

FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

*Prologue by Tang Dynasty National Master Ch'ing liang
with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA
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PROLOGUE:

THREE, THE FINAL TEACHING, IS ALSO CALLED THE ACTUAL TEACHING, BECAUSE THOSE OF FIXED NATURE FOR THE TWO VEHICLES AND ICCHANTIKAS WITHOUT THE NATURE ALL WILL BECOME BUDDHAS, IT THEN EXHAUSTS THE UTMOST EXPRESSION OF THE GREAT VEHICLE, AND SO IS SET AS FINAL. SINCE IT COINCIDES WITH TRUE PRINCIPLE IT IS THEREFORE CALLED THE ACTUAL.

COMMENTARY:

THREE is called FINAL TEACHING since it is the end of teaching the Great Vehicle. It IS ALSO CALLED by another name, THE ACTUAL TEACHING, since whereas the previous Initial Teaching only talked about emptiness, it now discusses existence: the Middle Way between wonderful existence and true emptiness which is the genuine teaching. BECAUSE in it THOSE OF FIXED NATURE FOR THE TWO VEHICLES of Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions, AND ICCHANTIKAS--beings of insufficient faith WITHOUT the seed NATURE for Buddhahood--ALL WILL be able to BECOME BUDDHAS, while the previous teaching said they couldn't, IT THEN EXHAUSTS THE UTMOST EXPRESSION OF the wonderful principle of THE GREAT VEHICLE, revealing it all. The Great Vehicle is called a "Vehicle" because it transports ordinary living beings to the Buddha position. It is called "Great" because there is no living being it fails to transport to Buddhahood. It speaks the Dharma of the Great Vehicle to the end, AND SO IS SET AS the FINAL Teaching of the Great Vehicle, SINCE IT COINCIDES WITH TRUE and real PRINCIPLE and is identical in substance with truth itself, IT IS THEREFORE CALLED THE ACTUAL Teaching,

PROLOGUE:

INASMUCH AS THE ABOVE TWO TEACHINGS BOTH RELY ON GRADUAL AND SUCCESSIVE CULTIVATION TO ACCOMPLISH POSITIONS, THEY ARE COLLECTIVELY CALLED THE GRADUAL,

COMMENTARY:

INASMUCH AS THE ABOVE TWO TEACHINGS, the Initial, "Divisional" Teaching and the Final, "Actual" Teaching, BOTH RELY ON GRADUAL AND SUCCESSIVE CULTIVATION TO ACCOMPLISH POSITIONS, progress in them is bit by bit and step by step. It's not like taking a bus, boat or plane to arrive at one's destination, but means

one cultivates some today, some more tomorrow, and also more the next day, until one gradually opens enlightenment and successfully accomplishes every living being's original position: the ground of Buddhahood. For that reason THEY, those two Teachings, ARE COLLECTIVELY taken as a group and CALLED THE GRADUAL Teaching. Gradual progress has to be kept up, however, for if you retreat it's not even gradual .

PROLOGUE:

FOUR IS THE SUDDEN TEACHING, IN WHICH IF ONLY A SINGLE THOUGHT IS NOT PRODUCED THAT IS CALLED THE BUDDHA. BECAUSE IT SPEAKS WITHOUT RELIANCE ON POSITIONS OR SUCCESSION IT IS THEREFORE SET AS SUDDEN.

COMMENTARY:

Number FOUR IS THE SUDDEN TEACHING, "sudden" meaning cultivation that does not depend on rules. It does not, however, mean not following the rules. Rather, in contrast to the previous Gradual Teaching of step by step cultivation:

At the time of bringing forth the first resolve,
One right then accomplishes Proper Enlightenment.

One becomes a Buddha as soon as one decides to do so--it's that fast. Taking the analogy of going to New York, if you walked there that would be the Gradual Teaching. But if you went by boat or bus or train you would arrive a lot faster than you would be going on foot. And if you took a plane it would require even less effort and time. As it is said:

The butcher puts down his knife, and immediately accomplishes Buddhahood.

That's the Sudden Teaching. Someone may be a butcher, a killer--of pigs, cattle, sheep, cats, dogs, or mice--and have a great deal of bad karma. But if he is able to toss away his blade and not slaughter anymore, he becomes a Buddha on the spot. Wouldn't you say he was getting quite a bargain and that he had it pretty easy attaining Buddhahood? What you need to know is that when he tossed his knife away it was a case of a single thought not being produced. Doesn't the text say that the Sudden Teaching is one IN WHICH IF ONLY A SINGLE THOUGHT IS NOT PRODUCED THAT IS CALLED THE BUDDHA. He didn't have any evil thought arise, and put down the knife. He realized what he had done before was wrong, and never killed again. That made him interactive with the Buddha's wisdom so he became a Buddha. And yet, "that is called the Buddha" does not mean accomplishing Buddhahood. It means the certain possibility of becoming a Buddha.

