

The Cover Verse

The Shurangama Mantra: An Explanation

First Assembly, Line #53

Mantra: NA MWO MWO NI JYU LA YE

Verse:

*The Buddha Jeweled Birth is Lord of the Mani Divisions,
Replete with his retinue of Space-Bodhisattvas.
The south is the region titled "Ping-Ting-Huo,"
Its fire blazes with red light, illumining Kan and Li.*

Commentary:

NWO NI is the mani jewel. This is the south, the Jeweled Birth Division, the region hosted by the Buddha Jeweled Birth. *The Buddha Jeweled Birth is Lord of the Mani Division/*. "Mani," again, simply means "jewel". *Replete with his retinue of Space-Bodhisattvas/*. He is surrounded by his retinue of Space-Treasury Bodhisattvas and Paramita Bodhisattvas. *The south is the region titled "Ping-Ting-Huo,"*. The Chinese people refer to this position in the south as "ping-ting-huo," which belongs to the element fire. *Its fire blazes with red light, illumining Kan and Li/* Although it is in the south, its fire blazes with such intensity that it illumines *Kan*, the primary trigram in the north, as well as *Li*, the primary trigram in the south. From the south, it shines to the north. *Kan* (坎), in the north, is of the element water. *Li* (離), in the south, belongs to fire. The illumination goes from south to north and back again. And so we see that the light from the Jeweled Birth Division shines throughout the Dharma Realm.

In studying the Buddhadharma, we should proceed vigorously and sincerely apply our own effort. We should not let a moment pass by in vain, but should use our time efficiently. Furthermore, in applying our effort, we should not be influenced by the laziness of others or swayed by opposition.

In everything we do, we should look within ourselves and not seek outside. And so if others like to be lazy, let them go ahead and be lazy; but as for you yourself, you should go forward and work even harder. You should increase your studies and, in the midst of the demands on your time and energy to take care of business, you should make time for lecturing on the Sutras and listening to lectures on the Sutras.

There are not many commentaries in the world written on the Shurangama Mantra; therefore, the faster this lecture series is completed, and the sooner the explanations are put into print, the better. In the world we cannot find many places where people are truly and actually working for the sake of the Buddhadharma; even within the Buddhadharma, most people are out for fame and profit. Therefore, we should take on this responsibility.

In working energetically for the Buddhama, the products of our labor are invaluable. Everyone should clearly understand this. And so, for my part I will continue to lecture on the mantra, and lecture more often, so that this lecture series can be quickly completed. And then, however long it takes for the explanations to be translated and put into print will be up to you, because as was just said, we should only seek within ourselves and not expect things from other people.

*to be continued next issue
translated, reviewed, and edited by members of
the Buddhist Text Translation Society*