

# DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA

with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA

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*Sutra: T.24a17*

*Then the Brahma Heaven Kings bowed with their heads at the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him a hundred thousand times and 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 voice, spoke verses in praise, saying,*

## COMMENTARY:

**Then the Brahma Heaven Kings, bowed with their heads at the Buddha's feet, circumambulated him a hundred thousand times...** When we circumambulate, it might take one or two minutes to walk around the Buddha just a few times. The gods, however, can walk around the Buddha a hundred thousand time in less than a minute. They use their spiritual powers. Don't worry about them, thinking, "If they go around the Buddha a hundred thousand times, how will they have time to listen to the lecture? The lecture takes two hours!" It takes them but a moment. This just shows you, you shouldn't try to figure these things out with your ordinary intelligence.

**...and scattered heavenly flowers upon him,** like snow falling upon the Buddha. **"The flowers were piled as high as Mount Sumeru,** the heap of flowers was that high, **and they offered them as well, to the Buddha's Bodhi Tree.** Not only did they make offerings to the Buddha, but also to his Bodhi Tree.

You're thinking, "These Brahma gods are too much. Why are they making offerings to a tree? I can see making offerings to the Buddha, but what's the use of making offerings to a tree?"

You should know that the Buddha realized Buddhahood under the Bodhi tree. It provided him with the space for becoming a Buddha and thereby gained great merit and virtue. The Great Brahma Kings aren't doing this because they are stupid, you know, but because they want to thank the Bodhi tree for helping the Buddha realize Buddhahood. When the Buddha sat beneath that tree he was sheltered from the rain; he was cool in the shade, and best of all, he became a Buddha. So, they make offerings to the Bodhi tree.

**Having made offerings of flowers, each presented his palace to the Buddha...** They gave that thing they most cherished, that thing they could not put down. When they got born in the heavens they got their past good deeds. It was inconceivably wonderful. Now, they give away what they could not give away.

The gods don't have anything else to speak of. They aren't like people who may accumulate a lot of land and other holdings. They simply possess their palaces and that's it. There's no "land" in the heavens; there's no real estate. The heavens are up in empty space! Their palaces sit in space. And they don't have to use money. The gods aren't like us, buying, selling, and huckstering. They don't have land or any possessions other than their palaces and their flowers. First, they offered their flowers, but then they thought that probably wasn't showing enough sincerity. "Now that we have met the Buddha, why not do it right and give him our palaces?" So, they did! Now they had no place to live. I don't know what they planned to do about that, where they were planning to emigrate to.

**...Saying, "Show us pity and benefit us by accepting and occupying these palaces that we offer you.**

We are singleminded in our desire that the Buddha be compassionate towards us and accept these palaces we offer you. Don't stay there under the Bodhi tree. It's not nearly as luxurious as our palaces."

**Then the Brahma Heaven Kings, before the Buddha, with a single voice...**

Now, that's not easy! Just look at translating Sutras, you want to translate it that way, he wants to translate it another way, and someone else has yet another idea about how it should be done. Even if you come to an agreement, there's still a lot of give and take involved, and you are not all of the "same mind." The Great Brahma Heaven Kings all had the same mind, and, not only that, they said the same thing at exactly the same time, and **Spoke verses in praise** of the Thus Come One, Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory, **saying...**

**Sutra: T. 24a23**

*"The World Honored One is very hard to meet;  
He who breaks through all afflictions.  
Passing through a hundred and thirty aeons,  
Only now do we get to see him.  
May living beings, starving and thirsty,  
Be filled with the rain of Dharma.  
He, whom we have never seen before,  
One of unlimited wisdom,  
Rare as the Udumbara blossom  
Today, at last we have met.  
All of our palaces  
Receiving your light, are adorned.  
In your great compassion, World Honored One  
Pray accept and live within them."*

**COMMENTARY:**

With a single mind and the same sound, the Brahma Kings praised the Buddha. They had the same thought, the same wisdom, the same sound, and the same inconceivable sate.

That's why they said, **The World Honored One, is very hard to meet/** It is extremely hard to meet up with the Buddha. Not only that, it is very rare even to see a Buddha image. For example, in America, just a hundred years ago, there were no Buddha images. **He who breaks through all afflictions/** The Buddha has already broken through all afflictions, and because he is greatly compassionate, he breaks through others' afflictions for them. Not only does he break through his own, but he wishes to relieve all living beings of their troubles and afflictions. Someone is afraid now, thinking, "My afflictions are so dear to me. I don't want to break through them." They then open the door and run out! They don't want to listen to the Sutra lectures and they don't want to break through their own afflictions. Hah! "If the Buddha broke through my afflictions, I wouldn't know what to do with myself! That will never do." They think their afflictions are more important than their daily bread.

**Passing through a hundred and thirty aeons/** The Brahma Kings from the southwest had passed through a hundred and eighty aeons, but the Brahma Kings from the south had only passed through a hundred and thirty aeons, before they got to see the Buddha. **Only now do we get to see him/**

**May living beings, starving and thirsty/** Living beings in the three evil ways are said to be hungry and thirsty. **Be filled with the rain of Dharma/** May the rain of Dharma all at once saturate these parched and hungry living beings. **He, whom we have never seen before/** They had never seen the Buddha, heard the Dharma, or met the Sangha. **One of unlimited wisdom/** The Buddha has limitless, boundless great wisdom and compassion. **Rare as the Udumbara Blossom/** I have already told you about the Udumbara flower. If you want to know what it is, look it up in your notes. I'm not going to tell you now. Someone says, "Maybe you forgot!" Well, maybe I did, but you are going to have to remember it! Tomorrow I'm going to ask you what it is, and if you can't answer, then I'm not going to lecture to you anymore. Did you hear?

