

平等的真義

The True Principle of Equality

EXCERPT FROM THE COMMENTARY ON THE VAJRA SUTRA BY MASTER HSUAN HUA

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ENGLISH TRANSLATED BY EDITORIAL STAFF



「亦無人，亦無佛，大千沙界海中漚，一切聖賢如電拂。」
你若明白佛法了，什麼都沒有了；你有所執著，那你還沒
明白佛法呢！

“There are no people and no Buddhas. The great thousand
worlds are bubbles in the sea. All the worthy sages are like
flashes of lightning.” If you understand the Buddhadharma,
there is nothing to which you can become attached. If you
still have an attachment, you still have not understood the
Buddhadharma.

《金剛經》在前邊所講的空理——
這個般若真空的妙理——總起來有五
種的平等；現在把它來講一講。這五
種的平等：（一）生佛平等；生就是眾
生，佛就是十方諸佛。（二）空有平
等。（三）諸法平等。（四）一多平等。
（五）諸見平等。

這一部《金剛經》上所講的這般若
妙理，就是平等法門。這個平等法
門，我們一般人都弄不明白；所以就頭
上安頭（在頭上又安一個頭），相上取
相（本來已經有相了，還在這個相上又
加多一個相），把平等法就變成不平
等了。

（一）生佛平等。我以前在十六
歲那時候寫了一幅對聯。爲什麼寫這
對聯呢？就因爲看《六祖壇經》，越看
越歡喜看；越歡喜看，就越看。才十
六歲那時候，我那時候還沒出家呢！
做居士，因爲我十五歲才念書。

我現在告訴你們我以前的事情——
十五歲才唸書，十六歲就講經，我
認了幾個字就講幾個字的經。講什麼
經？就講《六祖壇經》，講《金剛經》。
給什麼人講呢？很奇怪的，是給一些
和尚講；我一個在家居士就給和尚講
經。爲什麼？這些和尚他們不認字，
想要學佛法也沒有地方學去。我一個
十六歲的，也不是大人也不是小孩子
了，認幾個字就給他們講經，講《金
剛經》，講《六祖壇經》，還有講《阿
彌陀經》；因爲我住在廟上，天天就
給他們講經。

講到《六祖壇經》「法無頓漸，迷
悟有遲疾」那個地方，我就想：「怎麼
還有頓、有漸？什麼叫頓？什麼叫漸
呢？頓漸是不是一樣的呢？或是兩樣的
呢？」然後我就寫了一幅對聯，這對聯
怎麼說的呢？

頓漸雖殊，成功則一，何分南北；
聖凡暫異，根性卻同，莫論東西。

上聯是「頓漸雖殊，成功則一，何分南北？」頓，是立刻成佛；漸，是慢慢成佛。這頓漸雖然是兩樣的，「成功則一」，等到成功的時候，頓而非頓，漸而非漸，頓漸都沒有了。你一成功了，也沒有頓，也沒有漸了；漸也不漸，頓也不頓了。「何分南北」，又何必分南分北呢？南方就是六祖惠能大師，北方就是神秀大師。

當時南方六祖的門人就說：「我們這兒才是真的呢！我們這兒才是道地的產品呢！」道地，就是最正確了，是真的了。南方六祖大師是講頓法，北方神秀大師講的是漸法。北方神秀大師的弟子就說：「我們師父跟著五祖多少個十年，五祖所有的心法都是傳給我們師父了。」兩方面的徒弟就爭，你說你是真的，他就說他是真的。

我現在告訴你們這個法，你們無論遇著任何人，不要幫你們師父來爭。不要說：「哦，我師父是中國來的，這是真正的佛法！」你只可以講：「我師父所講的都是虛妄不實的法，沒有法可講；也沒有真，也沒有假；也沒有是，也沒有非，不和人講是講非的。」要講這個，不要像當時六祖和神秀大師那些徒弟互相爭，你就批評我的師父不對，我就批評你的師父不對，所以就分出有個頓漸。

因為我看見《六祖壇經》，我就覺得頓漸這個說法很不平等的。怎麼又跑出來一個頓、一個漸？所以我說：「頓漸雖殊，成功則一」，成功的時候，也沒有頓，也沒有漸了。再者，那個「頓」從什麼地方來的？他現在雖然頓然開悟了，這是以前修過的，以前生生世世都在佛法裏頭薰修，時間太久了，所以到這時候，他結果了，所以你說他是頓。那個漸，他是漸漸地正在修呢！修成的時候，等他成功那一天，也就是頓了嘛！所以我才說，也沒有頓，也沒有漸。

The *Vajra Sutra* expresses *prajna*, the wonderful principle of true emptiness, and also expresses the dharma door of equality found within the wonderful principle of *prajna*. In general there are Five Aspects of Equality evident in the sutra.

