

地藏菩薩本願經
忉利天宮神通品第一
如是我聞。一時佛在忉利天。為母說法。爾時
十方無量世界。不可說不可說。一切諸佛。及
大菩薩摩訶薩。皆來集會。讚歎釋迦牟尼佛。
能於五濁惡世。現不可思議大智慧神通之
力。調伏剛彊眾生。知苦樂法。各遣侍者。問訊
世尊。是時如來含笑。放百千萬億大光明雲。
所謂大圓滿光明雲。大慈悲光明雲。



THE SUTRA ON THE PAST VOWS OF KSITIGARBHA BODHISATTVA



Chapter One

Numinous Power in the Palace of Trayastrimsa Heaven

Thus have I heard:

Once, the Buddha was in Trayastrimsa Heaven teaching the Dharma to his mother. At that time an inexpressibly inexpressible amount of buddhas and bodhisattva *mahasattvas* from immeasurable worlds in the ten directions all came and assembled to praise the ability of Sakyamuni Buddha who during the evil period of the five degenerations manifested his inconceivably numinous power of vast wisdom in order to subdue stubborn sentient beings so they can know the reasons for suffering and for bliss. Each sent their attendants to pay respects to the World-Honored One.

At that time, **the Tathagata smiled, emitting** hundreds of thousands of ten-of-thousands of millions of great and radiant clouds, such as the radiant cloud of great fulfillment, the radiant cloud of great compassion,...

大智慧光明雲。大般若光明雲。大三昧光明雲。大吉祥光明雲。大福德光明雲。大功德光明雲。大歸依光明雲。大讚歎光明雲。放如是等不可說光明雲。已。又出種種微妙之音。所謂檀波羅蜜音。尸波羅蜜音。羸提波羅蜜音。毘離耶波羅蜜音。禪波羅蜜音。般若波羅蜜音。慈悲音。喜捨音。解脫音。無漏音。智慧音。大智音。師子吼音。大獅子吼音。雲雷音。大雲雷音。出如是等不可說不可說音。已。娑婆世界。及他方國土。有無量億天龍鬼神。

...the radiant cloud of great wisdom, the radiant cloud of great *prajna*, the radiant cloud of great *samadhi*, the radiant cloud of great auspiciousness, the radiant cloud of great reward, the radiant cloud of great merit, the radiant cloud of great refuge, and the radiant cloud of great praise.

After emitting inexpressibly radiant clouds such as these, the Tathagata produced various kinds of exquisite and wondrous sounds, such as the sound of *dana paramita*, the sound of *sila paramita*, the sound of *ksanti paramita*, the sound of *virya paramita*, the sound of *dhyana paramita*, the sound of *prajna paramita*, as well as the sound of compassion, the sound of joyous relinquishment, the sound of liberation, the sound of non-defilement, the sound of wisdom, the sound of great wisdom, the sound of the Lion's roar, the sound of the great Lion's roar, the sound of thunderclouds, and the sound of great thunderclouds.

After producing inexpressibly inexpressible sounds such as these there were immeasurable millions of *devas*, *nagas*, ghosts, and spirits from the Saha world and lands of other regions...

亦集到忉利天宮。所謂四天王天、忉利天、須
焰摩天、兜率陀天、化樂天。他化自在天、梵眾
天、梵輔天、大梵天、少光天、無量光天、光音天。
少淨天、無量淨天、遍淨天、福生天、福愛天、廣
果天、無想天、無煩天、無熱天、善見天、善現天。
色究竟天、摩醯首羅天。乃至非想非非想處
天。一切天眾、龍眾、鬼神等眾、悉來集會。

...who also assembled in the palace of Trayastrimsa Heaven. All of the *devas* and multitudes of *nagas*, ghosts, and spirits came from the Heaven of the Four Heavenly Kings, Trayastrimsa Heaven, Suyama Heaven, Tusita Heaven, the Heaven of Manifested Bliss, the Heaven of Bliss Manifested by Others, the Heaven of the Councilors of Brahman, the Heaven of the Ministers of Brahman, the Heaven of Great Brahman, the Heaven of Lesser Light, the Heaven of Immeasurable Light, the Heaven of Radiant Sound, the Heaven of Lesser Purity, the Heaven of Immeasurable Purity, the Heaven of Universal Purity, the Heaven of the Production of Merit, the Heaven of Meritorious Affection, the Heaven of Extensive Rewards, the Heaven Without Perception, the Heaven Without Anxiety, the Heaven Without Affliction, the Heaven of Excellent Vision, the Heaven of Excellent Manifestation, the Highest Heaven of the realm of form, the Heaven of Mahesvara, up to the Heavenly Realm of Neither Perception Nor Non-perception, and assembled altogether to meet.

復有他方國土及娑婆世界海神江神河神
 樹神山神地神川澤神苗稼神晝神夜神空
 神天神飲食神草木神如是等神皆來集會
 復有他方國土及娑婆世界諸大鬼王所謂
 惡目鬼王。噉血鬼王。噉精氣鬼王。噉胎卵鬼
 王。行病鬼王。攝毒鬼王。慈心鬼王。福利鬼
 王。大愛敬鬼王。如是等鬼王。皆來集會。爾時釋
 迦牟尼佛告文殊師利法王子。菩薩摩訶薩。
 汝觀是一切諸佛菩薩及天龍鬼神。此世界
 他世界。此國土他國土。

Furthermore, there were sea spirits, river spirits, stream spirits, tree spirits, mountain spirits, earth spirits, marsh spirits, sprout and seedling spirits, daytime spirits, nighttime spirits, space spirits, sky spirits, food and drink spirits, grass and wood spirits, and other spirits such as these who all came from the lands of other regions and of the Saha world to assemble and meet.

Moreover, there were the great ghost kings from the lands of other regions and of the Saha world, such as the Evil-Eyed Ghost King, the Blood Suckling Ghost King, the Vitality Draining Ghost King, the Fetus and Egg Devouring Ghost King, the Disease Spreading Ghost King, the Poison Absorbing Ghost King, the Kindhearted Ghost King, the Meritorious Ghost King, the Great Loving and Reverential Ghost King, and other ghost kings such as these who all came to assemble and meet.

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha told the Dharma Prince Bodhisattva Mahasattva Manjusri, “Look at all of those buddhas, bodhisattvas, *devas*, *nagas*, ghosts and spirits from this world and other worlds, from this land and other lands.

如是今來集會到忉利天者。汝知數不。文殊師利白佛言。世尊。若以我神力。千劫測度。不能得知。佛告文殊師利。吾以佛眼觀故。猶不盡數。此皆是地藏菩薩久遠劫來。已度當度。未度。已成就。當成就。未成就。文殊師利白佛言。世尊。我已過去久修善根。證無礙智。聞佛所言。即當信受。小果聲聞。天龍八部。及未來世諸眾生等。雖聞如來誠實之語。必懷疑惑。

Of those who have now come to assemble in Trayastrimsa Heaven, do you know their number, or not?"

Manjusri addressed the Buddha saying, "World-Honored One, if I used my numinous power and conjectured for a thousand *kalpas*, I would still not be able to know."

The Buddha told Manjusri, "When I observe with my Buddha Eye, there is still an inexhaustible number. Throughout long *kalpas*, they have all been liberated, are being liberated, and will be liberated, or have been perfected, are being perfected, and will be perfected by Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva."

Manjusri addressed the Buddha saying, "World-Honored One, I have for a long time cultivated wholesome roots and have realized unobstructed wisdom. When I hear what the Buddha has to say I immediately and faithfully accept it. However, when the *sravakas* who hold lesser attainment, the *devas*, *nagas*, and the remainder of the Eightfold Assembly, and all of the sentient beings of the future ages hear the true and sincere words of the Tathagata they will certainly harbor uncertainty.

設使頂受。未免興謗。唯願世尊。廣說地藏菩薩摩訶薩。因地作何行。立何願。而能成就不思議事。佛告文殊師利。譬如三千大千世界。所有草木叢林。稻麻竹葦。山石微塵。一物一數。作一恒河。一恒河沙。一沙之界。一界之內。一塵一劫。一劫之內。所積塵數。盡克為劫。地藏菩薩證十地果位已來。千倍多於上喻。何況地藏菩薩在聲聞辟支佛地。文殊師利。此菩薩威神誓願。不可思議。若未來世。有善男子善女人。

Even if they respectfully accept them, they cannot avoid disparagement toward them.”

“I only hope the World-Honored One can explain in detail the causal grounds on which Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva was able to achieve such inconceivable feats – what practices did he carry out, on what vows did he stand firm?”

The Buddha told Manjusri, “It is as if all of the grass, trees, forests, rice, hemp, bamboo, reeds, mountains, rocks, and minute particles of a *trichiliocosm* were each counted and considered as Ganges Rivers themselves, and each grain of sand in every one of those Ganges Rivers was a world, and each minute particle within every one of those worlds was taken as a *kalpa*, and the particles amassed within each of those *kalpas* were each considered as a *kalpa*. The time since Ksitigarbha’s realization of the fruit of the tenth *bhumi* has been a thousand times more than the above analogy. How much more so was the time he dwelled at the stage of a *sravaka* and *pratyekabuddha*!”

“Manjusri! The mighty vows of this bodhisattva are inconceivable. If, in future ages, there are virtuous men and women...

聞是菩薩名字。或讚歎。或瞻禮。或稱名。或供
 養。乃至彩畫刻鏤。塑漆形像。是人當得百返
 生於三十三天。永不墮惡道。文殊師利。是地
 藏菩薩摩訶薩。於過去久遠不可說不可說
 劫前。身為大長者子。時世有佛。號曰師子奮
 迅。具足萬行如來。時長者子見佛相好。千福
 莊嚴。因問彼佛。作何行願。而得此相。時師子
 奮迅。具足萬行如來。告長者子。欲證此身。當
 須久遠度脫。一切受苦眾生。

...who hear the name of this bodhisattva, or praise him, or gaze in veneration upon him, or recite his name, or make offerings to him, or even paint, carve, or cast his image, they will obtain one hundred rebirths in the Heaven of the Thirty-three and never fall into the evil paths.”

“Manjusri, in the distant past prior to an inexpressibly inexpressible amount of *kalpas*, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva was the son of a great elder. At that time there was a buddha named Lion-Swiftness Perfection of Ten Thousand Deeds Tathagata. When the son of the elder saw the excellent features of the buddha adorned with a thousand merits he consequently asked him what practices and vows he had undertaken to obtain such an appearance.”

“Then, Lion-Swiftness Perfection of Ten Thousand Deeds Tathagata told the elder’s son, ‘If you want to achieve this body you must, for a long time, liberate all sentient beings who endure suffering.’”

文殊師利時長者子因發願言我今盡未來
際不可計劫為是罪苦六道眾生廣設方便
盡令解脫而我自身方成佛道以是於彼佛
前立斯大願于今百千萬億那由他不可說
劫尚為菩薩又於過去不可思議阿僧祇劫
時世有佛號曰覺華定自在王如來彼佛壽
命四百千萬億阿僧祇劫像法之中有一婆
羅門女宿福深厚眾所欽敬行住坐臥諸天
衛護

“Manjusri, due to this the elder’s son set forth a vow saying, ‘From now until the end of time, throughout incalculable *kalpas*, I will exhibit expedient means extensively for those sentient beings on the six paths who suffer from their misconduct. Only once all have been directed to liberation will I personally attain buddhahood.’”

“It has been hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *nayutas* of inexpressible *kalpas* since he set forth that great vow in front of that buddha, and he is still a bodhisattva.”

“Furthermore, inconceivable *asamkhyā kalpas* in the past, there was at that time a buddha named Isvara King of the Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Tathagata. The life span of that buddha was four hundred thousand ten-thousand million *asamkhyā kalpas*.”

“During the period of the Semblance Dharma there was a Brahman girl whose merits from past lives were fathomless, and who was admired and revered by the multitudes. Whether walking, standing, sitting or lying down she was guarded by *devas*.”

其母信邪。常輕三寶。是時聖女。廣說方便。勸誘其母。令生正見。而此女母。未全生信。不久命終。魂神墮在無間地獄。時婆羅門女。知母在世。不信因果。計當隨業。必生惡趣。遂賣家宅。廣求香華。及諸供具。於先佛塔寺。大興供養。見覺華定自在王如來。其形像在一寺中。塑畫威容。端嚴畢備。

“Her mother, however, believed in perverse practices and consistently slighted the Three Jewels. At that time, the sagely girl expressed expedient means extensively to entice her mother to give rise to correct views, yet her mother had not yet entirely established a firm conviction, and not long thereafter the mother’s life came to an end with her spirit falling into the Unrelenting Hells.”

“At that time, the Brahman girl knew that while her mother was living she did not believe in cause and effect, and determined that she would be born in the evil realms in accordance with her *karma*. Thereupon, she sold the family house and widely sought incense, flowers and other oblations to make generous offerings at the temples of that buddha. In one of the temples she saw an image of the Isvara King of the Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Tathagata which was cast and painted with a majestic countenance and was fully dignified.”

時婆羅門女。瞻禮尊容。倍生敬仰。私自念言。
佛名大覺。具一切智。若在世時。我母死後。儻
來問佛。必知處所。時婆羅門女。垂泣良久。瞻
戀如來。忽聞空中聲曰。泣者聖女。勿至悲哀。
我今示汝母之去處。婆羅門女合掌向空。而
白空曰。是何神德。寬我憂慮。我自失母已來。
晝夜憶戀。無處可問。知母生界。時空中有聲。
再報女曰。我是汝所瞻禮者。過去覺華定自
在。王如來。

“While the Brahman girl gazed in veneration upon the noble image she doubled her reverence, privately thinking to herself, ‘Buddhas are named for their great enlightenment and their perfect omniscience. If a buddha existed in this present world and I were to ask, that buddha would certainly know the place my mother was reborn after death.’”

“Then the Brahman girl slumped over and wept for quite some time while she gazed in adoration at the Tathagata. Unexpectedly, a voice was heard in the air saying, ‘Weeping sagely girl, do not be so distressed, I will now reveal to you where your mother has gone.’”

“The Brahman girl, with her palms clasped toward the air, addressed it saying, ‘What spirit is this that so virtuously consoles my grief? Since I lost my mother I have thought adoringly of her day and night, but there is nowhere I can go to ask to find out where my mother was reborn.’”

“Then, from the air, there was a voice which responded to the girl a second time saying, ‘I am the one upon whom you gaze in veneration, the former Isvara King of the Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Tathagata.’”

見汝憶母。倍於常情。眾生之分。故來告示。婆
羅門女聞此聲已。舉身自撲。支節皆損。左右
扶持。良久方蘇。而白空曰。願佛慈悲。速說我
母生界。我今身心將死不久。時覺華定自在。
王如來告聖女曰。汝供養畢。但早返舍。端坐
思惟吾之名號。即當知母所生去處。時婆羅
門女尋禮佛已。即歸其舍。

Because I have seen that your regard for your mother is many times that of ordinary sentient beings, therefore I have come to reveal to you where she is.”

“After hearing this voice, the Brahman girl threw her body around and hit herself, leaving all of her limbs and joints injured. Her attendants held her, caring for her for quite a while before she regained composure. She then addressed the air saying, ‘I hope the Buddha has compassion and sympathy for me and will quickly inform me of the realm where my mother was reborn, since now I am not far from death physically and mentally.’”

“At that time the Isvara King of the Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Tathagata told the sagely girl, ‘After you make offerings, quickly return home. Sit upright, focusing your thoughts on my name, and you will immediately know where your mother has gone to be reborn.’”

“Immediately after the Brahman girl bowed to the Buddha she returned home.”

以憶母故。端坐念覺華定。自在王如來。經一日一夜。忽見自身。到一海邊。其水涌沸。多諸惡獸。盡復鐵身。飛走海上。東西馳逐。見諸男子。女人。百千萬數。出沒海中。被諸惡獸。爭取食噉。又見夜叉。其形各異。或多手多眼。多足多頭。口牙外出。利刃如劍。驅諸罪人。使近惡獸。復自搏攫。頭足相就。其形萬類。不敢久視。

“Because she missed her mother so dearly she was able to sit upright and be mindful of the Isvara King of the Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Tathagata. After one day and night, she unexpectedly saw herself beside a sea whose waters surged and boiled. There were many evil beasts with bodies completely covered in iron who flew and ran atop the sea, galloping in pursuit in all directions. She saw men and women, hundreds of thousands of ten-of-thousands in number, **bobbing** up and down in the sea who were being fought over, seized, and devoured by these evil beasts.”

“She also saw *yaksas*, whose each appearance varied – some had many hands, or eyes, or feet, or heads, with teeth protruding from their mouths that were as sharp as swords – and they drove these offenders close to the evil beasts. Moreover, these beasts would fight each other head to head and toe to toe. They had tens of thousands of types of appearances which one would not dare look upon for long.”

時婆羅門女以念佛力故自然無懼有一鬼
王名曰無毒稽首來迎白聖女曰善哉菩薩
何緣來此時婆羅門女問鬼王曰此是何處
無毒答曰此是大鐵圍山西面第一重海聖
女問曰我聞鐵圍之內地獄在中是事實不
無毒答曰實有地獄聖女問曰我今云何得
到獄所無毒答曰若非威神即須業力非此
二事終不能到

“During this time, the Brahman girl was naturally inclined to be fearless due to the power of being mindful of that buddha.”

“A ghost king named Harmless came to greet her, and while fully prostrating addressed the sagely girl saying, ‘Excellent! Bodhisattva, for what reason have you come here?’”

“The Brahman girl then asked the ghost king, ‘What place is this?’”

“Harmless replied, ‘This is the first of a series of seas located on the western face of the Great Ring of Iron Mountains.’”

“The Brahman girl asked, ‘I have heard that hells are located within that Ring of Iron, is this rumor true or not?’”

“Harmless replied, ‘It is true, there are hells there.’”

“The Brahman girl asked, ‘Why have I now arrived at this hellish place?’”

“Harmless replied, ‘If it is not due to your numinous power, then it must be the result of your karma. If not for these two factors, you would not be able to come here.’”

聖女又問此水何緣而乃涌沸多諸罪人及以惡獸無毒答曰此是閻浮提造惡眾生新死之者經四十九日後無人繼嗣為作功德救拔苦難生時又無善因當據本業所感地獄自然先渡此海海東十萬由旬又有一海其苦倍此彼海之東又有一海其苦復倍三業惡因之所招感共號業海其處是也聖女又問鬼王無毒曰地獄何在無毒答曰三海之內是大地獄其數百千各各差別

“The Brahman girl again asked, ‘For what reason does this water surge and boil, and why are there so many offenders and evil beasts?’”

“Harmless replied, ‘They are recently deceased sentient beings from Jambudvipa who have committed evil. Because forty-nine days have passed without any descendants performing meritorious deeds thus saving them from this suffering and hardship, and since during their lifetime they possessed no virtuous affinities, they will, by resonating in accordance with their past karma, be reborn in the hells. Naturally, they must cross this sea first. Tens of tens-of-thousands of *yojanas* east of this sea there is another sea whose suffering is double that of this one. East of that sea there is yet another sea whose suffering is again double that. The resonance of the evil affinities of the three kinds of karma are collectively known as the karmic seas, which are the places here.’”

“The sagely girl again asked the ghost king Harmless, ‘Where are these hells?’”

“Harmless answered, ‘Within the three karmic seas there are great hells which number in the hundreds of thousands, each one different from the next.’”

所謂大者。具有十八次。有五百苦毒無量。次有千百。亦無量苦。聖女又問大鬼王曰。我母死來未久。不知魂神當至何趣。鬼王問聖女曰。菩薩之母。在生習何行業。聖女答曰。我母邪見。譏毀三寶。設或暫信。旋又不敬。死雖日淺。未知生處。無毒問曰。菩薩之母。姓氏何等。聖女答曰。我父母。俱婆羅門種。父號尸羅善現。母號悅帝利。無毒合掌啟菩薩曰。願聖者卻返本處。

Totally, there are eighteen so called primary hells, and there are five hundred secondary ones, all with immeasurable suffering and pain. Furthermore there are also thousands of hundreds of others where there is also immeasurable suffering.”

“The sagely girl again asked the great ghost king, ‘My mother died not long ago, and I do not know into which realm her spirit has gone.’”

“The ghost king replied to the sagely girl, ‘While the bodhisattva’s mother was alive, what karmic practices was she accustomed to?’”

“The sagely girl replied, ‘My mother held perverse views, both mocking and slandering the Three Jewels. She would display occasional faith, but would turn irreverent again. Although she has been dead a few days, I still do not know where she was reborn.’”

“Harmless said, ‘What was the bodhisattva’s mother’s name and caste?’ The sagely girl replied, ‘Both my mother and father were Brahman caste, my father’s name was Sila Sudarsana, my mother’s name was Yue Dili.’”

“Harmless joined his palms and addressed the bodhisattva, ‘I hope the sagely one will return home...’

無至憂憶悲戀。悅帝利罪女。生天以來。經今
 三日。云承孝順之子。為母設供修福。布施覺
 華定自在王如來塔寺。非唯菩薩之母。得脫
 地獄。應是無間罪人。此日悉得受樂。俱同生
 訖。鬼王言畢。合掌而退。婆羅門女尋如夢歸。
 悟此事已。便於覺華定自在王如來塔像之
 前。立弘誓願。願我盡未來劫。應有罪苦眾生。
 廣設方便。使令解脫。佛告文殊師利。時鬼王
 無毒者。當今財首菩薩是。婆羅門女者。即地
 藏菩薩是。

...without any further grieving, lament or sorrow. Three days ago the offender Yue Dili was reborn in the heavens. It is said that she had a filial child who provided offerings and cultivated merit on behalf of her mother by giving to the temple of the Isvara King of the Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Tathagata. Not only did the bodhisattva's mother obtain liberation from the hells, but all of the offenders in the Unrelenting Hells enjoyed bliss on that day, and were reborn with her.”

“After the ghost king finished speaking he joined his palms and withdrew.”

“The Brahman girl immediately returned as if from a dream. After comprehending the situation she then set forth a great vow in front of the temple image of the Isvara King of the Enlightenment-Flower Samadhi Tathagata: ‘Throughout future *kalpas*, I vow to exhibit expedient means extensively to direct sentient beings suffering for their misconduct toward liberation.’”

The Buddha told Manjusri, “The ghost king Harmless is now Foremost Wealth Bodhisattva, and the Brahman girl is Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.”



分身集會品第二
 爾時百千萬億不可思不可議不可量不可
 說無量阿僧祇世界所有地獄處分身地藏
 菩薩俱來集在忉利天宮以如來神力故各
 以方面與諸得解脫從業道出者亦各有千
 萬億那由他數共持香華來供養佛彼諸同
 來等輩皆因地藏菩薩教化永不退轉於阿
 耨多羅三藐三菩提是諸眾等久遠劫來流
 浪生死六道受苦暫無休息以地藏菩薩廣
 大慈悲深誓願故各獲果證

Chapter Two

The Assembly of the Duplicated Bodies

At that time, all of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva's duplicated bodies from the hells of hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of inconceivable, indescribable, incalculable, inexpressible, immeasurable *asamkhya* worlds came and assembled in the palace of Trayastrimsa Heaven. Due to the numinous power of the Tathagata, each arrived from their regions with those who had obtained liberation from the karmic paths – also numbering in the thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *nayutas* – and all were holding incense and flowers to make offerings to the Buddha. Due to the edification by Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, all of these beings who came along will never retrogress from *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*.

For many long *kalpas* they wandered through the six paths of *samsara*, enduring suffering without a moment's rest. Due to the greatly compassionate and profound vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva each one had attained the fruit of realization.

既至忉利心懷踊躍瞻仰如來目不暫捨爾
時世尊舒金色臂摩百千萬億不可思議不可
地藏菩薩摩訶薩頂而作是言吾於五濁惡
世教化如是剛彊眾生令心調伏捨邪歸正
十有一二尚惡習在吾亦分身千百億廣設
方便或有利根聞即信受或有善果勤勸成
就

Having arrived in Trayastrimsa Heaven their hearts jumped with joy, and while gazing up at the Tathagata their eyes did not leave him for a moment.

At that time the World-Honored One extended his golden-colored arm, touching the heads of the duplicated bodies of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva from the hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of inconceivable, indescribable, incalculable, inexpressible, immeasurable *asamkhyā* worlds, and proclaimed these words: “During the evil period of the five degenerations I have edified tough and uncompromising sentient beings such as these, causing their minds to be disciplined and to abandon the perverse while returning to the proper. There are, however, but one or two out of ten that still have bad habits, therefore I also multiply thousands of hundreds-of-millions of bodies to exhibit expedient means extensively to them.”

“Some who have keen faculties and hear this will immediately and faithfully accept it, others who possess virtuous fruits will achieve realization after diligent encouragement,...

若墮惡趣。受大苦時。汝當憶念。吾在忉利天
 宮。殷勤付囑。令娑婆世界。至彌勒出世已來。
 眾生悉使解脫。永離諸苦。遇佛授記。爾時諸
 世界分身地藏菩薩。共復一形。涕淚哀戀。白
 其佛言。我從久遠劫來。蒙佛接引。使獲不可
 思議神力。具大智慧。我所分身。遍滿百千萬
 億恒河沙世界。每一世界。化百千萬億身。每
 一身。度百千萬億人。令歸敬三寶。永離生死。
 至涅槃樂。

If they fall into the evil realms and endure times of great suffering you should keep mindful of what I have earnestly entrusted to you here in the palace of Trayastrimsa Heaven: You will direct all sentient beings in the Saha world, until the advent of Maitreya, to liberation and eternal freedom from suffering, and will meet with this buddha to be given **the prediction of buddhood.**”

At that time, all of Ksitigarbha’s duplicated bodies from all of the worlds returned to a single form and, weeping tears of sympathy, addressed the Buddha saying, “For many long *kalpas* I have received guidance from the Buddha, allowing me to develop inconceivable numinous power and to perfect vast wisdom. My duplicated bodies pervade worlds that are as numerous as the grains of sand in hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of Ganges Rivers. In every world I transform into hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of bodies, where each body liberates hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of people, directing them to turn to and revere the Three Jewels, to be eternally free from *samsara*, and to attain the bliss of nirvana.”

但於佛法中所為善事。一毛一涕。一沙一塵。或毫髮許。我漸度脫。使獲大利。唯願世尊。不以後世惡業眾生為慮。如是三白佛言。唯願世尊。不以後世惡業眾生為慮。爾時佛讚地藏菩薩言。善哉善哉。吾助汝喜。汝能成就久遠劫來。發弘誓願。廣度將畢。即證菩提。

“Even if their virtuous deeds which are in accordance with the Buddha Dharma are as insignificant as a strand of hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand, a speck of dust, or even the tip of a hair, I will gradually liberate them and allow them to gain great benefits. I only hope that the World-Honored One will not be worried about the sentient beings in the later ages with evil karma.”

Three times he addressed the Buddha saying thus: “I only hope that the World-Honored One will not be worried about the sentient beings in the later ages with evil karma.”

At that time the Buddha praised Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva saying, “Excellent! Excellent! I will encourage your joy by saying that you will be able to fulfill your great vows from many long *kalpas* ago, and after the extensive liberation of those beings you will immediately realize *bodhi*.”



觀衆生業緣品第三
爾時佛母摩耶夫人恭敬合掌問地藏菩薩
言。聖者。閻浮眾生造業差別。所受報應。其事
云何。地藏答言。千萬世界。乃至國土。或有地
獄。或無地獄。或有女人。或無女人。或有佛法。
或無佛法。乃至聲聞辟支佛。亦復如是。非但
地獄罪報一等。摩耶夫人重白菩薩。且願聞
於閻浮罪報所感惡趣。地藏答言。聖母。唯願
聽受。我麤說之。

Chapter Three Contemplating the Karmic Affinities of Sentient Beings

At that time, the Buddha's mother, Queen Maya, reverentially joined her palms and asked Ksitigarbha Bodhiasattva saying, "Sagely one, sentient beings in Jambudvipa create diverse kinds of karma, what resonant kinds of retribution do they receive?"

Ksitigarbha replied, "In the thousands of tens-of-thousands of worlds and lands – whether with hells or without hells, with women or without women, with the Buddha Dharma or without the Buddha Dharma, or even with or without *śravakas* and *pratyekabuddhas* – there is not merely a single type of punitive retribution found in the hells."

Queen Maya again addressed Ksitigarbha, "I most wish to hear about the evil realms that have resonance with the punitive retributions of Jambudvipa."

Ksitigarbha replied, "Sagely mother, please listen with acceptance. I will explain it modestly."

The Buddha's mother addressed him saying, "I hope the sagely one will explain it."

佛母白言。願聖者說。爾時地藏菩薩白聖母言。南閻浮提。罪報名號如是。若有眾生不孝父母。或至殺害。當墮無間地獄。千萬億劫。求出無期。若有眾生。出佛身血。毀謗三寶。不敬尊經。亦當墮於無間地獄。千萬億劫。求出無期。若有眾生。侵損常住。點污僧尼。或伽藍內。恣行淫欲。或殺或害。如是等輩。當墮無間地獄。千萬億劫。求出無期。

At that time, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva addressed the sagely mother saying, “In the southern continent of Jambudvīpa the names for the punitive retributions are as such:”

“If there are sentient beings who are unfilial toward their father or mother, or who even kill them, then they will certainly fall into the Unrelenting Hell for thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas* while searching hopelessly for a way out.”

“If there are sentient beings who shed the blood of a Buddha, who slander the Three Jewels, or who are irreverent toward the sutras, then they will also certainly fall into the Unrelenting Hell for thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas* while searching hopelessly for a way out.”

