**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 2**

**CHAPTER 3**

**Mixing and Uniting**

### Mixing and Uniting

O2 The Buddha explains what Ananda has not understood.
P1 He traces his former awakening and what he has not yet awakened to.

**Sutra:
"Ananda, although you have already realized that the wonderfully bright basic enlightenment does not by nature come from causes and conditions and is not by nature spontaneous, you have not yet understood that the enlightened source is produced neither from mixing and uniting nor from a lack of mixing and uniting.

Commentary:** This passage is spoken to destroy the concept of mixing and uniting and of not mixing and uniting. Ananda still has doubts about it, so the Buddha expounds this doctrine once again. He says once again that the seeing-nature is just as it is.

He first reprimands Ananda: **“Ananda, although you have already realized that the wonderfully bright basic enlightenment does not by nature come from causes and conditions and is not by nature spontaneous -** Ananda, you understood this doctrine when it was explained before. The nature of wonderfully bright basic enlightenment does not belong to causes and conditions, nor does it belong to spontaneity. But **you have not yet understood.”** He reprimands him. “You still haven’t understood **that the enlightened source is produced neither from mixing and uniting nor from a lack of mixing and uniting.** It does not come from not mixing and uniting, either. ‘Mixing and uniting’ means the mixing and uniting of ignorance and karmic consciousness. You may think it is produced from mixing and uniting or perhaps from a lack of mixing and uniting, but both ideas are incorrect.”

The externalist sect which preaches spontaneity is called the “god-self” externalist sect. They have a self which is a god-self. What they think is this: outside of the categories of appearances (in the eighth consciousness) there is a category of seeing, which is what they refer to as the god-self. That changes it into the knowledge and views of a externalist sect. The externalist sect that preaches causes and conditions holds that there is no category of seeing beyond the categories of appearances. So they say that there is no self. There are only appearances, the division of appearances. There are also those who preach mixing and uniting. They say that when ignorance and karmic consciousness mix and unite, there is production and extinction. Characteristics that are subject to production and extinction and the nature which is not subject to production and extinction are all mixed up together. The two cannot be distinguished clearly. That is what they think, and so they preach mixing and uniting. Those who preach a lack of mixing and uniting think that the characteristics which are subject to production and extinction and the nature which is not subject to production and extinction are not the same and have nothing to do with one another. So they preach a lack of mixing and uniting. Those are the four kinds of ideas advocated by externalist sects. They are not the doctrines spoken by the Buddha. So now the Buddha, fearing that Ananda may be confused by these doctrines, explains the matter for him once again. He knows that Ananda still has doubts.

It is just when there is the false that the true is not separate from it. When there is the true, the false is still there. It is not absent. It is just like a hand, which has a back and a palm: although the palm and the back are two, they are both right there; all you have to do is flip your hand over. It is the same with the characteristics which are subject to production and extinction and the nature which is not subject to production and extinction; these two are also one. Just as affliction is Bodhi, and birth and death are nirvana; it is the same kind of principle.

People who study the Buddhadharma should certainly investigate the Shurangama Sutra and gain a thorough understanding of it. The Shurangama Sutra is for bringing forth great wisdom. If you want to have right knowledge and right views and open great wisdom, you should certainly understand the Shurangama Sutra. The Shurangama Sutra breaks up the deviant and reveals the proper. It smashes all the heavenly demons and those of externalist sects and reveals the innate human capacity for right knowledge and right views. But when the Buddhadharma is just about to become extinct, the very first sutra to vanish will be the Shurangama Sutra. So if we wish to protect and maintain the proper dharma, we should investigate the Shurangama Sutra, come to understand the Shurangama Sutra, and protect the Shurangama Sutra. When the Buddhadharma is about to become extinct, weird demons and strange ghosts will come in the world, people with deviant knowledge and deviant views. They will be wise to the ways of the world and will be endowed with powers of debate and keen intelligence. They will argue that the Shurangama Sutra is spurious - inauthentic - and will tell people not to believe it.

Why will they say the Shurangama Sutra is spurious?

Because the Shurangama Sutra tells about all their faults. It discusses their kinds of deviant knowledge and deviant views. If the Shurangama Sutra remains in the world, no one will believe their deviant views. If there is no Shurangama Sutra, then their deviant knowledge and deviant views will succeed in confusing people. So they argue that the Shurangama Sutra is spurious. This is the appearance of a demon-king. Those who study the Buddhadharma should be particularly attentive to this point. They should be particularly careful not to be turned around by the deviant knowledge and deviant views of that demon-king. Do not allow him to change your thoughts and opinions.

