

The Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra

with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

Chapter Ten: Dharma Masters

Continued from issue #173

SUTRA:

"MEDICINE KING, IN ANY PLACE WHERE THIS SUTRA IS SPOKEN, READ, RECITED, WRITTEN OUT, OR STORED, ONE SHOULD BUILD A STUPA OF THE SEVEN JEWELS, MAKING IT AS HIGH, BROAD, AND MAGNIFICENT AS POSSIBLE. IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PLACE SHARIRA IN IT. WHY IS THIS? WITHIN IT ALREADY IS THE COMPLETE BODY OF THE THUS COME ONE. ONE SHOULD USE ALL KINDS OF FLOWERS, INCENSE, BEADS, SILK CANOPIES, BANNERS, VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TO MAKE OFFERINGS, REVERE, HONOR, AND PRAISE IT. IF PEOPLE SEE THIS STUPA, BOW BEFORE IT, AND MAKE OFFERINGS TO IT, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY ARE CLOSE TO ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBOHDI.

COMMENTARY:

MEDICINE KING, IN ANY PLACE —that is, in all places regardless of where they are—WHERE THIS SUTRA IS SPOKEN, explained, READ, RECITED, WRITTEN OUT, OR STORED, wherever the Sutra is, ONE SHOULD BUILD A STUPA OF THE SEVEN JEWELS, MAKING IT AS HIGH, BROAD, AND MAGNIFICENT AS POSSIBLE. You shouldn't just make a small stupa. Remember the dwarf, the little man only three feet high but five feet wide? He looked strange, but he had a beautiful voice. Someone asked the Buddha how he could look so strange yet sing so well. The Buddha told him, "In a former life, limitless aeons ago, someone was making a jeweled stupa. This man objected, saying, 'Why are you making it so high? No one will even be able to see the top. Make it a little broader and a little shorter so everyone can see it and bow to it!' As a retribution for his discouraging words, life after life he was born as a dwarf." From this report you can guess that in former lives, people who are short probably criticized the making of a stupa. The reason for his bell-like voice was because when the stupa was completed, he hung a bell in the tower. If someone is building a temple, you shouldn't object to its size saying, "Why don't you make a smaller one? There's not that many people in this whole area anyway." In general, the higher and bigger temples and stupas are, the better. Stupas are defined as "high, manifest places," or as "square graves." Since the dwarf hung the bell in the stupa, he had a lovely voice. If anyone wants a beautiful voice, he should hang a bell in a jeweled pagoda.

"IT IS NOT NECESSARY TO PLACE SHARIRA IN IT." The jeweled stupa should be studded with lustrous jewels which shine both day and night. If you have some sharira you can put them in, of course, but if you don't, you need not go all over looking for some to put in. "WHY IS THIS? WITHIN IT ALREADY IS THE COMPLETE BODY OF THE THUS COME ONE." If there is a copy of this Sutra in the stupa, then the true body of the Buddha is there. "ONE SHOULD USE ALL KINDS OF FLOWERS, INCENSE, BEADS, SILK CANOPIES, BANNERS, VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TO MAKE OFFERINGS, REVERE, HONOR AND PRAISE IT." To

this jeweled stupa, you should make offerings of flowers, incense, beads, silk canopies, banners, and instrumental and vocal music. We sing songs and chants in praise of the Buddha. We really have no way to express completely our reverence for the Buddha and our sincerity, so we just use songs which everyone likes to hear to express our appreciation of the Buddha's merit and virtue. The Dharma does not consist of only one method of cultivation and accomplishment. There are eighty-four thousand Dharma doors. One can realize Buddhahood by using any one of them. "IF PEOPLE SEE THIS STUPA, BOW BEFORE IT, AND MAKE OFFERINGS TO IT, or even nod their heads ever so slightly or raise one hand as a gesture of respect, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THEY ARE CLOSE TO ANUTTARASAMYAKSAMBODHI, the unsurpassed Buddha fruition." We should all make vows to joint together and build a jeweled stupa for *The Dharma Flower Sutra*. We should make it as high as the tallest stupa in the world. If we join together in making that vow, then we can fulfill it. The strength of vows depends on determination. Determination means making up your mind to accomplish something, and not stopping until you do. When I left home I made a determined VOW. I said, "In the future I am certainly going to spread Buddhism throughout the entire world. I will bring Buddhism to every place where it is absent now. Not only will I spread the Buddhadharma, but I will spread the true, orthodox Buddhadharma." I haven't fulfilled my vows yet. When there is Buddhism in all worlds, not just this one, then my vows will be fulfilled. It's not enough to have Buddhism throughout just this one world. All of you who make vows and are determined in them will certainly succeed.

