

# The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra

with the commentary of **Tripitaka Master Hua**

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SUTRA:

*I, TOO, AM LIKE THIS,  
I AM THE GUIDE OF ALL;*

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COMMENTARY:

Shakyamuni Buddha says, I, TOO, AM LIKE THIS/. I am the same. I AM THE GUIDE OF ALL/ I am a Good Knowing Advisor for all living beings. I teach all living beings to hurry up and become Buddhas.

SUTRA:

*SEEING THOSE WHO SEEK THE WAY,  
EXHAUSTED IN MID-COURSE,  
UNABLE TO CROSS THE DANGEROUS PATHS  
OF BIRTH, DEATH AND AFFLICTION,  
THEREFORE, I USE THE POWER OF EXPEDIENTS,  
TO SPEAK OF NIRVANA AND GIVE THEM A REST,  
SAYING, "YOUR SUFFERINGS ARE ENDED.  
YOU HAVE DONE WHAT YOU HAD TO DO."  
THEN, KNOWING THEY HAD REACHED NIRVANA,  
AND HAD ALL BECOME ARHATS,  
I GATHER THEM TOGETHER,  
TO TEACH THEM THE GENUINE DHARMA.  
THE BUDDHAS USE THE POWER OF EXPEDIENTS,  
TO DISCRIMINATE AND SPEAK OF THREE VEHICLES.  
BUT THERE IS ONLY THE ONE BUDDHA VEHICLE.  
THE OTHER TWO WERE SPOKEN AS A RESTING PLACE.  
WHAT I AM TELLING YOU NOW IS THE TRUTH:  
WHAT YOU HAVE GAINED IS NOT EXTINCTION.  
FOR THE SAKE OF THE BUDDHA'S ALL-WISDOM,  
YOU SHOULD EXERT YOURSELVES WITH GREAT VIGOR.  
WHEN YOU HAVE CERTIFIED TO ALL-WISDOM,  
AND HAVE THE TEN POWERS AND OTHER BUDDHA DHARMAS  
AND HAVE PERFECTED THE THIRTY-TWO MARKS,*

*THEN YOU WILL HAVE ATTAINED GENUINE EXTINCTION.*

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COMMENTARY:

SEEING THOSE WHO SEEK THE WAY/ EXHAUSTED IN MID-COURSE/  
UNABLE TO CROSS THE DANGEROUS PATHS / OF BIRTH, DEATH AND  
AFFLICTIONS,/ THEREFORE, I USE THE POWER OF EXPEDIENTS, TO SPEAK  
OF NIRVANA AND GIVE THEM A REST, / SAYING, "YOUR SUFFERINGS ARE  
ENDED/." Those of the small vehicle cultivate for a while, but when they are half-way  
there, they decide they can't cultivate anymore. They can't stand the suffering. They get  
tired and slack off. So it's said,

The first year you cultivate, the Buddha's right in front of you.

By the third year, he's eighty thousand miles away.

By the tenth year, he's completely out of sight.

When you first decide to cultivate, you may be very sincere. If you can hold onto that  
kind of sincerity, you will become a Buddha soon. However, you can't keep it up for  
very long. Half way there you get lazy. Some people studying here should have  
already opened the five eyes and gained the six spiritual penetrations. Why haven't they  
done so? It's because they are lazy. Some people have opened the five eyes and gained  
the six penetrations, but haven't developed any genuine wisdom. This is also because  
they are lazy and they haven't purified themselves of desire. Some people have the five  
eyes and six spiritual penetrations, but then they get lazy and fail to cultivate and they  
lose their powers. These are all cases of turning back, exhausted at the half-way point.

Since such beings are unable to cross the sea of suffering, unable to cross the most  
dangerous road of affliction, the Buddha uses many expedient Dharma-doors. That is  
why at this point he offers the cultivators a place to rest--he lets those of the small  
vehicle have their Nirvana with residue. "YOU HAVE DONE WHAT YOU HAD TO  
DO/." He tells them, "Your job is done."

