

DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA

with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA

*-translated by BTTS
-reviewed by Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih
-edited by Upasika Nancy Lethcoe*

SUTRA:

*KASHYAPA, YOU SHOULD KNOW
ABOUT THESE FIVE HUNDRED WHO HAVE ATTAINED SELF-MASTERY.
AS FOR THE REMAINING SOUND HEARERS,
THEY SHALL BE LIKEWISE.
TO THOSE NOT PRESENT IN THIS ASSEMBLY,
YOU SHOULD EXPOUND THESE MATTERS.*

COMMENTARY:

KASHYAPA, YOU SHOULD KNOW / You have just been told the particulars concerning THESE FIVE HUNDRED WHO HAVE ATTAINED SELF-MASTERY. / You have heard about the five hundred Arhats whose minds have attained comfort. You should know that each of the remaining Arhats will also become Buddhas by the name Universal Brightness. AS FOR THE REMAINING SOUND HEARERS / THEY SHALL BE LIKEWISE/. This means the rest of the twelve hundred fifty Arhats. TO THOSE NOT PRESENT IN THIS ASSEMBLY, / YOU SHOULD EXPOUND THESE MATTERS. / You should, on my behalf, tell those not in this Dharma Assembly that they will become Buddhas, that I have given them predictions.

SUTRA:

*AT THAT TIME, THE FIVE HUNDRED ARHATS, HAVING RECEIVED
PREDICTIONS FROM THE BUDDHA, JUMPED FOR JOY.*

COMMENTARY:

AT THAT TIME, after the Buddha had spoken the verses to Kashyapa, THE FIVE HUNDRED ARHATS, HAVING RECEIVED PREDICTIONS FROM THE BUDDHA, JUMPED FOR JOY. They received predictions of Anuttarasamyaksambodhi, which was exactly what they wanted. They were so happy, they jumped for joy. This line of text was added by the Venerable Ananda when he compiled the Sutras.

SUTRA:

THEY ROSE FROM THEIR SEATS AND WENT BEFORE THE BUDDHA, BOWING WITH THEIR HEADS AT HIS FEET. REPENTING OF THEIR ERRORS, THEY REPROACHED THEMSELVES, SAYING, "WORLD HONORED ONE, WE HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT WE HAD ALREADY GAINED ULTIMATE QUIESCENCE. NOW WE KNOW THAT WE WERE LIKE UNKNOWING ONES. WHY IS THIS? WE SHOULD HAVE OBTAINED THE THUS COME ONE'S WISDOM, BUT WERE CONTENTED INSTEAD WITH LESSER KNOWLEDGE."

COMMENTARY:

THEY ROSE FROM THEIR SEATS AND WENT BEFORE THE BUDDHA, BOWING WITH THEIR HEADS AT HIS FEET. REPENTING OF THEIR ERRORS, THEY REPROACHED THEMSELVES. People who know enough to repent of their errors are sagely material. People who don't are really stupid. The Arhats were repentant, sorry for what they did. They reproached themselves because they had been satisfied with just a little. They had not attained ultimate Nirvana, but they thought that they had. They now knew they were wrong and were sorry. They expressed this by SAYING, "WORLD HONORED ONE, WE HAD ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT WE HAD ALREADY GAINED ULTIMATE QUIESCENCE, had certified to the fruition of Arhatship." They did not seek the Buddha Path above, and they did not teach living beings below. They felt they didn't need to become Buddhas or save living beings. All they needed to do was sit there, be at ease and happy, and not pay any attention to anything at all--self ending Arhats.

"NOW WE KNOW THAT WE WERE LIKE UNKNOWING ONES. WHY IS THIS? WE SHOULD HAVE OBTAINED THE THUS COME ONE'S WISDOM, but we didn't seek the Buddha's wisdom. What a terrible mistake! But we WERE CONTENT INSTEAD WITH LESSER KNOWLEDGE. We took our lesser-fruit wisdom and were satisfied with it, thinking we had attained the ultimate."

