

The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra

Chapter Fourteen "Happily Dwelling Conduct"

with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

SUTRA:

SUCH IS THE THIRD DHARMA
WHICH THE WISE ONES SHOULD ALWAYS GUARD.
WITH THE SINGLEMINDED HAPPILY DWELLING CONDUCT,
ONE IS REVERED BY LIMITLESS MULTITUDES.

COMMENTARY:

SUCH IS THE THIRD DHARMA the happily dwelling conduct of the mind. It is a Dharma WHICH THE WISE ONES SHOULD ALWAYS GUARD. Those with wisdom rely on these methods in their practice and protect the happily dwelling conduct. WITH THE SINGLEMINDED HAPPILY DWELLING CONDUCT, ONE IS REVERED BY LIMITLESS MULTITUDES. Limitless living beings will revere and respect this Bodhisattva who cultivates the Bodhisattva Way and holds to the happily dwelling conduct.

SUTRA:

FURTHER, MANJUSHRI, THE BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA WHO IN THE LATTER ENDING AGE, WHEN THE DHARMA IS ABOUT TO BECOME EXTINCT, UPHOLDS THE *DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA*, SHOULD GIVE RISE TO THOUGHTS OF GREAT KINDNESS FOR THOSE AT HOME AND THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT HOME. HE SHOULD GIVE RISE TO THOUGHTS OF GREAT COMPASSION FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT BODHISATTVAS.

COMMENTARY:

FURTHER, MANJUSHRI, Shakyamuni Buddha continues speaking to Wonderfully Lucky Bodhisattva, THE BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA who cultivates the Bodhisattva conduct WHO, IN THE LATTER ENDING AGE, in the future, WHEN THE DHARMA IS ABOUT TO BECOME EXTINCT, UPHOLDS the DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA—he receives, upholds, reads, and recites it—SHOULD GIVE RISE TO THOUGHTS OF GREAT KINDNESS FOR THOSE AT HOME, Upasakas, and Upasikas, AND THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT HOME, Bhikshus and Bhikshunis. Kindness makes living beings happy. HE SHOULD GIVE RISE TO THOUGHTS OF GREAT COMPASSION FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT BODHISATTVAS. Compassion pulls beings out of suffering which they are undergoing because of the offenses they have committed.

SUTRA:

HE SHOULD THINK, "PEOPLE LIKE THIS ARE MISSING A GREAT DEAL. ALTHOUGH THE THUS COME ONE SPEAKS THE DHARMA EXPEDIENTLY AND APPROPRIATELY, THEY DO NOT HEAR, KNOW, OR AWAKEN TO IT. THEY DO NOT INQUIRE INTO IT, BELIEVE IT, OR UNDERSTAND IT.

COMMENTARY:

HE SHOULD contemplate and THINK in this way: "PEOPLE LIKE THIS ARE MISSING A GREAT DEAL. The benefits they are missing are tremendous. They are taking the greatest loss. THE THUS COME ONE SPEAKS THE DHARMA EXPEDIENTLY AND APPROPRIATELY. According to the wishes and intent of the people he meets, the Buddha speaks the Dharma. If he meets a Great Vehicle person, he speaks the Dharma of the Great Vehicle. If he meets a Small Vehicle person, he speaks the Dharma of the Small Vehicle. As it is said,

The Buddha speaks the Dharma with one sound;
Living beings understand it according to their kind.

Living beings are different, yet, they all understand what a Buddha speaks in their own way. But although the Buddha speaks in that way, there are people with offenses who do not study the Buddhadharma. THEY DO NOT HEAR, KNOW, OR AWAKEN TO IT. THEY DO NOT INQUIRE INTO IT, BELIEVE, OR UNDERSTAND IT. They don't understand and they don't ask questions from those who do understand. They don't believe and they have no intention of understanding the Buddhadharma. People like that suffer the greatest loss.

SUTRA:

ALTHOUGH THESE PEOPLE DO NOT INQUIRE INTO, BELIEVE, OR UNDERSTAND THIS SUTRA, STILL, WHEN I OBTAIN ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBOODHI, WHEREVER THEY HAPPEN TO BE, I WILL USE THE POWER OF SPIRITUAL PENETRATIONS AND THE POWER OF WISDOM TO LEAD THEM TO ABIDE WITHIN THIS DHARMA.

