

Flower Adornment Sutra

The Second Ground

with commentary of Tripitaka Master Hua

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Sutra:

AT THAT TIME, VAJRA TREASURY BODHISATTVA ADDRESSED MOON OF LIBERATION BODHISATTVA, SAYING: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA WHO HAS ALREADY CULTIVATED THE FIRST GROUND AND WHO WISHES TO ENTER THE SECOND GROUND SHOULD GIVE RISE TO TEN KINDS OF PROFOUND MINDS. WHAT ARE THE TEN? THEY ARE: A PROPER AND UPRIGHT MIND, A COMPLIANT AND YIELDING MIND, A MIND ABLE TO ENDURE, A TAMED AND SUBDUED MIND, A STILL AND QUIET MIND, A COMPLETELY GOOD MIND, AN UNMIXED AND UNSCATTERED MIND, A MIND WITH NO HANKERING OR YEARNING, A VAST MIND, A GREAT MIND. THE BODHISATTVA, USING THOSE TEN MINDS, ATTAINS ENTRY TO THE SECOND GROUND OF LEAVING FILTH.

DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, WHEN THE BODHISATTVA DWELLS UPON THE GROUND OF LEAVING FILTH, HIS NATURE OF ITSELF LEAVES ALL KILLING FAR BEHIND. HE DOES NOT COLLECT KNIVES OR STAVES. HE DOES NOT CHERISH RESENTMENT OR HATRED. HE HAS SHAME AND HE HAS REMORSE. HE IS ENDOWED WITH HUMANENESS AND RECIPROCITY. TOWARDS ALL LIVING BEINGS WHO HAVE A LIFE, HE ALWAYS BRINGS FORTH THOUGHTS OF BENEFIT AND KINDLY MINDFULNESS. THIS BODHISATTVA WOULD NOT WITH EVIL MIND EVEN TROUBLE LIVING BEINGS, HOW MUCH THE LESS GIVE RISE TO HEAVY INTENT AND ACTUALLY KILL OR HARM AND WHOM HE REALIZES ARE LIVING BEINGS.

Commentary:

*AT THAT TIME--*when the great assembly of Bodhisattvas and Moon of Liberation Bodhisattva had finished speaking the previous verses --*VAJRA TREASURY BODHISATTVA ADDRESSED MOON OF LIBERATION BODHISATTVA.* Vajra Treasury Bodhisattva spoke to Moon of Liberation Bodhisattva, *SAYING: DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA, THE BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA,* the great Bodhisattva cultivates the Bodhisattva Way and accumulates all kinds of good roots and is one *WHO HAS ALREADY CULTIVATED THE FIRST GROUND--*he is one who has already cultivated and certified to the position of the First Ground, the Ground of Happiness--*AND WHO WISHES TO ENTER THE SECOND GROUND.* He further wishes to cultivate the Dharmas of the Second Ground. He *SHOULD GIVE RISE TO THE KINDS OF PROFOUND MINDS.* He should bring forth ten profound minds and have true and actual recognition of Buddhadharmas.

WHAT ARE THE TEN? What are the ten kinds of profound minds? *THEY ARE: A PROPER AND UPRIGHT MIND;* one's mind should be straight, not devious and crooked. As it is said:

The straight mind is the Way Place.

"Proper" means not having any deviant knowledge or deviant views. "Upright" means not having any deceitful thoughts.

A COMPLIANT AND YIELDING MIND--the mind of the Bodhisattva should be compliant and yielding; it should not be obstinate or stubborn. *A MIND ABLE TO ENDURE*--one is able to undergo and bear what is unendurable. The straight and upright mind represents the mind of Giving, while the compliant and yielding mind is Holding Precepts, and the mind able to endure is Patience. Being "able to endure" means the ability to be patient with the unbearable. The precepts one cannot hold one still must hold. No matter what, one cannot break the precepts.

There was a bhikshu like that in the past. The bhikshu, wearing red clothing, went to the home of a goldsmith. The goldsmith at the time was making a pearl necklace for the king of the country. Each pearl of the strand was extremely costly. While the bhikshu was in the goldsmith's home, the goldsmith lost one of the pearls and accused the bhikshu of having stolen it. Actually, the bhikshu did know where the pearl was, but he certainly had not stolen it. Where was the pearl? Because the bhikshu had been wearing red-colored clothing, the pearl had reflected the red color. Right at that time a goose had come in, and when he saw the pearl reflecting the red color, it looked to the goose like a piece of meat, and so the goose seized it in its beak and gulped it down. Thereupon, the bhikshu had reflected, "If I say the pearl has been eaten by the goose, the goldsmith will certainly kill the goose to get back the pearl. If that happens, it will be as if I indirectly had killed the goose." Therefore, he hadn't said where the pearl was. The goldsmith said, "Now, there are only two of us here, and since my pearl is missing, *you* must have stolen it. If you hadn't stolen it, how could it be missing?" The bhikshu said he hadn't stolen it.