“If there are sentient beings who rob or damage a monastery, who defile monks or nuns by indulging in the practice of illicit sexual desire within a *sangharama*, or who kill or harm such monastics, then they will also certainly fall into the Unrelenting Hell for thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas* while searching hopelessly for a way out.

若有眾生偽作沙門。心非沙門。破用常住。欺
誑白衣。違背戒律。種種造惡。如是等輩。當墮
無間地獄。千萬億劫。求出無期。若有眾生偷
竊常住財物穀米。飲食衣服。乃至一物不與
取者。當墮無間地獄。千萬億劫。求出無期。地
藏白言。聖母。若有眾生作如是罪。當墮五無
間地獄。求暫停苦一念不得。摩耶夫人重白
地藏菩薩言。云何名為無間地獄。

“If there are sentient beings who pretend to be *sramanas* but are not *sramanas* at heart and who abuse a monastery by deceiving the laity, or who violate the precepts and monastic rules by committing all kinds of evils, then they will also certainly fall into the Unrelenting Hell for thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas* while searching hopelessly for a way out.”

“If there are sentient beings who steal monastic property or goods such as grain, rice, food, drink, clothing, or who even take anything that is not given, then they will also certainly fall into the Unrelenting Hells for thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas* while searching hopelessly for a way out.”

Ksitigarbha said, “Sagely mother, if there are sentient beings who commit offenses like these then they will certainly fall into the Fivefold Unrelenting Hell, where they will seek temporary respite from their suffering, but will never obtain a moment’s rest.”

Queen Maya again addressed Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva saying, “Why is it called the Unrelenting Hell?”

地藏白言。聖母。諸有地獄在大鐵圍山之內。其大地獄有一十八所。次有五百名號各別。次有千百名字亦別。無間獄者。其獄城周圍八萬餘里。其城純鐵。高一萬里。城上火聚。少有空缺。其獄城中。諸獄相連。名號各別。獨有一獄。名曰無間。其獄周圍八千里。獄牆高一千里。悉是鐵圍。上火徹下。下火徹上。鐵蛇鐵狗。吐火馳逐。獄牆之上。東西而走。獄中有床。遍滿萬里。一人受罪。自見其身。遍臥滿床。

Ksitigarbha replied, “Sagely mother, all of the hells are located within the Great Ring of Iron Mountains. There are eighteen locations of the great hells and a further five hundred more, each with a different name. There are also thousands of hundreds more, whose names are also distinct from each other. The cell wall encircling these Unrelenting Hells is more than eighty-thousand *li*, made purely of iron with a height of ten-thousand *li*. There are clusters of flames atop the wall with very little space between them. Within this citadel there are many interconnected hells, each with a different name.”

“There is only a single hell properly named “unrelenting,” and its cell wall is eighteen thousand *li* long, one thousand *li* high, and is entirely made of iron. Flames shoot down from above and rise up from below. There are iron snakes and iron dogs spewing flames and chasing in pursuit atop the wall, running in all directions.”

“Within this hell there is a platform which fills up the space of ten thousand *li*. When a person receives punishment he personally sees his body lying across and filling the entire platform,...

千萬人受罪。亦各自見身滿床上。眾業所感。獲報如是。又諸罪人。備受眾苦。千百夜。又及以惡鬼。口牙如劍。眼如電光。手復銅爪。拖拽罪人。復有夜。叉執大鐵戟。中罪人身。或中口鼻。或中腹背。拋空翻接。或置床上。復有鐵鷹。啗罪人目。復有鐵蛇。繳罪人頸。百肢節內。悉下長釘。拔舌耕犁。抽腸剉斬。洋銅灌口。熱鐵纏身。

...and yet when thousands of tens of thousands of people receive punishment they each also see their bodies filling up the entire platform. Such are the retributions that are received in resonance with various types of karma.”

“Moreover, all of the offenders endure many kinds of suffering. Thousands of hundreds of *yaksas* and evil ghosts with teeth protruding from their mouths as sharp as swords and eyes that glare like lightning will drag the offenders with their copper-clawed hands. Furthermore, there are *yaksas* grasping large iron halberds who will run them through the bodies of the offenders. Sometimes they will pierce their mouths or noses and sometimes they will stab their stomachs or backs. They will toss them into the air, flipping and catching them, or throw them on top of the platforms. There are also iron eagles that peck out the eyes of the offenders, and iron snakes that wind around their necks. Long nails are driven into all of their hundreds of limbs and joints, their tongues are pulled out and slashed, their guts are ripped out and cut apart. Molten copper is poured into their mouths and hot iron is wound around their bodies.

萬死千生。業感如是。動經億劫。求出無期。此
界壞時。寄生他界。他界次壞。轉寄他方。他方
壞時。展轉相寄。此界成後。還復而來。無間罪
報。其事如是。又五事業感。故稱無間。何等為
五。一者。日夜受罪。以至劫數。無時間絕。故稱
無間。二者。一人亦滿。多人亦滿。故稱無間。三
者。罪器又棒。鷹蛇狼犬。碓磨鋸鑿。剉斫鑊湯。
鐵網鐵繩。鐵驢鐵馬。

Such is their karmic resonance throughout tens-of-thousands of deaths and rebirths. They will pass through millions of *kalpas* searching hopelessly for a way out.”

“When this world is destroyed they will be reborn in another world and when that other world is destroyed they will pass through other worlds being reborn. And when those worlds are destroyed they will continually pass through other worlds being reborn. After this world is re-formed they will come to return again. Such is the situation for punitive retribution in the Unrelenting Hell.”

“Moreover, due to five kinds of karmic resonance, is this hell therefore called “Unrelenting.” What are the five?”

“First, day and night, for more than a *kalpa*, beings receive punishment without interruption, therefore it is called Unrelenting.”

“Second, one person fills it, and many people also fill it, therefore it is called Unrelenting.”

“Third, torture devices include pitchforks, cudgels, eagles, snakes, wolves, hounds, and objects that pound, grind, saw, bore, cut and chop, as well as boiling cauldrons, iron nets, iron cords, iron asses, and iron horses.

生革絡首。熱鐵澆身。飢吞鐵丸。渴飲鐵汁。從
 年竟劫。數那由他。苦楚相連。更無間斷。故稱
 無間。四者。不問男子女人。羌胡夷狄。老幼貴
 賤。或龍或神。或天或鬼。罪行業感。悉同受之。
 故稱無間。五者。若墮此獄。從初入時。至百千
 劫。一日一夜。萬死萬生。求一念間。暫住不得。
 除非業盡。方得受生。以此連綿。故稱無間。地
 藏菩薩白聖母言。

Animal hides are wrapped around their heads and hot iron is spattered over their bodies. When hungry they swallow iron pellets, when thirsty they drink molten iron. For years on end, throughout *kalpas* numbering in *nayutas*, their suffering and punishment is continuous, without interruption. Therefore it is called Unrelenting.”

“Fourth, no matter whether one is a man, woman, barbarian, old, young, rich, poor, or whether a *naga*, spirit, *deva*, or ghost – all will equally receive punishment according to their karmic resonance. Therefore it is called Unrelenting.”

“Fifth, if beings fall into this hell, from the time of their initial entrance throughout hundreds of thousands of *kalpas*, every day and night they will have tens of thousands deaths and rebirths, and seeking a moment’s rest, they will not obtain it. Only when their karma is exhausted can they obtain rebirth elsewhere. Because of this continuity, it is called Unrelenting.”

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva addressed the sagely mother saying,...

無間地獄。麤說如是。若廣說地獄罪器等名。
及諸苦事。一劫之中。求說不盡。摩耶夫人聞
已。愁憂合掌。頂禮而退。❀

...“The Unrelenting Hell, modestly explained, is as such. If I explained in detail the names of the torture devices and all of the manners of suffering in this hell, I would not finish speaking for an entire *kalpa*.”

After hearing this, Queen Maya joined her palms in grievance, fully prostrated and withdrew.



閻浮衆生業感品第四
 爾時地藏菩薩摩訶薩白佛言世尊我承佛
 如來威神力故遍百千萬億世界分是身形
 救拔一切業報衆生若非如來大慈力故即
 不能作如是變化我今又蒙佛付囑至阿逸
 多成佛已來六道衆生遣令度脫唯然世尊
 願不有慮爾時佛告地藏菩薩一切衆生未
 解脫者性識無定惡習結業善習結果

Chapter Four The Karmic Resonance of Sentient Beings in Jambudvīpa

At that time Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, since I am aided by the numinous power of the Buddha – the Tathagata – I am able to pervade hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of worlds by multiplying my body and rescuing all of the sentient beings from their karmic retributions. If it were not for the Tathagata’s power of great compassion I would not be able to perform transformations like these. I have also now received the entrustment of the Buddha, and until Ajita attains buddhahood I will direct sentient beings on the six paths to liberation. Indeed, I hope the World-Honored One will not have worries.”

At that time the Buddha told Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, “All of the sentient beings who are not yet liberated have unsettled dispositions. Both their evil and virtuous habits are bound to their karma and its results.

為善為惡。逐境而生。輪轉五道。暫無休息。動
 經塵劫。迷惑障難。如魚遊網。將是長流。脫入
 暫出。又復遭網。以是等輩。吾當憂念。汝既畢
 是往願。累劫重誓。廣度罪輩。吾復何慮。說是
 語時。會中有一菩薩摩訶薩。名定自在王。白
 佛言。世尊。地藏菩薩。累劫已來。各發何願。今
 蒙世尊殷勤讚歎。唯願世尊。略而說之。爾時
 世尊告定自在王菩薩。諦聽諦聽。善思念之。
 吾當為汝分別解說。

Whether one is virtuous or evil arises in accordance with their surrounding circumstances. They revolve on the wheel of the five paths without even a temporary respite, passing through *kalpas* as numerous as dust particles, perplexed, deluded, hindered and troubled. It is like a fish travelling through nets in a long river. It may temporarily get free, but will be ensnared by the nets again. I grieve for these beings, yet since you have already made the earlier vows, repeating your oath for many *kalpas* to extensively liberate offenders, what worry do I have?"

When these words were spoken, there was a bodhisattva *mahasattva* among the assembly named Samadhi Isvara King who addressed the Buddha saying, "World-Honored One, for many *kalpas* what vows has Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva set forth to now receive the World-Honored One's most earnest praise? I only hope the World-Honored One will speak of them briefly."

At that time the World-Honored One told the Samadhi Isvara King Bodhisattva, "Listen attentively, very attentively, and consider it well. I will explain them separately for you."

乃往過去無量阿僧祇那由他不可說劫。爾時有佛，號一切智成就如來，應供、正遍知、明行足、善逝、世間解、無上士、調御丈夫、天人師、佛、世尊。其佛壽命六萬劫，未出家時，為小國王，與一鄰國王為友，同行十善，饒益眾生。其鄰國內所有人民，多造眾惡。二王議計，廣設方便。一王發願，早成佛道，當度是輩，令使無餘。一王發願，若不先度罪苦，令是安樂，得至菩提，我終未願成佛。

“In the past, immeasurable, *asamkhyas* of *nayutas* of inexpressible *kalpas* ago, there was a buddha named Perfect Omniscience Tathagata, the One Worthy of Offerings, the One of Proper and Total Knowledge, the One Perfect in Wisdom and Conduct, the Well-Gone One, the Comprehender of the World, the Unexcelled One, the Great Trainer, the Teacher of *Devas* and Humans, the Buddha, the World-Honored One. The life span of this buddha was sixty-thousand *kalpas*.”

“Before leaving home to become a monk he was a king of a small country. He was friends with the king of a neighboring country and together they would practice the Ten Good Deeds to benefit sentient beings. Because all of the citizens in the neighboring countries committed many kinds of evil, the two kings discussed a plan to exhibit expedient means extensively for them. One king set forth a vow to quickly attain buddhahood in order to liberate all beings without exception. The other king set forth a vow saying, ‘If I first do not liberate those who are suffering for their misconduct, allowing them to have peace and bliss, and to attain *bodhi*, I vow to not yet attain buddhahood.’”

佛告定自在王菩薩。一王發願早成佛者。即一切智成就。如來是一王發願永度罪苦眾生。未願成佛者。即地藏菩薩是。復於過去無量阿僧祇劫。有佛出世。名清淨蓮華目如來。其佛壽命四十劫。像法之中。有一羅漢。福度眾生。因次教化。遇一女人。字曰光目。設食供養。羅漢問之。欲願何等。光目答言。我以母亡之日。資福救拔。未知我母生處何趣。

The Buddha told the Samadhi Isvara King Bodhisattva, “The one king who set forth the vow to quickly attain buddhahood is the Perfect Omniscience Tathagata, the other king who set forth the vow to endlessly liberate sentient beings suffering for their misconduct, vowing to not yet attain buddhahood, is Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.”

“Furthermore, in the past, immeasurable *asamkhyā kalpas* ago, there was a buddha named Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata who appeared in the world. The life span of this buddha was forty *kalpas*.”

“During the Semblance Dharma there was an *arhat* who meritoriously liberated sentient beings, edifying them according to their capacities. He met a women named Radiant Eyes who provided food and made offerings to him.

“The *arhat* asked her, ‘What are your wishes?’”

“Radiant Eyes replied, ‘Since the day my mother died I have produced merit for her rescue, but I still do not know which realm my mother was reborn.’”

羅漢愍之。為入定觀。見光目女。母墮在惡趣。受極大苦。羅漢問光目言。汝母在生作何行業。今在惡趣受極大苦。光目答言。我母所習。唯好食噉魚鱉之屬。所食魚鱉多。食其子。或炒或煮。恣情食噉。計其命數。千萬復倍。尊者慈愍。如何哀救。羅漢愍之。為作方便。勸光目言。汝可志誠念清淨蓮華。目如來。兼塑畫形像。存亡獲報。光目聞已。即捨所愛。尋畫佛像。而供養之。

“The *arhat* sympathized with her, and entered into *samadhi* on her behalf to observe her mother’s realm of rebirth. He saw that the mother of Radiant Eyes had fallen into the evil realms and was enduring extreme suffering. The *arhat* asked Radiant Eyes, ‘While you mother was alive, what karmic practices did she do so that she now endures such extremely great suffering in the evil realms?’”

“Radiant Eyes replied, ‘My mother was accustomed to only enjoy eating fish, turtles, and the like. She often ate their eggs, and when fried or boiled she indulged in eating them. In counting the number of lives taken, it would be equal to thousands of hundreds-of-thousands, if not many times more. Honored one, have much compassion and sympathy. How can I save her?’”

“The *arhat* sympathized with her, and using expedient means advised Radiant Eyes saying, ‘If you can be sincerely mindful of Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata while casting or painting his image, then both the living and the dead will obtain recompense.’”

“After Radiant eyes heard this she renounced all that she loved and immediately painted an image of the buddha and made offerings to it.

復恭敬心。悲泣瞻禮。忽於夜後。夢見佛身。金色晃耀。如須彌山。放大光明。而告光目。汝母不久當生汝家。纔覺飢寒。即當言說。其後家內婢生一子。未滿三日。而乃言說。稽首悲泣。告於光目。生死業緣。果報自受。吾是汝母。久處暗冥。自別汝來。累墮大地獄。蒙汝福力。方得受生。為下賤人。又復短命。壽年十三。更落惡道。汝有何計。令吾脫免。光目聞說。知母無疑。哽咽悲啼。而白婢子。

Moreover, she wept sorrowfully as she gazed in veneration upon the image. Unexpectedly during the night, as if in a dream, she saw the dazzling golden hued body of the buddha as large as Mt. Sumeru. Emitting a great radiance he told Radiant Eyes, ‘Before long your mother will be reborn in your household, and once she feels hungry or cold she will speak.’”

“Afterward, a maidservant in her house gave birth to a son, who not yet three full days later began to speak. Fully prostrating and weeping sorrowfully, he told Radiant Eyes, ‘In *samsara*, the fruits of karmic affinities are self-imposed. I was your mother and have been in dark and deep places for a long time. Since I left you I have fallen many times into the great hells. After receiving the power of your merits I was able to be reborn elsewhere, but only as a lowly and poor person. Moreover, my life span is short, and when I am thirteen I will fall again into the evil paths. Do you have a way to allow for my release?’”

“After Radiant Eyes heard these words, she knew that without a doubt it was her mother and, choked up with tears of sorrow, addressed the maidservant’s child,...

既是我母。合知本罪。作何行業。墮於惡道。婢
子答言。以殺害毀罵二業受報。若非蒙福。救
拔吾難。以是業故。未合解脫。光目問言。地獄
罪報。其事云何。婢子答言。罪苦之事。不忍稱
說。百千歲中。卒白難竟。光目聞已。啼淚號泣。
而白空界。願我之母。永脫地獄。畢十三歲。更
無重罪。及歷惡道。十方諸佛。慈哀愍我。聽我
為母所發廣大誓願。若得我母永離三塗。及
斯下賤。

...‘Since you were my mother, you should know your past offenses. What karmic deeds have you done to fall onto the evil paths?’”

“The maidservant’s child replied, ‘I received this retribution due to the dual karmic deeds of killing and slandering. If I had not received your merit rescuing me from my troubles, then due to my karma, I would have not yet been released.’”

“Radiant Eyes asked, “What kinds of punitive retribution are found in the hells?””

“The maidservant’s child replied, ‘I cannot bear to recount such affairs of suffering which were due to my misconduct. Even if I spoke for hundreds of thousands of years, it would be difficult to finish describing them.’”

“After Radiant Eyes heard this she cried aloud and into the air said, ‘I wish my mother to be released eternally from the hells, and after her thirteen years of life to be free from her grave offenses and not have to pass through the evil paths. May all of the buddhas in the ten directions have compassion and sympathy for me, and listen to the great vow I am to set forth for the sake of my mother. If my mother obtains eternal freedom from the three mires, from the poor lower classes,...

乃至女人之身永劫不受者。願我自今日後，
 對清淨蓮華目如來像前，卻後百千萬億劫，
 中應有世界所有地獄及三惡道諸罪苦衆
 生，誓願救拔，令離地獄惡趣，畜生餓鬼等，如
 是罪報等人，盡成佛竟。我然後方成正覺。發
 誓願已，具聞清淨蓮華目如來而告之曰：光
 目，汝大慈愍，善能為母發如是的大願。吾觀汝
 母十三歲畢，捨此報已，生為梵志，壽年百歲，
 過是報後，當生無憂國土，壽命不可計劫。後
 成佛果，廣度人天，數如恒河沙。

...and from a female body, never for endless *kalpas* having to endure them, then I vow, before the image of Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata, that from this day forth throughout hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas*, if there should be sentient beings who are suffering for their misconduct in the hells and three evil paths of the worlds, I will rescue them, freeing them from the hells and evil realms of animals or hungry ghosts. Only after those beings enduring punitive retribution have all attained buddhahood, will I attain complete awakening.”

“After setting forth this vow she heard Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata tell her, ‘Radiant Eyes, you are highly compassionate and sympathetic to be so skillfully able to set forth a great vow such as this for the sake of your mother. I see that your mother will abandon these retributions after thirteen years and will be reborn as a *brahman* with a life span of one hundred years. After passing through this life, she will be reborn in the Land of No Distress and have a life span of incalculable *kalpas*. Afterwards she will attain the fruit of buddhahood and extensively liberate humans and *devas* as numerous as the sands of the Ganges River.’”

佛告定自在王。爾時羅漢福度光目者。即無
 盡意菩薩。是光目母者。即解脫菩薩。是光目
 女者。即地藏菩薩。是過去久遠劫中。如是慈
 愍。發恒河沙願。廣度衆生。未來世中。若有男
 子。女人。不行善者。行惡者。乃至不信因果者。
 邪婬妄語者。兩舌惡口者。毀謗大乘者。如是
 諸業。衆生。必墮惡趣。若遇善知識。勸令一彈
 指間。歸依地藏菩薩。是諸衆生。即得解脫。三
 惡道報。若能志心歸敬。及

The Buddha told the Samadhi Isvara King, “The *arhat* who meritoriously helped Radiant Eyes at that time is now Inexhaustible Intention Bodhisattva, the mother of Radiant Eyes is Liberation Bodhisattva, and Radiant Eyes herself is Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. Throughout many long *kalpas*, due to compassion and sympathy such as this, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has set forth as many vows as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River to extensively liberate sentient beings.”

“If in future ages there are men and women who do not practice what is virtuous and practice evil, who do not believe in cause and effect, who engage in illicit sexual conduct and false speech, who are double-tongued and practice harsh speech, and who slander Mahayana, then these sentient beings will certainly fall into the evil realms due to their karma.”

“If they meet with a virtuous and wise mentor who, in the instant of a finger-snap, encourages them to take refuge in Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, then these sentient beings will be released from the retributions of the three evil paths. If there are those who are able to turn to him in reverence with a resolute heart,...

瞻禮讚歎香華衣服種種珍寶或復飲食如是奉事者未來百千萬億劫中常在諸天受勝妙樂若天福盡下生人間猶百千劫常為帝王能憶宿命因果本末定自在王如是地藏菩薩有如此不可思議大威神力廣利眾生汝等諸菩薩當記是經廣宣流布定自在王白佛言世尊願不有慮我等千萬億菩薩摩訶薩必能承佛威神廣演是經於閻浮提利益眾生

...who praise him with a venerable gaze, who offer incense, flowers, clothing, gems of all kind, food and drink, or other offerings such as these, then they will always enjoy superbly wondrous bliss in the heavens for hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas* in the future. If their heavenly merits are exhausted they will have a lower rebirth in the human realm. Yet they will be consistently be reborn as kings for hundreds of thousands of *kalpas*, and will be able to remember the causes and effects of their past lives.”

“Samadhi Isvara King, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has inconceivably great numinous power such as this to widely benefit sentient beings. Bodhisattvas, all of you should remember this sutra and proclaim it, circulating it widely.”

The Samadhi Isvara King addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, I hope you will not have worries. We thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of bodhisattva *mahasattvas*, aided by your numinous power, are certainly able to proclaim this sutra widely in benefit of the sentient beings in Jambudvipa.”

定自在王菩薩白世尊已。合掌恭敬作禮而退。爾時四方天王俱從座起。合掌恭敬白佛言。世尊。地藏菩薩於久遠劫來。發如是大願。云何至今猶度未絕。更發廣大誓言。唯願世尊為我等說。佛告四天王。善哉善哉。吾今為汝及未來現在天人眾等。廣利益故。說地藏菩薩於娑婆世界閻浮提內生死道中。慈哀救拔度脫一切罪苦眾生方便之事。四天王言。唯然世尊。願樂欲聞。

After the Samadhi Isvara King addressed the Buddha, he joined his palms, reverentially made obeisance and withdrew.

At that time the Heavenly Kings of the four directions all arose from their seats. They joined their palms and reverentially addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, for many long *kalpas* Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has set forth great vows such as these, but why has he not yet finished liberating those beings? Why does he still set forth great vows? We only hope the World-Honored One will explain this for us.”

The Buddha told the Four Heavenly Kings, “Excellent! Excellent! For the great benefit of yourselves and the *devas* and humans of the future and present, I will now speak of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, who is among the paths of *samsara* in Jambudvipa of the Saha world, using expedient means to compassionately and sympathetically rescue and liberate all sentient beings who are suffering for their misconduct.”

The Four Heavenly Kings said, “Indeed, World-Honored One, we joyfully wish to hear.”

佛告四天王。地藏菩薩久遠劫來。迄至于今。度脫眾生。猶未畢願。慈愍此世罪苦眾生。復觀未來無量劫中。因蔓不斷。以是之故。又發重願。如是菩薩於娑婆世界。閻浮提中。百千萬億方便。而為教化。四天王。地藏菩薩若遇殺生者。說宿殃短命報。若遇竊盜者。說貧窮苦楚報。若遇邪淫者。說雀鴿鴛鴦報。若遇惡口者。說眷屬鬥諍報。若遇毀謗者。說無舌瘡口報。若遇瞋恚者。說醜陋癱殘報。

The Buddha told the Four Heavenly Kings, “For many long *kalpas* up until the present, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has liberated sentient beings, yet out of compassion and sympathy for the sentient beings suffering in this world for their misconduct, he has not yet completed his vows. Moreover, he sees that their causal connections in immeasurable future *kalpas* have not been severed, therefore he repeatedly sets forth these weighty vows. Thus in Jambudvīpa of the Saha world, this bodhisattva has hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of expedient means to edify sentient beings.”

“Four Heavenly Kings, if Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva encounters those who kill he speaks of a retribution of a short life span; for those who steal he speaks of a retribution of poverty and pain; for those who engage in illicit sexual conduct he speaks of a retribution of rebirth as sparrows, pigeons, or mandarin drakes and ducks; for those who practice harsh speech he speaks of a retribution of having quarreling relatives; for those who slander he speaks of a retribution of a tongueless, cankerous mouth; for those who are hateful he speaks of a retribution of being ugly and crippled;...

若遇慳吝者。說所求違願報。若遇飲食無度者。說飢渴咽病報。若遇畋獵恣情者。說驚狂喪命報。若遇悖逆父母者。說天地災殺報。若遇燒山林木者。說狂迷取死報。若遇前後父母惡毒者。說返生鞭撻現受報。若遇網捕生雛者。說骨肉分離報。若遇毀謗三寶者。說盲聾瘖啞報。若遇輕法慢教者。說永處惡道報。若遇破用常住者。說億劫輪迴地獄報。若遇汚梵誣僧者。說永在畜生報。

...for those who are miserly he speaks of a retribution of not finding what they wish; for those who eat or drink without restraint he speaks of a retribution of being hungry and thirsty with a diseased throat; **for those who hunt with an unrestrained nature** he speaks of a retribution of a frightening and cruel death; **for those who are disobedient to their father or mother** he speaks of a retribution of being killed in a natural disaster; for those who burn down forests he speaks of a retribution of a cruel and bewildering death; **for those who are evil stepfathers or stepmothers** he speaks of a retribution of receiving floggings in their rebirths; **for those who net and trap young animals** he speaks of a retribution of being separated from their blood relatives; **for those who slander the Three Jewels** he speaks of a retribution of being blind, deaf, and mute; **for those who slight the Dharma and disdain the teachings** he speaks of a retribution of eternally dwelling on the evil paths; for those who abuse monastic property he speaks of a retribution of transmigrating among the hells for millions of *kalpas*; **for those who defile the pure and defame the Sangha** he speaks of a retribution of eternal rebirth in the animal realm;...

若遇湯火斬斫傷生者。說輪迴遞償報。若遇
破戒犯齋者。說禽獸飢餓報。若遇非理毀用
者。說所求闕絕報。若遇吾我貢高者。說卑使
下賤報。若遇兩舌鬥亂者。說無舌百舌報。若
遇邪見者。說邊地受生報。如是等閻浮提眾
生。身口意業。惡習結果。百千報應。今麤略說。
如是等閻浮提眾生業感差別。地藏菩薩百
千方便而教化之。

...for those who scald, burn, behead, cut, or injure living beings he speaks of a retribution of similar pay back for future transmigrations; **for those who** break the precepts and violate fasting he speaks of a retribution of starvation as birds or beasts; for those who destroy things without principle he speaks of a retribution of losing what they seek; for those who are self-conceited and arrogant he speaks of a retribution of being lowly and poor; **for** those who are double tongued and cause conflict he speaks of a retribution of being tongue-less or having hundreds of tongues; **and for those who** hold perverse views he speaks of a retribution of being reborn in the bordering lands.”

“Such is the modest description of the hundreds of thousands of resonant retributions where fruits are bound to the evil habits from the physical, verbal, and mental karma of the sentient beings in Jambudvīpa. Since the sentient beings in Jambudvīpa have differing karmic resonances, Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva has hundreds of thousands of expedient means to edify them.”

是諸眾生先受如是等報。後墮地獄。動經劫
數。無有出期。是故汝等護人護國。無令是諸
眾業迷惑眾生。四天王聞已。涕淚悲歎。合掌
而退。❀

“These sentient beings first endure retributions such as these and will afterwards fall into the hells, where they will pass through *kalpas* without being released. Therefore you should protect these people and their countries, and do not allow these accumulated karmic deeds to confuse and delude these sentient beings.”

After the Four Heavenly Kings heard this they wept, and sighing sorrowfully they joined their palms and withdrew.

❀

地獄名號品第五
 爾時普賢菩薩摩訶薩白地藏菩薩言。仁者。願為天龍四眾及未來現在一切眾生說娑婆世界及閻浮提罪苦眾生所受報處。地獄名號及惡報等事。使未來世末法眾生。知是果報。地藏答言。仁者。我今承佛威神。及大士之力。略說地獄名號。及罪報惡報之事。仁者。閻浮提東方有山。號曰鐵圍。其山黑邃。無日月光。有大地獄。號極無間。又有地獄。

Chapter Five The Names of the Hells

At that time Samantabhadra Bodhisattva Mahasattva addressed Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva saying, “Benevolent One, I hope that you, for the sake of the *devas*, *nagas*, the Fourfold Assembly and for all of the sentient beings of the present and future, will speak about the names of the hells and of the affairs where sentient beings from Jambudvīpa in the Saha world who are suffering for their misconduct, endure their evil retributions, thus allowing the sentient beings during the Degenerate Dharma in the future age to know these fruits of retribution.”

Ksitigarbha replied, “Beneficent One, aided by the numinous power of the Buddha and the strength of this Mahasattva, I will speak briefly of the names of the hells and of their punitive and evil retributions.”

“Beneficent One, east of Jambudvīpa there are mountains called the Iron Ring. These mountains are dark and deep, and without the light of the sun or moon. There is a great hell there called the Utmost Unrelenting Hell and there is also a hell...

