



## *dharma sutra flower*

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SUTRA: T. 24b25

**AT THAT TIME, THE FIVE HUNDRED MYRIADS OF MILLIONS OF BRAHMA HEAVEN GODS, HAVING PRAISED THE BUDDHA IN VERSE, ADDRESSED THE BUDDHA, SAYING, "WE ONLY PRAY THAT THE WORLD HONORED ONE WILL TURN THE DHARMA WHEEL TO BRING TRANQUILITY AND LIBERATION TO MANY BEINGS." THEN THE BRAHMA HEAVEN KING SPOKE THESE VERSES OF PRAISE:**

**"WORLD HONORED ONE, TURN THE DHARMA WHEEL  
SOUND THE SWEET DEW DHARMA-DRUM,  
TO CROSS OVER TORMENTED LIVING BEINGS,  
SHOWING THEM NIRVANA'S PATH.  
PRAY, ACCEPT OUR REQUEST,  
AND, WITH THE GREAT AND SUBTLE SOUND,  
PITY US, AND SET FORTH,  
DHARMA GATHERED THROUGH COUNTLESS AEONS.**

COMMENTARY:

At that time, the five hundred myriads of millions of Brahma Heaven gods--**actually, there were not just five hundred, but five thousand or more, myriads of millions of gods from the ten directions**--Having praised the Buddha in verse, **each assembly of gods from the ten directions had spoken their verses, and then they** addressed the Buddha, saying, "We only pray that the World Honored One will turn the Dharma wheel, **speak the Dharma to teach and transform living beings. Before the Buddha speaks Dharma, someone must request it.** ...To bring tranquility and liberation to many beings," **happiness, and salvation.** Then, the Brahma Heaven King spoke these verses of praise:

"World Honored One, turn the Dharma wheel/ **We, Brahma Kings, and all living beings wish that the Buddha would turn the great Dharma wheel, to teach us all. Sound the sweet dew Dharma-drum/ so we can end birth and death with the sweet dew of Dharma.** To cross over tormented living beings/ **all beings suffering the agonies of the Three Evil Paths.** Showing them Nirvana's path/ **the path-way to non-production,**

**and non-extinction. Point it out clearly to us, so we can cultivate it.** Pray, accept our request/ **to turn the Dharma wheel,** And, with the great and subtle sound/ **the inconceivable sound, speak Dharma for us, and speak** Dharma gathered through countless aeons/ **gathered through successful cultivation throughout limitless aeons. Proclaim the wonderful Dharma for the sake of living beings.**

**SUTRA: T. 25a1**

**AT THAT TIME, THE THUS-COME-ONE GREAT-PENETRATING-WISDOM-VICTORY, HAVING RECEIVED THE REQUEST OF THE BRAHMA HEAVEN KINGS OF THE TEN DIRECTIONS, AS WELL AS THE SIXTEEN PRINCES,**

**COMMENTARY:**

At that time, **right after the great Brahma Kings from the ten directions had praised the Buddha,** The Thus-Come-One, Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory, **having** received the request of the Brahma Heaven Kings of the Ten directions, as well as the sixteen Princes . . .

**SUTRA: T. 25a2**

**THEREUPON, THREE TIMES TURNED THE DHARMA WHEEL OF TWELVE PARTS WHICH CANNOT BE TURNED BY SHRAMANAS, BRAHMANS, GODS, MARAS, BRAHMAS, OR OTHER BEINGS OF THE WORLD. HE SAID, "THIS IS SUFFERING. THIS IS THE ORIGATION OF SUFFERING. THIS IS THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING. THIS IS THE WAY TO THE EXTINCTION OF SUFFERING.**

**COMMENTARY:**

There are three turnings of the Dharma Wheel of twelve parts, also called, "the three turnings of the Four Truths": the Demonstration Turning, the Certification Turning, and the Exhortation Turning. Everyone should know them.

The Four Truths are, suffering, origination, extinction, and the Path. What is suffering? Happiness is suffering. Whatever you like is suffering. You like to get angry? That's suffering! You like to sleep? That's suffering. The things you like bring you suffering.

Right after each Buddha becomes a Buddha, he preaches the Four Truths, and then the Twelve Conditioned Causes, and after that, the Six perfections. That's the order in which he rolls the Wheel of Dharma.

