

FLOWER ADORNMENT

*Prologue by Tang Dynasty National
Master Ching Liang*

with commentary of Tripitaka Master Hua

THIRD DOOR: A DOCTRINAL ANALYSIS OF THE PERFECT TEACHING

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TEXT:

BASED ON THE MUTUAL INCLUSION AND PENETRATION OF THE ABOVE TWO PRINCIPLES. THEY ARE ALL OF ONE SINGLE NATURE.

THEREFORE, THE MANIFESTATIONS CHAPTER SAYS, "WHEN THE THUS COME ONE REALIZED PROPER ENLIGHTENMENT, WITHIN HIS OWN BODY HE UNIVERSALLY SAW ALL LIVING BEINGS REALIZE PROPER ENLIGHTENMENT, UP TO AND INCLUDING SEEING ALL LIVING BEINGS ENTER NIRVANA." ALL ARE OF ONE SINGLE NATURE, THAT IS TO SAY, "NO NATURE."

COMMENTARY:

BASED ON THE MUTUAL INCLUSION AND PENETRATION OF THE ABOVE TWO PRINCIPLES, THEY ARE ALL OF ONE SINGLE NATURE. The "two principles" refers to the states of the principle pervading the specifics, and the specifics pervading the principle. They all have the same Buddha nature; there is no other nature.

THEREFORE, THE MANIFESTATIONS CHAPTER of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* SAYS, "WHEN THE THUS COME ONE, Shakyamuni Buddha, REALIZED PROPER ENLIGHTENMENT, WITHIN HIS OWN BODY HE UNIVERSALLY SAW ALL LIVING BEINGS REALIZE PROPER ENLIGHTENMENT." How could the Buddha see all living beings become Buddhas when he became a Buddha? It was possible because the Buddha is of one substance with all living beings. There is no distinction between them. So we say,

The mind, the Buddha, and living beings
Are three but are not different.

"But how could living beings be in the Buddha's body?" you ask. It's because living beings and the Buddha are of one single nature. They are essentially the same, and so although there are living beings, they are all within the Buddha's own body, his self-nature. The Buddha saw all beings become Buddhas within his own Dharma body. The Buddha's Dharma body is one with living beings. Living beings themselves are the Buddha's Dharma body, and the Buddha's Dharma body is living beings. The Buddha and living beings are not divided. And yet, although they are not divided, living beings are still living beings and Buddhas are still Buddhas. The Buddha is a living being who has already become a Buddha and living beings are living beings who have not yet become Buddhas. When the Buddha became a Buddha, within his own body he saw all living beings become Buddhas, too, UP TO AND INCLUDING SEEING ALL LIVING BEINGS ENTER NIRVANA. Not only did all those living beings become Buddhas, they all went to Nirvana.

ALL ARE OF ONE SINGLE NATURE, THAT IS TO SAY, "NO NATURE." "No nature" means the Buddha nature. There is nothing that is not the Buddha nature. Thus the Buddha nature pervades empty space. There is no place it is present and no place it is absent.

TEXT:

BECAUSE THE PRINCIPLE PERVADES THE SPECIFICS, IN ONE REALIZATION ALL IS REALIZATION. BECAUSE THE SPECIFICS PERVADE THE PRINCIPLE, THERE IS SAID TO BE NO REALIZATION. THE SUTRA SAYS,

IT IS LIKE EMPTY SPACE:

IT NEITHER COMES INTO BEING NOR IS DESTROYED.

COMMENTARY:

BECAUSE THE PRINCIPLE PERVADES THE SPECIFICS, IN ONE REALIZATION ALL IS REALIZATION. When one living being becomes a Buddha, all living beings become Buddhas. BECAUSE THE SPECIFICS PERVADE THE PRINCIPLE, THERE IS SAID TO BE NO REALIZATION. Regarding principle, there is no realization. There is not a single living being who becomes a Buddha, nor is there a single living being who does *not* become a Buddha. There is neither realization nor nonrealization. THE *Flower Adornment Sutra* SAYS, "IT IS LIKE EMPTY SPACE: IT NEITHER COMES INTO BEING NOR IS DESTROYED. Empty space is not produced or destroyed, because it has no mark. The *Vajra Sutra* says, "All that has marks is empty and false. If one sees all marks as no-marks, one sees the Thus Come One." To see all marks as empty space is to have no attachments and to thereby see the Buddha.

