

NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR THOSE WHO SEEK TO LEAVE THE HOME-LIFE AT THE CITY OF TEN THOUSAND BUDDHAS

-spoken by Venerable Abbot Hua

Those who are born into this Dharma-ending Age are far from the Buddha, but they are not far from the Dharma, because the Dharma isn't completely gone yet, and so we still can rely on the Buddhadharma to cultivate, and in this way become enlightened and be certified to the fruit and become Buddhas.

As left-home people we should hold firm to our principles and not be turned by whatever states or tests that arise.

First we should obtain a clear understanding of true principle, and then we should travel along on the bright and proper Path without being swayed. When heavenly demons and those of outside ways, and the various goblins and strange essences of the mountains and waters try to distract us, we should not be moved.

The Shurangama Mantra is able to smash the deviant and to reveal the Proper. The *SHURANGAMA SUTRA* was spoken for the sake of the Shurangama Mantra. You could say that the Shurangama Mantra is the bones and marrow of the Buddhadharma, and just as people could not live without their bones and marrow, so, too, if there were no Shurangama Mantra then there would be no Buddhadharma to speak of.

So, in the Dharma-ending Age, the very best place to put your effort in protecting the Proper Dharma is to commit the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA* to memory and even more should you memorize the Shurangama Mantra! That's the most important thing you could do for the whole world, because the Shurangama Mantra can keep all the weird creatures and ghosts and deviant beings at bay. As long as people can recite it, those beings are unable to completely wreak havoc. They are most scared of the Shurangama Mantra, and so although they would like to act up, they are afraid to completely come out in the open.

However, in this day and age, the thoughts and habit-patterns of people have become so bizarre that they are not even up to the status of horses or cows--they are even more depraved than animals. Why is this? It's because people come under the sway of deviant ghosts and spirits who are really pushing to come all the way out. The deviant beings really want to come into the world and to take over. Why? Because there's virtually no one who can recite the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA* by heart and very few people who can recite the Shurangama Mantra. But the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is a place of genuine cultivation and anyone who comes here must want to seriously cultivate. Since we want to do this work, we can help hold the strange creatures at bay. They cannot come in here. By the same token, those who live here must have the requisite Way-virtue, and not everyone can make the grade.

Sometimes the people who come here cannot stay; it's because their virtuous conduct is insufficient, and their thoughts are too deviant. And now, all the residents of this Way-place, whether you are a

left-home person or a lay-person, should memorize the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA* and the Shurangama Mantra. By doing that, you can be of tremendous benefit to the Buddha-dharma.

In the world today there are well known scholars and professors, even left-home people, who openly advocate that the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA* is not authentic. Why? Because the Sutra contain the Four Unalterable Aspects of Purity, as well as the Fifty Skandha Demon States. Anyone who really understands the Fifty Skandha Demon States section will see that the detractors of this Sutra are described in detail by those states--these people fit perfectly the Sutra's description of rabble-rousers who will appear in the Ending Age to cast doubts in people's minds about the authenticity of this Sutra. Since they themselves find it impossible to uphold the Four Unalterable Aspects of Purity in their personal lives, they have no other recourse then to defame the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA*.

However, we here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas regularly recite the Shurangama Mantra, and we are also investigating the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA*, in depth. There is no mantra more powerful or more efficacious than the Shurangama Mantra, and there is no Sutra which is more true than the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA*. When the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA* no longer exists in the world, there will be no more Proper Dharma, and so it's our personal responsibility to familiarize ourselves with the Mantra and the Sutra in order to protect the Proper Dharma. We should become so familiar with that Sutra that no matter where we find ourselves, and no matter what the occasion, we can recite and explain the Sutra text. If we can do that, then we can say that we have not become Buddhist disciples in vain, and that we have not become left-home people for nothing.

So don't be taken in by the deviant views which certain professors and scholars expound; don't let them convince you that this Sutra is inauthentic. After all, what's inauthentic about the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA*? There is no foundation whatsoever for such a criticism. Anyone who would make such a criticism would just be revealing his own lack of understanding and wisdom. Such a one has already fallen into the mark of language and words, and is concerned with superficial aspects only. Anyone who would resort to such gross arrogance and debate is filled with deviant knowledge and deviant views, and the kind of retribution which will befall them in the future will be inconceivable.

I don't pay any attention to what other Dharma Masters use as their criterion for receiving left-home people, but here at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas anyone who wants



to leave the home-life must in the very least have a Bachelor's Degree. It's fine if they come here with a B.A. another University, but they will have to receive the three year training under the Sangha/Laity Training Program (in full) and exhibit superior performance before they are allowed to take the Complete Precepts of a left-home person. Left-home people must have a solid and extensive educational background, otherwise they just end up engaging in idle chatter and superficial business all day long, or go out fawning on the laity, trying to gain some petty advantage for themselves. Left-home people who work for fame, offerings or profit are a disgrace to the Buddhadharma. So from now on, those who come to stay at the City of Ten Thousand Buddhas must either have a B.A. degree, or earn one here. This applies to young and old students alike. And the very first thing that new students must do is to memorize the Shurangama Mantra and the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA*. That will insure the loftiness and credibility of those who profess to be disciples of the Buddha.

In the past the stipulations for new people may not have been this strict, but even though that was the case, still I didn't take left-home disciples casually. But now the rules for left-home aspirants are even more stringent. I expect my disciples to be outstanding individuals with their feet firmly planted on the ground and their heads reaching to the heavens--strong, and responsible people who, in terms of any worldly criteria would be recognized as extraordinary individuals. Those who already have left home under me should also memorize the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA*, and then you will be able to parallel the present requirements for new left-home people.

Those are the current requirements, but in the future they will get higher and it will be even more difficult for the people who aspire to leave home under me, until finally the time will come when that door will close completely and I will no longer accept new disciples. So all of you should study hard and memorize the *SHURANGAMA SUTRA* and the Shurangama Mantra.