**The Shurangama Sutra**

**VOLUME 4**

**CHAPTER 2**

**The Reason for Perfect Penetration**

K2 Then the Buddha speaks of the empty-not-empty treasury of the Thus Come One
to explain the reason for perfect penetration.
L1 He answers and then asks a question.
Ml He reiterates the doubt about the elements.
N1 He restates Purna's doubt.
 **Sutra:

Purna, you also asked whether the natures of water and fire would not destroy each other if the natures of earth, water, fire, and wind were all perfectly fused and pervaded the dharma-realm, and whether subtle emptiness and the great earth would not be incompatible if both pervaded the dharmarealm.

Commentary:**
Purna, you also asked whether the natures of water and fire would not destroy each other if the natures of earth, water, fire, and wind were all perfectly fused and pervaded the dharmarealm. You say, "Where there's water, there can't be fire, and where there's fire there can't be water. The natures of water and fire are not compatible.'"

You should know that water, fire, and every other thing has a nature, although it may not be capable of thought. Put you can't see this nature with the ordinary flesh eyes. When it's already become fire, we can see it, but before it becomes fire there is still a nature there. The same is true of water. This nature is contained within the dharma-realm. It pervades the dharma-realm. By use of the sun you can obtain fire, and by use of the moon you can obtain water, because the nature of those elements exists in emptiness. You see emptiness as empty, but it is actually replete with all appearances. And emptiness is just the dharma-realm. Purna doubts, however, that the nature of both fire and water can pervade the dharma-realm. "Purna, you also wonder whether subtle emptiness and the great earth would not be incompatible if both pervaded the dharma-realm. 'Emptiness is emptiness,' you reason, 'and if there is emptiness, there shouldn't be earth. The earth is a solid object, so there shouldn't be any emptiness where it is. If emptiness pervades the dharma-realm, earth shouldn't. If earth pervades the dharmarealm, then emptiness shouldn't' " the Buddha reiterates Purna's doubt.

N2 An analogy clarifies the appearance of the nature.
 **Sutra:

For example, Purna, the substance of emptiness is not the myriad things, and yet it does not prevent the inclusion of all appearances within it.

Commentary:**

There is an analogy to explain this principle, Purna. For example, Purna, the substance of emptiness is not the myriad things, and yet it does not prevent the inclusion of all appearances within it. It is basically empty of anything, but though its own substance has no appearance whatever, it does not oppose the natural arising of all things.

**Sutra:**
 **Do you know the reason why? Purna, the empty space is bright on a sunny day, and dark when the sky is cloudy. It moves when the wind rises up, it is fresh when the sky clears. It is turbid and hazy when the weather is foul, it is obscure when a dust-storm breaks out. It casts a bright reflection on a pool of clear water.

Commentary:**

Do you know the reason why? Purna, the empty space is bright on a sunny day, and dark when the sky is cloudy. It moves when the wind rises up, it is fresh when the sky clears. This refers to the time right after a rain when everything is sparkling clean. It is turbid and hazy when the weather is foul, it is obscure when a dust-storm breaks out. It casts a bright reflection on a pool of clear water. So in the great void, there are no appearances, but the appearances are allowed to appear at will, with no resistance on the part of emptiness. The same thing occurs
in the treasury of the Thus Come One, which is also basically devoid of appearances. And yet the seven elements, the five skandhas, the six sense organs, the twelve places, and the eighteen realms are all in the treasury of the Thus Come One, and it does not resist the arising of those appearances.

N3 He questions and explains about the falseness of appearances.

Sutra:
 **What do you think of these conditions which come into existence at different places? Are they created from these conditions themselves or do they find their origin in emptiness? If they arise from those conditions, Purna, then on a sunny day since the sun is bright, all the worlds of the ten directions should take the form of the sun. Then how does it happen that on a sunny day one still sees the round sun in the sky? If emptiness is bright, emptiness itself should shine. How does it happen that when there is a covering of clouds and fog there is no light in evidence?

Commentary:**

Purna, what is your opinion about this? What do you think of these conditions which come into existence at different places? Are they created from these conditions themselves or do they find their origin in emptiness? If they arise from those conditions, Purna, if the seven appearances arise of themselves, then let's take the sun as an example. On a sunny day since the sun is bright, all the worlds of the ten directions should take the form of the sun. All the lands and countries should look like the sun and have the ability to shine. Then how does it happen that on a sunny day one still sees the round sun in the sky? Moreover, if emptiness is bright, emptiness itself should shine. If the light is not produced from the sun, but from emptiness, then emptiness
should be innately bright. How does it happen that when there is a covering of clouds and fog there is no light in evidence? Emptiness doesn't give off light or have the ability to shine.
 **Sutra:

You should know that brightness is not the sun, is not emptiness, and is not other than the emptiness and the sun.

Commentary:**
You should know Purna, that the function of brightness is not the sun, it doesn't necessarily come from the sun. Nor does it necessarily come from emptiness. But it's also the case that it doesn't necessarily not come from emptiness and the sun. It is not other than they. Ultimately where does it come from? It comes from the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One.

N4 He correlates the analogy with the dharma.
 **Sutra:

The truly wonderful enlightened brightness is the same way. If your karma finds expression in emptiness, then emptiness will appear. If your karma finds expression in one or another of earth, water, fire, or wind, that one will appear. If your karma finds expression in them all, they will all appear.

Commentary:**
The truly wonderful enlightened brightness, the pure nature and bright substance of the everlasting true mind, is the same way. If your karma finds expression in emptiness, then emptiness will appear. If your karma finds expression in one or another of earth, water, fire, or wind, that one will appear. If you have created the causes to bring about one or another of the elements of earth, water, fire, or wind, then the element you have created will appear. If your karma finds expression in them all, they will all appear. If you create them simultaneously, then they simultaneously appear. For instance, a person might obtain fire from the sun and water from a pearl at the same time.
 **Sutra:

How can they all appear? Suppose, Purna, the sun's reflection appears in a single body of water, and two people gaze at it, both at the same time. Then one person walks east and the other walks west. Each person, still looking in the water, will see a sun go along with him, one to the east, one to the west, seemingly without there being any fixed direction for the movement of the sun?s reflection.

Commentary:**
How can they all appear? Suppose, Purna, the sun?s reflection appears in a single body of water, and two people gaze at it, both at the same time. If the water is clear, the sun's reflection can appear in it. The people see a single reflection of the sun in the water. Then one person walks east and the other walks west. Each person, still looking in the water, will see a sun go along with him, one to the east, one to the west. When the two stood together, they saw one sun. When they parted, there were two suns, one accompanying each of them, seemingly without there being any fixed direction for the movement of the sun's reflection. Which is true then? Which is false? These two suns appear unexpectedly. No one anticipated there would be more than one.

**Sutra:

"You shouldn't belabor the question and say, 'If there is one sun, how can it follow both people? Since the sun is double, why does only one appear in the sky?' This is just to revolve in falseness, because it cannot be proved."

Commentary:**

You shouldn't start arguing the point and belabor the question and say, "If there is one sun, how can it follow both people? Since the sun is double, why does only one appear in the sky?" To get caught up like this is just to revolve in falseness, because it cannot be proved. There's no foundation in fact. You may say it's one, but how can it follow both people? You may want to say it's two, but basically there isn't even one. How could there be two? Even the one is empty and false. So the whole argument is baseless.

N5 He explains the meaning to resolve his doubt.
 **Sutra:

Contemplate the fundamental falseness of appearances. They are just like flowers that are conjured up in space and produce empty fruit. Why, then, investigate the meaning of their formation and disappearance?

Commentary:**

When you look at appearances, contemplate their fundamental falseness. It's all like the sun's reflection in water, just mentioned. There was an appearance, but it was illusory. The one sun became two. How did the change take place? When did it divide? You can't see it clearly. One person sees only one sun, but it follows him. The same thing happens to the other person. And you can't point out and explain clearly exactly how those appearances come into being. They are just like flowers that are conjured up in space and produce empty fruit. Why, then, investigate the meaning of their formation and disappearance? How can you determine that earth, water, fire, and wind overcome one another? How can you ask about their mutual destruction?
 **Sutra:

Contemplate the fundamental truth of the nature. It is solely the wonderful enlightened brightness, the wonderful enlightened bright mind. Originally, it is neither water nor fire. Why, then, ask about incompatibility?

Commentary:**

Contemplate the fundamental truth of the nature. It is solely the wonderful enlightened brightness, the wonderful enlightened bright mind. These two phrases refer to the same thing, the second is just added for the sake of literary style. So the wonderful enlightened mind, originally, it is neither water nor fire. Although it is not either of these, it contains them both. The treasury of the Thus Come One is replete with that kind of functioning, but it doesn't originally manifest as water and fire. It is just the nature of water and fire. Why, then, ask about incompatibility?

You still don't understand the principle of contemplating the nature, so you ask about the mutual destruction of the appearances of water and fire. You don't know that the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One is complete with all the myriad dharmas and their functionings. You only know how to see the physical aspect of things, which, although it exists, is basically false. It is just like the one reflection of the sun which split in two and followed each person. Was it real? No. And that's the way all appearances are.

M2 He completes his discussion of the three aspects of the Treasury of the Thus Come One and exhorts him to cultivate.
N1 Ultimate disclosure of the perfect fusion.
O1 The mind in confusion and enlightenment is faced with the arising of conditions.
P1 Based on the arising of defiled conditions there is obstructive existence.
 **Sutra:

Purna, you think that form and emptiness overcome and destroy one another in the treasury of the Thus Come One. Thus the treasury of the Thus Come One accordingly appears to you as form and emptiness throughout the dharma-realm.