The Buddha said that after he became a Buddha he never spoke a single word, and that living beings did not hear a single word. He said he never spoke the Dharma and that no living beings ever heard the Dharma. That was to break living beings' attachments. All of you now listening to the Sutra should be as if you were not listening to the Sutra. Empty the body and empty the mind. However, I am not talking about falling asleep. Sleeping is a torpid kind of emptiness. You should be here, quite alert, but unaware of where your body is, because your body and

empty space have merged. At that time there is no mark of self, no mark of others, no mark of living beings, and no mark of lifespans. In this way, one is without impeding obstructions and one leaves upside-down dream thinking far behind. You shouldn't think that there is a "you" here listening to the Sutra. You shouldn't think, "I have come here to listen to the Sutra and study the Buddhadharmā." As long as a "you" remains, then you are no longer like empty space. As long as you are not like empty space, you won't have any genuine wisdom. Take a look at empty space: you can hit it, and it doesn't know it. You can scold it, and it won't be aware. The Venerable Master Hsu Yun said,

The cup fell to the ground,
Sharp and clear was its sound.
Empty space was smashed,
And the crazy mind put to rest.

How can empty space be smashed to bits? If empty space can be smashed to bits, how can it be empty? Then it's not empty space. What is meant is that even empty space no longer existed. With the concept of empty space itself gone, how could the "crazy mind" remain? At that point, the crazy mind is put to rest, that is, all attachments are broken.

We say that becoming a Buddha and not becoming a Buddha are like empty space. There is no production and no destruction. The Buddha becoming a Buddha is like empty space. Living beings not becoming Buddhas is also like empty space.

TEXT:

THE ONE NATURE IS WITHOUT A NATURE; IT IS THE BUDDHA NATURE. THEREFORE THE *NIRVANA SUTRA* SAYS, "THE BUDDHA NATURE IS CALLED EMPTINESS IN THE PRIMARY SENSE." EMPTINESS IN THE PRIMARY SENSE IS CALLED WISDOM.

COMMENTARY:

THE ONE NATURE IS WITHOUT A NATURE; IT IS THE BUDDHA NATURE. The Buddha nature is like empty space. But you must not become attached to empty space, either. If you get attached to empty space, then it is no longer empty; THEREFORE THE *NIRVANA SUTRA* SAYS, "THE BUDDHA NATURE IS CALLED EMPTINESS IN THE PRIMARY SENSE." The Buddha nature also goes by the name of emptiness in the primary sense. Well, what is emptiness in the primary sense? Aren't we getting a little reductionist here in our language? Perhaps, but let's continue. EMPTINESS IN THE PRIMARY SENSE IS CALLED WISDOM. Out of the emptiness in the primary sense arises genuine wisdom. True wisdom comes out of empty space. If you are not empty, your wisdom will not manifest.

For example, a house is habitable because it is empty inside. If the house were solid inside, like a rock, rather than empty, no one could live in it. The people here are an analogy for wisdom, and

the emptiness in the house is analagous to empty space. Wisdom abides in emptiness just as people can live in the space inside a house.

TEXT:

THE MANIFESTATION CHAPTER FURTHER SAYS, "THERE IS NOT A SINGLE LIVING BEING WHO IS NOT REplete WITH THE WISDOM OF THE THUS COME ONE." THAT THERE ARE NONE WHO DO NOT POSSESS IT IS THE MEANING OF THE ONE VEHICLE.

