

FLOWER ADORNMENT

Prologue by Tang Dynasty National Master Ch'ing Liang

with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA

THIRD DOOR: A DOCTRINAL ANALYSIS OF THE PERFECT TEACHING

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B. TRUE SUCHNESS ACCORDING WITH CONDITIONS

TEXT:

SECOND, AN EXPLANATION OF TRUE SUCHNESS ACCORDING WITH CONDITIONS. THEREFORE, IN THE CHAPTER ON ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION, MANJUSHRI BODHISATTVA SAYS: IF THE MIND AND NATURE ARE ONE, WHY DO WE PERCEIVE ALL THE VARIOUS DISTINCTIONS? THIS POSES A SEEMING CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE CONDITIONS AND THE NATURE.

ENLIGHTENED CHIEF BODHISATTVA ANSWERS: THE DHARMA NATURE BASICALLY HAS NO PRODUCTION. IT MANIFESTS AS HAVING PRODUCTION. THIS IS AN ANSWER BASED ON TRUE SUCHNESS ACCORDING WITH CONDITIONS. HE FURTHER SAYS: ALL DHARMAS ARE BASICALLY WITHOUT FUNCTION, AND HAVE NO SUBSTANCE OR NATURE. THIS SHOWS THAT IN FOLLOWING CONDITIONS, TRUE SUCHNESS DOES NOT LOSE ITS SELF-NATURE. THIS AGREES WITH THE *SHRIMALA SUTRA* WHICH SAYS: BASED ON THE THUS COME ONE'S STOREHOUSE, THERE IS BIRTH AND DEATH; BASED ON THE THUS COME ONE'S STOREHOUSE, THERE IS NIRVANA. AND OTHER SUCH TEACHINGS.

COMMENTARY:

SECOND, AN EXPLANATION OF TRUE SUCHNESS ACCORDING WITH CONDITIONS. True Suchness accords with conditions but does not change; it does not change, but accords with conditions. THEREFORE IN THE CHAPTER ON ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION, MANJUSHRI BODHISATTVA SAYS: IF THE MIND AND NATURE ARE ONE, WHY DO WE PERCEIVE ALL THE VARIOUS DISTINCTIONS? The Bodhisattva inquires, "If the mind is the nature and the nature is the mind, then why do we see so many distinctions? THIS POSES A SEEMING CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THE CONDITIONS AND THE NATURE. The nature and its characteristics would seem to be two. This is a paradox.

ENLIGHTENED CHIEF BODHISATTVA ANSWERS: THE DHARMA NATURE BASICALLY HAS NO PRODUCTION. IT MANIFESTS AS HAVING PRODUCTION. THIS IS AN ANSWER BASED ON TRUE SUCHNESS ACCORDING WITH CONDITIONS. The Dharma nature is basically not produced or destroyed. It manifests as having production, but it is actually True Suchness according with conditions.

HE FURTHER SAYS: ALL DHARMAS ARE BASICALLY WITHOUT FUNCTION, AND HAVE NOT SUBSTANCE OR NATURE. THIS SHOWS THAT IN FOLLOWING CONDITIONS, TRUE SUCHNESS DOES NOT LOSE ITS SELF-NATURE. All dharmas have no intrinsic mode of operation, which is to say, True Suchness follows conditions but does not change or lose its own nature of True Suchness.

THIS AGREES WITH THE *SHRIMALA SUTRA* WHICH SAYS: BASED ON THE THUS COME ONE'S STOREHOUSE, THERE IS BIRTH AND DEATH; BASED ON THE THUS COME ONE'S STOREHOUSE, THERE IS NIRVANA, the fruition of virtue. And OTHER SUCH TEACHINGS also make this principle clear. Birth and death is the Thus Come One's Storehouse from the point of view of ignorance. From the confused point of view, there is birth and death. When one is enlightened, there is no birth and death; there is Nirvana. In the pure Treasury of the Thus Come One there is Nirvana.

4. THE ABILITY OF THE SPECIFICS TO MANIFEST THE PRINCIPLE

TEXT:

THE SPECIFICS ARE CAPABLE OF MANIFESTING THE PRINCIPLE. THE PRINCIPLE IS CREATED WHEN THE SPECIFICS ARE STIRRED. THEREFORE THE SPECIFICS ARE FALSE AND THE PRINCIPLE IS REAL. THAT WHICH RELIES ON SOMETHING ELSE AND HAS NO NATURE IS THE PERFECTLY ACCOMPLISHED REAL NATURE. THIS IS LIKE UNREAL WAVES WHICH REVEAL THE WATER.

