

Flower Adornment Sutra

*Prologue by Tang Dynasty National Master Ching Liang
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COMMENTARY:

Continuing the discussion of the Seventy-five Dharmas of the Small Vehicle, after the Eleven Form Dharmas and the Single Mind Dharma, we come to the third major category, that of the Dharmas Interactive with the Mind, also known as dharmas pertaining to or belonging to the mind. There are forty-six dharmas in all (the Great Vehicle has fifty-one), and they fall into six groups:

III. *The Forty-six Dharmas Interactive with the Mind*

- A. Ten Dharmas Universally Interactive with All Minds.
- B. Ten Dharmas Interactive with Wholesome Minds, also known as the Ten Wholesome Mind Dharmas.
- C. Six Dharmas Interactive with Afflicted Minds, also known as the Six Major Afflictions.
- D. Two Dharmas Interactive with Unwholesome Minds, also known as the Two Intermediate Afflictions.
- E. Ten Subsidiary or "Following Afflictions," also known as the Ten Lesser Afflictions.
- F. Eight Indeterminate Dharmas.

The first category is the Ten Dharmas Universally Interactive with All Minds which accompany all thought. Within that category, the first dharmas is Reception, taking and receiving into the mind. That kind of feeling is all pervasive.

The second universally interactive dharma is Conceptualization (想), sometimes translated as "perception." It differs from the third universally interactive dharma Deliberation (思), which is a more internal mental process. But both involve the mind and so both are written with the character for mind (心), and both pervade all thinking. Deliberation, sometimes translated "consideration," etc., is thinking over--thinking about the past, the present, and the future.

The fourth universally interactive dharma is *Contact*, which also pervades all thought--not to be confused with the form dharma by the same name which refers to objects of touch. The fifth universally interactive dharma is *Desire*, or "volition"--liking or wanting--also pervasive with all minds. The sixth universally active dharma is *Reason* (慧), just a kind of small intelligence not to be mistaken for wisdom. The seventh is *Memory* (念), not forgetting thought after thought, for example being able to recall past events in all the vividness of their unfolding. The eighth is *Attention* (作意), before which you are unaware of something--but after making an act of attention, you know. For example, I

can be walking back and forth right next to a clock but not know what time it is--until I want to know and pay attention, after which I know.

The ninth universally interactive dharma is *Victorious Understanding*. This is an understanding that ordinary, common people do not possess, and when your understanding has been victorious it surpasses theirs. The tenth universally interactive dharma is *Concentration*. If concentrated one is concentrated in all respects. It's the ability not to move, to decide, "I shouldn't do that; I'm going to hold fast and not do it," and then not do what one decided not to do. Or it's to think, "I absolutely want not to be upside-down!" and then not be upside-down. Those are the Ten Dharmas Universally Interactive with All Minds, literally in Sanskrit, "Mental Dharmas of the Great Ground," the "ground" being the mind ground. They pervade universally and are not just one part, and so are said to interact universally with all minds.

People who study the Buddhadharma need to have "victorious understanding," and be able to understand what they have never heard explained and even be able to lecture it themselves. For instance, one of you should be able to explain the next group of dharmas. In Buddhist academies in *Chung Kuo* (China) there would be sticks with each of the student's names on them, one name to a stick. When it was time to have a student lecture, the Dharma Master would draw one by lot, and that student would have to explain the passage in question. In most cases, they had to repeat as much as they could recall of the explanation they had previously heard from the Dharma Master, and couldn't get it wrong or add any of their own ideas. Here we can introduce a much better and more democratic method: the Dharma Master doesn't explain it but you do instead, not only in English, but in *Chung Kuo Hua* (Chinese), and employing your own opinions as much as you want. It will take "victorious understanding" to do it, however, or you won't understand. From now on, from time to time I'll have someone else stand in for me--and it would be anyone. That way you'll make more progress and pay more attention. It may be to explain what you've heard before, but maybe it will be what has never been explained--to see if your understanding is victorious.

It's very useful when you go out lecturing to know the list of the One Hundred Dharmas for you can pull out a dharma suited to each problem in your audience. For example, if they are arrogant you can discuss the dharma of arrogance, or if they disbelieve you can discuss disbelief. You don't have to give the whole set or list as we're doing now but can concentrate on one. You might say, "In the *Shastra on the Door to understanding the One Hundred Dharmas* there is a certain dharma. What dharma is it? It's *Torpor!*" Then if someone is nodding off and hears "torpor," he'll think, "Oh, it's talking about me!" Try it out and you'll find this dharma really works.