The First of the Three Turnings of the Dharma Wheel of Twelve Parts is, the Demonstration Turning:

1. THIS IS SUFFERING, IT'S NATURE IS OPPRESSION. If you get angry, your temper oppresses you so that you are uncomfortable walking, standing, sitting, and even lying down.
2. THIS IS ORIGINATION, IT'S NATURE IS SEDUCTION. It beckons you. You respond to the stimulus. This refers to the accumulation of afflictions, one on top of another. You didn't want to get angry, but some situation triggered that response, and you did. You were "seduced" into it.
3. THIS IS EXTINCTION, IT'S NATURE IS THAT IT CAN BE CERTIFIED TO.
4. THIS IS THE PATH, IT'S NATURE IS THAT IT CAN BE CULTIVATED.

That's the first turning. The second turning is called, the Exhortation Turning:

1. THIS IS SUFFERING, YOU SHOULD KNOW IT.
2. THIS IS ORIGINATION, YOU SHOULD CUT IT OFF.
3. THIS IS EXTINCTION, YOU SHOULD CERTIFY TO IT.
4. THIS IS THE PATH, YOU SHOULD CULTIVATE IT.

This means that you should not only know about the Four Truths, but you should practice them: know suffering, cut off origination, long for extinction, and cultivate the Path.

Knowing suffering, you should put a stop to suffering. If you want to stop suffering, first of all you must get rid of affliction, that is, cut off origination. If you have afflictions, you will suffer. Without afflictions, there is no suffering. You must long for extinction, and cultivate the Way. In this, the second turning, then, you are exhorted to do these things.

The third turning is, the Certification Turning. The first turning tells you about this Dharma-door. The second turning, exhorts you to cultivate. The third turning, Certifies that the Buddha has perfected it.

1. THIS IS SUFFERING. I ALREADY KNOW IT. I DON'T NEED TO KNOW IT FURTHER.
2. THIS IS ORIGINATION. I HAVE ALREADY CUT IT OFF. I DON'T NEED TO CERTIFY TO IT FURTHER.
3. THIS IS EXTINCTION. I HAVE ALREADY CERTIFIED TO IT. I DON'T NEED TO CERTIFY TO IT FURTHER.
4. THIS IS THE PATH. I HAVE ALREADY CULTIVATED IT. I DON'T NEED TO CULTIVATE IT FURTHER.

...Which cannot be turned by Shramanas--those who diligently cultivate morality, samadhi, and wisdom and put to rest greed, hatred, and stupidity. Left-home people are all called, Shramanas.

Shramanas destroy greed, hatred, and stupidity. Hatred, is not easy to overcome. You may make a vow not to get angry, to obey your teacher, and be filial, and then--who knows where or why--suddenly, you get mad. Your temper pops out like a mouse of its mousehole. The mouse of your temper hides in its invisible hole and shows itself

unexpectedly. Stupidity. What's that? It's just doing dumb things, unintelligent things. You may clearly know that something is wrong, not in accord with Dharma, but insist on doing it anyway. That's stupidity.

Shramanas diligently cultivate morality, samadhi, and wisdom and put to rest greed, hatred, and stupidity.

Brahmans, are an outside Way. They wear robes and do various things, but they don't cultivate according to Dharma. The word, Brahma, means, "pure will," and they used to cultivate pure conduct. Now they don't even do that. They're all murky. With the passage of time, no matter what it is, there are bound to be false versions of it appearing. In China, the Taoists, are the equivalent of Brahmans. In Taoism, they talk about the three classes: the upper pure class, extreme pure ones, and the jade pure ones.

Gods, those who cultivate the five precepts, and the ten good deeds, are born in the heavens and become gods. Maras, are demons. They kill living beings. The Buddha saves, and the demons kill- Brahmas, or other beings of the world. The Buddha, and only the Buddha, can turn the Dharma Wheel of the Four Truths. Gods, demons, those of other religions--none of them can turn it.

He said, "This is suffering. This is origination of suffering. This is extinction of suffering. This is the Way to the Extinction of suffering."--the Dharma-door of the Four Truths.

*-continued next issue*



INTENSIVE CHINESE, BUDDHIST STUDIES,  
CHINESE CIVILIZATION--SUMMER '82 AT DRBU  
*from June 7- July 31: SCHOLARSHIPS*