Commentary:**

Purna, you think that form and emptiness overcome and destroy one another in the treasury of the Thus Come One. "You" here does not just refer to Purna. It refers to you and me and everyone here investigating the Shurangama Sutra. You think that form and emptiness are incompatible and that they battle with one another and destroy one another in the treasury of the Thus Come One. Thus the treasury of the Thus Come One accordingly appears to you as form and emptiness throughout the dharmarealm. Since that's what you think, that's what happens throughout the dharma-realm.
 **Sutra:

And so, within it the wind moves, emptiness is still, the sun is bright, and the clouds are dark. The reason for this lies in the delusion of living beings who have turned their backs on enlightenment and joined with the "dust." Thus, the wearisome defilements come into being and mundane appearances exist.

Commentary:**

And so, since form and emptiness continually overcome one another in the treasury of the Thus Come One, there arises the function of according with conditions. Because of this, form and emptiness come into being, and their appearance and functioning pervade the dharma-realm. Within it, within the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, the wind moves, emptiness is still, the sun is bright, and the clouds are dark. The reason for this lies in the delusion of living beings. In the midst of so many appearances, living beings become muddled and unclear. They don't understand the principle of true emptiness, and so they are muddled. Therefore, in the true emptiness of the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, they give rise to the three subtle
delusions and the six coarse delusions. One unenlightened thought produces the three subtle appearances; States become the conditions for the growth of the six coarse appearances.

As I explained above, the three subtle appearances are the appearance of karma, the appearance of turning, and the appearance of manifestation. The six coarse appearances are the appearance of knowing, the appearance of continuity, the appearance of grasping, the appearance of reckoning names, the appearance of the arisal of karma, and the appearance of suffering bound to karma. When living beings give rise to these appearances, they are confused. Once confused, they turned their backs on enlightenment and joined with the "dust." They turn away from the true nature and get involved with the experiences of the six sense-objects. And this is all because they think that in the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One there is mutual incompatibility. Since they turn their backs on enlightenment and get mixed up with defilements, the wearisome defilements come into being and mundane appearances exist. The mountains, the rivers, the great earth, and the continuity of the world come into being.

P2 Based on the arising of pure conditions, there is unobstructed fusion.
 **Sutra:

With the wonderful brightness that is not extinguished and not produced, I unite with the treasury of the Thus Come One. Thus the treasury of the Thus Come One is the unique and wonderful enlightened brightness which completely illumines the dharma-realm.

Commentary:**

"With the wonderful brightness, the wonderfully enlightened bright mind, that is not extinguished and not produced." Here the Buddha is referring to himself, unite with the treasury of the Thus Come One. Thus the treasury of the Thus Come One is the unique and wonderful enlightened brightness, there is only the wonderfully enlightened bright mind which completely illumines the dharma-realm, shining on absolutely every place.
 **Sutra:

That is why, within it, the one is limitless; the limitless is one. In the small appears the great; in the great appears the small.

Commentary:**

In the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, the one is limitless; the limitless is one. One is all and all is one. In the small appears the great; in the great appears the small. Great and small are unobstructed; one and many are unhindered. You can also say that the one represents the treasury of the Thus Come One, which can manifest the myriad dharmas. And the myriad dharmas all return to the treasury of the Thus Come One. "The one" can also refer to the one mind, in that the myriad dharmas are all from the mind. The mind contains the myriad dharmas. The true mind is the treasury of the Thus Come One, the treasury of the Thus Come One is the true mind. You can't use the limited knowledge of ordinary people to reflect upon the subtle, wonderful, enlightened bright mind, with its inconceivable transformations. You'll never totally understand it that way.
 **Sutra:

Unmoving in the Bodhimanda, yet pervading the ten directions, my body contains the ten directions and endless emptiness. On the tip of a single hair appear the lands of the Jeweled Kings. Sitting in a mote of dust, I turn the great dharma wheel, destroy the defilements, and unite with enlightenment, so, true suchness, the wonderful enlightened bright nature, comes into being.

Commentary:**

Unmoving in the Bodhimanda, yet pervading the ten directions. This phrase refers to the Buddha's dharma body in the Bodhimanda which does not move but goes to all countries in the ten directions. My body contains the ten directions and endless emptiness. Not only does it pervade all Buddhalands, it even fills up empty space.

Well, if empty space is filled up, does it then cease to be empty? Does it wipe out empty space? Does it obliterate emptiness? No. What pervades the ten directions and endless emptiness is the dharma body, which has no appearance. On the tip of a single hair appear the lands of the Jeweled Kings. This is truly an inexpressibly wonderful state. All the Buddhas' lands appear in a single hair. This is the dependent appearing in the proper. The body is the proper retribution. The Buddhalands are the dependent retribution. So, in the smallest division of the proper retribution a single hair appears the largest division of the dependent retribution the Buddhalands. In the small appears the great.

Sitting in a mote of dust, I turn the great dharma wheel. Here the mote of dust refers to a mote of dust bordering on emptiness, which is one seventh of the smallest division of the dependent retribution. In it appears the great the Buddha's body, as he turns the dharma wheel to teach and transform living beings. Thus, in the small appears the great, and in the great appears the small. Ultimately how can it be like this? It is the wonderful functioning of the Buddhadharma, a glimpse of the Buddha-nature. Another example of the great appearing in the small is when we hold up a mirror to reflect miles and miles of scenery. In order to know about this state, you have to understand the principle of the unobstructedness and perfect fusion of noumena and phenomena. It's just what is meant by the one being limitless and the limitless one, which was discussed above. It also pertains to the meaning of dharani, which is to gather in all dharmas and hold all meanings. And, where does this gathering occur? In the Buddha-nature. After you hear more sutras, you will naturally come to understand this principle. This doctrine is so inexpressibly wonderful that I'm not going to say any more about it now.

The Buddha says that, sitting in a mote of dust, he turns the great dharma wheel. Someone with virtue in the Way can turn the dharma wheel to teach and transform living beings in all three realms the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the realm of formlessness. When you don't see him, he may sometimes be in the heavens teaching living beings by lecturing the sutras and speaking dharma. Sometimes he may be in the hells, lecturing sutras and speaking dharma to teach living beings. Sometimes he goes into a mote of dust to turn the dharma wheel in order to teach and transform living beings. Although a mote of dust is small, the living beings within it are no fewer than the number of living beings in this world. This state is inconceivable and inexpressible. To describe it in words is just to reveal its superficial aspects. Why do living beings have to be living beings? Because they are plagued with the wearisomeness of defilement. They turn their backs on enlightenment and unite with defilement. The Buddhas have been able to destroy the defilements, and unite with enlightenment, so, true suchness, the wonderful enlightened bright nature, comes into being. Our true mind is the treasury of the Thus Come One are different names for the same thing.

O2 The inherent mind is faced with the perfect nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One.
P1 In the perfection of the empty treasury, everything is non-existent.
 **Sutra:

The treasury of the Thus Come One is the fundamental, wonderful, perfect mind.

Commentary:**

It's also called the treasury of the Thus Come One and the fundamental, wonderful, perfect mind. Basically wonderful, perfect, and pure, it pervades the dharma-realm. It is so great that there is nothing beyond it and so small that there is nothing within it. This fundamental, wonderful, perfect mind is different from any dharma. In what way?
 **Sutra:

It is not the mind, nor emptiness, nor earth, nor water, nor wind, nor fire; it is not the eyes, nor the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, or the mind. It is not form, nor sound, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or dharmas. It is not the realm of eyeconsciousness, nor any other, up to and including the realm of mind-consciousness.

Commentary:**

It is not the mind, not your conscious mind, nor emptiness, nor earth, nor water, nor wind, nor fire. It's not any of the four elements; they are all empty. This is called "making all conditioned dharmas empty." It is not the eyes, nor the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, or the mind. It is not the five skandhas or the six sense-organs. It is not form, nor sound, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or dharmas. The six sense-objects also are done away with. This is similar to the passage in the Heart Sutra which says, There are no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind; no forms, sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, or dharmas; no realm of eyeconsciousness, up to and including no realm of mind-consciousness; and no ignorance or ending of ignorance, up to and including no old age and death or ending of old age and death. There is no suffering, no accumulating, no extinction, no Way, and no understanding and no attaining. The difference is that the Heart Sutra says "there is no," and the passage here in the Shurangama Sutra says "it is not." "It is not" implies that it might be something else; here it says, "it is not," but later it says, "it is."

It is not the realm of eye-consciousness, nor any other, up to and including the realm of mind-consciousness. It is not the consciousness of the eyes, or of the ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind. Our fundamental, wonderful, perfect mind is none of these. The Buddha has already discussed all of them; the six entrances, the five skandhas, the twelve places, the eighteen realms, and he said that they were the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One. Now he says they are not. He has explained them to the point that everyone is confused, and no one knows what to think. He says they are, and he says they are not. Ultimately, are they or aren't they? There isn't any "is" or "is not." Don't worry. They neither are nor are not. That's Buddhadharma. There is no "is" and no "is not."

**Sutra:

It is not understanding, nor ignorance, nor the ending of understanding or ignorance, nor any other, up to and including old age and death and the ending of old age and death.

Commentary:**
The Buddha swept away the dharma, as he spoke it. When the Buddha was about to enter nirvana, someone asked him, "Buddha, how are we to propagate the dharma you have spoken?" What do you suppose the Buddha replied? He said, "I haven't spoken any dharma." Now you shouldn't think from his answer that the Buddha had become slightly eccentric as he neared his death. That's not the case. He said, "Whoever says that I spoke a single word slanders the Buddha. I never said a single word." So he spoke dharma for forty-nine years and held over three hundred assemblies but didn't speak a single word! How can that be? Basically, the Buddha spoke all dharmas, but after he finished speaking them, they disappeared. That's what's called,

Sweep away all dharmas,
And separate from all appearances.

