

# Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra

## Chapter Fifteen, Welling up from the Earth

with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

### SUTRA:

**The World Honored One, having recited those verses, then spoke to Maitreya Bodhisattva, saying, "I now, in this great assembly, make this announcement to all of you: AJITA! These incalculable Asankhyeyas of Great Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas, who have welled up out of the earth and whom you have never seen before, are those whom I taught, transformed, and guided in this Saha world after I attained Anuttarasamyaksambodhi. I tamed and subdued the minds of these Bodhisattvas, causing them to bring forth the resolve for the Way."**

### COMMENTARY:

Then, after Shakyamuni Buddha, **The World Honored One**, finished speaking those verses, and **having recited those verses, then spoke to Maitreya Bodhisattva, saying**, "Maitreya Bodhisattva, I will now tell you. **I now, in this Great Assembly, make this announcement to all of you** Great Bodhisattvas. **AJITA!** Pay attention to what I am about to tell you. **These Great Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas**, who issued forth from beneath the earth, are **incalculable Asankhyeyas**—one knows not how many in number." "Asankhyeya" is translated as "an incalculable number." "Now there are incalculable numbers of incalculable numbers of Bodhisattvas, **who have welled up out of the earth. You have never seen** so many Bodhisattvas as these **before**. Right? Now I will tell you. **In this Saha World**, that is, the world that we are "able to endure" ( 堪忍 kan ren) ....This world is 'full of a myriad evils' ( 萬惡充滿 wan e chung man) . It is also known as the world where a myriad sufferings merge together ( 萬苦交煎 wan ku jyau jyan) . **After I attained Anuttarasamyaksambodhi**, the unsurpassed, proper and equal, right enlightenment, **I taught, transformed, and guided these Bodhisattvas**, and pointed out the Way to them--leading and guiding them. **I tamed and subdued their minds**. I caused those with afflictions to be without afflictions; I caused those with ignorance to be without ignorance. I caused those with delusions like dust and sand to get rid of their delusions like dust and sand. Those with view delusions and thought delusions also got rid of those view and thought delusions, the delusions like dust and sand, and ignorance—I tamed and subdued their minds, **causing them to bring forth the resolve for the Way**. I have caused them all to decide to cultivate the Way and be resolved to practice the Bodhisattva Way. They have been brought to accomplishment through my previous teaching and transforming.

### SUTRA:

**"All of these Bodhisattvas live in empty space beneath the Saha World. They have read and recited all the Sutras until they have penetrated them thoroughly. They have pondered their meaning in detail and been properly mindful of them.**

### COMMENTARY:

**All of these Bodhisattvas**, that is, the ones who have just now welled up from the earth, **live in empty space beneath the Saha World**. Ordinary people cannot know of this state. If you obtain the Five Eyes and Six Spiritual Penetrations, then the empty space you see will not be the same as the empty

space which ordinary people see. In empty space there are the seven gems in profusion. There are all kinds of palaces, all kinds of pavilions and various Way-places. They are all adorned with the seven jewels. Within every palace, pavilion, and Way-place are Buddhas speaking the Dharma and Great Bodhisattvas listening to the Dharma and cultivating. That's what the Dharma Realm is like. The entirety of empty space is filled with the Buddha-dharma.

One hundred sixty-eight yojanas beneath our Saha World, in the empty space there, is where the Bodhisattvas live who have just now welled up out of the earth. If you have not opened your Way-eyes, you will be unaware of this state. Once you open your Way-eyes, then when you want to recite a Sutra, there are Sutras everywhere for you to recite. When you want to cultivate a Dharma, there are Dharmas everywhere. When you want to cultivate the Bodhisattva Way, you can do it any time you want. And so this is a wonderful and inconceivable state. These Bodhisattvas reside in empty space. **"They have read and recited the Sutras."** The Flower Adornment Sutra, The Shurangama Sutra, The Earth Store Sutra, The Vajra Sutra, and all the other Sutras in the Tripitaka, they read and recite. "Read" means to look at the book and read aloud. "Recite" means to recite from memory, without the book.

