

FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

*Prologue by T'ang Dynasty National Master Ch'ing Liang
with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA*

*The Third Door: continued
Doctrinal Analysis of the Perfect Teaching*

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PROLOGUE:

NUMBER ONE: THE "TEACHING" IS THAT WHICH INSTRUCTS, AS THE ABOVE FIVE TEACHINGS AND SO FORTH, INCLUDING LIGHT, FRAGRANCE, AND OTHER DEVICES ALL DO. THE "MEANING" IS THAT WHICH IS CONVEYED BY THE INSTRUCTION, SUCH AS ALL OF THE PRINCIPLES IN THE FIVE TEACHINGS AND OTHER DEVICES.

NUMBER TWO: "PRINCIPLES" ARE THE MANIFESTATION OF THE EMPTINESS OF LIVING BEINGS, THE MANIFESTATION OF THE TWO-FOLD EMPTINESS, AND THE LACK OF A NATURE, TRUE SUCHNESS AND OTHER SUCH PRINCIPLES. THE SPECIFICS ARE THE FORMS, BODIES, ASPECTS, AND OTHER SUCH SPECIFICS. THE REMAINING DIVISIONS MAY BE ASCERTAINED IN THE SAME WAY.

COMMENTARY:

NUMBER ONE: THE "TEACHING" IS THAT WHICH INSTRUCTS. The teachings refer to the teachings of the Buddha, the five teachings. The teachings reveal the meanings. AS THE ABOVE FIVE TEACHINGS AND SO FORTH, INCLUDING LIGHT, FRAGRANCE, AND OTHER DEVICES ALL DO. The five teachings are the Small, Initial, Final, Sudden, and Perfect Teachings. Also, some Buddhas use light as their teaching substance; they do not speak. Other Buddhas use fragrance as their teaching substance. They may use light or fragrances to do the Buddha's work. There are many such examples.

THE MEANING IS THAT WHICH IS CONVEYED BY THE INSTRUCTION, the principles which are set forth, SUCH AS ALL OF THE PRINCIPLES IN THE FIVE TEACHINGS AND OTHERS. This includes the principles contained in the five teachings and all the other teachings.

THE PRINCIPLES ARE THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE EMPTINESS OF LIVING BEINGS, THE MANIFESTATION OF THE TWO-FOLD EMPTINESS--the emptiness of people and dharmas--THE LACK OF A NATURE--living beings lacking the Buddha-nature--

TRUE SUCHNESS--the unchanging True Suchness nature--AND OTHER SUCH PRINCIPLES, that is, other doctrines of principles.

"The manifestation of the emptiness of living beings" refers to the Small Teaching. "The manifestation of the two-fold emptiness" refers to the doctrine of the Initial Teaching. "Lack of a nature, and True Suchness" refers to the Final Teaching's doctrines. "And other such principles" refers to the other two teachings, Sudden and Perfect.

THE SPECIFICS ARE THE FORMS, THE MIND, BODIES, ASPECTS, AND OTHER SUCH SPECIFICS. "Forms" is that which has shape and mark. "Mind" refers to mind dharmas. There are many varieties of "bodies." In the six paths of rebirth, the bodies are all different. Ghosts have ghost bodies, hell-beings have hell-being bodies, and animals have animal bodies. They all vary according to their retribution. There are asura, human, and god bodies. There are also the bodies of those in the Four Sagely Realms: the Sound Hearers, Conditioned Enlightened Ones, the Bodhisattvas, and the Buddhas. THE REMAINING DIVISIONS MAY BE ASCERTAINED IN THE SAME WAY. Now, we have mentioned two of the ten divisions. The other eight divisions can be deduced in more or less the same way. If you think it over, you will understand them.

2. SHOWING THE RETURN TO TRUE REALITY OF TEN PAIRS

(1) THE CONTEMPLATION OF TRUE EMPTINESS CUT OFF FROM MARKS.

PROLOGUE:

NUMBER TWO: SHOWING THE RETURN TO TRUE REALITY, TRUE EMPTINESS IS CUT OFF FROM MARKS. THE SUTRA SAYS,

THE DHARMA NATURE IS ORIGINALLY EMPTY AND STILL,
WITHOUT GRASPING AND WITHOUT VIEWS.
THE EMPTY NATURE IS JUST THE BUDDHA,
NOT MEASURABLE BY THOUGHT.

THIS ALSO HAS TEN MEANINGS AS IN THE DHARMA REALM CONTEMPLATION.

COMMENTARY:

NUMBER TWO: SHOWING THE RETURN TO TRUE REALITY. TRUE EMPTINESS IS CUT OFF FROM MARKS. Master Tu-hsún (558-640 AD), the first Patriarch of the Avatamsaka School, established the Dharma Realm Contemplation, which has three parts:

1. The Contemplation of True Emptiness as Cut Off from Marks.
2. The Contemplation of the Non-Obstruction of Principles and Specifics.
3. The Contemplation of Pervasive Containment.

