

# FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

*Commentary by Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua*

## WONDROUS ADORNMENTS OF WORLD RULERS

### CHAPTER ONE

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### ADORNMENTS OF THE WAY PLACE

SUTRA:

ITS GROUND WAS FIRM AND SOLID, AND MADE UP OF VAJRA. SUBLIMELY WONDERFUL PRECIOUS WHEELS, A MULTITUDE OF JEWELLED FLOWERS AND PURE MANIS SERVED AS ITS ADORNMENTS.

COMMENTARY:

When the Buddha realized proper enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree on Proper Path Mountain in Magadha, the ground all around the Bodhi tree became extremely solid, so the Sutra says, ITS GROUND WAS FIRM AND SOLID, AND MADE OF VAJRA. Vajra is the most adamant of substances, it has the three features of firmness, brilliance, and sharpness. Firmness refers to the solidity of one's resolve and vows. Brilliance refers to wisdom. Sharpness represents relentless vigor which is swift, and sharp like the blade of a sword.

SUBLIMELY WONDERFUL PRECIOUS WHEELS, A MULTITUDE OF JEWELLED FLOWERS--gem-studded blossoms, AND PURE MANI gems SERVED AS ITS ADORNMENTS. These decorated the Bodhi Way Place.

SUTRA:

A SEA OF COLORS AND MARKS MADE APPEAR BOUNDLESS MANIFESTATIONS.

COMMENTARY:

Mani gems are a kind of pure gem, sometimes called wish fulfilling pearls. They are extremely beautiful, replete with all the hues and colors of a rainbow. Since their shades are infinite like the sea, the Sutra describes them as A SEA OF COLORS AND MARKS,

which further MADE APPEAR BOUNDLESS MANIFESTATIONS. Infinite shades of adornments appeared in that Way place.

SUTRA:

BANNERS MADE OUT OF MANI CONSTANTLY EMITTED BRIGHT LIGHT, AND ALWAYS GAVE FORTH WONDROUS SOUNDS. NETS MADE OUT OF MYRIAD JEWELS AND SPLENDID STRANDS OF FLOWERS OF EXQUISITE FRAGRANCE WERE SPREAD OUT ALL ABOUT. MANI GEM KINGS WROUGHT TRANSFORMATIONS WITH EASE. THEY ENDLESSLY RAINED DOWN TREASURES AS WELL AS STREAMS OF WONDROUS FLOWERS WHICH FELL IN PATTERNS ON THE GROUND. JEWELLED TREES WERE ARRANGED IN ROWS. THEIR BRANCHES AND FOLIAGE WERE VERDANT AND LUXURIANT.

COMMENTARY:

BANNERS MADE OUT OF MANI EMITTED BRIGHT LIGHT. Banners are spiral-shaped canopies. Since these are fashioned out of radiant mani gems, they release bright light. AND ALWAYS GAVE FORTH WONDROUS SOUNDS that excelled the mystical sounds of all worldly and heavenly music. The bright light also transcended the light of the sun and moon put together. NETS MADE OUT OF MYRIAD JEWELS AND SPLENDID STRANDS OF FLOWERS OF EXQUISITE FRAGRANCE WERE SPREAD OUT ALL ABOUT. All of these are subtle, inconceivable adornments used to enhance the Buddha's Dharma body. Nets interwoven with clusters of precious stones, and flowers pleated into garlands and wreaths that gave off a rare perfume, were draped over on all sides of the Way Place. When living beings inhaled that wonderful perfume, or caught sight of these luxurious flowers and nets, they were able to plant sublime causes for Bodhi, and in the future would reap the wonderful fruit of Buddhahood.

MANI GEM KINGS WROUGHT TRANSFORMATIONS WITH EASE. These gems are able to conjure all sorts of spiritual transformations of selfmastery. They can make appear anything according to the mind's wishes. THEY ENDLESSLY RAINED DOWN TREASURES AS WELL AS STREAMS OF WONDROUS FLOWERS WHICH FELL IN PATTERNS ON THE GROUND. A fine shower of ornate articles and fragrant flowers came down non-stop. They were all part of the transformations of the mani kings.