If people want to maintain the precept against handling money they should do so very clearly, and not put out false publicity about how they don't touch money and then adopt a "modern style" and handle it. If you're not attached to money, there won't be any problem. This is a very important matter in Buddhism. One musn't hold the precept against handling money "modern style," saying one doesn't touch it yet taking it in one's hands. That's incorrect. That's to advertise one's selling lamb when actually it's dogmeat,

and is a form of cheating people. When someone is trying to hold the precept against touching money, you shouldn't tempt him or her to break it by giving them money when they are in unusual situations such as traveling. Help people not to handle money if that's what they're trying to do.

The Ten Wholesome Dharmas of the Forty-six Dharmas Interactive with the Mind are called "good" because they help you cultivate and bring your work to accomplishment. The first is *Faith*. You need to have faith in the principles and methods of cultivation and that you can have accomplishment, and that faith needs to be solid. The second is *Diligence*, being single-minded and persistent in your cultivation of good dharmas with no time when you are not vigorous and making progress. The third is *Renunciation*, ridding oneself of all evil thoughts and all attachment, and being unobstructed in every respect. The fourth is *Shame*, being very ashamed before others of the things one has done wrong. The fifth is *Remorse*, the inner counterpart of shame, feeling bad about one's own wrong deeds and that one ought to change for the better. These two are discussed in more detail in the section on unwholesome dharmas.

The sixth wholesome dharma is *Absence of Greed*, not giving rise to greed and love for wealth or sex or food or sleep or fame or profit. The problem with greed is that it is a defiled dharma involving attachments that will lead to suffering. It's better to know how to be content and not be greedy. The seventh wholesome dharma is *Absence of Anger*, having no thoughts of hostility inside your mind, so that even if someone dislikes or opposes you, you don't dislike or oppose them back. The eighth is *Non-Harming*, which concerns the way you treat people, not just the kinds of thoughts you have towards them. It means not doing things that will harm anyone. The ninth is *Light Ease*, a preliminary state in the cultivation of dhyana-samadhi in which body and mind feel incredibly comfortable. It comes from vigorous cultivation of wholesome dharmas. The tenth is *Non-Looseness*, non-laxness, that is, following the rules and relying on the Buddhadharma to cultivate without ever being casual or sloppy. Those are the ten.

Today there are some young people who have come from Seattle, Washington. They are the adults of the future, and the old people of an even more distant future, but for the present they are called young. They have come to our Buddha hall which, being a little over a year old, is even younger than they. Our youthful hall especially welcomes these youths who, not fearing the cold, have come to our no cold-fearing Buddha hall--a rare event. Therefore, I represent the Dharma protectors of Gold Mountain Monastery, the trustees and members of the Sino-American Buddhist Association, and the President, Editor, and staff of VBS in welcoming all of you young people with bright futures ahead of you. Why do I say your future is bright? It's because this world belongs to the young, and provided you study and prepare yourselves well, in the future you will be the world's leaders. But if you don't do a good job now, you will be lead by others instead. So you should study hard and get a good education if you want to be out in front of other people; otherwise, you'll be behind the other people in the world. Where you want to be is for you to decide.

This evening I've represented everyone else in giving you a hearty welcome. However, I myself don't really feel very welcoming, the reason being that no one welcomes me. So, I'm not very happy when I see people welcoming other people and giving me no welcome. Now you tell me: is someone like that intelligent or stupid? Such an attitude illustrates the topic of tonight's lecture, which is the Major Afflictions. "I'm welcoming them, but no one's welcoming me. This world is *too rotten!*" Is that a smart or stupid way of thinking?

The Major Afflictions are not small matters. Right now the entire world is actually not in very good shape, and if you don't want to completely ruin it, that's even more reason not to be stupid, that is to say, to forget about yourself. If you can forget your self, you won't have any afflictions. But if you have a self, you'll have afflictions. You could say I'm an expert on afflictions, having been through them all; and I know that they are the fountainhead of what's gone wrong with the world. It all stems from them. This list of the Small Vehicle's Seventy-five Dharmas again differs from that of the Hundred Dharmas of the Mahayana. These are still dharmas interactive with the mind, in this case an afflicted mind.

The first of the Six Major Afflictions is *Stupidity*, for you wouldn't get afflicted if you weren't stupid--and as soon as you're stupid you're afflicted. Affliction simply is stupidity, and stupidity is affliction. Don't be stupid and you won't be afflicted; don't get afflicted and you won't be stupid. See how obvious it is? But people still don't understand, and still want to get afflicted and be stupid.

