**The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra**

**Chapter 22: The Entrustment**

With Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

**At that time Shakyamuni Buddha rose from his Dharma seat and manifested great spiritual power. With his right hand he patted the crowns of limitless Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas and said, “Throughout limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of asamkhyeyas of eons, I have cultivated and practiced the rare Dharmas of anuttarasamyaksambodhi. I now entrust them to all of you. You should, with a single mind, propagate this Dharma, causing it to spread and grow extensively.”   
  
“In this way he patted the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas on the crown three times, saying, “Throughout limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of asamkhyeyas of eons, I have cultivated and practiced the rare Dharmas of anuttarasamyaksambodhi. I now entrust them to all of you. You should receive, uphold, read, recite, and vastly proclaim this Dharma, causing all living beings to hear and understand it.”**  
Outline:

C2. The Thus Come One pats the Bodhisattvas on the head and entrusts the Sutra to them.

D1. The entrustment.  
E1. The Thus come One’s entrustment.  
F1. The entrustment proper.  
  
**Commentary:**   
  
This is Chapter Twenty-two of the Dharma Flower Sutra, entitled "Entrustment." What is the purpose of this chapter? The Sutras spoken by the Buddha are Dharmas used to teach and transform living beings. These Dharmas must be propagated and circulated.   
  
What does "entrustment" mean? Shakyamuni Buddha gives commands to all the Bodhisattvas and Arhats, telling them that the propagation and circulation of the Dharma Flower Sutra should be their responsibility in the future.   
  
Why should the Dharma Flower Sutra be circulated? Because this is the most important Sutra. When living beings without good roots hear even one sentence, one word, or one verse of the Dharma Flower Sutra, they can plant good roots. Those living beings who have already planted good roots, who hear even one word, one sentence, or one verse of the Dharma Flower Sutra can increase their good roots. Those living beings whose good roots have already increased, hearing one word, one sentence, or one verse, will bring their good roots to maturity. Those living beings whose good roots have already matured, hearing one word, one sentence, or one verse of the Dharma Flower Sutra, will obtain liberation. But, they must hear the Dharma Flower Sutra—one word, one sentence, one verse, one chapter, or the entire Sutra. If they do not hear it, they cannot obtain liberation. The Dharma Flower Sutra is the Wonderful Dharma. Because of this, any kind of living being who obtains the doctrine of the Dharma Flower Sutra can obtain the due advantages.   
  
Shakyamuni Buddha entrusted the Bodhisattvas, Arhats, Bhikshus, and Bhikshunis with some hard work. He enlisted them to propagate and circulate the Dharma Flower Sutra, to distribute it to places it had not gone before, like water flowing into the great sea. Printing the Sutras is also a method of distribution. When Sutras are printed, you don't just print up one for your own use. There is great merit and virtue in printing the Sutras; it causes your original wisdom to open up. When you print a Sutra for yourself, you open up your own wisdom. If you print up ten, twenty, a hundred or more copies, you can give them to your relatives and friends as gifts, all wrapped up nicely for New Year's or Christmas or whatever. You can write a card saying, "This is something I really find hard to part with, but I am giving it to you. It is hard to part with because it is extremely fine and wonderful. I read it and it chased all my stupidity away. It brought my wisdom back! So this is my best Dharma experience." When they get the card, they will think, "He really did not want to part with this," and they would not throw it away.   
  
If you say something like this, "Here, take this thing. I have read it enough. I do not want it. It is of no use to me, so you take it," then they would not want it either. They would not even look at it; they will just throw it away. That is not a good approach for distribution. You can use various methods to get them to accept the Sutra. When they get it and read it, they too, will open up their wisdom, return from confusion and go towards enlightenment. You will have saved that person. Since you saved that person, in the future when you become a Buddha that person will be your Dharma protector, he will be your disciple, because you benefited him. Propagating the Sutras requires all kinds of methods. Shakyamuni Buddha spoke the Sutras and then entrusted the work of propagation to his disciples. He said, "In the future you should lecture the Dharma Flower Sutra, receive and uphold it, read and recite it. All of you Bodhisattvas should write it out and explain it to others. Disseminate it. When I enter Nirvana, exhaust your efforts to spread the teachings among the people."   
  
There is a simple analogy: Take our magazine, Vajra Bodhi Sea. I tell you, "Hurry up and get it out. Do the mailing early." That is just a form of entrustment. Probably you all understand from this example. It is just an encouragement to get going. Perhaps you and I were in the assembly with Shakyamuni Buddha and heard this entrustment, and so now we are here lecturing on the Sutra, listening to it, reading it, reciting it, and writing it out. We have received the entrustment from Shakyamuni Buddha, and that is what we are taking care of—listening and lecturing. So we are just following Shakyamuni Buddha's instructions.   
  