COMMENTARY:

ALTHOUGH THESE PEOPLE DO NOT INQUIRE INTO and ask about the wonderful principles of the Dharma Flower Sutra, or BELIEVE the wonderful principles of the Dharma Flower Sutra, or UNDERSTAND THIS SUTRA, STILL, WHEN I OBTAIN ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBOODHI," vows the Great Bodhisattva who is cultivating the Bodhisattva Way, "When I attain the Unsurpassed, Proper and Equal, Right Enlightenment, WHEREVER THEY HAPPEN TO BE, I WILL USE THE POWER OF SPIRITUAL PENETRATIONS AND THE POWER OF WISDOM TO LEAD THEM TO ABIDE WITHIN THIS DHARMA." I will welcome and lead those who do not ask, do not believe, and do not understand and enable them through the use of my spiritual powers and the strength of my wisdom to dwell in this wonderful Dharma.

SUTRA:

MANJUSHRI, THE BODHISATTVA, MAHASATTVA, WHO, AFTER THE TRANQUILITY OF THE THUS COME ONE, ACCOMPLISHES THIS, THE FOURTH DHARMA, SHALL BE FREE FROM ERROR WHEN HE SPEAKS THIS DHARMA.

COMMENTARY:

MANJUSHRI, THE BODHISATTVA MAHASATTVA, WHO, AFTER THE TRANQUILITY OF THE THUS COME ONE, ACCOMPLISHES THIS, THE FOURTH DHARMA, happily dwelling conduct of making vows, SHALL BE FREE FROM ERROR WHEN HE SPEAKS THIS DHARMA. When he has accomplished all four of the happily dwelling conducts just explained, he will make no mistakes when he explains the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra.

SUTRA:

HE WILL ALWAYS RECEIVE OFFERINGS FROM AND BE REVERED, HONORED, AND PRAISED BY BHIKSHUS, BHIKSHUNIS, UPASAKAS, UPASIKAS, KINGS, PRINCES, GREAT MINISTERS, COMMON PEOPLE, BRAHMANS, LAY PEOPLE AND SO ON. THE GODS IN EMPTY SPACE WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW AND SERVE HIM IN ORDER TO HEAR THE DHARMA. IF, IN VILLAGES AND CITIES OR IN THE WILDS OR FORESTS, SOMEONE APPROACHES HIM WISHING TO POSE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, ALL THE GODS, FOR THE SAKE OF THE DHARMA, WILL SURROUND AND PROTECT HIM DAY AND NIGHT, AND HE WILL CAUSE THE LISTENERS TO BE JOYFUL.

COMMENTARY:

HE WILL ALWAYS RECEIVE OFFERINGS FROM AND BE REVERED, HONORED, AND PRAISED BY BHIKSHUS, BHIKSHUNIS, UPASAKAS, UPASIKAS, KINGS, PRINCES, GREAT MINISTERS, COMMON PEOPLE, BRAHMANS, LAY PEOPLE AND SO ON. Not only will those in the human realm revere him, but also THE GODS IN EMPTY SPACE WILL ALWAYS FOLLOW AND SERVE HIM IN ORDER TO HEAR THE DHARMA from this Bodhisattva. IF, IN VILLAGES OR CITIES, IN THE WILDS OR FORESTS, and in the mountains—in the places where he is cultivating—SOMEONE APPROACHES HIM WISHING TO POSE DIFFICULT QUESTIONS, to give him a test, ALL THE GODS, dragons, and others of the eightfold division, the Dharma protectors and good spirits, FOR THE SAKE OF guarding THE DHARMA, WILL SURROUND AND PROTECT HIM DAY AND NIGHT. HE SHALL CAUSE THE LISTENERS TO BE JOYFUL. Those who listen to the Sutra and hear the Dharma will all be made happy.

SUTRA:

WHY IS THIS? THIS SUTRA IS PROTECTED BY THE SPIRITUAL POWERS OF ALL THE THUS COME ONES OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

COMMENTARY:

WHY IS THIS? THIS SUTRA IS PRO-TECTED BY THE SPIRITUAL POWERS OF ALL THE THUS COME ONES OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE. The Buddhas of the three periods of time guard the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra. Therefore, whenever problems or difficulties arise, they are taken care of so that they disappear.

SUTRA:

MANJUSHRI, THROUGHOUT COUNTLESS AEONS, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE EVEN TO HEAR THE NAME OF THE DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA MUCH LESS TO SEE, RECEIVE, UPHOLD, READ, OR RECITE IT.