**"They have penetrated them thoroughly."** Not one word do they read incorrectly. Not one sentence do they get wrong. Not one page would they forget. That's what's meant by "penetrated thoroughly": **"They have pondered their meanings in detail."** To read a Sutra until one is familiar with it, one does not stop at only reciting it. One must also reflect upon it and discern its meanings. Ponder the wonderful meanings and principles in the Sutras. **"And they have been properly mindful of them."** They are thoroughly attentive to the reading and reciting of the Dharma Flower Sutra. They are doing it right now. They are reading and reciting the Great Vehicle Sutras. At all times they have their minds on what they are doing. They do not forget the Sutras. They continually cultivate and study the doctrines in the Dharma Flower Sutra. And so these Great Bodhisattvas are those whom Shakyamuni Buddha in the past taught and transformed and brought to accomplishment.

#### SUTRA:

**"AJITA! All these good men take no delight in dwelling with the multitudes or in much talk. They always enjoy living in quiet places where they practice with diligence and vigor, never resting. They do not take up residence with humans or gods."**

#### COMMENTARY:

Shakyamuni Buddha called again, **"Ajita Bodhisattva, all these good men, so many Great Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas, Take no delight in dwelling with the multitudes."** They don't like being in places where many people are gathered. What is meant by busy, crowded places? It refers to within and beyond the Triple Realm. Within and beyond the Triple Realm are the five skandhas, and it is these five skandhas that "the multitudes" refers to (界内界外五陰謂衆 jye nei jye wai wu yin wei jung). These Bodhisattvas have all illumined and viewed the five skandhas as empty. And so they take no delight in being with the multitudes. Their five skandhas are already empty." Nor do they like **much talk.**" Since they have already transcended the Triple Realm, they have thoroughly comprehended all dharmas as basically inexpressible. (了達諸法本來無說 lyau da ju fa ben lai wu shwo). There's nothing that can be said about them and so they take no delight in talking. **"They always enjoy living in quiet places."** They always like to be quiet. They like tranquil places. Quiet places represent the Truth of the Primary Principle (第一義諦 di yi yi di). They are always within the Dharma of the Truth of the Primary Principle and so **"They practice with diligence and vigor."** They all have comprehended the doctrine of the Truth of the Primary Principle—the Dharma-door of no speaking, of no words. "They practice vigor. They are diligently vigorous and not the least bit lazy, **never resting.** They approach the Buddhadharma with diligent vigor and do not rest. They never rest. For the sake of

the Dharma, they forget themselves. For the Buddhadharmas, they will forget all else. **They do not take up residence with humans or gods.** They don't live among people, and they don't abide in the heavens. Where do they live? They reside in empty space."

**SUTRA:**

**"They always delight in deep wisdom and have no obstacles. They also always delight in all the Dharmas of the Buddhas, with single-minded vigor they seek supreme wisdom.**

**COMMENTARY:**

**"They always delight in deep wisdom.** What they like is profound and far-reaching great wisdom and great knowledge. **They have no obstacles.** Why don't they have any obstacles? It's because they have wisdom. When you, as a person, meet with a situation and you cannot see through it, you cannot put it down, why is that? It is because you have obstacles. Of obstacles, there are (1) the obstacle of afflictions (煩惱障), and (2) the obstacle of what is known (所知障). With the obstacle of what is known you think, "I know more than you." That's an obstacle. "I understand more than you do." That's also an obstacle. The obstacle of what is known is the fiercest obstacle. The obstacle of afflictions is very obvious and so it is quite easy for people to recognize it.

There are also: (1) the obstacle of karma: when one's karmic obstacles overtake one, one cannot take care of oneself. Perhaps one goes insane, or some other unusual thing happens. That's one's karmic-obstacles propelling one, oppressing one, and causing there to be all kinds of things that are not in accord with the Dharma. There's also the obstacle of retribution, which refers to the retributions one must undergo.

The obstacle of afflictions, the obstacle of karma, and the obstacle of retribution all hinder one, but the worst is the obstacle of what is known. Before you knew, there was no obstacle. As soon as you know a lot, obstacles arise. You become arrogant. For instance, before you began to study the Buddhadharmas, you didn't have this obstacle. But after studying the Buddhadharmas for a few years, you think, "I know a lot more Buddhadharmas than you do." With that, you give rise to an obstacle. To begin with, we study in order to become free of obstacles, but many who study end up getting this obstacle.

