**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 3**

**CHAPTER 1**

**False Is Just True**

L2 The Tathagata divides the explanation into four parts and thereby shows that the nature is permanently dwelling.   
M1 He shows that what is false is just true.   
N1 He explains that illusory, ephemeral characteristics are true.   
  
**Sutra:   
  
"Ananda, you have not yet understood that all the defiling objects that appear, all the illusory, ephemeral characteristics, spring up in the very spot where they also come to an end. They are what is called ‘illusory falseness’. But their nature is in truth the bright substance of wonderful enlightenment.  
  
Commentary: Ananda, you have not yet understood.** Are you still not clear about it? **All the defiling objects that appear -** the experiencing of each and every external defiling object - **all the illusory, ephemeral characteristics.** “Illusory” means unreal, not actual. “Ephemeral” means it seems to exist and yet doesn’t; it doesn’t seem to exist and yet does. Suddenly it exists, suddenly it does not. Illusory, ephemeral characteristics are things which are unreal. It looks to you like they actually exist, but in reality they are entirely illusory and transitory.   
  
These illusory, ephemeral characteristics **spring up in the very spot where they also come to an end**. They come forth anywhere at all, and wherever they happen to come up, that is where they come to an end. Their arising is an empty illusion, and their extinction is an empty illusion. They arise in an empty illusion and vanish in an empty illusion.  
  
**They are what is called “illusory falseness.”** They go by the name of “empty falseness.” **But their nature is in truth the bright substance of wonderful enlightenment.** It is called falseness, but where do the roots of this falseness arise? They, too, come from the bright substance of wonderful enlightenment. They come forth from our true mind. The existence of the true gives rise to the false.   
  
When the false arises, there is seeing and characteristics. There is the division of seeing (jian fen) and the division of characteristics (xiang fen). The existence of the seeing division confers the ability to see things. The characteristics division consists of all the external forms and appearances. The division of seeing and the division of characteristics arise from the bright substance of wonderful enlightenment, from the pure nature and bright substance of the everlasting true mind. They do not come from elsewhere.   
  
N2 Shows that the four parts are true.  
  
**Sutra:  
"Thus it is throughout, up to the five skandhas and the six entrances, to the twelve places and the eighteen realms; the union and mixture of various causes and conditions account for their illusory and false existence, and the separation and dispersion of the causes and conditions result in their illusory and false extinction.   
  
Commentary:Thus it is.** Why did I say that the illusory, ephemeral characteristics arise in an empty falseness? The doctrine I explained applies **throughout,** that is, to various divisions **up to the five skandhas** - form, feeling, thought, activity, and consciousness - **and the six entrances** - that is, the six sense organs, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind - **to the twelve places** - the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, together with the six defiling objects, which are forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas - **and the eighteen realms -** the six organs, the six defiling objects, and the six consciousnesses that are produced between the organs and the defiling objects opposite to them - the eye consciousness, the ear consciousness, the nose consciousness, the tongueue-consciousness, the body consciousness, and the mind consciousness. The six organs and the six defiling objects make up the twelve places. With the six consciousnesses added, they are the eighteen realms. When the various form and mind dharmas mix and unite, empty falseness arises. **The union and mixture of various causes and conditions account for their illusory and false existence, and the separation and dispersion of the causes and conditions result in their illusory and false extinction.** When causes and conditions do not mix and unite, there is an empty falseness which is called extinction. This is the nature of production and extinction.   
  
**Sutra:  
"Who would have thought that production, extinction, coming, and going are fundamentally the everlasting, wonderful light of the treasury of the Thus Come One, the unmoving, all pervading perfection, the wonderful nature of true suchness! If within the true and eternal nature one seeks coming and going, confusion and enlightenment, or birth and death, there is nothing that can be obtained.   
  
Commentary:**They are all non existent. There isn’t anything at all. When you do not understand, there is coming and going, there is confusion and enlightenment, there is birth and death. But if you understand the everlasting true mind, if you recognize your own basic nature, the pure nature and bright substance of the everlasting true mind, you put an end to all the false production and extinction. Then if you look for such characteristics as coming and going, confusion and enlightenment, and birth and death, you won’t find them. You won’t find anything at all.