

FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

Prologue by T'ang Dynasty National Master Ch'ing Liang

with commentary of TRIPITAKA MASTER HUA

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6. THE SPECIFICS CONCEAL THE PRINCIPLE

TEXT:

THE SPECIFICS CONCEAL THE PRINCIPLE. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE ACCORDS WITH CONDITIONS, AND SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE CREATED. ACCORDINGLY THE SPECIFICS ARE CAUSED TO MANIFEST WHILE THE PRINCIPLE DOES NOT APPEAR. THIS IS LIKE WATER TURNING INTO WAVES; MOTION APPEARS AND STILLNESS IS CONCEALED.

THEREFORE WHEN THE DHARMA BODY FLOWS AND TURNS IN THE FIVE PATHS, IT BECOMES WHAT ARE CALLED LIVING BEINGS. WEALTHY LEADER'S VERSE SAYS:

ALL WORLDLY DISCUSSION
IS ENTIRELY DISCRIMINATION.
THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A SINGLE DHARMA
OF GAINING ACCESS TO THE DHARMA NATURE.

IT CONTINUES IN THIS SAME VEIN.

COMMENTARY:

Above, the principle overpowered the specifics to the point they were gotten rid of. Here, the specifics conceal the principle to the point it is entirely hidden. That is an example of True Suchness according with conditions. THE SPECIFICS CONCEAL THE PRINCIPLE. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE ACCORDS WITH CONDITIONS, AND SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE CREATED. The marks of specifics appear. ACCORDINGLY THE SPECIFICS ARE CAUSED TO MANIFEST WHILE THE PRINCIPLE DOES NOT APPEAR. It's easy to see the marks of the specifics, but you can't find the principle because it's hidden.

Here we have yet another analogy. THIS IS LIKE WATER TURNING INTO WAVES; MOTION APPEARS AND STILLNESS IS CONCEALED. The motion of the waves is apparent, while the stillness of the water goes undetected. Motion represents the specifics. The specifics appear while the stillness, the principle, is concealed.

THEREFORE WHEN THE DHARMA BODY FLOWS AND TURNS IN THE FIVE PATHS, IT BECOMES WHAT ARE CALLED LIVING BEINGS. The pure Dharma body of the Buddhas pervades all places. The five paths are the six paths of rebirth except for that of the gods. That's because the gods do enjoy some measure of happiness. The five paths include the three evil paths: hell-beings, animals, and hungry ghosts. Add the path of asuras and that makes the four evil destinies.

"Destinies" means "where one runs off to." Humans become part of the human realm; hell-beings go to the hells. Animals join the realm of animals; asuras run to the path of asuras. Ghosts run off to the realm of ghosts.

"I know," you say, "people who fall into the hells are there forever! Ghosts are always in the ghost realm, people are always in the human realm, and animals are always part of the animal realm. The same is true for asuras."

Well, you are wrong again. That's falling into the extremist view of eternalism.

People can become asuras. If you are hostile and like to fight, in the future you will become an asura. If you are very greedy, you can turn into a hungry ghost. If you are hateful, you can fall into the hells. If you are very stupid, you can turn into an animal. For the most part, animals have to undergo the retribution of being stupid. If you act like a human being, and do human things, you can become a person. Those in the path of humans can end up in other paths. Those in the other paths can become people. That's what's meant by "turning and flowing," spinning around and around. If as an asura, you give rise to good thoughts, you can become a person. If, as an asura, you harbor evil thoughts, you will certainly fall into the hells. The five paths are sometimes called "the grab-bag of the five destinies." They are all mixed up, each with the others. When the Dharma body flows and turns in the five paths, it becomes what we call living beings. Originally the Dharma body is the Buddha. When it flows and turns in the five paths it is called living beings.

"Why does it flow and turn?" you ask.

Because of confusion. When the Dharma body is confused, it flows and turns in the five paths. When it is awake, it transcends the turning wheel.

WEALTHY LEADER'S VERSE SAYS: ALL WORLDLY DISCUSSION/ IS ENTIRELY DISCRIMINATION./ Say two words and you have two words' worth. Say three words and you have three words' worth, and so on. To separate from discrimination while remaining within discrimination is the Way. It's not easy to separate oneself from it, however, because one is quite accustomed to discriminating. It's an old habit that's hard to break, hard to get away from.

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A SINGLE DHARMA/ OF GAINING ACCESS TO THE DHARMA NATURE./ If you are outside the door and walk in, you have gained access. If you breathe out and then breathe in again, the air has gained access. When the mani pearls shine in the mirror and each reflects upon the other, they gain access. When the self-nature Dharma body reflects upon the Buddha nature-- the Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom--it has gained access. Here, however, there is not a single dharma of gaining access to the Dharma nature, AND SO ON. There is a lot more text but the point has been made.

7. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE IS THE SPECIFICS

TEXT:

THE TRUE PRINCIPLE IS THE SPECIFICS. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE CANNOT EXIST OUTSIDE OF THE SPECIFICS. THIS IS BASED ON THE DOCTRINE THAT DHARMAS ARE WITHOUT SELF, AND THAT EMPTINESS IS FORM. THE PRINCIPLE IS THE SPECIFICS, AND THEREBY IT IS THE TRUE PRINCIPLE. THE SEVENTH TRANSFERENCE SAYS: THE DHARMA NATURE DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE DHARMA MARKS, AND SO ON.

COMMENTARY:

THE TRUE PRINCIPLE IS THE SPECIFICS. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE CANNOT EXIST OUTSIDE OF THE SPECIFICS. The true principle is right in the specifics. THIS IS BASED ON THE DOCTRINE THAT DHARMAS ARE WITHOUT SELF AND THAT EMPTINESS IS FORM. Form is right within emptiness. It is not apart from emptiness that form exists, nor is emptiness apart from form. THE PRINCIPLE IS THE SPECIFICS AND THEREBY IT IS THE TRUE PRINCIPLE. The true principle is found in the specifics. One cannot find the principle apart from the specifics. THE SEVENTH TRANSFERENCE SAYS: THE DHARMA NATURE DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE DHARMA MARKS, nor do dharma marks contradict the nature. The production of dharmas does not contradict the nature, nor does the nature of dharmas contradict the production.

In the analogy we say that the water--the principle--is the waves--the specifics--because the wetness cannot be divorced from the motion.

8. SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE PRINCIPLE

TEXT:

SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE PRINCIPLE. ACCUMULATED CONDITIONS HAVE NO NATURE OF THEIR OWN. THEREFORE IN SUBSTANCE THEY ARE IDENTICAL TO THE REAL.

COMMENTARY:

SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE PRINCIPLE. Above we said that the true principle is the specifics. Here we say that the specific dharmas are just the principle. Without discrimination, the specifics are the principle. ACCUMULATED CONDITIONS HAVE NO NATURE OF THEIR OWN. The specific dharmas arise from conditions. The conditions accumulate but have no self-nature. THEREFORE IN SUBSTANCE THEY ARE IDENTICAL TO THE REAL. So we say that the specifics are the principle, the mark is just the nature.

TEXT:

THE TWO DIVISIONS ABOVE PROPERLY SHOW THAT THE TWO TRUTHS DO NOT CONTRADICT EACH OTHER, JUST AS THE WETNESS DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE WAVES AND THE WAVES DO NOT CONTRADICT THE WETNESS. IN SUBSTANCE THEY ARE IDENTICAL WITH EACH OTHER.

THE SUYAMA VERSE SAYS: IT IS LIKE GOLD AND THE COLOR GOLD. THEIR NATURES ARE NOT DIFFERENT. DHARMA AND NON-DHARMA ARE THE SAME WAY. IN SUBSTANCE AND NATURE THEY ARE NOT DIFFERENT.

COMMENTARY:

THE TWO DIVISIONS ABOVE, the two preceding categories, the seventh and eighth, PROPERLY SHOW THAT THE TWO TRUTHS DO NOT CONTRADICT EACH OTHER. The two truths are the Actual and the Worldly. The wetness is an analogy for the Actual Truth and the waves are an analogy for Worldly Truth. One may speak of them as emptiness and existence. One may also say, "Emptiness does not obstruct form; form does not obstruct emptiness. Outside of emptiness there is no form; outside of form there is no emptiness." Although they are not found outside of one another, still they are two. Although they are two, they do not contradict one another but remain in harmony.

THE WETNESS DOES NOT CONTRADICT THE WAVES AND THE WAVES DO NOT CONTRADICT THE WETNESS. The wetness is the waves and the waves are the wetness. Where there is wetness there are not necessarily waves, but where there are waves, there is sure to be wetness. So true emptiness does not obstruct wonderful existence and wonderful existence does not obstruct true emptiness. IN SUBSTANCE THEY ARE IDENTICAL WITH EACH OTHER. The waves are wetness; the wetness is waves.

THE SUYAMA VERSE SAYS: IT IS LIKE GOLD AND THE COLOR GOLD/ THEIR NATURES ARE NOT DIFFERENT./ DHARMA AND NON-DHARMA ARE THE SAME WAY./ What do we mean by non-dharma? We are talking about true emptiness and wonderful existence. IN SUBSTANCE AND NATURE THEY ARE NOT DIFFERENT.

TEXT:

THIS IS ALSO AN ANALOGY FOR THE THUS COME ONE'S STOREHOUSE AND THE ALAYA WHICH, WHEN IT TURNS, IS NO DIFFERENT FROM THE STOREHOUSE.

