

Shastra on the Understanding of the Hundred Dharmas

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with commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

continued from Issue #191

5. THE NO-THOUGHT SAMADHI. This is a samadhi cultivated by those of externalist ways. What they do is suppress coming into being and ceasing to be. They use a kind of force to prevent the mind and that which is interactive with the mind from working. They bring the operation of the mind and the dharmas interactive with the mind to a stop so that there is no actual thinking taking place. But it is really a forced situation. It's much like putting a heavy rock on crab grass in the attempt to prevent the grass from growing. You can press the grass down that way so it won't grow up, but its roots will remain. Likewise, those in this samadhi are still not free of their seventh consciousness and one of its two innate attachments.

The Two Innate Attachments of the Seventh Consciousness

- 1) the innate attachment to self;
- 2) the innate attachment to dharmas.

In this samdhi, one is not free of the attachment to self.

6. THE SAMADHI OF EXTINCTION. This is another dharma cultivated by those of externalist ways. Again, it is a case of using a kind of force as a means to arrive at extinction. Here the sixth consciousness and the Dharmas Interactive with the Mind cease to function, just as in the No Thought Samadhi described above. That means that one in this samadhi doesn't strike up false thoughts. Since false thinking is extinguished, it is called the "Samadhi of Extinction." However, the seventh consciousness, with its innate attachment to dharmas, has not ceased to function. In the No-thought Samadhi, the attachment is to self, which is the coarser of the two. Here, the attachment is a bit more subtle--the innate attachment to dharmas. The seventh consciousness and the eighth consciousness still mingle, and one is not yet free of them. And so, although this is called a "samadhi," it is not a real samadhi.

7. THE REWARD OF NO THOUGHT. This is different from the No-thought Samadhi. The No-thought Samadhi is a cause. The Reward of No Thought is an effect. The No-thought Samadhi is a state which can occur when one has not yet given up one's body. It means that one will be reborn in the Heaven of Neither Thought Nor Non-thought. In this Reward of No Thought, there remains a very subtle attachment to form that still exists in the eighth consciousness, and which one takes as one's life. This refers to an extremely subtle aspect of the Marks Division of the eighth consciousness. It causes a person to still feel that he has a life. But this

"life" still has an end to it and when that occurs the person can still fall. Remember I talked before about the cultivator who cultivated this Reward of No Thought? When he would sit by the sea in meditation, he was continually disturbed by a fish jumping in the water, until one day he gave rise to hate and got angry. He said, "I'm going to turn into a Kingfisher and get you, fish. I'm going to eat you up." When he relinquished his body, he was born in the Heaven of Neither Thought Nor Non-thought, obtaining his Reward of No Thought. But after his heavenly blessings were used up, he fell and became reborn as a kingfisher. That's why when I tell you that these two pigeons here used to be left-home people who didn't keep the precepts and so this is how they've ended up, you should understand it's the same principle.

8. BODIES OF NOUNS. "Nouns" are the names of people, places and things. Every human being is called a "person." That's a noun. They also each have their own individual names and those are all nouns. There is also the distinction of general and specific nouns that applies to material objects. For example, we can call this a "burner," or more specifically, an "incense burner". We can call this a "bottle," or more specifically, a "flower vase". When a general noun is used, it's simply called a noun. When a compound of nouns is used, it's referred to as a "body of nouns."

9. BODIES OF SENTENCES. Just as bodies of nouns are used to delineate dharmas, so, too, are "bodies of sentences" used to clarify dharmas.

All activities are impermanent,
Characterized by coming into being and ceasing to be.

That is a sentence. When combined with other sentences, it becomes part of a body of sentences. When groups of words are used to reveal dharmas, they are called bodies of sentences.

10. BODIES OF PHONEMES. Phonemes are sounds that carry meaning in a given language. In Chinese, each character has a single sound. When characters are combined in a meaningful way, then one obtains a "body of phonemes". The Sutras are all bodies of phonemes. All kinds of books, articles, treatises, and so forth, are bodies of phonemes.

11. BIRTH, and 12. DWELLING. Everything subject to birth will also dwell. Not only people and creatures, but things as well, are all subject to 13. AGING, and 14. IMPERMANENCE. "Birth" means that something which previously did not exist comes into being. "Aging" means that although something still exists, it is on the decline, decaying. Therefore, "aging" is also known as "changing". During the stage of "dwelling," one remains static, but when "aging" occurs, things become different. These four dharmas not interactive with the mind are synonymous with the cycle of coming into being, stasis, decay, and emptiness.

15. REVOLUTION, 16. DISTINCTION, and 17. INTERACTION are another interrelational group. "Revolution" is a translation from the Jungwen which literally means "turning and flowing," and refers to how we have, from beginningless time until the present, been turning on

the six-path wheel of rebirth. We have been flowing and turning in birth and death for myriads of kalpas without rest. This process never stops and so it's called "revolution" on the wheel.

"Distinction" means the "fixing of differences," and refers, for example, to the distinctions which occur in the process of cause and effect. Whatever kind of cause one plants will reap a corresponding result. But sometimes the same kinds of causes can lead to different effects. This aspect of the process is known as "distinction."

"Interaction" is the next dharma. Someone is wondering how since these twenty-four are called "Non-Interactive" there can be one among them called "interaction." That's a good question. It appears to be a contradiction, but actually it is not. Basically, these twenty-four dharmas are non-interactive with the dharmas of the other four general categories. They do not interact with the category which follows--Unconditioned Dharmas. But this dharma of "interaction" does interact with the dharmas within its own category--the Non-Interactive Activity Dharmas. The interaction is that involved with the cycle of cause and effect. The cause is the beginning of the cycle and the effect is the end result. Between the cause and the effect, there is the mark of karma, which interacts with both the cause and the effect. And so this cycle involves the "revolution," the "distinctions," and the "interaction". The "interaction" which occurs is decisive--just like a shadow that follows a shape. It's never off by the least bit.