BECAUSE IT, the Fourth Teaching, SPEAKS WITHOUT RELIANCE ON POSITIONS OR SUCCESSION, IT IS THEREFORE SET AS SUDDEN. The person in the example was a butcher, a position from which one should not be able to go straight to Buddhahood, for you could say a butcher is an icchantika of insufficient faith, or even worse. What

enabled him to become a Buddha was that he had one *true* thought of repentance and reform. It doesn't matter who you are:

Offenses great enough to cover heaven,
Once reformed will be no more.

Your offense karma could be so huge it fills all of empty space, and you could still repent of it. But it has to be true. You can't just superficially mouth the words but in your mind think, "I'm not wrong, but you say I am, so all I can do is admit it to show I'm not going to argue." That won't work. You must truly know in your own mind what you have done wrong for it to be called real repentance and reform. There are some lines of verse that put it very well:

Offenses arise from the mind, and must be repented by the mind.
If the mind is forgotten, the offenses are no more.
Mind forgotten, offenses gone, both of them are empty.
That is what is called true repentance and reform.

The offenses are created from your mind, from ignorance. It talked before about the body having ignorance as its cause. Some people even become enlightened by making that contemplation, and certify to the fruit of Arhatship from having that true understanding. So you need to repent with your mind, not your mouth. If your mind is forgotten, the offenses too are gone. When both the mind and the offenses are empty and no longer exist, then that is true repentance and reform.

There are four lines that come before those in the verses of repentance that go:

All the evil karma that I have made
From beginningless greed, hatred, and stupidity,
That has been produced from body, speech, and mind,
I now repent of and reform entirely.

"The offense karma that I have made in this lifetime is not the whole story--there has been too much of it lifetime after lifetime up to now. Why did I do it? It's because going back endlessly I haven't been able to stop my mind of greed, of hatred, and of stupidity. But now I want to repent of and reform all the offense karma I have ever created in body, speech and mind." If you don't repent of your offenses, they won't go away. But once you repent and reform, they are empty and gone.

The Dharma of the Sudden is that of immediate enlightenment in the present lifetime, but it's based on lots of gradual cultivation through the lives before. The butcher, for example, had been cultivating and cultivating and was on the verge of enlightenment, but then got confused and started killing pigs. That went on for awhile until his good karma ripened. Then he put down his blade and immediately became a Buddha. That's Sudden Dharma--instantaneous enlightenment in this life, but due to the amassing of lots of good roots in previous lives. The sudden, therefore, derives from the gradual. It's just that no one saw the gradual cultivation, but the sudden enlightenment is clearly visible.

PROLOGUE:

AS THE *VISHESHACINTA* SAYS: "WHEN ONE OBTAINS THE PROPER NATURE OF ALL DHARMAS, THERE IS NO GOING FROM ONE GROUND TO THE ONE NEXT GROUND." THE *LANKAVATARA* SAYS: "THE START IS THE EIGHTH GROUND," UP TO AND INCLUDING, "WHAT SUCCESSION IS THERE IN NOTHING WHATSOEVER?" AND SO FORTH, SINCE IT IS NOT THE SAME AS THE PREVIOUS GRADUAL CULTIVATION OF SUCCESSIVE POSITIONS, AND NOT THE SAME AS THE PERFECTLY FUSED ENDOWMENT WITH VIRTUES AFTERWARDS, IT IS THEREFORE CALLED THE SUDDEN.

COMMENTARY:

AS THE *VISHESHACINTA-Brahma-Paripriccha Sutra* (T.586) SAYS: "WHEN ONE OBTAINS THE PROPER NATURE OF ALL DHARMAS," "All dharmas" means each and every dharma, and it means one dharma--the one sudden dharma, or all dharmas spoken by the Buddha, "The proper nature" means the dharma of sudden enlightenment. When it is obtained, "THERE IS NO GOING FROM ONE GROUND TO THE ONE NEXT GROUND," There is no confinement to rules that insist on progress being one Ground at a time, First Ground on to Second Ground, Third Ground, Fourth Ground, Fifth Ground, Sixth Ground, Seventh Ground, Eighth Ground, Ninth Ground then Tenth Ground. Rather, one may go from the First Ground to the Tenth, or else from the Tenth Ground to the First, going and returning without the bit-by-bit cultivation in fixed order of the Gradual Teaching, The meaning is the same as that of immediately becoming a Buddha. Also, THE *LANKAVATARA Sutra* SAYS: "THE START IS THE EIGHTH GROUND," the Ground of Not Moving right from the beginning.