1. The equality of living beings and Buddhas,
2. The equality of emptiness and existence,
3. The equality of all dharmas,
4. The equality of one and many,
5. The equality of all views.

Most people do not understand equality dharma doors, so they put a head on top of a head, add marks to marks, and change what is basically equal to what is unequal.

1. The equality of living beings and Buddhas. When I was sixteen I wrote a matched couplet upon reading the *Sixth Patriarch Sutra*. Having lectured to the place where the text says “Dharma is not sudden or gradual; confusion and enlightenment are slow and quick,” I thought, “How can there still be a sudden and a gradual?” What is sudden? What is gradual? Are sudden and gradual different? Are they two? So I wrote the following:

*Although sudden and gradual are different,
Upon completion they are one.*

Why make divisions of North and South?

Sage and common are parts of the One:

The basic nature is absolutely the same.

Do not discuss East and West.

“Although sudden and gradual are different, upon completion they are one.” Sudden refers to instantaneous realization of the Buddhahood; gradual refers to slow cultivation to the Buddhahood. Sudden and gradual are two distinct methods, but when one finishes the work, there is no sudden and no gradual in evidence. They no longer exist.

“Why make divisions of North and South?” The south refers to the Sixth

Patriarch, the Great Master Hui Neng, who taught the sudden teaching; north refers to the Great Master Shen Xiu who advocated gradual teaching. In the south the Sixth Patriarch’s disciples said, “We are the true, authentic Chan sect.” In the north, the disciples of Great Master Shen Xiu said, “Our Master was with the Fifth Patriarch for several decades. All the mind-dharma of the Fifth Patriarch has been transmitted to him.” Each of the following disciples argued that their master was authentic.

Let me make it clear at this point, no matter whom you meet, you should not try to assist your Master by pleading his case. Instead of asserting that your Master transmits the proper dharma, you may say, “Our Master is empty, false, and unreal. There is no dharma which can be spoken. There is no true, no false, no right, and no wrong. One should not speak of people’s good points or their faults.” That is what you should say. Do not be like the disciples of the Sixth Patriarch and the Great Master Shen Xiu who carried on a running battle in which they criticized one another’s teacher. Their quarrel grew until it became the divisions into sudden and gradual teachings, North and South.

When I read the *Sixth Patriarch Sutra*, I thought that the reference to sudden and gradual lacked equality, so I wrote the line, “Although sudden and gradual are different, upon completion they are one.” What is the origin of sudden? Although one suddenly attains enlightenment, one cultivates life after life for a long time within the Buddhahood prior to that enlightenment. When one reaps the fruit of that long process of cultivation, that is called sudden. Gradual refers to the long process of cultivation, but the day the cultivation is complete, there is sudden enlightenment. For that reason I say there is no sudden or gradual.

“Why make divisions of North and

「何分南北」，你何必又分南分北，又有地方的這種區別呢？你說南，哪個是南？你說這個地方是南，你到它的南邊，這個地方又變成北了。《楞嚴經》上說這個中，「東看則西，南觀成北」，哪個是個中？這南北也是；你說這兒是北，你到它的北邊，這個北又變成南了，所以也沒有南北。你何必分別這麼多，有這麼多的分別心呢？

下聯是「聖凡暫異，根性卻同，莫論東西。」聖，就是佛，這叫聖人；凡，就是眾生。聖凡這是暫時間兩樣的，「根性卻同」，根本那個性都是佛性；佛也是佛性成的，眾生也是佛性成的。「莫論東西」，你不要論說西方阿彌陀佛是佛，東方這一切眾生是眾生，不要這麼多分別心。所以《永嘉證道歌》上說：「亦無人，亦無佛，大千沙界海中漚，一切聖賢如電拂。」你若明白法了，什麼都沒有了；你有所執著，那你還沒明白佛法呢！明白佛法，就沒有可執著的事情；所以就莫論東西，不要講這些個問題了。