鐵曰名獄地有復車夾曰名
 鉢鐵曰名獄地有復山飛大
 復丸燒曰名獄地有復刀阿
 有復腳耕曰名獄地有復鼻
 地有復舌抱曰名獄地有復
 獄地有復柱鐵曰名獄地有
 名獄地有復驢鐵曰名獄地
 曰名獄地有復衣鐵曰名獄
 多曰名獄地有復床通曰名
 瞋諍論為名獄地有復箭四
 復眼剗曰名獄地有復角
 有復首流曰名獄地有復
 地有復火洋曰名獄地有
 獄地有復銅千曰名獄地
 名獄地有復刀鐵曰名獄
 曰名獄地有復牛鐵曰名

...called Great Avici. There is also a hell called the Four Corners, a hell called Flying Daggers, a hell called Fiery Arrows, a hell called the Compressing Mountains, a hell called Piercing Spears, a hell called Iron Carts, a hell called Iron Platforms, a hell called Iron Oxen, a hell called Iron Clothing, a hell called Thousand Blades, a hell called Iron Asses, a hell called Molten Copper, a hell called Embracing Pillars, a hell called Flowing Fire, a hell called Tongue Plowing, a hell called Head Chopping, a hell called Feet Burning, a hell called Eye Pecking, a hell called Iron Pellets, a hell called Fighting and Quarreling, a hell called Iron Axes, and a hell called Much Hatred.”

感薩千復鐵獄地牛銅數地
 如言其有屋燒獄地獄地鎖無藏
 是仁中諸地手火獄地獄地限白
 業者名小獄地鷹火獄地獄地更言
 力此號地火獄地山火火有仁者
 甚者各獄狼燒獄地象地喚鐵
 大皆是各不一獄地牙火獄地圍
 是南同或如獄地石火獄地之內
 閻地二或是倒獄地狗地拔有
 浮藏或三地地地皮火獄地如
 提菩或獄獄地地床火獄地是
 行薩告四其火獄地馬糞地等
 惡眾普乃中屋飲獄地地獄地
 生賢至各各地血火獄地獄地
 業菩百各獄地地梁火獄地其

Ksitigarbha said, “Beneficent One, within the Iron Ring there are hells such as these that are illimitable in number. In addition there is the hell of Crying Out, the hell of Pulling Out Tongues, the hell of Excrement and Urine, the hell of Copper Locks, the hell of Fiery Elephants, the hell of Fiery Dogs, the hell of Fiery Horses, the hell of Fiery Oxen, the hell of Fiery Mountains, the hell of Fiery Rocks, the hell of Fiery Platforms, the hell of Fiery Beams, the hell of Fiery Eagles, the hell of Sawing Teeth, the hell of Flaying Skin, the hell of Blood Drinking, the hell of Hand Burning, the hell of Feet Burning, the hell of Inverted Thorns, the hell of Fiery Cells, the hell of Iron Cells, the hell of Fiery Wolves, and other hells such as these. Amid each of these hells there are smaller hells and whether there are one, two, three, four, or even hundreds of thousands, each has a different name.”

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva told Samantabhadra Bodhisattva, “Beneficent One, such are the karmic resonances for all of the sentient beings who commit evil on the southern continent of Jambudvīpa. The power of karma is very great.

能敵須彌。能深巨海。能障聖道。是故眾生莫
輕小惡。以為無罪。死後有報。纖毫受之。父子
至親。岐路各別。縱然相逢。無肯代受。我今承
佛威力。略說地獄罪報之事。唯願仁者暫聽。
是言。普賢答言。吾以久知三惡道報。望仁者
說。令後世末法一切惡行眾生。聞仁者說。使
令歸佛。

It can scale Mt. Sumeru, dive the depths of the sea, and even obstruct the way of the sages. For this reason sentient beings should not take minor misdeeds lightly by not considering them as offensive. After death, one will receive even the most minuscule of retributions. Those as closely related as father and son will each part on separate paths, and even if they meet neither would be permitted to take on the retribution of the other.”

“Aided by the numinous power of the Buddha, I will now speak briefly about the punitive retribution in the hells. I only hope the Beneficent One will listen to this for but a moment.”

Samantabhadra replied, “I have long known of the retributions on the three evil paths. I hope the Benevolent One will speak to allow all of the sentient beings in the Degenerate Dharma of the latter age to hear what the Benevolent One has to say, and to direct them to turn to the Buddha.”

地藏白言。仁者。地獄罪報。其事如是。或有地
 獄。取罪人舌。使牛耕之。或有地獄。取罪人心。
 夜叉食之。或有地獄。鑊湯盛沸。煮罪人身。或
 有地獄。赤燒銅柱。使罪人抱。或有地獄。使諸
 火燒。趁及罪人。或有地獄。一向寒冰。或有地
 獄。無限糞尿。或有地獄。純飛鏃鏢。或有地獄。
 多攢火槍。或有地獄。唯撞胸背。或有地獄。但
 燒手足。或有地獄。盤繳鐵蛇。或有地獄。驅逐
 鐵狗。或有地獄。盡駕鐵驪。

Ksitigarbha said, “Beneficent One, the punitive retributions found in the hells are as such: There are some hells where the tongue of the offender is taken and plowed through by oxen, some hells where the heart of the offender is taken and devoured by *yaksas*, some hells where the body of an offender is simmered in a cauldron brimming with boiling broth, some hell where the offender is forced to embrace a red-hot copper pillar, some hells where the offender is chased by flames, some hells which are constantly wintry and icy, some hell which have unlimited excrement and urine, some hells which have flying maces everywhere, some hells which have many clashing fiery spears, some hells where only the chest and back are beaten, some hells where only the hands and feet are burned, some hells where iron snakes wind around the body, some hells where iron dogs chase quickly in pursuit, and some hells where offenders everywhere are harnessed to iron mules.”

仁者。如是等報。各各獄中。有百千種業道之器。無非是銅。是鐵。是石。是火。此四種物。眾業行感。若廣說地獄罪報等事。一一獄中。更有百千種苦楚。何況多獄。我今承佛威神。及仁者問。略說如是。若廣解說。窮劫不盡。❀

“Beneficent One, the retributions are as such. Among each of the hells, the hundreds of thousands of kinds of devices on the karmic paths are not without the four kinds of materials – copper, iron, stone and fire – which are resonant with the various types of karmic action. If I were to explain in detail the punitive retributions found in the hells, then among every single hell there would be hundreds of thousands of kinds of pain and suffering. How much more so for the many hells!”

“Now aided by the numinous power of the Buddha and in response the Beneficent One’s question, I have thus spoken only briefly. If I had explained in detail, I would have not finished even by the end of the *kalpa*.”



如來讚歎品第六
 爾時世尊舉身放大光明。遍照百千萬億恒
 河沙等諸佛世界。出大音聲。普告諸佛世界
 一切諸菩薩摩訶薩。及天龍鬼神人非人等。
 聽吾今日稱揚讚歎地藏菩薩摩訶薩。於十
 方世界。現大不可思議威神慈悲之力。救護
 一切罪苦之事。吾滅度後。汝等諸菩薩大士。
 及天龍鬼神等。廣作方便。衛護是經。令一切
 眾生證涅槃樂。說是語已。會中有一菩薩。名
 曰普廣。合掌

Chapter Six The Praise of the Tathagata

At that time, the World-Honored One emitted a great radiance from his entire body which illuminated as many Buddha Lands as grains of sand in hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of Ganges Rivers. Producing a great sound he universally told all of the bodhisattva *mahasattvas* and *devas, nagas*, ghosts, spirits, humans and non-humans from all of the Buddha Lands saying, “Listen as I now commend and praise Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva, he who manifests inconceivably numinous and compassionate power in the worlds of the ten directions in order to rescue and protect all of those who are suffering for their misconduct. After my entrance into nirvana, all of you bodhisattva *mahasattvas, devas, nagas*, ghosts, and spirits should use expedient means extensively to protect this sutra, and direct sentient beings to realization of the bliss of nirvana.”

After speaking these words there was a bodhisattva among the assembly named Universal Expanse who joined his palms and...

禮者。地藏菩薩摩訶薩名者。或合掌者。讚歎者。作
 地。藏。菩。薩。未。來。世。中。若。有。善。男。子。善。女。人。聞。是
 廣。菩。薩。摩。訶。薩。名。者。或。合。掌。者。讚。歎。者。作
 之。事。普。廣。白。言。唯。然。世。尊。願。樂。欲。聞。佛。告。普
 聽。吾。當。為。汝。略。說。地。藏。菩。薩。及。四。眾。等。諦。聽。諦
 語。爾。時。世。尊。告。普。廣。菩。薩。及。四。眾。等。諦。聽。諦
 等。事。使。諸。天。龍。八。部。及。未。來。世。眾。生。頂。受。佛
 世。末。法。眾。生。宣。說。地。藏。菩。薩。利。益。人。天。因。果
 如。是。不。可。思。議。大。威。神。德。唯。願。世。尊。為。未。來
 恭。敬。而。白。佛。言。今。見。世。尊。讚。歎。地。藏。菩。薩。有

...reverentially addressed the Buddha saying, “I have now seen the World-Honored One praise Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, he who possesses such inconceivably great numinous power and virtue. I only hope the World-Honored One, for the sake of sentient beings during the Degenerate Dharma of future ages, will speak about the affinities of the deeds by Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva which benefited *devas* and humans, and directed the *devas*, *nagas*, and remainder of the Eightfold Assembly, as well as the sentient beings of future ages to respectfully receive the words of the Buddha.”

At that time, the World-Honored One told Universal Expanse Bodhisattva and the Fourfold Assembly, “Listen attentively, very attentively, and I will briefly explain to you the meritorious deeds of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva that benefited humans and *devas*.”

Universal Expanse said, “Indeed, World-Honored One, we joyfully wish to hear.”

The Buddha told Universal Expanse Bodhisattva, “In future ages, if there are virtuous men and women who hear the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva, or those who join their palms, or praise him, or make obeisance to him,...

戀慕者。是人超越三十劫罪。普廣。若有善男
 子。善女人。或彩畫形像。或土石膠漆金銀銅
 鐵。作此菩薩。一瞻一禮者。是人百返生於三
 十三天。永不墮於惡道。假如天福盡。故下生
 人間。猶為國王。不失大利。若有女人。厭女人
 身。盡心供養地藏菩薩畫像。及土石膠漆銅
 鐵等像。如是日日不退。常以華香。飲食。衣服。
 繒綵。幢幡。錢寶。物等供養。是善女人。盡此一
 報女身。百千萬劫。更不生有女人世界。何況
 復受。

...or adore him, then these people will overcome the offenses of thirty *kalpas*.”

“Universal Expanse, if there are virtuous men and women who paint an image or create this bodhisattva out of clay, stone, lacquer, gold, silver, copper, or iron and gaze upon it in veneration just once, then these people will obtain hundreds of rebirths in the Heaven of the Thirty-three and never fall into the evil paths. If due to the exhaustion of their heavenly merits, then they will have a lower rebirth in the human realm where they will be reborn as the kings of countries and will never lose great benefits.”

“If there are women who, growing tired of the female body, wholeheartedly make offerings to the painted image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, or to a clay, stone, lacquer, copper, or iron image, day after day without fail, consistently making offerings of flowers, incense, food and drink, clothing, silk, pennants, money, gems, or other goods, then these virtuous women will extinguish this retribution of a female body. For hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of *kalpas*, they will not even be reborn in a world that has women, much less be one again,...

除非慈願力故。要受女身。度脫眾生。承斯供養。地藏力故。及功德力。百千萬劫。不受女身。復次普廣。若有女人。厭是醜陋。多疾病者。但於地藏像前。志心瞻禮。食頃之間。是人千萬劫中所受生身。相貌圓滿。是醜陋女人。如不厭女身。即百千萬億生中。常為王女。乃及王妃。宰輔大姓。大長者女。端正受生。諸相圓滿。由志心故。瞻禮地藏菩薩。獲福如是。

...except if through the power of compassionate vows to willingly take on the female body to liberate sentient beings. Due to the influence of making offerings to Ksitigarbha they receive meritorious power and for hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of *kalpas* will never receive a female body.”

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, if there are women who, growing tired of being ugly and frequently sick, gaze in veneration with a resolute heart in front of an image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, even for the span of a single meal, then these women will be reborn for thousands of tens-of-thousands of *kalpas* with a body that is perfectly figured. If these ugly women do not tire of their female body, then for hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of rebirths they will consistently be reborn as female royalty, or imperial concubines, or daughters of ministers, or of great families, or of great elders, and will be upright and reborn with a perfect figure. By gazing in veneration with a resolute heart upon Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva they will gain merits such as these.”

復次普廣。若有善男子善女人。能對菩薩像
前。作諸伎樂。及歌詠讚歎。香華供養。乃至勸
於一人多人。如是等輩。現在世中。及未來世。
常得百千鬼神。日夜衛護。不令惡事。輒聞其
耳。何況親受諸橫。復次普廣。未來世中。若有
惡人。及惡神惡鬼。見有善男子善女人。歸敬
供養。讚歎瞻禮。地藏菩薩形像。或妄生譏毀。
謗無功德。及利益事。或露齒笑。或背面非。或
勸人共非。或一人非。或多人非。乃至一念生
譏毀者。如是之人。賢劫千佛滅度。

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, if there are virtuous men and women who are able to dance, play music, sing praise, and make offerings of incense and flowers in front of the image of this bodhisattva, and who encourage one or more people to do the same, then in the present age as well as for future ages such beings will always have hundreds of thousands of ghosts and spirits protecting them day and night who will not allow bad news to be heard by their ears, much less allow them to personally endure any misfortunes.”

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, if in the future ages there are evil people, ghosts or spirits who see that there are virtuous men and women turning to in reverence, making offerings, praising, and gazing in veneration upon the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, then they may wrongly express ridicule, decrying the acts as lacking merit or any benefit, or they may bear their teeth grinning, slandering them behind their backs, and encourage others – be it one or many – to express ridicule even if for only a moment. Even after the nirvana of the thousand buddhas of the Auspicious Kalpa,...

譏毀之報。尚在阿鼻地獄。受極重罪。過是劫
 已。方受餓鬼。又經千劫。復受畜生。又經千劫。
 方得人身。縱受人身。貧窮下賤。諸根不具。多
 被惡業來結。其心不久之間。復墮惡道。是故
 普廣。譏毀他人供養。尚獲此報。何況別生惡
 見。毀滅。復次普廣。若未來世。有男子女人。久
 處床枕。求生求死。了不可得。或夜夢惡鬼。乃
 及家親。或遊險道。或多魘寐。共鬼神遊。日月
 歲深。轉復尪瘵。眠中叫苦。慘悽不樂者。

...the retribution for such people who ridicule is to endure the utmost sever punishment in Avici Hell. After a *kalpa* they will be reborn as hungry ghosts, and after passing through thousands of *kalpas* they will be reborn as animals, and after passing through thousands of more *kalpas* they will be able to be reborn as humans. Even when they are reborn as humans, they will be impoverished, lowly, and with handicapped faculties. Their minds will often be bound to their evil karma and before long they will fall into the evil paths again. For this reason, Universal Expanse, those who ridicule other people for making offerings will endure this retribution. How much more so for those who express evil views which are damaging and destructive!”

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, if in future ages there are men and women who are bedridden for a long time seeking a recovery – or even seeking death – yet do not obtain either, and who have dreams at night of evil ghosts or of family and friends, or of travelling down treacherous paths, or of roaming with many nightmarish ghosts and spirits, and who for days, months, years or longer, waste away and cry out in their sleep from their wretched misery,...

此皆是業道論對未定輕重或難捨壽或不
得愈男女俗眼不辨是事但當對諸佛菩薩
像前高聲轉讀此經一遍或取病人可愛之
物或衣服寶貝莊園舍宅對病人前高聲唱
言我某甲等為是病人對經像前捨諸等物
或供養經像或造佛菩薩形像或造塔寺或
然油燈或施常住如是三白病人遣令聞知
假令諸識分散至氣盡者乃至一日二日三
日四日至七日已來但高聲白高聲讀經

...then this is due to their dubious karmic path whose unsettled severity makes it difficult for them to abandon this life or to have a full recovery. The eyes of common men and women do not recognize these affairs.”

“In this case, this sutra should be read once in a loud voice before the images of buddhas and bodhisattvas and the beloved possessions of the sick person such as their clothing, gems, gardens, or houses should be retained by saying in a loud voice before him or her: ‘I, so-and-so, before these images and this sutra, and on behalf of this sick person, relinquish all of his or her possessions.’”

“Whether making such offerings to this sutra and images, or by creating images of buddhas and bodhisattvas, constructing pagodas, burning oil lamps, or giving to monasteries, one should tell the sick person three times to make sure he knows. If his consciousness has disintegrated and breath has stopped, then for up to one, two, three, four, or even seven days, this statement and sutra should be read in a loud voice.”

是人命終之後，宿殃重罪，至于五無間罪，永
 得解脫。所受生處，常知宿命，何況善男子善
 女人，自書此經，或教人書，或自塑畫菩薩形
 像，乃至教人塑畫，所受果報，必獲大利。是故
 普廣，若見有人讀誦是經，乃至一念讚歎，是
 經，或恭敬者，汝須百千萬便，勸是等人，勤心
 莫退，能得未來現在千萬億不可思議功德。
 復次，普廣，若未來世諸眾生等，或夢或寐，見
 諸鬼神，乃至諸形，或悲或啼，或愁或歎，或恐
 或怖，此皆是一生十生百生千生過去

“After this person’s life has ended, they will be released eternally from their misfortunes and grave offenses of his past lives, and even from the offenses that warrant the Five-fold Unrelenting Hell. Wherever he is reborn he will always know his past lives. How much more beneficial must the retributive fruits be for those virtuous men and women who write this sutra personally, or commission others to do so, or who cast and paint the images of bodhisattvas, or even commission others to do so.”

“For this reason, Universal Expanse, if you see there are people who read and recite this sutra, or who praise and revere this sutra even for a moment, then you must exhibit hundreds of thousands of expedient means to encourage these people to resolve their minds so as not to retreat, so they can obtain, in the future and in the present, thousands of tens-of-thousands of million of inconceivable merits.”

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, if in future ages, while dreaming or while drowsy, sentient beings see ghosts, spirits, or other apparitions that are either sad, weeping, worried, grieved, fearful, or terrified then these beings are their...

父母男女弟妹。夫妻眷屬。在於惡趣。未得出離。無處希望。福力救拔。當告宿世骨肉。使作方便。願離惡道。普廣汝以神力。遣是眷屬。令對諸佛菩薩像前。志心自讀此經。或請人讀。其數三遍。或七遍。如是惡道眷屬。經聲畢。是遍數。當得解脫。乃至夢寐之中。永不復見。復次普廣。若未來世。有諸下賤等人。或奴或婢。乃至諸不自由之人。覺知宿業。要懺悔者。志心瞻禮地藏菩薩形像。乃至一七日中。

...fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives or relatives from one life, ten lives, a hundred lives, or a thousand lives in the past who have not yet been freed from the evil realms and who have nowhere to seek the meritorious powers able to rescue them. They must plead with their blood relatives from a past life to use expedient means in the hope of being freed from the evil paths.”

“Universal Expanse, by means of your numinous power, you should make these relatives personally recite this sutra with a resolute heart before the images of buddhas and bodhisattvas for a total of either three or seven times, or have them ask others to do so. After this sutra has been recited this number of times their relatives in the evil paths will be released and they will never see them in their dreams or drowsy states again.”

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, if in future ages there are people who are lowly and poor, or who are slaves, servants, or are otherwise not free, yet who are aware of the karma of their past lives and want to repent, then they should gaze in veneration with a resolute heart upon the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva during a seven day...

念菩薩名。可滿萬遍。如是等人。盡此報後。千
 萬生中。常生尊貴。更不經三惡道。復次。普
 廣。若未來世中。閻浮提內。刹利婆羅門長者
 居士。一切人等。及異姓種族。有新產者。或男
 或女。七日之中。早與讀誦。此不思議經典。更
 為念菩薩名。可滿萬遍。是新生子。或男或女。
 宿有殃報。便得解脫安樂。壽命增長。若
 是承福生者。轉增安樂。及與壽命。復次。普
 若未來世。眾生於二月十四日。八日。十四日。五
 日。十八日。二十三日。二十四日。二十八日。九
 乃至三十日。

...period reciting the name of Ksitigarbha a full ten thousand times. After their present retribution ends, such people, for thousands of tens-of-thousands of rebirths, will consistently be reborn into honor and wealth and will furthermore never experience the sufferings of the three evil paths.”

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, if in future ages *ksatriyas*, *brahmans*, elders, lay people, or any other people from different castes or various clans within Jambudvipa have a newborn child, whether a boy or girl, they should quickly read and recite this inconceivable sutra and recite the name of Ksitigarbha a full ten thousand times within seven days. This newborn child, whether boy or girl, will be released from any of the unfortunate retributions from their past lives and will be peaceful, happy, easily raised and long-lived. If the child was to receive a meritorious rebirth, then his or her peacefulness, happiness and life-span will be further increased.”

“Furthermore, Universal Expanse, in future ages all of the offenses of sentient beings on the first, eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth days of the lunar month are...

是諸日等諸罪結集定其輕重南閻浮提眾生舉止動念無不是業無不是罪何況恣情殺害竊盜邪淫妄語百千罪狀能於是十齋日對佛菩薩諸賢聖像前讀是經一遍東西南北百由旬內無諸災難當此居家若長若幼現在未來百千歲中永離惡趣能於十齋日每轉一遍現世令此居家無諸橫病衣食豐溢是故普廣當知地藏菩薩有如是等不可說百千萬億大威神力利益之事

...gathered together and their severity is settled. For the sentient beings in the southern continent of Jambudvīpa any action or stirring of thought is always karmic and thus always offensive, much less for those of unrestrained nature who kill, steal, engage in illicit sexual conduct, practice false speech, or hundreds of thousands of other offenses.”

“If they are able to read this sutra aloud in front of the images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, or the saints and sages once during these ten days of fasting then for hundreds of *yojanas* to the east, west, south, and north there will be no disasters or hardships and the old and young of this household will during the present and future hundreds of thousands of years eternally be free from the evil realms. If they are able to recite it once every day during the ten days of fasting then for this life the household will not have any misfortune or illness, while clothing and food will be in abundance.”

“Therefore, Universal Expanse, you should know of these inexpressible hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of great affairs concerning the strength of the numinous power and benefits of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva.

閻浮眾生於此大士有大因緣。是諸眾生聞菩薩名見菩薩像乃至聞是經三字五字或一偈一句者。現在殊妙安樂。未來之世。百千萬生常得端正。生尊貴家。爾時普廣菩薩聞佛如來稱揚讚歎。地藏菩薩已。胡跪合掌。復白佛言。世尊。我久知是大士。有如此不可思議神力。及大誓願力。為未來眾生遣知利益。故問如來。唯然頂受。世尊。當何名此經。使我云何流布。佛告普廣。此經有三名。

The sentient beings of Jambudvīpa have a great affinity with this Mahasattva. If these sentient beings hear the name of this bodhisattva or see an image of him or even hear three characters, five characters, a single verse or a line from this sutra then they will have exceptionally wonderful peace and bliss. For hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of rebirths in the future ages, they will consistently obtain a righteous rebirth in an honorable and wealthy family.”

At that time, after Universal Expanse Bodhisattva heard the Buddha – the Tathagata – commend and praise Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva he knelt on one knee, joined his palms, and addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, I have long known this Mahasattva to have such inconceivable numinous power and strength of great vows. For the sake of dispersing the knowledge of these benefits to future sentient beings I have questioned the Tathagata and have respectfully received the reply. World-Honored One, what should this sutra be called? How would you allow me to circulate it?”

The Buddha told Universal Expanse, “This sutra has three names.

地藏菩薩本願經卷上

一名地藏本願。亦名地藏本行。亦名地藏本誓力經。緣此菩薩。久遠劫來。發大重願。利益眾生。是故汝等。依願流布。普廣聞已。合掌恭敬。作禮而退。❀

One name is *The Sutra on the Past Vows of Ksitigarbha*; another name is *The Past Deeds of Ksitigarbha*; still another name is *The Sutra on the Power of the Past Vows of Ksitigarbha*. Because this bodhisattva has for many long *kalpas* set forth great and weighty vows benefiting sentient beings, you should all circulate this sutra in accordance with these vows.”

After Universal Expanse heard this he joined his palms, reverentially made obeisance, and withdrew.



*The Sutra on the Past Vows of Ksitigarbha
Bodhisattva
(Anterior Fascicle)*

利益存亡品第七
 爾時地藏菩薩摩訶薩白佛言世尊我觀是
 閻浮眾生舉心動念無非是罪脫獲善利多
 退初心若遇惡緣念念增益是等輩人如履
 泥塗負於重石漸困漸重足步深邃若得遇
 知識替與減負或全與負是知識有大力故
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Chapter Seven

Benefits for the Living and the Dead

At that time Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, I have observed that the motions of the heart and stirrings of thought of sentient beings in Jambudvīpa are always offensive. Thus they lose any of the virtuous advantages they have obtained, with many of them retreating from their initial resolve. If they encounter evil conditions then every thought will become increasingly more offensive.”

“They are like people trudging through mud carrying heavy rocks which gradually become heavier and more cumbersome as their feet sink deeper. If they meet with a wise mentor, he might help in lightening or completely removing their burden. Since this wise mentor may have great strength he could even support them and urge them toward more secure footing. If they reach level ground they should avoid the treacherous path and not pass through it again.”

“World-Honored One, the evil committed by sentient beings ranges from trivial to...

無量。是諸眾生。有如此習。臨命終時。父母眷屬。宜為設福。以資前路。或懸旛蓋。及然油燈。或轉讀尊經。或供養佛像。及諸聖像。乃至念佛菩薩。及辟支佛名字。一名一號。歷臨終人耳根。或聞在本識。是諸眾生所造惡業。計其感果。必墮惡趣。緣是眷屬。為臨終人修此聖因。如是眾罪。悉皆銷滅。若能更為身死之後。七七日內。廣造眾善。能使其諸眾生永離惡趣。得生人天。受勝妙樂。現在眷屬利益無量。

...immeasurable. When sentient beings who exhibit such habits as these approach the end of their lives then their parents and relatives should generate merit for them in order to assist them on the road ahead by hanging banners and canopies, burning oil lamps, reciting honored sutras, making offerings to the images of buddhas and sages, or even by reciting the names of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and *pratyekabuddhas* so that each name passes by the ear of the dying person or is heard in his base consciousness. The evil karma that was committed by these sentient beings will measure up to its resonant fruits, thus they will certainly fall into the evil realms. Yet because the relatives cultivated these conditions leading to sagehood on behalf of the dying person, his many offenses can be fully eradicated.”

“Moreover, if during the seven seven-day periods following the death of a person, his relatives perform many virtuous deeds then they will enable the deceased sentient being to be eternally free from the evil realms, and to be reborn as a human or *deva* enjoying superbly wondrous bliss. The living relatives will also benefit immeasurably.”

是故我今對佛世尊及天龍八部人非人等，
勸於閻浮提眾生臨終之日，慎勿殺害及造
惡緣，拜祭鬼神，求諸魍魎。何以故？爾所殺害
乃至拜祭，無纖毫之力，利益亡人，但結罪緣，
轉增深重。假使來世或現在生，得獲聖分，生
人天中，緣是臨終被諸眷屬造是惡因，亦令
是命終人殃累對辯，晚生善處。何況臨命終
人，在生未曾有少善根。

“Therefore, before the Buddha – the World-Honored One – and the *devas*, *nagas* and remainder of the Eightfold Assembly who are both human and non-human, I now advise the sentient beings in Jambudvipa who are approaching their final days to be cautious, and to not create any evil affinities by killing or harming others, or by worshipping and sacrificing to ghosts and spirits, or seeking out phantoms.”

“Why is this? Because such acts of killing, harming, worshipping and sacrifice have not the slightest power to benefit the deceased person. They only bind them to other offensive affinities that are increasingly abysmal and cumbersome. If in future lives or in the present life they should have secured a sagely birth among humans or *devas*, but because their relatives created these evil affinities, then this will cause those who are dying much calamity and opposition, delaying their rebirth into a virtuous realm. How much more so for people approaching the end of their lives who, while alive, never possessed even the slightest amount of wholesome roots!”

各據本業。自受惡趣。何忍眷屬。更為增業。譬如有人。從遠地來。絕糧三日。所負擔物。疆過百斤。忽遇鄰人。更附少物。以是之故。轉復困重。世尊。我觀閻浮眾生。但能於諸佛教中。乃至善事。一毛一涕。一沙一塵。如是利益。悉皆自得。說是語時。會中有一長者。名曰大辯。是長者。久證無生。化度十方。現長者身。合掌恭敬。問地藏菩薩言。大士。是南閻浮提眾生。命終之後。

“Each person must endure the evil realms in accordance with their own past karma. How could one bear their relatives adding even more to that karma? It is like a person who comes from a far away land being cut off from his provisions for three days while carrying goods in excess of one hundred pounds. If he unexpectedly came across a neighbor who added a few more goods to his load, then it would become even heavier and more cumbersome.”

“World-Honored One, I observe that there are still sentient beings in Jambudvipa who are capable of virtuous deeds which are in accordance with the teachings of the buddhas. Even if they are as insignificant as a strand of hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand, or a speck of dust, such benefits are entirely self-generated.”