It was to teach people not to be attached to dharma. It was to keep people from saying, "I should affix myself to the dharmas the Buddha spoke.' If people did that, they could not obtain the emptiness of dharmas. You want it to be that people are empty and dharmas are empty. So now, in this passage, the Buddha negates everything he has said.

You say, "I've obtained the emptiness of people and dharmas, and so all I do from morning to night is sleep. I don't study anything at all. People are empty, after all, so I just go to sleep." But, then you've still got "sleep." When even sleep is gone, that really is emptiness. If there's still sleep, it's not emptiness. You want to make the attachments to self and dharmas totally empty. The Vajra Sutra says that the dharma the Thus Come One spoke is like a raft. Imagine how tired you would get if you were to hoist the raft on your back and carry it with you once it has taken you across the river. The raft simply serves to get you across the water. You have to relinquish it once you are across. In the same way, the dharma's purpose is to extinguish our afflictions. Once the afflictions are gone, we don't need any dharmas. Before your afflictions are gone, you can't do without the dharma. If you reject the dharma at that stage, your afflictions will just increase.

Afflictions are endless;
I vow to cut them off.
Dharma-doors are limitless;
I vow to study them all.

We study the dharma-doors in order to cut off afflictions. Now let me tell you some true Buddhadharma. You have to cut off your afflictions. If you study the dharma for thousands of years and don't cut off your afflictions, it is the same as if you had not studied. "How do I cut off my afflictions?" you wonder. Just don't be turned around by the situations and states of mind that come your way. If you are not influenced by situations and states of mind, you have some samadhi-power. That's Buddhadharma! Why do you say that the Buddhadharma has no "is" or "is not"?

The Sixth Patriarch told us:

Basically there is nothing at all.
Where can the dust alight?

And so these dharmas are negated. If you can understand that the Buddhadharma has no "is" or "is not," you can become enlightened. The Sixth Patriarch asked Hui Ming, "When there is no thought of good and no thought of evil, what is the senior-seated Ming's original face?" "No thought of good" is the case of there being no "is" "No thought of evil" is the case of there being no "is not." Apply your effort to the point where there is no "is" and no "is not" no "right" and no "wrong" and try to figure out what kind of state that is. The absence of "is" and "is not" of "right" and "wrong" is itself the inherent Buddha-nature, the fundamental, wonderful, perfect mind. If you obtain that, then you have everything, and you also don't have anything; but, it isn't like your present attachment to that state. When you have everything, what do you have? You have all the dharma-gems in the treasury of the Thus Come One. You don't have anything at all; this means you don't have any affliction. There are as many afflictions as there are dharma-gems in the treasury of the Thus Come One. Why haven't you obtained those dharma-gems? Because you have too much affliction, and there is no place in your stomach for so many things. Thus, if you have a lot of affliction, you have only a little dharma-water small dharma-nature. If your afflictions change, they themselves are the dharmawater; they are your dharma-nature.

Don't fear that you have too big a temper. The bigger your temper, the greater your dharma-nature. But, don't keep letting it turn into temper, because if you do that, you counteract your own intelligence. You start out smart and end up stupid if you do that. The Buddhadharma teaches you to cut off your afflictions, and the the afflictions become Bodhi, just as ice melts into water. When water freezes, the ice is your afflictions; when it melts, it becomes Bodhi. There's nothing so terribly difficult about it. All you have to do is change and you can be successful.

It is not understanding " it's not enlightenment" nor ignorance, not the falseness that arises from the one truth, nor the ending of understanding or ignorance, nor any other, up to and including old age and death and the ending of old age and death. The dharmas of the twelve links of conditioned causation are also made empty.

The dharma now being explained is the empty treasury of the Thus Come One. Next, the treasury of the Thus Come One which is empty and yet not empty will be explained. So you see, the treasury of the Thus Come One is not just one simple thing; it has these several distinctions. You can't just know a single term in the Buddhadharma and assume that you understand it all. You may know only about the treasury of the Thus Come One, but you must also make empty the treasury of the Thus Come One, and know the treasury of the Thus Come One which is not empty, and then you have to realize the treasury of the Thus Come One which is empty and yet not empty. A lot of trouble?
 **Sutra:

It is not suffering, nor accumulation, nor extinction, nor the way. It is neither knowing nor attaining.

Commentary:**
In this world there are many kinds of suffering. First, there are three sufferings; there are also eight sufferings. The three sufferings are the suffering within suffering, the suffering of decay, and the suffering of process. Suffering within suffering is experienced by poor people. For example, poverty itself is a kind of suffering, and it becomes suffering within suffering when someone who is poor gets sick and has no money to see a doctor. Or, perhaps a poor person lives in a broken-down hut, and suddenly the rainy season hits. Living in the hut was suffering enough, but with the rain leaking in everywhere, there isn't much difference between being inside the hut and outside.

When I was in Hong Kong, I lived in a room that leaked when it rained. Above my bed alone were six holes where the rain poured in. Wouldn't you say that was suffering? Although it was suffering, I did not repair the leaks in my own roof. When I had a little money, I wanted to use it to help other people. That's the kind of stupid person I was. During that time, I gave $1,500 to help sponsor the carving of Buddha-images for a temple that was being established. I could have repaired my roof for about $200, but I couldn't bear to use the money to fix my own roof. I wanted to help make the Buddha-images for that other temple. And people think, "That person doesn't know how to keep books. He can't separate his own business from other people's."

Suffering within suffering occurs when someone has to endure poverty, and then in addition to being penniless, he can't even get any clothing or food. Or, someone who has no money suddenly learns of the death of his father and can't afford to buy him a coffin. I had that experience also. When my mother died, I was at her side, but I didn't have a cent in my pocket. The coffin had to be purchased, but what was I to do? When I talked it over with my brothers, we all looked at one another; no one was able to do it. I said, "Well, if you can't manage it, I will go ask a friend to help." Fortunately, I had some friends whom I investigated the Buddhadharma with, and among those friends was one who sold coffins.

When I told him my mother had died, he immediately said, "No problem. You select any kind of casket you want. I don't need any money now. You can pay me when you get it. Not only that, I'll give you $5,000 on loan for you to use now." Because I ordinarily liked to help people, there were people who wanted to help me when something of mine came up. But, that experience was another example of suffering within suffering.

From the moment my mother was buried, I really put everything down. I paid no attention to the fact that I was in debt. I just stayed by the grave to practice filial piety.

The suffering of decay happens to wealthy people. Originally they are wealthy, and then somehow or other their wealth is destroyed. Suppose, for example, some people make a lot of money and hide the bills in their house instead of putting the money in the bank. Then, their house catches on fire, and the whole wad burns up. Or, maybe their gold is stolen by thieves. Or, maybe you're so attached to your money that you carry it everywhere with you, never able to part with it, until one day you're not careful and you lose it all.

Then there is the suffering of the life-process. Although you don't undergo the suffering within suffering as those who are poor do, and you don't undergo the suffering of decay as those who are wealthy do, you still have the suffering of passing from childhood to adolescence to middle age to old age to death. This process flows on continually without cease, and it is also suffering. Those are the three sufferings.

The first of the eight sufferings is birth. When a child comes into the world, the only thing it can do is cry. The child can't express itself clearly yet, but its crying indicates suffering. The pain of birth is like the pain a live tortoise would feel if its shell were ripped away. When the infant first comes in contact with the air, its pain is extreme.

The second of the eight sufferings is old age. When people get old, they lose the use of their eyes, ears, hands, and legs. They can't get around, and their food is tasteless. When old age comes, the whole physical mechanism starts to break down. That's why old people get cranky and cross. They are just about like children, so you can't blame them for their behavior.

The third is the suffering of sickness. The things of this world may seem unjust, but sickness is very fair toward all. No matter whether one is rich or poor, of honorable or lowly birth, one will feel the discomfort of sickness when it strikes. The fourth suffering is death, which is also just, in regard to everyone. The time will come when everyone must die, no matter who it is.

The fifth is the suffering of being apart from those you love. Everyone knows what love is, but people don't realize that there is suffering in love, the suffering of being apart from those you love. No matter how much you may love a person, the time may come when you have to leave him. Some circumstances will arise that make parting necessary, and that is suffering.

The sixth is the suffering of being together with those you hate. You really dislike a certain type of person, but you meet up with just that kind of person no matter where you go.

The seventh is the suffering of not getting what you seek. You want something, and you can't get it; that is also suffering.

The last is the suffering of the blaze of the five skandhas. Forms, feelings, thoughts, activities, and consciousness are a raging blaze.

In this passage, the Buddha says that the treasury of the Thus Come One is none of the four truths, neither suffering, nor accumulation, nor extinction, nor the Way. Accumulation refers to affliction, and extinction refers to the principle of certification to nirvana. Nor is it the Way. It is neither knowing nor attaining. Even wisdom becomes empty. It is not the attaining to some level of fruition. This is the emptiness of the treasury of the Thus Come One; there is nothing in it at all.

Sweep away all dharmas,
And separate from all appearances.

Speaking of "extinction," I recall something that happened when Shakyamuni Buddha was practicing the Bodhisattva Way. When Shakyamuni Buddha was on the causal ground, that is, when he was cultivating the Way, before he became a Buddha, he met a rakshasa ghost who said:

All activities are impermanent
characterized by production and extinction.

He said just this one sentence, these two phrases, and did not say any more. Shakyamuni Buddha recognized it as Buddhadharma and said, "Brother ghost, you were just reciting a verse that was Buddhadharma, but you spoke only two lines of it. There must be two more lines. Can you tell me what they are?"

The ghost said, "You want to hear poetry, but I'm hungry right now. I haven't eaten in ever so long. I'd like to recite the verse for you, but I haven't the strength."

