

Shurangama Sutra Volume I

IBDSCL, Feb. 16th, 17th, 2019, by Nancy Yu

Na Mo Sakyamuni Buddha!
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Good morning! Welcome to the International Buddha Dharma Society for Cosmic Law to listen to today's Dharma talk! Today is Feb 16th, 2019. Each month, after we spend time on the monthly subject, we will focus on sutra reciting. Today, we will recite the Shurangama Sutra. We recited Vol. 7 and 8 before. Today, we will recite Vol. 1.

Verse for Opening Sutras

The unsurpassed, profound, subtle and wondrous dharma is difficult to encounter, even in a hundred, thousand, million kalpas.

Now we see and hear it, and are able to receive and maintain it.

We vow to understand the Tathagata's true meaning.

The Sutra of the Foremost Shurangama at the Great Buddha's Summit Concerning the Tathagata's Secret Cause of Cultivation, His Certification to the Complete Meaning and all Bodhisattvas' Myriad Practices

Vol. 1

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Thus I have heard.

At one time the Buddha dwelt at the city of Shravasti in the sublime abode of the Jeta Grove. With a gathering of great bhikshus, twelve hundred fifty in all.

All were great Arhats without outflows, disciples of the Buddha, dwellers and maintainers. They had fully transcended all existence, and were able to travel everywhere, and to accomplish the awesome deportment.

They followed the Buddha in turning the wheel and were wonderfully worthy of the bequest. Stern and pure in the Vinaya, they were great exemplars in the three realms. Their limitless response-bodies took living beings across and liberated them, pulling out and rescuing those of the future so they could transcend all the bonds of dust.

The names of the leaders were: the greatly wise Shariputra, Mahamaudgalyayana, Mahakaushthila, Purnamaitreyaniputra, Subhuti, Upanishad, and others.

Moreover limitless Pratyekas who were beyond learning and those with initial resolve came to where the Buddha was to join the bhikshus' Pravara at the close of the summer retreat. Bodhisattvas from the ten directions who desired counsel in order to resolve the doubts in their minds were respectful and obedient to the Awesome but Compassionate One as they prepared to seek the Secret Meaning.

Then the Tathagata arranged his seat, sat quietly and peacefully, and for the sake of everyone in the assembly proclaimed the profound and mysterious. Those in the pure assembly at the banquet of Dharma obtained what they had never obtained before.

The Immortal's kalavinka-sound pervaded the ten directions and Bodhisattvas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges gathered at the Bodhimanda with Manjushri as their leader. Then King Prasenajit, for the sake of his father, the late king, arranged on the day of mourning a vegetarian feast and invited the Buddha to the side rooms of the palace. He welcomed the Tathagata in person with a vast array of superb delicacies of unsurpassed wonderful flavors and himself invited the great Bodhisattvas.

In the city were also elders and laypeople who were also prepared to feed the Sangha at the same time, and they stood waiting for the Buddha to come and receive offerings. The Buddha commanded Manjushri to assign the Bodhisattvas and Arhats to receive offerings from the various vegetarian hosts.

Only Ananda, who, having accepted a special invitation earlier, had traveled far and had not yet returned, was late for the apportioning of the Sangha. No senior-seated one or Acharya was with him, so he was returning alone on the road.

On that day he had received no offerings, and so at the appropriate time Ananda took up his begging bowl and, as he traveled through the city, begged in successive order.

As he first began to beg, he thought to himself that down to the very last danapati who would be his vegetarian host he would not question whether they were clean or unclean; whether they were ksatriyas of honorable name or chandalas. While practicing equality and compassion he would not merely select the lowly but was determined to perfect all living beings. limitless merit and virtue.

Ananda already knew that the Tathagata, the World Honored One, had admonished Subhuti and great Kashyapa for being Arhats whose hearts were not fair and equal, and he regarded with respect the Tathagata's instructions on impartiality, to save everyone from doubt and slander.

Having crossed the city moat, he walked slowly through the outer gates, his manner stern and proper as he honored with propriety the method of obtaining food.

At that time, because Ananda was begging in sequential order, he passed by a house of prostitution and was waylaid by a powerful artifice. By means of a mantra of the Kapila

religion, formerly of the Brahma Heaven, the daughter of Matangi drew him onto an impure mat.

With her licentious body she stroked and rubbed him until he was on the verge of destroying the precept-substance.

