ancient toilets were not as fancy as today's. They were really stinky. Nobody would want to hang out in them. But Rahula could enter samadhi there. He was foremost of the Buddha's disciples in secret practices. Nobody could tell that he was using effort. He was not like us. We make spectacles out of ourselves: "Look at me! I am meditating! I am reciting Sutras! I am cultivating!" Nobody knew when Rahula was cultivating. No one ever saw him working or meditating. He looked like he was not doing much of anything all day. He just took his part in the play, so to speak, but all the time, he was cultivating. It is just that no one ever knew it. **Only I can know.** Only the Buddha knew that Rahula was in the roaming and playing samadhi. The Buddha knew his secret practices. **He manifests as my eldest son, so manifesting himself to living beings.** He was just making an appearance, so living beings could see him and learn how to seek the Buddha Way.   
  
**His limitless thousands of myriads of millions of merits cannot be counted.** He has great merit and virtue, accumulated through many lives of making vows to be the Buddha's eldest son. **He abides securely in the Buddhadharma and thereby seeks the Supreme Path,** the way to the realization of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. He sought to cultivate in the presence of the Triple Jewel.   
  
Once there was a Dharma Master who lectured on the Sutras. Although he was not as eloquent as the Second Patriarch, Shen Guang, he was eloquent in his own way. Everyone liked to hear him lecture. Once, someone asked him a question, "Are great cultivators subject to the laws of cause and effect?" He did not even think, but just responded off the top of his head, "No. They are not subject to cause and effect!" Because of that single wrong sentence, for the next five hundred lives he was reborn a fox. It was not until much, much later, when Dhyana Master Bai Zhang was in Jiangxi building a temple and giving lectures that he figured out what happened. As a fox he transformed himself into human form and went to a lecture. Once, after everyone else had gone home, he stayed to ask Bai Zhang a question. He had a long beard, and looked very strange as he spoke to the Dhyana Master, saying, "I am an old fox spirit from the mountain out back, but I know that in a former life, five hundred lifetimes ago, I was a Bhikshu. I said one wrong sentence, and not quite understanding how or why, I ended up as a fox."   
  
Dhyana Master Bai Zhang said, "What did you say?"   
  
"Someone asked me, ‘Are great cultivators subject to the laws of cause and effect?’" I answered ‘No, they are not subject to cause and effect.’ Then I fell into the body of a fox and have been one for five hundred lives. I still do not know what it was that I did wrong.”  
  
Dhyana Master Bai Zhang said, “Now you ask me that question.”  
  
The fox spirit said, “Please tell me, Superior One, are great cultivators subject to cause and effect?”  
  
Dhyana Master Bai Zhang said, "Great cultivators are not confused about the laws of cause and effect!"   
  
Hearing this, "not confused about cause and effect"--a change of just one word--he was greatly enlightened. "I was wrong!" he said, "I am going back to my mountain cave. You can come and see me tomorrow."   
  
The next day Dhyana Master Bai Zhang and some other monks went to see him. Sure enough, they found an old, dead fox in the cave. Dhyana Master Bai Zhang performed the funeral services for a deceased monk for the fox and buried it.   
  
So you see, when you are lecturing, you cannot just say whatever you want, and casually answer people's questions!   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **At that time the World Honored One saw that those who study and those beyond study, two thousand in all, were pliant in mind, quiet and pure, singlemindedly contemplating the Buddha. The Buddha spoke to Ananda, saying, “Do you see these two thousand who study and are beyond study?”  
  
“Yes, I have seen them.”   
  
“Ananda, they shall all make offerings to as many Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, as there are motes of dust in fifty worlds, revering and honoring them, protecting and upholding their storehouses of Dharma. Then simultaneously, in the lands of the ten directions, they shall each realize Buddhahood. They shall all have the same name, ‘Jeweled Appearance Thus Come One,’ One Worthy of Offerings, One of Proper and Universal Knowledge, One Whose Clarity and Conduct are Complete, Well-Gone One Who Understands the World, Unsurpassed Lord, A Subduing and Taming Hero, Teachers of Gods and People, Buddha, World Honored One. Their life spans shall be one eon, the adornments of their lands, the number of Hearers and Bodhisattvas, as well as the length of the Proper Dharma and Dharma Images Ages shall all be the same.”**Outline:  
  
I2. Predictions for the two thousand people.   
J1. Prose.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**At that time,** when the Buddha was about to give predictions to the two thousand people, **the World Honored One saw that those who study and those beyond study, two thousand in all, were pliant in mind.** With his wonderful observing wisdom, he took a look at the two thousand. He saw that they were pliant in mind. Not one of them had a temper. They were all docile and good nature. Not a single one had a fiery temper. That is what is meant by "pliant". Their minds and hearts were peaceful and subdued. **Quiet** means they had no false thinking. **And Pure** means that they had gotten rid of all their false thinking! False thinking is just the karmic-bound workings of the mad mind. They had returned to the pure original substance of their self-natures. This is like what the Sixth Patriarch said,

How unexpected! The self-nature is originally pure!   
How unexpected! The self-nature is originally unmoving!   
How unexpected! The self-nature gives rise to myriad Dharmas!

