

The Shurangama Mantra

An Explanation of This Issue's Cover Verse

Verses and Commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

Mantra: Line # 84. E LA HE DI

Verse:

*Born into noble station, the family of the Dharma King,
With three bodies and four wisdoms and wonderful observation,
One has five eyes, the six penetrations, and success in all one does.
The Great, Perfect Mirror shines and equality is reached.*

Commentary:

We've explained E LA HE DI many times before. You all know what it means. It means "bowing to all the worthy and true of the royal clan." I have already written many verses about this one sentence, and yet of the Shurangama Mantra you could write a thousand or ten thousand verses about each single sentence and still not have explained it completely. But the scope of our human minds is limited, and our wisdom is not yet fully developed, so we just write a few sentences to explain the meanings in general. Actually, we are picking up "one" and leaving out "ten thousand", revealing only a small portion of its meaning.

The worthy and true of the royal clan are the noble family. Among the Ten Dwellings, one is that of Noble Birth. This dwelling is the realm of the Bodhisattvas, the royal family. *Born into noble station, the family of the Dharma King,*/ Being born into the Buddha's family is something that not just anyone can do. You have to have virtuous practice and cultivation to be born in the family of the Dharma King.

With three bodies and four wisdoms and wonderful observation,/ One has five eyes, the six penetrations, and success in all one does./ The Great, Perfect Mirror shines and equality is reached./

The Three Bodies

- 1) the Dharma body;
- 2) the Transformation body;
- 3) the Reward Body.

The Dharma Body is one of purity, and it pervades all places. The Reward Body has thirty-two marks and eighty subsidiary characteristics. The Transformation Body is one of a thousand changes and ten thousand transformations. These transformations are

endless. One is not just one, or else it couldn't be many. The many are not simply many, therefore they are simply one. One and many are unobstructed and non-dual.

Those of outside ways, especially old Taoists, say that they are "Buddhas". But do they have the Three Bodies and the Four Wisdoms? These are not just something you can ascribe to yourself. Nor can you borrow them. The first of the Four Wisdoms is the Wonderful Observing Wisdom. We observe, too, but our powers of observation are coarse, not wonderful. We can see things that have shape and form, but we can't see the invisible. With this wisdom you can perceive both the material and the invisible. You can thoroughly comprehend both things with form and things without form. You can know ten thousand ages into the past and ten thousand ages into the future, limitless kalpas past and limitless kalpas to come.

The Buddha has the Five Eyes: the Buddha Eye, the Dharma Eye, the Wisdom Eye, the Heavenly Eye, and the Flesh Eye. There is a very succinct verse about the Five Eyes, which goes:

The Heavenly Eye penetrates without obstruction.
The Flesh Eye sees obstructions and doesn't penetrate.
The Dharma Eye contemplates the mundane.
The Wisdom Eye understands true emptiness.
It illumines the one substance underlying all diversity.

With the Heavenly Eye, you see without obstruction. You can see the Buddhas, spirits, ghosts, and the gods in the heavens. You can see everything they are doing. It's even better than the closed circuit TV that the international spies use. It's not as much trouble, either; and the best part is, it's all internal. You don't need any external device to know what's going on. The Flesh Eye sees obstructions and doesn't penetrate. It sees things that have form. The Heavenly Eye cannot see things with form. The Flesh Eye does not refer to the ordinary physical eyes that we have. The Flesh Eye is another, different eye. The Heavenly Eye can't see physical things, but it can see ghosts, gods, and so forth. The Flesh Eye can see things with physical form and also things without physical form. If you open your Flesh Eye, you can see the people in the room with you, and you can also see the people outside the room. Walls present no obstacle to your vision.

The Dharma Eye only sees the mundane. It views things on the level of the common, ordinary truth.

The Wisdom Eye contemplates true emptiness; one understands and certifies to the principle of true emptiness and is filled with the Dharma bliss of true emptiness.

The Buddha Eye is like a thousand suns, shining everywhere, illuminating the one substance underlying all diversity. It shines on different things, but underneath, they are all one substance. The Buddha Eye is the most perfect of the Five Eyes. It surpasses the other four. With it one can see people and ghosts, spirits, and everything else, both physical and non-physical.

The Six Penetrations are the Heavenly Eye, the Heavenly Ear, the Knowledge of Others' Thoughts, the Knowledge of Past Lives, the Penetration of the Extinction of Outflows, and the Penetration of the Complete Spirit. One who has the Six Penetrations is free to transform in any way -- to fly, to travel, and to transform. You don't have to take a plane or train to get around! In one thought, you encompass the three thousand worlds.

The text says, "....and succeeds in all one does." This refers to the Perfecting Wisdom, the second of the Four Wisdoms.

"The Great, Perfect Mirror shines, and equality is reached." The Great Perfect Mirror Wisdom is the third of the Four Wisdoms. It is like a mirror. When something happens, it reflects it. When it has passed by, then there is no reflection remaining. "When a thought arises, one awakens to it; upon awakening to it, the thought disappears."

The fourth of the Four Wisdoms is the Equality Nature Wisdom. The last word in the verse is "reached," but it can also mean "Dharma," referring to the equality of all dharmas.