

Shastra on the Understanding of the Hundred Dharmas

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with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua*

TEXT:

WHAT ARE ALL DHARMAS, AND WHAT IS MEANT BY HAVING NO SELF? ALL DHARMAS MAY BE GENERALLY GROUPED INTO FIVE CATEGORIES:

WHAT ARE ALL DHARMAS, AND WHAT IS MEANT BY HAVING NO SELF? Now Heavenly Relative Bodhisattva will analyze the Buddha's words. ALL DHARMAS MAY BE GENERALLY GROUPED INTO FIVE CATEGORIES: This is looking at them from a broad and comprehensive viewpoint. What are the Five Categories?

TEXT:

ONE, MIND DHARMAS,

COMMENTARY:

The first, ONE, MIND DHARMAS, means dharmas of the Mind King. The mind is called the King because each and every dharma is established based upon the mind. If there were no mind dharmas, then no dharmas would exist at all.

It is said:

The Buddha spoke all dharmas due to the minds of all living beings.
If it weren't for all those minds, of what use would all dharmas be?

There are Eight Mind-King Dharmas, but we won't talk about them yet because they will be discussed later.

TEXT:

TWO, DHARMAS INTERACTIVE WITH THE MIND.

COMMENTARY:

There are two ways to interpret number TWO, DHARMAS INTERACTIVE WITH THE MIND. On the one hand

they are "dharmas belonging to the mind," and on the other, they are "servants of the minds." They work for the mind. The mind is the King and the Dharmas Interactive with the Mind are its servants. But they are also like great ministers. A king does not enact his own orders. He uses those who interact with him to implement his commands. That is how these dharmas function in relation to the mind--they carry out the commands of the Mind King. They are also known as "enumerations of the mind," because they have a fixed number--there are fifty one of them. Since they arise from the mind, they are of the same family as the mind--they belong to the mind.

TEXT:

THREE, FORM DHARMAS,

COMMENTARY:

THREE, FORM DHARMAS, is the third category. Anything that has form and shape, that has a substantial aspect to it, is known as a Form Dharma. This does not just refer to color but also to their tangible form--their solid aspect. There are eleven Form Dharmas. They, too, will be discussed later on.

TEXT:

FOUR, DHARMAS NOT INTERACTIVE WITH THE MIND.

COMMENTARY:

Category FOUR, DHARMAS NOT INTERACTIVE WITH THE MIND, are those that do not interact, do not work together with the dharmas of any of the other categories. These kinds of dharmas are produced from the mind, and also have shape and some other representative aspect to them. There are twenty four such dharmas.

TEXT:

FIVE, UNCONDITIONED DHARMAS,

COMMENTARY:

The previous four categories were all conditioned dharmas. This final category, number FIVE, is that of UNCONDITIONED DHARMAS. These are used in cultivation of the world-transcending Great Vehicle. The states they represent can be certified to if one cultivates transcendental dharmas.

We haven't said anything in detail about the five categories of dharmas, because they'll all be discussed in detail later when we come to them in the text.

To review, the first four categories are conditioned dharmas and the fifth is unconditioned dharmas. If one only knows about the first four kinds, then one is an ordinary person or an externalist. If one knows the dharmas of the last category--the unconditioned dharmas--then one resides in the one-sided emptiness of the Small Vehicle, which has not reached the state of the Great Vehicle. What is the state of the Great Vehicle?

Right in the midst of the conditioned is the unconditioned.

It's right within conditioned dharmas that one sees unconditioned dharmas. It isn't that one leaves conditioned dharmas behind and finds other dharmas that are unconditioned. Rather, whether it's the conditioned or the unconditioned turns on just a single thought. If one can understand the unconditioned while in the midst of the conditioned, that is what is meant by being in the world while transcending the world. When one is like this, then while in the world one does not fight, is not greedy, has no impeding obstructions, and is free and at ease. One exists in a state of interpenetration and it is extremely blissful. To be right in the world and yet transcend the world is the state of a Great Vehicle Bodhisattva. If at that point one can progress further and use the principle of no self to cultivate courageously and vigorously, then one can obtain the fruition of Wonderful Enlightenment. That is an overall view of the five categories of dharmas.

TEXT:

THEY ARE IN THIS SEQUENCE BECAUSE THE FIRST ARE SUPREME, THE SECOND INTERACT WITH THE FIRST, THE THIRD ARE THE SHADOWS MANIFEST BY THE PREVIOUS TWO, THE FOURTH ARE THE POSITIONS IN WHICH THE PREVIOUS THREE ARE NOT FOUND, AND THE LAST ARE REVEALED BY THE PREVIOUS FOUR.

COMMENTARY:

THE FIRST refers to the mind dharmas. They ARE SUPREME over all else, because the mind is King and all dharmas arise from it. THE SECOND INTERACT WITH THE FIRST. The second category is dharmas interactive with the mind. They obey the orders of the Mind King. THE THIRD ARE THE SHADOWS MANIFEST BY THE PREVIOUS TWO. Form dharmas are the third category. The way that form dharmas come into being is from the shadows cast by the mind dharmas and the dharmas interactive with the mind. Therefore, form dharmas belong to the Marks Division of the Eighth Consciousness.

TWO DIVISIONS OF THE EIGHTH CONSCIOUSNESS

1. Seeing Division
2. Marks Division

The Marks Division basically has no nature of its own. We see all sorts of things as having shape or form, marks, characteristics, but basically they don't exist at all. It's just that the Eighth Consciousness makes these appear.

THE FOURTH ARE THE POSITIONS IN WHICH THE PREVIOUS THREE ARE NOT FOUND. The fourth category is Dharmas Not Interactive with the Mind. They are separate from Mind Dharmas, Dharmas Interactive with the Mind, and Form Dharmas.

THE LAST ARE REVEALED BY THE PREVIOUS FOUR. Those in the fifth category--Unconditioned Dharmas--are extremely profound. There is no way one could understand them. But in order to attempt to

understand them, one must make use of the Conditioned Dharmas. The Unconditioned Dharmas are revealed by the Conditioned Dharmas.

THEY ARE IN THIS SEQUENCE. They go from Mind Dharmas to Dharmas Interactive with the mind to Form Dharmas to Dharmas Not interactive with the Mind to Unconditioned Dharmas. They appear in that order BECAUSE of the reason just given.

*translated and reviewed by members of the Buddhist Text Translation Society
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