JEWELLED TREES WERE ARRANGED IN ROWS. THEIR BRANCHES AND FOLIAGE WERE VERDANT AND LUXURIANT. Jeweled trees were planted row upon row, in a very orderly fashion. These rows were such that you could view them from any of the ten directions and they would appear arranged in precise rows. They had trunks made of pure gold, branches made of amber, silver and other precious stones, and leaves made of pearls. The light streaming from these jeweled twigs and leaves was of a myriad colors--red, yellow, green, and white. The foliage itself was fresh and full. Just to look upon their leaves and blossoms made one happy.

SUTRA:

IT WAS DUE TO THE BUDDHA'S SPIRITUALPOWER THAT ALL SUCH  
ADORNMENTS WERE MANIFESTED WITHIN THE WAY PLACE.

COMMENTARY:

This sublime state was created by the Buddha's spiritual strength. Where does the Buddha's spiritual power come from? You could say that all of these requisite adornments are a reward of the Buddha's having kept the precepts with utmost purity. On the Cause ground, he never transgressed the Five Basic Precepts in the slightest. What are the Five Precepts? 1) No Killing: Not only did the Buddha not take life with his own hands, he did not even harbor a single thought of killing or hatred in his mind. With compassion, he cherished all living beings. 2) No Stealing: Not only did he not steal with his body, he didn't let thoughts of stealing arise in his mind. 3) No Sexual Misconduct: He would never let a thought of illicit behavior arise in his mind. 4) No False Speech: He only spoke the truth; he never lied or gave rise to thoughts of lying. 5) No Taking of Intoxicants: He never took alcohol, drugs, or tobacco. It is because he held the precepts sternly and purely on the Cause ground that the present wonderful adornments appeared when he accomplished Buddhahood. Therefore, those of us who have received the precepts absolutely must not violate the precepts in the least. Those who have transgressed must repent and reform before the assembly, or, if they are left home people, they should walk behind the novices, depending upon how severe the offense is, during the period of their repentance. Buddhism has just started in this country, and we cannot afford to be casual. If we are casual now, it's not known how far off we will end up in the future. The Buddha got to be the Buddha because he was never casual about holding the precepts. When his meritorious virtues were perfected, these adornments naturally appeared. IT WAS DUE TO THE BUDDHA'S SPIRITUAL POWER THAT ALL SUCH ADORNMENTS WERE MANIFESTED WITHIN THE WAY PLACE.

### *After a Visit to the Chinese Painter Chang Da Ch'ien*

Today, being the anniversary of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva's Leaving the Home Life (10/25/72) several of us went to Carmel to pay a visit to the world-renowned Chinese painter Chang Da Ch'ien. You could say that our reasons for going to see him were not small conditions, but important and great conditions. He is actually a transformation body of Kuan Yin Bodhiattva. Therefore, we went with the thought to influence him and to remind him of his actual calling. This was the first time I ever visited an artist at his studio. Before, there were quite a few other artists who did excellent work, but I never had the time to visit their studios. You could say that this particular artist has been a fellow Ch'an cultivator of mine for a long time, so I have special affinities with him. When we chatted with each other we found that we did have deep bonds. I found him to be honest and frank, not obsequious or crafty. It is hoped he can bring forth the Bodhi resolve. One needs to use different ways to cross over living beings. Today we went

through some hard work to do this. As to whether this transformation body of Kuan Yin Bodhisattva will recognize his original face and go back to the source only time will tell.

SUTRA:

THE BODHI TREE WAS TALL, EXTRAORDINARILY RARE, VAJRA MADE UP ITS TRUNK, VAIDURYA ITS BRANCHES. AN ASSORTMENT OF WONDROUS JEWELS MADE UP THE TWIGS AND LEAVES. ITS JEWELLED FOLIAGE CREATED A THICK ARBOR, PROVIDING SHADE LIKE THAT OF A BANK OF CLOUDS. MULTI-COLORED JEWELLED BLOSSOMS AND THEIR BRANCHES CAST A MYRIAD REFLECTIONS. MOREOVER, FRUITS MADE OF MANI AND BLAZING WITH DAZZLING LIGHT WERE INTERSPERSED BETWEEN THE BLOSSOMS.

