

The Cover Verse

The Shurangama Mantra: An Explanation

Verses and Prose Commentary by Tripitaka Master Hua

Shurangama Mantra

Mantra: #89 E LA HE DI

Verse:

*From nothing into something and back to nothing again,
The worthy and true manifest the map to ultimate bliss;
Vastly cultivate offerings and always be vigorous,
And bow to all the hosts of the King's clan.*

Commentary:

E LA HE means "to bow to all the worthy and true ones in the royal family." Worthy also means "response." When there is an interaction with the Way, a true state manifests. If you get a state like this, you shouldn't half believe it and half disbelieve it. Say you have a dream and you are bowing to the Buddha, and the Buddha is emitting light, or he rubs your crown, but you half believe and half disbelieve. When you do that, you defeat yourself. Even if it was real, your disbelieving makes it false, because you have no faith. If you have faith, then why do you have doubts? It's because you are an icchantika, one of insufficient faith, not enough trust. The "worthy and true state," this kind of state, takes you *From nothing into something and back to nothing again*/ This transformation reaches down to the most microscopic creatures and all the way up to the Bodhisattvas, Buddhas, Arhats, gods, and asuras -- all can manifest. There's no place where they don't manifest. From nothing, it changes into something -- from existence to non-existence; they are unfathomable changes and wonderful functioning.

The Worthy and true manifest the map to ultimate bliss/ We in the world feel that we are happy, but really it's just a false manifestation. Why is this falseness manifested? So that you can borrow the false to cultivate the true, understand that ultimate happiness has no shape, no mark, and that there can be no attachment to it. So, *Vastly cultivate offerings and always be vigorous*/ Make offerings to the worthy and true -- the Dharma Jewel -- and always be vigorous; go forward and seek the supreme path. *And bow to all the hosts of the King's clan*/ To cultivate the supreme path you must first get rid of arrogance and pride; empty the attachment to self, and break through the attachment to dharmas. If you only empty the attachment to self, but you still have attachment to Dharma, it's not good enough. You must break through them both. Self and dharmas must both be broken through. All is emptied, and emptiness itself is emptied! If you still have emptiness, then you have an attachment to emptiness. You should be attached to nothing. In the end, there shouldn't even be a "nothing".

Think it over. Cultivation is really difficult. If it were easy, everyone would have become a Buddha long ago. Why do we tarry in birth and death in this Saha world? Because it's difficult! Digging a gold mine is hard, too, but if you don't dig it, you will never get to the gold. It's hard at first, but eventually you succeed. To become a Buddha is just this way. You need the help of Good Knowing Advisors .

How do they help? Through opposing states. If you can suffer through opposing states happily, then you'll understand the real Buddhadharma. You have then broken attachment to self, dharmas, and emptiness. Such still extinction is bliss. As it's said,

All activity is impermanent, characterized by still extinction.

When production and extinction are extinguished, still extinction is bliss.