

DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA

with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA

*Translated into English by BTTS
EDITED BY UPASIKA NANCY LETHCOE
REVIEWED BY BHIKSHUNI HENG CH'IH*

SUTRA:

THE BUDDHA, KNOWING THE THOUGHTS IN THEIR MINDS, TOLD MAHAKASHYAPA: "I NOW CONFER UPON EACH OF THESE TWELVE HUNDRED ARHATS IN SUCCESSION A PREDICTION OF ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBOBODHI."

COMMENTARY:

THE BUDDHA, KNOWING THE THOUGHTS IN THEIR MINDS, TOLD MAHAKASHYAPA: "I NOW CONFER UPON EACH OF THESE TWELVE HUNDRED ARHATS." With his five eyes and six spiritual penetrations, the Buddha knew what was on their minds." Tell them not to have false thinking, and not to be nervous. I will give them each a prediction right away! IN SUCCESSION I will bestow on them each A PREDICTION OF ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBOBODHI."

SUTRA:

"IN THIS ASSEMBLY, MY GREAT DISCIPLE, THE BHIKSHU, KAUNDINYA, WILL MAKE OFFERINGS TO SIXTY-TWO THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS OF BUDDHAS. HAVING DONE SO, HE WILL THEN BECOME A BUDDHA BY THE NAME OF UNIVERSAL-BRIGHTNESS. THUS COME ONE, ONE WORTHY OF OFFERINGS, ONE OF PROPER AND UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE, ONE OF PERFECT CLARITY AND CONDUCT, WELL-GONE ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE WORLD, UNSURPASSED LORD, A TAMING AND REGULATING HERO, TEACHER OF PEOPLE AND GODS, A BUDDHA, THE WORLD HONORED ONE."

COMMENTARY:

Shakyamuni Buddha says, "IN THIS ASSEMBLY, MY GREAT DISCIPLE, my very good disciple, my most obedient disciple, my best cultivating disciple, my most non-lazy disciple, my most Dharma-upholding disciple--Who is it? THE BHIKSHU KAUNDINYA."

In former lives, Kaundinya had killed the Buddha, slandered the Buddha, beaten the Buddha, cut off his arms, cut off his legs, and cut off his ears and nose. But when

Kaundinya cut the Buddha's limbs off, the Buddha made a vow, "When I become a Buddha, I will save you first." So, in this life, when he became a Buddha, he went straight to the Deer Park to save the Five Bhikshus, the first of whom was Kaundinya. Ajnatakaundinya means "understanding the original limit," or "the first to understand." He understood his original face and was the first to become enlightened. He, too, was an elder among the twelve hundred fifty Bhikshus, one of the first to leave home under the Buddha.

"He WILL MAKE OFFERINGS TO SIXTY-TWO THOUSANDS OF MILLIONS OF BUDDHAS. HAVING DONE SO, HE WILL THEN BECOME A BUDDHA BY THE NAME OF UNIVERSAL-BRIGHTNESS, complete with the ten titles of a Buddha: THUS COME ONE, ONE WORTHY OF OFFERINGS, OF PROPER AND UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE, ONE OF PERFECT CLARITY AND CONDUCT, WELL-GONE ONE WHO UNDERSTANDS THE WORLD, UNSURPASSED LORD, TEACHER OF PEOPLE AND GODS, A BUDDHA, THE WORLD HONORED ONE." Every Buddha has these ten titles.

I don't believe that any of you are as anxious to get a prediction from Shakyamuni Buddha as those Arhats were.

SUTRA:

"THE FIVE HUNDRED ARHATS, URUVILVAKASHYAPA, GAYAKASHYAPA, NADIKASHYAPA, KALODAYIN, UDAYIN, ANIRUDDHA, PEVATA, KAPPHINA, VAKKULA, CUNDA, SVAGATA, AND OTHERS ALL WILL ATTAIN ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBODHI, ALL OF THEM WITH THE SAME NAME UNIVERSAL-BRIGHTNESS.