THE SUYAMA VERSE SAYS:

HOW DO WE SPEAK OF THE SKANDHAS?
WHAT NATURE DO THEY HAVE?
THE NATURE OF THE SKANDHAS CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED,
THEREFORE WE SAY IT HAS NO PRODUCTION.
IF WE INVESTIGATE THE SKANDHAS,
WE FIND THAT THEIR NATURE IS BASICALLY EMPTY AND
STILL.
BEING EMPTY, IT CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED.
THIS IS THE MEANING OF NON-PRODUCTION.
LIVING BEINGS ARE ALSO LIKE THIS.
SO, TOO, ARE ALL THE BUDDHAS.
THE BUDDHAS AND ALL BUDDHADHARMAS
DO NOT HAVE A NATURE OF THEIR OWN.

FURTHER, THE TEN PATIENCES CHAPTER SAYS:

THIS IS LIKE AN ECHO IN A VALLEY ARISING FROM
CONDITIONS,
SINCE THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION WITH REGARD TO THE
DHARMA NATURE.

THE SUMERU SUMMIT VERSE SAYS:

COMPREHEND THAT ALL DHARMAS
DO NOT HAVE A NATURE OF THEIR OWN.

PASSAGES SUCH AS THESE OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE NINE ASSEMBLIES.

COMMENTARY:

THE SPECIFICS ARE CAPABLE OF MANIFESTING THE PRINCIPLE. Within the specifics, the true principle is manifest. In understanding the specifics, you understand the principle. If you don't understand the specifics, you won't understand the principle. THE PRINCIPLE IS CREATED WHEN THE SPECIFICS ARE STIRRED. THEREFORE THE SPECIFICS ARE FALSE AND THE PRINCIPLE IS REAL. THAT WHICH RELIES ON SOMETHING ELSE AND HAS NO NATURE IS THE PERFECTLY ACCOMPLISHED REAL NATURE, which is also empty. THIS IS LIKE UNREAL WAVES WHICH REVEAL THE WATER. The waves are not real, but when the waves arise, you see the water.

THE SUYAMA VERSE--a verse from the Chapter titled "Praises in the Suyama Heaven Palace"--SAYS: HOW DO WE SPEAK OF THE SKANDHAS?/ What is the basic nature of the five skandhas--form, feeling, thought, activity, and consciousness. WHAT NATURE DO THEY HAVE?/ THE NATURE OF THE SKANDHAS CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED,/ THEREFORE WE SAY IT HAS NO PRODUCTION./ The nature of the skandhas cannot be destroyed; it is all-pervasive. Because it is not extinguishable, we also say that it is not produced. IF WE INVESTIGATE THE SKANDHAS,/ WE FIND THAT THEIR NATURE IS BASICALLY EMPTY AND STILL./ The nature of the skandhas is fundamentally empty. BEING EMPTY, IT CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED./ THIS IS THE MEANING OF NON-PRODUCTION./

LIVING BEINGS ARE ALSO LIKE THIS./ SO, TOO, ARE ALL THE BUDDHAS./ THE BUDDHAS AND ALL BUDDHADHARMAS/ DO NOT HAVE A NATURE OF THEIR OWN./ The Buddhas themselves and all the Dharma they spoke is actually devoid of a nature of their own, when viewed in light of the principle discussed in this verse.

FURTHER, THE TEN PATIENCES CHAPTER SAYS: THIS IS LIKE AN ECHO IN A VALLEY ARISING FROM CONDITIONS./ If you stand on a mountain and say, "Namo Amitabha Buddha," the sound will come back from across the valley, "Namo Amitabha Buddha!" Basically there's nothing over there, but the words come back anyway; SINCE THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION WITH REGARD TO THE DHARMA NATURE./

THE SUMERU SUMMIT VERSE SAYS: COMPREHEND THAT ALL DHARMAS/ DO NOT HAVE A NATURE OF THEIR OWN./ A verse from the Chapter titled "Ascent to Sumeru's Summit" says that the self-nature of all the Buddhadharmas is empty and has no existence. PASSAGES SUCH AS THESE OCCUR THROUGHOUT THE NINE ASSEMBLIES.