THEN KNOWING THEY HAD REACHED NIRVANA,/ AND HAD ALL BECOME  
ARHATS,/ I GATHER THEM TOGETHER,/ TO TEACH THEM THE GENUINE  
DHARMAS/. I open the provisional to reveal the real and teach the real Dharma, *THE  
DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA*. We are now hearing the Dharma of *THE LOTUS SUTRA*,  
so we should put forth vigor. We should not linger in Transformation City.

THE BUDDHAS USE THE POWER OF EXPEDIENTS,/ TO DISCRIMINATE AND  
SPEAK OF THREE VEHICLES/. The Buddhas of the ten directions and the three  
periods of time teach and transform living beings using expedient means. The  
Buddhadharma, in reality, is only the One Buddha Vehicle. The Sound Hearer,  
Conditioned Enlightened Ones, and the Bodhisattva Vehicles do not really exist. But if  
at the beginning, the Buddha had talked about the Buddha Vehicle, living beings  
would have been afraid. So, the Buddhas set forth the provisional dharmas for the sake  
of the real. Although they speak provisional dharmas, their ultimate destination is still

the real Dharmas. So it says, "They discriminate and speak of Three Vehicles." Fearing living beings would think the Buddha fruit was too far away and they could never cultivate it successfully, they decided to speak the Three Vehicles to lead living beings there gradually. BUT THERE IS ONLY THE ONE BUDDHA VEHICLE/. The Three Vehicles are just transformation city. They are transformed by the Buddhas' spiritual power. In the future, living beings will attain the Buddha fruit, for there is only the One Real Buddha Vehicle. THE OTHER TWO WERE SPOKEN AS A RESTING PLACE/. The Buddha saw that they were discouraged. Consequently, with his spiritual penetrations he created the city so they could rest a bit. The Buddha spoke of the two kinds of Nirvana: with residue and without residue.

WHAT I AM TELLING YOU NOW IS THE TRUTH/. "You should go beyond the transformation city. I am revealing to you the real Dharma, the Buddha Vehicle." WHAT YOU HAVE GAINED IS NOT EXTINCTION/. "The Nirvana with residue that you have attained, the Fourth Fruit of Arhatship, is not Buddhahood. It's not ultimate; it's not real extinction. You haven't completely ended birth and death and attained the bliss of still extinction. You still have a ways to go." As Fourth Stage Arhats, they have ended Share Section birth and death, but they have not yet ended Change birth and death.

Share Section birth and death refers to our physical existence, that is, every person has his own body which exists for a certain period of time. Change birth and death refers to the continual process of birth and death of thoughts in our minds.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE BUDDHAS' ALL WISDOM/ YOU SHOULD EXERT YOURSELVES WITH VIGOR/. You should be extremely vigorous and seek Real Mark Prajna wisdom. Don't stop at Fourth Stage Arhatship and fail to go forward. WHEN YOU HAVE CERTIFIED TO ALL WISDOM,/ AND HAVE THE TEN POWERS AND OTHER BUDDHA DHARMAS/ AND HAVE PERFECTED THE THIRTY-TWO MARKS,/ THEN YOU WILL HAVE ATTAINED GENUINE EXTINCTION/. Since the Ten Powers have been discussed in full before, I will now elaborate on some of them. The second is, "The Buddha knows the karmic retribution of living beings in the three periods of time." For now, we won't talk about the three periods of time. We will talk about yesterday, today and tomorrow. Or, we can talk about last month, this month, and next month, or we can talk about last year, this year, and next year. If you don't believe that there are future lives or past lives, you only believe in this life. So I will change the time period. Surely you will admit to the concept of last year, this year, and next year. You can't disagree with that. If you can't, then you cannot really object to the idea of past, present, and future lives. The Buddha knows the karmic retribution of living beings--that is, what karmic offenses or good deeds they did in past lives, and what their cause and effect is. They know currently what they are undergoing as retribution. They also know the fruits they will reap in the future.