The verses in that Sutra go into detail about how there is no reliance on succession. If you want to make a thorough study of the Buddhadharma, you can look up the names of the Ten Grounds and learn what they are, The general idea is that the Sudden Teaching is independent of any such fixed order, and so it says, UP TO AND INCLUDING "WHAT SUCCESSION IS THERE IN NOTHING WHATSOEVER?" AND SO FORTH-- there are many more lines of verse besides the two quoted by the *Prologue*.

SINCE IT IS NOT THE SAME AS THE PREVIOUS GRADUAL Teaching's step-by-step CULTIVATION OF SUCCESSIVE POSITIONS, one doesn't have to take as much time or expend as much effort. It's something like the speed of a computer, or of a rocket that arrives at the moon almost as soon as it's launched. AND it is also NOT THE SAME AS THE Perfect Teaching of PERFECTLY FUSED ENDOWMENT and adornment WITH ten thousand VIRTUES that comes AFTERWARDS. For that reason IT IS THEREFORE CALLED THE SUDDEN Teaching.

When you go home to visit your family, it shouldn't be a casual matter. You should influence your parents to believe in the Buddha, which is the greatest merit and virtue you can do. I'll tell you about how I was able to tell falsehoods as a child, even before growing up. I wanted to bow to my parents every day, but was afraid they would forbid it because I couldn't say it was something everybody did-- for no one did it except at New

Year's. Then I thought of an expedient method which involved a fabrication. When I bowed and they asked me, "It's not New Year so why are you bowing to us?" I replied, "Ah, last night I had a dream in which the Buddha or a Bodhisattva told me my offense karma was so heavy and I would die soon unless I bowed to my parents every day. I don't believe the dream, but I am afraid of dying!" When my parents heard that they said, "Well, go ahead," and let me do it.

PROLOGUE:

IT IS SUDDEN REVELATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE, AND SO IS CALLED THE SUDDEN TEACHING. THE REASON IT IS NOT ESTABLISHED BY T'IENT'AI IS THAT WITHIN ALL FOUR OF THEIR TEACHINGS THERE IS THE SINGLE CUTTING OFF OF WORDS. THE PRESENT DISCLOSURE AND SUDDEN REVELATION OF CUTTING OFF OF WORDS IS FOR THE SAKE OF A SINGLE KIND THAT FREES ITSELF FROM WORKINGS OF THOUGHT WHICH IS SIMPLY FOLLOWING THE CH'AN SCHOOL.

THE REASON IT IS NOT ESTABLISHED BY THE T'IENT'AI School in their original formulation of Store, Connective, Separate and Perfect Teachings--their Sudden, Gradual, Secret, and Unfixed Teachings being a later addition--IS THAT WITHIN ALL FOUR OF THEIR original TEACHINGS when each of those Teachings is spoken to the ultimate point THERE IS THE SINGLE CUTTING OFF OF WORDS and nothing can be said.

The path of language is cut off.

So they didn't set up a Sudden Teaching THE PRESENT DISCLOSURE AND SUDDEN REVELATION on the part of Hsien Shou OF CUTTING OFF OF WORDS, the principle that nothing can be said, IS FOR THE SAKE OF A SINGLE KIND of living being that is able not to produce a single thought. Didn't it talk before about how if only a single thought is not produced that is called the Buddha? This Sudden Teaching was established especially for the type THAT FREES ITSELF FROM WORKINGS OF THOUGHT, WHICH IS SIMPLY FOLLOWING the principle of THE CH'AN SCHOOL and its Dharma-door of Perfect, Sudden Enlightenment.

The Ch'an School Dharma is apart from words and speech, and so it is said not to establish language--yet it is not really free from words. Even the name "Ch'an School" involves language. We who cultivate the Way should be cultivating non-attachment, whether to good and evil, fine or ugly, right or wrong, slight or important, great or small--none of that should be attached to. And we should cultivate and practice all 84,000 Dharma-doors, for each is foremost. There aren't 84,000 second-rate ones, or for that matter 84,000 important ones or unimportant ones. So when you cultivate the Way if you cultivate even the most seemingly insignificant Dharma-door to accomplishment then it counts; and it's again your cultivation of it that counts if the Dharma-door is as big and coarse as Mount Sumeru. It's not the case that the light one is not important while the one huge as Mount Sumeru is. Rather:

From the small comes the great,
The near becomes the far,
Shallow leads to entry to the deep.