怎麼跑出來這麼多問題？這一些個問題從什麼地方來的？這都是和那個演若達多是一樣的，怖頭狂走啊！本來他頭沒有丟，他說他頭丟了。我們這一些個人找佛法，你到什麼地方找去？你轉身就是佛法；只要你轉過身來，所謂「轉過身就是覺悟」。你覺悟了，就是佛法；你不覺悟，那就是沒有明白佛法。沒覺悟也是佛法，不過你沒有明白而已；不能說沒有覺悟就不是佛法，覺悟和不覺悟都是佛法。

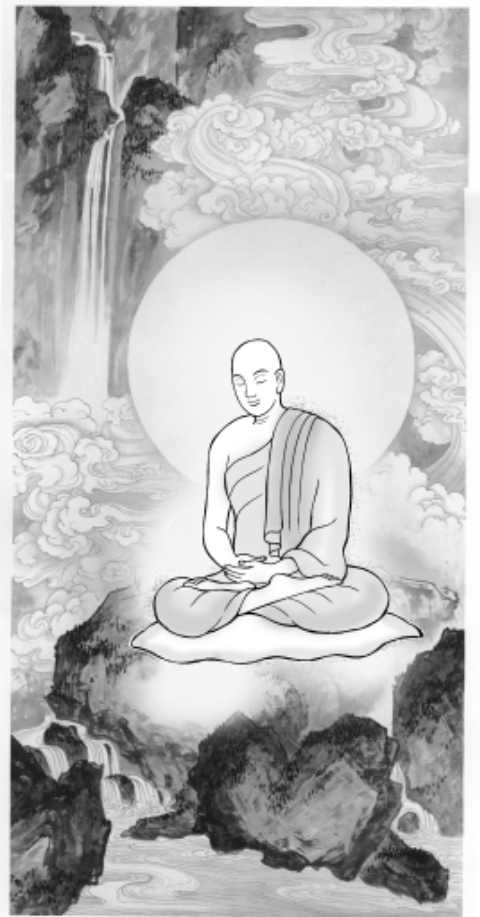
方才說「生佛平等」，這個眾生怎麼做的眾生？眾生是從佛示現出來做眾生，怎麼樣又成了佛？是這個眾生返本還原就成佛了。這叫聖凡不二，也就是生佛平等；生佛平等，就

是聖凡不二。你暫時在眾生的這種分別心上說；「哦！這是眾生，那個是佛。」你若沒有分別心了，就生佛平等了。

(二)空有平等。什麼是空？《六祖壇經》上說：「問空以有對。」什麼是空？有就是空。什麼是有？空就是有。說：「這才糊塗呢！講的空，怎麼又變成有了？有，又變成空了？」也不知道是你糊塗？是我糊塗？是他糊塗？你要是不糊塗，你就會覺得空有平等了；就因為你糊塗，所以你覺得這空有就是空有。空，本來就是有；有，本來也就是空。你能體驗得到空有不二，空有平等，也不執斷了，也不執常了——你執斷，就是落於空了；執常，就是落於有了。所以，空有不二，空有平等，這才是中道。真空不礙妙有，妙有也不礙真空；真空也就是妙有，妙有也就是真空。你想知道這個空怎麼是個空？那空是由有而顯空；怎麼叫個有？那個有是由空而顯有。沒有空，也沒有有；沒有有，怎麼會有個空？所以這空有是不二的；空有不二，就是空有平等。

(三)諸法平等。《金剛經》說：「是法平等，無有高下，是名阿耨多羅三藐三菩提。」這是諸法平等，所以如來無去無來，也沒有去，也沒有來，「無所從來，亦無所從去」，這是諸法平等。

(四)一多平等。一也就是多，多也就是一。這一粒微塵就是三千大千世界，三千大千世界也就是一粒微塵，沒有甚麼分別的。愚癡的眾生在分別：「哦，這是多，那是少！」哪個是多？哪個是少？多是從少這兒來的，少是從多這兒來的，這叫一多平等。一多平等，也就是所謂微塵世界——世界也就是微塵，微塵也就是世界。



(五)諸見平等。什麼叫我見、人見、眾生見、壽者見？沒有的，這就是諸見平等了。你對症下藥，你用這個藥來治這個病；病沒有了，怎麼會又用這個藥做什麼呢？所以這病沒有了，藥也不要了，不需要再吃藥了。因為你有病，所以要吃藥；你那病沒有了，你還吃藥幹什麼？吃藥反而又多了病。藥是治病的，沒有病你吃藥；藥吃多了，一樣又會生病了。所以這叫諸見平等。

這五種的意思，是《金剛經》的全部經文的意思。在這《金剛經》還要有一個「信」字。這般若是個空理，你要信；你若不相信這種空理，講多少也沒有用的。你要信，佛法好像大海水似的，唯信可入；你有一個信心，就可以到這佛法的大海裏邊。

South” How much the less are there distinctions like locations. What is south? You may call a certain location south, but if you go south of it, it becomes north. In the *Shurangama Sutra* there is a discussion of the middle, “when looked at from the east, it is west, and when seen from the south it is north.” South and north are also like that. There actually is no north or south, so why make such distinctions in your mind?

