

FLOWER ADORNMENT

*Prologue by Tang Dynasty National Master ch'ing Liang
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PROLOGUE:

THEREFORE, IN ORDINARY DISCUSSION THERE ARE IN GENERAL FIVE POSITIONS. ONE IS THE FUNDAMENTAL ONE VEHICLE, AS IN THE *FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA*. TWO IS THE SMALL VEHICLE OF SECRET INTENT. THREE IS THE GREAT VEHICLE OF SECRET INTENT. FOUR IS THE OPEN REVELATION OF THE THREE VEHICLES. THE ABOVE THREE ARE AS IN THE *DEEP SECRET*. FIVE IS THE ONE VEHICLE THAT DEMOLISHES ANY OTHER, AS IN THE *DHARMA FLOWER*. THE ABOVE FOUR DOORS INTERPENETRATE WITHOUT OBSTRUCTION, AND SO BEFORE AND AFTER HAVE NO BEFORE OR AFTER, BEING JUST BEFORE AND AFTER OF NO BEFORE OR AFTER.

COMMENTARY:

THEREFORE, IN ORDINARY DISCUSSION of the principles of the Teachings, THERE ARE, taken as a whole, IN GENERAL FIVE POSITIONS. If you make detailed distinctions, there aren't just five, but five positions give the overall picture. ONE IS THE FUNDAMENTAL ONE VEHICLE. That speaks from the point of view of the root, not the point of view of the branch-tips, and presents the fundamental Dharma door of the One Vehicle. This is the Dharma of the Sudden, AS are the principles spoken IN THE *FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA*. TWO IS THE SMALL VEHICLE OF SECRET INTENT. The meaning is very secret and hidden. THREE IS THE GREAT VEHICLE OF SECRET INTENT. FOUR IS THE very clear and OPEN REVELATION in which Dharma OF THE THREE VEHICLES is spoken. The Teaching principles of THE ABOVE THREE--the Small Vehicle of secret intent, the Great Vehicle of secret intent, and the open revelation of the Three Vehicles--ARE the same AS what is said IN THE *DEEP SECRET Sutra*.

FIVE IS THE ONE VEHICLE THAT DEMOLISHES ANY OTHER--any that are not the same as it. There is only the Buddha Vehicle, and no other Vehicle besides it. This doctrine is AS is spoken of IN THE *DHARMA FLOWER Sutra*. THE ABOVE FOUR DOORS INTERPENETRATE WITHOUT OBSTRUCTION. There's no resistance or opposition among them. They interfuse with no interference, AND SO BEFORE AND AFTER HAVE NO BEFORE OR AFTER. The doctrines interpenetrate and don't obstruct or block each other, so although there may be talk of before and afterwards, time really has no before or after, BEING JUST BEFORE AND AFTER OF NO BEFORE OR AFTER. Even though there's said to be no prior and subsequent, prior

and subsequent still exist from the point of view of ordinary living beings' discriminating minds. However, before and afterwards is false and illusory, and really no such sequence exists.

PROLOGUE:

FIVE IS THE DOOR OF UNFIXED ACCORDING WITH POTENTIALS. OF THE ABOVE FOUR DOORS, THE FIRST EXPLAINS THE POTENTIALS OF THREE KINDS AS CONSTANTLY FIXED FROM BEGINNING TO END. THE NEXT DOOR EXPLAINS POTENTIALS OF FIVE KINDS AS CONSTANTLY FIXED AT DIFFERENT TIMES. THE THIRD DOOR EXPLAINS POTENTIALS OF ONE KIND AS BEING THE PROFOUND OF THE SHALLOW ITSELF. THE FOURTH DOOR EXPLAINS POTENTIALS OF TWO KINDS, THE FIRST BEING POTENTIALS FOR HEARING THE SUDDEN, AND THOSE AFTERWARDS BEING POTENTIALS FOR GOING FROM THE SHALLOW TO THE DEEP. THERE IS ONE FURTHER KIND, THOSE OF UNFIXED POTENTIAL, WHO MIGHT FROM THE SMALL VEHICLE THEN ENTER THE THREE VEHICLES, AND AFTERWARDS ENTER THE ONE VEHICLE. AND THERE ALSO ARE THOSE WHO FROM THE SMALL DIRECTLY ENTER THE ONE VEHICLE. OR THERE MAY BE THOSE OF MANY KINDS OF POTENTIALS, WHO ACCORDING AS THEY HEAR A SINGLE PHRASE HAVE DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS WHICH ARE NOT THE SAME.

