



***Earth Store  
Bodhisattva's  
Vow Sutra***

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# **Bodhisattva's Vow Sutra**

**Translated from Sanskrit into Chinese by**  
**Tripitaka Śramaṇa Śikṣānanda**  
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**Namo Our Cardinal Teacher**  
**Sakyamuni Buddha**  
(Repeat Three Times)

**Sutra Opening Verse**

The unexcelled, most profound, and  
exquisitely wondrous Dharma  
is difficult to encounter throughout  
hundreds of thousands of millions of eons.  
Since we are now able to see, hear, receive and retain it,  
may we comprehend the true meaning of the Tathagata.

## **Chapter One**

### **Supernormal Powers in the Trayastrimsa Heaven**

Thus have I heard:

At one time, Buddha was in the Trayastrimsa Heaven expounding Dharma for his mother.

At that time, from countless worlds of the ten directions, all Buddhas and great Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas, inexpressibly-inexpressible many, all came and assembled there. They praised how Sakyamuni Buddha was able to manifest inconceivable great wisdom and supernormal powers to regulate and train obstinate sentient beings in the Evil World of the Five Turbidities, so that all beings would come to understand suffering and happiness. Each of them sent his attendant to inquire after the World-Honored One.

At that time, the Tathagata smiled and emitted hundreds of thousands of millions of clouds of greater illumination. There were illuminated clouds of great perfect completeness, illuminated clouds of great compassion, illuminated clouds of great wisdom, illuminated clouds of great prajna, illuminated clouds of great samadhi, illuminated clouds of great auspiciousness, illuminated clouds of great merit, illuminated clouds of great virtue, illuminated clouds of great refuge, illuminated clouds of great praise, and an inexpressible number of clouds of illumination.

He furthermore gave forth various sublime, wonderful sounds. There was the sound of perfection of giving, the sound of perfection of discipline, the sound of perfection of tolerance, the sound of perfection of diligence, the sound of perfection of meditation, the sound of perfection of wisdom, the sound of compassion, the sound of joy and equanimity, the sound of liberation, the sound of no-outflows, the sound of wisdom, the sound of great wisdom, the sound of lion's roar, the sound of great lion's roar, the sound of cloud thunder, and the sound of great cloud thunder.

After he had given forth an inexpressibly-inexpressible number of sounds such as these, from the Saha world and other lands, countless millions of heavenly beings, dragon-like beings, ghosts, and deities also assembled in the palace of the Trayastrimsa Heaven.

They were from the heavens of the Four Heavenly Kings, the Trayastrimsa Heaven, the Suyama Heaven, the Tusita Heaven, the Heaven of Delight in Transformations, the Heaven of Mastery over Others' Transformations, the Heaven of Brahma's Assembly, the Heaven of Brahma's Ministers, the Great Brahma Heaven, the Heaven of Limited Illumination, the Heaven of Immeasurable Illumination, the Light-Sound Heaven, the Heaven of Limited Purity, the Heaven of Immeasurable Purity, the Heaven of Universal Purity, the Heaven of Birth of Merit, the Heaven of Love of Merit, the Heaven of Abundant Attainment, the Heaven of No Perception, the Heaven of No Affliction, the Heaven of No Heat, the Heaven of Good Sight, the Heaven of Good Manifestation, the Ultimate Form Heaven, the Mahesvara Heaven, and so forth up to the Heaven of the State of Neither-Perception-nor-Non-Perception. All the multitudes of heavenly



beings, dragon-like beings, ghosts, and deities came and assembled there.

Furthermore, from other lands and the Saha world, sea deities, river deities, stream deities, tree deities, mountain deities, earth deities, brook-and-marsh deities, seedling-and-crop deities, day deities, night deities, space deities, heaven deities, food-and-drink deities, grass-and-wood deities – deities such as these all came and assembled there.

Furthermore from other lands and the Saha world, great ghost kings known as the Evil-eyed Ghost King, the Blood-consuming Ghost King, the Vital Energy-consuming Ghost King, the Fetuses and Egg-consuming Ghost King, the Disease-spreading Ghost King, the Poison-controlling Ghost King, the Kindhearted Ghost King, the Ghost King of Blessing and Benefit, the Ghost King of Great Love and Respect – ghost kings such as these all came and assembled there.

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha said to Manjusri, Dharma Prince, Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, “Look at all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, heavenly beings, dragon-like beings, ghosts, and

deities from this and other worlds, from this and other lands – those who come and assemble in the Trayastrimsa Heaven now. Do you know how many of them there are?”

Manjusri said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! Even if I were to measure and calculate with my supernormal powers for a thousand eons, I would not be able to know it.”

The Buddha told Manjusri, “As I see them through the Buddha eye, I still cannot count them fully. All these are beings who have been guided, are being guided, will be guided, have been brought to attainment, are being brought to attainment, or will be brought to attainment by Earth Store Bodhisattva throughout many long eons.”

Manjusri said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! In the past I have long cultivated virtuous roots and have attained unobstructed wisdom; therefore, when I hear what the Buddha says, I immediately believe and accept it.

“However, Sound-hearers (*Śrāvakas*) of small attainment, the Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings,



as well as sentient beings in the future – although they hear the sincere and truthful words of the Tathagata, they will certainly harbor doubts. Even if they receive these words most respectfully, they may still be unable to avoid slandering them.

“World-Honored One, please speak in detail about what practices Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva cultivated and what vows he made during his causal states of cultivation that have enabled him to accomplish such inconceivable deeds.”

The Buddha told Manjusri, “As an analogy, suppose all the grasses, trees, thickets, forests, cereal crops, flax plants, bamboos, reeds, mountains, stones, and dust particles in a third-order world-system of a billion worlds (*trisāhasra mahāssāhasralokadhātu*) were each counted as a unit. For each unit there would be a Ganges River. For each grain of sand in each of these Ganges Rivers, there would be a world. For each speck of dust in each of these worlds, there would be an eon. And, for every speck of dust accumulated during each of these eons, there would be an eon.

“The time since Earth Store Bodhisattva reached the Tenth Stage of Attainment is thousands of times greater than that of the above analogy. How much greater yet is the time since Earth Store Bodhisattva was at the stages of Sound-hearer and Solitary Buddha!

“Manjusri! The majesty, divine power and great vow of this Bodhisattva are inconceivable.

“In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who hear this Bodhisattva’s name. If they praise, gaze at him, pay reverence, chant his name, or make offerings; if they paint, carve, sculpt, or use lacquer to make his image, these people will be reborn a hundred times in the Thirty-three Heavens and will never fall into the evil realms.

“Manjusri! In the distant past, an inexpressibly-inexpressible number of eons ago, Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva was once the son of a great elder. At that time in the world, there was a Buddha named Lion’s Swift Rousing Perfect in Ten Thousand Practices Tathagata.

“The elder’s son saw the Buddha’s features and characteristics of excellence and how he was adorned with thousands of merits. He therefore inquired of that Buddha what practices he had cultivated and what vows he had made to achieve these signs of excellence.

“Lion’s Swift Rousing Perfect in Ten Thousand Practices Tathagata told the elder’s son, ‘If you wish to attain this body, you must guide all suffering beings to liberation throughout a very long time.’

“Manjusri! The elder’s son hence made a vow, saying ‘From now on, throughout incalculable eons in the future, I will employ many skillful means for the sake of wrongdoing, suffering beings in the Six Realms of Samsara, and help them to attain liberation; only after that will I myself attain Buddhahood.’