“Sage and common are parts of the One.” Sage refers to the Buddha; common refers to living beings. The world is divided into these two types, but “the basic nature is absolutely the same.” Buddhahood is the realization of the Buddha-nature. Living beings can also realize their Buddha-nature.

“Do not discuss East and West.” Do not say that in the west, Amitabha is a Buddha, and in the east all creatures are just living beings. Do not make such distinctions in your mind. Great Master Yong Jia’s *Song of Enlightenment* says, “There are no people and no Buddhas. The great thousand worlds are bubbles in the sea. All the worthy sages are like flashes of lightning.” If you understand the Buddhadharmas, there is nothing to which you can become attached. If you still have an attachment, you still have not yet understood the Buddhadharmas.

“Do not discuss East and West.” Why devise so many questions? Where did all the questions come from anyway? Such questions remind one of Yajnadatta who looked in the mirror one morning and saw that the person reflected had a head, whereupon he realized he had never seen his own head, and concluded that it was lost. The thought drove him insane, and he ran around madly looking for his head. Actually his head was not lost. He himself had jumped to that conclusion. People who become attached to the Buddhadharmas are the same way. They

become involved in a search for the Buddhadharmas. How do you really find the Buddhadharmas? Turn yourself around; that is the Buddhadharmas. To turn yourself around means to wake up. Wake up! That is the Buddhadharmas. If you have not awakened, you are still within the Buddhadharmas, but you do not understand that you are.

To continue the discussion of the equality of living beings and the Buddha, living beings are manifestations that originally came from Buddhas. For living beings to become Buddhas, they need only return to the origin and realize Buddhahood. Therefore it says that, “Sage and common are parts of the One. The basic nature is absolutely the same.”

2. The equality of emptiness and existence. The *Sixth Patriarch Sutra* says, “When asked about emptiness, answer with existence.”

What is emptiness?

Emptiness is existence.

What is existence?

Existence is emptiness.

“How can you say emptiness is existence and existence is emptiness? That is too confusing,” you may say.

Is it the principle that is confusing, or is it you, or I? When you are confused you think that emptiness is emptiness and existence is existence. When the confusion is cleared, you know that emptiness and existence are equal. Do not attach to either annihilationism or eternalism. The equality and nonduality of emptiness and existence is called the Middle Way. Here true emptiness does not obstruct wonderful existence and wonderful existence does not obstruct true emptiness. True emptiness *is* wonderful existence; wonderful existence *is* true emptiness. When there is existence, then emptiness manifests; when there is emptiness, then existence is apparent. There is no emptiness, and there is no existence. They are not two. The

nonduality of emptiness and existence is the equality of emptiness and existence.

3. The equality of all dharmas. The *Vajra Sutra* says, “This dharma is level and equal without high or low, therefore it is called *anuttarasamyak-sambodhi*.” That is the equality of the dharma. “The Tathagata neither comes nor goes.” That is the equality of the dharma.

4. The equality of one and many. One is many and many is one. A mote of dust is the three thousand great thousand world system and the three thousand great thousand world system is one mote of dust. There is no distinction. It is only ignorant living beings who make discriminations saying, “Oh, this is a lot and that is a little.” Which is many and which is a little? Many comes from a little and a little comes from many. This is called the equality of one and many.

The equality of one and many is also the dust mote of the world system -- the world system is contained in a dust mote and a dust mote is also the world system.

5. The equality of all views. What is the view of self, the view of others, the view of living beings, and the view of a life? There is none. That is the equality of all views. Medicine is prescribed according to the sickness, but once cured, you no longer take the medicine. If you remain on medication after the illness had been cured, further illness will result. That is the equality of all views.

Those five aspects express the essence of the entire *Vajra Sutra*, but to understand *prajna*, the principle of emptiness, one further thing is needed: faith. If you do not believe the principle of emptiness then no matter how often it is explained, it will do you no good. The Buddhadharmas are like a great sea. Only by faith can one enter.