SUTRA:

"WORLD HONORED ONE, THIS SITUATION IS LIKE THAT OF A PERSON WHO GOES TO A CLOSE FRIEND'S HOUSE, GETS DRUNK ON WINE, AND LIES DOWN. THIS FRIEND, WHO IS ABOUT TO GO AWAY ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS, SEWS A PRICELESS PEARL INSIDE THE CLOTHING OF THIS PERSON AS A GIFT, AND THEN LEAVES."

COMMENTARY:

"WORLD HONORED ONE, THIS SITUATION IS LIKE THAT OF A PERSON WHO GOES TO A CLOS FRIENDS'S HOUSE." The person refers to the five hundred Arhats. The close friend is the Buddha. "He GETS DRUNK ON WINE." Getting drunk means being stupid. The wine represents the five desires. "AND he LIES DOWN." This means that the Arhats were satisfied with little, and didn't do anything more. They just sat

around content with what they had attained. "HIS FRIEND," the Buddha, "IS ABOUT TO GO AWAY ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS." He had to go off to some other world to save living beings there. His conditions with beings have come to an end in that place, so he will go somewhere else to save living beings. "The friend SEWS A PRICELESS PEARL INSIDE THE CLOTHING OF THIS PERSON." The priceless pearl is the basic substance of the real mark, the inherent Buddhature. "Inside his clothing" means that the Arhats were taught the real-mark wisdom, the Great Vehicle, and this planted in them the seed for their future attainment. "He puts it there AS A GIFT, AND THEN LEAVES."

SUTRA:

"THAT PERSON, IN A DRUNKEN STUPOR, IS NOT AWARE OF ANYTHING.

COMMENTARY:

But, "THAT PERSON, with little wisdom is sunk in the five desires, the dreams of stupidity. IN A DRUNKEN STUPOR, he IS NOT AWARE OF ANYTHING." He doesn't know enough to accept the Great Vehicle Buddhadharma.

SUTRA:

"ON ARISING, HE SETS OUT ON HIS TRAVELS AND REACHES ANOTHER COUNTRY, WHERE, FOR THE SAKE OF CLOTHING AND FOOD, HE EXPENDS MUCH EFFORT, ENDURES GREAT HARDSHIPS, AND IS CONTENT WITH WHATEVER LITTLE HE MAY GET.

COMMENTARY:

"ON ARISING, HE SETS OUT ON HIS TRAVELS." This means that his good roots are about to come forth. He is tired of suffering and wishes to seek bliss. He "REACHES ANOTHER COUNTRY." This means that because he is still covered with ignorance, he does not know enough to turn back towards the Great Vehicle, his "own country." Instead, he seeks the lesser vehicle. "WHERE FOR THE SAKE OF CLOTHING AND FOOD HE EXPENDS MUCH EFFORT, and ENDURES GREAT HARDSHIPS." For the sake of the "clothing" of the Proper Path, and the "food" of the Aids to the Path, he has passed his time in vain; he has reached no certification. He has not yet entered the Proper Dharma. He is satisfied with the small state he has attained in the small vehicle, AND IS CONTENT WITH WHATEVER LITTLE HE MAY GET." He thinks he has gained the Nirvana of the Two Vehicles, the fruit of Arhatship, and is satisfied with that.

SUTRA:

"LATER, HIS CLOSE FRIEND HAPPENS TO MEET HIM AGAIN AND SAYS, 'WHAT'S HAPPENED, YOUNG MAN? HOW CAN YOU, FOR THE SAKE OF FOOD AND CLOTHING, HAVE COME TO THIS?'