COMMENTARY:

THE BODHI TREE WAS TALL, EXTRAORDINARILY RARE. Since this was the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha accomplished enlightenment, it was very special, unique. VAJRA MADE UP ITS TRUNK, VAIDURYA ITS BRANCHES. The larger branches were made of crystal. AN ASSORTMENT OF WONDROUS JEWELS MADE UP THE smaller TWIGS AND LEAVES. ITS JEWELLED FOLIAGE CREATED A THICK ARBOR, PROVIDING SHADE LIKE THAT OF A BANK OF CLOUDS. The leaves were thick and luxuriant. They hung in patterns that displayed the spaces between them. They rustled in wave-like movements and provided cool shade for all living beings. MULTI-COLORED JEWELLED BLOSSOMS AND THEIR BRANCHES CAST A MYRIAD REFLECTIONS. Those precious flowers of a hundred colors, supported by twigs created an exquisite table all of different shapes and hues. MOREOVER, FRUITS MADE OF MANI AND BLAZING WITH DAZZLING LIGHT, a flame-like radiance, WERE INTERSPERSED BETWEEN THE BLOSSOMS. The interplay of multi-colored flowers' light and the blaze of the mani-fruits was spectacular to see.

SUTRA:

ALL AROUND THE BODHI TREE BRIGHT LIGHT WAS EMITTED. WITHIN THAT LIGHT THERE WAS A RAIN OF MANI GEMS. WITHIN THOSE MANI GEMS, BODHISATTVAS PROFUSE AS CLOUDS SPONTANEOUSLY APPEARED. IN ADDITION, BECAUSE OF THE THUS COME ONE'S AWESOME SPIRITUAL POWER, THAT BODHI TREE CONSTANTLY Poured FORTH WONDROUS SOUNDS, AND PROCLAIMED ALL SORTS OF DHARMA WITHOUT END.

COMMENTARY:

ALL AROUND THE BODHI TREE an intense BRIGHT LIGHT WAS EMITTED. WITHIN THAT LIGHT THERE WAS A RAIN OF MANI GEMS. WITHIN THOSE MANI GEMS, BODHISATTVAS PROFUSE AS CLOUDS SPONTANEOUSLY

APPEARED. There were an infinite number of Bodhisattvas who arrived like billows of clouds. IN ADDITION, BECAUSE OF THE THUS COME ONE'S AWESOME SPIRITUAL POWER, THAT BODHI TREE CONSTANTLY Poured forth Wondrous sounds. People who heard those sounds attained all kinds of samadhi, AND these sounds PROCLAIMED ALL SORTS OF DHARMA WITHOUT END. There was no time the sounds of Dharma would cease. At all times, to the boundary of the future, the Bodhi tree proclaimed those wonderful sounds.

SUTRA:

AT THE PLACE OF THE THUS COME ONE THERE WERE PALACES, TOWERS AND PAVILIONS, VAST, MAGNIFICENT, AND ADORNED, WHICH PERVADED THE TEN DIRECTIONS. THEY WERE FASHIONED OF MULTI-HUED MANI AND ENHANCED BY VARIOUS INTERLACED JEWELLED BLOSSOMS. FROM ALL THE ARTICLES OF ADORNMENT, LIGHTS Poured forth LIKE CLOUDS. BETWEEN THE PALACES THE DENSE REFLECTIONS FORMED BANNERS. BOUNDLESS BODHISATTVAS AND MULTITUDES OF THE WAY PLACE WERE ALL GATHERED TOGETHER. MANI KING GEMS THAT COULD RELEASE ALL BUDDHAS' BRIGHT LIGHTS AND INCONCEIVABLE SOUNDS MADE UP THE LATTICE WORK.