5. THE PRINCIPLE OVERPOWERS THE SPECIFICS

TEXT:

THE PRINCIPLE OVERPOWERS THE SPECIFICS. AS THE SPECIFICS ARE COMPLETELY WITHIN THE PRINCIPLE, SPECIFICS ARE COMPLETELY ABSORBED. THIS IS LIKE WATER OVERPOWERING THE WAVES, SO THAT THE INDIVIDUAL WAVES ARE COMPLETELY ABSORBED BY THE WATER. THEREFORE WE SAY THAT LIVING BEINGS AND BUDDHAS NEITHER INCREASE NOR DECREASE.

THE MANIFESTATIONS CHAPTER SAYS: IT'S LIKE EMPTY SPACE. WITHIN IT, ALL WORLDS MAY BE IN THE PROCESS OF CREATION OR DESTRUCTION, BUT THE SPACE ITSELF NEVER INCREASES OR DECREASES. WHAT IS THE REASON? IT IS BECAUSE EMPTY SPACE DOES NOT HAVE PRODUCTION. THE BODHI OF ALL BUDDHAS IS ALSO LIKE THIS, WHETHER BEINGS ACCOMPLISH RIGHT ENLIGHTENMENT OR DO NOT ACCOMPLISH RIGHT ENLIGHTENMENT, BODHI DOES NOT INCREASE OR DECREASE. WHAT IS THE REASON? IT IS BECAUSE BODHI HAS NO MARK.

IT GOES ON TO SAY: SUPPOSE ALL LIVING BEINGS IN THE SPACE OF A THOUGHT WERE TO ACCOMPLISH RIGHT ENLIGHTENMENT. THAT WOULD BE THE SAME AS AND NOT DIFFERENT FROM THEIR NOT HAVING DONE SO BECAUSE THE TWO STATES ARE IDENTICAL IN NOT HAVING MARKS.

THE *SUTRA OF NO INCREASE AND NO DECREASE* ALSO SAYS THIS. IT IS NOT REFERRING TO SOME LIVING BEINGS NOT BECOMING BUDDHAS WHEN IT SAYS THAT THERE IS NO INCREASE OR DECREASE.

COMMENTARY:

THE PRINCIPLE OVERPOWERS THE SPECIFICS. "Overpower" means "exclude," or "cancel out." This means that there is only the principle and no specifics. Above, the specifics could pervade the principle, and the principle could pervade the specifics. The principle and the specifics were unobstructive. Now, the principle excludes the specifics. The principle is real and the specifics are false. So the real cancels out the false. Now we are speaking only of the principle. AS THE SPECIFICS ARE COMPLETELY WITHIN THE PRINCIPLE, THE SPECIFICS ARE COMPLETELY ABSORBED. In the totality of the principle, the specifics disappear. The totality of specifics is principle. Here just the principle is kept. THIS IS LIKE WATER OVERPOWERING THE WAVES, SO THAT THE INDIVIDUAL WAVES ARE COMPLETELY ABSORBED BY THE WATER. Before there were waves; now there aren't. The water is completely still. The water represents the principle and the waves represent the specifics. Originally there were waves, but they have been absorbed. Originally the specifics existed, but they have been cancelled out by the principle.

THEREFORE WE SAY THAT LIVING BEINGS AND BUDDHAS NEITHER INCREASE NOR DECREASE. When a living being becomes a Buddha, there is not an increase of one Buddha, with a corresponding decrease in the number of living beings. When a Buddha turns the compassionate boat around and returns to save living beings, there is not an increase in the number of living beings with a corresponding decrease in the number of Buddhas. Why do we say that?

In explanation, THE MANIFESTATIONS CHAPTER SAYS: IT'S LIKE EMPTY SPACE. Where is there an increase or decrease in the amount of empty space? Within it, ALL WORLDS MAY BE IN THE PROCESS OF CREATION OR DESTRUCTION. All that is included in the two retributions of dependent and proper in all worlds may be in the process of arising or cessation, BUT THE SPACE ITSELF NEVER INCREASES OR DECREASES, Empty space does not increase or decrease. If it increased or decreased, it would not, by definition, be empty space. WHAT IS THE REASON? IT IS BECAUSE EMPTY SPACE DOES NOT HAVE PRODUCTION. Nothing gives birth to empty space. Nothing brings about the extinction of empty space. Although we speak about it in this way, empty space is not final or ultimate either. Manjushri Bodhisattva points this out in the *Shurangama Sutra* where he says:

Emptiness arises within the great enlightenment.
Like a single bubble in the ocean.