COMMENTARY:

FIVE IS THE DOOR OF UNFIXED ACCORDING WITH the opportunities presented by the POTENTIALS of living beings. There is discussion of the Small Vehicle for living beings whose dispositions are suited to it. Teaching principles of the Middle Vehicle are spoken for living beings for whom the Middle Vehicle is appropriate. For living beings whose dispositions and potentials are suited to the Great Vehicle, the Great Vehicle is spoken. That's why it's unfixed--it's not necessarily a particular way. OF THE ABOVE FOUR DOORS--the Door of Difference of the Root and Branch-Tips, the Door of Branch-Tips Arising from the Root, the Door of Gathering the Branch-Tips to Return to the Root, and the Door of Non-Obstruction of the Branch-Tips and the Root--THE FIRST DOOR EXPLAINS THE POTENTIALS OF THREE KINDS AS CONSTANTLY FIXED FROM BEGINNING TO END. The Door of Difference of the Root and Branch-Tips treats living beings whose dispositions are suited either to the Small Vehicle, the Three Vehicles or the One Vehicle as seeming to be fixed all the time. THE NEXT DOOR EXPLAINS POTENTIALS OF FIVE KINDS AS CONSTANTLY FIXED AT DIFFERENT TIMES. The Door of Branch-Tips Arising from the Root treats the five kinds of potentials--Sound Hearers, Those Enlightened to Conditions, Bodhisattvas, Those Unfixed, and Those Without the Nature--as being at different times but always being fixed. THE THIRD DOOR EXPLAINS POTENTIALS OF ONE KIND--just potentials for the One Vehicle--AS BEING THE PROFOUND OF THE SHALLOW ITSELF. The Gradual Teaching leads those of the Small Vehicle into the Great Vehicle. THE FOURTH DOOR EXPLAINS POTENTIALS OF TWO KINDS, THE FIRST BEING POTENTIALS FOR HEARING

THE SUDDEN Teaching, AND THOSE AFTERWARDS BEING POTENTIALS FOR GOING FROM THE SHALLOW TO THE DEEP.

THERE IS ONE FURTHER KIND, THOSE OF UNFIXED POTENTIAL, WHO MIGHT FROM THE SMALL VEHICLE THEN study and ENTER THE THREE VEHICLES AND AFTERWARDS study and ENTER THE ONE VEHICLE. AND THERE ALSO ARE THOSE of unfixed potential WHO FROM THE SMALL Vehicle DIRECTLY ENTER THE ONE VEHICLE. OR THERE MAY BE THOSE OF MANY KINDS OF POTENTIALS, WHO ACCORDING AS THEY HEAR A SINGLE PHRASE HAVE DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS WHICH ARE NOT THE SAME. One phrase of Dharma spoken by the Buddha may mean one principle, or it may mean one spoken sentence. But living beings according to their kind each understand it in their own way.

The Buddha speaks the Dharma with a single sound,
And living beings understand it according to their kind.

That is, those of the Great Vehicle comprehend the wonderful doctrines of the Great Vehicle. Those of the Middle Vehicle understand it as doctrines of the Middle Vehicle, while those of the Small Vehicle say, "Oh, that's Small Vehicle doctrine." Their different dispositions make for different outlooks and understandings.

PROLOGUE:

SIX IS THE DOOR OF THE REVEALED AND SECRET BEING SIMULTANEOUS. IF THE HEARINGS ARE DIFFERENT BUT THERE IS NO MUTUAL KNOWING, THEN THAT IS THE REVEALED NOT BEING FIXED. IF THERE IS NO MUTUAL KNOWING, THEN THAT IS THE SECRET. WHEN THE SECRET AND REVEALED ARE SIMULTANEOUS, THERE ALSO IS NO BEFORE OR AFTERWARDS. SEVEN IS ALL THE PRECEDING DOORS BEING SUDDENLY PROCLAIMED AT JUST ONE TIME.