“He made such a great vow in front of that Buddha. Now, hundreds of thousands of millions of nayutas of inexpressible eons later, he is still a Bodhisattva.

“Moreover in the past, inconceivable asaṃkhyeyas eons ago, in the world there was a Buddha named Awakening-Blossom Samadhi Mastery King Tathagata. The lifespan of that Buddha was four hundred thousand million asaṃkhyeyas eons.

“During the Age of Semblance Dharma, there was a Brahman woman who had ample, profound merits from previous lives. She was admired and respected by the people. Whether she was walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, heavenly beings guarded and protected her. Her mother, however, believed in false doctrines and often slighted the Three Jewels.

“The holy woman used many skillful means to persuade and encourage her mother to develop the right view, but her mother did not fully believe. Before long, the mother’s life ended and she fell into the Hell of Incessant Suffering.

“The Brahman woman knew that when her mother was alive, she had not believed in cause and effect. She realized that her mother would certainly be reborn in the evil realms in accordance with her karma.

“The Brahman woman sold the family house and searched far and wide for incense, flowers, and various objects worthy to be offered. She then made many great offerings to that past Buddha’s stupas and monasteries.

“In one of the monasteries, she saw Awakening-Blossom Samadhi Mastery King Tathagata’s image: his awe-inspiring appearance was sculpted and painted, replete with splendor and dignity.

“As the Brahman woman gazed up at and paid respect to his honored countenance, her reverence multiplied. She thought to herself, ‘The Buddha is called the great awakened one, completed with all wisdom. If this Buddha is in the world, and I were to inquire of him after my mother’s death, he would certainly know where she is.’ The Brahman woman wept for a long time as she gazed up longingly at the Tathagata.

“Suddenly she heard a voice in the sky saying, ‘Weeping holy woman, do not be so sorrowful. I will show you where your mother has gone.’

“The Brahman woman joined her palms, faced skyward, and answered by saying, ‘Who is the divine virtuous one relieving me of my worry? Ever since I lost my mother, I have held her in memory day and night. There is nowhere that I can ask about the realm of her rebirth.’

“A voice again resounded in the sky, telling the woman, ‘I am the one to whom you gaze reverently and paid respect, the past Awakening-Blossom Samadhi Mastery King Tathagata. I have seen that you think of your mother many times more than ordinary beings do theirs. Therefore, I have come to show you where she is.’

“Upon hearing these words, the Brahman woman cast her entire body forward to prostrate herself, injuring her limbs and joints. Her attendants supported and attended her for quite a while before she finally revived.

“Then she said toward the sky, ‘I implore the Buddha to take kind pity upon me and quickly tell me in what realm my mother has been reborn, now that I am near death myself.’

“Awakening-Blossom Samadhi Mastery King Tathagata told the holy woman, ‘After your offering is complete, go home quickly. Sit upright and meditate on my name. You will soon know where your mother has been reborn.’

“After the Brahman woman paid reverence to the Buddha, she returned home immediately. As she thought of her mother, she sat upright meditating on the name of Awakening-Blossom Samadhi Mastery King Tathagata for a day and a night.

“Suddenly, she saw herself beside a sea whose waters seethed.

“Many evil beasts with iron bodies flew and ran on the sea, rushing here and there in pursuit. She saw hundreds of thousands of millions of men and women, rising and sinking in the sea, snatched up and devoured by vying evil beasts.

“She also saw yaksas whose appearances were each different: some had many hands, some many eyes, some many feet, and some many heads. Protruding from their mouths were teeth as sharp as swords. They drove the wrongdoers on toward



the evil beasts. Moreover, the yaksas hit and seized those people themselves and forced people's heads and feet together.

“The forms of torment were myriad in variety, a sight at which one would not dare to look for long. At the time, the Brahman woman was naturally without fear because of the power of invoking the Buddha.

“There was a Ghost King named Poisonless who bowed and welcomed the holy woman, ‘Excellent! For what reason has Bodhisattva come here?’

“The Brahman woman asked the Ghost King, ‘What is this place?’

“Poisonless replied, ‘This is the first of the seas west of the Great Iron-Enclosed Mountains.’

“The holy woman asked, ‘I have heard that hells are within the Iron-Enclosed Mountains. Is this really so?’

“Poisonless replied, ‘There really are hells.’

“The holy woman asked, ‘Now, how have I come to the hells?’

“Poisonless replied, ‘If it were not by awesome supernormal power, it would have been by the force of karma. Without either, one cannot come here at all.’

“The holy woman asked further, ‘Why is this water seething? Why are there so many wrongdoers and evil beasts?’

“Poisonless replied, ‘These are recently deceased beings of Jambudvipa who had done evil. They have passed through forty-nine days without any descendants doing meritorious and virtuous deeds in their behalf to rescue them from suffering.

““Besides that, during their lifetime, they did not plant any virtuous causes. Therefore, their own karma accordingly brings them about the hells, and naturally they are to cross this sea first.

““A hundred thousand yojanas east of this sea, there is another sea where the suffering is many times greater than this one. To the east of that sea, there is yet another sea where the suffering is multiplied again.

“Brought on by the evil causes in the karma of body, speech, and mind, these seas are called the Seas of Karma. This is that place.’

“The holy woman again asked Ghost King Poisonless, ‘Where are the hells?’

“Poisonless replied, ‘Within the three seas are great hells. They number in the hundreds of thousands, and each one is different. There are eighteen specifically known as the great hells.

“Second to them, there are five hundred hells where the agonizing suffering is immeasurable. Next, there are hundreds of thousands of hells, also with immeasurable suffering.’

“The holy woman again asked the great Ghost King, ‘My mother passed away not long ago. I wonder which realm is she in?’

“The Ghost King asked the holy woman, ‘What actions did the Bodhisattva’s mother do habitually while she was alive?’

“The holy woman replied, ‘My mother held false views, and she ridiculed and slandered the Three Jewels. Even when she temporarily believed, she would quickly become disrespectful again. She passed away recently. I do not know where she has been reborn.’

“Poisonless asked, ‘What was the name and clan of the Bodhisattva’s mother?’

“The holy woman replied, ‘My parents were both Brahmans. My father’s name was Silou Shanxian, and my mother’s name was Yue Dili.’

“Poisonless joined his palms and informed the Bodhisattva, ‘Holy One, please return to your home. Do not be worried or sorrowful in remembering, for the woman wrongdoer Yue Dili was reborn in heaven three days ago.

““It is said that her ascension was the result of her filial daughter's cultivation of merits and offerings, in her behalf, to Awakening-Blossom Samadhi Mastery King Tathagata's stupas and monasteries. Not only was the Bodhisattva’s mother

released from the hells, but the other wrongdoers in the Hell of Incessant Suffering also experienced happiness and were reborn on that day.’

“After the Ghost King had finished speaking, he joined his palms and withdrew. The Brahman woman quickly returned as if from a dream.

“Upon realizing this event, she made an immense vow before the image and stupa of Awakening-Blossom Samadhi Mastery King Tathagata, ‘I vow that throughout the future eons, I will employ many skillful means for all wrongdoing suffering beings to help them all attain liberation.’”