The categorization of afflictions into six is really a simplification, for if you went into them in detail, you'd find there are eighty-four thousand. The Buddha's Eighty-four thousand Dharma Doors are the specific cures for each of them. Now we're just mentioning the six great ones, which make fools of the most intelligent people and deprive the rational of the use of their reason. Afflictions are not good things to eat. You shouldn't make meal after meal of them, and not have any appetite when it comes to real food. It may sound interesting not to have to eat anything else day after day but afflictions; However, after you've consumed the world's afflictions, they will in turn devour all your blood and flesh and leave you a skinny leather bag of a ghost. To avoid ending up an emaciated phantom, cut down on your consumption of afflictions.

You may ask, "If the first affliction is stupidity, then what's the second?" Affliction number two is, not following the rules, *Looseness*. It's the kind of running around all over the place a horse does when it has no bridle and is not reined in.

The third affliction is *Laziness*, This is when students don't feel like studying or even getting up in the morning, workers don't feel like working, and teachers don't feel like teaching. In general, it's whenever you can't quite bring yourself to do the work you're supposed to do. You *want* to do it, but don't actually *feel like* doing it, so you kind of muddle your way through the day and let it go at that.

The fourth affliction is *Disbelief*. You refuse to believe what I say no matter what and protest, "You claim there are so many afflictions, but I don't have any." Yet that's the fourth affliction: not believing.

The fifth affliction is *Torpor*. As you listen to the Sutra lecture by the Dharma Master it seems meaningless and boring, and you not off to sleep--in a torpor.

The sixth affliction is *Agitation*. It's when your mouth flows out unrestrained talk, your hands gesture wildly, and your feet walk about restlessly. The general idea is that you won't apply self-control. You do too much talking even if told not to speak. It's not talk with principle, either, but discussion of the Jones' good points, the Smiths' shortcomings, and how a set of three frogs has six eyes--that kind of stuff.

There are also the Two Unwholesome Dharmas, which characterize an unwholesome mind. They are also called the Two Intermediate Afflictions by contrast with the Six Major and Ten Subsidiary Afflictions. The first of the Two Unwholesome Dharmas is *Lack of Shame*, and the second is *Absence of Remorse*. "Shame" is to repent of one's transgressions, and it's external before other people. "Remorse," on the other hand, is internal. Shame is feeling in one's mind that one cannot face people, and remorse is a kind of sickness in one's mind which results from that. Those were two of the previous Ten Wholesome Dharmas. Here there is lack of them. One has no idea what shame and remorse even are, two greatly unwholesome states of affairs. It's when one has done something wrong yet doesn't admit either to oneself or to others that one has done anything wrong, but still considers oneself to be in the right and has no thought of shame or remorse. The character for remorse (愧) is the standing heart (mind) radical (忄) with the character for "ghost" beside it (鬼). It graphically represents having a ghost in one's mind, and it also stands for one's own mind being black and dark with no light. Someone without shame or remorse is very difficult to teach. Although these two are called "intermediate" afflictions, they aren't lesser any more than the so-called "Lesser" Afflictions, also known as the "Subsidiary" or "Following" Afflictions, because they arise following their own kind. Major afflictions arise following upon major afflictions, intermediate afflictions arise following upon intermediate afflictions, and lesser afflictions all belong to one and the same category, too. There is a connection between the arising or non-arising of all the afflictions of the same class. It's as if they were relatives or close friends that seek each other out. Another explanation of their being "following" afflictions is that once you become involved with any one of them, it will follow you around.

The first of the "following" afflictions is *Rage* (忿). Rage is the first burst of anger of mind, suddenly becoming enraged for no rhyme or reason. The character for rage is composed of the character that means to divide (分) on top of the (non-standing) character for mind or heart (心). It means dividing the true mind so it becomes a false mind. There is no anger in the true mind, but when this false mind arises there is.

The second "following" affliction is *Hate*. Hate isn't a momentary attitude--it's long-lasting. Rage is when anger of mind has just begun to be produced, but hate is when it has

deeply entered one's false mind and is not forgotten thought after thought, having grafted itself there. When it's still temporary, it's rage, but it eventually develops into hate. And if hate goes on, the third "following" affliction, *Fury*, sets in. When anger is in the rage and hate stages it can still be contained, but when it reaches the point of fury, it has to find expression. One can't stand it anymore. The atomic bomb has to explode. So one starts yelling furiously at the person or hits him.

