

DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA

with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA
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Sutra: T.23 c 9

Then the Brahma Heaven Kings bowed with their heads at the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him a hundred thousand times, then scattered heavenly flowers upon him. The flowers were piled as high as Mount Sumeru, and they offered them as well to the Buddha's Bodhi tree. Having made offerings of flowers, each presented his palace to the Buddha saying, "Show us pity and benefit us by accepting and occupying these palaces that we offer you!" Then the Brahma heaven Kings, before the Buddha, with a single mind, and the same race, spoke verses in praise, saying,

*"Sagely Lord, king among gods,
With the kalavinka sound,
To you who pity living beings,
We now reverently bow.
The World Honored One is most rare,
Appearing but once in long ages.
One hundred and eighty aeons have passed
Empty, without Buddha.
The three evil paths are full.
The hosts of gods decrease.
Now the Buddha has appeared in the world,
To act as eyes for living beings,
As a refuge for the world,
Rescuing and protecting all creatures,
A father for all beings,
Pitying and benefitting them.
Now, through blessings gained in former lives,
We are enabled to meet the World Honored One.*

COMMENTARY:

In this passage, the Brahma gods from the southeast make offerings to the Buddha in just the same way as did the Brahma gods from the east. They, too, presented the Buddha with their most prized possessions, their palaces, and spoke verses to praise the Buddha, saying,

Sagely Lord, King among gods/ with the Kalavinka sound/ The Buddha is called the Sagely Lord, the Sage among Sages, the god among gods. He has the Kalavinka sound. In the AMITABHA SUTRA we read about the Kalavinka birds in the Land of Ultimate Bliss. Kalavinka means "fine sounding bird." Ultimately, how fine they sound you will know when you hear one. You still don't know how fine they sing. Once you get to the Land of Ulimatte Bliss, then you will

know. The Buddha speaks the Dharma with a sound even finer than that of the Kalavinka bird, so the sound of his voice is described as the "kalavinka sound." To you who pity living beings/
The Buddha is most compassionate. We now reverently bow/

The World Honored One is most rare/ appearing but once in long ages/ One hundred and eighty aeons have passed/ Empty, without a Buddha/ The three evil paths are full/ **The hells, the animal realm, and the realm of the ghosts get increasingly fuller, and** The host of gods decrease/ **The three evil paths are doing great business! Everyone wants to live in them! On the other hand, the three good paths are going bankrupt.** Now the Buddha has appeared in the world/ To act as eyes for living beings/ Why did everyone end up in the three evil paths? Because they couldn't tell right from wrong, black from white, good from evil. They had no one to be their guide, "to act as eyes" for them. They were in darkness, running in confusion, running into the three evil paths. Now the Buddha has appeared in the world; it is as if living beings had eyes. Now, the three evil paths can decrease and the three good paths increase. As a refuge for the world/ All beings in the world return in refuge to the Buddha and head toward the good Bodhi Path. Rescuing and protecting all creatures/ A father for all beings/ The Buddha cherishes all beings. He is a compassionate father to them. Living beings are like the Buddha's unfilial children. The more unfilial they are, the harder he works to save them. Pitying and benefitting them/ He shows them mercy and benefits them through his great, enlightened compassion. Now Through blessings gained in former lives/ We are enabled to meet the World Honored One/ We gods, no doubt, in former lives created merit and virtue by doing good deeds, and so now we are lucky enough to meet with the Buddha. We are lucky enough to meet the Buddha and listen to him speak the Dharma. This is because of good roots planted in former lives.

Sutra: T.23c24

At that time, the Brahma Heaven gods, having praised the Buddha, said, "We only pray that the World Honored One will take pity on all beings and turn the Dharma wheel to liberate living beings".