The Buddha told Manjusri, “Ghost King Poisonless then is now Leader In Wealth Bodhisattva. The Brahman woman is now Earth Store Bodhisattva.”

## Chapter Two

### The Assembly of the Manifestations

At that time, the manifestations of Earth Store Bodhisattva from all the hells in hundreds of thousands of millions of unthinkable, indescribable, countless, inexpressible, immeasurable asaṃkhyeyas of worlds all came and assembled in the palace of the Trayastrimsa Heaven.

Because of the supernormal power of the Tathagata, each manifestation came from his direction with beings who had obtained liberation from the karmic paths. These liberated beings also number in the thousands of millions of nayutas, and they all came holding incense and flowers to make offerings to the Buddha.

Those groups of liberated beings who came were on the path to Anuttarā-Samyak-Saṃbodhi and would not regress

because they had been taught and transformed by Earth Store Bodhisattva.

For many long eons these beings had been wandering in the cycle of birth and death, undergoing suffering in the Six Realms of Samsara with never a momentary rest. Due to the great compassion and profound vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva, they each had realized attainments.

When they came to the Trayastrimsa Heaven, their hearts danced joyously. They gazed up in reverence at the Tathagata, their eyes never leaving him for a moment.

At that time, the World-Honored One stretched forth his golden arm and placed his hand on the crowns of the heads of all the manifestations of Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva from hundreds of thousands of millions of unthinkable, indescribable, countless, inexpressible, immeasurable asaṃkhyeyas of worlds and spoke these words, “I teach and transform obstinate sentient beings like these in the Evil World of the Five Turbidities, helping them to regulate and tame their minds and to abandon the false and return to the true. However,



there are one or two out of every ten who still have evil habits. I, too, transform into hundreds of thousands of millions of manifestations and employ many skillful means.

“Some beings are of keen roots: they immediately believe and accept upon hearing the Dharma.

“Some are reaping the results of virtuous deeds: they achieve accomplishments through constant encouragement.

“Some are ignorant and dull: they return only after long being instructed.

“Some have karma that is heavy: they do not develop respect.

“Sentient beings like these types are each different. I, therefore, transform into various manifestations to guide them across to liberation.

“I manifest in the forms of a man, a woman, a heavenly being, a dragon-like being, a deity, a ghost, a mountain, a forest, a valley, a plain, a river, a pond, a spring, a well to benefit people. So that they all may be guided across to liberation.

“I manifest in the forms of a heavenly king, a Brahma king, a Wheel-turning King, a self-cultivator, a king, a high minister, a government official, a monk (*bhikṣu*), a nun (*bhikṣuṇī*), a male lay devotee (*upāsaka*), a female lay devotee (*upāsikā*), a Sound-hearer, an Arhat, a Solitary Buddha, a Bodhisattva, or others forms to teach and guide sentient beings across. It is not only in the form of a Buddha that I have manifested before them.

“You see how, eon after eon, diligently and arduously I guide difficult-to-teach, obstinate, wrongdoing, suffering beings such as these across to liberation. Those not yet regulated and tamed experience karmic effects according to their karma. If they fall into the evil realms and undergo great suffering, you should remember what I am earnestly entrusting to you now in the Trayastrimsa Heaven: Help all sentient beings in the Saha world until Maitreya Buddha arises in the world – help them to attain liberation, to leave all sufferings forever, to meet Maitreya Buddha and be given prediction of their future Buddhahood.”

At that time, all the separate manifestations of Earth Store Bodhisattva from the various worlds returned together to a

single form. Weeping from pity and great love, he said to the Buddha, “Throughout many long eons Buddhas have guided me, so that I am able to attain inconceivable supernormal power and great wisdom.

“My manifestations fill worlds as numerous as the sand grains in hundreds of thousands of millions of Ganges Rivers. In each of these worlds, I transform into hundreds of thousands of millions of manifestations. Each manifestation guides hundreds of thousands of millions of people across, causing them to revere and take refuge in the Three Jewels, leave samsara forever, and reach the bliss of nirvana.

“As long as they do virtuous deeds in Buddhadharma, even if such deeds are as little as a strand of hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand, a speck of dust, or a bit of fine hair, I will gradually guide them across to liberation causing them to gain great benefits. World-Honored One, please do not be concerned about future sentient beings who have evil karma.”

Thus, he said three times to the Buddha, “World-Honored One, please do not be concerned about future sentient beings who have evil karma.”

At that time, the Buddha praised Earth Store Bodhisattva, saying, “Excellent, excellent! I will assist in your glorious aspirations. You will be able to fulfill the profound vows taken throughout many long eons, finish guiding sentient beings far and wide, and immediately attain bodhi.”

## Chapter Three

### Observing the Karmic Conditions of Sentient Beings

At that time, the Buddha's mother, Queen Maya, respectfully joined her palms and asked Earth Store Bodhisattva, "Holy One! Sentient beings of Jambudvipa generate different karma. What karmic effects do they experience?"

Earth Store replied, "There are thousands of millions of worlds and lands: some have hells, others do not have hells; some have women, others do not have women; some have Buddhadharma, others do not have Buddhadharma; this is also the case for Sound-hearers, Solitary Buddhas, and so forth. Karmic effects of wrongdoings occur not only in hells."

Queen Maya again said to the Bodhisattva, "I wish to hear about the evil realms brought on by the karmic effects of wrongdoing in Jambudvipa."

Earth Store replied, “Holy Mother! Please listen and I will briefly speak about that.”

The Buddha’s mother answered, “Holy One, please tell me.”

At that time, Earth Store Bodhisattva said to the Holy Mother, “The offenses in Jambudvipa and the karmic effects are like these: If there are sentient beings who are not filial toward their parents, who even kill them, they will fall into the Hell of Incessant Suffering and, for thousands of millions of eons, be without a time of release despite their wishes.

“If there are sentient beings who shed a Buddha’s blood, who slander the Three Jewels, who disrespect the sacred sutras, they too will fall into the Hell of Incessant Suffering and, for thousands of millions of eons, be without a time of release despite their wishes.

“If there are sentient beings who illegally take or damage the property of the Sangha, who humiliate monks or nuns, who commit sexual acts in the monastery, or who kill or harm beings there – sentient beings like these will fall into the Hell of

Incessant Suffering and, for thousands of millions of eons, be without a time of release despite their wishes.

“If there are sentient beings who pretend to be monastics but whose hearts are not those of monastics – they abuse the property of the Sangha, deceive lay devotees, go against the precepts, do various evil acts – sentient beings like these will fall into the Hell of Incessant Suffering and, for thousands of millions of eons, be without a time of release despite their wishes.

“If there are sentient beings who steal the wealth, assets, grains, food, drink, clothing from the property of the Sangha, who take anything at all from the Sangha that is not given to them, they will fall into the Hell of Incessant Suffering and, for thousands of millions of eons, be without a time of release despite their wishes.”

Earth Store continued, saying, “Holy Mother! If there are sentient beings who commit such offenses, they will fall into the Hell of Fivefold Incessant Suffering. Although they seek for their suffering to stop temporarily, that will not happen even for one thought-moment.”



Queen Maya again asked Earth Store Bodhisattva, “Why is that hell named Hell of Incessant Suffering?”

Earth Store replied, “Holy Mother! The hells are within the Great Iron-Enclosed Mountains. There are eighteen of the great hells; second to them there are five hundred hells, each with a different name; and next, there are hundreds of thousands of hells, each also with a distinct name.