The Tathagata, knowing Ananda was being taken advantage of by the indecent artifice, finished the meal and immediately began his return journey. The king, great officials, elders, and laypeople followed along after the Buddha, desiring to hear the essentials of Dharma. Then the World Honored One emitted a hundred rays of jeweled and fearless light from his crown. Within the light appeared a thousand-petalled precious lotus, upon which was seated a transformation-body Buddha in full-lotus posture, proclaiming a spiritual mantra. He commanded Manjushri to take the mantra and go provide protection, and, when the evil mantra was extinguished, to lend support, and to encourage Ananda and Matangi's daughter to return to where the Buddha was.

Ananda saw the Buddha, bowed, and wept sorrowfully, regretting that from time without beginning he had been preoccupied with erudition and had not yet perfected his strength in the Way. He respectfully and repeatedly requested an explanation of the very first expedients of the wonderful shamatha, samapatti, and dhyana, by means of which the Tathagatas of the ten directions had realized Bodhi.

At that time Bodhisattvas as numerous as the sands of the Ganges, great Arhats, pratyekas, and others from the ten directions, were also present. Pleased at the opportunity to listen, they withdrew silently to their seats to receive the sagely instruction.

In the midst of the great assembly, the World Honored One then extended his golden arm, rubbed Ananda's crown, and said to Ananda and the great assembly, "There is a samadhi called the King of the Foremost Shurangama at the Great Buddha's Summit Replete with the Myriad Practices; it is a path wonderfully adorned and the single door through which the Tathagatas of the ten directions gained transcendence. You should now listen attentively." Ananda bowed down to receive the compassionate instruction humbly.

The Buddha said to Ananda, "You and I are of the same family and share the affection of a natural relationship. At the time of your initial resolve, what were the outstanding characteristics which you saw in my Dharma that caused you to suddenly cast aside the deep kindness and love found in the world?"

Ananda said to the Buddha, "I saw the Tathagata's thirty-two characteristics, which were so supremely wonderful, so incomparable, that his entire body had a shimmering transparency just like that of crystal.

"I often thought to myself that these characteristics cannot be born of desire and love. Why? The vapors of desire are coarse and murky. From foul and putrid intercourse comes a turbid mixture of pus and blood which cannot give off such a magnificent, pure, and brilliant concentration of purple-golden light. And so I thirstily gazed upward, followed the Buddha, and let the hair fall from my head."

The Buddha said, "Very good, Ananda. You should all know that all living beings are

continually born and continually die, simply because they do not know the everlasting true mind, the bright substance of the pure nature. Instead they engage in false thinking. It has been so since time without beginning. Their thoughts are not true, and so the wheel keeps turning.

"Now you wish to investigate the unsurpassed Bodhi and actually discover your nature. You should answer my questions with a straightforward mind, because that is exactly the way the Tathagatas of the ten directions escaped birth and death. Their minds were all straightforward, and since their minds and words were consistently that way, from the beginning, through the intermediate stages to the end, they were never in the least evasive. "Ananda, I now ask you: at the time of your initial resolve, which arose in response to the Tathagata's thirty-two characteristics, what was it that saw those characteristics and who delighted in them?"

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, this is the way I experienced the delight: I used my mind and eyes. Because my eyes saw the Tathagata's outstanding characteristics, my mind gave rise to delight. That is why I became resolved and wished to removed myself from birth and death."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "It is as you say, that experience of delight actually occurs because of your mind and eyes. If you do not know where your mind and eyes are, you will not be able to conquer the wearisome dust.

For example, when a king's country is invaded by thieves and he sends out his troops to suppress and banish them, the troops must know where the thieves are.

"It is the fault of your mind and eyes that you flow and turn. I am now asking you specifically about your mind and eyes: where are they now?"

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, all the ten kinds of living beings in the world alike maintain that the conscious mind dwells within the body; and as I regard the Tathagata's blue lotus-flower eyes, they too are on the Buddha's face.

"I now observe that these prominent organs, four kinds of defiling objects, are on my face, and so, too, my conscious mind actually is within my body."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "You are now sitting in the Tathagata's lecture hall looking at the Jeta Grove. Where is it at present?"

"World Honored One, this great many-storied pure lecture hall is in the Garden of the Benefactor of the Solitary. At present the Jeta Grove is in fact outside the hall."

"Ananda, as you are now in the hall, what do you see first?"

"World Honored One, here in the hall I first see the Tathagata, next I see the great assembly, and from there, as I gaze outward, I see the grove and garden."

"Ananda, why it is you are able to see the grove and the garden as you look at them?"