True reality--true emptiness--is cut off from, apart from marks. It has no form or mark. True emptiness is wonderful existence and wonderful existence is true emptiness. True emptiness is cut off from marks; it has no marks. Here we are referring to the basic substance of the Dharma-nature. So the text here quotes *THE FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA*:

THE SUTRA SAYS, THE DHARMA NATURE IS ORIGINALLY EMPTY AND STILL/. It is unmoving, basically empty and quiescent. It is WITHOUT GRASPING AND WITHOUT VIEWS/. There is no way you can grasp the Dharma-nature or even see the Dharma-nature. Although you cannot grasp it or see it, still the Dharma-nature exists in actuality. It exists because true emptiness is cut off from marks. It is apart from the mark of speech, apart from the mark of written words, and apart from the marks of conceptual thought. It cannot be grasped or seen.

Looking, one cannot see it.
Listening, one cannot hear it.
Sniffing, one cannot smell it.

This is because true emptiness is cut off from marks.

THE EMPTY NATURE IS JUST THE BUDDHA/. If you can arrive at the basic nature which is empty and still, just that is the Buddha. It is NOT MEASURABLE BY THOUGHT/. It is an inconceivable state.

THIS ALSO HAS TEN MEANINGS AS IN THE DHARMA REALM CONTEMPLATION, written by the First Patriarch of the Avatamsaka School, Master Tu-hsün.

3. DISPLAYING THE NON-OBSTRUCTION OF TEN PAIRS

PROLOGUE:

NUMBER THREE: DISPLAYING THE NON-OBSTRUCTION. THE ABOVE TEN PAIRS ARE ALL NON-OBSTRUCTIVE. WE WILL NOW USE THE PAIR OF PRINCIPLES AND SPECIFICS TO DEMONSTRATE THIS NON-OBSTRUCTION. THERE ARE TEN SUB-DIVISIONS.

COMMENTARY:

NUMBER THREE is DISPLAYING NON-OBSTRUCTION. This means presenting in a clear, obvious fashion the principle of non-obstruction. THE ABOVE TEN PAIRS mentioned in the text ARE ALL UNOBSTRUCTIVE. WE WILL NOW USE THE PAIR OF PRINCIPLES AND SPECIFICS in a general way TO DEMONSTRATE THIS NON-OBSTRUCTION. THERE ARE TEN SUBDIVISIONS.

FULL EXPLANATION OF THE TEN SUBDIVISIONS OF PRINCIPLES AND SPECIFICS

a. The Principle Pervades the Specifics.

PROLOGUE:

THE PRINCIPLE PERVADES THE SPECIFICS. THE BORDERLESS PRINCIPLE COMPLETELY PERVADES THE BORDERED SPECIFICS. THUS THE PRINCIPLE IS PERFECTLY COMPLETE WITHIN EACH AND EVERY MOTE OF DUST.

COMMENTARY:

THE PRINCIPLE PERVADES THE SPECIFICS. The principle is the doctrine under discussion. Specifics refer to that which has marks. The Principle pervades the characteristic of specifics. The principle and specifics are not separate, they pervade each other. The principle pervades the specifics and the specifics pervade the principle, unobstructed and interpenetrating.

The principle basically cannot be distinguished or discriminated. That which can be distinguished, that which has a border is the specifics. THE BORDERLESS PRINCIPLE COMPLETELY PERVADES THE BORDERED SPECIFICS. The substance of the principle is right within the specifics. Thus the principle pervades the specifics.

THEREFORE THE PRINCIPLE IS PERFECTLY COMPLETE WITHIN EACH AND EVERY MOTE OF DUST. Each particle of dust is complete with the interpenetrating, unobstructed principle.

"What does all this mean?" you ask. "How can every single mote of dust contain the substance of the principle?" We just heard about how the great sea takes in the hundred streams, but the hundred streams do not take in the great sea. The sea water is salty. River water is not. From the point of view of the principle, all the motes of dust contain the principle. This is just as every drop of water from the rivers becomes salty when it enters the sea. Every dust mote contains the perfectly interpenetrating, unobstructed principle.

Before you have certified to the attainment of the principle, you will not understand it. When your self-nature is not pure, your wisdom cannot manifest. When your self-nature is pure, then your inherent wisdom will manifest. But, before your self-nature is pure, your inherent wisdom does not manifest and you think, "Why don't I have wisdom? Why don't I understand?" It's because your self-nature is not pure. When you are pure, you won't have to try, and you will understand, naturally. Before you are pure, you can't understand no matter how hard you try.

b. The Specifics Pervade the Principle

PROLOGUE:

THE SPECIFICS PERVADE THE PRINCIPLE. THE DISCRIMINATED SPECIFICS ARE COMPLETELY IDENTICAL TO THE NON-DISCRIMINATED PRINCIPLE. THEREFORE, ONE SMALL DUST MOTE PERVADES THE DHARMA REALM.

