



THE BUDDHA SPEAKS THE SUTRA OF CHANGES TO COME

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Thus I have heard. At one time the Buddha was in Shravasti in the Jeta Grove, in the Garden of the Benefactor of Orphans and the Solitary, together with a gathering of great Bhikshus, five hundred in all, as well as the Bodhisattvas.

At that time the World Honored One told all the Bhikshus, "In the future there will be Bhikshus who will fail to be transformed by the Dharma for a set of specific reasons, thus bringing the Dharma to ruin and preventing its increase and growth. What are these reasons?

They are:

-not protecting the prohibitions and moral Precepts

- not being able to guard the mind
- not cultivating wisdom
- being lax in thought
- only seeking for a good reputation
- not following the teachings of the Way
- being unwilling to diligently honor the deeds which rescue those of the world.

These comprise the first set of matters which will bring about the Dharma's extinction." The Buddha told the Bhikshus, "In addition, there are two more sets of matters which will cause the Dharma's extinction. The first includes:

- not protecting the moral prohibitions
- not gathering in the mind
- not cultivating wisdom.
- indulging in dissolute attitudes and licentious intentions, Bhikshus will take wives and raise children, and engage in business to make a living.

The second set of matters includes:

- forming sects and parties,
- giving rise to enmity and competitiveness,
- wishing to cause Dharma peers to fall.
- Abusing proper language and discourses, Bhikshus will indulge in flattery and deceit. Internally creating evil deeds, outwardly they will pretend to be of pure conduct.

These comprise the additional two sets of matters which will bring about the Dharma's extinction."

The Buddha told the Bhikshus, "There are three other sets of matters which will cause the Dharma's extinction. The first includes:

- failure to protect the prohibitions and Precepts
- failure to gather in the mind and cultivate wisdom.

The second set of matters includes:

- an inability to know the proper sequence of sentences on the part of people who read the literature of the Dharma. They will put what comes first in the place of what comes later, and will put what comes later in the place of what comes first. By inverting start and finish like this, they won't understand where the teachings lead, yet they will assume their understandings are correct.

The third set of matters includes:

- refusal to listen to other people who correct them

- harboring feelings of resentment and jealousy towards those who correct them.
- People who recognize the teachings will be few. The majority will be unable to discern the principles but will simply follow along with the opinions of others. These comprise the three sets of matters that will bring about the Dharma's extinction."

The Buddha told the Bhikshus, "Moreover, there are another four matters which will cause the Dharma's extinction. What are they? The first is:

- In the future there will be Bhikshus who, having renounced the livelihood of householders, will go to an aranya but will fail to cultivate the Way.

The second is:

- They will enjoy socializing in noisy places with common people, wandering as they please, and engaging in casual talking.
- They will seek fine clothing and wear Precept sashes made of multicolored cloth.

The third is:

- They will affect the matters of the elite and make pretense to lofty vision and vast knowledge.
- They will claim high virtue for themselves and consider other people to be inferior.
- Possessing fragments of wisdom, they will compare themselves to the brilliance of the sun and moon.

The fourth is:

- They will not gather in the three karmas nor protect the gates of the sense organs.
- They will travel among women and propagate literature with erudite embroidered phrasing.
- They will speak much of coupling and marriage in order to move people's minds, thus causing the pure to become defiled.
- They will practice profligacy and reckless behavior.
- The Proper Dharma will go to ruin.

These comprise another four sets of matters that will bring about the Dharma's extinction."

The Buddha told the Bhikshus, "Furthermore there are five other sets of matters that will cause the Dharma's extinction. What are they: The first is:

- Bhikshus who originally left home to cultivate the Way because of the Dharma, will subsequently abuse and abolish the teachings of the profound Sutras, such as the twelve links, the thirty-seven limbs, the Vaipulya, the deep and

wonderful esoteric wisdom of emptiness, the unsurpassed perfection of wisdom, the wholesome provisional devices and expedient means, the empty, markless, and wishless Dharma, and the ultimate means of bringing about timely transformations.

The second is:

- They will turn instead to practice of random phrases, shallow branches, and lesser Sutras.
- Because they will mix with the mundane world and the common life, they will allow the classics and manifestos of kings to become a source of chaos within the Way.
- Bhikshus will enjoy discussing these matters and will become skilled at explaining worldly affairs.
- They will know how to win people's approval by pleasing them, thus gaining fame and reputation for themselves.

The third is:

- They will readily employ the ideas of scholars with shallow understanding, including those who have only studied the Dharma briefly, preferring them over those of the scholars who possess profound penetration of the teachings.

The fourth is:

- They will displease the gods, dragons, ghosts, and spirits. With hearts full of sorrow, the gods will say, 'This is the Dharma-Ending Age and that is why things are this way.'
- Forsaking the teachings of the wonderful Dharma, these Bhikshus will only propagate fragmented sentences. All the gods will weep and quickly depart.

The fifth is:

- From that time on, the Proper Dharma will be scarce and no one will cultivate it with vigor.

These comprise five further sets of matters that will cause the Dharma's extinction."

The Buddha told the Bhikshus, "After my Nirvana these deviant deeds and fifteen sets of disorders will bring the Dharma to extinction. How painful it will be then! If there are Bhikshus among you who sincerely wish to reverently study the Way, you should throw out all showy pretense and not seek fame or reputation. With a nature that is straightforward and innocent you should guard the truth and propagate the orthodox Sutras, the exalted canon of the Buddha, and the profound transformations of the Dharma, but avoid using too many words in explaining them. You should rely on the original explanation of the Sutra and not abandon the proper phrasings. In using special terms and

repetitions, you should not allow the Buddha's intent to become lost. As to food and clothing, you should not be pleased with good offerings nor despise mean offerings, but accord with the wishes of the donors. You should be neither delighted nor displeased with the quality of offerings of food and clothing, whether fine or coarse.



"You should gather in body, mouth, and mind, and guard the sense gates. You should not turn from the Buddha's teachings. Be mindful of life's brevity, for it's over in a flash. It is like a vision seen in a dream; upon awakening one cannot recall where it went. The suffering of the three evil destinies cannot be reckoned. Diligently cultivate the Buddhadharma as if intent upon saving your own heads!

"The Five Precepts, the Ten Good Acts, the Six Paramitas, the ten thousand conducts, the Four Unlimited Minds, the Four kinds of Kindness, wisdom, and expedient means must all be practiced with vigor. Then even though you may not meet with a Buddha in the world, nonetheless, leaving home and studying the Way will not be done in vain. You should make your original mind level and equal. With sympathy be mindful of all beings and treat everyone with kindness."

After the Buddha instructed them in this way, the Bhikshus all felt happy to the point of tears. They trusted in the Buddha, bowed in obeisance, and took their leave.

*END OF THE SUTRA OF THE
BUDDHA SPEAKS OF CHANGES TO COME*