

# *The Flower Adornment Sutra*

*with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua*

## *Chapter One: Wondrous Adornments of the World-Rulers Gathering of the Cloud-Like and Sea-Like Assemblies of Beings of Similar Births*

*continued from issue #181*

### *III KINNARA KINGS*

SUTRA:

MOREOVER, THERE WERE A MEASURELESS NUMBER OF KINNARA KINGS. SPECIFICALLY THEY WERE: HEAVEN OF GOOD WISDOM LIGHT KINNARA KING, WONDROUS FLORAL BANNER KINNARA KING, ALL SORTS OF ADORNMENTS KINNARA KING, DELIGHTING THE MIND WITH ROARING SOUNDS KINNARA KING, JEWELLED TREE BRILLIANCE KINNARA KING, DELIGHTING THE BEHOLDER KINNARA KING, MOST SUPREME LIGHT ORNAMENT KINNARA KING, SUBTLE AND WONDERFUL FLORAL BANNER KINNARA KING, POWER TO MOVE THE EARTH KINNARA KING, AND GATHERING IN AND SUBDUING EVIL MULTITUDES KINNARA KING. THEY ACTED AS THE LEADERS OF A MEASURELESS NUMBER. ALL OF THEM, WITH DILIGENCE AND VIGOR, CONTEMPLATED ALL DHARMAS; THEIR MINDS WERE ALWAYS HAPPY. THEY ROAMED IN PLAYFULNESS, PURE AND AT EASE.

COMMENTARY:

MOREOVER, THERE WERE A MEASURELESS NUMBER OF KINNARA KINGS. Kinnara translates as "non-human." This type of spirit strongly resembles a human: his features are upright and yet a horn grows from his head, hence his name "non-human." Kinnara also translates as "questionable spirit," because the horn on his head causes the beholder to question whether the spirit is human or not. Dharma Master Jwang of the Tang Dynasty translated the name kinnara as "music spirit." Kinnara also means "incense-sniffing spirit." When assemblies convene in the heavenly palace of Lord Shakra, or there is some special celebration, Lord Shakra only needs to light a stick of incense and the kinnara spirits will come. When they arrive at the heavenly palace, they play dignified and adorned Dharma music.

These kinnara kings are also manifestations of Bodhisattvas. They appear to be ordinary living beings, but they are not; they are Bodhisattvas. They go wherever there is a celebration and sing praises and chants of Dharma, inspiring in the listeners mindfulness of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha so they become enlightened to the Way. No matter what Dharma you might cultivate, if you study it to the point of essential clarity, you can open enlightenment. But to only seem to study without really doing so, or only half understand or just grasp a little bit is useless. The way to have some enlightenment is to study to the

essential point of clarity. So, music and singing can also act as an aiding condition for increasing goodness in those who hear.

There were ten kinnara kings in the present Avatamsaka assembly. SPECIFICALLY THERE WERE: HEAVEN OF GOOD WISDOM LIGHT KINNARA KING. He is skilled at crossing over living beings and causing them to open great wisdom.

WONDROUS FLORAL BANNER KINNARA KING. His banner is made out of wondrous lotuses.

ALL SORTS OF ADORNMENT KINNARA KING. He uses all different kinds of the seven jewels as adornments.

DELIGHTING THE MIND WITH ROARING SOUNDS KINNARA KING. His voice is resonant and clear, delighting the listener's minds.

JEWELLED TREE BRILLIANCE KINNARA KING. His jeweled Bodhi trees give off the light of Bodhi.

DELIGHTING THE BEHOLDER KINNARA KING. This kinnara king has a kind visage and attitude; therefore those who see him are all delighted.

MOST SUPREME LIGHT ORNAMENT KINNARA KING. He uses a most superior light to do his adorning.

SUBTLE AND WONDERFUL FLORAL BANNER KINNARA KING. He is very subtle and wonderful, like a banner of exquisite flowers.

POWER TO MOVE THE EARTH KINNARA KING. His every single move can shake the earth.

GATHERING IN AND SUBDUING EVIL MULTITUDES. He can tame and subdue all evil-natured living beings and cause them to change from the deviant and return to the proper. THEY ACTED AS THE LEADERS OF A MEASURELESS NUMBER. These ten kinnara kings acted as the leaders of the infinite kinnara multitudes.

ALL OF THEM, WITH DILIGENCE AND VIGOR, CONTEMPLATED ALL DHARMAS. They were all very courageously vigorous and not lax or lazy. They constantly contemplated and investigated all Dharmas. THEIR MINDS WERE ALWAYS HAPPY no matter what dharma they contemplated. After they themselves understood the Dharma, they taught it to others so they could all understand it. THEY ROAMED IN PLAYFULNESS, FREE AND AT EASE. They didn't figure, "I roam in free and easy playfulness so I can be very casual and do whatever I please--that's freedom!" They had wisdom.

People who investigate the Buddhadharma and who do not yet have firm samadhi power should not read

improper books. By reading such books, it is very easy to have your mind move. As soon as your mind moves, you have trouble, and won't be able to be happy in mind. These kinnaras contemplated proper dharmas, not non-dharmas. If a book wasn't handed down by a sage, they would not look at it. They did not read novels which dwell on the subject of emotion and love, because such books can disturb a cultivator's peace of mind, so that at night one can't sleep and during the day one has no energy to use in practice.