COMMENTARY:

SIX IS THE DOOR OF THE REVEALED--that which is very open and obvious, that which everyone can know, see and understand--AND THE SECRET, which is hidden and no one sees or knows of, BEING SIMULTANEOUS.

The revealed is when both parties know about each other.
The secret is when both parties don't know about each other.

Therefore it says, IF THE HEARINGS ARE DIFFERENT BUT THERE IS MUTUAL KNOWING. The Buddha speaks the Dharma, and beings in each of the nine kinds of Dharma Realms hear it as being doctrine of their particular Dharma Realm, so the hearings are different. But there is mutual knowing when living beings know how they understand it and also know how others understand it, even though those understandings

differ. THEN THAT IS THE REVEALED Teaching NOT BEING FIXED. IF THERE IS NO MUTUAL KNOWING, if:

Dharma is spoken for person A and person B does not know,
And Dharma is spoken for person B while person A does not know,
So that person A and person B do not know about each other,

THEN THAT IS called THE SECRET. WHEN, as now, THE SECRET AND REVEALED ARE SIMULTANEOUS, so the revealed is just the secret and the secret is just the revealed, THERE ALSO IS NO BEFORE OR AFTERWARDS. It's not that there is first the revealed and later on the secret, or the secret first and later the revealed. Rather, they are both at the same time.

Door SEVEN IS ALL THE PRECEDING DOORS BEING SUDDENLY PROCLAIMED AT JUST ONE TIME. The principles of all six doors just described are all-of-a-sudden spoken at the same time.

PROLOGUE:

EIGHT IS THAT FROM FIRST ATTAINMENT OF THE WAY UP UNTIL NIRVANA HE NEVER SPOKE A SINGLE PHRASE.

COMMENTARY:

Door EIGHT IS the Door of Silence Without Speaking, and so it says THAT FROM FIRST ATTAINMENT OF THE WAY under the Bodhi tree, after at midnight seeing a bright star and enlightening to the Way UP UNTIL the time of entry to NIRVANA, during all the time between, HE, the Buddha, NEVER SPOKE A SINGLE PHRASE of Dharma. Not one sentence of Dharma was proclaimed. All was silence. There is a passage in Chapter Twenty-six of the *Nirvana Sutra* which says this. It goes:

If someone knows that the Thus Come One never spoke Dharma, that person is said to be possessed of much erudition.

Someone who knows the Buddha never spoke Dharma is foremost in learning. But if you know the Buddha spoke Dharma, that doesn't count as erudition. Roll 425 of the *Great Prajna Sutra* has the Buddha saying:

"From the time I accomplished the Way up to now, I have never spoken a single word, and you also have not heard."

He says that from the time he became a Buddha he hasn't spoken even one word of Dharma, and that they haven't heard anything either. Another passage from Roll 567 of the same Sutra says:

Living beings all think the Buddha speaks Dharma for them alone, yet the Buddha basically has not spoken or made any representation of anything.

Living beings all say the Buddha speaks Dharma and teaches living beings, and yet the Buddha hasn't spoken any Dharma or represented any Dharma. In Part One of the *Vimalakirti-nirdesha Sutra* it says:

"The speaker of Dharma has no speaking and no representing. The listeners to Dharma have no hearing and no attaining."

There is no Dharma which can be spoken or represented by the speaker of Dharma, and those people who truly listen to the Dharma don't hear any Dharma or obtain any Dharma. Also, in the First Chapter on Mindfulness of the Buddha in the *Buddha Treasury Sutra* the Buddha tells Shariputra:

Not being able to penetrate all dharmas is to have a covering of words. Therefore the Thus Come One knows all speech as being deviant, to the point that if there is the least bit of language, one does not attain the Truth.

The reason language and speech obstruct is that one's attachment to dharmas is not empty. That is why the Buddha knows all language is incorrect. It covers and obstructs living beings' wisdom. If there's even one word or phrase, none of it is true and actual. That's because:

Whatever has words and speech is not the actual meaning.

If anything is said, it's an attachment.