COMMENTARY:

The doctrine now under discussion is also an analogy for the Thus Come One's Storehouse and the Alaya consciousness. The Alaya or "store" consciousness is the eighth consciousness. The Alaya is a great storeroom. It contains all good, evil, and indeterminate seeds within it. In fact, the affairs of several hundreds of thousands of millions of great aeons are held there. THIS IS ALSO AN ANALOGY FOR THE THUS COME ONE'S STOREHOUSE AND THE ALAYA, WHICH, WHEN IT TURNS, IS NO DIFFERENT FROM THE STOREHOUSE. Actually, the Thus Come One's Storehouse is the Alaya consciousness, and the Alaya consciousness is the Thus Come One's Storehouse. When clear, it's the Thus Come One's Storehouse. When muddled, it's the Alaya consciousness. Therefore, there is ultimately no difference between them.

TEXT:

FURTHER, BECAUSE THE SPECIFICS ARE THE PRINCIPLE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS EXISTENCE, IT IS NOT PERMANENCE. BECAUSE THE PRINCIPLE IS THE SPECIFICS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS EMPTINESS, IT IS NOT ANNIHILATION.

COMMENTARY:

FURTHER, BECAUSE THE SPECIFICS ARE THE PRINCIPLE, ALTHOUGH THERE IS EXISTENCE, although specifics exist, IT IS NOT PERMANENCE. It is wonderful existence, not eternal. BECAUSE THE PRINCIPLE IS THE SPECIFICS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS EMPTINESS, IT IS NOT ANNIHILATION. Although the principle is empty, it is not eternal cutting off.

TEXT:

FURTHER, BECAUSE THE SPECIFICS AND PRINCIPLE ARE MUTUALLY IDENTICAL, THEY ARISE AND ARE EXTINGUISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY. THE SUMERU VERSE SAYS:

ALL THE ACTIVITIES OF COMMON PEOPLE
QUICKLY RETURN TO EXTINCTION.
BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE LIKE EMPTY SPACE IN NATURE,
THEY ARE THEREFORE SAID TO BE ENDLESS.
THE WISE ONES SPEAK OF "ENDLESSNESS"
BUT THIS IS AS IF NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID.
THE SELF NATURE IS WITHOUT END.
SUCH ENDLESSNESS IS INCONCEIVABLE.

THUS THE FOUR MARKS EXIST SIMULTANEOUSLY AND NOT IN SEQUENCE.

COMMENTARY:

FURTHER, BECAUSE THE SPECIFICS AND PRINCIPLE ARE MUTUALLY IDENTICAL, THEY ARISE AND ARE EXTINGUISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY. The specifics and the principle are perfectly fused and unobstructed. THE SUMERU VERSE SAYS: ALL THE ACTIVITIES OF COMMON PEOPLE/ QUICKLY RETURN TO EXTINCTION./ BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE LIKE EMPTY SPACE IN NATURE,/ THEY ARE THEREFORE SAID TO BE ENDLESS./ The deeds and behavior of common people are like empty space, transient and fleeting, returning to emptiness. Because they are like empty space, we say they have no end. Even though they're over very fast, we say they have no end, because they are like empty space which has no end. THE WISE ONES SPEAK OF "ENDLESSNESS"/ BUT THIS IS AS IF NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID./ That's like no statement at all. THE SELF-NATURE IS WITHOUT END./ We are speaking of the self-nature of empty space which has no limit. And SUCH ENDLESSNESS IS INCONCEIVABLE./

THUS THE FOUR MARKS of production, dwelling, change, and extinction, EXIST SIMULTANEOUSLY AND NOT IN SEQUENCE./ They all happen "at once." It's not that one follows the other in succession. That is because they arise and are extinguished at the same time.

TEXT:

THIS LEADS ULTIMATELY TO SEVERING AND CERTIFICATION APART FROM SUBJECT AND OBJECT. THE TEN GROUNDS CHAPTER SAYS: THERE IS NO BEGINNING, NO MIDDLE, AND NO END, AND THIS IS BEYOND THE REACH OF THE CONVENTIONS OF LANGUAGE. THE TRANSFERENCES CHAPTER SAYS: THERE IS NOT, OUTSIDE OF WISDOM, A SUCHNESS ARRIVED AT BY MEANS OF WISDOM. THERE IS NOT, OUTSIDE

OF SUCHNESS, A WISDOM WHICH CAN BE CERTIFIED AS HAVING ATTAINED SUCHNESS, AND SO FORTH.

COMMENTARY:

THIS LEADS ULTIMATELY TO SEVERING AND CERTIFICATION APART FROM SUBJECT AND OBJECT. Such severing is separate from that which severs and that which is severed. Such certification is apart from that which certifies and that to which one is certified, as for example when the Dragon Girl gave her pearl to the Buddha and immediately realized Buddhahood. It is the sudden Dharma which is apart from all marks. At this place the path of words is cut off and the place of the mind's functioning is extinguished. This is sudden severing and certification, separate from subject and object.

