

Shurangama Mantra

commentary and verses by Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua

MANTRA: Na Mwo Sa Dwo Nan

VERSE:

*Great courageous one with a great mind for the Way,
Is like a lotus flower that is not defiled by dust.
In the six periods of the day and night, he is ever watchful and alert,
Constantly smelting real gold right within the fire.*

COMMENTARY:

SA DWO NAN refers to the "One of great courage." So, the whole line reads, "taking refuge in the One of great courage." One with great courage is able to do what others don't dare do and cultivate what most people don't dare cultivate. One can make the greatest sacrifices and not seek anything in return. The word "great," is used because it refers to the Buddha's wisdom. This is also "one who has opened great understanding," and "always being with a great mind for the Way." Among people, this is who is enlightened first.

*Great courageous one with a great mind for the Way/*One of great courage is able to do what others cannot do and to practice what others cannot practice. He's able to be patient with what others can't be patient with and endure what others can't endure. He lives within the defilement and yet is apart from it. His heart, his mind, is separate from the dust. *Is like a lotus flower that is not defiled by dust/* He is like a lotus flower which comes up from the mud and yet is not spoiled by the mud. Although the lotus flower comes up through the mud, when it blossoms upon the surface of the water, it is not defiled by the dirt--there's not the slightest bit of filth on it. So too, this Bodhisattva has great courage and a great mind for the Way. *In the six periods of the day and night, he is ever watchful and alert/* In the three periods of the night he works hard; there is no time when he is lax. In the six periods of the day and night he diligently cultivates precepts, samadhi, and wisdom and gets rid of greed, hatred, and stupidity.

*Constantly smelting real gold right within the fire/*In the six periods of the day and night you have to always be watching over yourself. You can never be lax. You can't be casual and say all manner of things. You can't always be talking confusedly when you eat and when it's time to sleep. If you are not rapping with this one, you're chatting with that one. Smelting gold in the fire is very difficult, but being in the Saha World is like being in a fire pit. Within this fiery pit we're smelting gold.

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