**Today, at last, we have met/** The Buddha is like the Udumbara Flower which blooms but once in a great, long while.

**All of our palaces/** Our most prized possessions, our most beautiful possessions. The things we cannot put down! Our favorite things! Our palaces!!! Now, having met the Buddha, we are going to renounce that which we cannot renounce.

**Receiving your light, are adorned/** In the Buddha's light, the palaces appear especially ornate and beautiful. We give them to the Buddha now, and **In your great compassion, World Honored One/ Pray accept and live in them/** Accept our offering to you, so that we may plant blessings and grow in wisdom.

*Sutra: T.24b1*

*At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, having praised the Buddha, said, "We only pray that the World Honored One will turn the Dharma wheel, causing the entire world with its gods, maras, Brahmans, shramanas, all to become peaceful and, calm and to attain liberation." Then, the Brahma Heaven Kings, with a single mind and the same voice, spoke verses in praise, saying,*

*" Honored One among gods and humans,  
Pray turn the unsurpassed wheel of Dharma.  
Beat upon the Dharma drum,  
And blow the great Dharma conch,  
Let fall everywhere the great Dharma rain,  
To cross over limitless living beings.  
We all beseech you to expound and proclaim  
The profound, far reaching sound.*

#### COMMENTARY:

**At that time, the Brahma Heaven Kings, having praised the Buddha, said, "We only pray that the World Honored One will turn the Dharma Wheel, the wonderful wheel of Dharma, causing the entire world with its gods, maras, brahmins, shramanas, left-home people who diligently cultivate morality, samadhi, and wisdom and eradicate greed, hatred, and stupidity, all to become peaceful and calm and to attain liberation, to be delivered from the sufferings of the three evil paths. Then, the Brahma Heaven Kings, with a single mind and the same voice, spoke verses in praise, saying,**

**Honored One among gods and humans/ Pray turn the unsurpassed wheel of Dharma/** The Buddha is honored in and beyond the world. We only pray that you will turn the unsurpassed great wheel of Dharma. **Beat upon the Dharma drum/ And blow the great Dharma conch/** Before the Dharma is spoken, before ceremonies, or before we start translating, we beat the drums and bells. Don't think they can't hear it in the heavens. They do! They hear it and think, "Oh, they're going to work, there, in San Francisco; they are translating! And, unseen by ordinary people, they stop by to see how the work is going, "Hmm... are they translating correctly? Are they just goofing off?" So, don't think you can get away with anything!!

In the *Forty-two Hands*, there is a Jeweled Conch Hand. When you blow the jeweled conch, it fills space and the Dharma Realm.

**Let fall everywhere the great Dharma rain/** Speaking the Dharma for the benefit of all beings, **To cross over limitless living beings/** There are a great many living beings. If I had been translating these two lines, I would have said,

Let fall everywhere the great Dharma rain,  
And everywhere save great living beings!

But, the text, as it stands, is okay, too.

Why do I want to change the line to read, "And everywhere save great living beings?" Because living beings, in the future, all can become Buddhas. Everyone is really very great. If I had said, "And everywhere save insignificant living beings," people would have assumed that they were very small and wouldn't cultivate. Great living beings can, in the future, realize the great Buddha Way. That's the way I would have translated it, but it's already been done the other way, and it can't be changed now!

**We all beseech you to expound and proclaim/** We beg you to turn the Dharma wheel, and proclaim **The profound, far-reaching sound/** "You simply must proclaim the profound, far-reaching sound." Would you say it was far reaching, or not? Shakyamuni Buddha is telling us about the Buddha Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory. Wouldn't you say his sound has reached far into the future?

*Sutra: T.24b9*

*Thereupon, the Thus-Come-One Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory assented by his Silence.*

**COMMENTARY:**

**Thereupon, the Thus-Come-One Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory assented by his silence.** He had been asked to speak the Dharma. His silence indicated that he would do so.

*Sutra: T.24b9*

*And so it was in all directions from the southwest to the lower direction.*

**COMMENTARY:**

**And so it was in all directions from the southwest to the lower direction.** This includes six directions not yet mentioned: the southwest, west, northwest, north, north east, and the lower direction. Since the process of seeing the light, investigating it, following it and seeing the Buddha, making offerings, and requesting the turning of the Dharma wheel had been set forth for the gods in the east, southeast, and south, that makes nine directions in all. The last direction to be mentioned is the upper direction, which follows:

*Sutra: T.24b10*

*Then five hundred myriads of millions of great Brahma Kings in the upper directions, seeing the palaces they rested in shining with awesome brilliance as never before, jumped for joy, thinking it rare indeed.*

**COMMENTARY:**

**Then, five hundred myriads of millions of Brahma Kings in the upper directions, seeing the palaces they rested in, where they lived, shine with awesome brilliance as never before...** It was a state they had never experienced. They were startled, amazed! Why? They had never seen such a thing before. They **jumped for joy...** They were so happy. They were like children at their first puppet show; they danced with glee and forgot all about who they were and where they were and just jumped for joy, **thinking it rare indeed.** They thought, "Since being born in heaven, we've seen many fine light shows, but this is the best one we've seen." And they were very happy.

1982 CTTB CALENDAR

March 14-21 - Kuan Yin Bodhisattva Recitation Week (tentative)  
March 14 (Sunday) - Kuan Yin Anniversary (CTTB)