COMMENTARY:

Shakyamuni Buddha continues speaking. "MANJUSHRI, THROUGHOUT COUNTLESS AEONS, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE EVEN TO HEAR THE NAME OF THE DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA, MUCH LESS TO SEE, RECEIVE, UPHOLD, READ, OR RECITE IT. It is definitely not easy to get a chance to even hear the name of the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra.

There is a certain sect that exclusively recites the name of the Dharma Flower Sutra, showing that they have been able to hear the name. Some people never even get to hear the name, so, those of that sect, having heard it, constantly recite it. It's not easy to lay eyes on this Sutra, much less to receive, uphold, read, and recite it.

SUTRA:

MANJUSHRI, IT IS LIKE A POWERFUL WHEEL-TURNING SAGE KING WHO WISHES BY FORCE TO SUBDUE OTHER COUNTRIES.

COMMENTARY:

MANJUSHRI, IT IS LIKE A POWERFUL WHEEL-TURNING SAGE KING WHO WISHES BY FORCE TO SUBDUE OTHER COUNTRIES. He wants to use his awesome virtue and might to conquer other lands.

SUTRA:

BUT ALL THE LESSER KINGS DO NOT FOLLOW HIS COMMANDS.

COMMENTARY:

BUT ALL THE LESSER KINGS DO NOT FOLLOW HIS COMMANDS. All the kings within those small countries do not pay any attention to him.

SUTRA:

THE WHEEL-TURNING KING THEN MOBILIZES HIS VARIOUS TROOPS AND GOES TO PUNISH THEM.

COMMENTARY:

THE WHEEL-TURNING KING THEN MOBILIZES HIS VARIOUS TROOPS AND GOES TO PUNISH THEM. The king then sends out his troops to impose discipline on the lesser kings.

SUTRA:

SEEING HIS TROOPS SUCCESSFUL IN WARFARE, HE IS GREATLY DELIGHTED AND, ACCORDING TO THEIR MERITS, HE REWARDS THEM, GIVING THEM FIELDS, HOUSES, VILLAGES, CITIES, OR ELSE CLOTHING, PERSONAL ORNAMENTS, OR VARIOUS PRECIOUS GEMS OF GOLD, SILVER, LAPIS LAZULI, MOTHER-OF-PEARL, CARNELIAN, CORAL, OR AGATE: OR ELEPHANTS, HORSES, CARRIAGES, SERVANTS, OR SUBJECTS.

COMMENTARY

SEEING HIS TROOPS SUCCESSFUL IN WARFARE, HE IS GREATLY DELIGHTED AND AWARDS THEM ACCORDING TO THEIR MERITS, GIVING THEM FIELDS, which represent samadhi; HOUSES, which represent wisdom; VILLAGES, which represent the first and second fruits of Arhatship; or CITIES, which represent the third and fourth fruits of Arhatship. Or he gives them CLOTHING, which represents good dharmas of shame and patience; PERSONAL ORNAMENTS, which represent the aids to the Way; OR VARIOUS PRECIOUS GEMS OF GOLD, SILVER, LAPIS LAZULI, MOTHER-OF-PEARL, CARNELIAN, CORAL, AND AGATE. The seven gems represent the Seven Bodhi Shares, also known as the Seven Limbs of Enlightenment. Or he gives them ELEPHANTS, HORSES, and CARRIAGES, which represent the Two Vehicles; SERVANTS, which represent the functions of spiritual penetrations; OR SUBJECTS, which represent wholesome Dharmas.

ULLAMBANA

We are about to celebrate Ullambana. "Ullambana" is Sanskrit. It means "releasing those who are upside-down." It's very painful to be hanging upside down, and so now we are going to release those who are. Release whom? We are going to release parents, grandparents, and other ancestors from our previous lives. We don't know whether our past relatives created merit, in which case they may have been reborn in the Land of Ultimate Bliss, or in the heavens, or among people as presidents or emperors, or whether

they created offenses in which case they may have fallen into the hells into the realm of hungry ghosts, or into the animal realm. The fifteenth day of the seventh lunar month is the anniversary of the day when Bhikshu Mahamaudgalyayana saved his mother from the hells. On this day, Ullambana, we can create merit and virtue for our relatives from the past seven lives and cross them over.

If you feel you have a big temper and too much "fire of ignorance," it is because your parents and other relatives from the past have not left suffering and attained bliss. Every day they help you get angry, and encourage you to commit offenses so that you can hurry up and join them. If you feel that this may be the case, you should take advantage of this opportunity to do merit and virtue to cross them over. This kind of ceremony has rarely been done in the West. You now have a chance to be a filial descendant and do some merit and virtue on your ancestors' behalf.