

## CHAPTER 9

### THE ASSURANCE OF FUTURE BUDDHAHOOD OF THE SRAVAKAS WHO HAVE SOMETHING MORE TO LEARN AND NOTHING MORE TO LEARN

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#### Summary

This chapter is a continuation of Chapter Eight. Here the Buddha assures Ananda and Rahula (the two remaining disciples among the Ten Great Disciples) of their future Buddhahood. At the same time, he assures the other Sravakas, both of those who had something more to learn and those who had nothing more to learn. As stated in the previous chapter, there are two classifications for Sravakas (voice-hearers) those who have something more to learn, people who have renounced their families to live as monks, released their attachments to material goods, learned the Four Noble Truths, yet still have worldly desires and those who have nothing more to learn otherwise known as *Arhats* (阿羅漢). These classifications are used in the Lesser Vehicle. We who practice the teachings of the Lotus Sutra are in the One Vehicle, that is, the way of the Bodhisattvas.

#### The Family Line of the Buddha

Ananda is a cousin of Sakyamuni Buddha while Rahula is the son of Sakyamuni.

King Suddhodana 淨飯王 (Buddha's father)	-----	Siddhartha	-----	Rahula
(Brothers)		(Cousins)		(Cousins)
King Kokubon 斛飯王 (Buddha's Uncle)	-----	Devadatta	-----	Ananda

**“Ananda will become a Buddha called Mountain-Sea-Wisdom-Supernatural-Power-King Tathagata.”**(P.164, Last paragraph)

Ananda is Sakyamuni Buddha's cousin. It is said that he was born on the day when Siddhartha became the Buddha, so the new born baby was named Ananda (joyfulness). He served the Buddha for 25 years, from the time when Buddha was 55 years old till his death. Because he was the longest serving attendant to the Buddha and heard the most teachings directly from the Buddha, he was selected as the speaker at the Buddhist councils when deciding the orthodoxy of the Dharma after the Buddha's Great-Nirvana. Thus, all sutra starts with, “Thus have I (Ananda) heard...”

**'As far as we have heard, even great Bodhisattvas have never been assured of their future Buddhahood. Why have these Sravakas been so assured?'** (P.167, LL.12~14):

When the Buddha assured Ananda's assurance to become a Buddha, eight thousand Bodhisattvas who recently become Bodhisattva pondered the above quote. Then the Buddha answers them, explaining the relationship between the Buddha and Ananda in their previous existence as seekers of the Buddha Dharma. The Buddha said, "Ananda and I resolved to aspire for enlightenment under the Void-King Buddha at the same time. At that time Ananda always wished to hear while I always practiced strenuously. Therefore, I have already attained enlightenment but he has not. Now he protects my teachings. He also will protect the store of the teachings of future Buddhas, teach Bodhisattvas, and cause them to attain enlightenment, according to his original vow. Therefore, now he has been assured of his future Buddhahood." (P.166, LL.17~24) As the Buddha said, Ananda's original vow was to teach Bodhisattvas. Since he has practiced the way of Bodhisattva, he was assured of Buddhahood.

We must know that there are ten kinds of Bodhisattvas from the stages of hell, hungry spirit, animals, fighting spirit, human beings, voice-hearers, self-learning, Bodhisattva, and Buddha. Depending of their stages, they have not assured themselves that they are able to attain Buddhahood while other Bodhisattvas postponed in becoming Buddhas but to be born again as Bodhisattvas to lead other beings to attain Buddhahood. To prove this, Ananda says, **"Having no doubts, I now dwell peacefully in the enlightenment of the Buddha. I will expediently become the attendant of future Buddhas, and protect their teachings."** (P.167, Second Paragraph)

**"Rahula will become a Buddha called Walking-On-Flower-Of-Seven-Treasure Tathagata."**(P.167, Third paragraph):

Rahula is Siddhartha's only son. It is said that the Buddha made him take ordination and ordered Sâriputra to be his master. At the beginning Rahula, being the son of the Buddha, did not follow the Buddhist orders, but after the Buddha cautioned him, he became the most intensive practioner among other disciples.

**"The two thousand Sravakas will be equally called Treasure-Form Tathagata."** (P.168, Last half of the page):

There are two classifications for Sravakas (voice-hearers). They are ① those who have something more to learn, people who live as monks, released their attachments to material goods, yet still have worldly desires and ② those who have nothing more to learn otherwise known as *Arhats* (阿羅漢). These are people who believe that they have already fulfilled all precepts and attained Enlightenment. In truth, they have not yet reached Enlightenment, as the Buddha used this as an expedient to help teach the congregation the path to the True Dharma.

## **The Ten Great Disciples of the Buddha十大弟子**

1. Sâriputra (舍利弗), the most brilliant = Flower-Light Tathagata (華光如来) in Chapter 3

2. **Mahâ-Kâsyapa** (摩訶迦葉), the foremost in asceticism = Light Tathagata (光明如来) in Chapter 6
3. **Subhuti** (須菩提), the one who understands emptiness the most = Beautiful-Form Tathagata (名相如来) in Chapter 6
4. **Maha-Katyayna** (迦旃延), the most skilled debater = Jambunada-Gold-Light Tathagata (閻浮那提金光如来) in Chapter 6
5. **Maha-Maudgalyayana** (摩訶目犍連), who possessed supernatural powers = Tamalapattracandana-Fragrance Tathagata (多摩羅跋旃檀光如来) in Chapter 6
6. **Puruna** (富樓那), the best preacher = Dharma-Brightness Tathagata (法明如来) in Ch. 8
7. **Kaundinya Bhiksu** (阿若憍陳如), who was one of the Five Attendants when Siddhartha became a monk to seek salvation from sufferings, the Divine Eye = Universal-Brightness Tathagata (普明如来) in Chapter 8.
8. **Ananda** (阿難), who possessed excellent memory = Mountain-Sea-Wisdom-Supernatural-Power-King Tathagata (山海慧自在通王如来) in Chapter 9
9. **Rahula** (羅睺羅), who practiced most intensely = Walking-On-Flower-Of-Seven-Treasures Tathagata (蹈七宝華如来) in Chapter 9. Since Rahula was the only son of the Buddha, he did not want to be viewed that his position was through nepotism; therefore, he practiced much harder than everyone else.
10. **Upali** (優波離), the foremost in upholding the Precepts = His name was not listed in Chapter 1 of the Lotus Sutra. He might be absent. Or since he was the number one keeper of the precepts that are mostly unused in Mahayana traditions, he was absent among the congregation of the Lotus Sutra, this is only my guess.

The above mentioned disciples are all men. Women are given the assurance of Buddhahood in Chapter 12 and 13. That means everyone is also able to become Buddhas.

Thus, from Chapters 2 through 9, the Lotus Sutra is the teaching for the two vehicles: Sravakas (voice-hearers) and Pratyaka-buddha (who attain liberation on their own by contemplating Dependent Origination). These chapters have presented the renowned disciples of Sakyamuni one after another and told that they are assured of their future Buddhahood. From Chapter 10 on, are the teachings for Bodhisattvas; therefore, the contents are more practical for our daily lives.