



# *Dharma Flower Sutra*

*with commentary of Tripitaka Master Hua*

*Translated by BTTS*

*Reviewed by Bhikshuni Heng Ch' ih*

*Edited by Upasika Kuo Lin Lethcoe*

SUTRA:

IF LIVING BEINGS ONLY HEAR OF THE ONE BUDDHA VEHICLE, THEY WILL NOT WISH TO SEE THE BUDDHA OR TO DRAW NEAR TO HIM. INSTEAD, THEY WILL THINK, "THE BUDDHA PATH IS LONG AND FAR; IT CAN ONLY BE ACCOMPLISHED AFTER MUCH LABOR AND SUFFERING." THE BUDDHA KNOWS THEIR MINDS TO BE WEAK AND LOWLY. WHEN THEY ARE HALFWAY THERE, HE USES THE POWER OF EXPEDIENTS TO SPEAK OF THE TWO NIRVANAS IN ORDER TO GIVE THEM A REST. IF LIVING BEINGS DWELL ON THESE TWO LEVELS, THE THUS COME ONE THEN TELLS THEM, "YOU HAVE NOT YET FINISHED YOUR JOB. THE LEVEL YOU ARE DWELLING AT IS NEAR THE BUDDHA'S WISDOM. YOU SHOULD OBSERVE AND PONDER THIS: THE NIRVANA YOU HAVE ATTAINED IS NOT THE REAL ONE. THE THUS COME ONE HAS BUT USED THE POWER OF EXPEDIENTS AND, WITHIN THE ONE VEHICLE, DISCRIMINATED AND SPOKEN OF THREE.

COMMENTARY:

If living beings only hear of the One Buddha Vehicle--if I were to start right out speaking ***THE WONDERFUL DHARMA LOTUS FLOWER SUTRA***, the Dharma-door of the One Buddha Vehicle they will not wish to see the Buddha. The Dharma-door of the One Buddha Vehicle is difficult to believe in and difficult to understand. It's not easy to have faith in it or to comprehend it. So, if living beings heard it they wouldn't want to see the Buddha. They would think, "Cultivating the Buddha Path is entirely too hard." ... or to draw near to him, because they are afraid they will lose their grip on the false things they are grasping. If they were to lose the false and gain the true what would they do? So they wouldn't want to get near the Buddha. Instead they will think, "The Buddha Path is long and far"--Because cultivating the Buddhadharma to become a Buddha takes an incredibly long time. You must pass through three great asankheya aeons! Such a long time; Good grief! That's too much! It can only be accomplished after much labor and suffering. Who knows how much hard work is involved, cultivating all the ascetic practices and so on? The Buddha knows their minds, Shakyamuni Buddha and all the Buddhas know the thoughts passing through the minds of living beings. ...to be weak and lowly. They are weak and soft, not solid at all. As soon as they undergo a bit of opposition they can't stand it. Lowly means that they are base and stupid. When they are halfway there he uses the power of expedients, clever expedient devices, to speak of the Two Nirvanas in order to give them a rest. They were three hundred yojanas into their

five hundred yojana trek. They still had two hundred yojanas to go. Transcending the desire heavens they traveled one hundred yojanas. Transcending to the form realm heavens they travelled two hundred yojanas. Transcending the formless realm, they travelled three hundred yojanas. Thus, they transcended the three realms. When Bodhisattvas who have transcended the three realms have subdued and destroyed the delusions of dust and sand they are said to have arrived in the Land of Expedients With Residue, having then travelled four hundred yojanas. If they then break through the delusions of ignorance they arrive at the Adorned Land of Real Retribution. Then they have travelled five hundred yojanas; they have made it. So the halfway point is the three hundred yojana mark. The Buddha spoke about the two Nirvanas to give them a rest. The two Nirvanas are, 1)With residue, and 2)Without residue. Nirvana with residue means that there is something left. This is the Nirvana attained by Arhats who have certified to the fruit and cut off the delusions of views and thought. Their bodies still remain, however; They haven't been able to get rid of both body and wisdom. Nirvana without residue means that you use the real fire of samadhi to annihilate the body as well. You can light your own fire from inside. This is called the annihilation of body and wisdom. But, both these Nirvana belong to the state of the Two Vehicles.