COMMENTARY:

"Among the twelve hundred fifty, there will be Arhats, FIVE HUNDRED of them, who will become Buddhas. URUVILVAKASHYAPA, GAYAKASHYAPA, and NADIKASHYAPA," were brothers. URUVILVAKASHYAPA's name means "papaya grove." GAYAKASHYAPA's name means "city." NADIKASHYAPA's name means "river."

"KALODAYIN," means "black light." He was one of the "gang of six" Bhikshus. He didn't follow the rules and always was off somewhere enjoying himself. Not only that, he went out at night. One time he was out at night begging. His complexion was very black and shiny. Although there were no lights on the road, his face glowed in the dark! He was walking along, and a lady opened the door of her house as he walked by. She thought he was a ghost! Seeing a ghost is very inauspicious. It scared her so badly that she had a miscarriage. Then she realized it was not a ghost; it was a person. Not only was it a person, it was a disciple of the Buddha! She went to the Buddha to complain: "You shouldn't allow your disciples to run around at night and scare people into having miscarriages." So the Buddha set up a rule that Bhikshus can't go out at night to beg. He

said, "Do you all agree to that rule?" The assembly, for the most part, agreed, because cultivators shouldn't do things that scare laypeople. KALODAYIN means "black light." He had a lot of affinities with people, and everyone believed what he said, so he was able to teach a lot of people. Although he was one of the six unruly Bhikshus, still, strangely enough, when others saw him, they followed the rules. He taught over a thousand married couples and a lot of people took refuge with him. He was a teacher who didn't follow the rules who taught many students, all of whom followed the rules. It was strange.

"UDAYIN" means "manifesting." He was Ananda's disciple.

"ANIRUDDHA" was the disciple who was scolded by the Buddha for sleeping during lectures.

"Do you mean that the Buddha got angry and scolded him?"

Of course the Buddha got angry! If he didn't his disciples wouldn't have listened to him. Besides, it was very aggravating. Just as the Buddha was speaking the Sutras in the most wonderful way, he would look over and see Aniruddha sleeping—in the most wonderful way! So the Buddha slammed his fist on the table and shouted,

Hey! Hey, how can you sleep,
Like an oyster or a clam?
Sleep, sleep for a thousand years,
And you'll never hear the Buddha's name!

"You're so lazy, all you do is sleep!" Aniruddha was the Buddha's cousin. He felt very ashamed that the Buddha had to scold him in front of all the Arhats. He didn't sleep for a week and went blind. The Buddha then taught him the Vajra Illuminating Samadhi, and he opened his Heavenly Eye. He could, using the Heavenly Eye, regard the entire three thousand great thousand worlds like an apple in the palm of his hand. His name means "never poor." This is because in the distant past he made offerings to an old cultivator who was a sage who had certified to the fruit. The old cultivator had cultivated wisdom and not blessings, and so he didn't get many offerings of food. What is more, at that time there was a famine. I said earlier that Arhats just sat and waited for the offerings to come in. This cultivator was a Pratyeka Buddha, a bit higher than an Arhat, but he hadn't cultivated blessings, so no one made offerings to him. Even though he was a sage, he still had to eat. He made a vow that he would go begging for food once every seven days. He would beg from seven houses in a row, and if he didn't receive an offering by then, he would forget it and go back up onto the mountain. One day, he was returning to his mountain with an empty bowl, when he passed by a farmer who was planting his fields. The farmer was very poor, and all he had was a bag lunch, since he was so far from his house. The farmer didn't know the cultivator was a Pratyeka Buddha. He asked him, "Oh, you have just come back from begging?"

Although he was a sage, he was still a bit disgruntled. "Today I didn't get anything. I'll just go hungry for another week."

The farmer thought, "That's too much suffering! I won't eat today. I'll give my lunch to this cultivator." "Old cultivator, I have some coarse rice, would you care to eat it? I would like to make an offering of it to you." The Pratyeka Buddha was uncomfortable with hunger pangs. "What will you eat then?" he asked.

"If I don't eat for one day, it's not important. I can get something when I get home."

The Pratyeka Buddha accepted the offering. Then he transferred the merit to the farmer:

Those who practice giving
Will attain benefit.
If they give seeking happiness,
They will attain the happiness they seek.

Having done this, he left the farmer.