Compared to the great enlightened nature, space is just like a single bubble in the sea. You shouldn't think that empty space is infinitely large. It's not bigger than the great enlightened nature. Empty space is not produced or extinguished. It has no mark. The nature of enlightenment is even less subject to production, extinction, or marks. Empty space, however, emerges from out of the enlightened nature.

THE BODHI OF ALL BUDDHAS IS ALSO LIKE THIS. Empty space is not produced and the same is true of the enlightenment of the Buddhas. All are like empty space, without form, without mark. WHETHER BEINGS ACCOMPLISH RIGHT ENLIGHTENMENT OR DO NOT ACCOMPLISH RIGHT ENLIGHTENMENT, BODHI DOES NOT INCREASE OR DECREASE. Regardless of whether living beings realize enlightenment or not, or whether Buddhas return to the realm of living beings to save them or not, Bodhi does not increase or decrease. In empty space there is no increase or decrease, likewise in the Buddha's Bodhi-- enlightenment--there is no increase or decrease.

WHAT IS THE REASON? There has to be an explanation for this. IT IS BECAUSE BODHI HAS NO MARK. Bodhi is just the enlightened nature. The enlightened nature has no form or mark. IT, the Sutra, GOES ON TO SAY: SUPPOSE ALL LIVING BEINGS IN THE SPACE OF A THOUGHT WERE TO ACCOMPLISH RIGHT ENLIGHTENMENT. THAT WOULD BE THE SAME AS AND NOT DIFFERENT FROM THEIR NOT HAVING DONE SO BECAUSE THE TWO STATES ARE IDENTICAL IN NOT HAVING MARKS. This is just a hypothetical suggestion used to help explain the principle. You shouldn't take this as a statement of truth. IN this whole world, there's nothing which is decidedly a certain and fixed way or decidedly not a certain and fixed way. Things may seem to be one way, but then they turn out not to be all just one way. Or they may seem to not be a certain way, but are found to be that way after all. If you can distinguish clearly the ways in which things are a certain way and are not a certain way, then you are one without attachments. "A thought" contains 900 productions and extinctions, and yet a thought is perceived of as an extremely short period of time. It just depends, however, on whether you perceive a thought as brief, for in fact, a single thought can pass through tens of thousands of great kalpas. A thought can also be perceived as so brief that it doesn't even fill a space in time. Hearing that all beings' accomplishment of enlightenment would be the same as their not having done so, you may say, "If that's the case, then studying the Buddhadharma and accomplishing Buddhahood is the same as not having done so, so we'll just not bother to accomplish Buddhahood." No one told you to accomplish anything. If you are seeking to accomplish Buddhahood, you are engaging in greedy thoughts. "So I

won't engage in that greedy thought," you say. You don't want to engage in greedy thoughts and you decide to start by eliminating the greedy thought of becoming a Buddha. Why don't you ask yourself if you can refrain from engaging in greedy thoughts for food, for clothes, and for sleep? Can you refrain from greedy thoughts when your eyes see beautiful forms or your ears hear pleasing sounds? Can you

refrain from being greedy for fine fragrances and delicious tastes? Can you refrain from delight in physical contact and from indulging in mental dharmas?

"Oh, I can control my greed for becoming a Buddha, but the rest of those things I can't help but be greedy for!" you say.

How is it that you cannot control your greed for anything except becoming a Buddha? Hmm. Look into this closely. What's really going on here?

You can look into it all you want, but really, wanting to become a Buddha is greed. It's a kind of greed you shouldn't give up, however. Besides, being greedy to become a Buddha is better than being greedy to become a hungry ghost! If you are greedy for forms, sounds, smells, tastes, things to touch, and ideas, it's very easy to become a hungry ghost, an animal, or a hell-being. All those retributions are created from greed, too--by greed for offenses, not greed for goodness and merit. It's very dangerous. I don't want to say too much about greed, or your greed will come popping out.

The two states of being enlightened and not being enlightened are identical in not having marks. This is said to encourage you to have no attachments. Being a Buddha and being a living being are pretty much the same thing. It's just that one is enlightened and the other is muddled. That's where the difference lies.

THE *SUTRA OF NO INCREASE AND NO DECREASE* ALSO SAYS THIS. IT IS NOT REFERRING TO SOME LIVING BEINGS NOT BECOMING BUDDHAS WHEN IT SAYS THAT THERE IS NO INCREASE OR DECREASE. The meaning is that whether living beings become Buddhas or not, there is no increase and no decrease.

-cont. next issue

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