“In regard to the Hell of Incessant Suffering, this hell city is more than eighty thousand li in perimeter. The city walls are made entirely of iron, ten thousand li in height. Atop these walls are mass of fire without hardly a gap. Within this hell city, the various hells are interconnected, each with a different name.

“There is just one hell named Incessant. It is eighteen thousand li in perimeter. Its hell walls are a thousand li in height, all made of iron. There are flames at the top reaching to the bottom and flames at the bottom reaching to the top. Iron snakes and iron dogs spew fire and rush here and there in pursuit atop these hell walls.

“In this hell, there is a bed that extends for ten thousand li. When one person undergoes torment there, that person sees his own body filling the bed. When thousands of millions of people undergo torment there, each of them sees his own body filling the bed, too. Such are the consequences brought on by the many kinds of karma.

“Moreover, the wrongdoers undergo all manner of suffering. There are hundreds of thousands of yaksas and evil ghosts with teeth like swords and eyes like lightning who pull and drag the wrongdoers with bronze-clawed hands. There are also yaksas wielding large iron halberds who pierce the wrongdoers’ bodies, into their mouths and noses or into their abdomens and backs. They toss them into the air, catch them again, or else place them on the bed.

“There are also iron eagles that peck at the wrongdoers’ eyes. There are also iron snakes that strangle the wrongdoers’ necks. Long nails are driven into all their hundreds of joints. Their tongues are pulled out and plowed through. Their bowels are

drawn out and chopped up. Molten bronze is poured into their mouths. Their bodies are bound in hot iron.

“They undergo myriads of deaths and as many births. Such are the consequences brought about by their karma. They pass through millions of eons without a time of release despite their wishes.

“When this world undergoes destruction, they will be transferred to live and suffer in another world. When that world undergoes destruction, they will be transferred to another one. When that other world, too, undergoes destruction, they will pass in turn through others. After this world is recreated, they will return here once again. Such are the karmic effects of wrongdoing as occur in the Hell of Incessant Suffering.

“Moreover, this hell is called Incessant because of five qualities of such karmic effects. What are the five?

“First, torment is undergone day and night throughout many eons without any break. Therefore, it is called Incessant.

“Second, one person fills this hell; many people fill it, too. Therefore, it is called Incessant.

“Third, there are instruments of torment such as forks clubs, eagles, snakes, wolves, dogs, pestles, grinders, saws, chisels, files, axes, cauldrons of boiling liquid, iron nets, iron ropes, iron donkeys, and iron horses. The wrongdoers are skinned alive and their heads are bound in their own skin. Hot iron is poured over their bodies. They swallow iron balls when hungry and drink molten iron when thirsty. The wretched suffering continues nonstop throughout nayutas of eons. Therefore, it is called Incessant.

“Fourth, be they men, women, of any race, young or old, of upper or lower class, dragon-like beings, deities, heavenly beings, or ghosts, they all undergo such karmic effects based on the offenses they committed. Therefore, it is called Incessant.

“Fifth, if beings fall into this hell, they will undergo myriads of deaths and myriads of births each day and night from the time of entry and on through hundreds of thousands of eons. Although they seek to pause, even for one thought-moment, that

will not happen. Only when their karma is exhausted can they be reborn. Because of this continuity, it is called Incessant.”

Earth Store Bodhisattva said to the Holy Mother, “This is a brief description of the Hell of Incessant Suffering. If I were to speak in detail about the names of the hells, the instruments of torment, and also about all the sufferings there, I could not finish even in an eon.”

After hearing this, Queen Maya sorrowfully joined her palms, prostrated herself, and withdrew.

## **Chapter Four**

### **The Karmic Effects of Sentient Beings of Jambudvipa**

At that time, Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! It is through the awesome supernormal power of Buddha Tathagata that I transform into manifestations and forms throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of worlds to rescue all beings who undergo the ripened effects of karma. If it were not for the power of Tathagata’s great compassion, I would not be able to perform such transformations.

Now, I have further been entrusted by Buddha to guide all beings in the Six Realms of Samsara across to liberation until Ajita becomes a Buddha. I will do so. World-Honored One, please do not be concerned.”

Then, Buddha told Earth Store Bodhisattva, “All beings who have not yet attained liberation are without permanence in their

nature and consciousness. Through evil habits they form malicious karma, and through virtuous habits they form kind results. Depending on the situations, they do virtuous and evil deeds.

“Revolving wheel-like through the five realms of samsara with never a momentary rest, they pass through eons as numerous as dust particles – confused, deluded, hindered and afflicted with difficulties. Just like a fish that swims in nets while following a long flowing current; every now and then, it would get free temporarily, only to be caught in the nets again.

“I would think with concern about these beings. However, because you will fulfill your vows, the profound oaths taken eon after eon to guide wrongdoing beings far and wide to the other shore, what further cause of worry need I have?”

As these words were spoken, in the assembly there was a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva named Samadhi Mastery King who said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! What vows has Earth Store Bodhisattva made during the many eons past that he now



receives profuse praise from the World-Honored One? World-Honored One, please briefly speak about this.”

Then, the World-Honored One told Samadhi Mastery King Bodhisattva, “Listen attentively! Listen attentively! Ponder and remember this well. I will explain them separately to you.

“At a time, immeasurable asaṃkhyeyas of nayutas of inexpressible eons ago, there was a Buddha named All Wisdom Accomplished Tathagata, Worthy One, Supremely Enlightened One, Perfected in Knowledge and Conduct, Well Gone, Knower of the World, Unsurpassed One, Leader of People to be Tamed, Teacher of the Heavenly and Human Beings, Buddha, World Honored One. The lifespan of that Buddha was sixty thousand eons.

“Before he renounced household life, he was the king of a small country and friends with the king of a neighboring country. They both practiced the ten virtuous acts and benefited sentient beings.

“However, in the neighboring country most people did many evil acts. The two kings conferred with each other and planned to employ many skillful means to help them.

“One king vowed, ‘I will attain Buddhahood early and guide all these people across without exception.’ The other king vowed, ‘If I do not first guide all wrongdoing suffering beings across, helping them to attain peace and happiness and enabling them to achieve bodhi, I shall not become a Buddha.’”

The Buddha told Samadhi Mastery King Bodhisattva, “The king who vowed to become a Buddha early is All Wisdom Accomplished Tathagata. The king who vowed to always guide wrongdoing suffering beings across and not to become a Buddha yet is Earth Store Bodhisattva.

“Moreover in the past, immeasurable asaṃkhyeyas eons ago, a Buddha named Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata arose in the world. The lifespan of that Buddha was forty eons.

“During the Age of Semblance Dharma, there was an Arhat who guided sentient beings across by means of merit, teaching

and transforming them in sequence. He came upon a woman named Bright Eyes who made a food offering to him.

“The Arhat asked her, ‘What is your wish?’

“Bright Eyes replied, ‘In the days after my mother’s death, I performed meritorious deeds for her rescue, but I do not know in what realm my mother has been reborn.’

“Out of compassion for her, the Arhat entered into samadhi to observe and saw that Bright Eyes’ mother had fallen into an evil realm and was undergoing extremely great sufferings.

“The Arhat asked Bright Eyes, ‘What actions did your mother do while she was alive? She is now undergoing extremely great suffering in an evil realm.’

