

FLOWER ADORNMENT SUTRA

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THIRD DOOR: A DOCTRINAL ANALYSIS OF THE PERFECT TEACHING

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8. Door of Revealing the Dharma through Specifics, and thereby Giving Rise to Understanding

TEXT:

EIGHT: TO SEE THIS LOTUS PETAL IS TO SEE THE UNENDING DHARMA REALM. THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT AN ANALOGY REPRESENTING SOMETHING ELSE. THE TEXT SAYS, "THESE FLOWERS, CANOPIES, AND SO FORTH ALL ARISE FROM PATIENCE WITH THE NON-PRODUCTION OF DHARMAS."

COMMENTARY:

All living beings throughout the Dharma Realm can see this lotus flower. TO SEE THIS LOTUS PETAL IS TO SEE THE UNENDING DHARMA REALM. Although it is only a flower petal, within it can be seen everything throughout the entire Dharma Realm. THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT AN ANALOGY REPRESENTING SOMETHING ELSE. The lotus is certainly not an analogy. All dust motes are replete with the Dharma Realm and in the Dharma Realm there are myriad dust motes, all of which are replete with the Dharma Realm. The Buddha is not using the lotus as an analogy or as a representational dharma to clarify some other doctrine. It stands for exactly what it says: the lotus petal, small as it is, can include the Dharma Realm. The Dharma Realm, as large as it is, can be found within a lotus petal. And this state continues in an unending repetition. The lotus is not just descriptive of some other principle.

THE TEXT SAYS, "THESE FLOWERS, CANOPIES, AND SO FORTH ALL ARISE FROM PATIENCE WITH THE NON-PRODUCTION OF DHARMAS." One petal of the lotus has this kind of state within it, and the same is true of every lotus petal. All the lotus petals combine to become a flower canopy. This flowered canopy arises from patience with the non-production of dharmas. Patience with the non-production of

dharms includes within it lotus petals, and so this pattern is also an unending repetition of layers.

Someone endowed with patience with the non-production of dharmas does not see a single dharma arise and does not see a single dharma extinguished. Aware of this state, such a one is able to bear it in one's mind. One is quite comfortable; free and at ease. One is also quite clear and alert. But it is impossible to express such a state in language. There is no way to speak about it or to write about it. Words cannot be used to represent patience with the non-production of dharmas. As soon as you write an article, there are dharmas produced and so there will be dharmas extinguished. Not perceiving the slightest dharma arise, not perceiving the slightest dharma extinguished, one can bear it in one's mind. You yourself will know but you will not be able to express it to others.

9. Door of the Distinct Formations of the Ten Times as Separate Dharmas.

TEXT:

NINE: ALTHOUGH THIS IS A SINGLE FLOWER, IT COMPLETELY PERVADES ALL PLACES AND IT EXTENDS THROUGH ALL TIME. AS TO THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME, EACH HAS THREE ASPECTS AND ALL ARE GATHERED INTO ONE THOUGHT, AND SO THERE ARE TEN TIMES. BASED ON TIME, WHICH HAS NO SPECIFIC SUBSTANCE, THE FLOWER IS ESTABLISHED. JUST AS THE FLOWER IS UNOBSTRUCTED, SO, TOO, IS TIME.

COMMENTARY:

The ninth is The Door of the Distinct Formations of the Ten Times as Separate Dharmas. ALTHOUGH THIS IS A SINGLE FLOWER, IT COMPLETELY PERVADES ALL PLACES AND IT EXTENDS THROUGH ALL TIME. That means that "horizontally it reaches throughout the ten directions, and vertically it penetrates the three periods of time." The three periods of time are the past, present, and future. AS TO THE THREE PERIODS OF TIME, EACH HAS THREE ASPECTS AND ALL ARE GATHERED INTO ONE THOUGHT. These are the aspects:

The Ten Times

1. the past of the past
2. the present of the past
3. the future of the past
4. the past of the present
5. the present of the present
6. the future of the present

7. the past of the future
8. the present of the future
9. the future of the future
10. one thought

The three aspects of each time become nine and you add to that the one thought which gathers them all in. We count that one thought as an aspect of time as well, AND SO THERE ARE TEN TIMES. BASED ON TIME, WHICH HAS NO SPECIFIC SUBSTANCE, THE FLOWER IS ESTABLISHED. JUST AS THE FLOWER IS UNOBSTRUCTED, SO, TOO, IS TIME. Time is just like the flower.

TEXT:

THEREFORE THE CHIN DYNASTY EDITION OF THE SUTRA SAYS, "THE LIMITLESS KALPAS OF THE PAST RELY ON THE FUTURE AND PRESENT; THE LIMITLESS KALPAS OF THE FUTURE RETURN TO RELY ON PAST TIME," AND SO FORTH.

UNIVERSAL WORTHY CONDUCT SAYS, "WITHIN THE PAST IS THE FUTURE; WITHIN THE FUTURE IS THE PRESENT," AND SO FORTH. IT ALSO SAYS, "LIMITLESS KALPAS ARE A SINGLE THOUGHT; A SINGLE THOUGHT IS LIMITLESS KALPAS." TIME HAS NO SPECIFIC SUBSTANCE AND SO THERE IS NOTHING SPECIFIC SET UP WHICH CAN BE RELIED UPON.