When these words were spoken, there was an elder named Grand Eloquence among the assembly who had long attained non-rebirth and who manifested a body of an elder to guide those of the ten directions to liberation. He joined his palms and reverentially asked Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva saying, “Great sir, after the lives of sentient beings in the southern continent of Jambudvipa have ended...

小大眷屬為修功德。乃至設齋。造眾善因。是命終人。得大利益及解脫。不地藏答言。長者。我今為未來現在一切眾生。承佛威力。略說是事。長者。未來現在諸眾生等。臨命終日。得聞一佛名。一菩薩名。一辟支佛名。不問有罪無罪。悉得解脫。若有男子女人。在生不修善因。多造眾罪。命終之後。眷屬小大。為造福利。一切聖事。七分之一。而乃獲一。六分功德。生者自利。以是之故。未來現在。善男女等。聞

...and their younger and older relatives cultivate merit on their behalf by providing vegetarian feasts or creating virtuous affinities, will those who are dying obtain great benefits and be liberated, or not?"

Ksitigarbha replied saying, "Elder, on behalf of all sentient beings of the future and of the present and aided by the numinous power of the Buddha, I will now briefly speak of this affair."

"Elder, if in the future or present, there are sentient beings who are approaching the days at the end of their life and who hear the name of one buddha, the name of one bodhisattva, or the name of one *pratyekabuddha*, regardless if they have committed offenses or not; they will fully attain liberation. If there are men and women who while alive did not cultivate virtuous affinities, and often committed many kinds of offenses, then after the end of their life when younger and older relatives are producing merits, they will obtain one of the seven parts of all of the noble deeds' merit. Six parts of the merit is beneficial to the living ones themselves. For this reason, virtuous men and women of the future and of the present who hear this...

健自修。分分已獲。無常大鬼。不期而到。冥冥
遊神。未知罪福。七七日內。如癡如聾。或在諸
司。辯論業果。審定之後。據業受生。未測之間。
千萬愁苦。何況墮於諸惡趣等。是命終人。未
得受生。在七七日內。念念之間。望諸骨肉眷
屬。與造福力救拔。過是日後。隨業受報。若是
罪人。動經千百歲中。無解脫日。若是五無間
罪。墮大地獄。

...should personally cultivate merit so as to receive every part of it themselves.”

“When the great ghost of impermanence unexpectedly arrives, the spirit roams in darkness and obscurity not knowing its offenses or merits. During the seven seven-day periods it is as if being deluded and deaf, or as if debating karmic fruits with a group of officers. After the judgment is settled, one will receive rebirth in accordance with their karma. While judgment is unsettled, one has thousands of tens-of-thousands of anxieties and distresses. How much more so for those who will fall into the evil realms!”

“During the seven seven-day periods, those deceased people who have not yet received rebirth will, with every thought, hope that their blood relatives will produce merit that is powerful enough to save them. After passing through these few days they will receive retribution in accordance with their karma. If they are offenders then they will pass through thousands of hundreds of years without a day of liberation. If they have committed offenses that warrant the Five-fold Unrelenting Hell,...

千劫萬劫，永受眾苦。復次長者，如是罪業眾生，命終之後，眷屬骨肉，為修營齋，資助業道。未齋食竟，及營齋之次，米泔菜葉，不棄於地，乃至諸食，未獻佛僧，勿得先食。如有違食，及不精勤，是命終人，了不得力。如精勤護淨，奉獻佛僧，是命終人，七分獲一。是故長者，閻浮眾生，若能為其父母，乃至眷屬，命終之後，設齋供養，志心勤懇，如是之人，存亡獲利。

...then they will fall into that great hell where for thousands of tens-of-thousands of *kalpas* they will endlessly endure suffering.”

“Furthermore, Elder, after the end of the lives of sentient beings with offensive karma such as this, they may have blood relatives who will prepare vegetarian feasts to assist them on their karmic path. Before the vegetarian feast concludes or even during the feast’s preparation the rice-washing water and vegetable leaves must not be discarded on the ground, nor should the food be taken first before being offered to the Buddha and the *sangha*. If there are violations of the food like this or people are not attentive, then the dying person will not receive strength from it. If there is attention to the purity of the offerings for the Buddha and *sangha* then the dying person will obtain one of the seven parts of the merit.”

“Therefore Elder, if sentient beings in Jambudvīpa, after the end of the lives of their fathers, mothers or relatives, are able to provide vegetarian feasts on their behalf by making these offerings with a resolute heart and attentiveness to purity, then such people will obtain benefits for both the living and the dead.”

退。鬼神悉發無量菩提之心。大辯長者作禮而
說是語時。忉利天宮有千萬億那由他閻浮

When these words were spoken, the thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *nayutas* of ghosts and spirits from Jambudvīpa that were in the palace of Trayastrimsa Heaven all fully developed the immeasurable mind of *bodhi*. The elder, Grand Eloquence, made obeisance and withdrew.



閻羅王衆讚歎品第八
 爾時鐵圍山內所有無量鬼與閻羅天子俱
 詣切利來白佛所謂惡鬼赤虎鬼千眼
 大諍鬼飛身鬼負石鬼畜耗鬼主禽禍
 殃王噉獸王鬼獸王鬼財主鬼主王
 王獸食鬼主魅鬼三目主命鬼五主
 主獸王主險鬼大王利目鬼主
 疾鬼王禰利失吒王禰利叉王
 鬼王禰利失吒王禰利叉王
 利叉王禰利失吒王禰利叉王

Chapter Eight

The Collective Praise for King Yama

At that time, King Yama with immeasurable ghost kings from the Ring of Iron Mountains arrived in Trayastrimsa Heaven and came before the Buddha. They were called: Evil Venom Ghost King, Many Evils Ghost King, Great Criticizing Ghost King, White Tiger Ghost King, Blood Tiger Ghost King, Crimson Tiger Ghost King, Spreading Calamity Ghost King, Aerial Body Ghost King, Lightning Flash Ghost King, Wolf Fang Ghost King, Thousand Eye Ghost King, Devouring Beast Ghost King, Rock Bearing Ghost King, Master of Squander Ghost King, Master of Disaster Ghost King, Master of Food Ghost King, Master of Wealth Ghost King, Master of Domestic Animals Ghost King, Master of Birds Ghost King, Master of Beasts Ghost King, Master of Specters Ghost King, Master of Birth Ghost King, Master of Life Ghost King, Master of Sickness Ghost King, Master of Danger Ghost King, Three Eyed Ghost King, Four Eyed Ghost King, Five Eyed Ghost King, Qilishi King, Maha Qilishi King, Qilicha King, Maha Qilicha King, Anazha King, Maha Anazha King, ...

迴視地藏菩薩。是時閻羅天子瞻禮世尊。及
 所問。吾為汝說。是時閻羅天子瞻禮世尊。及
 尊。唯願世尊慈悲宣說。佛告閻羅天子。恣汝
 亦是。我等獲善利故。我今有小疑事。敢問世
 及地。藏菩薩摩訶薩。力。方得詣此。忉利大會。
 白佛言。世尊。我等今者。與諸鬼王。承佛威神。
 詣忉利。在一面立。爾時閻羅天子。胡跪合掌。
 羅天子。承佛威神。及地藏菩薩摩訶薩。力。俱
 閻浮提。各有所執。各有所主。是諸鬼王。與閻
 如是。等大鬼王。各各與百千諸小鬼。王。盡居

...and other great ghost kings such as these.

Each one was accompanied by hundreds of thousands of minor ghost kings, all who resided in Jambudvīpa, with everyone having their own specialties and masteries. King Yama and all of these ghost kings were aided by the numinous power of the Buddha and the powers of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva. Arriving in Trayāstrimsa Heaven they stood off to one side.

At that time, King Yama knelt on one knee, joined his palms and addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, aided the Buddha’s numinous power and the powers of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva, all of the ghost kings and I were able to come to this great assembly in Trayāstrimsa Heaven. Because we will obtain virtuous benefits, I have a small concern of doubt that I now dare inquire about to the World-Honored One. I only hope the World-Honored One is compassionate in his teaching.”

The Buddha told King Yama, “Indulge in your inquiry, I will respond to you.”

At this time, King Yama gazed in veneration upon the World-Honored One, and then turned his gaze toward Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva.

而白佛言。世尊。我觀地藏菩薩在六道中。百
 千方便。而度罪苦眾生。不辭疲倦。是大菩薩
 有如是不可思議神通之事。然諸眾生脫獲
 罪報。未久之間。又墮惡道。世尊。是地藏菩薩
 既有如是不可思議神力。云何眾生而不依
 止善道。永取解脫。唯願世尊為我解說。佛告
 閻羅天子。南閻浮提眾生。其性剛彊。難調難
 伏。是大菩薩於百千劫。頭頭救拔。如是眾生
 早令解脫。是罪報人。乃至墮

He addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, I have observed Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva among the six paths liberating sentient beings who are suffering for their misconduct with hundreds of thousands of expedient means, and yet he has never expressed any fatigue or weariness. This great bodhisattva possesses such deeds of inconceivable numinous power. After all sentient beings are liberated from their punitive retributions, however, before long they will again fall into the evil paths. World-Honored One, since Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva possess such inconceivable numinous power, then why do sentient beings not remain on the wholesome paths, eternally choosing for their liberation? I only hope the World-Honored One will explain this for me.”

The Buddha told King Yama, “Sentient beings on the southern continent of Jambudvipa have stubborn natures and are difficult to tame, difficult to subdue. This great bodhisattva has rescued every such sentient being throughout hundreds of thousands of *kalpas* and has quickly directed them to liberation, even those people who due to the retributions of their misconduct fell into...

大惡趣菩薩以方便力拔出根本業緣而遣
 悟宿世之事自是閻浮眾生結惡習重旋出
 旋入勞斯菩薩久經劫數而作度脫譬如
 人迷失本家誤入險道其險道中多諸夜叉
 及虎狼師子。蚺蛇蝮蠍如是迷人在險道中
 須臾之間即遭諸毒。有一知識多解大術善
 禁是毒。乃及夜叉諸惡毒等。忽逢迷人欲進
 險道。而語之言。咄哉男子。為何事故而入此
 路。有何異術。能制諸毒。

...the great evil realms. This bodhisattva uproots their karmic affinities through his power of expedient means and helps them realize the deeds of their past lives. But since the sentient beings in Jambudvīpa are bound to evil habits which are so heavily reinforced they revolve in and out of rebirths, thus belaboring this bodhisattva throughout many long *kalpas* in attempting to liberate them.”

“It is like a person who is confused, and on losing his way back home mistakenly enters onto a dangerous path with many *yaksas*, tigers, wolves, lions, snakes, vipers, and scorpions. A confused person on a dangerous path such as this would soon meet with all kinds of peril.”

“If there was a wise mentor who knew many great methods of skillfully avoiding the perils of the *yaksas* and other evil menaces and who unexpectedly encountered that confused person who is entering onto the dangerous path he would then say, ‘Whoa fellow! For what reasons do you enter this road? Do you have other methods that are able to deal with these perils?’”

是迷路。人忽聞是語。方知險道。即便退步。求出此路。是善知識。提攜接手。引出險道。免諸惡毒。至于好道。令得安樂。而語之言。咄哉。迷人。自今已後。勿履是道。此路入者。卒難得出。復損性命。是迷路。人亦生感重。臨別之時。知識。又言。若見親知及諸路人。若男若女。言於此路。多諸毒惡。喪失性命。無令是眾自取其死。是故地藏菩薩。具大慈悲。救拔罪苦眾生。天人中。令受妙樂。是諸罪眾。

“After unexpectedly hearing these words, the confused traveler would recognize the dangers on the path and would walk in retreat, searching for a way off the road.”

“This virtuous and wise mentor would then take him by the hand and lead him off the dangerous path, avoiding all of the evil perils, and onto a better path. By allowing the traveler to enjoy peace and happiness he would say, ‘Well, confused one, from now after do not tread this path. Those who enter this path will ultimately have difficulty getting off of it, and furthermore will lose their lives.’”

“The confused traveler would show his appreciation. When they are about to part the wise mentor would further say, ‘If you see relatives, acquaintances, or other travelers, whether man or woman, tell them of the many perils and evils on this path that can cause loss of life. Do not allow them to take their own lives.’”

“For this reason, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, replete with great compassion, rescues sentient beings who suffer from their misconduct so they can be reborn among the *devas* or humans to enjoy wondrous bliss.

知業道苦。脫得出離。永不再歷。如迷路。人誤入險道。遇善知識。引接令出。永不復入。逢見他人。復勸莫入。自言。因是迷故。得解脫。竟更不復入。若再履踐。猶尚迷誤。不覺舊曾所落險道。或致失命。如墮惡趣。地藏菩薩方便力。故。使令解脫。生人天中。旋又再入。若業結重。永處地獄。無解脫時。爾時惡毒鬼王。合掌恭敬。白佛言。世尊。我等諸鬼王。其數無量。在閻浮提。

These offenders know of the suffering on those karmic paths, and once released and freed they never again wish to experience it.”

“Like the confused traveler who mistakenly entered onto the dangerous path, and having met with the virtuous and wise mentor who directed him out, will never again enter that path. If he meets others then he will also urge them not to enter by personally saying, ‘I was once confused, but after being liberated I will never again enter that path.’ If, however, he treads on it again, confused and mistaken, not realizing it as the dangerous path he had fallen onto in the past, then he will lose his life.”

“If he falls into the evil realms then Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva will liberate him by the power of expedient means, and he will be reborn among humans or *devas*. Yet he will immediately reenter the evil paths if his karmic ties are heavily reinforced, and will eternally dwell in the hells, without a date for release.”

At that time Evil Venomous Ghost King joined his palms and reverentially addressed the Buddha saying, “World-honored One, we ghost kings of Jambudvīpa are immeasurable in number.

或利益人。或損害人。各各不同。然是業報。使我眷屬遊行世界。多有惡少善過人。家庭或善。邑聚落莊園房舍。或有男子女人。修毛髮善。事乃至懸一旛一蓋。少華供養。佛像及。菩薩像。或轉讀經。燒香供養。一句佛偈。我等鬼王。敬禮是人。如過去現在未來。諸佛。敕。諸小鬼。各有大力。及土地。便令護。不令。惡事。橫惡病。橫病。乃至不如意。近於此。舍等處。何況入門。佛讚鬼王。善哉。近於此。及與閻羅能如是擁護善男女等。吾亦告梵。王帝釋。令衛護汝。

Some benefit humans and some harm humans, each is different. Thus our karmic retributions cause us and our retinue to roam the world doing much evil and little good. In passing households, cities, villages, estates, or huts, if there is a man or woman who has cultivated as little as a hair's worth of virtuous deeds, or has hung a single banner or canopy, or with few incense or flowers has made offerings to the images of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, or has recited the honored sutras and burned incense in offering to a single line or verse, then we ghost kings will revere and venerate this person as we would the past, present, and future buddhas. We will command the lesser ghosts, each who have great power, to go to these spots of earth to guard and protect them, not allowing bad news, accidents, severe or unexpected illness, or any undesirable events to come close to their dwellings, much less enter into their door."

The Buddha praised the ghost king, "Excellent! It is great that all of you and Yama are able to protect such men and women! I will tell the King of the Brahma Heavens and Sakra to protect you as well."

說是語時。會中有一鬼王。名曰主命。白佛言。世尊。我本業緣。主閻浮人命。生時死時。我皆主之。在我本願。甚欲利益。自是眾生。不會我意。致令生死。俱不得安。何以故。是閻浮提人。初生之時。不問男女。或欲生時。但作善事。增益舍宅。自今土地。無量歡喜。擁護子母。得大安樂。利益眷屬。或已生下。慎勿殺害。取諸鮮味。供給產母。及廣聚眷屬。飲酒食肉。歌樂絃管。能令子母。不得安樂。

When these words were spoken, a ghost king among the assembly named Master of Life addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, my past karmic affinities allow me to control the life-spans of people in Jambudvīpa. I fully control their time of birth and their time of death.”

“In accordance with my past vows, I sincerely want to benefit all sentient beings, yet since they do not understand my intentions, they never allow their births or deaths to be peaceful. Why is this? When people in Jambudvīpa have just given birth, regardless of a boy or girl, or are awaiting a birth, if they were to just do some virtuous deeds to increase the benefits of their household then they would personally ensure the immeasurable joy of the earth spirits. They would protect the child and mother, causing them to have great peace and happiness and benefiting their relatives.”

“After birth, people should be cautious to not kill or injure in selecting the fresh delicacies to be given to the new mother, or to have a wide gathering of relatives to drink wine, eat meat, sing songs or play instruments that will cause the child and mother to not enjoy peace and happiness.”

何以故。是產難時。有無數惡鬼及魍魎精魅。欲食腥血。是我早令舍宅土地靈祇。荷護子母。使令安樂。而得利益。如是之人。見安樂故。便合設福。答諸土地。翻為殺害。集聚眷屬。以是之故。犯殃自受。子母俱損。又閻浮提臨命終人。不問善惡。我欲令是命終之人。不落惡道。何況自修善根。增我力故。是閻浮提行善之人。臨命終時。亦有百千惡道鬼神。或變作父母。乃至諸眷屬。引接亡人。令落惡道。何況本造惡者。

“Why is this? During the difficult time of childbirth, while there are incalculable evil ghosts, phantoms, and specters who want to eat the foul-smelling blood, I quickly command the earth spirits of the household to protect the child and mother, allowing them to be peaceful and happy and to obtain benefits. When these people witness such peace and happiness they should generate merit in response to the earth spirits. If instead they kill and injure, and gather their relatives, they will bring calamity upon themselves and harm both the child and mother.”

“Moreover, I wish to direct the people in Jambudvīpa who are approaching the end of their lives, regardless of being virtuous or evil, to avoid falling into the evil paths. How much more increased is my influence over those who have cultivated wholesome roots for themselves! When people who practice virtues in Jambudvīpa are approaching the end of their lives, there are also hundreds of thousands of ghosts and spirits from the evil paths who transform themselves into their parents and relatives and who lead the dead person into falling into the evil paths. How much more so for those who have committed evil in the past!”

世尊。如是閻浮提男子。女人。臨命終時。神識
昏昧。不辯善惡。乃至眼耳更無見聞。是諸眷
屬。當須設大供養。轉讀尊經。念佛菩薩名號。
如是善緣。能令亡者離諸惡道。諸魔鬼神。悉
皆退散。世尊。一切眾生。臨命終時。若得聞一
佛名。一菩薩名。或大乘經典。一句一偈。我觀
如是輩人。除五無間殺害之罪。小小惡業。合
墮惡趣者。尋即解脫。佛告主命鬼王。汝大慈
故。能發如是。大願。於生死中。

“World-Honored One, when men and women in Jambudvīpa are approaching the end of their lives their consciousness is confused and dark, unable to discern between virtuous and evil, and have eyes and ears that cannot see or hear. Their relatives should provide great offerings, recite the honored sutras, and recite the names of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Virtuous affinities such as these will be able to allow those who are dead to be freed from the evil paths, and to cause the demons, ghosts, and spirits to retreat and scatter.”

“World-Honored One, if all sentient beings who are approaching the end of their lives are able to hear the name of one buddha or bodhisattva, or one line or verse from a Mahayana sutra, then I see that beings such as these, with the exception of those with offenses of killing or injuring which warrant the Fivefold Unrelenting Hell, will be immediately liberated from every minor evil karmic deed that binds them to falling into the evil realms.”

The Buddha told Master of Life Ghost King, “Due to your great compassion you are able to set forth great vows such as these to protect all sentient beings during their birth and their death.

護諸眾生。若未來世中有男子女人。至生死時。汝莫退。是願。總令解脫。永得安樂。鬼王白佛言。願不有慮。我畢是形。念念擁護閻浮眾生。生時死時。俱得安樂。但願諸眾生。於生死時。信受我語。無不解脫。獲大利益。爾時佛告地藏菩薩。是大鬼王主命者。已曾經百千生。作大鬼王。於生死中。擁護眾生。是大士慈悲願故。現大鬼身。實非鬼也。卻後過一百七十八劫。當得成佛。號曰無相如來。

If when in future ages there are men and women who are being born and dying, do not retreat from your vows and always direct them to liberation so they may obtain everlasting peace and happiness.”

The ghost king addressed the Buddha saying, “I hope you will not have worries. I will, until the end of this life, protect sentient beings in Jambudvīpa with every moment, both at their time of birth and death, so they can all enjoy peace and happiness. I only hope that sentient beings, both at their time of birth and death, will faithfully accept what I say so they will always be liberated and have great benefits.”

At that time, the Buddha told Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva, “This great ghost king, Master of Life, has already passed through hundreds of thousands of rebirths as a great ghost king protecting sentient beings during their births and deaths. Because of this *mahasattva*’s compassionate vows he manifests the body of a great ghost, but in reality is not a ghost. However, after one hundred and seventy *kalpas*, he will attain buddhahood with the name of Devoid of Marks Tathagata.

劫名安樂。世界名淨住。其佛壽命不可計劫。
地藏。是大鬼王。其事。如是不可思議。所度天
人亦不可限量。❀

The *kalpa* will be called Peace and Happiness, his world will be called Pure Abode, and the lifespan of this buddha will be incalculable *kalpas*. Ksitigarbha, the feats of this ghost king are inconceivable like this and the *devas* and humans which will be liberated are also immeasurable.”



稱佛名號品第九
爾時地藏菩薩摩訶薩白佛言世尊我今為
未來眾生演利益事於生死中得大利益唯
願世尊聽我說之佛告地藏菩薩汝今欲興
慈悲救拔一切罪苦六道眾生演不思議事
今正是時唯當速說吾即涅槃使汝早畢是
願吾亦無憂現在未來一切眾生地藏菩薩
白佛言世尊過去無量阿僧祇劫有佛出世
號無邊身如來若有男子女人聞是佛名

Chapter Nine

Reciting the Names of the Buddhas

At that time, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, on behalf of future sentient beings, I will now expound upon beneficial deeds so they can gain great benefits while in *samsara*. I only hope that the World-Honored One will listen to what I have to say.”

The Buddha told Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, “By now wishing to develop your compassion and to rescue all sentient beings on the six paths who suffer from their misconduct, you will expound upon inconceivable feats. The time is just right, as you must speak promptly for I am about to enter nirvana. I will direct you in quickly accomplishing your vows so that I have no worries about all sentient beings of the present and future.”

Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, in the past, immeasurable *asamkhyā kalpas* ago, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Illimitable Body Tathagata. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha and...

暫生恭敬。即得超越四十劫生死重罪。何況
 塑畫形像。供養讚歎。其人獲福無量無邊。又
 於過去恒河沙劫。有佛出世。號寶性如來。若
 有男子女人。聞是佛名。一彈指頃。發心歸依。
 是人於無上道。永不退轉。又於過去有佛出
 世。號波頭摩勝如來。若有男子女人。聞是佛
 名。歷於耳根。是人當得千返生於六欲天中。
 何況志心稱念。又於過去不可說不可說阿
 僧祇劫。有佛出世。號師子吼如來。

...momentarily develop reverence, they will then overcome forty *kalpas* of grave offenses in *samsara*. How much more so for those who cast or paint an image of this buddha or who make offerings in praise of him! These people will obtain merits that are immeasurable and illimitable.”

“Again, in the past, as many *kalpas* ago as grains of sand in the Ganges River, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Treasured Nature Tathagata. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha and in the instant of a finger-snap resolve their minds to take refuge in him, then these people will never retrogress from the unexcelled path.”

“Again, in the past, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Padma Victor Tathagata. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha, or if it just passes by their ears, then these people will obtain thousands of rebirths among the six heavens of the desire realm. How much more so for those who recite his name with a resolute heart!”

“Again, in the past, inexpressibly inexpressible *asamkhyā kalpas* ago, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Lion’s Roar Tathagata.

若有男子女人聞是佛名。一念歸依。是人得
 遇無量諸佛摩頂授記。又於過去有佛出世。
 號拘留孫佛。若有男子女人聞是佛名。志心
 瞻禮。或復讚歎。是人於賢劫千佛會中。為大
 梵王。得授上記。又於過去有佛出世。號毘婆
 尸。若有男子女人聞是佛名。永不墮惡道。常
 生人天。受勝妙樂。又於過去無量無數恒河
 沙劫。有佛出世。號寶勝如來。若有男子女人

If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha and take refuge in him after a single moment, then these people will meet immeasurable buddhas who, touching the crown of their heads, will be given predictions of buddhood.”

“Again, in the past, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Krakucchanda Tathagata. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha and gaze in veneration upon him with a resolute heart or praise him, then these people will be reborn as the great King of the Brahma Heavens among the assembly of the thousand buddhas of the Auspicious Kalpa, and be given lofty predictions of buddhahood.”

“Again, in the past, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Vipasyin. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha then they will never fall into the evil paths and will consistently be reborn among humans and *devas* enjoying superbly wondrous bliss.”

“Again, in the past, as many *kalpas* ago as grains of sand in immeasurable, incalculable Ganges Rivers, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Treasure Victory Tathagata. If there are men or women...

聞是佛名。畢竟不墮惡道。常在天上受勝妙樂。又於過去有佛出世。號寶相如來。若有男子女人。聞是佛名。生恭敬心。是人不久得阿羅漢果。又於過去無量阿僧祇劫。有佛出世。號袈裟幢如來。若有男子女人。聞是佛名者。超一大劫生死之罪。又於過去有佛出世。號大通山王如來。若有男子女人。聞是佛名者。是人得遇恒河沙佛。廣為說法。必成菩提。又於過去有淨月佛山王佛。

...who hear the name of this buddha then they will ultimately never fall into the evil paths and will consistently dwell in the higher heavens enjoying superbly wondrous bliss.”

“Again, in the past, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Treasured Appearance Tathagata. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha and develop a reverential mind, then these people will, before long, attain the fruit of an *arhat*.”

“Again, in the past, immeasurable *asamkhyā kalpas* ago, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Kasaya Banner Tathagata. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha they will then all overcome one hundred great *kalpas* of offenses in *samsara*.”

“Again, in the past, a buddha appeared in the world who was named Great Penetration Mountain King. If there are men or women who hear the name of this buddha, then these people will meet as many buddhas as grains of sand in the Ganges River who will teach the Dharma to them, and thus certainly realize *bodhi*.”

“Again, in the past, there was Pure Moon Buddha, Mountain King Buddha,...

智勝佛、淨名王佛、智成就佛、無上佛、妙聲佛、
 滿月佛、月面佛、有如是等不可說佛、世尊、現
 在未來一切眾生、若天若人、若男若女、但念
 得一佛名號、功德無量、何況多名、是眾生等、
 生時死時、自得太利、終不墮惡道、若有臨命
 終人、家中眷屬、乃至一人、為是病人、高聲念
 一佛名、是命終人、除五無間罪、餘業報等、悉
 得銷滅、是五無間罪、雖至極重、動經億劫、了
 不得出、承斯臨命終時、

...Wise Victor Buddha, Pure Fame King Buddha, Perfected Wisdom Buddha, Unexcelled Buddha, Wondrous Sounds Buddha, Full Moon Buddha, Moon Face Buddha, and other indescribable buddhas such as these.”

“World-Honored One, the merit will be immeasurable for all sentient beings of the present or the future, whether *devas* or humans, men or women, who merely recite the name of a single buddha. How much the more for reciting many names! These sentient beings, from the time of their birth to the time of their death, will naturally receive great benefits, and will not fall into the evil paths. If there are people who are approaching the end of their lives, and among the relatives in their family there is even just one person who on behalf of the sick person loudly recites the name of a single buddha then, with the exception of those offenses which warrant the Fivefold Unrelenting Hell, their remaining karmic retributions will all be fully eradicated. The offenses which warrant the Fivefold Unrelenting Hell are so extremely grave, that after passing through millions of *kalpas* these people will still not be released.

他人為其稱念佛名。於是罪中亦漸銷滅。何況眾生自稱自念。獲福無量。滅無量罪。

If, however, other people on the behalf of those approaching the end of their lives aid them by reciting the name of a buddha then even these offenses will be gradually eradicated. How much more so if sentient beings recite the names themselves! They will obtain merits that are immeasurable and eradicate immeasurable offenses.”



校量布施功德緣品第十
爾時地藏菩薩摩訶薩承佛威神從座而起
胡跪合掌白佛言世尊我觀業道眾生校量
布施有輕有重有一生受福有十生受福有
百生千生受大福利者是事云何唯願世尊
為我說之爾時佛告地藏菩薩吾今於忉利
天宮一切眾會說閻浮提布施校量功德輕
重汝當諦聽吾為汝說

Chapter Ten Comparison of the Meritorious Affinities of Giving

At that time Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva, aided by the numinous power of the Buddha arose from his seat, knelt on one knee, joined his palms and addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, I see from comparably weighing the acts of giving performed by sentient beings on the karmic paths, that some are light and some are heavy. Some receive merits for one life, some receive merit for ten lives, while others receive great merits for hundreds of lives or even thousands of lives. What are these affairs about? I only hope that the World-Honored One will explain this for me.”

At that time, the Buddha addressed Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, “I will now, for all assembled in the palace of Trayastrimsa Heaven, speak comparably on the merits of giving in Jambudvipa as to whether they are light or heavy. If you listen attentively I will explain this for you.”

地藏白佛言。我疑是事。願樂欲聞。佛告地藏菩薩。南閻浮提。有諸國王。宰輔大臣。大長者。大刹利。大婆羅門等。若遇最下貧窮。乃至癰殘瘡啞。聾癡無目。如是種種不具者。是大國王等。欲布施時。若能具大慈悲。下心含笑。親手遍布施。或使人施。軟言慰喻。是國王等。所獲福利。如布施百恒河沙佛功德之利。何以故。緣是國王等。於是最貧賤輩。及不具者。發大慈心。是故福利有如此報。百千生中。

Ksitigarbha addressed the Buddha saying, “I had doubts about this matter and will joyfully wish to hear.”