Entrustment is just propagation. The Dharma-protecting laypeople at the Sino-American Buddhist Association and the Buddhist Lecture Hall are going to print the Sixth Patriarch’s Dharma Jewel Platform Sutra, which is easy to read because it has a commentary. I feel that Americans have a great affinity with this Sutra, so everyone should bring forth a Great Vehicle Bodhi resolve, not a Small Vehicle resolve to print this Sutra. A Great Vehicle resolve means to practice giving Dharma. The gift of Dharma surpasses all other gifts, including gifts of money, but it needs the gift of money to make it possible. You first use money to print the Sutra, and then you can give the Sutra to people. You may not know how to lecture on Sutras, but if you give people this Sutra with its commentary, you accrue the same merit and virtue as if you lectured on it.  
  
Since this lecture hall is very small, not many people can come to the lectures. If too many people come and there are not enough seats, they have to stand through the lecture, which is very uncomfortable. If you give this Dharma gift to your friends and relatives, then even if they cannot come to the lectures, they can read the Sutra and learn a little bit of Buddhadharma. In this way you can lead them to bring forth the resolve for Bodhi. And so I hope all of you will contribute however much you can to print the Sixth Patriarch’s Sutra. Each person should print at least ten copies. If you can print a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand copies, then that is even better.  
  
I always supported the printing of Sutras when I was in Hong Kong. When I first arrived in Hong Kong, there were very few Sutras. First I printed the Lotus Sutra and the Shurangama Sutra. The copies of the Shurangama Sutra that we used here were printed in Hong Kong then. Later on other Buddhist organizations followed my example, and now Hong Kong has lots of Sutras.  
  
At present there are very few Sutras in America, but now we are starting to print Sutras. Everyone should print a lot of Sutras. Printing Sutras is a way of propagating the Buddhadharma. It opens up your wisdom. Why has not your wisdom opened yet? Because you have little merit and virtue. If you had a lot of merit and virtue, you would be wise and enlightened. The reason you are so confused is that you lack merit and virtue.  
  
“I have liberated creatures, printed Sutras, and made offerings to the Triple Jewel. Why am I confused if I have done all these meritorious deeds?” you ask. You think you have done a lot of merit, but actually it is very little. Think for a moment: Do you spend more money on meritorious deeds or more on food, clothing, and a place to live? You have spent so much money on these three mundane affairs, yet you do not feel it is a lot. Then you make a small contribution to print Sutras or liberate living creatures and you think you are creating great merit and virtue. How much money do you squander on gambling and drugs? Do you spend more to buy a car or more to create merit? Do you spend more money taking vacations or more on merit and virtue? Take stock of yourself and see how much merit you have.  
  
These figures are not that easy to calculate, so go home tonight and calculate them, and then bring forth a great Bodhi resolve tomorrow. If someone volunteers to print a thousand or ten thousand copies of the Sutra, one for every person in America, then he is one who takes the entrustment to propagate the Buddhadharma seriously. I believe that tomorrow, or on Guanyin Bodhisattva’s anniversary, some one will definitely offer to print, if not a hundred thousand copies, then ten thousand copies. If not ten thousand, then one thousand or one hundred at a minimum. I myself will print a hundred copies for the Way-place. We can sell them for fifteen dollars each and use the money to pay the temple’s bills. Although I do not know how to do business, this is a pretty good deal. But it is to help Buddhism, not myself. I myself do not need anyone’s help, and I do not need to do anything either. That is all I want to say about printing Sutras. You should mine this treasure. Do not just laugh and forget what I have said.  
  
This evening, when we do the Great Transference of Merit, you should walk faster during the walking recitation. It is called “running to the Western Land.” You have to walk faster and recite faster. Our place is small, but in a bigger place people would walk twice as fast as the normal walking speed. Whoever is not busy should come to attend the Guanyin Session. Guanyin Sessions, Chan Sessions, and Buddha Recitation Sessions are equally important. You should not think there is no point in reciting Guanyin Bodhisattva’s name. As we recite and sit, there is stillness within movement and movement within stillness. You can cultivate in stillness, or you can cultivate in movement. Movement and stillness do not hinder each other. It is a perfect Dharma door. Do not misunderstand the Buddhadharma and think some of it is good and some is not. The Dharma is all the same; there is no good or bad. Whether you think it is good or bad is just your own opinion, but the Buddhadharma itself is all equal.  
  
**At that time,** when the Buddha had finished the chapter “The Spiritual Powers of the Thus Come One” and was about to speak this chapter, “The Entrustment,” **Shakyamuni Buddha rose from his Dharma seat and manifested great spiritual power. With his right hand he patted the crowns of limitless Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas and said, "Throughout limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of asamkhyeyas of eons, I have cultivated and practiced the rare Dharmas of anuttarasamyaksambodhi.** They are extremely hard to meet in a million eons. These Dharmas of the Unsurpassed, Proper and Equal, Right Enlightenment are just the Dharmas of the Dharma Flower Sutra. **I now entrust them to all of you. You should, with a single mind, propagate this Dharma, causing it to spread and grow extensively,** and causing people to understand it."   
  
