

# *Prologue to the Flower Adornment Sutra*

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*with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua*

## *The Fourth Door: The Potentials Covered by the Teaching*

*continued from issue #182*

Now we're talking about the Five Teachings:

### The Five Teachings

1. The Small Teaching.
2. The Initial Teaching.
3. The Final Teaching.
4. The Separate Teaching.
5. The Perfect Teaching.

The first four Teachings constitute the causal ground, the position of study, while only the fifth, the Perfect Teaching, represents the ground of the fruition, the position of certification to the Way. This is another way of describing how Bodhisattvas of the Provisional Teaching are led to take refuge with the Actual Teaching.

This also refers to beings who comprise an assembly of influence. Such beings all understand the Buddhadharma, but act as if they don't. They always listen to Sutras and study the Dharma, to influence those who haven't listened to Sutras or studied the Buddhadharma to do so.

### D. THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS PROVISIONALLY INTENDED

#### PROLOGUE:

THE FOURTH ARE THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS PROVISIONALLY SPOKEN. SINCE THOSE OF THE TWO VEHICLES DO NOT EVEN HEAR IT, HOW MUCH THE LESS DO THEY RECEIVE AND MAINTAIN. THEREFORE MANY BODHISATTVAS PROVISIONALLY MANIFEST AS SOUND HEARERS. THEY MAY DWELL WITHIN THE DHARMA ASSEMBLY AS IF BLIND AND DEAF WITH THEIR SHARE APPARENTLY CUT OFF, OR ELSE THEY MAY APPEAR IN ORDER TO REVEAL ENLIGHTENMENT WITHIN THE WAY SO THAT OTHERS MAY KNOW THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO TURN ONE'S MIND AROUND.

#### COMMENTARY:

THE FOURTH category of beings for whom this Sutra is intended includes THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS PROVISIONALLY SPOKEN. This refers to bestowing the provisional for the sake of the actual. This can be said to refer both to those Bodhisattvas of the Actual Teaching who manifest provisionally, and to the Bodhisattvas of the Provisional Teaching for whom the Great Bodhisattvas manifest. Both are a part of the Provisional Teaching. The great Bodhisattvas are not really of the Provisional Teaching, but deliberately appear to be and so are included within this category.

THOSE OF THE TWO VEHICLES, Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened by Conditions, DO NOT have a share in the Dharma of the *Flower Adornment Sutra*.

Although they have eyes, they do not see Nishyanda Buddha;  
Although they have ears, they do not hear the Perfect, Sudden Teaching.

Since they do not EVEN HEAR the *Flower Adornment Sutra*, HOW MUCH THE LESS DO THEY RECEIVE this Dharma and MAINTAIN it by cultivating in accord with it? How can you get them to cultivate this Dharma when they don't even understand it?

And yet the Buddhas of the ten directions are compassionate, and they THEREFORE have MANY BODHISATTVAS of the Actual Teaching PROVISIONALLY MANIFEST AS having the bodies of SOUND HEARERS. Yet even though they appear to be Sound Hearers and to look like bhikshus on the outside, inside they cultivate the conduct of Bodhisattvas. THEY MAY DWELL as Sound Hearers who appear AS IF BLIND AND DEAF, unable to see, hear, or understand that kind of Dharma WITHIN THE DHARMA ASSEMBLY. They do this even though they basically do understand it very well. To the average person looking at them, they would seem to be people WITH THEIR SHARE in Great Vehicle Buddhadharma CUT OFF, who don't have any affinities with the Great Vehicle Dharma. OR ELSE THEY MAY APPEAR IN ORDER TO REVEAL ENLIGHTENMENT WITHIN THE WAY. To start with they may not seem to have a share, but then they open enlightenment in the course of cultivating the Way. They do that SO THAT OTHERS, the Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened to Conditions, MAY KNOW THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO TURN ONE'S MIND AROUND, turn away from the small, go towards the great, and bring forth the great resolve of a Bodhisattva.

#### E. THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS REMOTELY INTENDED

##### PROLOGUE:

THE FIFTH ARE THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS REMOTELY INTENDED: ALL COMMON PEOPLE, EXTERNALISTS, AND ICCHANTIKAS HAVE THE BUDDHA NATURE. ALTHOUGH FOR NOW THEY DO NOT BELIEVE, LATER THEY WILL CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO ENTER. THEREFORE, THE CHAPTER ON APPEARANCES SAYS: "ALTHOUGH THE GREAT MEDICINAL TREE OF THE THUS COME ONE'S WISDOM HAS TWO PLACES WHERE IT CANNOT GROW AND BRING BENEFIT, NAMELY THOSE OF THE TWO VEHICLES WHO FALL INTO THE PIT OF THE UNCONDITIONED, AND THOSE LIVING BEINGS WHO ARE NOT VESSELS BECAUSE THEY HAVE DESTROYED THEIR GOOD ROOTS AND ARE DROWNING IN THE WATER OF THE GREAT DEVIANT VIEWS OF GREED AND LOVE; NONETHELESS, THEY ARE NOT FORSAKEN."