Shakyamuni Buddha asked him, "What do you want to eat? I can prepare something for you."

The ghost said, "You can't prepare what I eat."

"Why not?"

"Because I eat human flesh, and there isn't anyone else around here now. Even if there were, you wouldn't have the right to offer him to me to eat."

Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Ah, so that's how it is. Well, finish speaking that dharma for me, and I'11 offer you myself to eat. You can eat me."

"Can you really give up your life?" the ghost asked.

"For the sake of the dharma, I forget my own life. Of course, I can give it up," said the Buddha. "So speak up. And, when you've finished, you can eat."

"Are you cheating me?" said the ghost, eyeing him closely. "After I speak the dharma, will you change your mind and be unable to relinquish your own life to make my meal?"

"Absolutely not," the Buddha said. "Don't worry. After you speak the dharma, and once I remember it clearly, I will let you eat me."

So the rakshasa ghost said the last two lines of the verse:

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

Then the rakshasa ghost said, "All right, I've spoken the dharma. Let me eat you."

Shakyamuni Buddha said, "Wait a minute. Don't eat me yet."

"See?" said the ghost. "I knew you'd back out. But, it won't work. I'll have to become impolite with you."

"I'm not backing out," said the Buddha. "Wait until I write the four lines of verse down, and then you can eat me. Then, even though I will be gone, I'll have preserved this dharma so that others who come after me can rely on it in their cultivation. So, wait a minute."

"Fine," said the ghost. "Start writing"

The Buddha carved the verse into the bark of a tree. As soon as the ghost saw he had finished, he said, "Now I can eat you, right?"

"Wait a bit longer," said the Buddha.

"You've carved it in the tree, and people who come along can read it. What more do you want? What are we waiting for now?"

The Buddha said, "I don't think that the carving in the tree will last long. Wait a bit while I carve the verse in a rock. Then it will last forever. Then you can eat me."

"Sure," said the ghost. "You've got a lot of excuses. You're just procrastinating. But, do as you like."

Shakyamuni Buddha found a way to carve the verse in a stone. Then he said invitingly to the ghost, "I'm finished. I've done what I needed to do. You can eat me now."

The rakshasa ghost said, "Really? You can really let me eat you?" So he opened his mouth as if to take a bite, but he suddenly ascended into empty space and went to the heavens. He was actually a god who had come to test Shakyamuni Buddha to see just how sincere he really was about the dharma. And Shakyamuni Buddha proved himself. He was able to forget his own life for the sake of the dharma. He could sacrifice his life in order to preserve the Buddhadharma. In the past, the Buddha renounced his life for half a verse.

Look at us now. We listen to the sutras and hear dharma, but we don't understand it very well, so we think it better to rest. See how lazy we are! Why did Shakyamuni Buddha become a Buddha? It was because he could forget about himself for the sake of the dharma. He would disregard everything else for the sake of the dharma; he didn't want anything. If you are really sincere about the dharma, you will seek it so sincerely that you will be able to drop everything, even things you thought it impossible to do without. A few days ago, a disciple of mine called me four or five times long-distance from New York. He is very unusual. He always wants to see me. He was about thirteen when he took refuge with me. Before that, he had had some strange experiences. Although he was young, he had heart disease. The doctors prescribed five years of complete bed-rest. He was not to get up at all; he wasn't supposed to walk even a few feet. It was during that period that he saw a photograph of me. While his relatives and friends recited "Namo Amitabha Buddha," he would recite one of my names: "Namo Dharma Master To Lun." "Namo" means to offer up one's life in reverence. He'd recite sitting in full lotus on his bed. His sincerity was unusual for such a small child, and he kept up that recitation for more than seventy days. Then he saw the photograph turn into a live person who stretched out his hand and rubbed the boy on the crown of his head. After that, his heart disease and all the symptoms of his illness disappeared. At that time he'd never even met me. This may sound like a tall tale, but it was his own personal experience. After he was cured, he came to my temple to meet me. He took refuge, and then sat in meditation. I didn't usually teach meditation when I was in Hong Kong. If someone wanted to investigate Chan, they did it on their own. So he did. He went to school, and during recess or breaks from classes he would go off into the hills to meditate, or even into the bathroom wherever he could find a place. After about a year, he opened his Buddha eye, and he then understood extremely clearly all manner of things that were going on.

Another strange thing happened with this same disciple. He was always very short, probably because of his earlier illness. But, his English was good, and when Americans came to visit me, I would have him translate for me. Despite his fluent English, though, Americans didn't take him seriously because they saw he was such a small child. So, one day I said to him, "Hurry up and grow up! You're so short that everyone thinks of you as just a kid, and no matter how eloquent you are, they don't take you seriously." He was very obedient. He went home, and in one week grew three inches. Now he's taller than I am.

A few days ago he called me and wanted me to come to New York to see him. But, because I was lecturing the sutra for all of you, I told him I couldn't come, even though he wanted to see me very badly. "I'm lecturing the sutras now," I said, "and I can't abandon a whole group of people just because one person wants to see me. If you really want to see me, come to San Francisco." He decided to come to San Francisco, but then found that he didn't have enough time. So yesterday he called to tell me he was leaving. If it weren't for lecturing the Shurangama Sutra, if it weren't for the sake of the Dharma, I would really like to see that disciple of mine. He has a lot of faith in me and really knows a lot of Buddhadharma.

When I was in Hong Kong, he used to translate my lectures into Cantonese. And he was so in tune with me that if I said just one sentence, he could pick up on it and explain the entire meaning. People objected and said, "The Abbot didn't say all that; what's he doing talking so much?" Actually I had told him to explain all that he was explaining. Because he had the Buddha eye, he knew that I was telling him to explain the principles in detail. What he would say is the same as what I would have said, and so I was a little lazy and let him do the talking. **Sutra:

It is not dana, nor shila, nor virya, nor kshanti, nor dhyana, nor prajna, nor paramita.**

**Commentary:**
In the empty treasury of the Thus Come One, the six perfections are also emptied. In the previous passage, the four truths were said to be empty. Immediately after his enlightenment, the Buddha explained the four truths and their three turnings. The emptying of the four truths and twelve links of conditioned causation makes the dharmas of the sound-hearers and the condition-enlightened ones empty. Now the emptying of the six perfections makes the dharmas of the Bodhisattvas empty.

The first of the six perfections is dana, Sanskrit for giving. There are three kinds of giving: giving of wealth, giving of dharma, and giving of fearlessness. In giving wealth, one gives material objects to people in order to help them out. Lecturing sutras and speaking dharma is an example of giving dharma. Giving of fearlessness ocurs when someone is afraid of something and you think of a way to comfort him so that he isn't frightened any more. The next is shila, Sanskrit for "precepts." There are the five precepts, the eight precepts, the ten precepts, the two hundred and fifty precepts for bhikshus, and the three hundred and forty-eight precepts for bhikshunis. There are also the ten major and fortyeight minor Bodhisattva precepts.

Kshanti is Sanskrit for "patience." We say we study Buddhadharma, and it's not that difficult to learn the concepts. What is difficult is to put the concepts into practice. The way some people study patience is to tell others to be patient with them, so that they will have no need to be patient with others. So they say to other people who are not patient with them, "You have studied so much of the Buddhadharma, you should have more patience. Why do you get so upset when I say just one thing to you?" They blame others for not being patient, but they can't be patient themselves. And how do they rationalize it? "I understand the Buddhadharma: I am supposed to be without a self. So I don't have any patience. I don't have the view that there's a self, so when it's time to be patient, it's you who should be patient, not me."

But, when it's time to eat, they remember they are not supposed to have any view that there are people, so they think they don't have to give anyone else anything to eat. When there's work to be done, or when they're in a difficult spot, they remember that they are not supposed to have the view that there is a self, so they say they don't have to take care of such things. And, if they kill someone, they say, "It doesn't matter, because there aren't any living beings to begin with. So I haven't really killed anything." Or they hit someone for no reason at all, and when asked why they did it, they say, "There aren't any living beings, and you belong in that category, so I haven't really hit anything at all!" That's deviant knowledge and deviant views for you. When they eat meat they say, "It doesn't matter, living beings aren't supposed to have the characteristic of a lifespan anyway. Since you don't have the characteristic of a lifespan, you can die at any time, so I can go ahead and eat you. Besides, once you're dead, your flesh will just get rancid if I don't eat it. That's what adherents of externalist religions say. They say that domestic animals are put here just for human beings to eat, and if they aren't eaten, they will overpopulate the world. If people didn't eat cows, sheep, and pigs, they would multiply until they filled up the world. But think about it; people don't eat cats, but the world has yet to be overridden with cats. In fact, when people don't eat animals, not so much killing-karma is created, and the animals don't multiply so quickly. So some people misinterpret the principles, such as the principle of patience, and say that other people should be patient with them, but that they themselves don't have to be patient with others.

Virya is Sanskrit for "vigor." There is physical vigor and mental vigor. When your mind is vigorous, you are seeking Buddhadharma at all times. When your body is vigorous, you practice the Buddhadharma at all times.

Dhyana is also a Sanskrit word; it means "quiet consideration." There are many kinds of dhyana; but now the Buddha says that there isn't any dhyana, either.

Prajna, another Sanskrit word, means "wisdom." There are three kinds of prajna: literary prajna, contemplative prajna, and actual-appearance prajna. Thus, the six perfections, or paramitas, are all empty.