The Buddha told Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, “In the southern continent of Jambudvīpa there are kings of countries, prime ministers, great officials, great elders, great *ksatriyas*, and great *brahmins* who may meet with those who are most lowly and poor, or crippled, mute, deaf, and blind, or other kinds of people who are handicapped such as this. When these great kings of countries and so forth, wish to give, and if they are able to do so with great compassion, a humble heart and a smile, whether through personally giving with their hands or directing others to give by using tender words and reassurance, then the merits that these beings will obtain is comparable to the benefits of merit by giving to as many buddhas as grains of sand in one hundred Ganges Rivers.”

“Why is this? Because these beings will have developed a great compassionate heart toward the most impoverished and handicapped of beings. For this reason their retribution of merits will be as such. For hundreds of thousands of rebirths...

常得七寶具足。何況衣食受用。復次地藏。若
 未來世。有諸國王。至婆羅門等。遇佛塔寺。或
 佛形像。乃至菩薩聲聞辟支佛像。躬自營辦
 供養布施。是國王等。當得三劫為帝釋身。受
 勝妙樂。若能以此布施福利。迴向法界。是大
 國王等。於十劫中。常為大梵天王。復次地藏。
 若未來世。有諸國王。至婆羅門等。遇先佛塔
 廟。或至經像。毀壞破落。乃能發心修補。是國
 王等。或自營辦。或勸他人。乃至百千人等

...they will always have an abundance of the seven jewels, much less clothing, food, and the necessities of life.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are kings of countries, *brahmans*, and so forth, who encounter Buddha pagodas, or images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, *sravakas*, or *pratyekabuddhas* and personally manage to practice giving through making offerings then these beings will obtain rebirths for three *kalpas* as Sakra, enjoying superbly wondrous bliss. If they are able to use the merits from giving for dedication to the *dharmadhatu*, then these great beings will consistently be reborn as the great King of the Brahma Heavens for ten *kalpas*.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are kings of countries, *brahmans*, and so forth, who encounter pagodas of previous buddhas, or sutras and images that are damaged or decayed and they are able to resolve their mind to repair and mend them, whether personally doing so or by encouraging others – as many as hundreds of thousands of people – ...

布施結緣。是國王等。百千生中。常為轉輪王身。如是他人。同布施者。百千生中。常為小國王身。更能於塔廟前。發迴向心。如是國王。乃至諸人。盡成佛道。以此果報。無量無邊。復次。地藏。未來世中。有諸國王。及婆羅門等。見諸老病。及生產婦女。若一念間。具大慈心。布施醫藥。飲食。臥具。使令安樂。如是福利。最不思議。一百劫中。常為淨居天主。二百劫中。常為六欲天主。畢竟成佛。永不墮惡道。

...then these beings will consistently be reborn as wheel-turning kings for hundreds of thousands of rebirths because of such affinities of giving. The other people who helped in giving will consistently be reborn as kings of smaller countries for hundreds of thousands of rebirths. Furthermore, if these beings are able to resolve their minds to the dedication of merit before a pagoda then such kings and helpers will all attain buddhahood. Such are the fruits of retribution, both immeasurable and illimitable.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are kings of countries, *brahmins*, and so forth, who see the old, the sick, or women in childbirth, and instantaneously perfecting a great compassionate heart they give medicines, food, drink, and bedding so as to allow them to have peace and happiness, then such merits will be most inconceivable. For one hundred *kalpas* they will consistently be reborn as lords in the Heavens of Pure Abode, and for two hundred *kalpas* they will consistently be reborn as lords in the six heavens of the realm of desire, and will ultimately attain buddhahood, never falling into the evil paths...

乃至百千生中耳不聞苦聲復次地藏若未
 來世中有諸國王及婆羅門等能作如是布
 施獲福無量更能迴向不問多少畢竟成佛
 何況釋梵轉輪之報是故地藏普勸眾生當
 如是學復次地藏未來世中若善男子善女
 人於佛法中種少善根毛髮沙塵等許所受
 福利不可為喻復次地藏未來世中若有善
 男子善女人遇佛形像菩薩形像辟支佛形
 像轉輪王形像布施供養得無量福常在
 天受勝妙樂

...nor even hearing the sounds of suffering for hundreds of thousands of rebirths.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are kings of countries, *brahmins*, and so forth, who are able to practice giving like this to obtain immeasurable merit, and moreover dedicate it, regardless of it being a lot or a little, then they will ultimately attain buddhahood, much less the retributions as Sakra, King of the Brahma Heavens, or a wheel-turning king. For this reason, Ksitigarbha, you should universally encourage sentient beings to train like this.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who plant a few wholesome roots in the Buddha Dharma, even if they are as insignificant as a strand of hair, a grain of sand, or a speck of dust, then the merits they receive will be incomparable.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who encounter images of buddhas, bodhisattvas, *pratyekabuddhas*, or wheel-turning kings, and give through making offerings to them they will obtain immeasurable merit and will consistently enjoy superbly wondrous bliss as humans or *devas*.

若能迴向法界是人福利不可為喻。復次地藏。未來世中。若有善男子善女人。遇大乘經典。或聽聞一偈一句。發殷重心。讚歎恭敬。布施供養。是人獲大果報。無量無邊。若能迴向法界。其福不可為喻。復次地藏。若未來世中有善男子善女人。遇佛塔寺。大乘經典。新者布施供養。瞻禮讚歎。恭敬合掌。若遇故者。或毀壞者。修補營理。或獨發心。或勸多人同共發心。如是等輩。三十生中。常為諸小國王。檀越之人。常為輪王。還以善法教化諸小國王。

If they are able to dedicate the merit to the *dharmadhātu* then their merit will be incomparable.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who encounter Mahayana sutras and hearing a single line or single verse develop resolved minds to praising, revering, and giving through making offerings then these people will obtain great fruits of retribution that are immeasurable and illimitable. If they are able to dedicate the merit to the *dharmadhātu* then their merit will be incomparable.

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who encounter new Buddha pagodas and Mahayana sutras and give through making offerings, or gaze in veneration and praise reverentially with joined palms, or who encounter ones that are damaged and repair or mend them, whether they personally resolve their mind or they encourage many others to equally resolve their minds, then beings such as these will consistently be reborn as kings of small countries for thirty rebirths. The *danapati* will consistently be reborn as wheel-turning kings who will edify the kings of the small countries with the wholesome Dharma.

復次地藏。未來世中。若有善男子善女人。於
佛法中所種善根。或布施供養。或修補塔寺。
或裝理經典。乃至一毛一塵。一沙一涕。如是
善事。但能迴向法界。是人功德。百千生中受
上妙樂。如但迴向自家眷屬。或自身利益。如
是之果。即三生受樂。捨一得萬報。是故地藏。
布施因緣。其事如是。❀

Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who plant wholesome roots in the Buddha Dharma, give through making offerings, repairing pagodas or mending sutras, even if the virtuous deeds are as insignificant as a strand of hair, a speck of dust, a grain of sand, or a drop of water, and yet are able to dedicate the merit to the *dharmadhatu*, then their merit will allow them to enjoy the utmost wondrous bliss for hundreds of thousands of rebirths. If, however, they dedicate the merit to their own families and relatives or for their own personal benefit then their fruits will only be three rebirths of enjoying bliss. So by relinquishing a single merit, a ten-thousand-fold result can be obtained. For this reason, Ksitigarbha, the affairs concerning the affinities of giving are thus.”



地神護法品第十一
 爾時堅牢地神白佛言。世尊。我從昔來。瞻視
 頂禮。無量菩薩摩訶薩。皆是大不可思議神
 通智慧。廣度眾生。是地藏菩薩摩訶薩。於諸
 菩薩。誓願深重。世尊。是地藏菩薩。於閻浮提
 有大因緣。如文殊。普賢。觀音。彌勒。亦化百千
 身形。度於六道。其願尚有畢竟。是地藏菩薩
 教化六道一切眾生。所發誓願劫數。如千百
 億恒河沙。世尊。我觀未來及現在眾生。

Chapter Eleven

The Dharma Protection of the Earth Deity

At that time, the Earth Deity Prthivi addressed the Buddha saying, “From long ago, I have gazed and fully prostrated at the feet of immeasurable bodhisattva *mahasattvas*, all of who had the vastly inconceivable numinous power of wisdom to extensively liberate sentient beings. Among all of the bodhisattvas, the vows of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva are the deepest and weightiest. World-Honored One, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has great affinity with Jambudvipa. Manjusri, Samantabhadra, Avalokitesvara, and Maitreya have also transformed into hundreds of thousands of bodies to liberate those on the six paths, yet their vows have limitations. Thus, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has set forth vows to edify all of the sentient beings on the six paths throughout *kalpas* as numerous as the grains of sand in thousands of hundreds of millions of Ganges Rivers.”

“World-Honored One, I observe that sentient beings in the future and in the present...

於所住處。於南方清潔之地。以土石竹木。作其龕室。是中能塑畫。乃至金銀銅鐵。作地藏形像。燒香供養。瞻禮讚歎。是人居處。即得十種利益。何等為十。一者。土地豐壤。二者。家宅永安。三者。先亡生天。四者。現存益壽。五者。所求遂意。六者。無水火災。七者。虛耗辟除。八者。杜絕惡夢。九者。出入神護。十者。多遇聖因。世尊。未來世中。及現在眾生。若能於所住處。方面。作如是供養。得如是利益。

...will construct shrines on the purified ground in the southern section of their dwelling out of clay, stone, bamboo, and wood. Within these shrines they will create images of Ksitigarbha by casting or painting, or even by using gold, silver, copper, or iron. They will burn incense, make offerings, and praise him while gazing in veneration. The people of these dwelling will obtain ten types of benefits. What are the ten?"

"First, their lands will be fertile. Second, their homes will eternally be safe. Third, their ancestors will be born in the heavens. Fourth, their current generation will have the benefit of longevity. Fifth, they will find what they wish. Sixth, they will avoid the disasters of fire or flood. Seventh, waste and squander will be averted. Eighth, their nightmares will be prevented. Ninth, their comings and goings will be protected by spirits. Tenth, they will encounter many conditions leading to sagehood."

"World-Honored One, if sentient beings in future ages and in the present are able to make offerings such as these in a section of their dwellings, then they will gain such benefits."

復白佛言。世尊。未來世中。若有善男子善女
 人。於所住處。有此經典及菩薩像。是人更
 轉讀經。乃至供水。堅盜賊。大橫小橫。一切惡事。
 護是人。乃告堅盜賊。大橫小橫。一切惡事。
 悉皆銷滅。佛告堅盜賊。大橫小橫。一切惡事。
 及何以故。閻浮土地。悉蒙汝護。乃至草木沙
 石。稻麻竹葦。穀米寶貝。從地而有。皆因汝力。
 又常稱揚地藏菩薩利益之事。汝之功德。及
 以神通。百千倍於常分。地神若未來世。有
 善男子善女人。供養菩薩。及轉讀是經。但依
 地藏本願經一事修行者。

Earth Deity Prthivi continued to address the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who keep this sutra and image of this bodhisattva in their dwellings, and also who are able to recite this sutra and make offerings to this bodhisattva, then I will always protect these people, day and night, with my supernatural powers from floods and fire, robbery and theft, major and minor misfortunes. All of their woes will be fully eradicated.

The Buddha told the Earth Deity Prthivi, “Few spirits can reach up to your great supernatural powers. Why is this? The land of Jambudvīpa receives your full protection, even the grasses, trees, sand, stones, rice, hemp, bamboo, reeds, grains, rice, gems, and shells all emerge from the earth due to your powers. You also constantly commend the beneficial deeds of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva. Your merits and supernatural powers are hundreds of thousands of times that of ordinary earth spirits, thus if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who make offerings to this bodhisattva and recite this sutra, or who rely on a single aspect of the *Sutra on the Past Vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva* in their cultivation,...

汝以本神力而擁護之。勿令一切災害及不如意事。輒聞於耳。何況令受。非但汝獨護是人。故亦有釋梵眷屬。諸天眷屬。擁護是人。何故得如是聖賢擁護。皆由瞻禮地藏形像。及轉讀是本願經故。自然畢竟出離苦海。證涅槃樂。以是之故。得大擁護。❀

...then you should protect them with your supernatural powers, so as not allow any disaster, injury, or any undesirable event to be heard by their ears, much less allowed to be experienced!”

“Not only will you protect these people, but also Sakra, the King of the Brahma Heavens, their retinues, and the retinues of all *devas* will protect them. Why will they obtain protection from sages and saints such as these? Since they all gaze in veneration upon the images of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and recite the *Sutra on Past Vows*, they naturally and ultimately will be freed from the sea of suffering and realize the bliss of nirvana. For this reason they will obtain great protection.”



於頂門上放如是等毫相光已。出微妙音。告諸大眾。天龍八部。人非人等。聽吾今日於忉利天宮。稱揚讚歎地藏菩薩於人天中。利益等事。不思議事。超聖因事。證十地事。畢竟不退。阿耨多羅三藐三菩提事。說是語時。會中有一菩薩摩訶薩。名觀世音。從座而起。胡跪合掌。白佛言。世尊。是地藏菩薩摩訶薩。具大慈悲。憐愍愍罪苦眾生。於千萬億世界。化千萬億身。

After the *urna* rays such as these emitted from the crown of his head the Buddha proclaimed in an exquisite and wondrous voice, telling the great gathering of *devas*, *nagas*, and the remainder of the Eightfold Assembly who were both human and non-human, “Hear me today, in the palace of Trayastrimsa Heaven, as I commend and praise Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva who among the humans and *devas* has accomplished beneficial deeds and inconceivable feats, and who has excelled in the tasks which lead to sagehood, the affairs which realize the tenth *bhumi*, and ultimately in the means for non-retrogression from *anutara-samyak-sambodhi*.”

When these words were spoken, among the assembly there was a bodhisattva *mahasattva* named Avalokitesvara who arose from his seat, knelt on one knee, and joining his palms addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva is replete with great compassion and sympathy for sentient beings who are suffering for their misconduct. In thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of worlds he has transformed into thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of bodies and...

所有功德及不思議威神之力。我聞世尊與
十方無量諸佛異口同音讚歎地藏菩薩云。
正使過去現在未來諸佛說其功德。猶不能
盡。向者又蒙世尊普告大眾。欲稱揚地藏利
益等事。唯願世尊為現在未來一切眾生。稱
揚地藏不思議事。令天龍八部。瞻禮獲福。佛
告觀世音菩薩。汝於娑婆世界。有大因緣。若
天若龍。若男若女。若神若鬼。乃至六道罪苦
眾生。聞汝名者。見汝形者。戀慕汝者。讚歎汝
者。是諸眾生。於無上道。必不退轉。

...has merits and numinous power which are inconceivable. I have heard the World-Honored One and the immeasurable buddhas of the ten directions praise Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in unison about these affairs. Even if the buddhas of the past, present, and future were to speak of all of his merits they would never be able to finish. Previously, the great assembly received the universal announcement of the World-Honored One who intended to commend the beneficial deeds of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, I only hope the World-Honored One will commend the inconceivable feats of Ksitigarbha for the sake of all sentient beings in the future and the present, and to allow the *devas*, *nagas*, and the remainder of the Eightfold Assembly to gaze in veneration upon him to obtain merits.

The Buddha told Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, “You have great affinity with the Saha world. If *devas*, *nagas*, men, women, spirits, ghosts, or sentient beings on the six paths who are suffering for their misconduct hear your name, see your image, adore you, or praise you, then these sentient beings will never retrogress from the unexcelled path.

常生人天，具受妙樂。因果將熟，遇佛授記。汝今具大慈悲，憐愍眾生，及天龍八部，聽吾宣說地藏菩薩不思議利益之事。汝當諦聽。佛告今說之。觀世音言：唯然世尊，願樂欲聞。佛告觀世音菩薩：未來現在諸世界中，有天人受天福盡，有五衰相現，或有墮於惡道之者，如是天人，若男若女，當現相時，或見地藏菩薩形像，或聞地藏菩薩名，一瞻一禮，是諸天人轉增天福，受大快樂，永不墮三惡道報。

They will consistently be reborn among humans or *devas* and will enjoy wondrous bliss. When their affinitive fruits ripen, they will meet with buddhas and be given predictions of buddhood. You are now replete with great compassion and sympathy for sentient beings, *devas*, *nagas*, and the remainder of the Eightfold Assembly. Listen as I proclaim the inconceivably beneficial feats of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. Listen attentively as I now explain them to you.”

Avalokitesvara said, “Indeed, World-Honored One, I joyfully wish to hear.”

The Buddha told Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, “Among the worlds, in the future or in the present, there will be *devas* reborn into the heavens whose merit has been exhausted, who will exhibit the five signs of decay and will fall into the evil paths. When these signs appear, if *devas* such as these, whether male or female, see an image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, or hear the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, or gaze upon him in veneration just once, then these *devas* will increase their heavenly merit, enjoy great bliss, and never fall into the retributions of the three evil paths.

何況見聞菩薩。以諸香華、衣服、飲食、寶貝、瓔珞、布施供養。所獲功德、福利無量無邊。復次觀世音。若未來現在諸世界中。六道眾生。臨命終時。得聞地藏菩薩名。一聲。歷耳根者。是諸眾生。永不歷三惡道苦。何況臨命終時。父母眷屬。將是命終人。舍宅財物、寶貝、衣服、塑畫、地藏形像。或使病人。未終之時。眼耳見聞。知道眷屬將舍宅寶貝等。為其自身。塑畫地藏菩薩形像。是人若是業報。

How much more immeasurable and illimitable will their meritorious benefits be if they see and hear Ksitigarbha, and give through making offerings of incense, flowers, clothing, drinks, food, gems, and jeweled adornments!”

“Furthermore, Avalokitesvara, in the future and present, when sentient beings on the six paths of the world are approaching the end of their lives, if they hear the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva then the single passing of that sound by their ears will allow these sentient beings to never have to experience the suffering of the three evil paths. How much more so for those approaching the end of their lives whose parents or relatives use the houses, wealth, gems, and clothing of the soon to be deceased to commission the casting or painting of the image of Ksitigarbha.”

“If before the sick have died, they see with their eyes, or hear with their ears, or otherwise come to know that their relatives have used their houses, gems and so forth on their behalf to commission the casting or painting of the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, then they will receive merits to be immediately healed and have a prolonged lifespan even if their karmic retribution was...

合受重病者。承斯功德。應有一切罪障。壽命增益。
 是人若業報盡。命終之後。即生天受。
 墮惡趣者。承斯功德。命終之後。即生天受。
 勝妙樂。一切罪障。悉皆滅。復次。觀世音菩
 薩。若未來世。有男子。或乳哺時。或三歲
 五歲。十歲。已下。亡失父母。及兄弟姊妹。
 妹。是人。年既長大。思憶父母。及眷屬。不知
 落在何處。生何世界。何天。是若人。能知
 晝地。藏菩薩。形像。乃至聞名。瞻禮。供養。是日
 至七日。莫退初心。聞名。見形。瞻禮。供養。是人
 眷屬。假因業故。墮惡趣者。計當劫數。是人

...in accordance with enduring a severe sickness. Even if these people were at the end of their karmic life spans, whereby their offensive karmic hindrances were in accordance with falling in to the evil realms, then upon receiving these merits after the end of their lives they will be reborn as humans or *devas* and enjoy superbly wondrous bliss while all of the offensive hindrances will be fully eradicated.”

“Furthermore, Avalokitesvara, if in future ages there are men and women who lose their father, mother, bother or sister while still breast feeding, or under the age of three, five, or ten, then as these people grow older in years they will think of their parents and relatives without knowing which realm they have fallen into, or what world or heaven they have been reborn. If these people are able to cast or paint an image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, listen to his name, or gaze upon him in veneration for up to seven days without retreating from their initial resolve to listen to his name, look upon his image, gaze in veneration, and make offerings, then even if the relatives of these people, due to their karmic affinities, were to fall into the evil realms for numerous *kalpas* then...

承斯男女兄弟姊妹。塑畫地藏形像。瞻禮功德。尋即解脫。生人天中。受勝妙樂者。是人眷屬。如有福力。已生天中。受勝妙樂者。即承斯功德。轉增聖因。受無量樂。是人更能三七日中。一心瞻禮地藏形像。念其名字。滿於萬遍。當得菩薩現無邊身。具告是人眷屬。生界。或於夢中。菩薩現大神力。親領是人。於諸世界。見諸眷屬。更能每日念菩薩名千遍。至于千日。是人當得菩薩遣所在土地鬼神。

...they will receive the merits of their sons, daughters, brothers, or sisters who cast or painted an image of Ksitigarbha and gazed upon it in reverence and immediately be released and reborn among humans or *devas* and enjoy superbly wondrous bliss.”

“If the relatives of these people already have the meritorious power to be reborn among the heavens and enjoy superbly wondrous bliss then the merit they receive will increase the conditions that lead to sagehood and the enjoyment of immeasurable bliss. If these people are able for three seven-day periods to wholeheartedly gaze in veneration upon the image of Ksitigarbha and recite his name a full ten thousand times, then the Bodhisattva will manifest an illimitable body and fully disclose to these people the realm in which their relatives were reborn, or the Bodhisattva will appear in a dream through his numinous power and personally guide these people into the worlds to see their relatives.”

“Furthermore, if they are able to recite the name of the Bodhisattva a thousand times every day for a thousand days then the Bodhisattva will dispatch ghosts and spirits to the location of...

終身衛護。現世衣食豐溢。無諸疾苦。乃至橫
事不入其門。何況及身。是人畢竟得菩薩摩
頂授記。復次觀世音菩薩。若未來世。有善男
子。善女人。欲發廣大慈心。救度一切眾生者。
欲修無上菩提者。欲出離三界者。是諸人等。
見地藏形像。及聞名者。至心歸依。或以香華
衣服。寶貝飲食。供養瞻禮。是善男女等。所願
速成。永無障礙。復次觀世音。若未來世。有善
男子。善女人。欲求現在未來百千萬億等願。

...these people for protection until the end of their lives. During their current lives their clothing and food will be abundant, and they will be without sickness or suffering. Misfortunes will not even enter their doorways, much less affect their bodies. These people will ultimately be touched upon the crown of the head by the Bodhisattva while they are given predictions of buddhahood.”

“Furthermore, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who wish to develop a great compassionate heart in liberating all sentient beings and who wish to cultivate unexcelled *bodhi* in the desire to be freed from the triple realm, and if these people see the image of Ksitigarbha, hear his name, take refuge in him with utmost sincerity, and use incense, flowers, clothing, gems, drinks, and food to make offerings while gazing upon him in veneration, then the wishes of these virtuous men and women will be quickly realized and they will be eternally without any hindrances.”

“Furthermore, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who wish to seek out hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of their desires along...

百千萬億等事。但當歸依瞻禮。供養讚歎。地藏菩薩形像。如是所願所求。悉皆成就。復願地藏菩薩具大慈悲。永擁護我。是人於睡夢中。即得菩薩摩頂授記。復次觀世音菩薩。若未來世。善男子。善女人。於大乘經典。深生珍重。發不思議心。欲讀欲誦。縱遇明師。教視令熟。旋得旋忘。動經年月。不能讀誦。是善男子。等有宿業障。未得銷除。故於大乘經典。無讀誦性。如是之人。聞地藏菩薩名。

...with hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of other affairs, in the present or in the future, they only have to take refuge in, gaze in veneration upon, make offerings to, and praise the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. If so, what they desire and what they seek will all be fully realized. If they further desire Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, who is replete with great compassion, to eternally protect them, these people will be touched upon the crown of the head in a dream by the Bodhisattva while they are given predictions of buddhahood.”

“Furthermore, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, in future ages there may be virtuous men and women who deeply treasure Mahayana sutras and develop the inconceivable intent of wishing to read and recite them. Even if they might meet a bright teacher who instructs them, allowing them to become familiar with the sutras, yet as quickly as they learn they then forget, as they are unable to read and recite them after many months or years. It is because these people have karmic hindrances from past lives that have not yet been eliminated, and thus do not have the ability to read and recite Mahayana sutras. Once people such as this hear the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva or...

見地藏菩薩像。具以本心恭敬陳白。更以香華衣服飲食。一切玩具。供養菩薩。以淨水一盞。經一日一夜。安菩薩前。然後合掌請服。迴首向南。臨入口時。至心鄭重。服水既畢。慎五辛酒肉。邪淫妄語。及諸殺害。一七日或三七日。是善男子善女人。於睡夢中。具見地藏菩薩。現無邊身。於是人處。授灌頂水。其人夢覺。即獲聰明。應是經典。一歷耳根。即當永記。更不忘失一句一偈。

...see an image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva they should reverentially address him, replete with a resolute heart. They should make offerings of incense, flowers, clothing, drinks, food, and all kinds of trinkets to the Bodhisattva, and place a bowl of purified water in front of the Bodhisattva for one day and one night. Afterwards they should join their palms and appeal to drink it. With their heads turned toward the south, and as the water is entering their mouths, they should have the utmost sincerity and earnestness. After drinking the water they should abstain from the five pungent herbs, alcohol, meat, illicit sexual conduct, false speech, and all killing for one to three periods of seven days.”

“The dreams of these virtuous men and women will be replete with visions of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva who will manifest an illimitable body whereby these people will be given a sprinkling of water upon their heads. When these people awaken from their dreams they will acquire a keen intelligence, and should they hear this sutra just once they will always remember it, never forgetting a single line or verse.”

復次觀世音菩薩。若未來世有諸人等。衣食
 不足。求者乖願。或多病疾。或多凶衰。家宅不
 安。眷屬分散。或諸橫事。多來忤身。睡夢之
 多。有驚怖。如是人等。聞地藏名。見地藏形。至
 心恭敬。念滿萬遍。是諸不如意事。漸消滅。
 即得安樂。衣食豐溢。乃至於睡眠中。悉皆安
 樂。復次觀世音菩薩。若未來世有男子。善
 女人。或因治生。或因公。私。或因死。因急
 事。入山林中。過渡河海。及大水。或經險道。
 是人先當念地藏菩薩名。萬遍。所過土地。鬼
 神衛護。

“Furthermore, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, if in future ages there are people whose clothing and food is insufficient, who find what is contrary to what they wish, who endure much illness and adversity, whose homes are not peaceful with relatives that are scattered, who often have misfortunes come to plague them, and who are often startled from their dreams, and if such people hear the name of Ksitigarbha and see an image of Ksitigarbha, and recite his name a full ten thousand times with utmost sincerity and reverence, then all of these undesirable events will gradually disappear, and they will be peaceful and happy with an abundance of clothing and food. Even their dreams will be entirely peaceful and blissful.

Furthermore, Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva, if in future ages there are virtuous men and women who in order to make a living, or due to public or private business, or due to concerns of life and death or other pressing matters must enter into mountains or forests, or cross over rivers, seas or other great waterways, or travel on dangerous roadways, then these people should first recite the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva ten thousand times so that ghosts and spirits will protect them...

吾觀地藏威力
恒河沙劫說難盡

行住坐臥。永安樂。乃至逢於虎狼師子。一切毒害。不能損之。佛告觀世音菩薩。是地藏菩薩。於閻浮提有大因緣。若說於諸眾生見聞利益等事。百千劫中。說不能盡。是故觀世音。汝以神力。流布是經。令娑婆世界眾生。百千萬劫。永受安樂。爾時世尊而說偈言。

...on whatever terrain they pass through and whether walking, standing, sitting, or laying down they will eternally be safe, peaceful and blissful. Even if they encounter tigers, wolves, lions, or all kinds of malice, nothing will be able to harm them.

The Buddha told Avalokitesvara, “Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva has great affinity with Jambudvīpa. If you were to speak of all of the beneficial aspects through having sentient beings seeing his image or hearing his name then you would speak for hundreds of thousands of *kalpas* without being able to finish. Therefore Avalokitesvara, you should circulate this sutra with your numinous power and direct sentient beings of the Saha world to eternal enjoyment of peace and bliss for hundreds of thousands of tens-of-thousands of *kalpas*.

At that time the World-Honored One spoke the verses saying:

I observe the numinous power of Ksitigarbha,
Hardly exhausted though explained for *kalpas* as
numerous as the Ganges River’s sand.

見聞瞻禮一念之間
利益天人無量事
若男若女若龍神
報應當墮惡道
至心歸依大士身
壽命轉增除罪障
少失父母恩愛者
未知魂神在何趣
兄弟姊妹及諸親
生長以來皆不識
或塑或畫大士身

By seeing him, or hearing his name, or gazing in
veneration upon him for even an instant,
Humans and *devas* are benefited through his
immeasurable deeds.

Whether man, or woman, or *naga*, or spirit,
If at life's end they should fall into the evil paths,
But with utmost sincerity take refuge in this
Mahasattva,

Their life-spans will be prolonged, and their
offensive hindrances will be erased.

For the young who've lost their parents'
affectionate love,

And do not know into which realm their spirits
have gone,

Or whose brothers, or sisters, or other kin,
They have not known from birth to adulthood,
If they cast or paint the image of this Mahasattva,

悲戀瞻禮不暫捨
三七日中念其名
菩薩當現無邊體
示其眷屬所生界
縱墮惡趣尋出離
若能不退是初心
即獲摩頂受聖記
欲修無上菩提者
乃至出離三界苦
是人既發大悲心
先當瞻禮大士像

And adoringly gaze in veneration upon him without
abstaining for a moment,
And reciting his name for three seven-day periods,
Then Ksitigarbha will manifest an illimitable body,
Revealing the realms in which their relatives were
reborn,
Even those who have fallen into the evil realms
will immediately be freed.
If they do not retreat from their initial resolve,
Then they will be touched upon the head and
respectfully receive their prediction for
sagehood.
To cultivate the unexcelled *bodhi*,
And be freed from the suffering of the triple realm,
Once they have developed a great compassionate
heart,
And must first gaze in veneration upon the image
of the Mahasattva.

