

Explanation of this Issue's Cover Verse

SHURANGAMA MANTRA

*Commentary and Verses by Tripitaka Master Hua
-translation of verses by Bhikshuni Heng Tao
-translation of the commentary by members of BTTS
-reviewed and edited by Bhikshuni Heng Ch'ih*

MANTRA: 26. JYA LA HE

VERSE:

*THE RETINUE OF ALL THE GODS PLANTED THE CAUSES OF
BLESSINGS.
TOGETHER THEY CULTIVATED THE GOOD PATH, NOW THEY
FORM A SUPREME KINSHIP.
YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THIS IS NOT THE ULTIMATE JOY.
ONE STILL NEEDS TO BRING FORTH THE GREAT RESOLVE FOR
BODHI.*

COMMENTARY:

JYA LA HE translates as "living beings," here referring not to human beings, but to heavenly beings--to the retinue of gods. *The retinue of all the gods planted the causes of blessings.* In the past, the retinue of all the gods planted blessings together. How did they plant blessings? When they saw left-home people, they made offerings or they bowed, and in that way they planted blessings. Why don't we have blessings? Because in the past we did not plant them. Perhaps money was more important than life itself. You always felt that if you had to give to others, you'd be taking a great loss. Rather, you thought it better that people give to you. However, the retinue of the gods all planted blessings. *Together they cultivated the good path, now they form a supreme kinship.* When they were in the human realm, together they cultivated the good path. Together they practiced giving; together they held the precepts; together they were patient; together they grew vigorous; together they developed Ch'an Samadhi. So, they all became endowed with wisdom. They became a supreme family. They became relatives up in the heavens. *You should know that this is not the ultimate joy.* You should know that the bliss in this heaven is not the ultimate joy. The only ultimate bliss is becoming a Buddha, because then you end birth and death and attain ultimate Nirvana. *One still needs to bring forth the great Resolve for Bodhi.* If you want to obtain real and ultimate joy, you have to bring forth the Bodhi-resolve. Go ahead and practice the Bodhisattva Path. Only then can you perfect the Unsurpassed Proper and Equal Enlightenment. That is ultimate joy!