**In this way he patted the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas on the crown** of their heads **three times, saying, "Throughout limitless hundreds of thousands of myriads of kotis of asamkhyeyas of eons, I have cultivated and practiced the rare Dharmas of anuttarasamyaksambodhi. I now entrust them to all of you.** I give you this job. **You should receive, uphold, read, recite, and vastly proclaim this Dharma, causing all living beings to hear and understand it."**  
  
 **Sutra:**  
 **“For what reason? The Thus Come One is greatly kind and compassionate, without stinginess and without fear. He is able to give living beings the wisdom of the Buddha, the wisdom of the Thus Come One, and spontaneous wisdom. The Thus Come One is a great giving host to all living beings. You should all accordingly study the Dharmas of the Thus Come One and never be stingy.”**  
Outline:  
  
F2. The explanation.  
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**For what reason?** It is because **the Thus Come One is greatly kind and compassionate.** With kindness he bestows happiness. With his compassion he relieves us of suffering. He is **without stinginess,** not miserly when it comes to giving the gift of Dharma. **And** he is **without fear. He is able to give living beings the wisdom of the Buddha;** the Buddha's wisdom is that of great enlightenment. **The wisdom of the Thus Come One** is the Buddha's Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom; **and spontaneous wisdom** is the original wisdom of the self-nature. **The Thus Come One is a great giving host to all living beings.** He gives all his Dharma treasures to living beings. **You should all accordingly study the Dharmas of the Thus Come One.** You great Bodhisattvas should imitate the Buddha **and never be stingy.** Once you have learned the Dharma, do not be niggardly with it.  
  
**Sutra:**  
 **“In the future, if there is a good man or a good woman who believes in the Thus Come One’s wisdom, you should expound the Dharma Flower Sutra to that person, causing the person to hear and understand and obtain the Buddha’s wisdom. If there are living beings who do not believe or accept it, you should instruct them with another of the profound Dharmas of the Thus Come One, benefiting them and causing them to rejoice. If you can do this, you will have already repaid the kindness of the Buddhas.”**  
Outline:  
  
F3. Exhortation and entrustment.  
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**In the future, if there is a good man or a good woman,** one who cultivates the Five Precepts and the Ten Good Deeds, **who believes in the Thus Come One's wisdom, you should expound the Dharma Flower Sutra to that person, causing the person to hear and understand it, and to obtain the Buddha's wisdom.**  
  
**If there are living beings who do not believe or accept it, you should instruct them with another of the profound Dharmas of the Thus Come One, benefiting them and causing them to rejoice.** Lecture some other deep and wonderful Sutra. Teach and transform them so that they gain benefit and are happy. **If you can do this,** then **you will have already repaid the kindness of the Buddhas** of the ten directions.  
  
**Sutras:**  
 **When the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas heard the Buddha’s words, profuse joy permeated their bodies. With increasing reverence, they bowed their heads, placed their palms together, faced the Buddha, and said in unison, “We shall reverently carry out the World Honored One’s command. Yes, World Honored One, pray do not be concerned about this.” The assembly of Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas spoke in this way three times, saying, “We shall reverently carry out the Buddha’s command. Yes, World Honored One, pray do not be concerned about this.”**  
Outline:  
  
E2. The Bodhisattvas accept the command.  
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**When the Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas heard the Buddha's words, profuse joy permeated their** entire **bodies. With increasing reverence**—they were twice as respectful—**they bowed their heads, placed their palms together, faced the Buddha, and said in unison, "We shall reverently carry out the World Honored One's command. Yes, World Honored One, pray do not be concerned about this.** We will comply, just as you wish. Please do not worry about this, Buddha." **The assembly of Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas spoke in this way three times, saying, "We shall reverently carry out the Buddha's command. Yes, World Honored One, pray do not be concerned about this."  
  
Sutra:  
  
At that time Shakyamuni Buddha sent the division-body Buddhas of the ten directions back to their own lands, saying, “Peace to all of you Buddhas. Let the stupa of the Buddha Many-Jewels be again as it was.”**  
Outline:  
  
E3. The job finished, and the call to disband.  
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**At that time Shakyamuni Buddha sent the division-body Buddhas of the ten directions back to their own lands, saying, "Peace to all of you Buddhas.** You can all go back to your own lands. We have taken care of business. You can all go back home now. **Let the stupa of the Buddha Many-Jewels be again as it was."** The stupa of the Buddha Many-Jewels has certified the speaking of the Dharma Flower Sutra, and now it is time for it to return to the lower direction, where it came from originally.  
  
**Sutra:**  
 **As he said this, the limitless division-body Buddhas of the ten directions, seated on lion thrones beneath jeweled trees; the Buddha Many-Jewels; Superior Conduct and the limitless asamkhyeyas of Bodhisattvas in the great assembly; Shariputra and the other Hearers; as well as the fourfold assembly and all those in the world—the gods, humans, asuras, and so forth—hearing the Buddha’s words, all rejoiced exceedingly.**  
Outline:  
  
D2. Rejoicing.  
  
**Commentary:**   
  
**As he said this, the limitless division-body Buddhas of the ten directions, seated on lion thrones beneath jeweled trees; the Buddha Many-Jewels; Superior Conduct** Bodhisattva; **and the limitless asamkhyeyas of Bodhisattvas in the great assembly; Shariputra and the other Hearers; as well as the fourfold assembly and all those in the world—the gods, humans, asuras, and so forth,** including the eightfold division—**hearing the Buddha’s words, all rejoiced exceedingly.**