This is the state that is quiet and pure. It is the same as the state of the Sixth Patriarch. Quiet and pure, they were **singlemindedly contemplating the Buddha.** The two thousand people all had the same heart. They all had a reverent heart as they looked at the Buddha.   
  
**The Buddha spoke to Ananda** who was the Buddha's attendant, **saying: Do you see these two thousand who study and who are beyond study?** We should understand that each of the two thousand people had their own body. Everyone could see them, obviously. Why, then, did the Buddha ask Ananda if he could see them? Not only could Ananda see them, everyone there could see them quite clearly. Since they were so obviously visible, why did the Buddha ask?   
  
There is more to it than meets our ordinary eyes. Most people could just see their physical bodies. They could not see their minds. The previous sentence said, "pliant in mind." The Buddha was actually asking Ananda, "Do you see the minds of these two thousand who study and who are beyond study? Do you know what is on their minds?" That is what he was really asking. Of course Ananda could see their bodies, but could he see their minds?   
  
Ananda answered, saying, "**Yes, I have seen them.** I know what is on their minds."   
  
The Buddha was going to give them their predictions. This is not like politics, where elected officials appoint their best friends as high officials or swap favors. The Buddha must see that the person about to receive the prediction has a mind that is quiet and pure, pliant and soft. Then the Buddha can give them their prediction. It is not the case that he thinks like this: "I like this person. I think I will give him a prediction. Ananda is my attendant. I think I will give him a prediction." No way! The Buddha's compassion is totally impartial. It all depends on the person's level of attainment. If the causal conditions have matured, the Buddha will give him a prediction. If they have not matured, he does not get a prediction. So, Ananda said, "Yes, I see their minds."   
  
The Buddha continued, saying, **Ananda, they shall all make offerings to as many Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, as there are motes of dust in fifty worlds, revering and honoring them, protecting and upholding their storehouses of Dharma.** They will take care of the treasury of Buddhadharmas. **Then, simultaneously,** after they have made offerings to the number of Buddhas as there are dust motes in fifty worlds, during the time of the very last one of those Buddhas, they will all at the same time, **in the lands of the ten directions, they shall each realize Buddhahood. They shall all have the same name** because they were fellow companions while cultivating the Way. They cultivated in pretty much the same way. Therefore, their resultant fruition will be pretty much the same. This means that they will all have the same name, **“Jeweled Appearance Thus Come One.”** Their Buddha-marks will be very adorned. **One Worthy of Offerings, One of Proper and Universal Knowledge, One Whose Clarity and Conduct are Complete, Well-Gone One Who Understands the World, Unsurpassed Lord, A Subduing and Taming Hero, Teacher of Gods and People, Buddha, World Honored One.** They will have the same ten titles as all the Buddhas have. **Their life spans shall be one eon,** one small eon. **The adornments of their lands, the number of Hearers and Bodhisattvas, as well as the length of the Proper Dharma and Dharma Image Ages shall all be the same.**  
  
**Sutra:**  
 **At that time, the Buddha, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses, saying:**

**“Upon these two thousand Hearers, Now standing before me, I bestow a prediction, Of their future realization of Buddhahood. The Buddhas to whom they shall make offerings Shall be in numbers as stated above. Protecting and upholding their Dharma storehouses, They shall afterwards realize Proper Enlightenment. Each one, throughout lands in the ten directions, Shall have the same name,And at the same time sit upon their Bodhimandas. Because they shall have certified to Supreme Wisdom, They shall all be called “Jeweled Appearance”Their lands and their disciples, And the length of the Proper Dharma and Dharma Image Ages,Shall be identical with no difference. They shall all use spiritual powers, To save living beings in the ten directions. Their renown shall be all-pervasive, As they gradually enter into Nirvana.”**

Outline:  
  
J2. Verse.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
Shakyamuni Buddha said, "These two thousand people cultivate pure conduct and plant good roots together. They simultaneously brought forth the Bodhi mind, together they cultivate the Bodhi practice and together they bear the fruits of Bodhi. As Buddhas they will have the same name."   
  
**At that time, the Buddha, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses, saying:**  
**Upon these two thousand Hearers,** those who study and those with nothing left to learn, **now standing before me. I bestow a prediction.** Their merit and virtue has been accomplished. Now I can give them predictions of Buddhahood, **of their future realization of Buddhahood. The Buddhas to whom they shall make offerings, shall be in number as stated above,** to as many Buddhas as there are motes of dust in fifty worlds, **protecting and upholding their Dharma storehouses,** the Buddhadharmas of those Buddhas. **They shall afterwards realize Proper Enlightenment.** Then they shall become Buddhas. **Each one, throughout lands in the ten directions shall have the same name.** The two thousand will go off into each of the ten directions to be Buddhas. But they will all have the same name.   
  
You should all think this over. Two thousand of them were fellow cultivators. They cultivated together, and none was jealous of the other! The two thousand of them all thought, "They are just me, and I am just them. We are all the same. Although there are two thousand of us, we have one mind." They ate together, wore clothes together and rested together. Nobody was jealous. They thought, "Their good points are just mine. My faults are mine alone."