COMMENTARY:

"LATER, HIS CLOSE FRIEND," the Buddha, "HAPPENS TO MEET HIM AGAIN." The Sound Hearers are quite satisfied with their attainment, when the Buddha says, "WHAT'S HAPPENED, YOUNG MAN?" He calls out in this way to startle him. "HOW CAN YOU, FOR THE SAKE OF FOOD AND CLOTHING, for the sake of cultivating the Way, for the sake of the Aids to the Path, "HAVE COME TO THIS?" Why are you so poor? How could you have been satisfied with so little? As Fourth Stage Arhats, they thought that above there was no Buddha Way for them to seek, and below there was no living being to save; there was nothing at all.

So, here on Vulture Peak, in the Dharma Flower Assembly, the Buddha and those of the Two Vehicles happen to meet.

SUTRA:

"LONG AGO, WISHING YOU TO GAIN PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND ENJOYMENT OF THE FIVE DESIRES, ON SUCH AND SUCH A DAY, MONTH, AND YEAR I SEWED A PRICELESS PEARL INTO YOUR CLOTHING. IT'S BEEN WITH YOU ALL THIS TIME, BUT YOU NEVER REALIZED IT. THUS YOU HAVE TOILED AND SUFFERED TO GAIN YOUR LIVELIHOOD. HOW STUPID OF YOU!"

COMMENTARY:

'LONG AGO, WISHING YOU TO GAIN PEACE, HAPPINESS, AND ENJOYMENT OF THE FIVE DESIRES, ON SUCH AND SUCH A DAY, MONTH, AND YEAR I SEWED A PRICELESS PEARL INTO YOUR CLOTHING.'" "Peace and happiness" here refers to the supreme, Great Liberation. The Buddha wanted to lead those of the Two Vehicles to attain the perfect fruition of the Great Vehicle. Ordinarily, the "five desires" are forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas. Here, they refer to the Five Roots, and the Five Powers, and so on. The five desires also refers to gaining the use of the Great Vehicle. This is what made Kashyapa jump for joy. The "day, month, and year" refers to the time when the Buddha, Great Penetrating Wisdom Victory, spoke *THE DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA*, some eighty thousand aeons or more ago. With that teaching of the Great Vehicle Buddhadharma in you were planted the seeds of the Great Vehicle. "'IT'S BEEN WITH YOU ALL THIS TIME, BUT YOU NEVER REALIZED IT. THUS YOU HAVE TOILED AND SUFFERED TO GAIN YOUR LIVELIHOOD.'" The pearl is still there; you haven't lost it. But, you Arhats didn't know of it. You forgot the Great Vehicle Dharma and chose instead to study the Small Vehicle Dharma. It's been a lot of hard work just cultivating to keep yourselves spiritually alive. "'HOW STUPID OF YOU!'" Very, very stupid!

SUTRA:

"YOU MAY NOW TAKE THIS JEWEL, EXCHANGE IT FOR WHAT YOU NEED, AND YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE WHATEVER YOU WISH AND BE FREE FROM WANT."

COMMENTARY:

"YOU MAY NOW TAKE THIS JEWEL," the Buddhanature, and "EXCHANGE IT FOR WHAT YOU NEED." Develop it by means of the clothing of patience and the food of Dhyana happiness. Then "YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE WHATEVER YOU WISH." If you cultivate the Great Vehicle, you will never lack for anything, "AND will BE FREE FROM WANT." You will never be poor again.

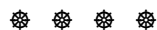
SUTRA:

"THE BUDDHA IS ALSO LIKE THIS. WHEN HE WAS A BODHISATTVA, HE TAUGHT AND TRANSFORMED US, CAUSING US TO BRING FORTH THE THOUGHT OF ALL-WISDOM."

COMMENTARY:

"THE BUDDHA IS ALSO LIKE THIS. The Buddha is like the good friend mentioned in the above analogy. WHEN HE WAS A BODHISATTVA, HE TAUGHT AND TRANSFORMED US, CAUSING US TO BRING FORTH THE THOUGHT OF ALL-WISDOM. During the time of the Buddha Great Penetrating Wisdom Victory, the Buddha was teaching us. He has appeared in various Bodhisattva bodies to teach and transform us in the Great Vehicle Buddhadharma.

- to be continued



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