Then, the Brahma Heaven Kings, with one mind and a single voice, spoke verses saying,

*"Great Sage, turn the Dharma wheel,
To reveal the marks of all Dharmas,
To cross over tormented living beings,
So they may gain great joy.
When living beings hear the Dharma,
They may gain the way, or be reborn in the heavens;
The evil paths will decrease
And those of patience and goodness will increase.*

COMMENTARY:

At that time, the Brahma Heaven gods, having praised the Buddha, **in verses,** "We only pray that the World Honored One will take pity on all beings" **and rescue them. In order to rescue them, he must speak the Dharma,** turn the Dharma wheel to liberate living beings, teaching and transforming them. **In this way they can leave suffering, attain bliss, and put an end to birth and death.**

Then, the Brahma Heaven Kings, with one mind and a single voice, spoke verses saying--**they had different mouths, but they spoke in unison.**

Great Sage, turn the Dharma wheel/ To reveal the marks of all Dharmas/ **to instruct us in the real marks of all dharmas, in the doctrine of the Dharma.** To cross over tormented living beings/ **all the miserable living beings,** So they may gain great joy/

When living beings hear the Dharma/ **that the Buddha speaks, they can leave suffering and attain bliss and end birth and death.** They may gain the Way, or be reborn in the heavens/ **Perhaps they certify to the fruition of sagehood, or perhaps they are born in the heavens.** The evil paths will decrease/ **If they are born in the good paths, then the good paths increase in number and the evil paths decrease,** And those of patience and goodness will increase/ **People who practice forbearance and who do the ten good deeds will increase in number.**

Sutra: T.24a2

At that time, the Thus-Come-One Great Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory assented by his silence.

COMMENTARY:

At that time, the Thus Come One Great Penetrating Wisdom Victory assented by his silence. **He didn't say anything, and that meant he agreed to speak.**

Sutra: T.24a2

'Furthermore, O Bhikshus, to the south, the great Brahma Kings in five hundred myriads of millions of Buddhalands, seeing their palaces in dazzling brilliance as never seen before, jumped for joy, thinking it rare indeed

COMMENTARY:

Furthermore, O Bhikshus, to the South, the Great Brahma Kings in five hundred myriads of millions of Buddhalands, seeing their palaces in dazzling brilliance as never seen before, jumped for joy, **seeing such light, they were very happy,** Thinking it rare indeed, **very, very rare.**

Sutra: T.24a5

Thereupon, they visited one another and discussed this matter, wondering, "why do our palaces glow with the light?" Then, in the assembly a Brahma Heaven King called Wanderful Dharma, on behalf of the Bhrahma hosts, spoke these verses,

*"All of our palaces
Shine with awesome brilliance,
This cannot be for no reason,
We should seek out this sign.
In a hundred thousand aeons,
Such a sign has never been seen.
Has a great and virtuous god been born?"*

Or has a Buddha appeared in the world?"

COMMENTARY:

Thereupon, they visited one another and discussed this matter, **they had a meeting**, wondering, "Why do our palaces glow with the light?" Then, **right in the middle of the meeting there was** A Brahma Heaven King, called Wonderful Dharma, **who**, On behalf of the Brahma hosts, spoke these verses,

All of our palaces/ **where we live**, Shine with awesome brilliance/ **such as we have never seen before**. This cannot be for no reason/ **There must certainly be a special reason for this light**. We should seek out this sign/ **We shouldn't just let it go by; we should find out where it's coming from**. In a Hundred thousand aeons/ such a sign has never been seen/ **During the past hundred thousand aeons, we haven't seen such a sign**. Has a great and virtuous god been born?/ Or has a Buddha appeared in the world?/ **So they all set out to find the source of the light**.

Sutra: T.24a12

At that time, five hundred myriads of millions of Brahma Heaven kings, together with their palaces, each with sacks filled with heavenly flowers, went to the north to seek out this manifestation. They saw the Thus-Come-One Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory seated on the lion throne beneath the Bodhi tree in the Bodhimanda, revered and circumambulated by gods, dragon kings, gandharvas, kinnaras, mahoragas, and beings both human and non-human, They saw, as well, the sixteen sons of the king requesting the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel.