THE FIRST THREE ARE NOT VESSELS BECAUSE THEY ARE DROWNING IN DEVIANT VIEWS; THE FOURTH ARE NOT VESSELS BECAUSE THEY HAVE FALLEN INTO THE DEEP PIT. THAT IS WHY THEY WERE ALL PREVIOUSLY CATEGORIZED AS SUCH. BUT NOW, THE FOURTH AND FIFTH OF THIS GROUP MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE BUDDHAS DO NOT FORSAKE THEM, BUT GUIDE THEM BY MANIFESTING SO THAT PERMEATION FORMS A SEED.

##### COMMENTARY:

THE FIFTH category of those for whom this Sutra is intended are THOSE FOR WHOM IT IS REMOTELY INTENDED, which shows how the Buddhas do not abandon any living beings, even though it may take infinite aeons to save them. ALL ordinary COMMON PEOPLE, EXTERNALISTS, AND ICCHANTIKAS--beings who are deficient in faith--are included in this category. All beings whatsoever HAVE THE BUDDHA NATURE, even the icchantikas, and are capable of becoming Buddhas. ALTHOUGH FOR NOW THEY DO NOT BELIEVE, it is a temporary state of affairs, and when they do bring forth faith, they will accomplish Buddhahood. It will be in the remote future, but at that LATER date THEY WILL CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO ENTER into the Great Vehicle, the Buddha Vehicle.

In THE CHAPTER ON APPEARANCES, there is a section of Sutra text about this which says: "ALTHOUGH THE Thus Come One's wisdom can save any living being; just as a GREAT MEDICINAL TREE can cure any illness with its death-preventing medicine, still the great medicinal tree OF THE THUS COME ONE'S WISDOM HAS TWO kinds of living beings it cannot help, just as that tree HAS TWO PLACES WHERE IT CANNOT GROW AND BRING BENEFIT.

Those two kinds of living beings are, first, the people of the Two Vehicles, Sound Hearers and Those Enlightened by Conditions, who stop half-way down the road. They set themselves limits part-way to their destination, declare themselves unable to advance any further, and stop right there. They have more wisdom than the ordinary people behind them, but on the other hand they are not progressing to Buddhahood that lies ahead of them and their wisdom is not ultimate. That is how they FALL INTO THE PIT OF THE UNCONDITIONED. They become self-ending Arhats who don't propagate the Buddhadharma to teach and transform living beings. They just save themselves and land in that pit of not doing anything at all.

THOSE LIVING BEINGS of the second kind which the Buddha's wisdom cannot save are those WHO ARE NOT VESSELS BECAUSE THEY HAVE DESTROYED THEIR GOOD ROOTS instead of planting more, AND ARE DROWNING IN THE WATER OF the GREAT DEVIANT VIEWS OF GREED AND LOVE. Deviant views of greed and love are like water that drowns living beings because they prevent them from opening enlightenment. Greed refers to desire for wealth, sex, fame, and profit. Love refers to the lust and emotional bonds between men and women. The water of greed and love is so devastating that it drowns people and they die in it. People who don't understand the Buddhadharma would rather die than give up greed and love.

Even though people of the Two Vehicles have fallen into the pit of the unconditioned, and the other living beings have destroyed their good roots and are drowning in deviant views, NONETHELESS, THEY ARE NEVER FORSAKEN by the Buddhas. The Buddhas are so kind and compassionate that no matter how terrible living beings are, no matter how they disobey, the Buddhas still want to rescue and teach them. That's how Buddhas differ from ordinary living beings.

THE FIRST THREE categories of those who ARE NOT VESSELS because they lack faith, go against the true, and pervert the real. They are ordinary people and externalists who ARE NOT VESSELS BECAUSE THEY HAVE FALLEN INTO THE DEEP PIT of the unconditioned. They are those of the Two Vehicles. THAT IS WHY THEY WERE ALL PREVIOUSLY CATEGORIZED AS SUCH.

BUT NOW, THE FOURTH category, those of the Two Vehicles, AND THE FIFTH category, those who cling to the provisional, OF THIS GROUP MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE BUDDHAS DO NOT become disgusted with living beings who disobey, and they do not FORSAKE THEM. BUT instead they make appear the Provisional Teaching to GUIDE THEM. They entice them in the same way the Buddha rescued

a child by using only his empty fist.

The infant was crawling towards a well and would have fallen in, but the Buddha said, "I have candy in my fist. If you come over here, I'll give you some candy." That aroused the child's interest, and so it turned back from the well and was saved.

BY MANIFESTING for those who are not vessels, the Buddhas enable those living beings to hear the Great Vehicle Dharma so that PERMEATION FORMS an everlasting SEED of the Way FOR THEM.

The five categories of those for whom the Great Vehicle Teaching is spoken turn out to be precisely the previous five categories who were not vessels. It is just like a person's hand: on one side is the back of the hand, and on the other side is the palm. One is the yin side and the other is the yang side. If you go off in one direction, you become someone who is not a vessel; but if you are able to return, you become a vessel. That means any kind of person can cultivate the Way, provided you can correct what is wrong and become a new person.

A good person and a bad person are not two different kinds of people, they just have two different names, depending on whether they continually do good or continually do bad. In the same way, there are ten categories, and the ten are made up of five kinds who are not vessels but who can become five kinds of vessels, provided they change. If you trace good and bad back to their root and fundamental source, they turn out to be one.

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