Paramita, also Sanskrit, means to reach the other shore. It refers to the successful completion of anything. We cultivate and become Buddhas; having progressed from the state of an ordinary beings to the state of Buddha is a case of paramita. For an ordinary person to become a Bodhisattva is another kind of paramita. Going from San Francisco to Oakland is also a kind of paramita. Now all these dharmas in the treasury of the Thus Come One are said to not exist. They are all emptied. Previously, when we said that empty space does not exclude any appearances, we were talking about the treasury of the Thus Come One which is not empty. Here we are discussing the empty treasury of the Thus Come One. In describing the empty treasury of the Thus Come One, the word "not" is used, but it does not signify total negation. What still exists is the basically wonderful, perfect mind. But that mind is not called by these names, so here the empty treasury of the Thus Come One is being described.
 **Sutra:

Nor any other: it is not the Tathagata, nor the arhats, nor samyaksambodhi, nor parinirvana, nor eternity, nor bliss, nor true self, nor purity.

Commentary:**

Nor any other means that all the levels of enlightenment, from the six paramitas through the ten dwellings, the ten faiths, the ten practices, the ten transferences, and the ten grounds, up to and including the fruition of Buddhahood, are included in the emptying. Progressing from the level of Bodhisattvahood to the fruition of Buddhahood takes a long time, and there are many dharmas along the way, but none of them exists; they are all empty, and the fruition of Buddhahood is also empty. It is not the Tathagata which is Sanskrit for the Thus Come One. Even the title of Thus Come One is empty. Nor the arhats, those worthy of the offerings of people and gods. Nor is it samyaksambodhi. The title "One of Proper and Universal Knowledge" is also empty. "Proper knowledge" is the mind being the myriad dharmas. "Universal knowledge" is the myriad dharmas being the mind. One of proper and universal knowledge realizes that,

The mind is the myriad dharmas;
The myriad dharmas are the mind.

Nor is it parinirvana. The Sanskrit word "nirvana" is interpreted as meaning "not produced and not extinguished." Even the concept of non-production and non-extinction is non existent. Nor is it eternity, nor bliss, nor true self, nor purity.

"Eternity" means unmoving. "Bliss" means being filled with the joy of dharma. "True self" is the comfort of having attained the genuine self. "Purity" is what is obtained from the dharma of nirvana. These names are also non-existent. They are also empty. You may ask, then, what there is in the treasury of the Thus Come One. I've told you before that everything is there. You ask what is not there; there isn't anything there at all. Everything is made from the mind alone. The treasury of the Thus Come One is empty, is not empty, and is both empty and not empty, and so the mystery in it is endless. You can say that things exist, you can say that they are empty, and you can say that they do not exist and are not empty. After you have studied the Buddhadharma for a long time, you will understand this.

P2 In the non-empty treasury everything exists.
 **Sutra:

Therefore, it is neither mundane nor transcendental, since the treasury of the Thus Come One is the fundamental brightness of the wonderful mind.

Commentary:**

What has been discussed above is the empty treasury of the Thus Come One. Therefore, it follows from these principles that it is neither mundane nor transcendental. The treasury of the Thus Come One is empty. There aren't any dharmas. This is called,

Sweep away all dharmas,
And separate from all appearances.

The total absence of any dharmas is true emptiness. True emptiness can bring about wonderful existence.

'Mundane" refers to the six ordinary dharma-realms. "Transcendental" refers to the four holy dharma-realms. The treasury of the Thus Come One is the fundamental brightness of the wonderful mind. On the other hand, the mundane and transcendental dharmas are just the treasury of the Thus Come One, fundamentally bright and illumining. They are the wonderful mind which is still and constantly illumining, illumining and constantly still. The text here says the treasury of the Thus Come One "is not," and the text that follows says that absolutely everything "is" the treasury of the Thus Come One, the fundamental brightness of the wonderful mind.
 **Sutra:

It is the mind, it is emptiness, it is earth, it is water, it is wind, it is fire, it is the eyes, it is the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. It is form, it is sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas. It is the realm of eye-consciousness, and so forth up, to and including the realm of mindconsciousness.

Commentary:**

It is the mind, the discriminating, conscious mind, it is emptiness, it is earth, it is water, it is wind, it is fire, it is the eyes, it is the ears, the nose, the tongue, the body, and the mind. It is form, it is sounds, smells, tastes, objects of touch, and dharmas. It is the realm of eye-consciousness, and so forth, up to and including the realm of mind-consciousness. So, the empty treasury of the Thus Come One is also the existent treasury of the Thus Come One, the treasury of the Thus Come One which is not empty. Thus, in the treasury of the Thus Come One, which is empty and yet not empty, there is the fundamental brightness of the wonderful mind. It is the five skandhas, the six entrances, the twelve places, and the eighteen realms.
 **Sutra:

It is understanding and ignorance and the ending of understanding and ignorance, and so forth up to and including old age and death and the ending of old age and death. It is suffering, it is accumulation, it is extinction, and it is the way. It is knowing and attaining. It is dana, it is shila, it is virya, it is kshanti, it is dhyana, it is prajna, and it is paramita, and so forth, up to and including the Tathagata, the arhats, samyaksambodhi, parinirvana, eternity, bliss, true self, and purity.

Commentary:**

This section of text describes the treasury of the Thus Come One which is not empty. Previously, the empty treasury of the Thus Come One was described. Now it is said to be not empty. If it's empty, why is it now said not to be empty? After it's empty, it can be not empty. If it were empty and if that's all there were to it, it wouldn't be wonderful. It's because true emptiness is what gives rise to wonderful existence. And wonderful existence produces true emptiness. So now the treasury of the Thus Come One which is not empty is giving rise to wonderful existence. Therefore, the five skandhas, the six entrances, the twelve places, the eighteen realms, the four truths, and the twelve links of conditioned causation, and so forth, none of them is empty. They can be empty or not empty because there are no fixed dharmas. That's why the Vajra Sutra says,

Even dharmas should be relinquished,
Not to speak of no dharmas.

You should not be attached to the existence of dharmas, because if you are, you have an attachment to dharmas. If you have an attachment to dharmas, it is the same as if you had not understood the dharma. Originally you have an attachment to self, but then when you encounter the dharma you give rise to attachment to dharmas. In Buddhism, then, you can't have any attachments. If there are no attachments, existence is just non-existence. If you have attachments, then non-existence exists.

P3 In the empty-not-empty treasury is perfect fusion.
 **Sutra:

It is both mundane and transcendental, since the treasury of the Thus Come One is the wonderful brightness of the fundamental mind.

Commentary:**

In the previous passage, it is said that it is the five skandhas, the six entrances, the twelve places, the eighteen realms, the four truths, the twelve links of conditioned causation, the six paramitas, and so forth, including the titles of the Thus Come One. It is all these things. Further, it is both mundane and transcendental, since the treasury of the Thus Come One is the wonderful brightness of the fundamental mind, the basic mind that is still and always illumining.
 **Sutra:

It is apart from 'is' and 'is not.' It is identical with 'is' and 'is not'

Commentary:**

It is apart from "is," from existence, and "is not," nonexistence. It's not that is does exist, and it is not that it doesn't exist. That's true emptiness and wonderful existence. So, the principle of the treasury of the Thus Come One which is empty and yet not empty is that it is apart from emptiness and existence and yet not apart from emptiness and existence. And, in light of this principle, the Buddha spoke what follows.

N2 He upbraids them for conceptualizing and verbalizing.
 **Sutra:

How can living beings in the three realms of existence on the level of worldliness and the sound-hearers and those enlightened to conditions on the level of transcendence make suppositions about the supreme Bodhi of the Thus Come One with the minds that they know of, or enter the knowledge and vision of the Buddha through the medium of worldly language and expressions?

Commentary:**

How can living beings in the three realms of existence on the level of worldliness,in the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm, in the six common dharma-realms, the sound-hearers and those enlightened to conditions on the level of transcendence, the arhats of the two vehicles, how can they make suppositions about the supreme Bodhi of the Thus Come One with the minds that they know of? At that time, Purna had already been certified as having attained the fourth fruition of arhatship, so the Buddha says, "The minds you know of" the mind of an ordinary person and the mind of an arhat, "How can you investigate the Buddha's enlightenment which no one surpasses? Or enter the knowledge and vision of the Buddha through the medium of worldly language and expressions? You want to know the Buddha's knowledge and vision, you want to get into the same state as the Buddha; but how can that be?" Worldly language is the knowledge and vision of ordinary people. And even you who have transcended the mundane and are at the fourth stage of arhatship still cannot imagine the state of the Buddha. You can't use language and consideration to make suppositions about it, to guess at it. "Make suppositions" means you don't really know, but you assume something about it. For example, a child likes to eat candy, so it supposes that everyone likes to eat candy. It doesn't know that some grown-ups don't like candy.

By the same token, ordinary people, and even arhats who are still in the state of the small vehicle, don't have total comprehension, and so they don't know the state of the Buddha.

N3 Conclusion: an analogy for the seeming loss.
 **Sutra:

For example, lutes, flutes, and guitars can make wonderful sounds, but if there are no skilled fingers to play them, their music will never come forth.

Commentary:**

Although the treasury of the Thus Come One is empty, it is nonetheless replete with all dharmas. For example, lutes, flutes, and guitars can make wonderful sounds. Various instruments can make subtle, wonderful sounds. But if there are no skilled fingers to play them, their music will never come forth. No matter how fine the instrument is, there is no way it can play itself. There must be clever fingers to play it. Although the text speaks of "skilled fingers," there must also be a skilled mind. The mind cannot control the fingers if it is not skilled. The skill in the fingers comes from a skilled mind, which is what brings forth the exquisite sounds.
 **Sutra:

You and all living beings are the same way. The precious, enlightened mind is perfect in everyone. Thus, I press my finger upon it and the ocean-impression emits light; you move your mind, and the wearisome defilements spring up.