In cultivating the Way, we should use counter-methods to reach the middle Way in all we do and think. If, for example, you already have enough of something yet follow your greed for more, you increase your greed. But if you don't have something, it's all right to acquire a little bit of it. The Middle Way means "not too much and not too little." That is the ultimate meaning of the Middle Way. Not leaning over to either side is the principle. The Middle. If you need to use something, you use it, and if you don't need to use it, you don't use it. If people lack what they need, they can acquire what they need; but if they have enough they shouldn't get more. We should act in accordance with the Middle Way in whatever we do.

#### *IV MAHORAGA KINGS*

SUTRA:

MOREOVER, THERE WERE A MEASURELESS NUMBER OF MAHORAGA KINGS. SPECIFICALLY THEY WERE: GOOD WISDOM MAHORAGA KING, PURE AWESOME SOUND MAHORAGA KING, SUPREME WISDOM ADORNED COWL MAHORAGA KING, WONDROUS EYES AS RULERS MAHORAGA KING, LAMPLIKE BANNER REFUGE OF THE MULTITUDES MAHORAGA KING, MOST VICTORIOUS LIGHT BANNER MAHORAGA KING, LION CHEST MAHORAGA KING, SOUND ADORNED WITH MULTITUDES OF WONDERS MAHORAGA KING, SOLID LIKE SUMERU MAHORAGA KING, PLEASING BRIGHTNESS MAHORAGA KING. THEY ACTED AS THE LEADERS OF A MEASURELESS NUMBER. ALL OF THEM DILIGENTLY CULTIVATED VAST, GREAT EXPEDIENTS AND CAUSED ALL LIVING BEINGS TO FOREVER CUT THROUGH THE NET OF STUPIDITY.

COMMENTARY:

MOREOVER, THERE WERE A MEASURELESS NUMBER OF MAHORAGA KINGS. Mahoraga is also a Sanskrit term and it translates as "Great Belly boas" and they are great python spirits. They crawl on their stomachs instead of using their legs to transport them. Although they appear to be huge python spirits, they are also manifestations of Bodhisattvas who deliberately, out of a wish to benefit others, appear in all sorts of shapes and are not attached to their own appearance. Therefore, they manifest as gods, and spirits of the Eightfold Division.

Mahoragas also are called "earth dragons," because they do not have spiritual penetrations of heavenly dragons and yet they can spit out venom that is very harmful. Yet, although they have venomous natures to begin with, they are moved by the Buddhadharma to change and now they have become protecting spirits. People who have a jealous bent to their natures should watch out: in the future

they may fall into this path. For example, the Emperor Wu of the Lyang Dynasty (5th Century A.D.) had a queen who was extremely jealous. After she died, she fell into a python's body. But relying upon the power of the virtuous Sangha at that time, she was released from her animal body and attained rebirth in the heavens.

Now there were ten mahoraga kings in the assembly. SPECIFICALLY THEY WERE: GOOD WISDOM MAHORAGA KING. He has great wholesome wishes.

PURE AWESOME SOUND MAHORAGA KING. The sound of his voice is very majestic, clear and resonant.

SUPREME WISDOM ADORNED COWL MAHORAGA KING. He has especially supreme wisdom, also a cowl that is adorned with all kinds of wondrous gems.

WONDROUS EYES AS RULERS MAHORAGA KING. His eyes are the most attractive part of his face. They are extremely beautiful.

LAMPLIKE BANNER REFUGE OF THE MULTITUDES MAHORAGA KING. He constantly emits light which is like a banner formed by dense reflections of brilliant lamplight. His light also acts as a beacon of refuge for all living beings in that all beings took towards it.

MOST VICTORIOUS LIGHT BANNER MAHORAGA KING. His banner is like the net canopy found outside of Lord Shakra's palace. It is extremely supreme and wonderful. On that net lights mutually reflect and interpenetrate layer upon layer.

LION CHEST MAHORAGA KING. The scope of his heart is broad and vast, like a lion's chest.

SOUND ADORNED WITH MULTITUDES OF WONDERS. The unbearable makes him all the more want to bear it, and what is impossible to do he even more wishes to do. He is adorned with all kinds of wondrous gems. His sound is very clear, resonant and overpowers all other mahoraga's sounds.

SOLID LIKE SUMERU MAHORAGA KING. He has an immense body, which is as solid as Mount Sumeru.

PLEASING BRIGHTNESS MAHORAGA KING. Even though his body is ugly, like that of a big python, he sends forth a pleasing light that makes everyone happy when they see him. THEY ACTED AS THE LEADERS OF A MEASURELESS NUMBER. ALL OF THEM, all of the time, DILIGENTLY CULTIVATED VAST, GREAT EXPEDIENTS. They employed the most vast and skillful means and CAUSED ALL LIVING BEINGS TO FOREVER CUT THROUGH THE NET OF STUPIDITY. They can rend the net of delusions and stupidity of living beings so they are no longer bound by it and instead attain self-mastery and wisdom.

*translated by Bhikshuni Heng Tao*

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