The goldsmith grabbed a cane and started beating the bhikshu, yelling, "So you didn't steal it? You're just not admitting it!" He kept beating him until the bhikshu's body was entirely covered with welts, his skin broken and bleeding. When the bhikshu had been beaten to the point that he bled, the goose, seeing the blood, ran up and started drinking the blood that was flowing from the bhikshu's body. The goldsmith hadn't expected the goose to run and drink the blood and was still using his cane to beat the bhikshu. One blow of his cane smashed the goose's head, and the goose died of the blow. Once it was dead, the bhikshu said, "You shouldn't beat me. Now you can find your pearl."

The goldsmith said, "I can find it, can I? You stole it, and now you'd better come up with it fast! If not, I'll beat you to death!"

The bhikshu said, "The pearl was eaten by the goose. Now that you have beaten the goose to death I'm telling you. The pearl is in the goose's belly. If you don't believe me, you can slit open the goose's stomach, and you will find the pearl." As it turned out, when the goldsmith cut open the goose's belly, the pearl actually was inside the goose's stomach.

When the goldsmith saw that, he realized, "This bhikshu is someone who *really* holds the precepts! In order to protect the goose's life, no matter how much I beat him, he wouldn't say anything, but in fact, the goose had eaten the pearl!" He informed the king of the country of what had happened, and the king was very respectful of the bhikshu. That is what is meant by a mind which is able to bear and endure.

There is another story, this time about a group of bhikshus, quite a few of them, who while traveling through a stretch of wilderness were held up by bandits. The bandits robbed the bhikshus of their valuables and also robbed them of all their clothing, so that they had no clothes to wear. Some of the bandits suggested, "We should kill these left-home people. If they aren't killed, they'll probably report us to the king, and it won't go well for us. It would be better to kill them." Other bandits said, "Don't kill them. The law of bhikshus is that not only do they not harm the lives of living beings, they are not even permitted to harm the lives of plants and trees. Let's tie these bhikshus up in the rushes. That way they won't be able to report us to the king, and no one will find us." The other bandits thought it over and said, "That's a good plan. It would be best to tie them up in the rushes and have them die on their own." So, the bandits bound the bhikshus in the rushes and then went on their way.

When they had gone, an elder among the bhikshus said, "We should now recognize that in the past we robbed people of their valuables and took people's lives, and so this life we have met with this retribution. So, all of you bear up under this!" He talked to them like that. Then, at dusk, the ants and beetles and mosquitoes and all the rest came to bite them. They bit the bhikshus to the point that their entire bodies were one huge blister which was both painful and itchy. The elder bhikshus said, "Everyone bear with it. Don't become hateful. See how the dragons, because of giving rise to hatred while cultivating the Way, fell to the bodies of dragons. Although we have now encountered this difficulty, we should have no hate, to avoid ending up like the dragons. When the dragons lose their hatred, then they will be able to abandon the bodies of dragons and resume cultivating. So, everyone be patient!" The more he spoke that way, the more trouble there was. Bees came to sting them, everything imaginable came to bite them, and their bites were extremely difficult to endure.

During the night, the howls of the wolves, bears, panthers, and leopards terrified the bhikshus incredibly. Then, at daybreak, who should appear but the king of the country conducting a hunting expedition right through the area where the bhikshus were! When he saw them from afar, the king thought that they were wild beasts, since the bhikshus were not wearing clothes. As he approached and saw them better, the king thought they must be goblins. As he got even closer and was within speaking distance, upon questioning them he found out that they were bhikshus who had been robbed of all their possessions by bandits, and in consideration of holding the precepts were enduring hunger and thirst, rather than consenting to harm the grass and bushes. When the king saw those bhikshus were that way, he felt great respect for them and said, "In my country there are still bhikshus who cultivate the Way like that! This is truly rare!" The king immediately released them from the rushes in which they had been tied and invited them to return with him to the palace to accept offerings from him.