18. SPEED. This refers to an extremely powerful forward momentum. It is found in a flash of lightning; the velocity of wind; the swiftness of a bird in flight; the quickness of a rabbit on the run. Those are all outward manifestations of speed.

19. SEQUENCE. This dharma is revealed in the marking of intervals such as years, months, days, and hours. The smallest interval of time is a kshana. The largest is a great kalpa. Time, too, is a dharma.

21. DIRECTION refers to location or placement. We distinguish direction by referring to things as being in front or behind, to the left or to the right, above or below, and so on, in relation to other things.

22. NUMERATION refers to numbering systems.

23. COMBINATION can be blending and uniting, as when milk is mixed with water to form a totality whose parts cannot be distinguished. Or it may be a fitting together, as of a pot with its lid.

24. DISCONTINUITY is the opposite of combination, in that it refers to spontaneity as opposed to causation. Externalists attach to the extreme of spontaneity, whereas those of the Two Vehicles attach to causation--the coming together of causes and conditions. But in the nature of the Treasury of the Thus Come One there is neither combination nor non-combination. There are neither causes and conditions nor spontaneity, that is neither the discontinuity or the combination dharmas mentioned here.

TEXT:

THE FIFTH IS THE UNCONDITIONED DHARMAS, OF WHICH THERE ARE, IN GENERAL, SIX: I. UNCONDITIONED EMPTY SPACE, II. UNCONDITIONED EXTINCTION WHICH IS ATTAINED BY SELECTION, III. UNCONDITIONED WHICH IS UNSELECTED, IV. UNCONDITIONED UNMOVING EXTINCTION, V. UNCONDITIONED EXTINCTION OF FEELING AND THINKING, VI. UNCONDITIONED TRUE SUCHNESS.

COMMENTARY:

V. THE FIFTH IS THE UNCONDITIONED DHARMAS OF WHICH THERE ARE, IN GENERAL, SIX.

The Six Unconditioned Dharmas

- 1) unconditioned empty space (虛空無為) *akasha*;
- 2) unconditioned extinction which is attained through selection (擇滅無) *pratisamkhyanirodha*
- 3) unconditioned extinction which is unselected (非擇滅無為) *apratisamkhyanirodha*;
- 4) unconditioned, unmoving extinction (不動滅無為) *aninjya*;
- 5) unconditioned extinction of feeling and thinking (想受滅無為) *samjnavedayitanirodha*;
- 6) unconditioned True Suchness (真如無為) *Tathata*.

1. UNCONDITIONED EMPTY SPACE. Empty space is basically unconditioned, so there is no need to describe it as unconditioned. But here the "unconditioned" refers to one's ability to contemplate empty space as unconditioned. It means to be able to "illumine and view the Five Skandhas all as empty." Then there is no mark of self, no mark of others, no mark of living beings, and no mark of a lifespan.

You may say, "Well, I cultivate and have a little skill. I always sleep sitting up and never lie down. I only eat one meal a day." But if you still know that you sleep sitting up and never lie down then you still haven't reached unconditioned empty space. If you still know that you eat only one meal a day then you still haven't reached unconditioned empty space. If you know that you cultivate, then you haven't reached unconditioned empty space. Because unconditioned empty space means that your self-nature is like empty space; your body is like empty space; what you contemplate and cultivate is like empty space—devoid of a mark of self, a mark of others, a mark of living beings, and a mark of a lifespan. When you reach that state, then if someone punched you, it would be as though they were punching empty space. Just think what it would be like to punch empty space. Empty space wouldn't put up any opposition at all. Empty space certainly wouldn't hit you back. If you can cultivate so that you get to be like empty space, then nothing will be able to bother you. That is the meaning of unconditioned empty space.

Unconditioned empty space is extremely wonderful. I always tell you this, but you never think it is very interesting because you hear it every day. What is it? It's just, "everything is okay." If you can really have it be that "everything's okay," then you are like empty space, because empty

space contains everything within it. Can you think of anything that is not in empty space? And there is nothing that empty space rejects. It never gets upset with you and says, "You, there, who are part of my empty space. You got it so dirty! How can you have gone to the toilet there and gotten my empty space so dirty?" It doesn't think that way. Pigeons, too, for their part, are always up in empty space flying around, and empty space doesn't get in their way at all.

If we were to really discuss unconditioned empty space in detail, there would be much to say. But you should always contemplate empty space, and then you'll become one who has no mark of others, no mark of living beings, and no mark of a lifespan.

Unite your virtue with heaven and earth.
Unite your light with the sun and moon.
Unite your order with that of the four seasons.
Unite your good and bad luck with the ghosts and spirits.

When you are like that, then however great the virtuous nature of heaven is, your virtuous nature is just that great. However great the virtuous nature of earth is, your virtuous nature is just as great. The light of the sun is really bright, but your light is just as bright as the sun's. The moon is also bright, but your light is as bright as the light of the moon. That's what's meant by uniting your light with the sun and the moon.

Spring, summer, fall, and winter are the four seasons. If you cultivate so that you are just like empty space, then when springtime comes, you have the same kind of representation of spring come to you. In the same way, you represent all the four seasons as they occur. In the spring the myriad things come into being. In the summer the myriad things increase and grow. In the fall the myriad things are harvested, and in the winter they are stored away. You can unite your order with that of the four seasons.

You can also know what the ghosts and spirits know. Take a look at that! Would you say that is wonderful or not? When you are about to reach unconditioned empty space, then you become one with the natural order of things.

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