Does anyone have an opinion?

Student: How does the Lankavatara Sutra compare to the Shurangama Sutra?

The Master: The Lankavatara Sutra discusses the doctrine of the Chan school. It is different from the Shurangama Sutra. The Patriarch Bodhidharma used the Lankavatara Sutra as a basis when he transmitted the Chan school to China. The Shurangama Sutra represents the genuine wisdom of the entirety of Buddhism.

Student: Is it possible for a Bodhisattva to appear in the form of a teacher of an externalist sect?

The Master: All dharmas are the Buddhadharma. None can be obtained. Do not be attached. If you are attached, it is not Buddhadharma. If you are not attached, it is the Buddhadharma. If you are attached, it is demonic dharma.

Student: Another translation of the Shurangama Sutra has been published. Is it basically correct? If not, what would you suggest that English-speaking people read?

The Master: We are in the process of translating the Shurangama Sutra now. As for the other translation you mention, it is correct in some places and incorrect in many other places. And it is not at all in accord with the basic intent of the sutra. For instance, the translator says that Westerners wouldn’t like the Shurangama Mantra and that they would not study the mantra. That is a complete mistake. He omits the mantra from his translation.

But if there hadn’t been any Shurangama Mantra in the Shurangama Sutra, then basically there wouldn’t have been any reason to speak the sutra. The importance of the Shurangama Sutra is just to praise the Shurangama Mantra. The translator took it upon himself to dispense with the mantra. That is in total discord with the purport of the Buddha’s explanation of the Shurangama Sutra.

Student: I have heard it said about the Lotus Sutra that the Buddha spoke all the other sutras of the other periods, all the other teachings, only as expedient means, and that they were taught only to enable his disciples to know the Lotus Sutra, and that in the Dharma-ending Age all other sutras would lose their power. Only the Lotus Sutra would have real power.

The Master: Not bad. All sutras were spoken for the sake of the Lotus Sutra. But the Lotus Sutra was spoken in order to cause living beings to become Buddhas. The Shurangama Sutra is for opening wisdom. The Lotus Sutra is for realizing Buddhahood. The Shurangama Sutra is for breaking through all the heavenly demons and externalist sects. It can also be said that it is for the sake of the Lotus Sutra that the Shurangama Sutra breaks through all the heavenly demons and externalist sects - that it is to cause people to cultivate the Wonderful Dharma Lotus Flower Sutra. One studies the Dharma Flower and cultivates the doors of practice explained in it in order to realize Buddhahood.

However, at the very last, when the dharma is about to become extinct, it is not the Lotus Sutra that will remain alive in the world; it will be the [*Amitabha Sutra*.](http://cttbusa.org/amitabha/amitabhasutra.asp) In the end, when the Buddhadharma becomes extinct, only the Amitabha Sutra will remain, and after it remains in the world for one hundred years it too will vanish. Then only the one sentence, the great six-syllable name Na Mwo A Mi Two Fwo (Namo Amitabha Buddha) will remain.

P2 The Buddha’s refutation: both mixing and uniting are false.
Q1 First refutation: the seeing-essence does not mix and unite.
R1 He brings up his false doubt.

**Sutra:
"Ananda, now I will once again make use of the mundane objects before you to question you. You now hold that false thoughts mix and unite with the causes and conditions of everything in the world, and you wonder whether certification to Bodhi might arise from mixing and uniting.

Commentary:** Since the Buddha had not dealt with one of the major theories propounded by those of externalist sects, he suspected his small disciple’s mind might be wandering in that direction, so he says: **Ananda, now I will once again make use of the mundane objects before you to question you. You now hold that false thoughts mix and unite with the causes and conditions of everything in the world, and you wonder whether certification to Bodhi might arise from mixing and uniting.** You keep bringing up the theories of those externalists and comparing them to my dharma, so now I will make the comparison for you.

R2 The refutation.
S1 He refutes mixing.

**Sutra:

"Accordingly, right now, does the wonderful pure seeing-essence mix with light, does it mix with darkness, does it mix with emptiness or does it mix with solid objects? If it mixes with light, look further at the light: what place there in the light before you is combined with the seeing? If you can distinguish the characteristic of seeing, what does it look like in combination?