If living beings dwell on these two levels, **that of Nirvana with residue and Nirvana without residue**, the Thus Come One then tells them, "You have not yet finished your job. **Your cultivation of the Path is not yet finished. You're not done yet. You've quite a ways to go.** The level you are dwelling at is near the Buddhas' wisdom. You should observe and ponder this: The Nirvana you have attained is not the real one. **Both Nirvana with residue and Nirvana without residue are not real; they are not genuine Nirvana.** The Thus Come One has but used the power of his expedients and, **using those clever devices**, within the One Buddha Vehicle, discriminated and spoke of three," **the Vehicle of the Sound Hearers, the Vehicle of the Conditioned Enlightened Ones, and the Bodhisattva Vehicle.**

SUTRA:

HE IS LIKE THAT GUIDE, WHO, IN ORDER TO GIVE THE TRAVELERS A REST, CONJURED UP A GREAT CITY. THEM, WHEN THEY HAD RESTED, HE TOLD THEM, "THE PLACE OF THE JEWELS IS NEAR. THIS CITY IS NOT REAL, BUT MERELY SOMETHING I HAVE CONJURED UP."

COMMENTARY:

He is like that guide, **the Buddha is like the guide who knows the way through the hazardous road.** Who, in order to give the travelers a rest, **knowing that they were weary**, conjured up a great city. Then, when they had rested, he told them, "The place of the jewels is near. This city is not real, but merely something I have conjured up."

SUTRA:

AT THAT TIME THE WORLD HONORED ONE, WISHING TO RESTATE THIS MEANING, SPOKE VERSES SAYING,

THE BUDDHA GREAT-PENETRATING-  
WISDOM-VICTORY  
SAT IN THE BODHIMANDA FOR  
TEN AEONS,  
WITHOUT THE MANIFESTATION  
OF THE BUDDHADHARMAS,  
AND HE DID NOT REALIZE THE  
BUDDHA WAY.  
HEAVENLY SPIRITS AND DRAGON  
KINGS,  
AND THE HOST OF ASURAS,  
CONSTANTLY RAINED DOWN  
HEAVENLY FLOWERS  
AS AN OFFERING TO THAT  
BUDDHA.  
THE GODS BEAT UPON THEIR  
HEAVENLY DRUMS  
AND MADE ALL KINDS OF  
MUSIC,  
FRAGRANT BREEZES BLEW AWAY  
THE WITHERED FLOWERS  
AND FINE NEW ONES RAINED  
DOWN.  
WHEN TEN AEONS HAD PASSED,  
HE REALIZED THE BUDDHA  
WAY.  
ALL THE GODS AND HUMANS,  
DANCED FOR THE JOY WITHIN  
THEIR MINDS.  
THE SIXTEEN SONS OF THAT  
BUDDHA  
AS WELL AS THEIR RETINUES,  
THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS  
SURROUNDING THEM,  
ALL WENT BEFORE THAT  
BUDDHA.  
THEY BOWED WITH THEIR HEADS  
AT HIS FEET,  
AND ASKED HIM TO TURN THE  
DHARMA WHEEL.  
"MAY THE SAGELY LION'S DHARMA  
RAIN  
FILL US AND EVERYONE!"

COMMENTARY:

At that time, The World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses saying. **The Buddha wanted to go into more detail so he talked about the doctrines in verse.**

The Buddha, Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory/ Sat in the Bodhimanda for ten aeons/ **He sat there in full lotus in samadhi, but he didn't certify to the fruit in ten aeons.** Without the manifestation of the Buddhadharmas/ And he did not realize the Buddha Way/ Heavenly spirits and dragon kings/ And the host of asuras/ **the ugly ones,** Constantly rained down heavenly flowers/ As an offering to that Buddha/ **to the Buddha Great-Penetrating-Wisdom-Victory.**

The gods beat upon their heavenly drums/ and made all kinds of music/ Fragrant breezes blew away the withered flowers/ and fine, new ones rained down/

When ten aeons had passed/ He then realized the Buddha Way/ **The Buddhadharmas manifested, and he realized Anuttarasamyaksambodhi.** All the gods and humans/ Danced for the joy within their minds/ **They were all ecstatic. Never had they been so happy.**

The sixteen sons of that Buddha/ As well as their retinues/ thousands of millions surrounding them/ All went before that Buddha/

They bowed with their heads at his feet/ and asked him to turn the Dharma Wheel/ "May the sagely Lion's Dharma rain/ Fill us and everyone!"/ **Fill us and all living beings.**

SUTRA:

A WORLD HONORED ONE IS VERY  
HARD TO ENCOUNTER,  
APPEARING BUT ONCE IN A  
LONG TIME.  
IN ORDER TO AWAKEN ALL  
CREATURES,  
HE SHAKES ALL THINGS.