The fourth is, "The Buddha knows the superiority or inferiority of living beings' faculties." This means he knows which living beings have good roots and which do not. The Buddha knows at a glance. The Buddha knows, but he won't tell you. He

won't blast a living being saying, "You are too rotten. Hurry up and get away from the Buddha!" He wouldn't say that. He also wouldn't say, "Oh, you have such fine, good roots. You should draw near to the Buddha." He won't talk about these things. Why not? It's one thing to know about them, it's another thing to broadcast your knowledge. You can't go around telling people all these things. You may know, but you can't tell. If you tell living beings they have good roots, they will get arrogant, thinking it doesn't matter if they cultivate or not. Then you have harmed them. Those without good roots should not be told either, or they will get discouraged and refuse to cultivate. Thinking it hopeless, they will retreat. If they don't know whether or not they have good roots, they will go ahead and cultivate. If they know, they will be lazy and retreat from the Bodhi mind. The Buddha knows, but he doesn't tell people. He's not like common people who don't know, but press the issue and insist that they do know. The Buddha knows, but doesn't tell. Those who don't know often claim that they do.

Genuinely intelligent people would never say, "See me? I am the most intelligent person there is!" People who say they are smart are already stupid to the extreme. If they weren't stupid, they wouldn't praise themselves as being wise. Some people affect very strange styles and ways of thinking. If you flatter them with even one sentence of praise, they feel it's as sweet as eating honey. If you say one thing unfavorable, they find it bitter as gall. Praise them, and they are delighted. If you don't praise them, they will praise themselves. No one else praises them, so they have to introduce themselves. They say, "I cultivate really hard. I have made a lot of progress. I have no false thinking," How do you know you have no false thinking? If you know you have no false thinking, that itself is false thinking. If you had no false thinking, you won't have to introduce yourself and say, "I have no false thinking." Why do you want everyone to know that you have no false thinking? Others cultivate and claim that they have no thoughts of sexual desire. As soon as you say you don't have desire, that means that you do have it. If you really didn't have any desire, you wouldn't feel compelled to say that you didn't. If you don't have any, why bring up in the first place? If you bring it up, that means it's still there. You just want to give yourself a high hat to wear and to cheat people into thinking that you have no sexual desire. I will tell you, until you have reached Fourth Stage Arhatship, you can't say that you have no sexual desire.

"Oh, in that case, then I probably have certified to the fourth fruit, because I really don't have any. You just don't believe me, that's all." If you really didn't have any, why would you be worried about people believing that you did or didn't? Hmm? If you don't, you don't. Why try to get people to believe you? Huh? If other people believe that you don't have any, that's not going to help them get rid of theirs! It doesn't work like that. So what's the big deal?

There are a lot of people who speak out of both sides of their mouths. They say they do, and they say they don't. For example, they don't have the Buddha's wisdom, but then they say that they do. They aren't as pure as the Buddha, but they say that they are. Living beings all like to be number one. They even want to put the Buddha in the

number two slot! So, the fourth wisdom power of the Buddha is knowing the superiority or inferiority of living beings' dispositions.

The fifth wisdom power is "The Buddha knows the various capacities of understanding of living beings." One who has this wisdom power, not only understands oneself, but understands other living beings as well. If you only understand yourself and know how to lecture Sutras, what good does that do anyone else. If you can lecture the Sutras, but living beings can't understand them, it's useless. You have to be aware of what living beings can understand, so that when you explain a certain principle, a certain living being can understand it, and if you explain another principle, that other living being can understand it. You can't explain things too profoundly or too mysteriously so people can't understand. If they don't understand, it may be very profound, but it's of no use. Right? The doctrines must be explained so that everyone can understand and accept them. That's one of the powers of the Buddha. He knows what living beings can understand, and he teaches them accordingly. You shouldn't deliberately lecture in such a way that people can't understand you. It would be better not to lecture at all than do that.