一切諸願速成就
永無業障能遮止
有人發心念經典
欲度群迷超彼岸
雖立是願不思議
旋讀旋忘多廢失
斯人有業障惑故
於大乘經不能記
供養地藏以香華
衣服飲食諸玩具
以淨水安大士前

Then every wish will be quickly realized,
And they will never be hampered by karmic
hindrances.

If people resolve their minds to recite this sutra,
Hoping to liberate the confused and reach the other
shore,

Although they establish vows which are
inconceivable,

What they read they soon forget, often expressing
forgetfulness.

Due to their karmic hindrance of delusion,
They cannot memorize Mahayana sutras.

If they make offerings to Ksitigarbha with incense,
flowers,

Clothing, drinks, food, and other trinkets,

And place pure water in front of this Mahasattva,

能以千應覺即至三酒發一
使是萬是來於心七肉殷日
斯大生經便夢思日邪重一
人土中教得中念內淫心夜
獲不永歷利見大勿及慎求
此思不耳根無士殺妄五服
慧議忘聞耳邊名害語辛之

Drinking it after one day and one night,
While developing a resolved mind, and abstaining
from the five pungent herbs,
Alcohol, meat, illicit sexual conduct, false speech,
For three seven-day periods without killing,
And with utmost sincerely reciting the name of this
Mahasattva,
Then in their dreams will appear an illimitable
body,
And upon awakening they will obtain a keen ear.
Should a sutra teaching be heard by their ears,
For thousands of tens-of-thousands of rebirths they
will never forget it.
Due to the inconceivability of this Mahasattva,
He can enable these people to acquire such
wisdom.

貧窮眾生及疾病
家宅凶衰眷屬離
睡夢之中悉不安
求者乖違無稱遂
至心瞻禮地藏像
一切惡事皆消滅
至於夢中盡得安
衣食豐饒鬼神護
欲入山林及海
毒惡禽獸及惡人
惡神惡鬼并惡風

If impoverished sentient beings sick with disease,
Whose homes have adversity and relatives that are
scattered,
Who have no peace even while dreaming,
And who find what is contrary to what they wish,
They should with utmost sincerely gaze in
veneration upon the image of Ksitigarbha,
And all their woes will fully disappear.
They will have peace during their dreams,
Clothing and food will abound, and
the ghostly spirits will protect them.
Those who wish to enter the mountains or forests,
or cross the sea,
With the malice of birds, beasts, and evil people,
Of cursed spirits and ghosts, and adverse winds,

一切諸難諸苦惱
但當瞻禮及供養
地藏菩薩大士像
如是山林大海中
應是諸惡皆消滅
觀音至心聽吾說
地藏無盡不思議
百千萬劫說不周
廣宣大士如是力
地藏名士如是聞
乃至見像瞻禮者

And all difficulties and distresses,
Then they should only gaze in veneration and make
offerings
To the image of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva
Mahasattva.
Thus among the mountains, forests and great seas,
All evils will fully disappear.
Avalokitesvara, listen with utmost sincerity to
what I say,
Ksitigarbha is inexhaustibly inconceivable,
Speaking for hundreds of thousands of tens-of-
thousands of *kalpas* is not sufficient
To fully explain the powers of this Mahasattva.
If the name of Ksitigarbha is heard by people,
And they gaze in veneration upon his image,

香華衣服飲食奉
供養百千受妙樂
若能以此迴法界
畢竟成佛超生死
是故觀音汝當知
普告恒沙諸國土

Providing incense, flowers, clothing, drinks, and food

Through making offerings, they will enjoy hundreds of thousands of wondrous joys.

If they are able to dedicate them to the *dharmadhatu*,

They will ultimately attain Buddhahood, eclipsing *samsara*.

Therefore Avalokitesvara, you should know to Proclaim this throughout the lands as numerous as the sand grains of the Ganges River.



動經千萬億劫。無有出期。地藏是南閻浮提
 眾生。志性無定。習惡者多。縱發善心。須臾即
 退。若遇惡緣。念念增長。以是之故。吾分是形。
 百千億化度。隨其根性。而度脫之。地藏。吾今
 殷勤。以天人眾。付囑於汝。未來之世。若有天
 人。及善男子。善女人。於佛法中。種少善根。一
 毛一塵。一沙一涕。汝以道力。擁護是人。漸修
 無上。勿令退失。復次地藏。未來世中。若天若
 人。隨業報應。

...where they would pass through thousands of tens-of-thousands of millions of *kalpas* without being released.”

“Ksitigarbha, the sentient beings on the southern continent of Jambudvīpa have unsettled dispositions and many habitual evils. Even if they develop virtuous intentions they will immediately retreat from them. If they encounter evil circumstances then every thought becomes increasingly more offensive. Because of this reason, I multiply my body hundreds of thousands of millions of times to guide them to liberation in accordance with their natural dispositions.”

“Ksitigarbha, I now earnestly entrust the multitudes of *devas* and humans to you. If in future ages there are *devas* or virtuous men and women who plant a few wholesome roots in the Buddha Dharma, even if they are as insignificant as a strand of hair, speck of dust, a grain of sand, or a drop of water, then you should protect these people with your liberating powers so they can gradually cultivate the unexcelled path, and not allow them to retrogress from it.”

“Furthermore, Ksitigarbha, if in future ages there are *devas* or humans who...

現在未來天人眾
吾今殷勤付囑汝
以大神通方便度
勿令墮在諸惡趣

落在惡趣。臨墮趣中。或至門首。是諸眾生。若能念得一佛名。一菩薩名。一句一偈。大乘經典。是諸眾生。汝以神力。方便救拔。於是人所現無邊身。為碎地獄。遣令生天。受勝妙樂。爾時世尊。而說偈言。

...have fallen into the evil realms according to the resonant retributions of their karma, or amid their descent into those realms, or even at the threshold, if these sentient beings are able to recite the name of one buddha, one bodhisattva, or one line or verse from a Mahayana sutra, then by means of your numinous power and expedient means you should rescue them. For these people he manifests an illimitable body for to obliterate the hells, and send them to be reborn in the heavens where they will enjoy superbly wondrous bliss.”

At that time, the World-honored One spoke the verses saying:

Regarding the *devas* and humans of the present and the future,
I now earnestly entrust them to you,
And by using your numinous power and expedient means you liberate them,
Never allowing them to fall into the evil realms.

爾時地藏菩薩摩訶薩。胡跪合掌。白佛言。世
 尊。唯願世尊。不以為慮。未來世中。若有善男
 子。善女人。於佛法中。一念恭敬。我亦百千方
 便。度脫是人。於生死中。速得解脫。何況諸
 善事。念念修行。自然於無上道。永不退轉。說
 是語時。會中有一菩薩。名虛空藏。白佛言。世
 尊。我自至忉利。聞於如來讚歎地藏菩薩。威
 神勢力。不可思議。未來世中。若有善男子。善
 女人。乃及一切天龍。聞此經典。及地藏名字。
 或瞻禮形像。得幾種福利。

At that time, Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva Mahasattva knelt on one knee, joined his palms and addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, I only hope that you would not be worried. If in future ages there are virtuous men and women who have a single thought of reverence toward the Buddha Dharma then I will free these people with hundreds of thousands of expedient means so they quickly attain liberation from *samsara*. How much more so if they have heard of virtuous deeds, cultivating and practicing them with every thought, so as to naturally never regress from the unexcelled path.”

When these words were spoken, among the assembly there was a bodhisattva named Akasagarbha who addressed the Buddha saying, “World-Honored One, in Trayastrimsa Heaven I have personally heard the Tathagata praise the numinous powers of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva as inconceivable. If in future ages there are virtuous men and women, as well as *devas* and *nagas* who hear this sutra and the name of Ksitigarbha or who gaze in veneration upon his image, how many kinds of merits will they obtain?

唯願世尊。為未來現在一切眾等。略而說之。佛告虛空藏菩薩。諦聽諦聽。吾當為汝分別說之。若未來世。有善男子善女人。見地藏形像。及聞此經。乃至讀誦。香華飲食。衣服珍寶。布施供養。讚歎瞻禮。得二十八種利益。一者。天龍護念。二者。善果日增。三者。集聖上因。四者。菩提不退。五者。衣食豐足。六者。疾疫不臨。七者。離水火災。八者。無盜賊厄。九者。人見欽敬。十者。神鬼助持。十一者。女轉。

I only hope the World-Honored One will briefly speak of them for all the multitudes of the future and present.”

The Buddha told Akasagarbha Bodhisattva, “Listen attentively, very attentively and I will explain them separately for you. If in future ages there are virtuous men and women who see the image of Ksitigarbha, or who hear this sutra or even recite it, or who give through making offerings of incense, flowers, drinks, food, clothing or gems, or who praise him while gazing in veneration, then they will obtain twenty-eight kinds of benefits.”

“First, *devas* and *nagas* will protect them and keep them in mind. Second, their wholesome roots will increase daily. Third, they will accumulate superior conditions leading to sagehood. Fourth, they will not retrogress from *bodhi*. Fifth, their clothing and food will be sufficiently abundant. Sixth, sickness and plagues will not draw near them. Seventh, they will be free from the calamities of floods and fires. Eighth, they will be without the adversities of robbery and theft. Ninth, they will be admired and revered by people who see them. Tenth, spirits and ghosts will assist and support them. Eleventh, women will be able to transform...

男身十二者。為王臣女。十三者。端正相好。十四者。多生天上。十五者。或為帝王。十六者。宿智命通。十七者。有求皆從。十八者。眷屬歡樂。十九者。諸橫銷滅。二十者。業道永除。二十一者。去處盡通。二十二者。夜夢安樂。二十三者。先亡離苦。二十四者。宿福受生。二十五者。諸聖讚歎。二十六者。聰明利根。二十七者。饒慈愍心。二十八者。畢竟成佛。

...into men in their next rebirth. Twelfth, they will be able to be reborn as daughters of kings and ministers. Thirteenth, they will have an upright and proper appearance. Fourteenth, they will have many rebirths as *devas*. Fifteenth, they may become emperors or kings. Sixteenth, they will have the power to know their past lives. Seventeenth, they will find all that they seek. Eighteenth, their relatives will be joyous and blissful. Nineteenth, all misfortune will be eradicated. Twentieth, the karmic paths will endlessly be averted. Twenty-first, they will always arrive at the places they want to go. Twenty-second, their nightly dreams will be peaceful and blissful. Twenty-third, their deceased ancestors will be free from suffering. Twenty-fourth, they will be reborn according to the merits of their past lives. Twenty-fifth, they will be praised by all of the sages. Twenty-sixth, they will have intelligent and keen faculties. Twenty-seventh, they will have magnanimous, compassionate, and sympathetic hearts. Twenty-eighth, they will ultimately attain buddhhood.”

復次。虛空藏菩薩。若現在未來。天龍鬼神。聞地藏名。禮地藏形。或聞地藏本願事。行讚歎。瞻禮。得七種利益。一者。速超聖地。二者。惡業銷滅。三者。諸佛護臨。四者。菩提不退。五者。增長本力。六者。宿命皆通。七者。畢竟成佛。爾時十方一切諸來。不可說不可說諸佛如來。及大菩薩。天龍八部。聞釋迦牟尼佛。稱揚讚歎。地藏菩薩。大威神力。不可思議。歎未曾有。

“Furthermore, Akasagarbha Bodhisattva, if in the present or the future there are *devas*, *nagas*, ghosts or spirits who hear the name of Ksitigarbha and venerate the image of Ksitigarbha, or who hear the past vows and deeds of conduct of Ksitigarbha and praise him while gazing in veneration, then they will obtain seven kinds of benefits.”

“First, they will quickly ascend the stages of sagehood. Second, they will eradicate their evil karma. Third, all buddhas will protect and attend to them. Fourth, they will not retrogress from *bodhi*. Fifth, their innate strengths will increase and expand. Sixth, they will they will have the power to know all of their past lives. Seventh, they will ultimately attain buddhahood.”

At that time, all who had come from the ten directions, the inexpressibly inexpressible buddhas – *tathagatas* – and the great bodhisattvas, *devas*, *nagas*, and remainder of the Eightfold Assembly who heard the commendation and praise of Sakyamuni Buddha for the great and inconceivable numinous power of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva applauded since there has not ever been an event like this.

是時。切利天。雨無量香華。天衣珠瓔。供養釋
迦牟尼佛。及地藏菩薩已。一切眾會。俱復瞻
禮。合掌而退。❀

地藏菩薩本願經卷下

At that time immeasurable incense, flowers, heavenly garments, and pearl necklaces rained down in Trayastrimsa Heaven as offerings to Sakyamuni Buddha and Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva. Afterward, the entire assembly once more gazed in veneration, and then joined their palms and withdrew.



*The Sutra on the Past Vows of Ksitigarbha
Bodhisattva
(Posterior Fascicle)*



SUTRA INTRODUCTION



THE SUTRA ON THE PAST VOWS OF KṢITIGARBHA BODHISATTVA

For well over a millennia Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva has been viewed in China as a compassionate savior that unhesitatingly rushes to the rescue of the deceased who are enduring the torments of the hells.¹ He is often called upon by relatives who fear that their departed loved ones may be suffering in these horrid realms, and who wish to allay their troubles – and even allow for their release – through the recitation of Buddhist sutras, such as the one presented here, and by offering donations to temples. In modern Chinese Buddhist monasteries Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva is often enshrined in a small cloister adjacent to the main shrine where memorial tablets and placards of the devotees' deceased ancestors are kept. In Japan, Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva has assumed the responsibility of caring after infants who die, or after those who are stillborn, miscarried, or aborted. Kṣitigarbha's

¹ His name is Dizang Pusa in Chinese and Jizō Bosatsu in Japanese (地藏菩薩).

image, in the form of a small plain statue, is often dressed with bibs and hats by the grieving parents. For these reasons, this bodhisattva has a special affinity with the hearts and minds of many, and stands as a beacon of light and salvation for those who are nearing death and for their concerned families.

Long before the influence of this Buddhist figure, however, Chinese culture had emphasized the need to look after the welfare of the deceased. Indeed, the *Sutra on the Past Vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva* (hereafter *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*) can be viewed as a product of the confluence of two great ancient world views, where the doctrines and expressions of Buddhism are interpreted and presented in a largely Chinese idiom.² The *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* appeared nearly one thousand years after Buddhism first entered China, and thus represents a highly sinicized expression of many

² *Dizang pusa ben yuan jing* 地藏菩薩本願經. The version translated here was adapted from the *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* (hereafter abbreviated as T), ed. Takakusu Junjirō, Watanabe Kaigyoku, and Ono Gemmyō, 100 vols. (Tokyo: Taishō issaikyō kankōkai, 1924–1935); vol 13, no. 412.

doctrines and practices. Cross-cultural patterns of assimilation are very complex, thus it is valuable to provide a historical evolution of some of the central themes in this text and provide a cultural context in which many people have read, and indeed still read, this sutra. The *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* locates itself as a great expression of medieval Chinese Buddhist devotionalism oriented around the ninth and tenth centuries, and many strains are still exhibited in Chinese Buddhist religious practices today.

The attributed translator of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* is Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀, a monk from Khotan 于闐 who is well known for being invited to the capital at Chang'an in 695 to produce a new translation of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* 華嚴經. When he died at the age of fifty-nine in 711 his body was cremated and it is believed that his tongue remained unburned, a sign indicating that his translations were faithful to the original texts. His remains and tongue relic were returned to Khotan where a seven-tiered pagoda was erected over them.³ The attribution

³ Summarized from the biographical account in the *Song Biographies of Eminent Monks* 宋高僧傳 compiled by Zanning 贊寧 (920-1001). See T: 50:2061.718c.

of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* to Śikṣānanda is dubious however, and most scholarly opinion considers this text to be an indigenous (and anonymous) Chinese composition that appeared by the tenth century.⁴ Thus, it is no surprise that many indigenous Chinese themes are so well integrated within the Buddhist conceptual framework, providing a multi-cultural view of many important aspects of Buddhism in China including perspectives on the afterlife, the realms of hell, the recourse of karma, the cultivation and transference of merit, and of course, the figure of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva.

DEATH AND AFTERLIFE

By the second century BCE in China there was a relatively prevalent belief that a person had multiple facets to their soul, and there emerged a theory, which soon became dominant, that living people are animated by a “heavenly soul” called

⁴ The text does not appear in the catalogues compiled in 730 or 800, nor seem to be mentioned by any Japanese pilgrims to China during the Tang Dynasty. For further research see Zhiru, *The Making of a Savior Bodhisattva: Dizang in Medieval China*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), esp. 107-115.

hun 魂, which governs their intellectual faculties, and a “bodily soul” called *po* 魄, which governs their bodily actions. Upon death the *hun* would separate from the body and certain services and rituals would be required to ensure its safe journey. Other practices were intended to secure the *po*, which could remember its family and return as a malevolent ghost that would wander aimlessly, both hungry and homeless. These funerary practices mostly revolved around cults of ancestral worship at the imperial court or popular sacrifices among the masses which were usually conducted by shamans. The intention was to both feed and pacify the dead, attempting to secure their welfare and ensure that malevolent ghosts would not interfere with affairs of the living.

The *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* implores parallel sensibilities from the Buddhist model and offers ways to appease the dead and to ease any of their unnecessary suffering. The activities advocated in this text, such as reciting sutras and the names of buddhas, among many others, will not only help liberate those suffering in the hell realms but will also scatter potentially dangerous demons

and ghosts, echoing the concerns of native Chinese anxieties about the afterlife (see Ch. 7). Another passage from the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* that also has a particular Chinese flavor is found in the discussion of the disintegration of the consciousness (recalling the parting of *hun* and *po*) and exhaustion of the breath, or vital essence 氣 (a patently Chinese concept which conveys a sense of creative energy or life-force) which marks the end of a person’s life. Following death, the funerary practice advocated by the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* involves the recitation of this sutra (Ch. 6), an act which will release the deceased from any of their past offenses and ultimately from rebirth in the hell realms.

Furthermore, the glyph for *hun* is also used a few times in this text to refer to this transmigrating spirit of the deceased. Originally, the Chinese had no indigenous belief in rebirth, and the *hun* was just a facet of the soul that continued on after death. Yet its use in this text exemplifies how an Indian Buddhist concept found expression through reusing, and re-tooling, an existent Chinese term. By maintaining a focus on the cultural concern for the deceased, the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* largely

orients its discussion around the location of their next rebirth, which almost invariably means being reborn in the hells.

Before the common era, some of the native Chinese conceptions of the afterlife focused on a somber subterranean region called the Yellow Springs 黃泉 where the *po* was believed to descend after death. By the beginning of the common era Mount Tai 泰山 (also 大山), or more precisely the regions beneath Mount Tai, were commonly cited as the final abode for the *hun* and *po*. This mountain, located in modern Shandong province, soon became an important sacrificial site and remains as one of the five sacred mountains of China. Some early Buddhist translators, such as Kang Senghui 康僧會 (d.280), used this pre-existing association with the underworld to their advantage and chose “Mount Tai” as a convenient translation for the Sanskrit term for hell (*naraka*).⁵

The descriptions of the hells found in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* conform to the standard model found in China, that of a place of dreadful torture,

⁵ See for example T3. 152.39b22.

but their geography and enumeration seem to move away from what is considered the more mainstream depiction of the cosmos. The more-or-less “orthodox” Buddhist view presented of the hells is that they are located beneath the earth of Jambudvīpa, the continent on which we are believed to reside. This cosmology was reproduced in Abhidharma treatises like the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and *Abhidharmakośa* which were very influential throughout East Asia, especially the latter which was used in monastic curriculum and provoked numerous commentaries.⁶ The *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, however, diverges from these texts and positions the hells among the Ring of Iron Mountains 鐵圍山 that encircle and enclose the cosmological horizon of our world (Ch. 1), a relatively odd depiction in the face of the wide influence of the Abhidharma texts above.⁷ The association of the hells with the

⁶ Both texts stem from the Sarvāstivāda tradition. *Mahāvibhāṣā* 大毘婆沙論, trans. Buddhavarman 浮陀跋摩, Daotai 道泰, et.al. between 437-39 (T no.1546), Xuanzang between 656-59 (T no.1545); *Abhidharmakośa* 俱舍論, *Vasubandhu*, trans. Paramārtha 真諦 between 563-68 (T no. 1559), Xuanzang 玄奘 between 651-54 (T no.1558).

⁷ For a basic diagram of the traditional cosmology including the heavenly realms see Appendix I.

Ring of Iron Mountains may have harmonized with and have been bolstered by popular Chinese understandings of Mount Tai, but the notion of regions existing at the extreme borders of the Buddhist cosmos is not an innovative Chinese concept, as antecedents can be found in Indian sources.

A passage can be found in the Pali Dīgha Nikāya where beings are reborn in a gloomy and dark region just beyond the furthest reaches of our world, where the radiance of the sun and moon cannot reach.⁸ In fact this passage strikingly echoes the description of the Ring of Iron in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* as being dark and without either sunlight or moonlight (Ch. 5). Another Indian Abhidharma text entitled the *Nyāyānusāra*, which is critical of the *Abhidharmakośa*, more specifically locates eight freezing hells at the margins of the cosmos, placing them beyond the periphery of

8 See Dīgha Nikāya (hereafter DN) 14.17; the passage is repeated at 14.30. This realm may have been envisioned as the space in-between worlds (*lokāntarika*) and seems similar to the Vedic notion of an “unsupported darkness.” See *Rigveda* I.182.6 and VII.104.3.

the outer ring of mountains in an extremely dark and dismal place.⁹ Furthermore, an early Chinese Buddhist precedent that parallels this description may have been established by the *Sutra on the Eighteen Hells*, which positions ten freezing hells at the “boundaries of heaven and earth,” within a sunless and moonless region.¹⁰ Thus the imagery of a dark and isolated region is not unique to the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, and even the *Mahāvibhāṣā* and *Abhidharmakośa*, following their discussion of the underground hells, allow for numerous isolated “frontier” hells, which can be occupied by one or many people and are located among rivers, valleys, deserts, and even among the mountains.¹¹

Another clue regarding the unorthodox positioning

9 See T29:1562.517a19. The *Nyāyānusāra* 順正理論 is a Sarvāstivāda text composed by Saṃghabhadra. Trans. by Xuanzang between 653-654 (T no. 1562).

10 *Shiba nili jing* 十八泥犁經, T no. 731; this text is currently attributed to An Shigao 安世高 (d. 168), but is listed as having an unknown translator in the catalogue of scriptures compiled by Sengyu 僧祐 in 515 CE. The passage on the hells can be found at T17:731.528b20 and 529b14. The other eight hells of the eighteen mentioned in this text are the fiery hells, and are located underground.

11 For example see T29:1559.216b5 and T27:1545.866c1.

of the hells can be found in the Chinese translation of the *Dīrghāgama*, which locates the hells in a desolate and dark region between two concentric mountain ranges that encircle the exterior of our world.¹² This notion of dual mountain ranges (instead of the more traditional single range) can be found in the early Sanskrit text the *Mahāvastu*, which claims that the wails from those tortured in the hells will echo back and forth among these mountains and reach the ears of those living on the continents.¹³ According to the *Dīrghāgama* these surrounding mountains are composed of *vajra*, a mythological adamantine-like substance, and not the more traditional substance of iron. This apparent difference is downplayed in another translation of a similar passage found in the *Sutra on the Genesis of the World*.¹⁴ This sutra claims that the interior ring of mountains is composed of

12 *Chang ahan jing* 長阿含經, T no. 1; a supposed translation of the Dharmaguptaka *Dīrghāgama* by Buddhayaśas 佛陀耶舍 and Zhu Fonian 竺佛念 in 412-13 CE. The passage can be found in the *Shiji jing* 世記經 at T1:1.121c3.

13 See Jones, J.J. *The Mahāvastu*. (London: Luzac and Co. 1949-56), pg. 7.

14 *Qishi jing* 起世經, T no. 24; translated by Jñānagupta 闍那崛多 between 585-600.

vajra, but then still refers to them as the Ring of Iron 鐵圍. an obvious mismatch that was seemingly tolerated. Subsequently, the mountains surrounding the Ring of Iron are called the Great Ring of Iron 大鐵圍, and it is between these two circular ranges that the hells are positioned.¹⁵ Thus the tradition established by these texts which placed the hell realms in the mountainous periphery of the Buddhist cosmology seem to have been a major influence on the authors of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*.

While the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* does not seem to differentiate between the Ring of Iron and the Great Ring of Iron (its switches between both terms throughout), it seems clear that its cosmology was predicated on these early Buddhist works such as the *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Dīrghāgama*, which locate the hells in the secluded and dark extremities of the world or among the surrounding mountain ranges, and not on the Abhidharma texts circulating

15 The passages can be found at T1.24.320b27, 320c02, and 330a2. Interestingly, these mountains are also believed to be beneficial since they shield us from a destructive, fiery, and foul smelling wind that would otherwise destroy Jambudvīpa and the other continents.

as monastic curriculum that locate them in the subterranean realms. The process of diffusing this new world view into popular Chinese Buddhist imagination may have eliminated the stark distinction between these two concentric mountain ranges, creating a cosmos where the hells were simply to be found among the outer mountains, as in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*.

One further curio in the description of the hells in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* is that they are specifically located in the Ring of Iron Mountains *east* of Jambudvīpa (Ch. 5). It is only speculation, but Mount Tai is famed for its position in the east, and is often referred to as the Eastern Peak 東嶽, so perhaps this attribution in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* is some minor remnant or undercurrent of indigenous sentiment associating the subterranean afterlife with a generalized eastern location in the mountains.¹⁶ Furthermore, those familiar with the Buddhist descriptions of the hells in medieval China would have frequently run across the judge

¹⁶ It is of interest to note that the glyph for peak, *yue* 嶽, is composed of a prison 獄 beneath a mountain 山. The significance of a subterranean prison is discussed below.

of the dead who was known as the Magistrate of Mount Tai, thus nourishing and maintaining the age-old associations with the holy mountain.

Besides the geographical location of the hells, the number of great hells mentioned in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* also differs from what has been seen as canonical orthodoxy. It is important to point out that the earliest Buddhist texts, such as in the Pali Nikāyas, did not develop a rigid numerical count and systematized cosmology for the hell realms, which often simply remained generalized as retributive states of anguish. Only later, during the sectarian Abhidharma period, were the hells properly configured and enumerated, of which the *Abhidharmakośa* was instrumental in locating a hierarchical layering of eight major hells and eight freezing hells beneath the earth.¹⁷

Yet the *Dīrghāgama*, *The Sutra on the Genesis of the World*, and other similar texts which position the hells among the outer rims of mountains, not

¹⁷ The eight freezing hells, which are presumed to be on the same level as the eight great hells in the *Abhidharmakośa*, are not mentioned in the *Mahāvibhāṣā*.

only describe eight great hells but further talk of *ten* additional freezing hells, which if added to the original “great eight” would yield a total of eighteen.¹⁸ And as we have already mentioned, an early precedent may have been established in China through the *Sutra on the Eighteen Hells*, which describes in some detail eight fiery and ten freezing realms of hell. The *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* presumably follows along these lines in indicating that there are eighteen primary hells (Ch. 1). Another popular medieval text, *The Scripture of the Ten Kings*, which also discuss Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva and the hell realms, equally enumerates eighteen great hells.¹⁹ This indicates that this enumeration of the hells was not isolated to the *Kṣitigarbha*

18 The other texts include the *Daloutan jing* 大樓炭經 translated by Fali 法立 and Faju 法炬 between 290-306 (T no. 23) and the *Qishi yinben jing* 起世因本經 by Dharmagupta between 605-17 (T no. 25). These four “cosmological” texts and the *Abhidharmakośa* and *Nyāyānusāra* Abhidharma texts derive many of the names for the freezing hells from a list of ten hells in the *Kokālika Sutta* found at Saṃyutta Nikāya 6.10 and Suttanipāta 3.10.

19 For an in depth study of this text see Teiser, Stephen F. *The Scripture on the Ten Kings*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994).

Sutra. Regardless of these matters, however, it is important to point out that the main purpose of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* was not to create a cohesive discourse on the cosmology of the Buddhist underworld. Out of concern for themselves and others, devoted Buddhist practitioners would have been more interested in the kinds of suffering that people experience within the hells, rather than their exact location or number, and this is certainly a main component of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*.

SUFFERING IN THE HELLS

One of the most profound impressions one takes away from the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* is of the various horrifying tortures inflicted on the unfortunate people who are reborn there. While this became a fairly standard trope in the discussions of Buddhist hells, early Buddhist texts do not support such gratuitously hideous scenes of the netherworld. In the Dīgha Nikāya of the Pali canon, hell is more modestly discussed as a place of woe and suffering or as an evil state, or even as simply as a dark place. Some passages are ambiguous enough that hell may only be a negative mental state and not

an actual location of torture. Indeed, the Sanskrit term for hell, *naraka*, literally means “devoid of happiness,” and does not necessitate a physical location.