Nobody criticized anyone else, and no one slandered anyone else. See? Not only did they cultivate together, they made vows together. What vows? They vowed that life after life they would always do things together, they would cultivate together and become Buddhas together, and they would have the same Buddha name. No one would have a different name. No one was big and no one was small. They were all big and they were all small together. There was no big or small, no inside or outside. They were all the same. Nobody was short, and nobody was tall. They were equal. That is really a wonderful Dharma. Two thousand people became of one mind and realized Buddhahood with the same Buddha-name. "All are uncluttered and unobstructed." They did not make discriminations among themselves. Nobody obstructed anybody else. Nobody thought, "You are not me!" and no one thought, "I am not you!"   
  
This was not like sometimes when two people live in one room and fight over the amount of space each occupies. "You are breathing my air!" They were not like that. No matter how many of them lived in the same room, they were all as happy and delighted as if they had the room all to themselves. This shows that these two thousand had cultivated giving, morality, patience, vigor, samadhi, and wisdom. They had cultivated the Six Perfections together. It would not be the case that if one of them worked hard, another would get uncomfortable, thinking, "You are so vigorous, you are making me look bad! You get up so early! If I do not get up when you do, everyone is going to think I am not much of a cultivator. If I do get up, my eyes will be glued shut most of the day.” Misery! You are terrible!   
  
Hearing this, we should all bring forth the great Bodhi mind. Do not be an independent Arhat, thinking only of yourself and not of others. These two thousand Hearers were fellow cultivators. They thought, "I am just you and you are just me. I will not obstruct you and you will not obstruct me. We shall help each other out, urge each other on, and work together. In fact, when it is time to die, we shall die together." They were genuine "birth and death buddies" set on saving one another. Nobody was allowed to dally behind. They all had to cultivate together. This is because they had very, very deep causal affinities with one another. Thus, they shall all have the same name.

**And at the same time sit upon their Bodhimandas.** They had made vows to become Buddhas together at the same time, to sit in their respective Bodhimandas. And together to turn the Dharma-wheel, teaching and transforming living beings. This would all happen at the same time. No one would go ahead, no one would lag behind. It was all timed to the second.   
  
**Because they shall have certified to Supreme Wisdom,** cultivated together; together became Buddhas and gained supreme wisdom, **they shall all be called "Jeweled Appearance."** In the past they cultivated the same practices with the same mind, and so they shall reap the same reward.   
  
**Their lands and their disciples, and the length of the Proper Dharma and Dharma Image Ages shall be identical with no difference.** There will be two thousand Buddhas named Jeweled Appearance, each having exactly the same size Buddhaland. They will also have the same number of disciples. They were true friends of one identity.   
  
**They shall all use spiritual powers to save living beings in the ten directions.** Wherever one of these Buddhas goes, all two thousand are there. **Their renown shall be all-pervasive, as they gradually enter into Nirvana,** enter into the position of Nirvana, still extinction, the state of non-production and non-extinction.   
  
Why did all two thousand of them receive predictions at the same time? Why were they all given the same name? In the causal ground, they all studied the Way under the same teacher. They wanted to make special vows, to the effect that, in life after life, they would all take the same teacher and study the Buddhadharma. When their teacher became a Buddha, they would together receive a prediction from their teacher. They would all have the same name, and this would save their teacher a lot of work. It would have taken their teacher a long time to give out two thousand names, several days at the least. So, they all wanted the same name, to be filial and save him trouble. They were genuinely filial disciples.   
  
You should not think that a dozen or so people are too many. You should not think, "If I were the only one here, wouldn't that be great?" You should understand that your teacher cannot be exclusive and save only you. If he were going to save only one person, his state would be too small.   
  
**Sutra:**  
 **At that time, the two thousand people, both those who study and those beyond study, hearing the Buddha bestow these predictions, jumped for joy and spoke verses, saying:**

**“O World Honored One, Bright Lamp of Wisdom, Hearing the sound of these predictions, Our hearts are filled with joy, As if sprinkled with sweet dew.”**

Outline:  
  
J3. Rejoicing at getting the prediction.   
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**At that time, the two thousand people, both those who study and those beyond study, hearing the Buddha bestow these predictions, jumped for joy.** Upon all of them at the same time, giving them the same name. This was really an unusual prediction. They were so happy they jumped right up and danced for joy. They had attained an especially fine state. Even Mahakashyapa, who was dead serious and long-faced at all times and never laughed, (because he considered the thirteenth of the twelve ascetic practices to be "not laughing") when he heard Shakyamuni Buddha speak about the adorned land of their retribution, he jumped right for joy. **And spoke verses, saying:**  
**O World Honored One, Bright Lamp Of Wisdom!** The World Honored One is like a lamp of wisdom, putting forth great light. **Hearing the sound of these predictions**--we two thousand disciples all got our prediction at the same time--**our hearts are filled with joy, as if sprinkled with sweet dew.** As if sweet dew had been poured over our heads, we greatly rejoice!