The sixth wisdom power is, "The Buddha knows all the different states of living beings." Everyone has his own state of mind. Everyone has his fondnesses and his dislikes. Some living beings like to eat sweet things. Some don't. Some like bitter things, or hot things, or sour things. There are many different religions in the world too. There's Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam. They are like the different flavors. Everybody has his preference. If you look at it one way, there are many different religions. If you look at it another way, they are all included in Buddhism. No religion is outside of Buddhism. Other religions claim that they are the truest, the most lofty. Buddhism doesn't claim to be lofty or true, because all religions, true or false, high or low--all are included within Buddhism. None of them are outside of Buddhism, the true is Buddhism, and the false is Buddhism. They are all included within Buddhism. True and false, high and low, are discriminations made by living beings; there are no such discriminations within the religion itself. As *THE VAJRA SUTRA* says, "This Dharma is level and equal, with nothing above or below it." Where is this "true and false?" The true comes from the false, and the false comes from the true. It's just like day and night. When the day reaches its ultimate, night falls. When night reaches its ultimate, dawn breaks. People are awake sometimes, and sometimes they are asleep. When they are asleep, they don't know anything at all. When awake, they are alert. When they sleep they dream. The dreams are false. Religions are a bit like this. It's not that religions are always alert and awake. Sometimes they are sleeping, too. When religions are asleep, they are false. Even though it causes them to be false they can't avoid falling asleep. If people don't sleep they can't survive. Look at the Venerable Aniruddha who didn't sleep for a week and consequently went blind! So, the Buddhas know all the different states of mind of living beings. Living beings congregate with those of their own kind. Throughout the Ten Dharma Realms beings gather together with those in their own realm. Bodhisattvas do the deeds of Bodhisattvas. Arhats do Arhat's work. Gods do the deeds of gods. People behave like human beings. Asuras act like asuras; that is, they fight all day long. Hungry ghosts do what hungry ghosts are forced to do, and animals act like

the animals they are. Hell-beings must undergo the experiences of the hells. Each follows its own kind.

The seventh wisdom power is "The Buddha knows where all paths lead." If you cultivate the five precepts and ten good deeds, you can be born in the heavens. If you cultivate the Dhyanas, you can certify to the sagely fruition. If you cultivate the six perfections and the ten thousand conducts, you can perfect the Bodhisattva practices and become a Buddha. If you create offenses, you can turn into a hungry ghost or fall into the hells. Whatever cause you plant, you reap that fruit. If you plant good causes, you reap a good fruit; if you plant a bad cause, you reap a bad fruit.

There are ten powers, but they are inexhaustible, really. The ten unfold into a hundred; the hundred expand into a thousand, the thousand multiply into ten thousand, the ten thousand increase to become a million and so forth. Having perfected the six paramitas and ten thousand practices, having developed the thirty-two marks and eighty subtle characteristics to completion, one can be said to have attained genuine extinction.

SUTRA:

*THE BUDDHAS, THE GUIDING MASTERS,  
SPEAK OF NIRVANA TO GIVE LIVING BEINGS REST,  
BUT ONCE THEY KNOW THAT THEY ARE RESTED,  
THEY LEAD THEM INTO THE BUDDHAS' WISDOM.*

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COMMENTARY:

THE BUDDHAS, THE GUIDING MASTERS,/SPEAK OF NIRVANA TO GIVE LIVING BEINGS REST/. The Buddhas speak of Sound Hearer, Conditioned Enlightened, and Bodhisattva Vehicles. They speak of Nirvana with residue. BUT ONCE THEY KNOW THAT THEY ARE RESTED/--once they know living beings have recuperated in the transformation city, THEY LEAD THEM INTO THE BUDDHAS' WISDOM/. They lead living beings to become Buddhas and attain the Buddhas' wisdom.

*-end of Chapter 7  
-Sutra continued next issue.*