The fourth "following" affliction is *Concealment*. Even though you've become furious at the person you think, "Hey! If I hit you directly I won't be able to harm you, so I'll hide the fact that I'm angry and not get mad." What you really want to do is blow up and scream and yell and hit the person, but your fury turns into concealment and you cover it up. Then what happens? You go into the madness of *Deceit* and tell lies. Although you actually can't stand the person, you do a lot of sweet talking and say things like, "We're old friends, let's not fight." But it's all put on. You're just pretending to be nice, wearing a false mask and repressing your fury.

The sixth "following" affliction is *Flattery*, playing up to people so your errors won't be exposed and because you think their power is greater than yours. With evil intent, you fawn upon them, hiding your dislike and saying things they'll like to hear. Put crudely, this is called "patting the horse's ass," and it's also called being a syncophant.

The seventh "following" affliction is *Arrogance*, having contempt for others and being very naughty towards them. One flatters the rich and behaves with arrogance towards the poor. One's gaze is up at a person one is fawning upon, but looks down with scorn on a poverty-stricken individual for whom one feels contempt.

When still at the level of rage, hate, fury, concealment, deceit, flattery and arrogance, it still hasn't come to the eighth "following" affliction: *Harm*, wrecking and ruining people.

Harming others brings no benefit
to oneself.

It hurts others, but nothing beneficial accrues to you from it, either. There's a proverb that goes:

One eradicated, both die.

It's the attitude, "If I'm not going to get any advantages, I won't let you get them either, so we'll both go without." For example, there may be a cup that both of us could use, but I don't want you to use it so I smash it to bits. Then neither one of us can use it. That's harm, ruining people and destroying things. It's like two countries with a wall between them, in their fight to see who will get to use it, tearing the wall down so neither one can. It's destructive both to others and to oneself.

The ninth "following" affliction is *Jealousy*, being jealous when people are better than oneself and always wanting others not to be as good as oneself--yet not doing things

better than other people! It would be one thing if you did act better, but you keep on being bad and hope others will be worse! Perhaps you are jealous of others' talents and abilities which are greater than yours, or of their being more learned. Or maybe you would like to eat a lot but can't, and become jealous of those who do. Or else you see someone who sleeps soundly the whole night long while you have insomnia, and get jealous of them. Or you see someone better-looking than you are and feel jealous. Is that intelligence or stupidity? No matter what it is, you insist on getting jealous. I'll tell you something: jealousy is not something you want to have; for if you harbor jealousy your body will stink. Jealousy has a stench to it. It's like a poisonous snake that wants to kill any living creature it sees with its poison. It got to be a venomous serpent precisely from being jealous, and as such it's still pretty well off. If the jealousy really mounts up, one falls into the hells--the hell of excrement and urine where that's all one has to eat and drink. What do you think of that kind of life? Then as the offense karma decreases one crawls out of the hells as an animal--right into the toilet. That's because jealousy stinks, but one likes that odor, and so is born as a beetle in a latrine, all from having been jealous of others in one's previous life. If you're not afraid of ending up a shit-beetle, then don't hesitate to get jealous. But if you think, "Latrines smell awful. The stench must be hard to take," then don't let jealousy arise. Appreciate and approve of others instead. Jealousy is the worst thing there is.

The tenth "following" affliction is "*Stinginess*, not being able to give. It means, for example, pinching pennies until they bleed and still refusing to use them. It's being absolutely unable to part with wealth or objects. Renunciation was one of the wholesome dharmas, but in this case one cannot renounce. Suggest the person practice giving and he replies, "What do you mean 'give?' Why don't you give to me? Why tell me to give to you? I've counted it all very clearly. How could I give it away to you? If I did, I wouldn't have it to use myself." That's stinginess--being miserly.

Those Ten Minor Afflictions can become major afflictions, and major afflictions can become intermediate. These ten are also "Following" Afflictions for they run after you; and you could also say it's because you follow them. If they tell you to go east, you go along with them, and you go west if that's what they want--any direction very obediently without the least resistance. As you reckon the accounts you find, your following them is in exact ratio to their following you. The best thing is for neither of you to follow each other but to establish a line of demarcation between you.

There are also the Eight kinds of Indeterminate Dharmas of the Small Vehicle (the Great Vehicle has four). They are indeterminate as to whether they are good or bad, defiled or pure. They aren't necessarily pervasive of all minds or pervasive of all places, either.

