

Why Does the Buddha Have So Many Pagodas?

Hi everyone, this is Nancy. Today is Mar. 5th, 2022. How are you doing? The law of Cause and Effect is well known to most of you. It seems that everything can be explained by this law. After the Buddha entered Nirvana, in the following hundreds of years, 84000 pagodas were erected for the Buddha. Are you interested in knowing why? Why would the Buddha be able to have so many Pagodas? Today, I would like to share with you the Buddha's words about the reason, the cause, behind his 84000 pagodas.

During the time the Buddha lived in Jetavana Vihara, one morning, the Buddha and his disciple Ananda entered the city for alms. A group of children were playing on the side of the road. Each of them gathered the dirt on the ground and built them into palaces, houses, and warehouses which contained gold and silver treasures and grains. Among these children, one saw the Buddha approaching from a distance, and when he saw the Buddha's appearance, a heart of respect and reverence rose spontaneously. Immediately, he took out what was called the "valley" in the "storehouse" and stretched his hand upwards, intending to make offerings to the Buddha with the "valley". But he was short and couldn't reach to the Buddha. So he said to another child, "Let me step on your shoulders and offer this to the Buddha." The other child was happy to do that. So the child stepped on the other one's shoulders and offered the "valley" to the Buddha. The Buddha lowered his bowl and accepted the dirt. Then he handed his bowl to Ananda and said to him, "take the dirt back and paint it onto my wall."

After they returned to Jetavana Vihara, Ananda followed the Buddha's words and painted the earth onto a whole side of wall in the Buddha's room. After that, he told the Buddha what he did. The Buddha said to Ananda, "The child was so happy to offer me the dirt. With this merit, after a hundred years of my Nirvana, he will be reincarnated as a king named Asoka, and the other child will be his minister. Together they will command all the land of Jambudivipa, widely propagate the three jewels, set up places for people to make offerings, distribute my relics to all the countries, and erect 84000 pagodas."

Hearing these words, Ananda was happy and also curious. He asked the Buddha, "Buddha, what did you do in the past so that there would be 84000 pagodas in the future?" The Buddha answered, "Ananda, listen carefully! In the past countless kalpas ago, there was a King who ruled 84000 countries in Jambudivipa. At that time, there was a Buddha living in the world. The King together with all his people and officials were extremely respectful to the Buddha and his disciples.

The King had this thought, "Now in this big country, all the people are able to see the Buddha often, make offerings, and pay homage to the Buddha. However, in those small countries in the rural places, people don't have the chance to do this

to accumulate blessings. I should distribute the Buddha's portraits to these places so that people can also have the opportunity to pay homage to the Buddha."

So the King called in painters and ordered them to draw the Buddha. All the painters went to the Buddha. They wanted to draw the Buddha's wondrous appearance, but they had trouble remembering what they saw just a minute ago. So the Buddha himself personally mixed various pigments, painted the first Buddha portrait and gave it to the painters to learn.

As a result, the painters were able to draw 84,000 Buddha portraits according to the one the Buddha gave to them, each of which was vivid, pure and delicate like the real Buddha, incomparably upright. Then the King distributed the Buddha portraits to various countries, and each country got one. The King also issued a decree that all countries must prepare flowers and incense to make offerings. After the people of various countries received the portraits of the Tathagata, they were extremely happy and reverently made offerings, as if they were treating the true Buddha.

The Buddha then told Ananda, "The King at that time was me. Because of what I did in that life, making 84000 Buddha portraits available to all the people, I was able to receive blessings every life after and become a King no matter it's in the heaven or on the earth. In every life, I was upright and sublime, and equipped with an appearance of 32 good signs and 80 finer characteristics. And also due to this merit, I am able to receive the 84000 pagodas in the future."

Hearing the Buddha's words, Ananda and all the disciples in the assembly were joyful.

Amitabha! This is today's Dharma share. As always, I hope this story is inspiring to you in some way. Thank you everyone for being here. I will see you next time. Bye.