

The Flower Adornment Sutra

Universal Worthy's Conduct and Vows Chapter 40

Commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

SUTRA:

"GOOD MAN, THE IMMEASURABLE MERIT AND VIRTUE CREATED FROM MAKING THOSE OFFERINGS, WHEN COMPARED WITH THE MERIT AND VIRTUE FROM A SINGLE THOUGHT OF OFFERING DHARMA, DOES NOT EQUAL ONE PART IN A HUNDRED, ONE PART IN A THOUSAND, ONE PART IN A HUNDRED THOUSAND KOTIS OF NAYUTAS, ONE PART IN A KALA, ONE PART BY RECKONING, ONE PART BY CALCULATION, ONE PART THAT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED BY COMPARISON, OR ONE PART IN AN UPANISHAD. NONE OF THEM MEASURE UP TO A SINGLE PART. WHY IS THIS? BECAUSE ALL THUS COME ONES HONOR THE DHARMA. CULTIVATING ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS GIVES BIRTH TO ALL BUDDHAS. IF ALL BODHISATTVAS MAKE THE OFFERING OF DHARMA, THEY PERFECT THE MAKING OF OFFERING TO ALL THUS COME ONES. CULTIVATION IN THIS MANNER IS A TRUE OFFERING, A VAST, GREAT, AND MOST SUPREME OFFERING.

"WHEN THE REALM OF EMPTY SPACE IS EXHAUSTED, WHEN THE REALMS OF LIVING BEINGS ARE EXHAUSTED, WHEN THE KARMA OF LIVING BEINGS IS EXHAUSTED, AND WHEN THE AFFLICTIONS OF LIVING BEINGS COME TO AN END, ONLY THEN WILL MY MAKING OF OFFERINGS BE EXHAUSTED. JUST AS THE REALM OF EMPTY SPACE UP TO AND INCLUDING THE AFFLICTIONS ARE ENDLESS, SO TOO ARE MY MAKING OF OFFERINGS ENDLESS. IN THOUGHT AFTER THOUGHT WITHOUT CEASE, MY BODY, MOUTH, AND MIND NEVER WEARY OF THESE DEEDS.

COMMENTARY:

The passage immediately preceding this discussed making offerings. In the practice of giving many offerings, the gift of Dharma is the most supreme, because it causes all living beings to cultivate according to the teachings; it benefits them; it is the offering which attracts them; it is the offering of standing in for all beings to undergo their suffering; it is the offering of diligently cultivating good roots; it is the offering of never forsaking the deeds of the Bodhisattva; and it is the offering of never renouncing the Bodhimind.

Therefore, Universal Worthy Bodhi-sattva again said, "GOOD MAN, THE IMMEASURABLE MERIT AND VIRTUE CREATED FROM MAKING THOSE OFFERINGS is great, but WHEN COMPARED WITH THE MERIT AND VIRTUE

FROM A SINGLE THOUGHT OF OFFERING DHARMA, it DOES NOT EQUAL ONE PART IN A HUNDRED. An ordinary offering does not equal one hundredth part of the merit derived from giving Dharma, nor does it equal ONE PART IN A THOUSAND, up to the point that it does not equal ONE PART IN A HUNDRED THOUSAND *KOTIS OF NAYUTAS* of the merit and virtue derived from the giving of Dharma."

Koti is a Sanskrit word which means "10,000,000." It means "hundreds of thousands of millions of *Nayutas*." *Nayuta* is also a large number.

ONE PART IN A *KALA*. A *Kala* is an inconceivable number. ONE PART BY RECKONING, or ONE PART BY CALCULATION. You may use any means of reckoning or calculation. OR ONE PART THAT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED BY COMPARISON, and you still cannot measure the merit and virtue from giving Dharma.

Also, it does not equal ONE PART IN AN *UPANISHAD*. *Upanishad* is the name of one who is mentioned in the *Shurangama Sutra*: "With Upanishad as their leader." Translated, the word means "the nature of dust" and "dust motes," and so it is a number as great as the number of dust motes. NONE OF THEM MEASURE UP TO A SINGLE PART. They cannot equal one part of the merit and virtue derived from an offering of Dharma.

WHY IS THIS? Why is it that the offering of Dharma is so great? BECAUSE ALL THUS COME ONES, because all Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, HONOR THE DHARMA. Not only should all common people honor the Dharma, but all Buddhas also honor the Buddhadharma, because if there were no Buddhadharma, no one could become a Buddha.

To become a Buddha, you must study the Buddhadharma, and the Buddhadharma must be transmitted by a left-home person, because those who have left the home-life are entrusted with the Buddhadharma. The merit and virtue derived from giving the Dharma as an offering to all Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, and to all living beings, is inconceivable; there is no way one can discuss it all, because all Buddhas, Thus Come Ones, honor the Buddhadharma.

CULTIVATING ACCORDING TO THE TEACHINGS GIVES BIRTH TO ALL BUDDHAS. Because one relies on the Buddhadharma, which teaches how to cultivate, one can become a Buddha. If you teach the Buddhadharma and people cultivate according to it, they can become Buddhas. This is what is meant by "gives birth to all Buddhas."

IF ALL BODHISATTVAS MAKE THE OFFERING OF DHARMA, THEY PERFECT THE MAKING OF OFFERING TO ALL THUS COME ONES. These Bodhisattvas cultivate the practice of giving Dharma. On the one hand, they make offerings to Thus Come Ones, and on the other hand, they themselves can become Thus Come Ones. CULTIVATION IN THIS MANNER IS A TRUE OFFERING. This is truly making offerings. The gift of Dharma is a true offering, A VAST, GREAT, AND MOST

SUPREME OFFERING. The offering of Dharma is the most extensive and supreme offering.

WHEN THE REALM OF EMPTY SPACE IS EXHAUSTED, when there is no more empty space, WHEN THE REALMS OF LIVING BEINGS ARE EXHAUSTED, when there are no more living beings, WHEN THE KARMA OF LIVING BEINGS IS EXHAUSTED, when the karmic obstructions of living beings are no more, AND WHEN THE AFFLICTIONS OF LIVING BEINGS COME TO AN END, and when living beings have no more afflictions, ONLY THEN WILL MY MAKING OF OFFERINGS BE EXHAUSTED. When these four things, empty space, living beings, living beings' karma, and living beings' afflictions, no longer exist, then my giving of offerings need not continue. I need give no more. But since the realm of empty space, the realms of living beings, the karma of living beings, and the afflictions of living beings are endless, and there is no way they can be exhausted, no way they can be finished, so too are my gifts of offerings endless. Therefore, my resolve to extensively and greatly make offerings and to extensively cultivate the giving of offerings is inexhaustible and never-ending.

The strength from this vow continues IN THOUGHT AFTER THOUGHT WITHOUT CEASE, and never ends. MY BODY, MOUTH, AND MIND NEVER WEARY OF THESE DEEDS. When I give offerings with my body, I never grow weary; when I give offerings with my mind, I never grow weary; and when I give offerings with my mouth, I never become tired.

There is a saying about the karma of body, mouth, and mind:

When no anger appears in the face, then the offering is complete.

When the mouth is without anger, the saliva is fragrant.

When the mind is without anger, it is a precious pearl.

To be without stupidity and greed is the fragrance of giving.

When one is without angry facial expression, that is a complete offering. When you do not engage in harsh speech, you emit a fragrant breath. When you have no angry thoughts in your mind, your mind is an offering of a precious pearl. And the best offering is to be without stupidity, anger, and greed; this is a true and complete offering.