A sutra in the Pali Majjhima Nikāya, however, does present a more graphic depiction of these regions in a passage where the Buddha is having difficulty in finding an appropriate simile to discuss the sufferings in the hell realms.²⁰ He declares that the punishment inflicted upon a robber by a king, such as impaling him with one hundred spears in the morning, at noon, and at night, is not even a fraction of the torment and suffering one would endure in the hells. This follows with a description of some of the tortures that these “offenders” in the hells undergo, including being hewn by axes, boiled in cauldrons, and engulfed in flames. This latter notion of the hells as a location of horrendous corporal punishment has held strong throughout popular Buddhist tradition, and is the basic mode of description in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*.

When Buddhist monks from India and Central

20 *Bālaṇḍita Sutta*; Majjhima Nikāya (hereafter MN) 129.

Asian began to bring their ideas of an embattled underworld to the frontiers and metropolises of China, the pre-existing Chinese cultural imagination could only provide a roughly analogous, but ultimately incongruous, concept; the eastern peak of Mount Tai.²¹ Many Buddhist translators chose to leave the foreign term for hell untranslated within the text, and simply transliterated it (such as *nili* 泥犁). The Chinese term that is now standard, however, clearly shows its etymological relationship with the juridical system and penal codes, as it literally means underground prison or subterranean jail (地獄). Through embracing an afterlife based on administrative jurisprudence, a highly bureaucratized system of judgment emerged in medieval China concerning the fate of the recently deceased which often involved a series of officiating ministers and judges.²² While these bureaucratic affairs are largely silent in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, the highly descriptive quality of the punishments meted out in the hellish prisons

21 The biggest difference, of course, was that the Chinese had no native conception regarding rebirth.

22 For an in depth study of this subject see Teiser, *Ten Kings*.

seems to invest more interest on the verdict of guilt rather than the trial process. From this perspective, the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* can possibly be seen as an attempt at deterring people from committing immoral and evil acts by revealing the gruesome tortures which are received in retribution for them.

Traditionally, the worst of these earthen jails was called the Unrelenting Hell 無間地獄, named so because it was thought that the torture was unending, without a moment's rest (but not eternal, since one will be reborn elsewhere, eventually). The Sanskrit term for this most misfortunate of hells, *avīci*, literally means “waveless,” and only became particularly associated with the nether realms during the composition of scholastic compendia in the sectarian Abhidharma period. It does not seem to be used in many early Buddhist sources, such as in the first four Nikāyas, as a term for hell.²³ There is, however, a description of a so-called “Great Hell” found in the Majjhima Nikāya

²³ The term *avīci* is found at Dīgha Nikāya 26.23 and Anguttara Nikāya 3.56. In these passages it seems to denote the dense population of Jambudvīpa, moreover which is presented as a blessing!

which was later claimed in exegetical literature to be identical with *Avīci Hell* (i.e. Unrelenting Hell). This hell, in short, is depicted as having four iron walls that spewed flames in all directions.²⁴ We find that many Chinese translations, such as the above mentioned Abhidharma treatises and the *Dīrghāgama*, describe the Unrelenting Hell in exactly the same terms as this Great Hell. Indeed, this idiom continued through to the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* which also contains a description of the Unrelenting Hell as having iron walls that have flames covering them (Ch. 3).

The *Sutra on the Eighteen Hells* also provides a description of the eighth and final fiery hell (the traditional location of *Avīci*) which includes a platform on which the prisoners are forced to lay and not permitted to leave nor rest upon.²⁵ In medieval China, the association of this hell and platform would undoubtedly cause a reader to recall the famous story of Maudgalyāyana (Mulian 目連) and his quest for his mother in the hells, ultimately finding her nailed down to an iron

²⁴ See for example MN129.16 and MN130.16.

²⁵ See T17: 731.529b4.

platform.²⁶ This aspect of the Unrelenting Hell is emphasized in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, where within the iron-walled citadel there is a mysterious platform on which a single person or multiple people would see themselves filling up the entirety of the platform (Ch. 3), presumably so as not to escape any portion of the punishment to be doled out. Including this spatial dimension of inescapable suffering, the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* proclaims that the Unrelenting Hell is in fact to be considered “unrelenting” in five aspects, to which it includes the temporal dimension of its endless daily torture, the universal use of every imaginable kind of torture device, the egalitarian acceptance of people from every class and race, and its endless duration throughout many eons (Ch. 3).

An unresolved set of interpretations, however, emerges from the reading of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* regarding as to whether the Unrelenting Hell it

²⁶ For a study on the Mulian myth and its influence on medieval China see Teiser, Stephen F. *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988). For some popular medieval Chinese representations depicting the platform within this hell see Teiser, *Ten Kings*, 189, 194-5.

is seen as distinct from or synonymous to Avīci Hell. There is no distinction traditionally since “unrelenting” (無間) is merely the translation of “avīci” (阿鼻). The text describes two walled citadels, one within the other, which are both termed “unrelenting” (Ch. 3). Other passages within the text clearly imply that the Unrelenting Hell and Avīci Hell are separate but makes no indication as to their relationship to one another, though it seems plausible to assert that the inner citadel could refer to Avīci, while the outer citadel would refer to the multiple Unrelenting Hells in the outer citadel. It is clear though that what is called the Five-fold Unrelenting Hell is only contained within the innermost walls.

This notion of a Five-fold Unrelenting Hell seems unprecedented in Buddhist literary history, and at least in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* seems unrelated to a far more common association of the five heinous crimes with Avīci Hell. Traditionally, if committed, the crimes of matricide, patricide, killing an *arhat*, causing a buddha to bleed, or disrupting the harmony of the monastic community would inevitably, if not immediately, lead to the rebirth

in this most despised of hells. The *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* does discuss these crimes in relation to retribution in the Unrelenting Hell (with the absence of killing an *arhat*, however), but tacks on more acts of misconduct including harboring irreverence toward the sutras, stealing monastic goods, engaging in sexual intercourse within the monastery, and some others of a peculiar Chinese flavor concerning traditional Confucian family values – the unfilial child²⁷ – and sociopolitical interests closely associated with medieval China – that of people pretending to be monks.²⁸ It is

27 Concerns of filial piety in Indian Buddhism often revolved around monastics teaching their parents the Dharma so they may avoid unfortunate rebirths. In China, a major focus was on a child's obedience to the parents, and an entire genre of Buddhist filial piety sutras emerged in China voicing this concern. The passage in discussion here clearly implies this latter Chinese expression. For discussion on Buddhist filial piety in China see Cole, Alan. *Mothers and Sons in Chinese Buddhism*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

28 It is interesting to note that the very beginning of the *Sutra on the Eighteen Hells* solely warns that by breaking the traditionally valued Confucian relations between parents and child, or ruler and subject, one will be reborn in the hells. See T17: 731.528b18.

important to keep in mind however, that regardless of the violation the hidden mechanisms of causal efficacy are what Buddhists traditionally believed to lead to particular rebirths, and this must include a discussion on the doctrine of karma.

KARMIC RESONANCE

While some Chinese Buddhist texts present retribution for karmic acts as one of judgment by King Yama, the Buddhist lord of the dead, and a hoard of administrative record keepers (who are known to make mistakes!), the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* highlights the more orthodox teaching concerning the impersonal force of karma.²⁹ Karma denotes any intentional mental, verbal or physical activity, and ultimately leads to (i.e. causes) a natural ripening of consequences from those activities. Being guided by mental defilements such as ignorance, hatred, and greed will only cause unfortunate results

29 Though there is one passing mention of pleading one's case to a group of officials who decide on the next appropriate rebirth in accordance with one's past karma (Ch. 7). King Yama also appears in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, but only as an interlocutor (Ch. 8).

(such as being reborn in the hells realms), while being guided by wholesome intentions such as wisdom, compassion and generosity will engender positive and beneficial results (such as being reborn in the heavens). In this sense the suffering of those in the hells is naturally self-imposed, as they are simply reaping the fruits of their own immoral misconduct.

The notion of karma and the causal inevitably of resulting fruits was deeply rooted in Indian thought, and ancient Chinese culture also shared similar rudimentary conceptions of moral retribution, although it seems to have never been formulated into a doctrinal tenet by any school of thought.³⁰ A more robust theory which philosophers in pre-Buddhist China often discussed was the natural resonance between two phenomena that were considered of the same type. This is often subsumed under the theory of Five Phases 五行

³⁰ For discussion on pre-Buddhist Chinese understanding of moral retribution see Gjertson, Donald E. *Miraculous Retribution: A Study and Translation of T'ang Lin's Ming-pao chi*. (Berkeley: Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series, 1989), pp. 118-150.

(or Five Elements). According to this theory many phenomena (colors, bodily organs, emotions, etc.) and concepts (cardinal directions, numbers, etc.) can be classified under five categories – water, wood, fire, earth, and metal – and any two phenomena that fall under the same category have a natural correlation, or sympathetic resonance 感應, with each other. For example, disparate phenomena and concepts such as “autumn,” “kidneys,” “west,” “nose,” “9,” and “hemp” were all seen as somehow interrelated since they all were classified under the category of metal. Indeed traditional Chinese acupuncture, herbology, music, martial arts and military strategy are all based on this theoretical foundation.

This manor of thinking, often deemed “correlative,” functioned in the same way as the Indian “causal” theory of karma, as they both provided a metaphysical ground which explains the interaction between two events.³¹ Many times these elements were interwoven in Chinese Buddhist texts such

³¹ For more of an in depth discussion see Sharf, Robert H. *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 77-133.

as the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, where concepts such as karmic resonance 業感 (or karmic stimulus) would have a sympathetic relationship with a particular resonant retribution 報應 (or retributive response). This represents an interesting linguistic synthesis where the Indian notions of karma and retribution are merged with the Chinese concepts of stimulus and response to coin new terminology which signifies a culturally integrated understanding of Buddhist doctrine. Thus moral retribution, a major concern of Indian Buddhists and integral to the theory of rebirth, found new expression in native Chinese metaphysics. This is often exemplified in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* by descriptions of specific offenses which yield particular punishments of a similar sort (such as in Ch. 4), grounding the karmic process as a function of Chinese correlative theories while having a trajectory following the traditional Indian Buddhist concern for personal actions. It is also important to point out that this karmic process does not need to be understood in a metaphysical Hammurabian sense of justice – an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth – but also can simply be seen as naturally resonating outcomes of one’s karmic

actions.³² Of course what is deemed as a “natural outcome,” is due in large part to the cultural context, which we will see below.

FILIAL DEVOTIONS

This karmic resonance between two seemingly different phenomena is perhaps best exemplified in tandem with a major recurrent theme in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, that of filial piety. In Chapter 4 it is warned that if a child is disobedient to his or her parents then the child will meet their demise at the hands of a natural disaster (天地災殺), the apparently “natural” outcome of this immoral act. Both the theme and operation of this retribution is strongly influenced by Chinese understandings. The Chinese held the view that the entire universe, including both nature and humans, was an interconnected whole, and that the maintenance of harmony was incumbent upon proper moral conduct and social behavior. Thus, the severing of the social bonds of obedience between parents and

³² The error of strict *lex talionis* judgment comes out in the example: If you kill an animal you will be reborn as an animal. But if you kill a buddha, will you become a buddha?

children would be resonant with the severing of the natural and orderly relationship between nature and humans. The retribution for such an unfilial breach of conduct therefore manifests as a catastrophic event of nature.

The obligation of children toward their parents is emphasized even in the very first sentence of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, where the Buddha ascends the heavens in order to teach his mother the Dharma. It is believed that Queen Maya, the mother of Śākyamuni Buddha, died seven days after giving birth to him and was reborn as a *deva* in Trāyastriṃśa Heaven. It can be reasoned then, as it probably was in medieval China, that as an act of filial devotion the Buddha returned to her to share his insights on the Dharma.³³ The central figure of this text, Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva, is also depicted as responding to the duties of filial piety. In previous lives Kṣitigarbha is presented as being born as a girl who is deeply concerned for the well being of her deceased mother. In two different

³³ Indeed, the story of the Buddha visiting his mother was frequently cited as proof that Buddhist teachings were filial. See Cole, *Mothers and Sons*, esp. 64ff.

stories the girl makes generous offerings to a temple that housed an image of a buddha, and in this act of devotion she generated enough merit to rescue her mother from the depths of hell (Ch. 1 & 4). Examples such as these illustrate the influence of the cultural context in which this sutra circulated and inform us of the values it equally wished to instill in the audience.

Furthermore, it is important to note the mechanism that allowed for the girl in the above stories to fulfill her filial obligations. A popular practice already firmly established in Indian Buddhism was the notion of the transference of merit 迴向 (or dedication of merit), where one could produce merit for the benefit of others, generally for those who had little opportunity to engage in such practices themselves, such as those in the hell realms. While particular merit making practices could range from hanging banners and burning oil lamps to holding vast vegetarian banquets, it was popular belief that one could not transfer all of one's merit to a deceased loved one, but could only transfer one-seventh of it, while the remaining six-sevenths would remain with the benefactor. The

Kṣitigarbha Sutra confirms this belief and even implies that in the act of transference the donor accrues even more merit for their generosity (Ch. 10).

Moreover, the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* advises the relatives of the deceased to act with forty-nine days after their death, before their karmic offenses are weighed and settled and they are reborn into their next life. It also warns against improper conduct during this period, such as sacrificing to ghosts and spirits or seeking out phantoms for assistance, as this will only add to the offenses that the dead relatives have committed (Ch. 7). Although this practice of transference is philosophically suspect, as it seems to be at odds with the sense of self-imposed consequences found in the theory of karma, it was widely popular and continues to be an important part of Buddhist devotionalism across the world.

DEVOTIONS TO KṢITIGARBHA

Of course, the figure of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva is also seen as an important agent in rescuing



tormented people from their sufferings. His spirit of salvation is encapsulated in the vow that he has recounted innumerable times throughout immeasurable eons; that of personally attending to the rescue of all sentient beings who are suffering and not to attain enlightenment until all are liberated. According to the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, he manages this by the continued and extensive use of expedient methods which edify people in the Dharma and lead them toward liberation.³⁴ Kṣitigarbha is also well known for his ability to manifest multiple bodies in order to liberate numerous beings at the same time (Ch. 2).

Perhaps one distinguishing characteristic about this noble bodhisattva is that of his physical appearance, which was presumably in no need of discussion in this sutra because it was already popularly known throughout medieval China. Kṣitigarbha is commonly depicted donning the monastic

³⁴ The popular notion of Kṣitigarbha charging into the hell realms to release people who are being tormented is not illustrated in this sutra, though it can be implied in many passages.



garments and shaved head of a monk, an unusual portrayal for a bodhisattva, who are often adorned with regal clothing and jewelery. His appearance was first discussed in the fifth century work called the *Sutra on the Ten Cakras*, which claims that he appears as a *śramaṇa*, or monk, and similarly claims that he manifests the form of a *śrāvaka*, or monastic disciple, through his numinous power.³⁵ This depiction struck a cord with Chinese Buddhist devotees and his likeness was reproduced often in cultic artworks.³⁶ To help distinguish him from other commonplace monks he is depicted holding a spherical wish fulfilling gem or even a six-ringed walking staff. Thus, it would be no surprise for the faithful reading the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, in the present or in the past, to imagine their heroic savior in this form.

Furthermore, in modern China, Kṣitigarbha is closely associated with Mount Jiuhua 九華山

³⁵ *Shilun jing* 十輪經; T13:410.681c14 and T13:410.0682a22. The translator is unknown, but is a product of the Northern Liang 北涼.

³⁶ For the evolution of Kṣitigarbha worship in medieval China see Ng, “The Dizang Cult in Medieval China.”

(literally “Nine Flowers”) located in the province of Anhui 安徽. The mountain received its name from the famous Tang Dynasty poet Li Bo 李白 who was struck by the beauty of the peaks and their resemblance to the petals of lotus flowers, thus naming the site the Mountains of Nine Flowers. According to tradition, an itinerant Korean monk named Jin Qiajue 金喬覺 journeyed to these mountains, and enjoying the seclusion decided to remain there to practice austerities. He was soon recognized as a manifestation of Kṣitigarbha and a temple was built there for him. Many more temples were built and by the Ming Dynasty the mountains became a popular place for pilgrimage and remain so to this day. The association of Kṣitigarbha and the appearance as a monk has also remained strong.

The *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* also explains a variety of simple and moderately more complex devotional practices followers can participate in to venerate Kṣitigarbha and receive blessings from him. They mostly revolve around reciting his name, creating an image of him, gazing in reverence upon him, making offerings to him, and reciting passages

from his (this) sutra.³⁷ Also, this text recommends the construction of a shrine containing his image on a purified spot in the southern part of the house (Ch. 11).³⁸ These acts will engender many positive responses from Kṣitigarbha who will, among many other benefits, manifest a form to tell you where your loved ones are, command various spirits and ghosts to protect you while travelling, erase the offenses of innumerable eons, grant your every wish, and even instill the ability to memorize sutras. In addition, near the end of the last chapter, thirty-five specific benefits are listed that recount many of the fortunate outcomes scattered throughout the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* that are in response to worshipping this bodhisattva. The compassion of Kṣitigarbha is easily moved, and his work is tireless, as he looks to help any beings who

³⁷ There is also a prescribed ritual service one can perform on behalf of a dying person which involves the recitation of his sutra to ensure their rebirth into a wholesome realm (Ch. 6).

³⁸ The connection of Kṣitigarbha to the southern direction is established in the *Sutra on the Ten Cakras*. See T410.682a20. It is also possible that this notion is reinforced in the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* since it repeatedly claims he has a special affinity with Jambudvīpa, the southern continent.

are enduring any kind of suffering, no matter how serious or insignificant.

For reasons such as these, Buddhist practitioners have found solace in Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva. As a bodhisattva he is closely connected with the Buddhist tradition, but can also harmonize with native Chinese sympathies such as their concerns for their parents and for the deceased. His association with the dead and the underworlds has become the popular defining aspect of his character, though it is not the only aspect of his multifaceted identity, as we have seen above. His compassion extends to all sentient beings who are suffering, not just those tormented in the hell realms. And while the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra*, with its portrayal of the hells, may be read as a deterrent to do evil, it also reflects upon the sympathies that this benevolent bodhisattva has for all beings and equally encourages any reader to cultivate these sympathies as well.





TRANSLATION CATALOGUE



The following is a list of books and/or journals that contain versions of the *Kṣitigarbha Sutra* in Chinese or in English translation.

CHINESE VERSIONS

Taishō no. 412. *The Sutra on the Past Vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva* 地藏菩薩本願經. Attributed to Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 (652-711 CE).

ENGLISH VERSIONS

Translations from Chinese:

Buddhist Text Translation Society. *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*. Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society, 1983.

French, Frank G., ed. *The Sutra of Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha's Fundamental Vows*, trans. Tao-

tsi Shih. Taipei, Taiwan: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Education Foundation, n.d.

Heng Ching, trans. *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*. New York: Buddhist Text Translation Society, The Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, 1974.





GLOSSARY



The entries in this glossary fall under two categories: 1) foreign terms and technical concepts that appear in the body of the text and 2) generalized topics that are inferred in the text and which have thematic importance to the reading of the sutra.

All entries that are covered by the first category are parenthetically followed by their commonly Romanized Sanskrit form, with diacritical marks if necessary, and by the correlating Chinese character(s) as they are exactly found in the text. The Sanskrit term provided is the most typical equivalent of the Chinese word, and not necessarily based on comparative examples found in extant manuscripts.

Entries which are topical and not discussed in the text directly, or are indigenous Chinese concepts or innovations, are not included with a Sanskrit equivalent.

When possible we have also provided other common translations of terms at the end of some entries.

Ajita (Ajita 阿逸多): Literally meaning “invincible,” it is another name for Maitreya.

Akasagarbha (Ākāśagarbha 虛空藏): A bodhisattva who is known for his wisdom which is considered to be as expansive as space. He is often paired with Ksitigarbha because they share a similar aspect in their names, *garbha* 藏, meaning “matrix,” and form a complementary duality, that of earth (for Ksitigarbha) and sky (for Akasagarbha). Akasagarbha is most popular in Esoteric forms of Buddhism.

anuttara-samyak-sambodhi (*anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi* 阿耨多羅三藐三菩提): A term that refers to the complete enlightenment of a buddha. It is considered to be the greatest class of awakening and is characterized by the possession of omniscience and the ten powers. Other translations: “supreme correct enlightenment” or “unexcelled perfect enlightenment.”

arhat (*arhat* 阿羅漢; 羅漢): Literally meaning “worthy one,” it is a name for one who has eradicated all of their defilements and has become

enlightened. They are distinguished from buddhas and *pratyekabuddhas* by the fact that *arhats* practice the teachings of a buddha, while buddhas and *pratyekabuddhas* attain enlightenment solely through their own efforts. Other translations: “saint.”

asamkhya (*asamkhya* 阿僧祇): A term generally used to represent an indefinitely large number. In some sources it has been defined as equaling 10^{59} . Other translations: “incalculable.”

Auspicious Kalpa (*bhadra-kalpa* 賢劫): The name of the present period during which one thousand buddhas are thought to appear. Krakucchanda is considered to be the first buddha of this *kalpa*, Sakyamuni is the fourth, while Maitreya will be the fifth.

Avalokitesvara (Avalokiteśvara 觀音; 觀世音): The bodhisattva who symbolizes the embodiment of compassion. According to popular Chinese sentiment, Avalokitesvara is one of four great bodhisattvas and is sometimes depicted riding upon a dragon, fish or lion while sometimes holding

a vase of water and a willow branch. Originally Avalokitesvara was depicted as male, but has taken on a female form in Chinese iconography.

Avici (Avīci 阿鼻): See **Unrelenting Hell**.

bhikṣu (*bhikṣu* 比丘): A fully ordained male member of the Buddhist monastic community. Other translations: “monk,” “mendicant.”

bhikṣuni (*bhikṣunī* 比丘尼): A fully ordained female member of the Buddhist monastic community. Other translations: “nun.”

brahman (*brahmin* 婆羅門; 梵志): The clerical and highest social class among the traditional four castes of India. In Buddhist texts brahmins are sometimes depicted as lay supporters of Buddhism, or as of significant social standing and thus deserving of respect, while in other texts they are criticized for being immoral. Being a brahmin is a birthright and not an occupational choice.

bodhi (*bodhi* 菩提): Literally meaning “awakening,” it denotes the realized state of a

buddha (an “awakened one”). While *arhats* and *pratyekabuddhas* both attain enlightenment, the awakening of a buddha is considered especially profound, that of *anuttara-samyak-sambodhi*. Other translations: “enlightenment.”

bodhisattva (*bodhisattva* 菩薩): A title given to a being who compassionately vows to liberate all sentient beings from suffering and help free them from *samsara*. Originally this term was exclusively used to describe the Buddha in his previous lives before his enlightenment, but in the Mahayana tradition this term denotes anyone who aspires to attain buddhahood through the practice of the *paramitas*. Some particular bodhisattvas have come to symbolize an especially valuable quality of Buddhist practice, i.e. wisdom, compassion, etc. The term “bodhisattva” is traditionally glossed as meaning “enlightenment being,” but can also be understood to mean “a being oriented toward enlightenment.”

buddha (*buddha* 佛): A title meaning “Awakened One” used for a being who has perceived the true nature of all phenomena, has overcome all

suffering, and who compassionately teaches these insights to others. It is one of the ten titles of a fully enlightened being. When capitalized and preceded by definite article “the” the term refers to the historical figure Siddhartha Gautama, and when it is pluralized or not capitalized or it refers to anyone in the general class of fully enlightened beings. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha comprise the Three Jewels.

Buddha Eye (*buddha-cakṣus* 佛眼): The eye of omniscience which is only obtained by fully enlightened buddhas.

Buddha Land (*buddha-kṣetra* 佛世界): A world in which a buddha has resolved to liberate sentient beings through his teachings. In Mahayana cosmologies there are infinite numbers of Buddha Lands which vary in their degrees of perfection or purity. Other translations: “Buddha field,” “Buddhaverse.”

cause and effect (*hetu-phala* 因果): A central doctrinal tenet of Buddhism which states that all causes have an effect and likewise that all effects

have a cause. In terms of ethical practice, all karmic activity thus necessarily entails some kind of consequence, whether it is positive, negative, or neutral. Other Translations: “causality.”

dana (*dāna* 檀): See **giving**.

danapati (*dānapati* 檀越): The chief patron or benefactor who supports a temple through donations.

Degenerate Dharma (末法): The third and final period of the dispensation of the Dharma following the death of the Buddha. The notion that the teachings of the Buddha were in a slow decline throughout three distinct periods became widespread in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. During the Degenerate Dharma even the appearance of Buddhist practices decline and no beings are able to attain enlightenment.

deva (*deva* 天): An inhabitant of the heavens that are located on or above Mt. Sumeru. Any sentient being with the requisite amount of merit can be reborn as a *deva*. Life in the heavenly realms is

generally considered to be utopian; however it is also transient, as all *devas* are mortal and subject to rebirth. They are one of the members of the Eightfold Assembly. Other translations: “god,” “deity.”

Dharma (*dharma* 法): The Dharma refers to the body of Buddhist teachings. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha comprise the Three Jewels. Other translations: “Truth,” “Law.”

dharmadhatu (*dharma-dhātu* 法界): The universal matrix from which all phenomena arise and which is empty in nature. In general it refers to the entire cosmos and totality of all beings.

dhyana (*dhyāna* 禪): Literally meaning “meditation,” an integral Buddhist practice which involves the deep absorption of the mind on a single object while maintaining a lucid awareness. In the Mahayana tradition concentration is typically considered the fifth of the *paramitas*. Other translations: “trance,” “absorption.”

Earth Deity Prthivi (Prthivī 堅牢地神): The Indian

goddess who is the personification of earth. This figure was present at the moment of Sakyamuni's enlightenment and testified to his worthiness by causing an earthquake to chase away Mara.

Eightfold Assembly (*aṣṭa-gatya* 八部): Eight groups of non-human beings that are often present in the audience of the Buddha's sermons. They include *devas* (divine beings), *asuras* (semi-divine beings), *nagas* (snake-like beings), *garudas* (eagle-like beings), *gandharvas* (celestial musicians), *kinnaras* (half-human celestial musicians), *yaksas* (tree spirits), and *mahoragas* (large snake-like beings). Considered once to be evil, these beings became followers of the Buddha and now protect his teachings and practitioners.

expedient means (*upāya* 方便): Methods employed which are adapted to best suit the practitioner and to expedite his or her progress toward enlightenment. This is also used to explain the diversity of Buddhist teachings, where teachings are regarded as provisional and tailored to a particular circumstance which may not be appropriate in other circumstances. According to

the longer list of ten *paramitas* expedient means is the seventh *paramita*. Other translations: “skillful means” or “liberative technique.”

five degenerations (*pañcakaṣāya* 五濁): According to Indian cosmology the world undergoes a cosmic cycle of creation and destruction over a duration of *kalpas*. The phase of destruction is marked by decay, corruption and conflict which is encapsulated in the five degenerations: the decay of the *kalpa*, the deterioration of views, the delusion of the *klesas*, the decline of sentient beings, and the diminishing of life-spans. Other translations: “five corruptions.”

Fivefold Unrelenting Hell (五無間地獄): According to this text, this hell is unremitting, or ceaseless, in five respects: 1) punishment is inflicted all day and night; 2) an offender appears to take up the entire space of the hell; 3) an infinite variety of torture device are used; 4) offenders are of every gender, nationality, and class; 5) and punishment is endured throughout many rebirths during many *kalpas*.

five paths (*pañca-gati* 五道): See **six paths**.

five pungent herbs (*pañca-parivyaya* 五辛): Five forbidden plants consisting of garlic, onions, scallions, leeks, and chives, which are considered to be an aphrodisiac and to cause bad breath which would drive away an audience or protective spirits when reading and reciting the sutras.

five signs of decay (五衰相): Five indications that a *deva* is approaching death. They vary from source to source but often include the withering of flowers worn upon the head, profuse sweating, unpleasant odors, having uncontrolled discharges, and experiencing a feeling of anxiety.

Fourfold Assembly (*catuṣ-pariṣad* 四眾): Four main groups that compose an audience, namely monks (*bhikshus*), nuns (*bhikshunis*), male laity (*upasakas*), and female laity (*upasikas*).

Four Heavenly Kings (*catur-mahārāja* 四天王): The four *deva* kings who are guardians of the world and protectors of the Buddhist teachings. Each king guards one of the cardinal directions.

They reside in the heaven located on the slopes of Mt. Sumeru below Trayastrimsa Heaven. The Heaven of the Four Heavenly Kings is the first of six heavens in the Desire Realm. Other translation: “Four Guardian Kings,” “Four Celestial Kings.”

giving (*dāna* 布施): An integral Buddhist virtue which is considered instrumental in overcoming greed. It is considered a great source for merit and, according to some early Buddhist traditions, the amount of merit gained was proportional to the difficulty of the act of giving. In the Mahayana tradition giving is typically considered the first of the *paramitas*, and its ultimate practice includes using the insight of emptiness and the dissolution of the conception of a benefactor, beneficiary, and the act of giving itself. Other translations: “charity,” “generosity.”

Great Ring of Iron Mountains (*mahā-cakravāla* 大鐵圍山; 鐵圍): The mountain range composed of iron that encircles a world and marks its outermost periphery. See the introduction for more information on this mountain range.

Heaven of the Thirty-three (*trāyas-triṃśa* 三十三天): See **Trayastrimsa Heaven**.

Heavenly Kings: See **Four Heavenly Kings**.