SUTRA:

"MEDICINE KING, MANY PEOPLE, BOTH THOSE AT HOME AND THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT HOME, PRACTICE THE BODHISATTVA PATH. IF THEY ARE UNABLE TO SEE, HEAR, READ, RECITE, WRITE OUT, UPHOLD, OR MAKE OFFERINGS TO THE DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA, KNOW THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE NOT YET SKILLFULLY PRACTICED THE BODHISATTVA PATH. IF THEY ARE ABLE TO HEAR THIS SUTRA, THEN THEY WILL BE ABLE TO SKILLFULLY PRACTICE THE BODHISATTVA PATH.

COMMENTARY:

"MEDICINE KING," Shakyamuni Buddha continues, "MANY PEOPLE, BOTH THOSE AT HOME, that is, laymen and laywomen, AND THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT HOME, that is, Bhikshus and Bhikshunis, PRACTICE THE BODHISATTVA PATH." Both lay-people and left-home people can practice the Bodhisattva Path.

What is the Bodhisattva Path? It is the way of other people. It means benefitting oneself and benefitting others. It means being able to put yourself aside to help others, giving the advantages to other people and being willing to accept the disadvantages. The Bodhisattva Path is like water: "water benefits all things and yet does not contend." All living creatures, whether they are born from wombs, eggs, moisture, or transformation, depend upon water for the maintenance of their life. Without water, they can't live. But water itself doesn't boast of its merit saying, "I have helped you so much. My merit is great indeed!" Those who practice the Bodhisattva Path should be this way. Don't think, "I have helped living beings, and so I have merit." Lau-dz said,

The highest goodness is like water. Water is able to benefit all things and does not contend. It goes to places people despise and so it is close to the Way.

Water flows down into lowly places; places where no one would like to live. When you practice the Bodhisattva Path, you must give the merit to others and take the mistakes upon yourself.

"But then I won't have any merit," you object.

The more you give merit to others, the greater your own merit becomes. On the surface, you are giving the merit away, but underneath, in the realms of true principle, it remains yours. People who don't understand how to cultivate are always struggling to grab the spotlight, to be number one, and to make sure everyone knows who they are. People who understand true principle don't seek recognition. It is said,

Good done for show, is not truly good.
Evil done in secret, is great evil indeed.

Bodhisattvas don't want people to know about their good deeds. If they make mistakes, they don't care if people find out.

The Bodhisattva Path is the way of benefitting yourself and benefitting others. It means benefitting others more than yourself, and even benefitting others at your own expense. Bodhisattvas practice the Six Perfections: giving, holding precepts, patience, vigor, dhyana concentration, and wisdom. In giving, you should give to other people. Giving doesn't mean to tell other people to give things to you! You can't complain and say, "I am one of the Triple Jewel. Why doesn't anyone make offerings to me?" Holding precepts also means that you hold them yourself. It doesn't mean that you go around telling other people to hold precepts. Patience means you yourself are patient, not that you tell others to be patient. Vigor also means that you are vigorous, not that you tell others to be vigorous and remain lazy yourself. You can't think, "I have already become a Bodhisattva and so I don't need to be vigorous. I'll just tell the new Bodhisattvas to be vigorous. I am an old Bodhisattva, so I don't have to be vigorous."

As to Dhyana concentration, you must cultivate it yourself. You can't pester people and say, "Why don't you have any Dhyana concentration?" Finally, you yourself must have Prajna wisdom. You can't tell others to cultivate it and fail to cultivate it yourself.

The Six Perfections aren't to be practiced for one day. You must practice them every single day and never rest for even a second. Practicing the Bodhisattva Path means that you are busy working every day. Busy doing what? Teaching and transforming living beings. Living beings are drowning in the sea of suffering. Unless you push yourself a little, how are you ever going to be able to save them all? There is no time for naps! There is no time for false thinking! "Many people, both at home and left home, practice the Bodhisattva Path."

IF THEY ARE UNABLE TO SEE, HEAR, READ, RECITE, WRITE OUT, UPHOLD, OR MAKE OFFERINGS TO *THE DHARMA FLOWER SUTRA*, KNOW THAT THESE PEOPLE HAVE NOT YET SKILLFULLY PRACTICED THE BODHISATTVA PATH. They practice the Bodhisattva Path, but their foundation is not solid, and they haven't perfected their practice. "If there are those who practice the Bodhisattva Path and ARE ABLE TO HEAR THIS SUTRA, THEN THEY WILL BE ABLE TO SKILLFULLY PRACTICE THE BODHISATTVA PATH." We are now able to hear, see, uphold, read, recite, and write out *The Dharma Flower Sutra*. The only thing to be feared is that you won't wish to practice the Bodhisattva Path. If you practice it, you will certainly perfect it. Once you have done so, the Buddha Path is then realized as well.

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