"World Honored One, since the doors and windows of this great lecture hall have been thrown open wide, I can be in the hall and see into the distance."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "It is as you say. When one is in the lecture hall and the doors and windows are open wide, one can see far into the garden and grove. Could there be someone in the hall who does not see the Tathagata and yet sees outside the hall?"

Ananda answered: "World Honored One, to be in the hall and not see the Tathagata, and yet see the grove and fountains is impossible."

"Ananda, you are like that too.

"Your mind is capable of understanding everything thoroughly. Now if your present mind, which thoroughly understands everything, were in your body, then you should be aware first of what is inside your body. Can there be living beings who first see inside their bodies before they observe things outside?"

"Even if you cannot see your heart, liver, spleen, and stomach, still, the growing of your nails and hair, the twist of your sinews, and the throb of your pulse should be clearly understood. Why don't you perceive these things? If you cannot perceive what is inside at all, how can you perceive what is outside?"

"Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that the aware and knowing mind is in the body."

Ananda bowed his head and said to the Buddha, "Upon hearing such a Dharma-sound as the Tathagata has proclaimed, I realize that my mind is actually outside my body.

"Why? For example, a lamp alight in a room will certainly illumine the inside of the room first, and only then will it pour through the doorway to reach the recesses of the hall. For all living beings who do not see within their bodies but only see outside them, it is as if the lighted lamp were placed outside the room, so that it cannot illumine the room.

"This principle is certainly clear: it is absolutely beyond all doubt and exactly the Buddha's entire meaning, and so it isn't wrong is it?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "All these bhikshus who just followed me to the city of Shravasti to beg in sequence for food have returned to the Jeta Grove and are rolling their food into balls as they eat. I have already finished eating, but consider the bhikshus: when one person eats, does everyone get full?"

Ananda answered, "No, World Honored One. Why? These bhikshus are Arhats, but their individual lives differ. How could one person's eating cause everyone to be full?"

The Buddha told Ananda, "If your mind which understands, knows, sees and is aware were actually outside your body, your body and mind would be mutually exclusive and would have no relationship to one another. The body would be unaware of what the mind perceives, and the mind would not perceive the awareness within the body.

"Now as I show you my tula-cotton hand, does your mind distinguish it when your eyes see it?"

Ananda answered, "So it is, World Honored One."

The Buddha told Ananda, "If the mind and eyes create a common perception, how then can the mind be outside?"

"Therefore you should know you state the impossible when you say that the mind which knows, understands, and is aware is outside the body."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, it is as the Buddha has said, since I cannot see inside, my mind does not reside in the body. Since my body and mind have a common awareness, they are not separate and so my mind does not dwell outside my body. As I now consider it, I know it is in a certain place."

The Buddha said, "Now where is it?"

Ananda said, "Since the mind which knows and understands does not perceive what is inside but can see outside, upon reflection I believe it is concealed in the organ of vision.

"For example, when someone places crystal bowls over his eyes, the bowls cover his eyes but do not obstruct his vision. The organ of vision is thus able to see, and discriminations are made accordingly.

"And so my mind which knows, understands, and is aware does not see within because it resides in the organ. It can gaze outside clearly, without obstruction for the same reason: it is concealed in the organ."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "Assuming that it is concealed in the organ, as you assert in your analogy of the crystals: if someone were to cover his eyes with the crystals and look at the mountains and rivers, would he see the crystals as well?"

"Yes, World Honored One, if a person were to cover his eyes with the crystals, he would in fact see the crystals."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "If your mind is analogous to the eyes covered with crystals, then when you see the mountains and rivers, why don't you see your eyes?"

"If you could see your eyes, your eyes would be part of the external environment. If you cannot see them, why did you say that the mind which understands, knows, and is aware is concealed in the organ of vision as eyes are covered by crystals?"

"Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that the mind which knows, understands, and is aware is concealed in the organ of vision in the way that the eyes are covered by crystals."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, I now offer this reconsideration: viscera and bowels lie inside the bodies of living beings, while the orifices are open to the exterior. There is darkness at the bowels and light at the orifices.

"Now, as I face the Buddha and open my eyes, I see light: that is to see outside. When I close my eyes and see darkness, that is to see within. How does that principle sound?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "When you close your eyes and see darkness, does the darkness you experience lie before your eyes? If it does lie before your eyes, then the darkness is in front of your eyes. How can that be said to be 'within'?"