Now, the farmer continued working when all of a sudden a very naughty rabbit started to play tricks on him, jumping on his hoe and things like that. Finally the rabbit jumped onto his back. He tried to get it off with his hoe, but it wouldn't budge. This frightened him. He ran home and asked his wife to help him get the rabbit off his back. His wife tried, but the rabbit had turned to gold! She plucked off one leg and took it to town to exchange it for money. When she got back, the leg had grown back. They were rich! Not only was he rich for one life, but for ninety-one kalpas in every life he was wealthy. So his name means "not poor." He wasn't poor because he gave his lunch to the Pratyeka Buddha. As a result, he was wealthy for ninety-one kalpas.

"REVATA" means "constellation."

"KAPPHINA" means "house constellation." Kapphina was named after the constellation his parents prayed to in order to have him. They were over the age of forty, and childless when they decided to pray to the constellation for a son.

"VAKKULA" in the past kept the precept against killing, and so in his present life, he received five kinds of non-dying rewards. When he was born, he was laughing, as if to say, "Hi!" This scared his mother. "He must be a goblin! Why is he laughing instead of crying?" So she tried to fry him in the frying pan. He couldn't be fried, however. Then she tried to boil him in water, but he couldn't be boiled! Then she threw him into the ocean hoping he would drown, but he couldn't be drowned, either. Then a hungry fish tried to gobble him up. Then a fisherman caught the fish and cut it open. There was Vakkula! The knife didn't kill him. He couldn't be fried, boiled, drowned, eaten, or stabbed to death. He had these five kinds of non-dying rewards gained through his practice of non-killing in former lives. Life after life he kept this precept very purely, and so he gained this reward.

"CUNDA" is another name for Suddhipanthaka, and "SVAGATA" is another name for Mahapanthaka. These two brothers were disciples of the Buddha. One was very stupid;

the other was very intelligent. The stupid one, however managed to get enlightened right away. This is because in past lives the stupid one thought that he alone understood the Buddhadharma and others didn't. Not only that, he wouldn't explain it to other people. "It's so wonderful, I want it all to myself." Consequently, he was a high Dharma Master for five hundred lives, but he never taught the Dharma. If someone asked him to, he wouldn't. He was stingy with the Dharma. For this reason, as retribution, he was very stupid. He didn't want other people to be smart, so he became very stupid. Luckily, in the past he made offerings to the Buddhas and created a lot of merit and virtue. This life he got enlightened very fast, even though he was stupid. The reason we are more intelligent but slower to get enlightened, study and study, but feel that we haven't attained anything, is because we haven't created merit and virtue, and haven't made offerings to the Triple Jewel. Good roots are like the roots of trees. If they are nourished and taken care of, the tree will grow well. If the roots dry up, it won't grow.

So, now we must both cultivate and do good deeds, then we can get enlightened. Take care not to fail to speak the Buddhadharma. If you know one sentence, then speak that one sentence. Don't just look after yourself. Don't be critical of other people and fail to correct your own faults. Don't be stingy with the Dharma, or you'll end up stupid. Or, what's worse, you'll be unable to speak at all! You won't be able to say anything. You won't have much of a chance of becoming enlightened then.

"AND OTHERS ALL WILL ATTAIN ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBODHI, ALL OF THEM WITH THE SAME NAME, UNIVERSAL-BRIGHTNESS." "And others" means the rest of the five hundred Arhats. They will all attain the utmost right and perfect enlightenment, the position of Buddhahood. They will all have the same name, "Universal Brightness."

SUTRA:

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

*THE BHIKSHU KAUNDINYA,
WILL SEE LIMITLESS BUDDHAS,
AND AFTER ASAMKHYEYA AEONS,
WILL REALIZE PROPER AND EQUAL ENLIGHTENMENT.
EVER PUTTING FORTH GREAT LIGHT,
PERFECTING ALL SPIRITUAL POWERS,
HIS NAME WILL BE HEARD IN THE TEN DIRECTIONS,
AND HE SHALL BE REVERED BY ALL.
HE WILL ALWAYS SPEAK THE UNSURPASSED PATH,
AND THEREFORE BE CALLED UNIVERSAL BRIGHTNESS.
HIS LAND WILL BE PURE;
THE BODHISATTVAS WHO SERVE HIM WILL BE COURAGEOUS
AND HEROIC.
ALL WILL MOUNT WONDERFUL TOWERS,*