COMMENTARY:

A World Honored One is very hard to encounter/ **Hard to encounter as he is we have now encountered him.** Appearing but once in a long time/ **The Buddha doesn't appear in every generation. Who knows how long one must have to wait before a Buddha manifests?** In order to awaken all creatures/ **Why does the Buddha manifest in the world? To wake up all living beings.** He shakes all things/.

SUTRA:

IN FIVE HUNDRED MYRIADS  
OF MILLIONS OF LANDS,  
IN WORLDS IN THE EASTERN  
DIRECTION,  
BRAHMA PALACES SHONE WITH  
A LIGHT  
SUCH AS THEY NEVER HAD BEFORE.  
THE BRAHMAS, SEEING THESE  
SIGNS,  
FOLLOWED THEM TO THE BUDDHA;  
THEY SCATTERED FLOWERS  
AS AN OFFERING,  
AND OFFERED UP THEIR  
PALACES,  
ASKING THE BUDDHA TO TURN  
THE DHARMA WHEEL,  
WITH VERSES IN HIS PRAISE.  
THE BUDDHA KNEW THE TIME  
HAD NOT YET COME  
AND RECEIVED THEIR REQUEST  
SEATED IN SILENCE.  
FROM THE OTHER THREE DIRECTIONS  
AND THE FOUR POINTS BELOW,  
THEY SCATTERED FLOWERS AND  
OFFERED THEIR PALACES,  
ASKING THE BUDDHA TO TURN  
THE DHARMA WHEEL:  
"THE WORLD HONORED ONE  
IS VERY HARD TO MEET;  
WE PRAY THAT THROUGH HIS  
GREAT COMPASSION AND PITY  
HE WILL OPEN WIDE THE  
SWEET DEW DOOR  
AND TURN THE SUPREME  
DHARMA WHEEL."

COMMENTARY:

In five hundred myriads of millions of lands/ In worlds of the Eastern direction/ Brahma Palaces shone with a light/ Such as they never had before/ The Brahma seeing these signs/ Followed them to the Buddha/ **When the Great Brahma Kings saw these signs they followed the light to the Buddha. Ordinarily their palaces shone with light and they would not think light was anything special. But, this light was so bright they thought it quite unusual. "Something special is happening."** They scattered flowers as an offering/ **The ones they had brought in their flower sacks, very wonderful and fragrant.** And offered up their palaces/ asking the Buddha to turn the Dharma Wheel/

With verses in his praise/ **They scattered heavenly flowers over the Buddha and presented him with their most prized possessions--their palaces, They did this because they wanted him to turn the Dharma Wheel, to speak the Dharma. Before he turned the Dharma Wheel it was appropriate that they make offerings to him. They praised him with verses.**

The Buddha knew the time had not yet come/ **The Buddha, Great-penetrating-Wisdom-Victory knew it wasn't yet time to turn the Wheel.** And received their request seated in silence/ **He didn't say a thing.** From the other three directions, and four points between/ **From the south, west, and north, and the four intermediate directions,** and likewise from above and below/ They scattered flowers and offered their palaces/ Asking the Buddha to turn the Dharma Wheel/ "The World Honored One is very hard to meet/ **It's no simple matter to encounter a Buddha.** We pray that, through his great compassion and pity/ **We hope that the Buddha will use his basic wisdom and compassion.**

**Why does the text say first, the "eastern" direction? Because the east is associated with growth, with wood, and with the season of spring. Therefore, it comes first. The texts says, "worlds," plural, because there are many of them. In the east there is the Eastern Crystal World of Medicine Master Buddha; there are also countless other worlds as well. In general, they come from, "five hundreds of myriads of millions of lands."**

He will open wide the sweet dew door/ **Open wide for all of us the door of sweet dew, the nectar of immortality, so that we may end birth and death.** And turn the supreme Dharma Wheel"/.

*continued next issue*