That's how one has success in cultivation. It's not to say, for example, "I'm not going to eat things I don't like the taste of, and I'll eat more of foods that appeal to me more." People who cultivate the Way have to be heroically vigorous in cultivating whatever Dharma they are involved in as they cultivate. It can be the most insignificant Dharma-door, but if you are able to cultivate it you can accomplish your Way karma. And it may be the most important Dharma, but if you can't cultivate it, your Way karma won't be accomplished. If you fail to recognize an important Dharma, it becomes unimportant; and an unimportant Dharma-door, if recognized, becomes important. It all depends on whether you recognize it or not. For example, when you eat, do you know what the things you eat taste like? If you do, then you'll have feelings about whether they taste good or bad. But if you aren't aware of what they taste like, you won't know if they taste good or bad or what. As it is said:

In the door of Buddha's work
Not one dharma is rejected.
In the substance of True Suchness.
Not one speck of dust is set.

You can take any Dharma and cultivate it to accomplish Buddhahood. But in the self-nature of True Thusness, not even a dustmote can remain, which is why its light is all-pervasive.

The reason that one sits to cultivate the Dharma of Investigating Ch'an is so one won't have any thoughts. Didn't it specify before that if only a single thought is not produced that is called the Buddha? But can you go without producing a single thought? As you sit there you think of all sorts of things you don't ordinarily think of, and remember a lot of long forgotten circumstances that now suddenly pop up again: historical events from 700 and 800 years back now return to mind. Is that having not a single thought arise? Of course not. How can you get there then? I'll tell you straight today: there isn't any way. There isn't any way to keep a single thought from arising--but you can get so that a single thought is not destroyed. For if it's destroyed, it can be produced, and if produced it can be destroyed. But if you prevent its destruction you'll keep it from arising. How can you do it though? Well, take for example the one thought, "Who is mindful of the Buddha?" You can keep that "Who?" going non-stop. "Who?" It's searching, not reciting. As long as you keep searching it isn't destroyed--and so it won't be produced. And its not being produced is the Buddha.

That's what the doctrine of the Ch'an School is all about. If you can be such that not one thought is produced or destroyed, then the light of your wisdom will appear. It's not that you sit there and grit your teeth, square your eyes, and press all thoughts down with your fists so they can't get up. The more you try to do that, the more trouble you will have. Tell them not to arise and they'll insist on arising. You'll be holding mother thought down, but father thought will arise. Or father thought will stop, but older brother thought will

come along, with younger brother holding up the rear. Pretty soon the whole family of six types of relations will be grabbing at you--seventh and eighth--the whole kit and caboodle. "Seventh" is the seventh consciousness which will pull at you, and the eighth consciousness will drag you from the other side, a tug-of-war with you in the middle.

The six types of close relatives are consciousnesses one through six. You'll be sitting there trying to investigate dhyana, and this one will want to chat with you, another to investigate a certain question. The eyes have visual questions, the ears auditory questions, the nose its nose questions, and the tongue its tongue questions, the body, body questions, and the mind mental ones. The eyes will say to you, "Have you forgotten that beautiful form we saw today? So pretty! Did you like it or not?" The ears will say, "The music we heard today sounded so good, lets go listen to it again tomorrow." The nose will pose the question, "Evening in Paris smells so good, wouldn't you like to smell it again?" The tongue will propose, "There's not much point in just smelling the aroma of the best-tasting food. It's only if it gets tasted and eaten that its advantages are obtained." The body will say, "I get the advantage, not you."

The mind says, "The feeling is entirely with me. None of the rest of you count." Those six types of relations hold a debate, and the seventh and eighth work at their tug-of-war. That really messes people up when they try to investigate Ch'an.

PROLOGUE:

FIVE, THE PERFECT TEACHING, CLARIFIES THAT ONE POSITION IS EACH AND EVERY POSITION, AND THAT EACH AND EVERY POSITION IS ONE POSITION. THEREFORE, WHEN THE MINDS OF THE TEN FAITHS ARE FULFILLED, THAT GATHERS IN THE FIVE POSITIONS AND IS THE EQUIVALENT OF ACCOMPLISHING PROPER ENLIGHTENMENT. IT RELIES ON THE DHARMA REALM OF UNIVERSAL WORTHY, THE MULTIPLE REPETITIONS OF INDRA'S NET, AND THE TOTALITY OF HOST AND ATTENDANTS. AND SO IS CALLED THE PERFECT TEACHING, AS SPOKEN IN SUCH SUTRAS AS THIS ONE.

COMMENTARY:

So far we have given a general outline of the first four of the Five Hsien Shou Teach-ings, and now reach discussion of Teaching number FIVE, which IS THE PERFECT TEACHING of unobstructed interpenetration. In it,

The one is each and every one,
And each and every one is the one.