"If it were within, then when you are in a dark room without the light of sun, moon, or lamps, the darkness in the room would constitute your .warmers. and viscera. If it is not before you, how can it be seen?"

"If you assert that there is an inward seeing that is distinct from seeing outside. In that case, when you close your eyes and see darkness, you would be seeing inside the body. Therefore, when you open your eyes and see light, why can't you see your own face?"

"If you cannot see your face, then there can be no seeing within. If you can see your face, then your mind that knows and understands and your organ of vision as well must be suspended in space. How could they be part of your body?"

"If they are in space, then they are not part of your body. Otherwise the Tathagata who now sees your face should be part of your body as well."

"In that case, when your eyes perceive something, your body would remain unaware of it. If you press the point and say that the body and eyes each have an awareness, then you should have two perceptions, and your one body should eventually become two Buddhas."

"Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that to see darkness is to see within."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "I have heard the Buddha instruct the four assemblies that because the mind arises every kind of dharma arises, and that because dharmas arise, every kind of mind arises."

"As I now consider it, the substance of that very consideration is truly the nature of the mind. Wherever it comes together with things, the mind exists in response. It does not exist in the three locations of inside, outside and in between."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "Now you say that because dharmas arise, every kind of mind arises. Wherever it comes together with things, the mind exists in response. But if it has no substance, the mind cannot come together with anything. If, having no substance, it can yet come together with things, that would constitute a nineteenth realm brought about by a union with the seventh defiling object, and there is no such principle."

"If it does have substance, when you pinch your body with your hand, does your mind which perceives it come out from the inside or in from the outside? If it comes out from the inside, then, once again, it should see within your body. If it comes in from outside, it should see your face first."

Ananda said, "Seeing is done with the eyes. The mind's perception is not that of the eyes. To say it sees doesn't make sense."

The Buddha said, "To suppose that the eyes can see is like supposing that the doors of a room can see. Also, when someone has died but his eyes are still intact, his eyes should see things. How can it be death if one can still see?"

"Furthermore, Ananda, if your mind which is aware, understands, and knows in fact has substance, then is it a single substance or many substances? Does its substance perceive the body as it now resides in it or does it not perceive it?"

"Supposing that it were a single substance, then when you pinched one limb with your fingers, the four limbs would be aware of it. If they all were aware of it, the pinch could not be at any one place. If the pinch were confined to one place, then the single substance you propose would not be possible.

"Supposing that it were many substances: then you would be many people. Which substance would be you?"

"Supposing it were a pervasive substance: the case would be the same as before in the instance of pinching. But supposing it were not pervasive; then when you touched your head and touched your foot simultaneously, the foot would not perceive it if the head does. But that is not how you are.

"Therefore you should know that you state the impossible when you say that wherever it comes together with things, the mind exists in response."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, I also have heard the Buddha discuss true appearance with Manjushri and the other disciples of the Dharma king. The World Honored One also said, 'The mind is not inside and it is not outside.'

"As I now consider it, if it were within, it would see things it does not see; if it were outside, there would be no common perception. Since it cannot see inside, it cannot be inside; and since the body and mind have common perception, it does not make sense to say it is outside. Therefore, since there is a common perception and since there is no seeing within, it must be in the middle."

The Buddha said, "You say it is in the middle. That middle must not be haphazard or without a fixed location. Where is this middle that you propose? Is it in an external place, or is it in the body?"

"If it were in the body, it could not be on the surface of the body since that is not the middle. But to be in the middle is no different than being inside. If it were in an external place, would there be some evidence of it, or not? If there were no evidence of it, that would be the same as if it did not exist. If there were evidence of it, then it would have no fixed location.

"Why? Suppose that someone were to indicate the middle by a marker. When regarded from the east, it would be to the west, and when regarded from the south, it would be to the north. The marker is unclear, and the mind would be equally chaotic."

Ananda said, "The middle I speak of is neither of those. As the World Honored One has said, the eyes and forms are the conditions which create the eye-consciousness. The eyes make

discriminations; forms have no perception, but a consciousness is created between them. That is where my mind is.”

The Buddha said, “If your mind were between the eye and an object, does the mind’s substance combine with the two or does it not?”

”If it did combine with the two, then objects and the mind-substance would form a chaotic mixture. Since objects have no perception, while the substance has perception, the two would stand in opposition. Which is the middle?”

”If it did not combine with the two, it would then be neither perceiver nor perceived and would have no substance or nature. Where would the characteristic of ‘middle’ be?”