The first indeterminate dharma is *Regret*, also known as self-reproach. It's regretting something one did and thinking, "Why did I do that? Nothing was gained by it at all." It's also regretting something one *didn't* do and thinking, "Why didn't I do it *that* way? That's what I should have done. Oh, why didn't I do it?" In general it means having qualms about everything and feeling nothing turned out the way you wanted it to.

The second indeterminate dharma is *Sleep*, which is just being in a stupor and unaware of anything. During sleep one is cut off from external conditions, and screened off from internal contemplation, from one's own contemplative wisdom. So sleeping a lot is not a good idea. Look at how pigs sleep all the time, and so have no wisdom. They wake up long enough to eat, then go right back to sleep, and upon reawaking they eat again. They have lots of flesh on their bodies and think to themselves, "I don't have to do any work and I've grown so much flesh," but when the time comes, people kill them and eat it.

Living beings return to eat the flesh of living beings. So sleeping is not such a good deal. Don't study it.

Once there were two fellow-cultivators who accomplished the Way, and upon contemplating saw that two previous fellow students of theirs who had been jealous of them in school had fallen into the hells and then become toilet beetles. They decided to cross them over, and started by buying a flask of fragrant oil so the two bugs wouldn't have to live in the stinking cesspool but could dwell in fragrance while being taught and transformed to make the Bodhi resolve. They plucked the beetles out of the latrine, rinsed them off, and set them in the perfumed oil. Little did they expect that in less than an hour the two insects would go off to rebirth and be reborn again in the outhouse as shit-beetles, but that's what happened. There was no way the two Bodhisattvas could cross their former fellows over into the bottle of perfume. So be very careful not to be jealous of others, because it's very dangerous.

The third indeterminate dharma is *Investigation*, and the fourth is *Examination*. Investigation is looking for something to do when there's nothing to do and stirring up trouble when there is none. It's coarse and external, by comparison with examination which is internal and more subtle and is a kind of waiting that goes on inside. Neither one is the basic substance of wisdom, but a type of small intelligence dependent upon reasoning, which is not proper and authentic wisdom. Examination is like a cat waiting for a mouse to pop out of its hole. It has a lot of patience as it keeps watching to see if the mouse is coming out or not. Investigation is looking outside, by contrast with the internal waiting of examination.

The fifth indeterminate dharma is *Greed*, insatiable greed, about which a lot has been said.

Of all the evil karma I created in
the past,
Due to beginningless greed, anger
and stupidity...

The sixth is *Anger*, the seventh *Pride*, and the eighth *Doubt*--always being doubtful about anything that is said. Tell them the truth and they doubt it as they do when you say something false. That way they can't tell what's true and what's false, so it's an indeterminate dharma. Greed, anger, and pride can also be unfixed. Some are greedy for the good, and so fear there won't be much good, while those who are greedy for evil are concerned that there won't be lots of evil. That makes it indeterminate. Anger and pride

can be that way, too. Some feel conceited when they see poor people, but others feel proud when they see the rich and think, "You can have all the money you want, but I'm not going to be polite to you." All eight are unfixed.

The fourth general category is Activity Dharmas Non-Interactive with the Mind. There are twenty-four in the Great Vehicle, but the Small Vehicle just has fourteen. Whether the others were forgotten or lost is not known. These are dharmas which do not interact with form dharmas, with mind dharmas or with dharmas interactive with the mind--and yet they still are not divorced from what is brought about by the operation of those three other categories of dharmas.

The first non-interactive dharma is *Attainment*, acquisition, getting something. Before one gets one wants to get. Then after getting, one fears losing, which would be not-getting, and so the second non-interactive dharma is *Non-attainment*, fear of loss. One thinks, "I don't really have it; I might lose it and not have it!" It's attaining but not considering it attaining, as the saying goes:

Troubled to get and troubled about loss. It is also said:

Before one has it, one is troubled
to get it;
And once one gets it, one is
troubled one will lose it.

Before acquisition there no trouble, but acquisition brings trouble in its wake. One is unable to sleep nights for thinking about acquiring, and food loses its taste since one is forever preoccupied with the problem of getting and non-getting: loss.

The third non-interactive dharma is *Generic Similarity*. Bodhisattvas share generic similarity with Bodhisattvas; Arhats share it with Arhats. The same holds true of ordinary people among themselves, and those of outside ways with each other. Each member of the category shares that similarity with the general class or "genre," hence the name "generic similarity."