“Bright Eyes replied, ‘My mother had a habit of only liking to eat fish, turtles and the like. Of the fish and turtles that she had eaten, she had most often consumed their eggs, fried or boiled, and she would indulge in eating them. I would reckon the number of all these lives to be thousands of millions and many

times over. Venerable One, please take pity. How can she be saved?’

“Out of compassion for them, the Arhat used skillful means. He advised Bright Eyes, ‘You may, with sincere determination, chant the name of Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata. Also, sculpt and paint his image. Both the living and the deceased will harvest beneficial results.’

“After hearing this, Bright Eyes immediately gave up everything she loved to have an image of that Buddha painted right away. She then made offerings before the image. Moreover, she wept sorrowfully as she respectfully gazed at and paid reverence to that Buddha.

“That night, in her dream, she suddenly saw that Buddha – his body a dazzling golden hue, majestic like Mount Sumeru, and emitting great illumination. He said to Bright Eyes, ‘Before long your mother will be reborn in your household. She will speak as soon as she can feel hunger and cold.’

“Shortly thereafter, a maidservant in Bright Eye’s household gave birth to a child who spoke within three days of birth.

“The infant, lowering his head and weeping sorrowfully, told Bright Eyes, ‘In the cycle of birth and death through karmic conditions, one undergoes the karmic effects of one’s actions. I am your mother. I have long dwelled in darkness. Since parting from you, again and again I agonized in the great hells.

“‘It was through the strength of your merit that I was finally able to be reborn as a person of the lower class, and my lifespan will be short. At the end of thirteen years, I am to fall into an evil realm. Do you have any way to help relieve me of these sufferings?’

“When Bright Eyes heard what was said, she knew without a doubt that this infant was her mother. Sobbing and crying sadly, she said to the maidservant’s child, ‘Since you are my mother, you should know your own past wrongdoings. What actions did you do that caused you to fall into an evil realm?’

“The maidservant’s child replied, ‘Killing and slandering. I was undergoing the karmic effects of these two actions. If it were not for the merit that you have cultivated to rescue me from hell, my karma would be such that I still could not have been released.’

“Bright Eyes asked, ‘What karmic effects do the wrongdoers experience in hell?’

“The maidservant’s child replied, ‘I cannot bear to speak of those torments. Even in hundreds of thousands of years I would not be able to describe them all.’

“Upon hearing this, Bright Eyes cried and wailed. She said toward the sky, ‘May my mother be forever released from hell! At the end of thirteen years, may she be relieved from the heavy punishments and not go through the evil realms again.

““Buddhas of the ten directions, kindly take pity upon me. Please hear the far-reaching vow that I am making for the sake of my mother:

““If my mother can forever leave the three evil realms, the low and mean, and never again be reborn as a woman; then, in

front of the image of Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata, I vow that from this day forth, throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of future eons in all worlds where there are hells, where there are the three evil realms, I will rescue all wrongdoing suffering beings and help them to leave the evil realms of hells, animals, and hungry ghosts. Only when the beings who undergo the karmic effects of wrongdoing have all become Buddhas will I myself attain perfect enlightenment.’

“After making this vow, she clearly heard Pure Lotus Eyes Tathagata saying to her, ‘Bright Eyes! You have great kindness and compassion. It is excellent that you can make such a great vow for your mother.

“I see that after your mother passes away at thirteen years of age and completes her present karmic effect, she will be reborn as a Brahman with a lifespan of a hundred years. After that karmic effect is over, she will be reborn into the Land of No Sorrow with a lifespan of incalculable eons. Later she will attain Buddhahood, and far and wide she will guide humans and heavenly beings as numerous as the sand grains in the Ganges River to the other shore.”

The Buddha told Samadhi Mastery King, “The Arhat who guided Bright Eyes across by means of merit then is now Inexhaustible Awareness Bodhisattva. Bright Eyes’ mother is now Liberation Bodhisattva. The woman Bright Eyes is now Earth Store Bodhisattva.

“Throughout many long eons past, Earth Store Bodhisattva has been so kind and compassionate that he has made as many vows as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River to guide sentient beings far and wide to the other shore.

“In the future, if there are men and women who do not practice virtuous deeds but do evil, who do not believe in cause and effect, who engage in sexual misconduct and false speech, who engage in divisive and harsh speech, who slander the Mahayana – beings with karma like these will certainly fall into the evil realms.

“However, if they meet a virtuous friend who encourages them so that they take refuge in Earth Store Bodhisattva, within the time of a finger-snap, they will be liberated from experiencing the karmic effects in the three evil realms.



“If people are able to revere and take refuge in him with a resolute mind, as well as reverently gaze, pay respect, sing his praises, and make offerings of incense, flowers, clothing, treasures of all sorts or also food and drink to him, they will be reborn in the various heavens to experience excellent, wonderful happiness during hundreds of thousands of millions of eons in the future.

“When their heavenly merit is exhausted and they are reborn below in the world of humans, they will frequently be emperors or kings throughout hundreds of thousands of eons. They will be able to remember the cause and effect, the sequence of events, of their previous lives.

“Samadhi Mastery King, Earth Store Bodhisattva has such inconceivable, great, awesome supernormal power to widely benefit sentient beings, thus all of you Bodhisattvas should remember this sutra, expound and propagate it far and wide.”

Samadhi Mastery King said to Buddha, “World-Honored One! Please do not be concerned. Through Buddha’s awesome supernormal power, we, thousands of millions of Bodhisattva-

Mahasattvas, will certainly be able to expound this sutra widely throughout Jambudvipa to benefit sentient beings.”

Having spoken thus to the Buddha, Samadhi Mastery King Bodhisattva joined his palms in respect, paid reverence, and withdrew.

At that time, the Heavenly Kings of the four directions all rose from their seats, joined their palms in respect, and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! Earth Store Bodhisattva has made such great vows throughout many long eons past. As of now, sentient beings have not all been guided across. How is it that he makes further immense vows again? World-Honored One, please explain this to us.”

The Buddha told the Four Heavenly Kings, “Excellent, excellent! Now for the broad benefit of you, as well as for heavenly and human beings in the present and future, I will speak of what Earth Store Bodhisattva does in the paths of birth and death in Jambudvipa and Saha World. How he kindly and compassionately rescues and liberates all wrongdoing suffering beings by way of skillful means.”

The Four Heavenly Kings replied, “Yes, World-Honored One! We joyfully wish to listen.”

The Buddha told the Four Heavenly Kings, “For many long eons past and up to the present, Earth Store Bodhisattva has been guiding sentient beings across to liberation; nevertheless, he has not yet completed his vows.

“He has kindness and compassion for wrongdoing suffering beings in this world. He further sees that, during countless eons in the future, their causes of suffering are endless like vines. Hence, he makes profound vows again. In Jambudvipa and Saha World, this Bodhisattva teaches and transforms sentient beings by way of hundreds of thousands of millions of skillful means.

“Four Heavenly Kings! To those who kill, Earth Store Bodhisattva would say that such action would lead to misfortune and a short lifespan.

“To those who steal or rob, he would say that such action would lead to poverty and wretched suffering.

“To those who engage in sexual misconduct, he would say that such action would lead to rebirth as sparrows, pigeons and mandarin ducks.

“To those who use harsh speech, he would say that such action would lead to quarrels and fights in one’s family.