”Therefore you should know that for the mind to be in the middle is impossible.”

Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, when I have seen the Buddha turn the Dharma wheel in the past with great Maudgalyayana, Subhuti, Purna, and Shariputra, four of the great disciples, he often said that the nature of the mind which perceives, makes discriminations, and is aware is located neither within nor outside nor in the middle; it is not located anywhere at all. That very non-attachment to anything is what is called the mind. Therefore, is my non-attachment my mind?”

The Buddha said to Ananda, “You say that the nature of the mind which perceives, makes discriminations, and is aware is not located anywhere at all. The entirety of things existing in the world consists of space, the waters, the land, the creatures that fly and walk, and all external objects. Does your non-attachment also exist?”

”If it does not exist, it is the same as hairs on a tortoise or horns on a rabbit. How can you speak of non-attachment?”

”If non-attachment existed, it could not be said to be non-existent. To be non-existent is to be without attributes. To be existent is to have attributes. Whatever has attributes has a location; how then can it be said to be unattached?”

”Therefore you should know, to call the aware, knowing mind non-attachment to anything is impossible.”

Then Ananda arose from his seat in the midst of the great assembly, uncovered his right shoulder, placed his right knee on the ground, respectfully put his palms together, and said to the Buddha:

”I am the Tathagata’s youngest cousin. I have received the Buddha’s compassionate love and have left the home-life, but I have been dependent on his affection, and as a consequence have pursued erudition and am not yet without outflows.

”I could not overcome the Kapila mantra. I was spun around by it and sank in the house of prostitution, all because I did not know the location of the realm of reality.

"I only hope that the World Honored One, out of great kindness and pity, will instruct us in the path of shamata to guide the icchantikas and overthrow the mlecchas."

After he had finished speaking, he placed his five limbs on the ground along with the entire great assembly. Then they stood on tiptoe waiting attentively and thirstily to respectfully hear the instructions.

Then the World Honored One radiated forth from his face various kinds of light, dazzling light as brilliant as hundreds of thousands of suns.

The six kinds of quaking pervaded the Buddharealms, and thus lands as many as fine motes of dust throughout the ten directions appeared simultaneously.

The Buddha's awesome spirit caused all the realms to unite into a single realm.

And in these realms all the great Bodhisattvas, each remaining in his own country, put their palms together and listened.

"The reason those who cultivate cannot accomplish unsurpassed Bodhi, but instead reach the level of a Sound-Hearer or of one enlightened to conditions, or become accomplished in outside ways as heaven-dwellers or as demon-kings or as members of the retinue of demons is that they do not know the two fundamental roots and are mistaken and confused in their cultivation. They are like one who cooks sand in the hope of creating savory delicacies. They may pass through as many aeons as there are motes of dust, but in the end they will not obtain what they want.

"What are the two? Ananda, the first is the root of beginningless birth and death, which is the mind that seizes upon conditions and that you and all living beings now make use of, taking it to be the self-nature.

"The second is the primal pure substance of the beginningless Bodhi Nirvana. It is the primal bright essence of consciousness that can bring forth all conditions. Because of conditions, you consider it to be lost.

"Living beings lose sight of the original brightness: therefore, though they use it to the end of their days, they are unaware of it, and without intending to they enter the various destinies. "Ananda, since you now wish to know about the path of shamatha with the hope of getting out of birth and death, I will question you further."

Then the Tathagata raised his golden arm and bent his five wheeled fingers as he asked Ananda, "Do you see?"

Ananda said, "I see."

The Buddha said, "What do you see?"

Ananda said, "I see the Tathagata raise his arm and bend his fingers into a fist of light which dazzles my mind and my eyes."

The Buddha said, "What do you see it with?"

Ananda said, "The members of the great assembly and I each see it with our eyes."

The Buddha said to Ananda, "You have answered me by saying that the Tathagata bends his fingers into a fist of light which dazzles your mind and eyes. Your eyes are able to see, but what is the mind that is dazzled by my fist?"

Ananda said, "The Tathagata is asking where the mind is located. Now that I use my mind to search for it thoroughly, I propose that precisely what is able to investigate is my mind."
The Buddha said, "Hey! Ananda, that is not your mind."

Startled, Ananda leapt from his seat, stood and put his palms together, and said to the Buddha, "If it's not my mind, what is it?"

The Buddha said to Ananda, "It is your perception of false appearances based on external objects which deludes your true nature and has caused you from beginningless time to your present life to recognize a thief as your son, to lose your eternal source, and to undergo the wheel's turning."

Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, I am the Buddha's favorite cousin. It is because my mind loved the Buddha that I was led to leave the home-life. It is my mind that not only makes offerings to the Tathagata, but also, in passing through lands as many as the grains of sand in the Ganges River to serve all Buddhas and good, wise advisors, and in martialing great courage to practice every difficult aspect of the dharma, I always use this mind. Even if I am slandering the dharma and eternally withdrawing my good roots, it would also be because of this mind. If this is not my mind, then I have no mind, and I am the same as a clod of earth or a piece of wood. Without this awareness and knowing, nothing would exist.

"Why does the Tathagata say this is not my mind? I am startled and frightened and not one member of the great assembly is without doubt. I only hope that the World Honored One will regard us with great compassion and instruct those who have not yet awakened."

Then the World Honored One gave instruction to Ananda and the great assembly, wishing to cause their minds to enter the state of patience with the non-production of dharmas.

From the lion's seat he rubbed Ananda's crown and said to him, "The Tathagata has often said that all dharmas that arise are only manifestations of the mind. All causes and effects, the worlds as many as fine motes of dust, come into being because of the mind.

"Ananda, when all the things in the world, including blades of grass and strands of silk thread, are examined at their fundamental source, each is seen to have substance and a nature, even empty space has a name and an appearance.

"How much the less could the clear, wonderful, pure bright mind, the essence of all thoughts, itself be without a substance?"

"If you insist that the nature which knows and observes and is aware of distinctions is the mind, then apart from all forms, smells, tastes, and touches . apart from the workings of all the defiling objects . that mind should have its own complete nature.

"And yet now, as you listen to my Dharma, it is because of sound that you are able to make distinctions.

"Even if you could extinguish all seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowing, and maintain an inner composure, the shadows of your discrimination of dharmas would remain.

"I do not insist that you grant that it is not the mind. But examine your mind in minute detail to see whether there is a discriminating nature apart from the objects of sense. That would truly be your mind.

"If this discriminating nature has no substance apart from objects, then it is shadows of discriminations of objects of mind.

"The objects are not permanent, and when they pass out of existence, such a mind would be like hair on a tortoise or horns on a rabbit. In that case your Dharma-body would be extinguished along with it. Then who cultivates and attains patience with the non-production of dharmas?"

At that point Ananda and everyone in the great assembly was speechless and at a total loss. The Buddha said to Ananda, "There are cultivators in the world who, although they realize the nine successive stages of samadhi, do not achieve the extinction of outflows or become Arhats, all because they are attached to birth-and-death false thinking and mistake it for what is truly real. That is why now, although you are greatly learned, you have not realized the accomplishment of sagehood."

When Ananda heard that, he again wept sorrowfully, placed his five limbs on the ground, knelt on both knees, put his palms together, and said to the Buddha, "Since I followed the Buddha and left home, what I have done is to rely on the Buddha's awesome spirit. I have often thought, 'There is no reason for me to toil at cultivation' expecting that the Tathagata would bestow samadhi upon me. I never realized that he could not stand in for me in body and mind. Thus, I lost my original mind and although my body has left the home-life, my mind has not entered the Way. I am like the poor son who renounced his father and roamed around.

"Therefore, today I realize that although I am greatly learned, if I do not cultivate, it is the same as if I had not learned anything; just as someone who only speaks of food will never get full.

"World Honored One, now we all are bound by two obstructions and as a consequence do not perceive the still, eternal nature of the mind. I only hope the Tathagata will take pity on us poor and destitute ones and disclose the wonderful bright mind, and open my Way-eye."

Then from the character wan [signifying "myriad virtues"] on his chest, the Tathagata poured forth precious light. Radiant with hundreds of thousands of colors, the brilliant light

simultaneously pervaded everywhere throughout the ten directions to Buddharealms as many as fine motes of dust, anointing the crowns of every Tathagata in all the jeweled Buddhalands of the ten directions. Then it swept back to Ananda and all in the great assembly.

And said to Ananda, "I will now erect the great Dharma banner for you, to cause all living beings in the ten directions to obtain the wondrous subtle secret, the pure nature, the bright mind, and to attain the pure eye.

Amitabha! Deep into the sutras and be more wise! Thank you! See you next week!

Verse of Transference

May the merit and virtue accrued from this work,
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands,
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.
May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth the resolve for Bodhi.
And when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in ultimate bliss.