THE TEN GROUNDS CHAPTER SAYS: THERE IS NO BEGINNING, NO MIDDLE, AND NO END, AND THIS IS BEYOND THE REACH OF THE CONVENTIONS OF LANGUAGE. This sudden severing and certification cannot be expressed in words; there is no way to describe this by means of language.

THE TRANSFERENCES CHAPTER SAYS: THERE IS NOT, OUTSIDE OF WISDOM, A SUCHNESS ARRIVED AT BY MEANS OF WISDOM. There is no principle of "thusness" outside of wisdom. The principle of "thusness" is just wisdom; the "thusness" wisdom is just the "thusness" principle. They are one. Conversely, THERE IS NOT, OUTSIDE OF SUCHNESS, A WISDOM WHICH CAN BE CERTIFIED AS HAVING OBTAINED SUCHNESS, AND SO FORTH,

9. THE TRUE PRINCIPLE IS NOT THE SPECIFICS

TEXT:

THE TRUE PRINCIPLE IS NOT THE SPECIFICS. THE TRUE, ALTHOUGH IDENTICAL TO THE FALSE, IS DIFFERENT FROM THE FALSE. THIS IS LIKE MOISTURE WHICH IS NOT MOTION.

COMMENTARY:

THE TRUE PRINCIPLE IS NOT THE SPECIFICS. THE TRUE, WHICH IS IDENTICAL TO THE FALSE, IS DIFFERENT FROM THE FALSE. Above, it was said that true principle is the specifics; the specifics are the principle, and the specifics and the principle are mutually unobstructed. Now, we say the true principle is not the specifics. However, this doesn't mean that the mutual non-obstruction of specifics and principle does not hold. You shouldn't think that when the statement is negated, obstruction arises. In fact, obstruction and non-obstruction are mutually unobstructed and interpenetrating.

The true principle is not the false specifics, the true is not the false and the real is not the unreal. Although we use the false to attain the true. The true which is certified to is not false. How do we show this principle? THIS IS LIKE MOISTURE WHICH IS NOT MOTION. The water, representing the principle, may be inseparable from the waves, which represent the specifics. But it is not the waves as such, for motion and wetness are different.

10. SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE NOT THE PRINCIPLE

TEXT:

SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE NOT THE PRINCIPLE. THE FALSE, ALTHOUGH IDENTICAL TO THE TRUE, IS DIFFERENT FROM THE TRUE. THIS IS LIKE MOTION WHICH IS NOT WETNESS. THE VERSE BY FOREST OF REPENTANCE SAYS: FORM AND NON-FORM ARE TWO AND NOT ONE. ALSO, IT IS LIKE MARKS AND THE ABSENCE OF MARKS, LIKE BIRTH AND DEATH, AND NIRVANA. WHEN DISCRIMINATED, THEY ARE ALL DIFFERENT, AND SO FORTH.

COMMENTARY:

SPECIFIC DHARMAS ARE NOT THE PRINCIPLE. THE FALSE, ALTHOUGH IDENTICAL TO THE TRUE, IS DIFFERENT FROM THE TRUE. The principle is true and the specifics are false. The specifics, which are the totality of the principle, are not always the principle as such because their form and nature are different. THIS IS LIKE MOTION WHICH IS NOT WETNESS. The waves cannot be discerned apart from the water, yet they are not synonymous with the water, because motion is different in meaning from wetness.

We must examine the principles from every angle, speaking about them from every possible point of view. Why? Because if you are off just the slightest bit, then you have an attachment. With even a bit of attachment you cannot become enlightened. If you can be without the slightest bit of attachment, then you can obtain freedom and non-discriminating wisdom.

THE VERSE BY FOREST OF REPENTANCE Bodhisattva SAYS very clearly: FORM AND NON-FORM/ ARE TWO AND NOT ONE./ How could they be one? If they aren't one, then are they two? No, and that's where the catch is! They are not the same and they are not different. ALSO, IT IS LIKE MARKS AND THE ABSENCE OF MARKS, LIKE BIRTH AND DEATH, AND NIRVANA. WHEN DISCRIMINATED, THEY ARE ALL DIFFERENT. "Marks" means birth and death; "no marks" means Nirvana. There is no way to finish speaking about these principles. If you want to understand them, study the *Shurangama Sutra*. There it is made clear that neither seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing, nor earth, air, fire, and water, nor emptiness, perception, and consciousness arise from causes and conditions or appear spontaneously in nature. The nature of each element pervades the entire Dharma realm. If you investigate these principles in the *Shurangama Sutra*, you can lessen your attachments.

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