At the time of first bringing forth the resolve
One right then accomplishes Proper Enlightenment.

And so it says that Teaching CLARIFIES THAT ONE POSITION IS EACH AND EVERY POSITION, AND THAT EACH AND EVERY POSITION IS ONE POSITION.

It's a doctrine of inconceivable perfection and completeness, with no deficiencies and nothing in excess. Try to say it's less in some way, and it won't be; and you won't find it more in any respect. There's no remainder. It's a perfect fit. You can take any one of the positions for example of the Ten Faiths, the Ten Dwellings, the Ten Practices, the Ten Transferences or the Ten Grounds, and although there are ten to each position, any position will be complete with all positions. For instance, the First Faith will perfectly fuse and interpenetrate not only with the First Dwelling, but with every one of the Ten Dwellings, the Ten Practices, the Ten Transferences, and the Ten Grounds--and with Equal Enlightenment and Proper Enlightenment as well. Every level of practice is replete with the meritorious qualities of cultivation and certification to all stages and levels of practice, and yet remains the one position. THEREFORE, WHEN THE MINDS OF THE TEN FAITHS ARE FULFILLED and one obtains any one of those positions, then THAT GATHERS IN all THE other FIVE POSITIONS which have ten to each, AND IS THE EQUIVALENT OF ACCOMPLISHING Equal Enlightenment and PROPER ENLIGHTENMENT.

IT, the doctrine of one position being all positions and vice versa, RELIES ON THE Contemplation of THE DHARMA REALM OF UNIVERSAL WORTHY, and its discussion of THE MULTIPLE REPETITIONS OF INDRA'S NET. It's the same state as that of the infinite inter-reflections of the lights from the pearls in every interstice in Lord Shakra's cylindrical network banner. All kinds of lights come from every pearl, and every pearl reflects the lights from all the other pearls, at that same time as every interstice in the net interpenetrates with every other. That's why one position is said to be them all and all of them the one. It's a multi-layered infinity of endless repetitions, AND further described as THE TOTALITY OF HOST AND ATTENDANTS. The repetitions are endlessly multiplied to infinity, yet host and attendants never are confused. Whether it's the Dharma-speaking Host, or the host of cultivation. There is always a host and attendants--guests. For example, when Shakyamuni Buddha is the Host, the Buddhas of the ten directions are the guests; and when the Buddhas of the ten directions are the guests, Shakyamuni Buddha is the Host. Host and attendants mutually form a totality, AND SO it IS CALLED THE PERFECT TEACHING. Because its doctrine is one of no deficiency and no excess, but multi-layered infinity of endless replications as in Indra's Net, the name given to it is the Perfect Teaching. AS SPOKEN IN SUCH SUTRAS AS THIS ONE, *The Great Means Expansive Buddha flower Adornment Sutra*, which is considered both Perfect and Sudden Teaching. Therefore the Perfect-Sudden Teaching is inexhaustible and endless.

PROLOGUE:

IF IN TERMS OF WHAT IS SAID BY THE DHARMA MARKS, IN THE FIRST, THE SMALL VEHICLE, THERE IS ONLY TALK OF SEVENTY-FIVE DHARMAS.

COMMENTARY:

IF one considers this IN TERMS OF WHAT IS SAID in discriminating the names and characteristics of dharmas BY THE DHARMA MARKS School, IN THE FIRST, THE

SMALL VEHICLE Teaching, THERE IS ONLY TALK OF SEVENTY-FIVE DHARMAS, not the hundred dharmas of the Great Vehicle.

The first category in the seventy-five is that of form dharmas.

I. The Eleven Form Dharmas

A. The Five Sense Faculties ("roots")

1. Eye.
2. Ear.
3. Nose.
4. Tongue.
5. Body.

B. The Six Sense Objects "States"

1. Forms/sights.
2. Sounds.
3. Smells.
4. Tastes.
5. Objects of touch.
6. Dharmas.

The five sense faculties, called "organs" or "roots," belong to form dharmas, but the faculty of mind does not. The five corresponding realms of sense perception are also called "states" or "dusts," and they too are form dharmas. The sixth category is the "dust" of dharmas which has no representation of its own, and so is also called that without representation. It may sound contradictory to say that such dharmas are form dharmas, until you realize they are the impressions that remain in the sixth consciousness from perception of the other five categories of dusts. They are subtle, but still form dharmas.

-To be continued next issue

CALENDAR NOTE: A Kuan Yin Bodhisattva Recitation and possible Ch'an Session have been tentatively planned for mid-March. Call or write the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas for confirmation.