COMMENTARY:

THEREFORE THE CHIN DYNASTY EDITION OF THE SUTRA SAYS, "THE LIMITLESS KALPAS OF THE PAST RELY ON THE FUTURE AND THE PRESENT; THE LIMITLESS KALPAS OF THE FUTURE RETURN TO RELY ON PAST TIME." Why is the Chin dynasty edition referred to here? It is because that edition is particularly clear in elucidating the principles and therefore is easy to understand. For these reasons it was useful to refer to when the later translation of the *Flower Adornment Sutra* was being done. That edition of the Sutra says that the past relies on the future and present. So although it is past, it is possible to make it the present and even the future. An example of this is how television is able to show things which belong to the past. AND SO FORTH means that there are many passages of text which express this principle.

UNIVERSAL WORTHY CONDUCT SAYS, "WITHIN THE PAST IS THE FUTURE; WITHIN THE FUTURE IS THE PRESENT," AND SO FORTH. This refers to the future within the past and the present within the future. There's a saying: "The three periods of time can change places with each other." You can perceive in this way and so can I. The past can be seen as the present and the future. The future can become the present or the past. And this is not an unclear, muddled kind of perception, either. It is clear and aware. What is perceived is seen quite vividly. IT ALSO SAYS, "LIMITLESS KALPAS ARE A SINGLE THOUGHT; A SINGLE THOUGHT IS LIMITLESS KALPAS." Limitless kalpas refers to such a long time and yet that time does not transcend a single thought.

The opposite is also true. That is because Bodhisattvas have "wisdom that enters time" (入劫慧). For Bodhisattvas, great kalpas can enter small kalpas, small kalpas can enter great kalpas; long kalpas can enter short kalpas, short kalpas can enter long kalpas; limitless kalpas can enter one kalpa, and one kalpa can enter limitless kalpas. These are the kinds of inconceivable states which Bodhisattvas have experienced, AND SO FORTH means that this same principle is stated elsewhere in the Sutra as well. TIME HAS NO SPECIFIC SUBSTANCE AND SO THERE IS NOTHING SPECIFIC SET UP WHICH CAN BE RELIED UPON. Time basically doesn't have a substance at all. So time is not set up as something definite which dharmas can rely upon.

TEXT:

THE EXAMPLE OF THE FLOWER IS LIKE THAT, AND SPECIFICS SUCH AS A SINGLE MOTE OF DUST AND SO FORTH ARE ALSO LIKE THE FLOWER. THE FLOWER IS A SPECIFIC THAT SHOWS THE FUNCTION OF THE DOOR OF SIMULTANEOUS AND COMPLETE INTERACTION AND SO FORTH, AND IS REplete WITH ALL TEN DOORS. FURTHER, THE PAIR OF SPECIFICS AND PRINCIPLES IS ALSO REplete WITH THE PAIRS OF TEACHING AND MEANING AND SO FORTH INCLUDING ALL TEN OF THOSE DOORS, MAKING ONE HUNDRED DOORS. THE ONE PAIR OF SPECIFICS AND PRINCIPLES IS LIKE THAT AND THE OTHER PAIRS OF TEACHING AND MEANING AND SO FORTH ARE ALSO REplete WITH A HUNDRED DOORS IN THE SAME WAY, MAKING A THOUSAND DOORS IN ALL. JUST AS THE PAIRS OF TEACHING AND MEANING AND SO FORTH ARE REplete WITH A THOUSAND DOORS, SO, TOO, THE DOOR OF SIMULTANEOUS AND COMPLETE INTERACTION AND SO FORTH ARE EACH REplete WITH A HUNDRED DOORS. SINCE THE DOOR OF VAST AND NARROW AND SO FORTH ARE THE SAME, THAT MAKES A THOUSAND DOORS. IF ONE CONTINUED TO UNFOLD THEIR LAYERS, THEY WOULD BE UNENDING.

COMMENTARY:

THE EXAMPLE OF THE FLOWER IS LIKE THAT. Above, the wonderful lotus flower was discussed and it was described how one petal of it can include the entire Dharma Realm. Within the small is contained the great and the great does not obstruct the small. The small and the great can mutually contain one another and be mutually unobstructive. Although the small contains the great, the great does not become small. Although the great can be found in a mote of dust or a lotus petal, even though the Dharma Realm is vast, the lotus petal can accommodate it. The lotus petal doesn't get bigger and the Dharma Realm doesn't get smaller. The lotus petal was shown to have the functions of the Ten Esoteric Doors, AND THE SPECIFICS SUCH AS A SINGLE MOTE OF DUST AND SO FORTH ARE ALSO LIKE THE FLOWER. Since a flower petal is like that, so is a dust mote, and so is every other specific thing that exists. All of them are multilayered and unobstructed, unobstructed and multilayered. THE FLOWER IS A

SPECIFIC THAT SHOWS THE FUNCTION OF THE DOOR OF SIMULTANEOUS AND COMPLETE INTERACTION AND SO FORTH. The specifics are unobstructed and the principles are unobstructed. A flower petal was used to show this state of perfect fusion and non-obstruction. However, the states described are beyond the reach of ordinary people's comprehension. "Simultaneous" means that these functions happen at the same time. It's not that first the lotus petal is small but then it gets big, or that first the Dharma Realm is big but then it gets small. The specific of the flower petal IS REplete WITH ALL TEN Esoteric DOORS.