“To those who utter slander, he would say that such action would lead to being tongueless and having mouth ulcers.

“To those who are angry and hateful, he would say that such action would lead to being ugly, deformed and disabled.

“To those who are stingy, he would say that such action would lead to unanswered prayers.

“To those who are immoderate in consuming food and drink, he would say that such action would lead to hunger, thirst and throat diseases.

“To those who indulge in hunting, he would say that such action would lead to fright, insanity and a disastrous end.

“To those who are rebellious and harmful to their own parents, he would say that such action would result in being killed by natural disasters.

“To those who set fire to mountains or forests, he would say that such action would lead to death from confusion and insanity.

“To those who are cruel parents or stepparents, he would say that such action would lead to being likewise abused in the next life.

“To those who net or trap young animals, he would say that such action would lead to separation of parents and children.

“To those who slander the Three Jewels, he would say that such action would lead to being blind, deaf and mute.

“To those who slight the Dharma or regard the teachings with arrogance, he would say that such action would lead one to remain in the evil realms forever.

“To those who abuse the property of the Sangha, he would say that such action would lead one to revolve through hells for millions of eons.

“To those who humiliate or make malicious accusations against dharma practitioners and monastics, he would say that such action would lead one to remain in the Animal Realm forever.

“To those who scald, burn, behead, chop or otherwise harm living beings, he would say that such action would lead to repayment in the same manner in samsara.

“To those who violate the precepts and rules of eating, he would say that such action would lead to rebirth as birds and beasts suffering from hunger and thirst.

“To those who unreasonably destroy things and deplete resources, he would say that such action would lead to insufficiency and never obtaining what one seeks.

“To those who are conceited and arrogant, he would say that such action would lead to being lowly and servile.

“To those whose divisive speech causes dissension and disorder, he would say that such action would lead to having no tongue or having ‘a hundred tongues’.

“To those who hold false views, he would say that such action would lead to rebirth in barbarous lands.

“Sentient beings of Jambudvipa such as these – the actions of body, speech and mind bear karma. Their evil habits give rise to hundreds of thousands of karmic effects, of which I have now spoken in general terms.

“Since the beings of Jambudvipa experience different karmic effects, Earth Store Bodhisattva uses hundreds of thousands of skillful means to teach and transform them accordingly. These sentient beings will experience the karmic consequences like the ones mentioned first and then fall into the hells, where they pass through many eons without a time of release.

“Therefore, you should protect the people and protect the countries. Do not allow sentient beings to be deluded by these many kinds of karma.”

After hearing this, the Four Heavenly Kings wept and sighed sorrowfully, joined their palms and withdrew.

## Chapter Five

### The Names of the Hells

At that time, Universal Virtuous (*Samantabhadra*) Bodhisattva-Mahasattva said to Earth Store Bodhisattva, “Benevolent One! For the sake of heavenly beings, dragon-like beings, the fourfold assembly, as well as for all sentient beings in the present and future, please speak about the names of the hells, where wrongdoing suffering beings of Jambudvipa and Saha World undergo karmic effects, and the bad consequences that they experience. So that sentient beings of the Degenerate Age of Dharma in the future may know of such results.”

Earth Store replied, “Benevolent One! Now through the Buddha’s awesome supernormal power and Mahasattva’s power, I will briefly speak about the names of the hells, the karmic effects of wrongdoing, and the bad consequences.



“Benevolent One, to the east of Jambudvipa there is a mountain named Iron-Enclosed. This mountain is completely dark without the light of the sun and moon. There is a great hell called Extreme Incessant Suffering. There is another hell named Great Avici.

“Furthermore, there is also a hell named Four Corners, a hell named Flying Knives, a hell named Flaming Arrows, a hell named Squeezing Mountains, a hell named Piercing Spears, a hell named Iron Carts, a hell named Iron Beds, a hell named Iron Oxen, a hell named Iron Clothing, a hell named Thousand Blades, a hell named Iron Donkeys, a hell named Molten Bronze, a hell named Pillar Embracing, a hell named Flowing Blaze, a hell named Tongue Plowing, a hell named Head Chopping, a hell named Feet Ablaze, a hell named Eye Pecking, a hell named Iron Balls, a hell named Quarreling, a hell named Iron Axes and a hell named Much Anger.”

Earth Store said, “Benevolent One! Within the Iron-Enclosed Mountain, there are hells such as these, which are limitless in number.

“In addition, there is the Hell of Crying Out, the Hell of Tongue Plucking, the Hell of Excrement and Urine, the Hell of Bronze Locks, the Hell of Flaming Elephants, the Hell of Flaming Dogs, the Hell of Flaming Horses, the Hell of Flaming Oxen, the Hell of Flaming Mountains, the Hell of Flaming Rocks, the Hell of Flaming Beds, the Hell of Flaming Beams, the Hell of Flaming Eagles, the Hell of Teeth Sawing, the Hell of Skin Peeling, the Hell of Blood Drinking, the Hell of Hands Burning, the Hell of Feet Burning, the Hell of Hanging Thorns, the Hell of Flaming Houses, the Hell of Iron Houses and the Hell of Flaming Wolves.

“There are many other hells such as these. Within each hell, there is one, two, three, four or even as many as hundreds of thousands of smaller hells, each with a different name.”

Earth Store Bodhisattva told Universal Virtuous Bodhisattva, “Benevolent One! Such are the karmic effects of beings of Jambudvīpa who do evil. The force of karma is so great that it can rival Mount Sumeru in height, surpass the immense oceans in depth and hinder one’s cultivation of the noble path.

“Therefore, sentient beings must not underestimate small wrongdoings and consider them harmless. After death, wrongdoers will be punished to the most exact detail of their karmic effects. Beings as closely related as fathers and children will part their respective ways. Even if they should meet, neither would consent to undergo the consequences in the other’s place. Now, through the Buddha’s awesome power, I will briefly speak about the karmic effects of wrongdoing as occur in the hells. Benevolent One, please take a moment to hear these words.”

Universal Virtuous replied, “I have long known of the karmic effects experienced in the three evil realms. I hope Benevolent One will speak about them so that at a later time, in the Degenerate Age of Dharma, all beings who do evil may hear your words and be moved to take refuge in the Buddha.”

Earth Store said, “Benevolent One! The karmic effects of wrongdoing as occur in the hells are like these:

“In some hells, the wrongdoers’ tongues are taken out and then plowed over by oxen. In some hells, the wrongdoers’ hearts are taken out and eaten by yaksas. In some hells, the wrongdoers’

bodies are cooked in cauldrons full of boiling liquid. In some hells, the wrongdoers are compelled to embrace red-hot, burning bronze pillars. In some hells, fires are burning everywhere and chasing the wrongdoers to burn them.

“In some hells, it is frozen and icy at all times. In some hells, there are limitless excrement and urine. In some hells, there are solely flying caltrops. In some hells, there are many flaming spears. In some hells, the wrongdoers are struck solely on the chests and backs. In some hells, their hands and feet are burned specifically. In some hells, iron snakes twine around and strangle wrongdoers. In some hells, iron dogs pursue wrongdoers. In some hells, iron mules trample wrongdoers.

“Benevolent One! There are karmic effects such as these. In each hell, there are hundreds of thousands of instruments of karmic punishments all made of bronze, iron, stone or fire – these four materials are manifested by the sentient beings’ karma.