Commentary:**The Buddha questions Ananda: **Accordingly, right now, does the wonderful pure seeing-essence mix with light, does it mix with darkness, does it mix with emptiness or does it mix with solid objects?** As you are at present, does your subtle wonderful pure and clear seeing-essence mix with light or darkness, with emptiness or solid objects? Which does it mix with? **If it mixes with light, look further at the light: what place there in the light before you is combined with the seeing?** If you say it mixes together with the light, then when you are looking at the light in front of you, tell me which part of it is the seeing? Point it out to me! Which place is mixed and united with the seeing? **If you can distinguish the characteristic of seeing, what does it look like in combination?** If it is possible for you to determine the form and appearance of your seeing, if you can recognize it, what form and appearance does it have when it is mixed together with the light? For instance, if you combine red and white, the result is neither red nor white. When you combine your seeing and light, what does the end-result look like?

**Sutra:
"If it is not the seeing, how can you see the light? If it is the seeing, how can the seeing see itself?

Commentary:If it is not the seeing, how can you see the light? If it is the seeing, how can the seeing see itself?** If you say you do see the light and that it is the seeing, then it must be that you are seeing your seeing. **How can the seeing see itself?** How can you do that? What’s your method? Once again Ananda has to think over the doctrine.

**Sutra:
"If it is certain that the seeing is complete, what room will there be for it to mix with the light? If the light is complete, it cannot unite and mix with the seeing.

Commentary:If it is certain that the seeing is complete, what room will there be for it to mix with the light?** If you definitely know the seeing to be complete and not deficient, neither lacking nor in excess, how can you combine it with light? **If the light is complete, it cannot unite and mix with the seeing.** If you say the seeing is not complete but that the light is complete, the light should not combine with the seeing. If it is neither lacking nor in excess, it will not be able to admit other things.

**Sutra:
"If seeing is different from light, then both the nature and the light lose their identity when they combine. Since the combination results in the loss of the light and the nature, it is meaningless to say it mixes with light. The same principle applies to its mixing with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects.

Commentary: If seeing is different from light, then both the nature and the light lose their identity when they combine.** If you say that the seeing and the light are two different things, then it follows that they would lose their original characteristics if they were mixed together. The identity of the seeing-nature and the identity of the light - the basic nature of the light - would both be lost. **Since the combination results in the loss of the light and the nature, it is meaningless to say it mixes with light.** So I say that there is no such thing as the mixing and uniting of your seeing with the light. To say they do mix and unite has no basis in principle.

**The same principle applies to its mixing with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects.** The doctrine that the seeing cannot mix with light can be applied to the proposition that it can mix with darkness, emptiness, or solid objects. It cannot mix with them. How can you say that certification to Bodhi arises from mixing and uniting? This is a mistake.

Earlier, Ananda had wondered whether the seeing is based on causes and conditions. The Buddha broke up this idea. Now he had decided that the seeing is a result of mixing and uniting. Step by step, the Buddha has broken up Ananda’s confusion. As soon as the Buddha breaks up one kind of confusion, Ananda gets involved in another kind of confusion. He has still not found the genuine doctrine.

The Buddha said that all living beings have the Buddha-nature and that all can become Buddhas. Some people hear that and go insane, and they say, “Ah, I am a Buddha. Everyone is a Buddha.” Why don’t they say that everyone is a demonic ghost? They say everyone is a Buddha. If everyone is a Buddha, then have you become a Buddha? The Buddha has three bodies, four kinds of wisdom, five eyes, and six spiritual penetrations. How many bodies do you have? The Buddha has the pure and clear dharma body, the perfect full reward body, and millions of transformation bodies. How many bodies do you have? The Buddha has the great perfect mirror wisdom, the fair and impartial wisdom of the nature, the wonderful contemplating and investigating wisdom, and the wisdom that accomplishes what must be done - four kinds of wisdom. How much wisdom do you have? The Buddha has five eyes: the Buddha eye, the dharma eye, the wisdom eye, the flesh eye, and the heavenly eye. How many eyes do you have? You don’t have a single eye, you haven’t opened a single eye and yet you say, “Oh, I am Buddha.” What Buddha are you? Buddhas have names. What is the name of your Buddha?

”I’m just Buddha,” you say.

If you don’t even have a name, what kind of Buddha are you? Buddhas have names, too, and there is no nameless Buddha. So, to go around saying, “Everybody is Buddha!” is to be someone who has gone insane.

