

Prologue to the Flower Adornment Sutra

by T'ang Dynasty National Master Ch'ing Liang

with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

The Third Door: Doctrinal Analysis

Continued from issue #173

TEXT:

THIS, THE TENTH DOOR OF PERFECTION, IS BASED ON THE PREVIOUS THIRD DOOR, AND EXPLAINS ITS MEANINGS AND PRINCIPLES. THUS THE SUTRA THAT FOLLOWS SAYS:

THE BODHISATTVA IS SKILLED AT CONTEMPLATING THE DHARMAS OF ARISING FROM CONDITIONS. WITHIN A SINGLE DHARMA HE UNDERSTANDS THE MANY; WITHIN THE MANY DHARMAS HE UNDERSTANDS THE ONE.

ALSO:

WITHIN THE ONE, UNDERSTAND THE LIMITLESS; WITHIN THE LIMITLESS, UNDERSTAND THE ONE. KNOWING THAT THEY HAVE MUTUAL PRODUCTION AND ARISING, ONE ACCOMPLISHES FEARLESSNESS,"

AND SO FORTH.

ALL OF THESE HAVE THE SAME MEANING. THIS CONCLUDES THE DOOR OF THE INTERCAUSALITY OF ARISING FROM CONDITIONS.

Commentary:

THIS, THE TENTH DOOR OF PERFECTION, IS BASED ON THE PREVIOUS THIRD DOOR, AND EXPLAINS ITS MEANINGS AND PRINCIPLES. The tenth door is complete in every aspect, without any deficiency or excess. This door gathers in all the doctrines discussed in the preceding theories and unifies them. The "meanings" refers to the same and the different, the perfect and the imperfect. These antitheses are all merged and fused in perfection. What was different is now made the same; what was imperfect is now rendered perfect. This theory is perfect and unobstructed.

THUS THE SUTRA THAT FOLLOWS SAYS: "THE BODHISATTVA IS SKILLED AT CONTEMPLATING THE DHARMAS OF ARISING FROM CONDITIONS." The Bodhisattva is an expert in observing all dharmas arising from conditions. The great arising from conditions is a single condition. The multiple conditions are many conditions. Many conditions, when gathered together, become one condition. One condition, when broken up, divides into many conditions. With

Wonderful Contemplative Wisdom, the Bodhisattva is proficient at contemplating the workings of dharmas that arise from conditions.

"WITHIN A SINGLE DHARMA HE UNDERSTANDS THE MANY; WITHIN THE MANY DHARMAS HE UNDERSTANDS THE ONE." The one becomes the limitless; the limitless become the one. When he views the myriad dharmas, he suddenly understands, "Ahah! All dharmas are originally one. They come from the one. For example, 10,000 "ones" become 10,000. But those 10,000 are not apart from the one. And one is a unit of the 10,000." There is a saying that goes:

The self-nature is like empty space.
Truth and falseness are contained within it.
Enlightening to the original substance,
When one is penetrated, all are penetrated.

Your self-nature is vast like emptiness. Within it the true and the false are included. If you wake up to your original Dharma substance, then if you can become clear about one dharma, you can thereby penetrate all dharmas. For this reason, those of old said, "When the one is attained, everything is accomplished." It's also long been told us that:

When heaven attains the one, it is clear.
When earth attains the one, it is peaceful.
When people attain the one, they become sages.

Why is the sky pure and clear? Because it has obtained the one. Why is the earth peaceful? Because it has attained the one. We all rely on the earth and feel it is secure, solid, and unmoving. If the earth loses the one, then the earth will start to quake. A disaster will occur! If you understand and obtain this one, you can become a sage. Otherwise, you're still an ordinary person. It's just this little bit that makes the difference between an ordinary person and a sage. From this one, you can make transformations into two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten, and from there all the way to infinity. The more transformations, the more varieties. The more varieties, the more trouble. The more trouble, the more people want transformations. It's to be feared that once so many transformations are made you won't know how to get back to the source. You will run farther and farther away instead. Why? Because you know how to make transformations. If you stop doing that and come back to the one, then you can change the one back into zero--return to the root and go back to the source. Once you return to the root and go back to the source, all trouble ends. But first you have to arrive at the one. Once you attain the one, you can give birth to heaven, nourish the earth, and aid all people. You bring all things in the universe to perfection. That's how wonderful it is.

ALSO: another part of the Sutra says, "WITHIN THE ONE, UNDERSTAND THE LIMITLESS; WITHIN THE LIMITLESS, UNDERSTAND THE ONE." Right within the one, you can understand the meaning of limitless meanings; and within the limitless, you can know the one. For example, Confucius' favorite disciple Yan Ywan "heard one and understood ten." Dz Gung, another disciple, "heard one and understood two." When Dz Gung heard his teacher expound one principle, he would understand another principle besides that one all by himself. For example, if Confucius talked about "yin," then Dz Gung would by deduction understand "yang." As for Yan Ywan, when Confucius would explain one principle --like here we are discussing the principle of one--Yan Ywan would immediately understand two, three, four, five, all the way up to ten "ones." That's an illustration of the Sutra passage: "within the one understand the limitless; within the limitless, understand the one."

Basically, there isn't very much to talk about, but because people have run far away, you have to talk about a lot of extraneous things in order to bring them to a slight awakening. Thus, we talk about how one door divides into ten doors, how ten doors return to one door, and how one door ultimately becomes no door. With no door, there's no way to enter--which is another way of describing the problem of those who have not yet understood. Despite this whole explanation, such people can't figure out what's being discussed. It's too many numbers for them to count. "How much?" they ask and answer themselves, "I don't know." However, KNOWING THAT THEY HAVE MUTUAL PRODUCTION AND ARISING, ONE ACCOMPLISHES FEARLESSNESS. Why are some beings fearless? It is because they have attained the one; that makes them intrepid. ALL OF THESE HAVE THE SAME MEANING. THIS CONCLUDES THE DOOR OF THE INTERCAUSALITY OF ARISING FROM CONDITIONS. The principles spoken of all return to the same teaching. Now this section on "inter-causality" has come to a close.

Translated by Bhikshuni Heng Tao, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Bhikshuni Heng Chr, Ph.D.

Edited by Upasika Susan Rounds, Ph.D.