*AND ROAM THROUGH THE TEN DIRECTION LANDS,
AND SUPREME OFFERINGS,
THEY WILL PRESENT TO ALL THE BUDDHAS.
HAVING MADE THESE OFFERINGS,
WITH MINDS FULL OF REJOICING,
THEY WILL INSTANTLY RETURN TO THEIR OWN LANDS,
SUCH ARE THE SPIRITUAL POWERS THEY WILL HAVE.
THE LIFESPAN OF THAT BUDDHA WILL BE SIXTY-TWO
THOUSAND AEONS
HIS PROPER DHARMA WILL DWELL TWICE THAT LONG.
THE DHARMA IMAGE AGE WILL BE TWICE THE LENGTH OF
THAT.
WHEN THE DHARMA IS EXTINGUISHED, THE GODS AND
PEOPLE WILL MOURN.
THESE FIVE HUNDRED BHIKSHUS
SHALL IN TURN BECOME BUDDHAS,
ALL BY THE NAME OF UNIVERSAL BRIGHTNESS.
EACH SHALL BESTOW PREDICTIONS ON HIS SUCCESSOR
SAYING, "AFTER MY EXTINCTION
SO AND SO SHALL BECOME A BUDDHA.
THE WORLD IN WHICH HE WILL TEACH
WILL BE LIKE MINE TODAY.
THE ADORNMENTS AND PURITY OF HIS LAND
AND HIS SPIRITUAL POWERS,
THE HOST OF BODHISATTVAS AND SOUND HEARERS,
THE PROPER AND DHARMA IMAGE AGES,
THE NUMBER OF AEONS IN HIS LIFESPAN,
WILL BE AS JUST STATED."*

COMMENTARY:

AT THAT TIME, after he had finished the prose section, THE WORLD HONORED ONE, WISHING TO RESTATE HIS MEANING SPOKE VERSES, SAYING:

THE BHIKSHU KAUNDINYA, / the first to understand, WILL SEE LIMITLESS BUDDHAS, / countless, numberless Buddhas. AND AFTER ASAMKHYEYA AEONS, / he WILL REALIZE PROPER AND EQUAL ENLIGHTENMENT / --will become a Buddha. EVER PUTTING FORTH GREAT LIGHT, / PERFECTING ALL SPIRITUAL POWERS, / HIS NAME WILL BE HEARD IN THE TEN DIRECTIONS, / AND HE SHALL BE REVERED BY ALL /. All living beings will pay him homage.

HE WILL ALWAYS SPEAK THE UNSURPASSED PATH; / AND THEREFORE BE CALLED UNIVERSAL BRIGHTNESS. HIS LAND WILL BE PURE. / THE BODHISATTVAS WHO SERVE HIM WILL BE COURAGEOUS AND HEROIC. / ALL WILL MOUNT WONDERFUL TOWERS, / many stories high, with countless windows and doors, AND ROAM THROUGH THE TEN DIRECTION LANDS, / to frolic in the "roaming and playing samadhi." AND SUPREME OFFERINGS, / THEY WILL PRESENT TO ALL THE BUDDHAS /. HAVING MADE THESE OFFERINGS, / WITH MINDS FULL OF REJOICING, / THEY WILL INSTANTLY RETURN TO THEIR OWN LANDS /. They will make offerings of jewels, and palaces, and various things adorned with the seven jewels. SUCH ARE THE SPIRITUAL POWERS THEY WILL HAVE /.

THE LIFESPAN OF THAT BUDDHA WILL BE SIXTY-TWO THOUSAND AEONS /. HIS PROPER DHARMA WILL DWELL TWICE THAT LONG /--one hundred twenty-four thousand aeons. THE DHARMA IMAGE AGE WILL BE TWICE THE LENGTH OF THAT /--two hundred forty-eight thousand aeons.