Yes, everyone is indeed Buddha, but you must practice the Buddhadharma. After sitting for six years in the Himalayas under the Bodhi tree, he saw a star one evening and awakened to the Way. That is the work Shakyamuni Buddha did to become a Buddha. But you do as you please from morning till night. If you like to drink, you go out drinking. If you feel like smoking, you pull out a cigarette. If you are in the mood for a movie, you go see one. If you like dancing, you go dancing, and then you go home and accompany your wife to bed, and that’s a Buddha! That’s a realized Buddha! Ah, too easy! So take a look at how much distress and difficulty the Buddha endured to realize Buddhahood, and all you do all day is lie in bed and sit around the house. One need not speak of six years in the Himalayas, you haven’t even sat there for six days. If you could sit there in a state of unmoving suchness for six days, I would consider you a Buddha, but you haven’t even sat for six hours, and yet you say of yourself that you have realized Buddhahood. How could that not be called upside-down? Ananda may be upside-down, but that viewpoint is even more upside-down than Ananda’s. So I call such people demon kings. From now on, when you meet people like that, you may also call them demon kings. S2 He refutes uniting.

**Sutra:

"Moreover, Ananda, as you are right now, once again, does the wonderful pure seeing-essence unite with light, does it unite with darkness, does it unite with emptiness, or does it unite with solid objects?

Commentary:** Uniting is different from mixing. Mixing is when two kinds of things are blended together. Uniting is like when a lid is placed on a round pot. They unite and become one. So he says: **Moreover,** I will explain yet another doctrine for you. **Ananda, as you are right now, once again, does the wonderful pure seeing-essence unite with light?** The substance of your seeing-essence is subtle, wonderful, clear, and pure: does it unite with light? **Does it unite with darkness**? **Does it unite with emptiness**? **Or does it unite with solid objects?

Sutra:

"If it unites with light, then when darkness comes the characteristic of light is extinguished, how will you be able to see darkness, since the seeing does not unite with darkness? If you do see darkness and yet at that time there is no union with darkness, but rather a union with light, then you would not have seen light. Since you would not have seen light, why is it that, when there is union with light, you are able to know clearly that it is light and not darkness?**

**Commentary:If it unites with light -** if you say the seeing and the characteristic of light are united, then **when darkness comes the characteristic of light is extinguished, how will you be able to see darkness, since the seeing does not unite with darkness?** When it gets dark, the characteristic of light disappears. Since the seeing is not united with darkness, why can it see darkness? **If you do see darkness and yet at that time there is no union with darkness:** if you say that when you see darkness, the seeing does not unite with darkness - although it does see darkness it is not united with it - **but rather a union with light, then you would not have seen light.** If you say the seeing is united with light, then it should not see light. That is, it you say it can see what it is not united with - in this case darkness - then it should not see what it is united with - that is, light. **Since you would not have seen light, why is it that, when there is union with light, you are able to know clearly that it is light and not darkness?** You can see light and understand perfectly well that it is not darkness. According to your argument, then, you should not see light, but that is actually not the case, since you are able to distinguish the difference between brightness and darkness. In the last analysis, then, would you say that the seeing is united with light or united with darkness?

**Sutra:

"The same is true of its union with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects.”

Commentary:** The very same principle applies to the possibility of the seeing uniting with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects. You cannot say that the seeing unites with any characteristic at all. But you also cannot say that it does not unite with any characteristic. The fact is that light and darkness are subject to production and extinction, while the seeing-essence is neither produced nor destroyed. What is neither produced nor destroyed cannot be united with what is produced and destroyed. Ananda didn’t understand this doctrine, and so the Thus Come One used the greatly compassionate expedient device of speaking all kinds of examples to instruct him.

Q2 He refutes that it is not mixed and united.
R1 Based on the teaching, Ananda gives rise to a doubt.

**Sutra: Ananda said to the Buddha, "World Honored One, as I consider it, the source of this wonderful enlightenment does not mix or unite with any conditioned mundane object or with the mind’s speculation. Is that the case?”

Commentary:** Having heard the Buddha’s explanation, Ananda had another doubt. He once again thought about it and considered it. **Ananda said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, as I consider it, the source of this wonderful enlightenment** - this refers to the seeing-nature - **does not mix or unite with any conditioned mundane object.** It does not unite with the wearisome dust, which is based on causes and conditions, **or with the mind’s speculation. Is that the case?”** He asks, “Are all these various things in fact not united?” His asking shows that he is not speaking decidedly. Before this, what he said was very decisive. He said that the seeing is spontaneity, that it is causes and conditions, and he mentioned various other doctrines. He spoke with absolute confidence then, but his theories did not stand up; all of his ideas were smashed by Shakyamuni Buddha. So now he’s learned how to be slippery. When he says things, he doesn’t speak with any finality. “Is it that they do not mix and unite?” He takes a questioning tone. “I think the doctrine works this way, but maybe it’s not this way?”