COMMENTARY:

The principle pervades the specifics, but THE SPECIFICS PERVADE THE PRINCIPLE as well. This is the second of the non-obstructions. Specifics and principle are mutually unobstructive. They do not hinder one another. Non-obstruction is the key word here. Basically, principle and specifics cannot be "unobstructive," but if you understand, then they are. THE DISCRIMINATED SPECIFICS ARE COMPLETELY IDENTICAL TO THE NON-DISCRIMINATED PRINCIPLE. THEREFORE, ONE SMALL DUST MOTE PERVADES THE DHARMA REALM. One tiny mote of dust can pervade the entire Dharma Realm. We say, then, that the Dharma Realm is not big and the dust mote is not small. One dust mote is just the Dharma Realm and the Dharma is just the dust mote.

The one dust mote is complete with the principle of the Dharma Realm. The principle of the Dharma Realm is not apart from the one mote of dust. That's because both are mutually pervasive.

Here in the Buddhist Lecture Hall of the Sino-American Buddhist Association at Gold Mountain Monastery, some people want to run away. I think that's the best thing. I'd like to run away myself. But, you know, no matter how you run, you can't run out of the Dharma Realm; you can't run out of a single mote of dust. Why not? Because it's too wonderful! A single mote of dust is just the Dharma Realm. The entire Dharma Realm is not apart from the one mote of dust. You can run around all you want to, back and forth, but you can't run out of a single mote of dust.

Besides that, in this world, whatever you fear, that's exactly what you will run into. If you fear demons, you'll run into demons. If you're afraid of ghosts, you'll run into ghosts. If you're afraid of people, you'll run into people. The same goes for asuras. You get what you're afraid of. If you're annoyed by crying children, the kids will cry. One of my disciples says that she gets angry when the children cry during lecture. So she spends a certain amount of her time getting angry.

If you analyze these first two divisions, then you see that the specifics are just the principle and the principle is just the specifics. If you get angry, that's just the Bodhi mind! I'm not saying that getting angry itself is the Bodhi mind, but that by changing the anger, transforming it, you can give rise to the Bodhi mind. Don't be afraid of people scolding or hitting you. If someone scolds you, they are just testing your patience. If someone hits you, he is just testing you out. If you say you don't eat after noon, he may give you something to eat as a test. If you say you don't hold money, they may give you some money to see if you use it. Just testing!

*Everything's a test,
to see what you will do.
If you don't recognize
what's before your eyes,
You have to start anew.*

All of these tests are just to wake you up.

In general, watch over yourself, not over other people.

The husband cultivates, the husband has attainment.

The wife cultivates, the wife has attainment.

Whoever cultivates gains advantage. Don't take in other people's laundry. Wash your own clothes, or else you yourself will be dirty. Besides, washing clothes is not as good as washing your mind. Wash your mind and don't be afraid. Make a vow that, when you are enlightened you will save everyone who hasn't become a Buddha yet, even from the hells. When you have become a Buddha, you won't be afraid of anything and you'll be able to save living beings. Don't have such a narrow outlook. Think in terms of the Dharma Realm. In the Dharma Realm there are good, bad, and all kinds of people. Some kill their fathers. Some kill their mothers. Some kill Arhats, break up the Sangha and shed the Buddha's blood. It takes all kinds. You can't say, "If they're going to be like that, I'm leaving." You can't get away from them. We are all in the Dharma Realm together and there's no way to get away.

If you're afraid of getting scolded, you might get scolded. If you are in samadhi you'll probably get left alone. So whoever doesn't want to be scolded should go to samadhi. King Yama can't even disturb you there. Now, all of you should think this over.

If you want to be invisible to King Yama, you must:

Eat your own food, fill yourself.

End your own birth and death.

Leave upside-down dream thinking. Don't even be upside-down in your dream. If you want to leave upside-down dream thinking, what should you do? You should have no impeding obstructions. If you have obstructions, you can't leave upside-down dream thinking far behind. You shouldn't be obstructed by your children, your relatives, even by your own father and mother. Don't worry about any of that. Just be a person of the Way without a mind. If you have a mind, you have false thinking, you cannot end birth and death or leave upside-down dream thinking. So one time a professor came here and asked me, "You may be in control when you are sick, but are you in control when you dream?"

I said to him, "Who's asking me?"

He couldn't answer. I said, "If someone asked me that question, I would pound him to death with a single punch of my fist." He didn't dare repeat his question.

-continued next issue.