WHEN THE DHARMA IS EXTINGUISHED, THE GODS AND PEOPLE WILL MOURN /. THESE FIVE HUNDRED BHIKSHUS / SHALL IN TURN BECOME BUDDHAS /. They will succeed one another in turn. ALL BY THE NAME OF UNIVERSAL BRIGHTNESS / EACH SHALL BESTOW PREDICTIONS ON HIS SUCCESSORS / SAYING, "AFTER MY EXTINCTION / SO AND SO SHALL BECOME A BUDDHA, / THE WORLD IN WHICH HE WILL TEACH / WILL BE LIKE MINE TODAY. / THE ADORNMENTS AND PURITY OF HIS LAND / AND HIS SPIRITUAL POWERS, / THE HOST OF BODHISATTVAS AND SOUND HEARERS, / THE PROPER AND DHARMA IMAGE AGES, / THE NUMBER OF AEONS IN HIS LIFESPAN, / WILL BE AS JUST STATED /, the same as those given for Universal Brightness."

to be continued.

Records of the Life of the Venerable Master Hsuan Hua

translated by the International Institute for the Translation of Buddhist Texts

As the head of the Way Virtue Society, the Master not only urged others to practice the Way but did so himself. His great virtue and selflessness were admired by the entire community. He labored to build free schools and meeting halls where he lectured against alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. He worked untiringly for the benefit of others and never thought of himself.

One day, beneath a tree, he read of the virtuous conduct of Chang Ya Hsuan and was so impressed that he made a vow. "Heaven," he said, "I shall certainly follow the example of Chang Ya Hsuan."

That very evening, a demon came to test the Master's vow. A beautiful woman secretly entered the Master's room and tempted him with her beauty and with money. Caught off guard, for an instant the Master's mind wavered, but he immediately regained his composure and thought, "She has been sent to test my sincerity." He recited the Buddha's name, collected his thoughts, and then spoke to the girl. "As a member of the Way Virtue Society," he said, "you should understand the principle of cause and effect. Now, would you like to be born in heaven or would you rather go to hell?"

"I want to go to heaven, of course," she said.

"Then you must not act in this way," said the Master, "because if you continue, you will certainly go to hell."

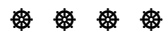
Hearing this, she was greatly ashamed, begged forgiveness and left.

The Master had joined the Way Virtue Association when he was sixteen, and by the time he was seventeen he was teaching sixty to seventy men and women, many of whom were middle-aged.

In teaching, the Master always tried to simplify problems so they could be easily understood. One such problem was potato skins. Whenever a lunch was held at the Way Virtue Association, the members would not eat their potato skins.

The Master had explained about the benefits of eating what others cannot eat and of doing what others cannot do, and of how essential it is to actually put that teaching into practice. But his instructions had gone in one ear and out the other, and his students paid no attention to it at all.

One time, when the members were eating potatoes and as usual spitting the skins out on the floor until the place was littered with them, the Master took a bowl and went around picking up the skins, and proceeded to eat them. His students were extremely embarrassed to see their teacher eat what they themselves had chewed up and spat out. The Master's lesson on eating what others cannot eat finally sank in. His students repented and changed their ways.



FROM BTTS Flower Adornment Sutra to be cont.

PRAISES IN THE TUSHITA HEAVEN PALACE, Chapter 24. Ten Bodhisattvas speak verses in praise of the Buddhas. ISBN 0-917512-39-1.

*Just like clear, and pure eyes
Which, because of the sun, can see a multitude of forms;
So, too, the pure mind in the same way
Can see the Tathagata by means of the Buddha's power.
Just as with the power of vigor
One is able to fathom the source of the sea;
So, too, the power of wisdom
Enables one to see measureless Buddhas.*

UNIVERSAL WORTHY'S CONDUCT, Chapter 36 Universal Worthy Bodhisattva speaks:

"Disciples of the Buddha, I have not seen any such Dharma as the great offense and mistake of Bodhisattvas giving rise to thoughts of anger towards other Bodhisattvas. Why is that? Disciples of the Buddha, if Bodhisattvas were to give rise to thoughts of anger and hatred towards other Bodhisattvas, that would open doors to millions of obstructions."

The Chapter tells of those obstructions. ISBN 0-88139-011-9