The fourth non-interactive dharma in the Great Vehicle list of twenty-four is *Difference*. Although each has a share in the same general category, there are individual differences in behavior and outlook. For example, you may enjoy being lazy and I may enjoy being vigorous--or else you might be the one who likes vigor and I might like to take it easy. The nature of each turns out different. However, in the Small Vehicle list of fourteen the fourth non-interactive dharma is *Cessation of Thought*, which leads directly into the fifth non-interactive dharma, which is the name of a samadhi: the *No-thought Samadhi*. In it one is no longer troubled by thoughts of gain and loss, because all thinking has stopped, and there is no more similarity or difference either. The sixth non-interactive dharma is the *Samadhi of Extinction*. In the No-thought Samadhi, thought was not yet gone, but in this one it is brought to an end--while in samadhi, however. It has not yet ended when out of samadhi.

The seventh non-interactive dharma is the *Life Faculty*, or root of life, the underlying basis of life. The eighth non-interactive dharma is *Birth*, the ninth is *Dwelling*, and the tenth is *Aging* or changing, and the eleventh is *Extinction*. The twelfth is the *Body of Names*, the thirteenth is the *Body of Phrases*, and the fourteenth is the *Body of Phonemes*, bodies of names (e.g., nouns), phrases (including sentences), and phonemes (texts made up of phonetic elements). Those are the fourteen non-interactive activity dharmas.

The Life Faculty is the eighth consciousness, for without that consciousness there would be no root of life. The eighth consciousness,

Departs last and arrives first.

When we're going to be born it's the first thing that arrives, and when we die it's the last thing to leave, in human existence being the owner of the false combination of the four elements we take for the body. If you cultivate, the eighth consciousness becomes the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom, a Bodhisattva. But if you don't, it turns into the body intermediate between skandhas--which most people call a ghost, and which is just stupidity. If you can turn the eighth consciousness around to become Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom, then you will have wisdom. So if you don't mind being stupid, then don't cultivate; but if you want wisdom, you have to cultivate--that's the way to open wisdom. Otherwise all you'll get is stupid. There's nothing fixed about the Life Faculty. If you go up, it will ascend and it will descend if you let yourself go down. I regularly tell people who don't believe in ghosts, "Then you shouldn't believe there are Buddhas, because Buddhas are made from ghosts. If there weren't any ghosts there wouldn't be any Buddhas. To believe in Buddhas but not in ghosts is like only knowing how to eat and not knowing how to go to the toilet. It's the same principle."

After the Life Faculty, there are Birth, Dwelling, Changing (Aging), and Extinction, after which there are the final three of the fourteen non-interactive dharmas of the Small Vehicle: Bodies of Names, Phrases, and Texts respectively. Names are terms, and phrases are successive lines, as in:

All activities are impermanent,
Characterized by production and
extinction;
When production and extinction
are extinguished,
That still extinction is bliss.

Texts are meaningful arrangements of phonemes, for individual characters, words or phonemes cannot be considered texts. Adding the fifth major category, that of the Unconditioned Dharmas, we can review the total distribution of the seventy-five dharmas into the five major categories:

- I. The Eleven Form Dharmas.
- II. The One Mind Dharma.

- III. The Forty-six Dharmas Interactive with the Mind.
- IV. The Fourteen Non-Interactive Dharmas.
- V. The Three Unconditioned Dharmas,

All seventy-two dharmas in categories I-IV are all conditioned dharmas. The Great Vehicle has six unconditioned dharmas, but the Small Vehicle just has three:

- 1. *Unconditioned Selected Extinction.*
- 2. *Unconditioned Unselected Extinction.*
- 3. *Unconditioned Empty Space.*

One might ask how Selected Extinction could be unconditioned, since selection should make it conditioned. However, that selecting process takes place before entry to extinction. There's selection of dharmas for entering extinction, selection of the dharma of extinction. So although it starts out looking like it's going to be conditioned, it develops into the unconditioned. Unselected Extinction, on the other hand, doesn't require the skill of selectivity to bring about arrival at the state of still extinction. Unconditioned Empty Space is that cultivators are constantly making the contemplation of emptiness and attain to that principle, certifying to the self-nature being like empty space which is such that:

so big there is nothing outside it,
so small there is nothing inside it.

What could you say is beyond empty space? Nothing. And what is within it? Nothing. For if there were something inside of space, there would be blockage. That's a brief explanation of the seventy-five dharmas investigated by the Small Vehicle. They just have seventy-five, not yet being perfectly interpenetrating without obstruction,

-cont. next issue.

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