“If I were to speak in detail about the karmic effects of wrongdoing as occur in the hells, there are furthermore

hundreds of thousands of kinds of wretched suffering in every single hell. How much more so are the torments in the numerous hells!

“Now through the Buddha’s awesome power and at Benevolent One’s request, I have briefly described in this way. If I were to explain in detail, I could not finish in eons.”

## **Chapter Six**

### **Tathagata’s Praise**

At that time, the World-Honored One emitted great illumination from his entire body, illuminating Buddha Worlds as numerous as the sand grains in hundreds of thousands of millions of Ganges Rivers. With a tremendous voice, he advised all the Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas as well as heavenly beings, dragon-like beings, ghosts, deities, humans, non-humans and others in the various Buddha Worlds.

“Listen as I now praise and acclaim Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva for how he manifests great, inconceivable, awesome supernormal power, kindness and compassion in the worlds of the ten directions to rescue and care for all wrongdoing suffering beings. After my nirvana, all of you Bodhisattvas, Mahasattvas, heavenly beings, dragon-like beings, ghosts, deities and others should employ many skillful means to

guard and protect this sutra, causing all sentient beings to attain the bliss of nirvana.”

After these words were spoken, in the assembly there was a Bodhisattva named Universally Expansive (*Samantavipula*) who joined his palms in respect and said to the Buddha, “We now see World-Honored One highly praise Earth Store Bodhisattva for his numerous inconceivable, awesome supernormal power and virtue. World-Honored One, for the sake of future sentient beings of the Degenerate Age of Dharma, please speak about how Earth Store Bodhisattva benefits humans and heavenly beings and about the cause and effect. Such that the Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings and sentient beings of the future may receive Buddha’s words most respectfully.”

At that time, the World-Honored One told Universally Expansive Bodhisattva, the fourfold assembly and others, “Listen attentively! Listen attentively! I will briefly describe for you how Earth Store Bodhisattva benefits humans and heavenly beings such that they can attain merits and virtues.”

Universally Expansive replied, “Yes, World-Honored One! We joyfully wish to listen.”

Buddha told Universally Expansive Bodhisattva, “In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who hear Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva’s name. If these people join their palms, sing his praises, pay reverence or feel great love and admiration for him, they will transcend thirty eons of punishments.

“Universally Expansive! There may be kind men and kind women who paint this Bodhisattva’s image or make his image with clay, stone, resin, lacquer, gold, silver, bronze or iron. If these people then reverently gaze at and pay reverence to his image, they will be reborn a hundred times in the Thirty-Three Heavens and will never fall into the evil realms. If their heavenly merit is exhausted and they are reborn below in the Human Realm, they will still be kings and will not lose great benefits.

“There may be women who despise being women and who wholeheartedly make offerings in reverence to Earth Store Bodhisattva’s image, whether the image be a painting or made



of clay, stone, resin, lacquer, bronze, iron or other materials. They may do so day after day without fail, making offerings to him with flowers, incense, food, drink, clothing, colored silk, banners, canopies, money, treasures and the like. Then after the present karmic effect of being a woman comes to an end, throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of eons, these kind women will never again be reborn in worlds where there are women, much less be one. The only exception is if, out of their compassionate vows, they choose to be women to liberate sentient beings. Through such people's wholehearted offerings to Earth Store and the power of these merits and virtues, they will not be reborn as women throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of eons.

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! There may be women who despise their unsightly appearance or who are frequently ill. With a resolute mind before Earth Store's image, they may sincerely gaze at and pay reverence to him for even just the time of a meal. Then, throughout thousands of millions of eons, such women will be reborn with perfect looks and features.

“If these unsightly women are not weary of being women, for hundreds of thousands of millions of lives, they will always be reborn as princesses, princess consorts, daughters of high ministers or daughters of great elders. They will be born with a dignified appearance and perfect features. These blessings are the result of gazing and paying reverence to Earth Store Bodhisattva with a resolute mind.

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! There may be kind men and kind women who make offerings before this Bodhisattva’s image by playing music, singing songs of praise and offering incense and flowers. They may also encourage others, one or many, to do likewise. Then, both now and in the future, such people will be protected day and night by hundreds of thousands of ghosts and deities. The protection will prevent unfortunate events from reaching their ears, much less allow them to personally suffer from calamity.

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! In the future there may be evil people, evil deities or evil ghosts who see kind men and kind women taking refuge in this Bodhisattva, making

offerings, singing his praises, respectfully gazing at or paying reverence to Earth Store Bodhisattva's image. Then, those evil beings may express ridicule or slander. They may malign that such deeds are without merit, virtue or benefit. They may laugh at these people, utter slander behind their backs or urge others to slander likewise, whether one person or many people. Also, anyone who may even bear a mere thought of ridicule and slander, such evil beings will fall into and remain in the Avici Hell, undergoing extremely severe torments as the consequence of their ridiculing and slandering. They shall remain in Avici Hell even after the Auspicious Eon has ended and all the one thousand Buddhas of the Auspicious Eon have entered nirvana.

“When they are finally released from hell, they will be reborn in the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. After suffering for a thousand more eons, they will be reborn in the Animal Realm. After suffering for another one thousand eons, they will be reborn in the Human Realm. Even though they have attained a human body, they will be poor, lowly and with incomplete features. Frequently, malicious karma will obscure their minds. Before long, they will fall into the evil realms again.

“Therefore, Universally Expansive! Those who ridicule and slander others’ offerings will receive such karmic effects. How much worse will the consequences be if beings have evil views and destructive behavior!

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! In the future, there may be men and women who are ill and bedridden for a long time. They are unable to get well or die despite their wishes. At night, they may have nightmares of evil ghosts, of deceased family and relatives, of traveling on dangerous paths, of being pressed or scared by ghosts and demons, or of being dragged away by ghosts and deities. As days, months and years go by, their illnesses worsen and they waste away; they cry out in their sleep; they are miserable and melancholy. All these are the results of karmic deliberation in which the judgment has not yet been rendered, making it difficult for these people to die or recover.

“The ordinary eyes of men and women cannot discern such matters. Hence, the person’s family should read this sutra aloud once before the images of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. They may

also make an offering of the sick person’s beloved possessions, such as clothing, treasures, manors, gardens or houses. They should make the offerings in front of the sick person and loudly declare, ‘In the presence of the sutras and images of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, I, so-and-so, give these items on behalf of this sick person to make offerings to the sutras and images, to make the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, to construct stupas and monasteries, to make light offerings, or to donate to the Sangha.’ Say the declaration three times such that the sick person can clearly hear it and know the offerings being made.

“If his various consciousnesses are dispersed and his breathing stops, for one day, two days, three days, four days or onto seven days, declare such offerings clearly and read this sutra out loud. After this person’s life ends, he will forever be relieved from the severe torments which are punishments for his past wrongdoings. He will even be relieved of the Five Heinous Crimes that lead to incessant torments. Wherever he is reborn, he will know his previous lives.

“How much more beneficial will it be when kind men and kind women personally copy this sutra in writing, teach others

to copy it, sculpt or paint this Bodhisattva’s image personally, or even teach others to sculpt or paint his image! They will certainly gain immense benefits.

“Therefore, Universally Expansive! If you see people who read and recite this sutra, who have even one thought of praise for it, or who revere it, you should use hundreds of thousands of skillful means to encourage these people to keep their diligent mind from regressing. They will be able to attain thousands of millions of inconceivable merits and virtues in both the present and future.