COMMENTARY:

At that time, five hundred myriads of millions of Brahma Heaven Kings, having praised the Buddha... Brahma Kings have come from five hundred myriads of millions of lands to the east, from five hundred myriads of millions of lands to the southeast, and from five hundred myriads of millions of lands to the south. Together with their palaces. Wherever they went, they rode their palaces. We have mobile homes, and such, that one can travel in, but they are usually very small and cramped. The palaces are quite comfortable and can go anywhere.

Each with sacks filled with heavenly flowers... The gods love flowers and incense and never travel without them. They adorn their palaces with them; the flowers and incense appear as their rightful enjoyments, the rewards from their former good deeds. Wherever they go, they carry sacks full of flowers. They went to the north to seek out this manifestation. They hopped into their palaces and headed north to find the source of the light. They saw the Thus Come One Great Penetrating Wisdom Victory seated on the lion throne beneath the Bodhi tree in the Bodhimanda. They saw that the light was coming from the Buddha. Revered and circumambulated by gods, dragon kings, from the four seas, gandharvas, kinnaras, mahoragas, and beings both human and non-human.

Gandharvas and kinnaras are music spirits in the court of the Jade Emperor. Gandharva means "incense inhalers," because they love the smell of incense. When the Jade Emperor wants some music, he just lights some incense, and the gandharvas come flying in. Once they get there, the Jade Emperor says, "You make great music. Why don't you play a few tunes for me?" Since they love the incense, they obey the Jade Emperor and make music for him, sniffing the incense all the while.

Kinnara means "doubtful spirit," because they resemble human beings, except that they have a horn on their heads. When they play music and dance for the Jade Emperor, they shake their heads back and forth and around and around, to show off their beautiful horns. At least, they think they are beautiful. They sing, play music, dance, and shake their heads. This just means that they have no samadhi power! Hah!

The entire eight-fold division is represented in this line of text. They are all very strange. Some have one leg, and some have three legs, and some, like the mahoragas, just crawl on their bellies. Some fly in the sky like the garudas and the musical spirits. The gandharvas and the kinnaras work out of the same union, and, if the Jade Emperor calls in the kinnaras, they will usually demand that the gandharvas be hired, as well, so they can jam together- rocking out on the drums, the conch shells, and the gongs and bells.

The I-CHING, *The Book of Changes*, says, "It appears as an archetype in heaven, and it manifests in the phenomenal on earth," and so, we find music groups and musical instruments among people. Why do we have these music groups and these kinds of musical instruments? It's because some people who had their (five) eyes opened took a look into the heavens and saw, "Oh, wow! Look at those instruments! Let's make some like that!" So, the great treasury of musical science was opened, thanks to the kinnaras and the gandharvas. This isn't too hard to figure out. People have pretty much imitated the way things are in heaven.

All the living beings were revering the Buddha, walking around him slowly, keeping him to the right. They saw as well, the sixteen sons of the king requesting the Buddha to turn the Dharma wheel. The sixteen sons of the Buddha were asking him to turn the Dharma wheel. They were the sons of the Buddha not just in one lifetime; you might say that in every life they had received the Buddha's teaching, and been his Dharma protectors. This life, when the Buddha became a Buddha, they vowed to be his sons and ask him to turn the Dharma wheel. They did this because of their vows. People's relationships to each other work the same way. Each family has its own set of cause and effect. People's relationships are based on their mutual cause and effect. In the distant past, the Buddha taught living beings; he taught them for a long time, life after life, being so good to them that they realized, "He is our great compassionate father." They vowed in every life to follow that Buddha, saying, "When you become a Buddha, we will follow you and be your disciples. We will do this in every life. In every life, we will be the Buddha's disciples." They did this before he even became a Buddha. Now that Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory has become a Buddha, the sixteen sons, because of their former vows, naturally come and ask him to turn the great wheel of the Dharma.