FURTHER, THE PAIR OF SPECIFICS AND PRINCIPLES IS ALSO REplete WITH THE PAIRS OF TEACHING AND MEANING AND SO FORTH INCLUDING ALL TEN OF THOSE DOORS, MAKING ONE HUNDRED DOORS.

The one pair of specifics and principles is replete with the Ten Esoteric Doors and also with the Ten Pairs.

The Ten Pairs

1. Teaching and Meaning
2. Principles and Specifics
3. States and Wisdom
4. Practice and Position
5. Cause and Effect
6. The Dependent and the Proper
7. Substance and Function
8. People and Dharmas
9. Opposition and Compliance
10. Petition and Response

One pair divides into ten doors and again into ten pairs in all, making one hundred combinations. THE ONE PAIR OF SPECIFICS AND PRINCIPLES IS LIKE THAT AND THE OTHER PAIRS OF TEACHING AND MEANING AND SO FORTH ARE ALSO REplete WITH A HUNDRED DOORS IN THE SAME WAY, MAKING A THOUSAND DOORS IN ALL. Each of the other pairs can be applied to the specific of the lotus petal in the same way, including the Ten Esoteric Doors and the Ten Pairs. Since there are ten pairs, that makes a thousand doors. If you were to keep expanding this, the thousand doors would become ten thousand and so forth. JUST AS THE PAIRS OF TEACHING AND MEANING AND SO FORTH ARE REplete WITH A THOUSAND DOORS, SO, TOO, THE DOOR OF SIMULTANEOUS AND COMPLETE INTERACTION IS REplete WITH A HUNDRED DOORS. It is replete with the Ten Esoteric Doors and the Ten Pairs too. THE DOOR OF THE VAST AND NARROW AND SO FORTH ARE THE SAME, MAKING A THOUSAND DOORS. Each of the other Esoteric Doors is also replete with a hundred doors, making a thousand doors in all. IF ONE WERE TO UNFOLD THEIR LAYERS, THEY WOULD BE UNENDING. They keep multiplying and multiplying, layer upon layer, to the point that

there is no end. This doctrine expands infinitely. Analyzing any single door in its minute aspects would show that each door has unending layers.

The purport of the long discussion of so many doors which has just finished is to represent the multilayered and infinite aspects of the Dharma Realm of Specifics, the Dharma Realm of Principles, the Dharma Realm of Unobstructed Specifics and Principles, and the Dharma Realm of Specifics and Specifics. This state of the Avatamsaka can never be explained to an end. No matter how much is said, it is still multilayered and unending. But even though it is multilayered and unending, still, it must be discussed.

TEXT:

AND YET THESE TEN DOORS CAN BE PERFECTLY UNDERSTOOD
AND CLEARLY DISCERNED, SO ONE CAN CONSTANTLY ENTER THE
STATE OF THE MULTILAYERED DHARMA REALM.

COMMENTARY:

AND YET THESE TEN DOORS CAN BE PERFECTLY UNDERSTOOD AND CLEARLY DISCERNED. Each door divides into ten to become a hundred doors. The hundred in turn divide to become a thousand doors. And this principle is multilayered and unending. But the doctrines of each and every door can be recognized quite distinctly and understood quite thoroughly. Since you can understand the doctrines of each single door, you can also fathom completely the doctrines of all ten doors. Since you can perfectly understand and clearly discern the doctrines of ten doors, you can also grasp the doctrines of a hundred doors. Since you can perfectly understand and clearly discern the doctrines of a hundred doors, then you can also understand any given specific in terms of a thousand doors' doctrines. This is what is means by the phrase "when one is penetrated, all are penetrated." If you fathom the meaning of one, then you can comprehend the meaning of all. But if you don't understand one, you won't be able to understand anything about many. That is why you must be specific and concentrated in your study. It's said, "When you are concentrated, then you can understand. If you are scattered then you will fail to understand." "Scattered" means having continual false thinking. To "fail to understand" is to be stupid. Since each and every door can be perfectly understood and clearly comprehended, ONE CAN CONSTANTLY ENTER THE STATE OF THE MULTILAYERED DHARMA REALM. The state which is multilayered is itself the Dharma Realm and the Dharma Realm is none other than this state which is multilayered. Even though the kalpas progress through coming into being, dwelling, decaying, and being empty, the Dharma Realm itself is never destroyed. The Dharma Realm is not subject to these stages of the rise and fall of kalpas. No matter what stage a kalpa is in, the Dharma Realm is still the Dharma Realm. That's why it is said to be multilayered and unending.

-to be continued