COMMENTARY:

THE MANIFESTATION CHAPTER of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* FURTHER SAYS, "THERE IS NOT A SINGLE LIVING BEING WHO IS NOT REplete WITH THE WISDOM OF THE THUS COME ONE." There is not any being who isn't completely endowed with the potential to realize the virtuous characteristic of the wisdom of the Buddha. There's not any living being who doesn't have it. Why? It's because the Buddha and living beings are one. The Buddha became a Buddha and living beings can become Buddhas. This is precisely the point where Buddhism goes beyond other religions in its scope. Other religions will claim the existence of a Supreme Being, saying, "God is the greatest. He's the one in charge and people are just his subjects." They say, "God is number one. No one else can be God. Only God can be God." But that's completely dictatorial, completely authoritarian. We are living in democratic times. Anyone has the opportunity to become the President. Why doesn't anyone have the opportunity to become God? In the old days, only the Emperor's son could become Emperor. The son of a commoner had no right to become an emperor. That's just like those religions who say there is only one god. Buddhism regards all beings as equal. The Buddha became a Buddha and so can we. That's why it makes sense to cultivate and study the Buddhadharma. I'm not trying to downgrade other religions, mind you. I believe in God myself. He is the boss up in heaven, for sure. But he's just the boss in heaven. He's not the boss in the Pure Land of Eternal Stillness and Light. He doesn't have such status there. I prefer to believe in the Buddha in the Pure Land of Eternal Stillness and Light. The Buddha encompasses God, but God does not encompass the Buddha. The Buddha is the complete substance, totally pervading the entire Dharma Realm. God lives in heaven. He couldn't even live on earth. Why do I say that? Isn't it obvious? If you believe in him, he's God, but if you don't, where does that leave him? Nowhere. With no one to believe in him, he has no power. The Buddha's the Buddha whether you believe in him or not. He doesn't need people to believe in him. It makes no difference to him at all. He is the Buddha whether you believe in him or not. If you believe in the Buddha, you can become a Buddha. If you don't believe in the Buddha, you will still become a Buddha in the future. That is because the Buddha and living beings are one and the same. It's not that the Buddha is the most high and living beings are way below him. That's not how it is at all. Between the Buddha and living beings there are no distinctions of high or low. We say, "The Dharma is level and equal, with nothing above or below." It's an entirely democratic, non-authoritarian Dharma-door. If you cultivate, you will become a Buddha. If I cultivate, I will become a Buddha. Whoever cultivates will become a Buddha. You just have to cultivate, that's all. Today I put up the first line of a couplet for you to match. It said,

Cultivation is like sailing upstream,
If you don't go forward, you fall back.

If you are swimming upstream and you don't put forth effort, you won't get anywhere. You may even drown. Here, we are all swimming. Everyone should apply effort. Don't just retreat.

There is not one living being who isn't complete with the Thus Come One's wisdom. **THAT THERE ARE NONE WHO DO NOT POSSESS IT IS THE MEANING OF THE ONE VEHICLE.** This is the meaning of the doctrine of the One Vehicle.

Someone just heard me talking about empty space and how wonderful it is, and that person now wants to become empty space. He thinks, "Once when I was meditating and several times when I was listening to the Sutras, there was nothing at all. It was empty. It really was! I saw it."

Hah! In that case, you aren't empty yet. If you were really empty, how would you know you were empty? If you were empty, how could you see emptiness? If you were empty, how could you feel you were empty? How could you have the sensation of being empty? Take a good look at yourself. Are you empty or not? If you are empty, why is there still a "you"? How can there be the concept of "I feel"? Is that empty?

3. SPECIFICS ARE CREATED ON THE BASIS OF THE PRINCIPLE

TEXT:

THE SPECIFICS ARE CREATED ON THE BASIS OF THE PRINCIPLE. THE SPECIFICS HAVE NO SEPARATE SUBSTANCE, BUT ARE CREATED BECAUSE OF THE PRINCIPLE. THIS IS LIKE WAVES WHICH ARE CREATED BY STIRRING WATER.

COMMENTARY:

The third of the ten divisions, **THE SPECIFICS ARE CREATED ON THE BASIS OF THE PRINCIPLE**, says that the specifics have no basic substance. They depend upon the principle. This demonstrates the non-obstruction of the principle and the specifics.