COMMENTARY:

AT THE PLACE OF THE THUS COME ONE. When the Buddha accomplished Buddhahood beneath the Bodhi tree, he manifested a ten-thousand foot reward body of Nishyanda Buddha, hence his palace, in proportion had to be at least thirty thousand feet high. All the transformations which occurred were brought about by the Thus Come One's spiritual power. THERE WERE PALACES, TOWERS AND PAVILIONS. "Towers" refers to multi-storied buildings, "Pavilions" refers to the structure erected on top of the towers. All of these were VAST, MAGNIFICENT AND ADORNED. These structures were not of the sort ever seen before in the human realm. AND they were so large they PERVADED THE TEN DIRECTIONS. THEY WERE FASHIONED OF MULTI-HUED MANIS AND ENHANCED BY VARIOUS INTERLACED JEWELLED BLOSSOMS. Wish-fulfilling mani gems of the ten directions were assembled to enhance these palaces. FROM ALL THE ARTICLES OF ADORNMENTS, LIGHTS Poured forth LIKE CLOUDS. Those bright lights streamed forth in cloudlike formations.

After Shakyamuni Buddha accomplished Proper Enlightenment, with his spiritual power he adorned the Way Place and proclaimed the GREAT MEANS EXPANSIVE BUDDHA FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA. When most ordinary people hear the descriptions of these adornments, they consider them to be quite insignificant. Actually these adornments are all symbolic. They represent the manifold conduct doors which the Buddha cultivated on the Cause ground, and all the bitter discipline that he endured, so that now, upon his accomplishing of Buddhahood, the purification of those doors of conduct produced these fruits of inconceivable adornments. BETWEEN THE PALACES

THE DENSE REFLECTIONS FORMED BANNERS. The patterns made by the dense reflections in the intervals between the palaces had the look of banners. Within the exquisite reflections, there appeared the images of BOUNDLESS BODHISATTVAS AND MULTITUDES OF THE WAY PLACE who WERE ALL GATHERED TOGETHER. Each Bodhisattva led his own retinue of living beings and arrived at the Bodhi Way Place of Shakyamuni Buddha. There were so many of them that they were an inexpressible number. In addition to that, MANI KING GEMS THAT COULD RELEASE ALL BUDDHAS' BRIGHT LIGHTS AND INCONCEIVABLE SOUNDS MADE UP THE LATTICE WORK. All those Bodhisattvas emitted bright lights which inter-reflected. Within the lights, wonderful sounds were also released, and the net-like lattice work was all made out of mani-king gems.

### *Take Care of Your Own Business*

Cultivators should at all times watch over themselves. Otherwise you should listen to the guidance of those who have more experience than you. If you don't watch over yourself and you don't listen to instructions from others, then nothing can be made of you. In my homeland of Manchuria, there was a monk called Hsiu Yuan (Cultivation to Perfection). He wanted very much to leave the home-life. His family consisted of only he and his mother. His mother was over fifty years old. Most mothers in that situation would not want their only son to leave the home-life. But his mother was a very understanding woman. She urged him to leave home as fast as he could. So he went to a monastery in Peking to receive the precepts. Now basically, he did not know anything about the rules of monastic life, for he was illiterate. He just knelt there in the precept platform like everyone else. He happened to have huge eyes and he was staring up and down, right and left, at everything in the precept hall. The guest prefect shouted at him, "What are you staring at!? Pull your eyes back!" Hsiu Yuan didn't even understand what "pulling your eyes back" meant, but he figured that it meant he had to close his eyes and not look all around. The guest prefect then asked him, "Who is your Shih fu--your teacher?"

Hsiu Yuan said, "I have no Shih fu."

The guest prefect said, "If you don't even have a Shih fu how can you leave the home-life?"

"I don't know who's supposed to be my Shih fu. Could you find me a Shih fu, please?" Hsiu Yuan asked.

The guest prefect, seeing that this novice was very naive and honest, allowed him to leave home and receive the Complete Precepts anyway.

*to be continued*