"These Bodhisattvas **have no obstacles.**" No obstacles at all. It's said, "Everything you enter into goes favorably (無入而不自得焉 wu ru er bu dz de yen)." Everything goes your way. Everything makes you happy. Favorably means you are very pleased. No matter what causes and conditions, no matter what the situation, you are always very happy. **"They also always delight in all the Dharmas of all Buddhas.** They always want to study and practice all Dharmas--all the Buddhas' Dharmas, **with single-minded vigor.** They don't think about anything else. They are of one mind. What is that mind about? **They seek supreme wisdom.** They want to obtain the highest, most supreme, most ultimate wisdom."

**SUTRA:**

**At that time, the World Honored One, wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses, saying:**

**COMMENTARY:**

Then, **at that time**, Shakyamuni **World Honored One**, concerned that living beings might still not understand this principle, or that they hadn't heard it clearly, **wishing to restate this meaning, spoke verses** to reiterate.

#### **SUTRA:**

**Ajita, you should know.  
All these great Bodhisattvas,  
For countless eons,  
Have cultivated and practiced the Buddha-wisdom.  
They are all being taught by me.  
And caused to bring forth great resolve for the Way.  
They are all my disciples.  
Dwelling in this world system.  
Ever practicing the work of dhuta.  
They are determined and delight in quiet places.  
Renouncing the bustle of crowds.  
They take no delight in much talk.  
These disciples  
Study and practice the dharma of my Way,  
Vigorous always, day and night,  
Seeking the Buddha-Way.  
They dwell in the empty space  
Beneath this Saha world.  
Solid and powerful in resolve and thought.  
They are ever diligent, seeking wisdom.  
They speak various wonderful dharmas,  
With no fear in their minds.**

#### **COMMENTARY:**

Shakyamuni Buddha uses verses to answer again the question asked by Ajita Bodhisattva. He says, "**Ajita**, 'Invincible,' **you should know**, / **all these great Bodhisattvas**, who are now welling up from the earth, **for countless eons**—from uncountable great kalpas past to the present time—**have cultivated and practiced the Buddha-wisdom**. In every kalpa, life after life, time after time, they have been developing the Buddhas' wisdom, seeking the unsurpassed wisdom of the Buddhas. **They are all being taught by me**. Didn't you ask who's teaching and transforming them? From the time they brought forth the initial resolve until now, they have become Great Bodhisattvas. And it has been I who personally taught and transformed them, **and caused to bring forth great resolve for the Way**. I will cause them to bring forth the Great Bodhi Way-mind. I will cause them to bring forth the Bodhisattva's Way-mind, cause them to bring forth the Way-mind to seek the unsurpassed Way. This is how I teach them."

You see how Shakyamuni Buddha taught and transformed these Bodhisattva disciples so that in this life, when he is speaking the Dharma, they all well up out of the earth, follow along and rejoice in the Dharma Assembly, and act as the influential assembly (影響衆). They influence the Great Assembly to bring forth the Bodhi mind.

"**They are all my disciples**. These Great Bodhisattvas are all my disciples. They are disciples whom I have taught and transformed. **Dwelling in this world system**, they reside beneath this world in empty space. **Ever practicing the work of dhuta**: they are always practicing asceticism."

There are twelve dhuta practices:

1. wearing rag robes
2. possessing only three robes
3. begging for food
4. consecutive begging
5. eating only one meal at midday
6. eating a fixed and moderate amount of food
7. not drinking juices after noon
8. dwelling in an aranya
9. dwelling beneath a tree
10. dwelling in the open
11. dwelling in a graveyard
12. always sitting and never lying down

They rely on the Dharma-door of dhuta in their cultivation.

**They are determined and delight in quiet places.** Their resolve and vows are that they prefer to dwell in tranquil, pure places, where there are no extraneous noises to disturb them. **Renouncing the bustle of crowds**, they stay away from places where there are many people. They tend to avoid noisy and confusing places full of loud sounds that are not quiet. "Renouncing the bustle of crowds" also means renouncing afflictions. They cast off the afflictions of view delusions and thought delusions, as well as delusions like dust and sand.

**They take no delight in much talk.** They don't like to talk. And this doesn't mean not talking for one day, two days, three or five days, or for a week and then talking even more to make up for it. They never like to talk.