All of you think it over: all people had to do was tie the bhikshus up with rushes, yet they would not consent to break the precepts and harm the rushes. They were prepared to endure starvation and being stung to death by insects rather than break the precepts. See what kind of ability they had to bear what is difficult to bear and practice what is difficult to practice. Precepts which it was impossible to keep, they were able to keep. That is to be genuine Dharma and Sangha jewels within Buddhism, and that is the mind which is able to endure.

A TAMED AND SUBDUED MIND, Not to speak of taming and subduing the minds of others, it is not easy to tame and subdue one's own mind. You tell it to cultivate the Way, yet all it does is strike up false thinking. As soon as you want to cultivate the Way, there are even more false thoughts. You want to become purer, and your defiled thoughts multiply. It is not easy to tame and subdue one's mind. If

you are able to tame and subdue that mind which is so stubborn and disobedient then you have some skill. To have A *STILL AND QUIET MIND* does not mean that the external environment is still and quiet, but rather that one is still and quiet within one's own mind. Within one's own mind there is no sound whatsoever, A *COMPLETELY GOOD MIND* is a mind without the slightest evil. AN *UNMIXED AND UNSCATTERED MIND* is when one's mind is unconfused and undispersed, with no admixtures. The opposite of A *MIND WITH NO HANKERING OR YEARNING* would be, for instance, if you gave something away and then afterwards regretted it. A *VAST MIND* is expansive and broad. A *GREAT MIND* means the very greatest mind there is. Nothing is greater. *THE BODHISATTVA, USING THOSE TEN MINDS, ATTAINS ENTRY TO THE SECOND GROUND OF LEAVING FILTH.* The Bodhisattva, by employing those ten kinds of profound minds in cultivation, can attain the Second Ground and leave all defiling filth far behind.

DISCIPLES OF THE BUDDHA--Vajra Treasury Bodhisattva again calls out: All of you disciples of the Buddha, *WHEN THE BODHISATTVA DWELLS UPON THE GROUND OF LEAVING FILTH, HIS NATURE OF ITSELF LEAVES ALL KILLING FAR BEHIND. HE DOES NOT COLLECT KNIVES OR STAVES.* He, himself, does not collect--that is, does not retain or prepare--knives, staves, or any instruments of killing. *HE DOES NOT CHERISH RESENTMENT OR HATRED.* The Bodhisattva has no resentment or hatred in his mind for anyone. *HE HAS SHAME, AND HE HAS REMORSE.* He always has a sense of great shame and great remorse. *HE IS ENDOWED WITH HUMANENESS AND RECIPROCITY.* This means that one does not subject others to what one would not want to be subjected to oneself. For instance, if you would not want others to oppress you, then you yourself do not oppress other people. If you yourself would not like to be scolded by people, then you do not scold others. Those are all minds of humaneness and reciprocity. Humaneness means being kind and compassionate towards people, and reciprocity also means a sense of forgiveness. No matter who does what wrong, you forgive them. He is endowed with this mind of humane love, this mind of reciprocity and forgiveness.

TOWARDS ALL LIVING BEINGS WHO HAVE A LIFE-- with regard to all living beings with sentience, that is, all living beings who have blood and breath and so have lives--*HE ALWAYS BRINGS FORTH THOUGHTS OF BENEFIT AND KINDLY MINDFULNESS.* He always wants to benefit all those living beings and be kind and compassionate towards all people. *THIS BODHISATTVA WOULD NOT WITH EVIL MIND EVEN TROUBLE LIVING BEINGS*-- he would not maliciously cause living beings to become afflicted--*HOW MUCH THE LESS GIVE RISE TO HEAVY INTENT AND ACTUALLY KILL OR HARM AND WHOM HE REALIZES ARE LIVING BEINGS.* Being aware that they are living beings, he would not employ a heavily evil mind and then carry out that "heavy intent" to kill or harm living beings. Because they are living beings, one should have an attitude of humaneness and reciprocity towards them; one should not kill and harm them.

to be continued

CORRECTION

to News, Issue 145

The Sino-American Buddhist Association sponsored the first transmission of the complete precepts for Bhikshus and Bhikshunis in the United States in a traditional 108-day ordination program from June 7

to September 22, 1972. Similar ordination programs were held from June 24 to October 10, 1976, and from July 13 to October 28, 1979.

THE 1982 PRECEPT PLATFORM COMMENCES ON JULY 8, AND CONTINUES FOR 108 DAYS, CULMINATING WITH THE ORTHODOX TRANSMISSION ON OCTOBER 24, 1982.