

Shurangama Mantra

commentary and verses by Tripitaka Master Hsuan Hua

verses translated by Bhikshuni Heng Tao

commentary translated by members of BTTS

reviewed & edited by Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih

MANTRA: #21 NA MWO TI PE LI SHAI NAN

VERSE:

*BOWING TO THE GODS OF THE DESIRE REALM AND FORM
REALM,
FOR A LONG LIFE AND LONG VISION, THEY SMELT THE
IMMORTAL CINNABAR.
THE FIVE ENERGIES COMPLETE THEIR REVOLUTION AND
ILLUMINE THE GREAT WAY.
AFTER NINE TURNINGS TO A PURE YANG BODY, ONE LIVES FOR
TEN THOUSAND YEARS.*

COMMENTARY:

NA MWO means "to return one's life and bow in reverence." TI PE means "heavens." LI SHAI NAN means "form." So NA MWO TI PE LI SHAI NAN means to take refuge with all the gods in the Desire Realm and Form Realm, *Bowing to the gods of the Desire Realm and Form Realm.*/"The gods" here means all the immortals and spirits in the heavens.

For a long life and long vision, they smelt the immortal cinnabar. Immortals and spirits all preferred to ascend to the heavens. This is because in the past they didn't know of the existence of the Buddha, Dharma, and the Sangha. They only knew how to cultivate, but they cultivated for the sake of long life and eternal youth. They wanted to gain immortality. This is different from the principles of Buddhism. In Buddhism one certifies to the fruition of Arhatship. There are four stages of Arhatship.

1. Shrotaapanna,
2. Sakridagamin,
3. Anagamin, and
4. Arhatship

The First Fruition is called the Position of the Way of Seeing. At this position of Seeing the Way, one has cut off view delusions, but hasn't yet cut off thought delusions. One has already cut off the eighty-eight categories of view delusion. The Second and Third Fruits are called the Position of the Way of Cultivation. One cultivates the Way in order to cut off thought delusion. The Fourth Fruit is called the Position of the Way of Certification. One who reaches this position has already cut off ignorance and manifested the Dharma nature. Coarse delusions, subtle delusions, and delusions like dust and sand have been cut off at the Fourth Fruit of Arhatship. One who has cut off delusions like dust and sand does not have the coarse false thoughts, but still has very small, subtle delusions. The Venerable Ananda referred to this in his verse when he said, "Expel even the most subtle of my doubts." In order to certify to the Fourth Fruit of Arhatship, one has to cut off all the coarse false thought, but still one may be unaware of the very subtle false thinking. Even Bodhisattvas at the Ninth Ground haven't cut off the subtlest delusions. Even the Bodhisattvas at the Position of Equal Enlightenment still have one fraction of ignorance of appearance of production which they haven't cut off. That's why they have not yet become Buddhas. Those people who want to ascend to the heavens prefer long life and eternal youth. They don't like to enter Nirvana; they just want to drag this stinking skin bag around all the time. So, people who cultivate to be immortals are called "corpse-guarding ghosts." They guard this corpse and don't want to leave it. They think this corpse is a precious thing. No matter what, they won't give it away. Mounting the clouds, they bring along the corpse; driving the fog, they also bring along the corpse. The immortals or spirits can mount the clouds and drive the fog. At all times they want to remain with this stinking skin bag. Don't you think it's pretty dirty? In other words, they want to live in the toilet forever. Those immortals and spirits who can't give away their corpses are as if dwelling in a toilet. That's why they are nicknamed "corpse-guarding ghosts." Of course, ghost is not a complimentary name. Now we can change this name to the "corpse-guarding immortal" or "corpse-guarding spirit." No matter how many hundreds of thousands of years you guard this corpse, one day it will rot. Even though you may become an immortal or spirit, you will still fall when the time comes.

You may have never seen people smelt the cinnabar. How do they do it? Some eat phlegm or mucus. They eat the mucus from the nose like one eats noodles. They call that smelting the cinnabar. What do they smelt the cinnabar for? They,

Smelt the essence to transform it into energy;
Smelt the energy to transform it into spirit;
Smelt the spirit to return it to the void;
Smelt the void to return it to nothingness;
From nothingness, they give rise to existence.

However, you can see that even if one smelts the cinnabar as far as it will go, it'll still end up at nothingness. Since it's that way, there's still an attachment. The state is small and is not the complete functioning of the entire substance. What do they become attached to? They are attached to the cinnabar! They are just like dragons nurturing their pearls, who are attached to the pearls.

The five energies complete their revolution and illumine, the Great Way./ What are the five energies? There is metal, wood, water, fire, and earth. They also correspond to the heart, liver, spleen, lungs, and kidneys. The heart belongs to fire, the liver belongs to wood, the spleen belongs to earth, the lungs belong to metal, and the kidneys belong to water. The heart is red, the liver is green, the spleen is yellow, the lungs are white, and the kidneys are black. When these five energies of metal, wood, water, fire, and earth are smelted to perfection without being deficient or in excess, then they will

return to the basic substance. When these five energies go back to the source, each energy is endowed with the five elements. Then the five energies and the five elements can unite into one substance. These five energies and the five elements all return to the source and are gathered together at the Heavenly Door. This is known as "the three flowers gather together on the crown; the five energies return to the source." This is the method of the Taoist school. When you get to the state of the "three flowers gather together on the crown," and the "five energies return to the source," you will become a living immortal. Thus the verse says, "The five energies complete their revolution and illumine the Great Way." That is why they have penetrating powers; they can fly and travel as they wish. They have a body beyond a body and an appearance which is no appearance. You shouldn't look down on this kind of skill.

After nine turnings to a pure yang body, one Lives for ten thousand years./ "Nine turnings" means in cultivation you go through it once and go through it all over again. After you have done it once, you do it again and again. For example, you smelt the cinnabar again and again. Each time it almost makes it, but fails, so you start over again. The verse says, "nine turnings," but actually it's not known how many times you have to cultivate to reach pure yang. What is pure yang? It means one's body is totally yang, without a bit of yin energy. If you don't have any yin energy, then you won't have jealousy and you won't obstruct people; you won't have afflictions or thoughts of greed, hatred, and stupidity.

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