Commentary:**

The musical instrument that needs a musician before it can make music; the instrument may be fine, but what comes out may not sound so good if one is not a musician, is an analogy for the treasury of the Thus Come One. The Buddha tells Purna, "You and all living beings are the same way. With your ordinary thought you try to make suppositions about the state of the Thus Come One, and so you fit the analogy. The precious, enlightened mind is perfect in everyone. Every person is complete with it. Thus, I press my finger upon it and the ocean-impression emits light." Here the Thus Come One refers to himself. "All I need do is press my finger and the ocean-impression emits light." What is the 'ocean-impression'?

It is a kind of samadhi which the Buddha has where the myriad things are all known to the mind as if they had been imprinted on it like a seal. When the ocean is completely smooth, it can reflect the myriad things; it is what is meant by the "ocean-impression emits light." You move your mind, and the wearisome defilements spring up. As soon as a thought comes to your mind, the tiresome dust arises. The false-thinking mind manifests itself. The Buddha presses his finger and the ocean-impression emits light, which shows how subtle and miraculous the state of the Buddha is. Purna and other living beings don't have such a subtle state. They exist in a state of wearisome defilements.

L2 Again the explanation brings up a question.
M1 Purna asks about the cause for falseness and decides to vigorously cultivate.
 **Sutra:

It is all because you do not diligently seek the unsurpassed enlightened Way, but are fond of the lesser vehicle and are satisfied with little attainment.

Commentary:**

Here the Buddha scolds Purna even more severely. "Why haven't you cut off your wearisome defilements? Why do you move your mind and let the tiresome dust spring up? It is all because you do not diligently seek the unsurpassed enlightened Way. You aren't attentive at all times to the unsurpassed path to enlightenment, but are fond of the lesser vehicle and are satisfied with little attainment. You are greedy for the dharmas of the small vehicle and are content with having attained a slight state." This section of text is very important. Everyone should take a look at himself. Ask yourself whether you are actually diligently seeking unsurpassed Bodhi. Are you genuinely seeking the Buddhadharma? If you really want to understand the Buddhadharma, you should diligently seek unsurpassed Bodhi. Ask yourself what you are doing here every day. "Is it the case that I just follow the crowd? If people laugh, do I laugh? If people talk, do I talk?" If you just follow the crowd, you are not really developing your own skill. If you are really working on yourself, then you aren't even aware of it when someone beside you speaks. You don't even hear them. If someone walks past you, you don't even see them. "I'm not deaf, I'm not blind," you say. "Why wouldn't I see them? Why wouldn't I hear someone speak?" If you are able not to see and not to hear, even though you are not blind or deaf: that is the wonderful. Then you've really got something. You are not blind or deaf, but,

Your eyes see forms,
but inside there is nothing.
Your ears hear mundane sounds,
but the mind does not know.

If you can be like that, then I know that you are diligently seeking unsurpassed Bodhi. If you are not like that, you should be courageous, truly set your mind on the Way, and seek the Unsurpassed Path.

One day someone said to me, "There's not a single place here that's quiet." If you yourself are quiet, then every place is quiet. If you yourself are not quiet, then no place will be quiet. If you are not quiet within and are turned around by external states, there will be external states wherever you go. No matter where you go, to the mountains, to the rivers, on the great earth, in the houses and cottages, on the porches and verandas, no matter where you go it will not be quiet. It is because you can't even get along with yourself. You get angry with yourself. And why is that? Because you can't control your environment. You are influenced by it. When someone passes by a person who diligently seeks for Bodhi, he doesn't notice the person passing; if someone says something nearby him, he doesn't even hear it.

"You are always urging the impossible," you protest. "It can't be done."

If you can find a way to do the impossible, then it counts. All of these things are insignificant states if you have the Way. If you can turn the noisy city into a mountain grove, you've got some skill. So, ask yourself whether you are diligently seeking the unsurpassed Bodhi. Or have you come here just to find fault with people instead? "So-and-so is all right, but so-and-so is always wrong." Do you just keep pointing the camera outward to take pictures of others and never of yourself? You should return the light and look within. Have you really been studying during the time you have been studying the Buddhadharma? If not, then you've wasted your time. If you have been seriously studying, ask yourself what advantages you have gained. If you haven't gained any, you should work even harder. Take for example your ability to recite the Shurangama Mantra. How are you doing? Can you recite it from memory? After all, the Shurangama Sutra was spoken on behalf of the Shurangama Mantra. Without the Shurangama Mantra, there wouldn't even be a Shurangama Sutra. So, even if you don't understand the text of the Shurangama Sutra, you pass if you can recite the Shurangama Mantra from memory. But don't worry about it too much. You should still eat when it's time to eat and sleep when it's time to sleep. Don't get so concerned about not being able to recite the Shurangama Mantra from memory that when it's time to eat you can't get the food down, and when it's time to sleep you have insomnia. If you get all bothered about it, you'll be even less able to learn the Mantra.

I said you should look and yet not see, listen and yet not hear. But people are turned around by situations and cannot control them. You pay a lot of attention to something when you first see it. But after a while you forget about it, and it ceases to exist for you. Take a clock as an example. The old ones used to go "tick, tock" and then chime. If you had such a clock, you might notice its ticking at first, but after you got used to it, you wouldn't even hear it anymore. If you listen for it, it's still ticking, but if you pay no mind to it, it's as if it isn't there at all. This proves that if your mind is not attached to something, it doesn't exist. And that's what's meant by

The eyes see forms,
but inside there is nothing.
The ears hear sounds,
but the mind does not know.

So you join everyone here in meditation, but then complain that a certain person wiggles. The person beside you keeps moving; but don't put the blame on him. It's just that you don't have enough samadhi-power. If you did, then no matter how much the person next to you moved, you wouldn't even know it. How do you know that person is moving? Because you are moving. Your mind is moving.

That's a state. There are little states and big states, good states and bad states. All you have to do is know how to use the Buddhadharma and none of them is any problem.

"But I can't use it now," you protest. If you can't use it, you have to think of a way to do so. You have to keep heading in that direction. As your skill deepens, you will quite naturally not be moved by states. Once you have enough samadhi, no state will move your mind. In China there's a saying:

When you have studied in depth,
You won't have a temper.

People fly off the handle when they lack sufficient education. If your samadhi is sufficient, then even if something is really bad, you can influence it for the better. For example, I've said that as long as I am in San Francisco the earth will not quake. People who don't understand the Buddhadharma think that this is impossible. But if you understand the Buddhadharma and you practice until you have some samadhi, then wherever you are, the earth stays put. It's absolutely certain that there won't be a problem. So now we are all studying samadhi-power, and when you really have samadhipower, it will be peaceful wherever you go. If you don't have any samadhi, then even peaceful places won't be peaceful, because your mind is moving. With samadhi-power you can transform your environment. This is most important.

Therefore, you must first study the Shurangama Mantra, and then you must study the Shurangama Samadhi. With the Shurangama Samadhi, you are not afraid of anything; you are really solid. So now I am telling the earth here in San Francisco to remain solid, and even if an atom bomb fell, it wouldn't matter, it wouldn't go off. You should all have faith and not be afraid. With the Shurangama Mantra, and with the fact that we are explaining the Shurangama Sutra, there is nothing to be afraid of. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are certainly protecting us as we study the Buddhadharma here, so none of you should worry.
 **Sutra:

Purna said, "I am non-dual and complete with the Thus Come One's perfect brightness of the precious enlightenment, the true wonder of the pure mind. But long ago I was victimized by false thoughts that have no beginning and I have long endured the turning wheel of rebirth. Now I have attained the sagely vehicle, but it is not yet ultimate. The World Honored One has completely extinguished all falseness and obtained wonderful true eternity."

Commentary:**

Having heard the Buddha say that Purna did not diligently seek unsurpassed Bodhi, was greedy for the dharmas of the lesser vehicle, and was satisfied with a little, Purna responded: I am nondual and complete with the Thus Come One's perfect brightness of the precious enlightenment. He said that he and the Buddha were both replete with the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, the true wonder of the pure mind. There is no division into two, and it is not that there is more or less of anything. But, although the Buddha's true, wonderful, pure mind and mine each has the precious enlightenment and is perfectly bright, long ago I was victimized by false thoughts that have no beginning and I have long endured the turning wheel of rebirth. In the past I got caught up in beginningless false thoughts, and for ever so long I have been turning over and over again in the six paths of rebirth. Now I have attained the sagely vehicle. Now I have been certified as having attained the fourth fruition of arhatship. But it is not yet ultimate. But I haven't yet gotten completely rid of my left-over
habits of false thinking. My true mind has not yet revealed itself. The World Honored One has completely extinguished all falseness and obtained wonderful true eternity. For the World Honored One, the false is gone and only the true remains. His state is particularly subtle, wonderful, and truly eternal. It will never change.
 **Sutra:

I venture to ask the Thus Come One why all living beings exist in falseness and conceal their own wonderful brightness, so that they keep drowning in this deluge?

Commentary:**

"I venture to ask the Thus Come One, I dare to question the Buddha, why all living beings exist in falseness. Why do they suddenly give rise to falseness?" This is like Purna's earlier question: "If the fundamental purity pervades the dharma-realm, why do there suddenly arise the mountains, the rivers, and the great earth?" Living beings' self-nature is basically pure and devoid of falseness. Why then does the falseness arise?

And why do they conceal their own wonderful brightness, so that they keep drowning in this deluge? They cover over their wonderfully bright true mind, and they go on in this world, turning through the paths of rebirth, until they are submerged in this world, just like being drowned. They keep sinking into the mire of the wheel of birth and death.

M2 The Thus Come One uses an analogy to show there is no cause and instructs him to immediately stop.
N1 The analogy to explain that there is no cause.
 **Sutra:

The Buddha said to Purna, "Although you have cast off doubts, you still have not ended residual delusions. I will now employ a worldly event in questioning you."