R2 The specific refutation.
S1 He refutes not mixing.

**Sutra: The Buddha said, “Now you say further that the enlightened nature is neither mixed nor united. So now I ask you further: as to this wonderful seeing-essence’s neither mixing nor uniting, does it not mix with light? Does it not mix with darkness? Does it not mix with emptiness? Does it not mix with solid objects?

Commentary:** The seeing-nature is neither produced nor extinguished. Ananda is trying to compare what is neither produced nor extinguished with what is produced and extinguished. He wants to compare it to light and darkness, to emptiness and solid objects, to the causal mundane conditions, and to the mind’s thoughts. He keeps trying to combine it with them. Now he’s thought some more, and he says, “Is it the case that it does not mix and unite?” In reply, **the Buddha said, “Now you say further that the enlightened nature is neither mixed nor united.** You said before that the enlightened seeing is mixed and united. **So now I ask you further –** I’ll ask you something else now. **As to this wonderful seeing-essence’s neither mixing nor uniting:** you say that the subtle, wonderful seeing-essence which is not produced and not extinguished neither mixes nor unites. But **does it not mix with light? Does it not mix with darkness? Does it not mix with emptiness? Does it not mix with solid objects?** Speak up.”

**Sutra:"If it does not mix with light, then between seeing and light there must be a boundary.

Commentary:**If you want to say that it does not mix with light, then your seeing-essence and the characteristic of light must certainly have boundaries. What is the boundary of your seeing? What is the boundary of the characteristic of light? If you say it does not mix with light, then find the boundary between them. What indication is there of a division between them?

**Sutra:
"Examine it further: what place is light? What place is seeing? Where are the boundaries of the seeing and the light?**

**Commentary: Examine it further:** look into it. **What place is light?** Where does the light end? **What place is seeing?** Where does the seeing end? **Where are the boundaries of the seeing and the light?** Tell me, where is the boundary-line which divides them?

**Sutra:

"Ananda, if there is no seeing within the boundaries of light, then there is no contact between them, and clearly one would not know where the characteristic of light is. Then how could its boundaries be realized?

Commentary:Ananda, if there is no seeing within the boundaries of light -** if within the characteristic of light there is indeed no seeing-essence, **then there is no contact between them.** Light and seeing could not bump into one another. The two would never meet. **And clearly one would not know where the characteristic of light is.** Since the two cannot come in contact, it’s quite evident that one could not know where the characteristic of light is. **How could its boundaries be realized?** If you don’t even know where its characteristic is, how can any boundary be drawn?

**Sutra:

"As to its not mixing with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects, the principle is the same.

Commentary:** The doctrine is the same for darkness, for emptiness, and for solid objects. Now you divide them for me. You say they do not mix; where is the boundary of their not mixing. Speak up.

S2 He refutes not uniting.

**Sutra:
"Moreover, as to the wonderful seeing essence’s neither mixing nor uniting, does it not unite with light? Does it not unite with darkness? Does it not unite with emptiness? Does it not unite with solid objects?

Commentary:**Above, mixing was discussed. Now, uniting will be discussed: **Moreover, as to the wonderful seeing essence’s neither mixing nor uniting:** you say that the subtle wonderful seeing-essence does not mix or unite. But **does it not unite with light? Does it not unite with darkness? Does it not unite with emptiness? Does it not unite with solid objects?

Sutra:

"If it does not unite with light, then the seeing and the light are at odds with each other by nature, as are the ear and the light, which do not come in contact.

Commentary:If it does not unite with light, then the seeing and the light are at odds with each other by nature.** If the seeing is not united with the characteristic of light, then they are opposed to one another. Since they do not unite, they go so far as to be in discord and mutual opposition. **As are the ear and the light, which do not come in contact.** It would be like the ear. If you look, you can see light, but if you cover your eyes, your ears don’t know if it is light or dark. The ear does not distinguish brightness and darkness. Light and the hearing-nature of the ear do not come in contact.

**Sutra:
"Since the seeing does not know where the characteristic of light is, how can it determine clearly whether there is union?

Commentary:**It can’t see the characteristic of light because it can’t unite with it, so how can it distinguish, how can it discern the presence or absence of light?

**Sutra:
"As to its not uniting with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects, the principle is the same.

Commentary:** The doctrine of whether the seeing unites with darkness, with emptiness, or with solid objects is the same.