Jambudvīpa (*Jambu-dvīpa* 閻浮提; 閻浮): The continent located south of Mt. Sumeru that is considered to be the landmass on which we live. It is shaped like an isosceles trapezoid and markedly resembles the Indian subcontinent in shape and in other geographical features. Two smaller subcontinents are located on either side, and can be said to roughly correspond to Sri Lanka and Maldives. The name is derived from a grove of tall jambu trees (possibly the *Syzygium jambos*, or rose apple tree) that grows on Jambudvīpa and which produce a sweet tasting fruit. Other translation: “Rose Apple Continent.”

kalpa (*kalpa* 劫): An extremely vast measurement of time used in ancient India. The length of time of a single *kalpa* is considered to be of an almost inconceivable duration. Other translations: “eon,” “cosmic age.”

karma (*karma* 業): Literally meaning “action,” it denotes all mental, verbal and physical activities that inevitably entail consequences. It is impossible to circumvent the consequences effected by karmic actions, although it is possible to alter their trajectory through further karmic actions. An evil deed is any karmic activity committed under the influence of greed, hatred, or delusion, while a virtuous deed is any karmic activity guided by generosity, compassion and wisdom. According to traditional Buddhist doctrine, karma is the sole determining factor in deciding a sentient being’s rebirth on the six paths.

Khotan (于闐): The ancient oasis kingdom located on the southwest border of the Taklamakan desert and important junction on the Silk Road. Originally famed in China as the main exporter of jade, it later became the first region outside of China to practice sericulture after smuggling in the eggs of silkworms. Khotan became an influential center of Buddhist culture and stronghold of Mahayana Buddhism, producing such translators as Siksānanda. The modern city of Hotan (Hetian 和田) was the ancient capital city of the Kingdom

of Khotan.

King of the Brahma Heavens (*brahma-rāja* 梵天王; 梵王): Often called Brahma, this figure is an important Hindu *deva* who was regarded as the creator of the world. In Buddhist texts he is relegated to an inferior position, yet is still respected since he rules over the first three heavens of the form realm. In Buddhism this term generally refers to a title or status rather than a particular *deva*.

King Yama (Yama-rāja 閻羅王; 閻羅天子): The *deva* who is the master of the hell realms. He was considered the judge and punisher of the dead in Vedic texts, but lost this role in the Buddhist tradition since karma is considered the sole determinate of one's fate. Regardless, he is commonly portrayed in the Chinese Buddhist tradition as arbiter for the destiny of a deceased person's next rebirth. Other translations: "Lord Yama."

Krakucchanda (Kraucucchanda 拘留孫): The first buddha to have appeared during the present

Auspicious Kalpa and the fourth buddha among the list of seven past buddhas.

ksanti (*kṣanti* 羼提): Literally meaning "forebearance," an integral Buddhist virtue which is considered instrumental in overcoming hatred. In the Mahayana tradition forbearance is typically considered the third of the *paramitas*. Other translations: "tolerance," "patience," "acceptance," "receptivity."

ksatriya (*kṣatriya* 刹利): The social class of warriors or monarchs among the traditional four castes of India. In Buddhist texts *ksatriyas* are often depicted as lay supporters of Buddhism. Sakyamuni was born into the *ksatriya* class.

Kṣitigarbha (Kṣitigarbha 地藏): A bodhisattva who is famed for his strident efforts in saving beings who are tormented in the hell realms. According to popular Chinese sentiment, Kṣitigarbha is one of four great bodhisattvas and is often depicted riding upon a lion-like animal while sometimes holding a walking staff and a wish-fulfilling gem. Other translations: "Earth Store," "Earth Matrix,"

“Earth Womb.” See Sutra Introduction for more information.

Land of No Distress (無憂國土): A term which a Qing Dynasty commentary on this sutra claims is the Pure Land of Amitabha Buddha.

li (里): A traditional Chinese measurement for longer distances. Its measure has changed drastically throughout Chinese history, but was roughly 1500 feet (450 meters) during the Tang Dynasty.

Lion’s roar (*siṃhanāda* 師子吼): A term denoting the eloquence and authority of the Buddha’s teachings. The lion is often used as a metaphor for the Buddha, implying both fearlessness and the ability to conquer all adversity.

mahasattva (*mahāsattva* 摩訶薩; 大士): A title given to bodhisattvas that means “great being.” There also is some evidence to indicate that *mahasattva* might be a distinct class of bodhisattva.

Mahayana (*mahāyāna* 大乘): A major movement

in Buddhist history that offered reinterpretations of Buddhist doctrine in an entirely new body of literature and sutras. Philosophically the movement is distinguished by its emphasis on the notion of emptiness, and practically it is distinguished by its emphasis on compassion.

Maitreya (Maitreya 彌勒): The bodhisattva currently residing in Tusita Heaven who will be reborn into this world to become the next buddha and teach the Dharma to all sentient beings. The timeframe for his arrival varies by tradition, though 5,670,000,000 years is commonly cited. In Indian iconography he is often depicted in regalia seated with both feet placed flat on the ground, while much later East Asian traditions depict him in a pensive posture with his hand to his chin or with a fat round belly and jovial smile.

Manjusri (Mañjuśrī 文殊師利): The bodhisattva who symbolizes the embodiment of wisdom (*prajna*) and realization. In the Chinese tradition he is often considered the left-hand assistant to Sakyamuni and the complement of Samantabhadra. According to popular Chinese sentiment, Manjusri

is one of four great bodhisattvas and is often depicted riding upon a lion while sometimes holding various implements such as a sword, a sutra, or a scepter.

naga (*nāga* 龍): A mythological class of snake-like creatures that are closely associated with water and rainfall. *Nagas* are thought to be cunning and with the ability to transmogrify into human form. Influenced by native snake species (like the King cobra), Indian artisans depicted *nagas* as either half-human half-snake, or as humanoids with a cobra hood shielding the back of their heads. In China, the Sanskrit term *naga* was translated by the Chinese word for dragon, thus *nagas* are sometimes depicted in that form. They are one of the members of the Eightfold Assembly. Other translations: “dragons,” “serpents.”

nayuta (*nayuta* 那由他): An indefinitely large number. Other translations: “myriad.”

nirvana (*nirvāna* 涅槃; 滅度): The Buddhist goal of liberation from *samsara* and the cessation of all suffering caused by the extinction of greed, hatred

and delusion. Nirvana literally means “blown out.”

non-defilement (*anāsrava* 無漏): Literally “without outflows,” a term that refers to the elimination of the cognitive and affective impediments which allow for the flow of karma that hinders enlightenment.

numinous power (*abhijñā* 神通; 神力; 威神力; 威神; 威力): The supernatural cognitive faculties and thaumaturgical abilities possessed by buddhas and bodhisattvas which are used to assist sentient beings in attaining enlightenment. This power is seen as a type of knowledge acquired through adeptness at meditation. Other translations: “supernatural powers,” “extraordinary powers,” “supernormal cognition” or “numinous charisma.”

paramita (*pāramita* 波羅蜜): The ultimate realization and mastery of the practice of a particular Buddhist virtue or quality. In the Mahayana tradition a list of six *paramitas* is typically given: giving (*dana*), morality (*sila*), forbearance (*ksanti*), effort (*virya*), meditation (*dhyana*), and wisdom (*prajna*). An expanded

list of ten *paramitas* used to complement the ten *bhumis* also appears which includes: expedient means (*upaya*), vows (*pranidhana*), power (*bala*) and knowledge (*jnana*). Other translations: “perfection,” “transcendence.”

past vows (*pūrvapranidhāna* 本願): The solemn oaths taken by bodhisattvas which are formulated with the earnest desire to attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. These vows tend to give some indication of the general qualities the bodhisattva is thought to embody. Other translations: “fundamental vows,” “original vows,” “former vows.”

prajna (*prajñā* 般若): Literally meaning “wisdom,” an integral Buddhist virtue which is instrumental in overcoming delusion. *Prajna* denotes the specific insight into phenomenal reality that results in the direct realization of emptiness and is the practice of the highest form of Buddhist wisdom that is fully actualized by buddhas and bodhisattvas. In the Mahayana tradition *prajna* is typically considered the sixth of the *paramitas*. Other translations: “insight,” “gnosis,” “wisdom.”

pratyekabuddha (*pratyeka-buddha* 辟支佛): A term which refers to a being who has been enlightened through their own effort and study without the aid of a teacher. A *pratyekabuddha*, however, does not possess the wisdom and compassion of a fully enlightened buddha, and so does not teach his insight to others. Other translations: “solitary buddha,” “solitary realizer,” or “self-enlightened one.”

Queen Maya (*māyā-devī* 摩耶夫人): The mother of Siddhartha Gautama and wife of Suddhodhana, a king who ruled from his capital at Kapilavastu. According to Buddhist tradition, Sakyamuni, as the Bodhisattva residing in Tusita Heaven, chose Queen Maya as his mother because of her exemplary virtues. While she was asleep he appeared in her dream as a white elephant and passed through her right side into her womb. Ten lunar months later, in a grove of trees at Lumbini, Queen Maya gave birth standing up while grasping a branch of a tree overhead. The delivery was painless as Siddhartha emerged from her right side and was received by attendant *devas*. According to most sources Queen Maya died seven days later

and ascended to Trayastrimsa Heaven.

Ring of Iron Mountains: See **Great Ring of Iron Mountains**.

Saha (Sahā 娑婆): The name of the world in which we live and the one that Sakyamuni presides over. The term literally means “enduring” and refers to all of the suffering that the sentient beings must withstand. Some sources claim that it only refers to Jambudvipa, while others claim it refers to the four main continents of a world, while others also claim it to be as large as a *trichiliocosm*.

Sakra (Śakra 天帝; 帝釋): The common Buddhist name for the Vedic *deva* Indra who is considered to be the king of the *devas*. He resides in Trayastrimsa Heaven ruling over a court of thirty-two other heavenly beings. He is regarded as a model for kingship, embodying the ideal ruler who protects the teachings of the Buddha and his followers. In Buddhism this term generally refers to a title or status rather than a particular *deva*.

Sakyamuni (Śākyamuni 釋迦牟尼): A title given

to Siddhartha Gautama who was born among the Sakya tribe. The title literally means “Sage of the Sakyas.” Mahayana texts typically use this title to distinguish the historical Buddha from the numerous other buddhas that proliferate the cosmos.

samadhi (*samādhi* 三昧): A deep state of meditative concentration and absorption which is the result of continued focus upon a single object. Mahayana texts mention a variety of *samadhis* that each have their own particular name and associated qualities. Other translations: “meditation,” “trance,” or “deep concentration.”

Samantabhadra (Samantabhadra 普賢): The bodhisattva who symbolizes the embodiment of practice and meditation. In the Chinese tradition he is often considered the right-hand assistant to Sakyamuni and the complement of Manjusri. According to popular Chinese sentiment, Samantabhadra is one of four great bodhisattvas and is often depicted riding upon a six-tusked elephant while sometimes holding various implements such as a sutra, a scepter, or a wish-

fulfilling gem.

samsara (*samsāra* 生死): The repetitious cycle of birth and death experienced by a sentient being until they attain enlightenment. This cyclic existence is marked by suffering as beings are continuously reborn in one of the six paths throughout the triple realm. Liberation from *samsara* leads one to enlightenment and the end of suffering.

Sangha (*samgha* 僧): The monastic community originally organized by the Buddha. The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha comprise the Three Jewels.

sangharama (*samgha-ārāma* 伽藍): A term which specifically denotes the garden used for meditation on Buddhist monastic grounds, but generally refers to the monastery itself.

Semblance Dharma (像法): The second period of the dispensation of the Dharma following the death of the Buddha. The notion that the teachings of the Buddha were in a slow decline throughout three

distinct periods became widespread in the Chinese Buddhist tradition. During the Semblance Dharma Buddhist practices remain only in appearance, and as a result less beings are able to attain enlightenment.

seven treasures (*sapta-ratna* 七寶): Seven precious substances that are valued because of their scarcity and are generally ascribed no symbolic importance. The list varies from source to source but commonly include gold, silver, and lapis lazuli with agate, carnelian, crystal, coral, rubies (or red pearls), nacre (mother-of-pearl), or wish fulfilling gems variously rounding out the lists.

Siksananda (Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀): (652-711) A Buddhist monk from Khotan who was originally invited by the Chinese Empress Wu Zetian 武則天 in 695 to come to the capital of Chang'an 長安 to produce a new translation of the *Avatamsaka Sutra* 華嚴經. He is the attributed, though doubtful, translator of the *Sutra on the Past Vows of Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva*. See Introduction for more information.

śīla (*śīla* 尸): Literally meaning “morality,” an integral Buddhist virtue which is practiced through the observance of precepts or normative moral rules that are ultimately derived from the conduct of the Buddha. In the Mahayana tradition morality is typically considered the second of the *paramitas*. Other translations: “ethics,” “discipline.”

six paths (*ṣaḍ-gati* 六道): The possible realms or states of existence into which sentient beings are reborn due to their karma. The six paths include being reborn as a *deva*, *asura*, human, animal, hungry ghost or hell being, while reference to the five paths means the omission of the asuras, who are sometimes absorbed into the *deva* and hungry ghost realms. Other translations: “six destinies,” “six realms.”

sramana (*śramaṇa* 沙門): A general term used to denote a person who has shaved their head and renounced their worldly status and possessions to pursue a spiritual practice. Originally referred to any itinerant ascetic who rejected Brahmanical religious orthodoxy. In Buddhist texts it sometimes refers specifically to a Buddhist monk or nun.

Other translations: “renunciant,” or “ascetic.”

śravaka (*śrāvaka* 聲聞): Literally meaning “hearers,” this is a name used in Mahayana texts to denote the early disciples of the Buddha who heard and practiced his teachings in order to become *arhats*. The term comes to be used disparagingly in Mahayana sutras. Other translation: “auditor.”

Sumeru (Sumeru 須彌山): The mountain considered to be the *axis mundi* of traditional Buddhist cosmology, the summit of Mount Sumeru (or Mount Meru) extends into the heavens and constitutes the highest geographical point of a world.

sūtra (*sūtra* 經): Scripture which traditionally preserves the discourses of the Buddha. The earliest dialogues of the Buddha were preserved orally, and it is commonly held that his teachings were not committed to writing until the first century BCE. With the advent of Mahayana Buddhism new sutras were circulated in Northern India and Central Asia.

Tang (唐): (618-907) A period of Chinese dynastic history when the Tang ruling house held imperial power. It is regarded as a golden age of Chinese history marked by prosperity and peace. Buddhism received unprecedented support during this period.

Tathagata (*tathāgata* 如來): One of the ten epithets given to every fully enlightened being. The Sanskrit term is a fanciful combination of *tathā-āgata*, meaning “thus-come,” and *tathā-gata*, meaning “thus-gone.” This purposefully preserves an ambiguity in the meaning of the term. However, the Chinese translation only captures one aspect of the play on words found in Sanskrit and can be translated as the “Thus Come One.”

ten bhumis (*daśa-bhūmi* 十地): The ten stages along the path of a bodhisattva’s spiritual career. The advancement through the stages requires a bodhisattva to hone particular practices and virtues which bring about the elimination of certain obstacles to enlightenment. The *paramits* are used to complement the ten *bhumis*. The culmination of the tenth stage is traditionally equivalent to the attainment of buddhahood. See Appendix II.

ten days of fasting (十齋日): The tens days (first, eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth) of every lunar month in which special rituals and services are held for both the monastics and lay devotees. On a popular level in China these ten days lost their association with strict fasting and were instead affiliated with the notion of abstaining from eating meat, thus vegetarian banquets were held on these days. Other activities included the confession, Dharma lectures, and for the monastics the recitation of the monastic codes. It was popularly believed that *devas* or members of their retinue would descend to inspect the behavior of people on these days.

Ten Good Deeds (*daśa-kuśala* 十善): The virtuous actions which abstain from practicing the ten evil deeds such as killing, stealing, engaging in illicit sexual conduct, practicing false speech, harsh speech, or ornate speech, having a double-tongue, and possessing greed, hatred, and perverse views.

tenth bhumi (十地): See **ten bhumis**.

three evil realms (*trividhā-durgatī* 三惡趣): The three realms of rebirth that are considered to be the most despised and unfortunate, namely being reborn as a hell being, hungry ghost or animal. This is the same as the three evil paths 三惡道.

Three Jewels (*tri-ratna* 三寶): The three most highly valued objects of reverence in the Buddhist tradition, namely the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Other translations: “Three Treasures” or “Triple Gem.”

three mires (*trividhā-durgatī* 三塗): See **three evil realms**.

Trayastrimsa (*trāyas-triṃśa* 仞利): The heaven located on the summit of Mt. Sumeru. According to Vedic mythology this is the location of the palace of Sakra (also known as Indra), the king of the *devas*. The name literally means “Heaven of the Thirty-three” because, along with Sakra, there are thirty-two other *devas* who serve at Sakra’s court. In Buddhist texts this heaven is commonly depicted as a paradise and is known as being the realm where Queen Maya, the mother of

Siddhartha Gautama, was reborn after her death. This heaven is the second of six heavens in the realm of desire.

trichiliocosm (*trisahasra-mahāsahasra-lokadhātu* 三千大千世界): A term that typically designates a totality of one billion worlds, and symbolically represents the largest possible combination of worlds in Buddhist cosmology. It is believed that one thousand individual worlds constitute a “small world system,” and one thousand small world systems constitute a “medium world system,” and one thousand medium world systems constitute a “great world system.” The number of individual worlds in a great world system is equal in number to a *trichiliocosm*, namely one billion (1000³). Other translations: “thousandfold great thousandfold world system,” “three thousand great thousand worlds.”

Tripitaka Master (三藏法師): Honorary title given to Buddhist monastics in China who mastered the *tripitaka*, or three divisions of the Buddhist teachings, namely the *vinaya*, sutras, and commentarial literature.

triple realm (*triloka* 三界): The three divisions of the world in which sentient beings can be reborn, namely, the realm of desire, the realm of form, and the formless realm. These are based on the pre-Buddhist Indian divisions of the earth, atmosphere, and heavens.

Unrelenting Hell (*avīci* 無間地獄): The most heinous of the hell realms where torture is continuously inflicted. While only those committing the most horrendous of crimes are reborn here, the duration of one's stay in this particular hell, however, is not eternal. It is traditionally located as the lowermost of the eight hot hells. Other translations: "Uninterrupted Hell," "Unremitting Hell."

upasaka (*upāsaka* 優婆塞): A male lay Buddhist.

upasika (*upāsikā* 優婆夷): A female lay Buddhist.

urna (*ūrṇa* 毫相): A tuft of white hair located between the eyebrows which is one of the marks of a buddha and a wheel-turning king.

Vipasyin (Vipaśyin 毘婆尸): The first among the list of seven past buddhas. He was the earliest of the last three buddhas to appear during the previous *kalpa* that was prior to the present Auspicious Kalpa.

virya (*vīrya* 毘離耶): Literally meaning "effort," an integral Buddhist virtue which is practiced through the strenuous exertion directed toward the enlightenment of oneself and others. In the Mahayana tradition effort is typically considered the fourth of the *paramitas*. Other translations: "determination," "energy," "exertion," "striving," "courage."

wheel-turning king (*cakravartī-rāja* 轉輪王): A sovereign ruler who embodies the Buddhist political ideal of the virtuous monarch who brings about peace and prosperity to his subjects. There are four hierarchical classes of wheel-turning sage kings that are distinguished by the type of metal used for the wheels of their chariots and their ability to move between the four main continents that constitute the Buddhist conception of a world. The historical Indian king, Asoka, who ruled the

Mauryan kingdom in the third century BCE, is commonly referred to in Buddhist texts with this title.

world (*loka-dhātu* 世界; 界): Term generally used to describe the greater structure of the Buddhist cosmos in which sentient beings are continuously reborn. In later Mahayana cosmologies there are an indefinite number of worlds, each with a similar structure: a central axis centered at Mt. Sumeru which is subsequently surrounded by a total of eight mountain ranges, seven oceans, four large continents, eight sub-continents, and celestial bodies such as the sun, moon, and stars. Other translations: “world sphere,” world system,” “galaxy.”

yaksa (*yakṣa* 夜叉): A mythological class of beings that can be generally characterized as nature spirits who had a special association with trees and forests. In pre-Buddhist times they played an ambiguous role as being both beneficent and demonic. Early Buddhist art forms embraced the *yaksas*' connection to trees, but in later texts *yaksas* became predominantly evil and hideous creatures

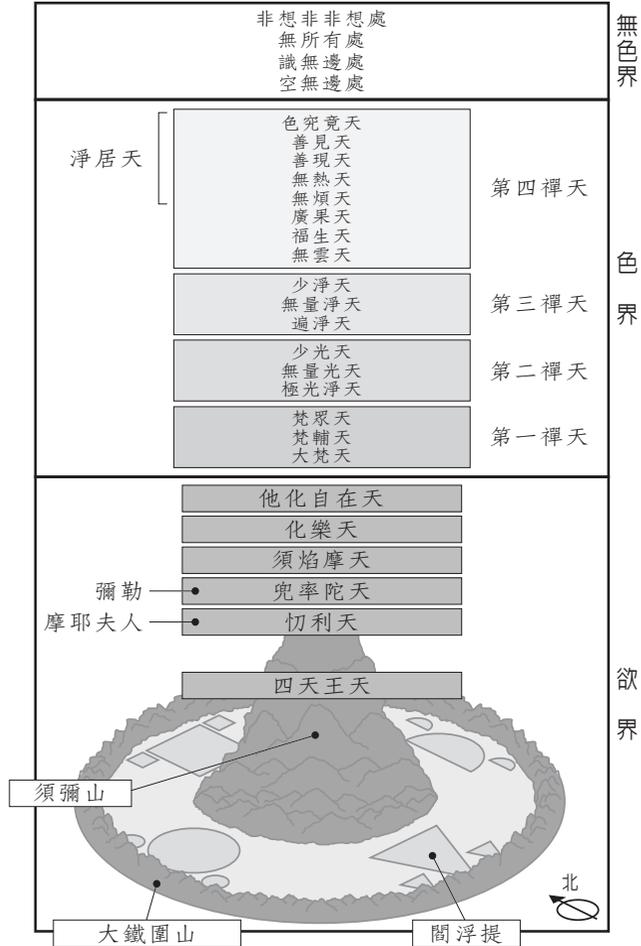
that often tormented other beings. They are one of the members of the Eightfold Assembly.

yojana (*yojana* 由旬): A classical Indian measure for longer distances. It is quantified diversely in different sources, but ranges from 4.5 miles to 10 miles (7.2 to 16 km).



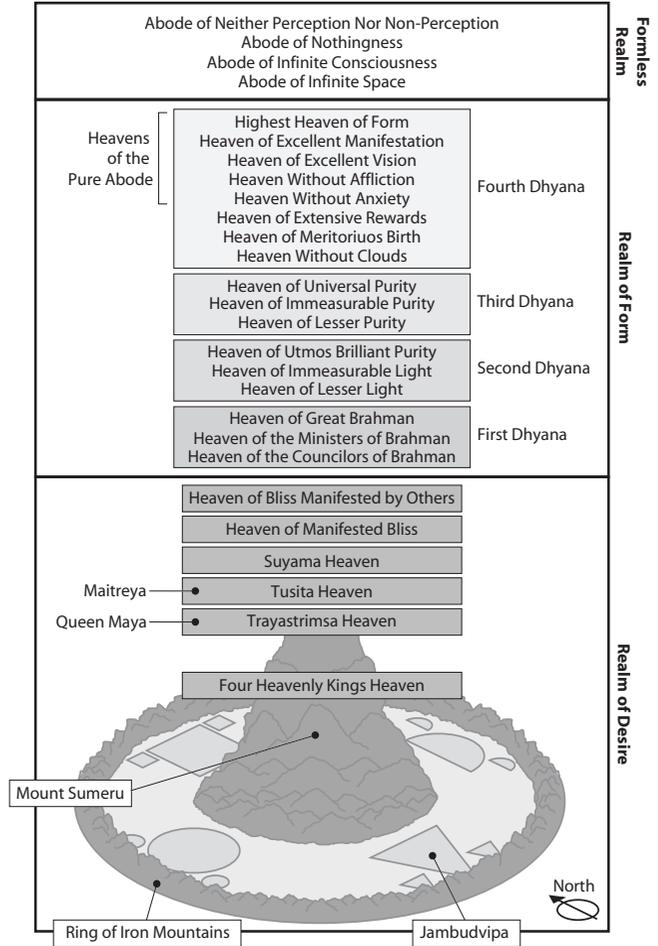
附錄I：佛教的宇宙觀

阿毘達摩俱舍論



Appendix I: Buddhist Cosmology

Based on the *Abhidharmakosa*



Appendix II: Ten Bhumis 十地

According to the *Dasabhumika Sutra* 摘自《十地經》

10. Stage of the Dharma-Cloud realizes the <i>paramita</i> of knowledge	法雲地
9. Stage of the Wondrous Wisdom realizes the <i>paramita</i> of power	善慧地
8. Stage of Immovability realizes the <i>paramita</i> of great vows	不動地
7. Stage of Far-Reaching realizes the <i>paramita</i> of expedient means	遠行地
6. Stage of Manifesting Direct Realization realizes the <i>paramita</i> of wisdom	現前地
5. Stage of Overcoming Difficulties realizes the <i>paramita</i> of meditation	難勝地
4. Stage of Blazing Wisdom realizes the <i>paramita</i> of effort	焰慧地
3. Stage of Emission of Light realizes the <i>paramita</i> of forbearance	發光地
2. Stage of Freedom from Defilement realizes the <i>paramita</i> of morality	離垢地
1. Stage of Joy develops <i>bodhicitta</i> and realizes the <i>paramita</i> of giving	歡喜地



EDITORIAL MESSAGE



With the growing popularity of Buddhism around the world, access to its doctrine through reliable translations of its scriptures is of utmost importance. Therefore, we have set as our pinnacle goal the production of a new standardized canon of Buddhist sutras in English. As scholars, teachers and students of Buddhism, we recognize that the most valuable resources for Buddhist texts are the exhaustive editions of the Chinese Buddhist canon, yet of the hundreds of sutras in Chinese, only a fraction have been reliably translated into the English language. We are aware of the efforts of other translation committees and translators involved in the effort to produce English translations of Buddhist texts. However, we feel our endeavor is unique in several important ways.

First, we are committed to producing bilingual editions of each sutra with tools for studying the original Chinese text. By providing facing bilingual pages, we hope to encourage those students who are learning Chinese to compare our English translation with the original source text, thereby

deepening their understanding of the translation process and of the content of the sutra. Our editions will also include a brief history of the particular sutra, an exhaustive glossary of foreign words and ideas, and, as an homage to the long Chinese tradition of compiling catalogues of sutras, a translation catalogue which lists many of the other Chinese and English translations of the same text.

Secondly, our method of translation attempts to provide a literal, yet fluid, rendition of the Chinese text, trying to capture the experience of reading sutras in Chinese while remaining as faithful as possible to the original text. For example, we choose to back-transliterate terms such as *biqu* 比丘 (Skt. *bhikṣu*), instead of translating them (“monk”) to try to maintain a similar reading experience of the Chinese text. By attempting to make the translation process more transparent, we aim to uncover the subtleties of the text that are easily lost when rendering a sutra from one language into another. Our translation board consists of a variety of experts on Buddhism from different areas and fields, and all our translations go through a series of revisions and renditions before final printing to ensure their accuracy.

Finally, our focus is the production of not just one, but a complete series of translations of specifically Chinese Buddhist sutras using a consistent vocabulary for technical terms and foreign concepts. Throughout all our translations we will employ a standardized lexicon and methodology for translation, so that a technical term will be translated, or transliterated, in the same manner in every volume in this series. In this way, we hope to aid the reader in comprehending the complexities of Buddhist doctrine, which often call upon a diverse array of technical terminologies and conceptual constructs.

Through the publication of these translations, we hope to allow a greater accessibility to Buddhist sutras, and circulate them to a much wider audience. We hope to appeal not only to the uninitiated, but also to the more accomplished student of Buddhist thought.

We would like to extend our gratitude to William Bodiford (UCLA), Venerable Zhiru (Pomona College) and Paul Kjellberg (Whittier College) for their comments on this publication.



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Venerable Yifa has been a nun at Fo Guang Shan Monastery in Taiwan since 1979. She received a law degree from National Taiwan University, a MA in comparative philosophy from University of Hawaii and her Ph.D. in religious studies from Yale University in 1996. She was granted the awards “the Ten Outstanding Young Persons” in Taiwan in 1997, “Outstanding Women in Buddhism Award” in 2003 and “Juliet Hollister Award” in 2006. She has been the Dean at Fo Guang Shan Buddhist College and the Provost at Hsi Lai University, Rosemead, California, a visiting scholar at the University of California at Berkeley and Harvard University, a lecturer at Boston University and a faculty member at National Sun Yat-Sen University in Taiwan. She taught at McGill University as the Numata visiting professor in the spring of 2005 and currently serves as the chair of Department of Religious Studies at the University of the West in Los Angeles.

Recently Yifa has been conducting the “Humanistic

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She is the author of *The Origin of Buddhist Monastic Codes in China* (2002), by Hawaii University Press and *Safeguarding the Heart: a Buddhist Response to Suffering and September 11* (2002); *On Junk* (2007); *On Suffering* (2007); all by Lantern Books, NY; and co-author of *Benedict's Dharma: Buddhists Reflect on the Rule of Saint Benedict* (2001), Riverhead, NY.

Peter Matthew Romaskiewicz was born and raised in a small town near the Atlantic coastline of New Jersey. While attending Rutgers University he became interested in the study of philosophy and world religions and was ultimately attracted to the richness of Buddhism and Chinese culture. He embarked on his study of literary Chinese at

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