Commentary:**

Purna wanted to know why false thinking should arise in the fundamental purity which pervades the dharma-realm, false thinking which covers over the wonderful bright mind of everyone. In reply, the Buddha said to Purna, "Although you have cast off doubts, you still have not ended residual delusions. When I explained the continuity of the world, the continuity of living beings, and the continuity of karmic retribution to you, you got rid of your doubts, but you still haven't completely realized the principle and are not yet totally clear. You still have a few questions. I will now employ a worldly event in questioning you. It will be easy for you to understand an ordinary event, a worldly
phenomenon, so I will employ one in asking you some questions."

N2 He correlates the dharma and the analogy.
 **Sutra:

"Have you not heard of Yajnadatta in Shravasti who on impulse one morning held a mirror to his face and fell in love with the head in the mirror? He gazed at the eyes and eyebrows but got angry because he could not see his own face. He decided he must be a li mei ghost. Having lost all his bearings, he ran madly out. What do you think? Why did this person set out on a mad chase for no reason?"

Purna said, "That person was insane. There's no other reason."

Commentary:**

"Purna, haven't you heard this story? Have you not heard of Yajnadatta in Shravasti who on impulse one morning held a mirror to his face? Didn't you hear the news about Yajnadatta in the City of Flourishing Virtue?" At that time there were no newspapers; word just got around. Yajnadatta's name means "arrived in a temple," (ci jie) because once his mother went to a god's temple to pray and gave birth to her son while she was there.

One morning Yajnadatta got up and impulsively, with out any forethought, picked up a mirror and held it to his face. His own face was reflected in the mirror, and he loved what he saw. He was delighted with how handsome the head in the mirror was. He fell in love with the head in the mirror. He gazed at the eyes and eyebrows. He scrutinized the features and decided the head was superb, but got angry because he could not see his own face. Then, suddenly he flew into a rage. "Why don't I have a head?" he demanded. "Imagine how fine it would be if I had a head like that!" He got exasperated because he couldn't see his own face and thought he didn't have a head. "I can see the head in the mirror perfectly well. Why can't I see my own face and eyes?" He decided he must be a li mei ghost. At this point he made a mistake. He thought he was a ghost or a weird creature of some kind. Li mei ghosts dwell in the mountains, and they have a kind of bewitching power. Li mei and wang liang are two kind of ghosts. There?s a verse in Chinese about them:

Lutes, flutes, ballon guitars:
Eight great kings, every king on top.
Li mei, wang liang:
Four small ghosts, each ghost to the side.

Once he had decided he was a ghost, he lost all his bearings, he ran madly out. He was trying to shake the ghost. He ran up and down the streets of the city. There wasn't any other reason for his behavior except that he had become possessed with the idea that he was a ghost.

What do you think? Purna, what's your idea about this? Why did this person set out on a mad chase for no reason? What was actually behind the unreasonable behavior that led him to run madly about?

Purna said, "That person was insane. There's no other reason." Yajnadatta went crazy; he had no sane motive. He didn't understand, and therefore, he said he must be a weird creature, because he couldn't see his own head. Now, is it true that he didn't have a head? I believe that all of you are more intelligent than Yajnadatta, and that none of you would conclude that you didn't have a head just because you saw a head in a mirror. Basically, he hadn't lost his head, but he thought he had.

Purna had asked Shakyamuni Buddha why living beings give rise to falseness for no reason. Shakyamuni Buddha then brought up Yajnadatta and asked why he had decided on impulse that he didn't have a head. Purna replied that Yajnadatta's mind had gone mad. Why do living beings give rise to falseness? It's just because they give rise to falseness in the true mind. It's certainly not that fundamentally there is a root of falseness there which can produce the falseness. The principle is the same as with the case of Yajnadatta.
 **Sutra:

The Buddha said, "What reason can you give for calling false the wonderful enlightened bright perfection, the fundamentally perfect bright wonder? If there is a reason, then how can you say it is false?"

Commentary:**

The Buddha said to Purna, "What reason can you give for calling false the wonderful enlightened bright perfection, the fundamentally perfect bright wonder?" The Buddha is referring to the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, which is still and yet constantly illumining, illumining and yet constantly still. It is subtle, wonderful, and inconceivable. "What reason," the Buddha asks Purna, "can you have for saying that the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One is empty and false? If there is a reason, if there's some basis for it, if it is a critical judgement, if there's some good reason behind your doing so, how can you say it is false? If you can pass a critical judgment about something, it must exist. It would be true, not false, and you wouldn't be able to say it was empty and false."
 **Sutra:

All your own false thinking becomes in turn the cause for more. From confusion you accumulate confusion through kalpa after kalpa; although the Buddha is aware of it, he cannot counteract it.

Commentary:**

All your own false thinking, although it is false, gives rise to a lot more falseness. False thoughts are like ants in a short amount of time a few can produce many. Or like bacteria. How does this happen? It's as I've said before:

The good get together,
The bad gang up:
People find their own kind.

In the same way, false thoughts arise, accumulate, and becomes in turn the cause for more. Suddenly there's a lot of false thinking. In fact, that is what keeps people from be coming enlightened. If it isn't one false thought coming in, it's another one arriving; they flock in and out like guests at an open house. I asked one of you what you thought about in meditation, and the answer was, "Sometimes I think about good things to eat, sometimes about wearing nice clothes, or about living in a fine house, or buying a new car. Sometimes I even plan how I'm going to buy a helicopter when I get the money." When you sit in meditation, all these thoughts arise. One goes by and the next one arrives, coming and going, all your own false thinking.

From confusion you accumulate confusion. One instance of confusion breeds a lot more, through kalpa after kalpa. Because your false thinking is so great, you can't put a stop to it, and so you keep your self-nature busy from morning to night. Basically, the self-nature is fundamentally pure and pervades the dharma-realm, but when it entertains too much false thinking, it can't rest. It entertains false thinking for kalpa after kalpa and is never finished. Today this false thought invited me over, and tomorrow I've been asked by that false thought to go to a play. The day after tomorrow I've got a date with another false thought to go dancing, and then there are meetings and social gatherings. In general, there are a lot of things happening. And so for kalpa after kalpa, from time without beginning until today, you still haven't finished having meetings.

Although the Buddha is aware of it, he cannot counteract it. The Buddha sees all this going on, but he can't counteract it. He can't get you to turn around and face the other way. You are still friends with the false thoughts and can't renounce them.

If you can't renounce death,
you can't change life.
If you can't reject the false,
you won't succeed with the true.

"Does 'renouncing death' mean that I die now, and does 'changing life' mean I go off to a new rebirth?" you ask. No. It means that while you are still alive, you look upon yourself as a living dead person. If you do that, then you won't flare up if someone criticizes you or gloat if someone compliments you. Just pretend you are dead. Don't be so worried about your reputation, and don't put a lot of energy into this thin shell of physical existence. "Renounce death," in that way, and then after such a "big death' you can have a "big life."

If you can't reject the false,
you won't succeed with the true.

Why haven't you attained to your precious, perfectly enlightened nature? It's because you have too much false thinking and can't renounce it. And every day your mind that seeks advantage from situations grows. Once you start seeking advantage from situations, there?s no point in hoping to accomplish the Way.

Most people put their energy into lifeless things. People who cultivate the Way should apply their skill to living things. "Lifeless things" means your physical body, which keeps you hopping on its behalf. In the future, your body will certainly die. The "living thing" is our self-nature which never dies. When your physical body dies, your self-nature does not die. It just moves to a new house.
 **Sutra:

From such confused causes, the cause of confusion perpetuates itself. When one realizes that confusion has no cause, the falseness becomes baseless. Since it never arose, why would you hope for its extinction? One who obtains Bodhi is like a person who awakens to realize the events of a dream; even though his mind is awake and clear, he cannot get hold of the things in the dream and physically display them.

Commentary:**

From such confused causes, the cause of confusion perpetuates itself. You encounter confusion and it seems to really exist. The false thinking appears to be real enough, but actually it is phony. You seem to have false thinking, but actually the confusion doesn't have a substantial nature. Thus, you can't say that confusion gives rise to confusion, because confusion doesn't have any substance of its own. When one realizes that confusion has no cause, that there is nothing for confusion to rely on; that it has no seed, no root, the falseness becomes baseless. Once you realize that confusion hasn't any substance, how can the false remain? Since it never arose: It has no way to come into being. The person who said he didn't have a head thought he didn't have one, but it was really growing right there on his shoulders. Confusion is a temporary lack of clarity. It's not that your confusion completely obliterates your enlightened nature. Why would you hope for its extinction? If it doesn't arise, how can you say it is destroyed?

One who obtains Bodhi is like a person who awakens to realize the events of a dream. When he was asleep he was the emperor, had a whole passel of advisors, ate fine foods, and was richly dressed, and everything he did reaped immeasurable blessings. Even though his mind is awake and clear, he cannot get hold of the things in the dream and physically display them. Could he bring out the events in the dream and show them to people? No. Who is the person whose mind is "awake and clear?" It's the Buddha. The Buddha can speak dharma to point out that you experience all kinds of states in a dream, but he can't take the states from the dream and display them for you in actuality. Although the Buddha speaks dharma to destroy confusion and falseness, nevertheless he can"t physically get hold of false thoughts and confusion and show them to you. All he can do is use analogies to instruct you. Don't expect him to pull out the actual things as proof. So, he's like the person who awakens from a dream and can talk about all the things that happened, but he can't pull out the actual things of the dream and show them to you.
 **Sutra:

How much the more is that the case with some thing which is without a cause and basically non-existent, such as Yajnadatta's situation that day in the city? Was there any reason why he became fearful for his head and went running about? If his madness were suddenly to cease, it would not be that he had obtained his head from someplace outside; and so before his madness ceases, how can his head have been lost?