When not a single dharma is established, there isn't a single word. That's why if people can recite the wordless Sutra they really understand the Buddhadharma. You can recite Sutras with words over and over and you're just finding something to do when there is nothing to do. So what should one do? If you can recite the Great Wordless Sutra, then you have a method. But can you recite it? If you can't then start by reciting Sutras with words until such time as you understand the Wordless Sutra and you can stop reciting Sutras with words. What you are able to do is not hard. The hard is what you're not able to do.

What's meant by the Wordless Sutra? I'll transmit that Mind Dharma. It's when a single thought does not arise. If not one thought arises, what words could there be? If you can be that way, then the entire substance manifests, and all Buddhadharmas are thus thus. If you can't manage not to have a single thought arise, then you should create more merit and virtue, nurture your basis for Bodhi and foster your Bodhi Way. When for you the myriad virtues interfuse and the Six Paramitas and Ten Thousand Conducts are all perfected, then very naturally not a single thought will arise and the entire substance will manifest.

The question was raised about both the *Prologue* and a number of Sutras saying the Buddha never spoke Dharma, but is that ultimately the case or not? If not, then where did the Sutras come from? If so, then why didn't the Buddha himself admit

it? Someone is having the false thought, "I know, originally the Buddhadharma is all false." Then you can take a look and see what's true. His point is that if the Buddha didn't speak any Dharma at all, then isn't this Dharma all just false. Well, you can put it this way. If you say the Buddha spoke a single word of Dharma, then you are slandering the Buddha. But if you depart from the Sutra text by a single word, then that is the talk of demons. So then should you pack your bags and stop studying the Buddhadharma and return home to celebrate the new lunar year? The reason the Buddha did not admit to having spoken any Dharma is that anything spoken is not the actual meaning. Whatever is spoken is not it. True and actual Dharma cannot be spoken. Everything spoken is expedient Dharma. Even though the provisional is opened to reveal the actual, if the actual is revealed then it's no longer the real. If you can speak true Dharma, then there is no need to speak at all. So I won't talk about it either.

PROLOGUE:

NINE IS THAT ALL THE ABOVE DOORS EXHAUSTIVELY PENETRATE THE THREE BOUNDARIES.

TEN IS THAT ALL NINE PRECEDING DOORS ARE MULTI-LAYERED AND INFINITE WITH RESPECT TO PLACE AND WITH RESPECT TO TIME, AND NONE HAVE BEFORE OR AFTERWARDS.

COMMENTARY:

We've already discussed eight doors, and this one, number NINE, IS THAT ALL THE ABOVE DOORS EXHAUSTIVELY PENETRATE THE THREE BOUNDARIES--the boundary of before, the boundary of right now, and the boundary of afterwards. Door TEN IS THAT ALL NINE PRECEDING DOORS ARE MULTI-LAYERED AND INFINITE WITH RESPECT TO PLACE AND WITH RESPECT TO TIME. The principles are so many leveled and unending that they could never be completely expounded. They apply to infinite possible locations and infinite slots of time, AND NONE HAVE BEFORE OR AFTERWARDS. Nothing is before or after anything else. Rather there is interreflection of level after level on and on. Prior and subsequent reveal each other, and nothing has temporal sequence. This is the Dharma of multi-leveled infinity without any fixed sequential order of time.

PROLOGUE:

THE FINAL TWO DOORS ARE PROPERLY THE STATE OF THE *FLOWER ADORNMENT*. THEY FUSE WITH AND TAKE IN THE PRECEDING EIGHT, SO THEY TOO ARE NOT APART FROM THE FUNCTION OF THE *FLOWER ADORNMENT*.

COMMENTARY:

The doctrines spoken by THE FINAL TWO, DOORS nine and ten, ARE PROPERLY expressing THE STATE OF THE *FLOWER ADORNMENT* which is that of multi-layered infinity of interreflection like a net in which the individual lights shine upon

each other and the holes all connect with each other, so each contains and reflects all others. That is what the *Flower Adornment* state is like. THEY, doors nine and ten, FUSE WITH AND TAKE IN THE PRECEDING EIGHT doors, SO THEY TOO ARE NOT APART FROM THE FUNCTION OF THE *FLOWER ADORNMENT*. The wonderful function of the *Flower Adornment* is that of multi-leveled inexhaustibility.