

FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA



Chapter 26, Part 2, THE SECOND GROUND

with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA
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Sutra:

*THE BODHISATTVAS, UPON HEARING THIS
MOST SUPREMELY SUBTLE, WONDERFUL GROUND,
IN THEIR MINDS THOROUGHLY WERE PURE,
AND WERE HAPPY, EACH AND EVERY ONE.*

*THEY ALL, ARISING FROM THEIR SEATS,
SOARED UP AND DWELT IN EMPTY SPACE,
EVERYWHERE SCATTERED WONDROUS FLOWERS,
AND SIMULTANEOUSLY SPOKE THESE WORDS OF PRAISE.*

*"GOOD, INDEED, O TREASURY OF VAJRA,
GREATLY WISE AND WHO HAS NO FEAR,
WELL HAVE YOU SPOKEN OF THIS GROUND'S
DHARMAS PRACTICED BY THE BODHISATTVAS!"*

*MOON OF LIBERATION BODHISATTVA,
KNOWING THE ASSEMBLY'S MINDS WERE PURE,
AND THAT THEY WISHED TO HEAR THE SECOND GROUND,
ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ITS CONDUCTS.*

*RIGHT THEN REQUESTED VAJRA TREASURY,
"GREATLY WISE ONE, WE WISH THAT YOU WOULD SPEAK.
DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA ALL WOULD LIKE TO HEAR,
ABOUT THE DWELLING ON THE SECOND GROUND."*

Commentary:

When *THE BODHISATTVAS* had heard Vajra Treasury Bodhisattva discuss the Dharma of the First Ground, the Ground of Happiness, *UPON HEARING THIS MOST SUPREMELY SUBTLE, WONDERFUL GROUND, IN THEIR MINDS* they

THOROUGHLY WERE PURE. The minds of all the Bodhisattvas were pure, free of any false thoughts, *AND they WERE HAPPY, EACH AND EVERY ONE.* Their minds were totally happy. *THEY ALL, ARISING FROM THEIR SEATS, SOARED UP AND DWELT IN EMPTY SPACE.* They all physically ascended into empty space and *EVERYWHERE SCATTERED WONDROUS FLOWERS, AND SIMULTANEOUSLY SPOKE THESE WORDS OF PRAISE.* All of them in empty space scattered flowers as offerings to Vajra Treasury Bodhisattva, saying simultaneously, "*GOOD, INDEED, O TREASURY OF VAJRA,*" They said, "Good, indeed, Vajra Treasury Bodhisattva, *GREATLY WISE AND WHO HAS NO FEAR.* You truly are a Bodhisattva of great wisdom, courageously heroic and without the least bit of fear! *WELL HAVE YOU SPOKEN OF THIS GROUND'S DHARMAS PRACTICED BY THE BODHISATTVAS!* You have well spoken about the Dharmas on the Ground of Happiness!"

MOON OF LIBERATION BODHISATTVA, KNOWING THE ASSEMBLY'S MINDS WERE PURE, AND THAT THEY WISHED TO HEAR THE SECOND GROUND, made a request. The discussion of the First Ground was over, and everyone still wished to hear the Dharmas of the Second Ground with *ALL THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ITS CONDUCTS.* They wanted to know all about the Second Ground's Dharma doors--how to cultivate them, what kinds of states one has, and what fruits one obtains; and so *Moon of Liberation Bodhisattva RIGHT THEN REQUESTED VAJRA TREASURY.* He immediately asked of Vajra Treasury Bodhisattva, "*GREATLY WISE ONE, WE WISH THAT YOU WOULD SPEAK.*" He said, "O one of great wisdom, you, Vajra Treasury Bodhisattva, all of us would still like you to continue your discussion of the Dharmas of the Ten Grounds. *DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA ALL WOULD LIKE TO HEAR.* All the great Bodhisattvas wish to hear about the marks, characteristics, and states of the Second Ground--*ABOUT THE DWELLING ON THE SECOND GROUND.* They would all like to continue and cultivate the Dharma doors of the Second Ground."

I want to say something here about the problem of holding precepts versus not holding precepts. To cultivate the Way is not easy. No matter how much someone tells you to cultivate well, you still refuse to go forward and make progress. Yet, when it comes to doing bad, you do not require a teacher--you yourself know how to do it. When you hear about the Way, it sounds so fine. There are so many subtle and wonderful states. However, one must practice over a long period of time, and it may happen that one encounters brambles and thorns, tigers and wolves. If one lacks a great spirit of fearlessness and patience, it is very difficult to reach the goal.

As to holding precepts, while there are many people who take the precepts, there are very few who do not break or violate the precepts. To keep the precepts very purely also is not easy. Then should one simply not keep them? If you were not going to keep them, then why did you take them in the first place? Scrupulous holding of the precepts is extremely important, especially for those who have left the home life. The Buddha at the time of his Nirvana said, "Take the precepts as your Master." There is also the phrase, "The precepts are the basis of unsurpassed Bodhi: you should with one mind purely hold the precepts."

How does one hold precepts? First, you should not be selfish and not calculate for yourself in any way. You should not kill, not steal, not commit sexual misconduct, not engage in false speech, and not take intoxicants. You should scrupulously observe the rules which disciples of the Buddha should observe. Do what you should do, regardless of the difficulty or the suffering involved. Do not do what you should not do. Do not be greedy for fame or profit and offerings. Hold and maintain the conduct of pure precepts in your cultivation. If you fail to do what you *should* do, that, too, is a violation of the precepts.

We who cultivate the Way should at all times return the light and reverse the illumination. We should take a good look at ourselves and alert and alarm ourselves. If we make mistakes, we should correct them and resume our solid holding of the precepts. It is like crossing the sea in a life-raft. If the life-raft springs a small hole, it must be repaired quickly. If neglected and not repaired, the small hole will become large. With a large hole, the raft will start to leak and eventually will sink--and your life will go down along with it. This is greatly to be feared. Therefore, I hope that everyone will be especially attentive to the matter of holding precepts purely, and then the precept-protecting spirits will at all times accompany you and insure that you peacefully and safely traverse the road of cultivation.

Note: The First of the Ten Bodhisattva Grounds appeared in issues #80-99. VBS plans to print the Second Ground in each "earth/ground" issue in the sequence of elements represented by the cover colors. Earth, associated with the color gold, is shown as the yellow-gold range of the background, and the element fire which generates earth appears as the red of the lettering. On the cover of the issue previous to this--"fire" in the sequence of elements--the red-to-magenta range of background stood for fire, while the green of the letter symbolized wood, which produces fire. Throughout the Grounds Chapter the Bodhisattva is compared to gold which becomes progressively more purified, bright and useful as it is refined by fire and admixtures removed.

Calendar note: Gwan Yin Bodhisattva's Birthday will be celebrated at the various branches of the Sino-American Buddhist Association in mid-March. Readers should contact their local branch for the exact date in their area. There are also tentative plans for recitation and Ch'an meditation session weeks at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas. Write or phone for confirmation or else consult the March issue.