Commentary:**

How much the more is that the case with some thing which is without a cause? Since you can't display the things you saw in a dream to prove to others that you saw them, how much the more impossible would it be to prove the existence of something that has no source, no root, and no cause, and that is basically nonexistent? Confusion certainly has no substance or appearance.

There isn't any "thing" there at all. It is like Yajnadatta's situation that day in the city. Was there any reason why he became fearful for his head and went running about? Was there really any reason why he got frightened and began to question the existence of his own head? His doubt was this: He said he couldn't see his own head and concluded that he didn't have a head. He saw a head in the mirror but didn't realize that it was his own. He thought it existed independent of him there in the mirror. So, he scolded himself for not having a head and called himself a headless freak. And that's why he began running around. If his madness were suddenly to cease, it would not be that he had obtained his head from someplace outside. His craziness might stop, but it isn't that his head has returned from somewhere else. This represents the fact that although we have given rise to confusion, confusion has no nature of its own; it has no substance or appearance. Although the true suchness of the self-nature may become confused, it is never lost. And, when there is no confusion, it isn't the case that one has obtained the true suchness of the selfnature.

In the same way, one's head is one's own all along. It's not the case that one can obtain a head or lose a head. And so before his madness ceases, how can his head have been lost? When Yajnadatta lost his head, where did it go? That's the topic for today. If you know where it went, then you understand a certain amount of this sutra. If you don't know where it went, you should listen attentively to the sutra right now, and you will understand. Even before his madness ceases, then, has he in fact lost his head, or hasn't he? Is it really gone?
 **Sutra:

Purna, falseness is the same way. How can it exist?

Commentary:**

The head didn't actually go anywhere. It wasn't lost. The only reason he thought he didn't have a head is that he got confused. Purna, falseness is the same way. How can it exist? Where is the root of falseness? It doesn't have any support or any foundation. Without a root, then, where do you suppose confusion and falseness really are? You can't find them.

N3 He explains that he should immediately stop.
 **Sutra:

All you need do is not follow discriminations, because none of the three causes arises when the three conditions of the three continuities of the world, living beings, and karmic retribution are cut off.

Commentary:**

All you need to do you don't have to use any other method, is not follow the discriminations of your false thinking, because none of the three causes arises when the three conditions of the three continuities of the world, living beings, and karmic retribution are cut off. If you don't give rise to discriminations, then there is no world, there are no living beings, and there is no karmic retribution; the three conditions are cut off. These three continuities existed in the first place because of your false consciousness and discriminating mind. When the conditions are cut off, the causes do not arise.
 **Sutra:

Then the madness of the Yajnadatta in your mind will cease of itself, and just that ceasing is Bodhi. The supreme, pure, bright mind originally pervades the dharma-realm. It is not something obtained from anyone else. Why, then, labor and toil with marrow and joint to cultivate and be certified?

Commentary:**

Then the madness of the Yajnadatta in your mind, your mad mind, will cease of itself. Your confusion will quiet itself, and just that ceasing is Bodhi. It's not the case that once it ceases it can start up again. The ceasing itself is Bodhi. Simply getting rid of the confusion is the true. It's not that after the confusion is gone, there is the true. Rather, once you understand in the midst of your confusion, the truth reveals itself. They are not two things. Your understanding is true, and your lack of understanding is confusion. The confusion basically has no foundation, and if you can stop it, that ceasing is itself Bodhi, the enlightened nature.

The supreme, pure, bright mind, which is incomparable and undefiled, with a light that shines everywhere, originally pervades the dharma-realm. It is not something obtained from anyone else; that is, it doesn't come from someplace external. It is something inherent in every person. The true mind, the supreme, pure, bright mind, is not greater in the Buddha's case, even by a little bit, nor is it even a little bit smaller in the case of living beings, although it is in the midst of confusion. The supreme, pure, bright mind is innate in everyone; no one lacks it. It is not something borrowed from someone else or obtained from some external place. Why, then, labor and toil with marrow and joint to cultivate and be certified? An example of labor and toil is that of parents for their children. They nourish the baby, change its diapers, and do everything in their power to display their kindness and concern for it. By the same token, you don't need to treat your self-nature like a baby and labor and toil on its behalf because the self-nature is inherent in you. You don't have to care for it with the toil "of marrow and joint."

The butcher, Pan Ding, in Zhuang Ze's Yang Shen Zhu, was so powerful that he could decapitate a cow without exerting his "marrow and joints." He could cut through with a single swipe. The meaning of "marrow and joints" here in the text is that you don't have to calculate and formulate a plan for how you are going to cultivate and become certified. There is no cultivation of this dharma and no certification to it. One cultivates as if not cultivating and is certified as if there is no certification. This is the effortless Way. And the fine points of it are perfectly fused and unobstructed. You don't have to cultivate and be certified. Didn't Ananda say earlier, 'So that I needn't pass through countless aeons to attain the dharma body?" He doesn't have to go through three great asamkhyeya kalpas to attain the dharma body. The wonderful dharma of the Shurangama Sutra is just in this: It is not necessary to labor and toil in marrow and joint to cultivate and be certified.

N4 He concludes with an analogy to show it is not lost.

**Sutra:

This is to be like the person who has a wish fulfilling pearl sewn in his clothing without-realizing it. Thus he roams abroad in a state of poverty, begging for food and always on the move. Although he is indeed destitute, the pearl is never lost.

Commentary:**

If the Yajnadatta within you, your mad mind, ceases, if your false thinking, your perpetual state of confusion and lack of enlightenment disappears, then Bodhi appears. But, the appearance of Bodhi is not something that is obtained from outside, nor is there any need to nourish it in yourself. It is something we have all along. The Buddha now gives Purna another example: This is to be like the person who has a wish-fulfilling pearl sewn in his clothing without realizing it. The wish-fulfilling pearl makes whatever wish you might have come true. The first "hand and eye" in the great compassion dharma is the "hand and eye of the wish-fulfilling pearl" If you want gold, you can have gold; if you want silver, you can have silver; anything at all can manifest from the wish fulfilling pearl. Someone who has a wish-fulfilling pearl is the wealthiest person on earth, because it can never be used up. You can have whatever wealth and riches come to your mind.

The person in the Buddha's example has a wish-fulfilling pearl sewn in his clothing without realizing it. Maybe he once knew, but with the passage of time, he has forgotten about it. He is probably a very forgetful person and doesn't even remember such an important matter as this. Thus he roams abroad in a state of poverty. He is penniless: so destitute that he has hardly any clothes to wear. Perhaps he doesn't have a house and has to sleep along the road. By this I don't mean that he is like people who get together and go camping out in the open. They do that for fun. This person is so poor that he has no choice. He must beg for food and he is always on the move. He ends up a beggar. Although he is indeed destitute, the pearl is never lost. Although the fact of his poverty is very real, he has still not lost his wish-fulfilling pearl. This shows that although we people are in a state of confusion, our self-nature is not lost.

One may be confused, lack understanding, and not study the Buddhadharma, still, the self-nature is not lost. Those greedy for worldly riches and honor, for entertainment and pleasure, don't realize that these mundane attainments are not genuine riches and honor. The poorest people are those who do not recognize genuine principle; they are those who do not understand the Buddhadharma. Since you don't understand the Buddhadharma, you don't realize that your self nature is like the hidden wish-fulfilling pearl. But, even when you don't understand your self-nature, still the nature of the treasury of the Thus Come One, the supreme, pure, bright mind, is certainly not lost. It is still inherently yours.

Those who cultivate and believe in the Buddhadharma understand that their self-nature is inherent within them, and they come to discover their innate wealth. That is genuine riches and honor.
 **Sutra:

Suddenly, a wise person shows him the pearl: all his wishes are fulfilled, he obtains great wealth, and he realizes that the pearl did not come from somewhere outside.

Commentary:**

Suddenly, a wise person shows him the pearl. The wise person is analogous to the Buddha. Showing him the pearl in his clothing represents pointing out to him his inherent Buddha-nature. All his wishes are fulfilled, when he obtains the wish-fulfilling pearl. He can have whatever he wants, and he obtains great wealth. He be comes an elder with great blessings. He has so much money that he can't count it all, even with the help of accountants. The "great wealth" represents one's understanding of one's inherent self-nature and one's being certified as having attained the enlightened fruition of Bodhi. He realizes that the pearl did not come from somewhere outside. He understands that the "spiritual pearl," the wish-fulfilling pearl, is not obtained from outside. This means that he knows that his inherent Buddha-nature is not obtained from outside himself. When you can accomplish Buddhahood, you will know, and you'll say, "Oh, so that's what it's all about." When you become enlightened, you will know that basically you were an enlightened person all along. You'll think, "If I'd realized this earlier, I wouldn't have had put forth so much effort. I wouldn't have had to go outside begging for food. I wouldn't have had to endure such poverty." But you haven't had a wise person to instruct you, and you yourself have already forgotten. So, as we listen to instruction on the Shurangama Sutra, each of us should discover the wish-fulfilling pearl in his or her clothing. If you uncover your wish-fulfilling pearl, you will become the most wealthy person in the world. Another definition of genuine wealth is this:

The mind's stopping and thoughts' ceasing:
That is true wealth and honor.
Selfish desires cut off completely:
That is the true field of blessings.

If your false-thinking mind stops, if your crazy thoughts disappear, then you have attained genuine wealth and honor. So, when you obtain the wish-fulfilling pearl, you won't have any more greed, because you will already have everything. Everything will be yours, and if you have no selfishness, no thoughts of desire, then you are a person who is a genuine field of blessings.