THE SPECIFICS HAVE NO SEPARATE SUBSTANCE. Apart from the principle, the specifics have no substance, **BUT ARE CREATED BECAUSE OF THE PRINCIPLE.** Without the principle, the specifics are not created. Thus the specifics do not obstruct the principle and the principle does not obstruct the specifics. They are mutually nonobstructing.

THIS IS LIKE WAVES WHICH ARE CREATED BY STIRRING WATER. The specifics are like the waves and the principle is like the water. Although the specifics manifest with visible characteristics, they are ultimately created on the basis of the principle, just as waves are created out of the water. If there is no water, there will be no waves. Thus the specifics cannot be separated from the principle.

A. WHOLENESS OF PARTS ARE TRANSFORMATIONS OF MIND ONLY

TEXT:

HEREIN ARE TWO DIVISIONS. FIRST, AN EXPLANATION OF THE WHOLENESS OF THE DISCRIMINATED PARTS AS BEING TRANSFORMATIONS OF MIND ONLY. THEREFORE, FOREST OF ENLIGHTENMENT BODHISATTVA'S VERSE SAYS:

THE MIND IS LIKE A MASTER PAINTER,
IT CAN PAINT ALL THE WORLDS.
THE FIVE SKANDHAS ARISE FROM IT,
AND THERE IS NO DHARMA IT DOES NOT CREATE.

HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND "THE WHOLENESS OF THE DISCRIMINATED PARTS"? THE NEXT VERSE SAYS:

THE MIND AND THE BUDDHA ARE THE SAME,
SO, TOO, ARE THE BUDDHA AND LIVING BEINGS.
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE BUDDHA AND THE MIND
IN SUBSTANCE AND NATURE ARE WITHOUT END.

SINCE THE BUDDHA IS THE MIND, IT IS CLEARLY NOT THE FALSE MIND ALONE WHICH IS BEING DISCUSSED.

COMMENTARY:

HEREIN ARE TWO DIVISIONS to this third part. FIRST, AN EXPLANATION OF THE WHOLENESS OF THE DISCRIMINATED PARTS AS BEING TRANSFORMATIONS OF MIND ONLY. What is meant by "the wholeness of the discriminated parts"? "Discriminated parts" refers to production/extinction and non-production/non-extinction. Here, production/extinction and non-production/non-extinction form a totality. It is within production and extinction that there is nonproduction and non-extinction.

THEREFORE FOREST OF ENLIGHTENMENT BODHISATTVA'S VERSE SAYS: THE MIND IS LIKE A MASTER PAINTER./ IT CAN PAINT ALL WORLDS./ All the shapes, colors, and forms in the world are painted by the mind. THE FIVE SKANDHAS--form, feeling, thought, activity, and consciousness--ALL ARISE FROM IT./ The five heaps come from the mind. AND THERE IS NO DHARMA IT DOES NOT CREATE./ There is not a single dharma that is not made from the mind. THIS CLARIFIED THE MEANING OF MIND ONLY. HOW ARE WE TO UNDERSTAND "THE WHOLENESS OF THE DISCRIMINATED PARTS"? How are we to understand the totality of how within production/extinction there is non-production/nonextinction?

THE NEXT VERSE SAYS: THE MIND AND THE BUDDHA ARE THE SAME./ Above, the verse spoke of the mind as a master painter. The Buddha, too, is like a master painter. SO, TOO,

ARE THE BUDDHA AND LIVING BEINGS the same. Living beings are also like master painters. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE BUDDHA AND THE MIND/ and living beings IN SUBSTANCE AND NATURE ARE WITHOUT END/."

SINCE THE BUDDHA IS THE MIND and the mind is the Buddha, IT IS CLEARLY NOT THE FALSE MIND ALONE WHICH IS BEING DISCUSSED. It's obvious that we are not just talking about the false mind. We are talking about the true mind.

-continued next issue