

Prologue to the Flower Adornment Sutra

by Tang dynasty National Master Ching Lyang

with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

The Fifth Door: The Progressive Depth of the Substance of the Teaching

continued from Issue #190

PROLOGUE:

THE SECOND APPROACH, THAT OF SPEAKING AND LISTENING ENTIRELY GATHERED BACK IN, IS SUBSUMED UNDER TWO SETS OF FOUR PROPOSITIONS. FIRST, IN TERMS OF THE CONNECTIVE TEACHING, THERE COME TO BE FOUR PROPOSITIONS. THAT IS: ONE, THERE ARE NO LIVING BEINGS SEPARATE FROM THE TRUE MIND OF THE BUDDHA, SINCE THE TRUE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS IS ITSELF THE TRUE MIND OF THE BUDDHA. IN THAT CASE, THERE IS ONLY SPEAKING AND NO LISTENING, AND SO THE TEACHINGS SPOKEN ARE ONLY MANIFESTATIONS OF THE BUDDHA.

COMMENTARY:

THE SECOND APPROACH,* THAT OF SPEAKING AND LISTENING ENTIRELY GATHERED BACK IN, IS SUBSUMED UNDER TWO SETS OF FOUR PROPOSITIONS. The Buddha does the speaking, and living beings do the listening. Here there is speaking and yet no speaking, listening and yet no listening. Both are taken back in. This is expressed in two versions of the four propositions.

The FIRST set is that IN TERMS OF THE CONNECTIVE TEACHING, which was discussed before, THERE COME TO BE FOUR PROPOSITIONS. That is, ONE, the first proposition, maintains that THERE ARE NO LIVING BEINGS SEPARATE FROM THE TRUE MIND OF THE BUDDHA, SINCE THE TRUE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS IS ITSELF THE TRUE MIND OF THE BUDDHA. That is because the Buddha and living beings are not separate from each other. IN THAT CASE, THERE IS ONLY SPEAKING AND NO LISTENING. The Buddha speaks the Dharma, and no one listens, AND SO THE TEACHINGS SPOKEN ARE ONLY MANIFESTATIONS on the part OF THE BUDDHA himself.

* The first approach was introduced in Vajra Bodhi Sea #190.

PROLOGUE:

TWO, THERE IS NO BUDDHA SEPARATE FROM THE TRUE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS, SINCE THE TRUE MIND OF THE BUDDHA IS ITSELF THE TRUE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS. IN THAT CASE, THERE IS ONLY LISTENING AND NO SPEAKING,

AND SO THE TEACHINGS SPOKEN ARE ONLY MANIFESTATIONS OF LIVING BEINGS THEMSELVES. THE "BRAHMA CONDUCT CHAPTER" SAYS: "KNOW THAT ALL DHARMAS ARE THE VERY NATURE OF THE MIND," AND SO FORTH. THREE, WHEN THE BUDDHA'S TRUE MIND MANIFESTS, IT DOES NOT PREVENT THE TRUE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS FROM MANIFESTING. THEREFORE, SPEAKING AND LISTENING CO-EXIST, AND THOSE TWO ASPECTS OF THE TEACHING ARE ESTABLISHED ON AN EQUAL BASIS.

COMMENTARY:

TWO, the second proposition, maintains that THERE IS NO BUDDHA SEPARATE FROM THE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS.

The Buddha, the mind, and living beings--
Those three do not differ from each other.

That is why it is said that outside the mind of living beings there isn't any other Buddha, SINCE THE TRUE MIND OF THE BUDDHA IS ITSELF THE TRUE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS. IN THAT CASE, THERE IS ONLY LISTENING on the part of living beings, AND NO SPEAKING on the part of the Buddha. Living beings speak the Dharma they hear--that Dharma is not spoken by the Buddha. AND SO THE TEACHINGS SPOKEN ARE ONLY MANIFESTATIONS OF LIVING BEINGS THEMSELVES. Although the Buddha speaks the Dharma of those Teachings, it appears from the true mind of living beings themselves. Therefore, THE "BRAHMA CONDUCT CHAPTER" SAYS: "KNOW THAT ALL DHARMAS ARE THE VERY NATURE OF THE MIND," AND SO FORTH. One should understand that no dharmas are separate from the nature of the mind of living beings. Apart from living beings' mind's nature, there is no Dharma that can be spoken.

THREE, the third proposition, maintains that WHEN THE BUDDHA'S TRUE MIND MANIFESTS, IT DOES NOT PREVENT THE TRUE MIND OF LIVING BEINGS FROM MANIFESTING. One might expect that when the Buddha's true mind manifests, the true mind of living beings wouldn't manifest, but that isn't the case. It doesn't keep the true mind of living beings from appearing, and so they both appear at the same time--simultaneous and unobstructed. THEREFORE, SPEAKING AND LISTENING CO-EXIST. Both speaking Dharma and listening to Dharma are retained, AND THOSE TWO ASPECTS OF THE TEACHING ARE ESTABLISHED ON AN EQUAL BASIS.

PROLOGUE:

FOUR, SINCE THE BUDDHA IS IDENTICAL WITH LIVING BEINGS, THERE IS NO BUDDHA; AND SINCE LIVING BEINGS ARE IDENTICAL WITH THE BUDDHA, THERE ARE NO LIVING BEINGS. THEY ABROGATE EACH OTHER SO BOTH DISAPPEAR, AND SO SPEAKING AND LISTENING SEEM TO BE STILLED. THEREFORE, THE *VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA* SAYS: "ON THE PART OF THE SPEAKER OF DHARMA, THERE IS NO SPEAKING AND NO DISCLOSING; AND ON THE PART OF

THE LISTENERS TO DHARMA, THERE IS NOTHING HEARD AND NOTHING OBTAINED."

COMMENTARY:

So far there have been three propositions in terms of the Connective Teaching.

- 1) There is only speaking and no listening. (= only speaking)
- 2) There is only listening and no speaking. (= only listening)
- 3) Speaking and listening co-exist.(= both speaking and listening)

Now, FOUR, the fourth proposition, maintains that

- 4) Speaking and listening seem to be stilled. (= neither speaking nor listening)

SINCE THE BUDDHA IS IDENTICAL WITH LIVING BEINGS, THERE IS NO BUDDHA. Because the Buddha is living beings, it's possible not to call him the Buddha. AND SINCE LIVING BEINGS ARE IDENTICAL WITH THE BUDDHA, THERE ARE NO LIVING BEINGS. Living beings are the Buddha, and so there aren't any living beings either. THEY ABROGATE EACH OTHER SO BOTH DISAPPEAR. If for you a Buddha exists, then you have an attachment to there being a Buddha; and if for you living beings exist, then you have an attachment to there being living beings. Now both the Buddha and living beings are made empty, AND SO SPEAKING AND LISTENING SEEM TO BE STILLED. There is neither speaking nor listening. Both are gone. THEREFORE, THE *VIMALAKIRTI SUTRA*, concerning the question of speaking Dharma, SAYS: "ON THE PART OF THE SPEAKER OF DHARMA, THERE IS NO SPEAKING AND NO DISCLOSING." The person who speaks Dharma doesn't say anything and doesn't point anything out to anyone. "AND ON THE PART OF THE LISTENERS TO DHARMA, THERE IS NOTHING HEARD AND NOTHING OBTAINED." For there to be nothing heard and nothing obtained is true Prajna.

translated by member of the Buddhist Text Translation Society