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! In the future, when sentient beings are dreaming or dozing, they may see ghosts, deities and other forms who are sad, crying, worried, sighing, fearful or terrified. These ghosts or forms are the sentient beings’ fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, relatives or other retinues from their previous one, tens, hundreds or thousands of lives. These beings are in the evil realms and unable to leave. They have no place from which to hope for the strength of merit to rescue them. So, they plead with

their family from their previous lives to use skillful means, hoping that they may thereby leave the evil realms.

“Universally Expansive! Use your divine power to help these living family members to personally read this sutra aloud with a resolute mind before the images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, or request others to read it aloud, three or seven times. When the sutra has been read aloud such a number of times, the relatives in the evil realms will gain liberation and will never appear in the dreams of the living family members again.

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! In the future, there may be various persons of the lower classes, slaves, maids or other people deprived of freedom. These people may realize that they are undergoing the consequence of their past karma and wish to repent. They should, with a resolute mind, gaze and pay reverence to Earth Store Bodhisattva’s image for seven days and chant the Bodhisattva’s name a full ten thousand times. When their present karmic effect is over, for thousands of millions of lives they will always be reborn among the respected and

wealthy. They will not undergo the suffering of the three evil realms again.

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! In the future, Kṣatriyas, Brahmans, elders, self-cultivators and other humans of various names and clans in Jambudvīpa may have newborn infants. Whether these newborns are boys or girls, in the first seven days of their birth, the families should read this extraordinary sūtra and chant the Bodhisattva’s name a full ten thousand times on behalf of the newborns. If these newborn children, boys or girls, are due to have misfortunes as a result of their past, they will gain liberation. They will be peaceful, happy and easily raised; their lifespans will increase. If they had been reborn by the virtue of their past merit, their peacefulness and happiness will increase and so will their lifespans.

“Furthermore, Universally Expansive! In the future, on the first, eighth, fourteenth, fifteenth, eighteenth, twenty-third, twenty-fourth, twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth and thirtieth days of the lunar month, the offenses of sentient beings will be compiled and the degrees of seriousness assessed. For sentient beings in



Jambudvipa, every action and every thought inevitably account as karma and sin. How much more so when they give themselves over to killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech – hundreds of thousands of offenses!

“If they are able to read this sutra aloud once in front of the images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, virtuous ones and holy ones on these Ten Observance Days, there will not be disaster or calamity for a hundred yojanas to the north, south, east and west. Those in their families, both young and old, will be liberated from the evil realms now and throughout hundreds of thousands of years in the future. If they can read this sutra once on each of the Ten Observance Days, their family will not suffer from sudden severe illnesses and will have an abundance of food and clothing in this lifetime.

“Therefore, Universally Expansive! You should know that Earth Store Bodhisattva used inexpressible hundreds of thousands of millions of awesome supernormal powers to benefit sentient beings such as these.

“Sentient beings of Jambudvipa have great cause and condition with this Mahasattva. If these sentient beings hear this Bodhisattva’s name, see this Bodhisattva’s image, or hear but three words, five words, a verse or a sentence of this sutra, they will have superbly wonderful peace and happiness in the present life. For hundreds of thousands of millions of lives in the future, they will always have a dignified appearance and will be reborn into noble and wealthy families.”

At that time, after Universally Expansive Bodhisattva had heard Buddha Tathagata praise Earth Store Bodhisattva, he knelt down with palms joined and said to Buddha once more, “World-Honored One! I have long known that this Mahasattva has such inconceivable supernormal power, as well as the power of great vows. I make this request to Tathagata, such that the future sentient beings may know these benefits. We most respectfully receive your Dharma teaching.

“World-Honored One! How should this sutra be named? How should we propagate it?”

The Buddha told Universally Expansive, “This sutra has three names: the first is called Earth Store’s Vows; it is also called Earth Store’s Deeds; and it is also called Earth Store’s Vows and Deeds. Because this Bodhisattva has made such profound vows throughout many long eons to benefit sentient beings, all of you should propagate it in accordance with these VOWS.”

After hearing this, Universally Expansive joined his palms in respect, paid reverence and withdrew.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Benefiting the Living and the Deceased**

At that time, Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! I observe that the mental stirring and thoughts of sentient beings of Jambudvīpa are almost always wrongdoings. When they benefit from virtuous thoughts and actions, they often regress from their initial resolve. When they encounter evil influences; their evil thoughts and wrongdoing increase.

“These people are as if walking in the mud while carrying heavy rocks. They would become more trapped and weighted down as their feet would sink deeper with each step.

“If such a person can meet a virtuous friend, this person’s burden will be lightened or even completely removed. Because such a virtuous friend has great strength. Furthermore, the virtuous friend will lend him support,

advise him to keep his steps firm and steady, and point out that once he reaches solid ground, he should reflect on the evil path and not walk on it again.

“World-Honored One! Sentient beings who are accustomed to evil begin with a small evil act, then quickly escalate into countless evil. Because these beings have such a habit, when they are about to depart this life, their parents and relatives should make merits and virtues in their behalf to assist them on the road ahead. Their relatives may hang banners and canopies, make light offerings, read sacred sutras or make offerings to the images of Buddhas and holy ones. Their relatives may also chant the names of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Solitary Buddhas in such a way that the chanting of each name reaches the ear of the dying one and may be heard in his fundamental consciousness.

“On the account of their malicious karma, these dying people would certainly fall into the evil realms. Because their relatives cultivated the Causes for Holiness in their behalf, all their wrongdoings can be eradicated.

“If the relatives can furthermore widely perform many virtuous deeds during the seven seven-day periods after the death of such people, the deceased will be able to leave the evil realms forever. They will be reborn as humans or heavenly beings and experience wondrous joy. The living relatives will also receive immeasurable benefits.

“Therefore, in the presence of Buddha, World-Honored One, as well as the Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings, humans, non-humans and others, I urge the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa to be careful: when someone is nearing death, do not kill, harm or generate evil conditions; do not worship or offer sacrifices to ghosts and demons; do not seek the help of monstrous creatures and spirits.

“Why is this? Your killing, harming, worshipping or offering sacrifices do not benefit the deceased in any small way, but add more sinful karma and make their karmic effect more severe.

“In this life or the future, the deceased one might gain holiness and has the opportunity to be reborn among humans or heavenly beings. Because his relatives committed these evil

deeds in his behalf when he is on the verge of death, he is considered to be involved in the evil deeds. He is obliged to disputes and is delayed from being reborn in a kind place.

“How much worse the situation will be for dying people who never have even a few virtuous roots from their lifetime! Each of them will undergo the evil realms in accordance with his karma. Why would their relatives want to increase their evil karma?

“It is as if there was a person who had traveled from afar. He had been out of food for three days and carrying a load that weighed more than a hundred pounds. Suddenly he came upon a neighbor who attached a few more things to the load and made his burden even heavier.

“World-Honored One! I see that as long as sentient beings of Jambudvīpa can follow the teachings of the Buddhas, or even just do good deeds as little as a strand of hair, a drop of water, a grain of sand or a speck of dust, they will gain all the benefits.”

As these words were spoken, in the assembly rose an elder named Great Eloquence (*Mahapratibhāna*). This elder had long since attained complete and pure wisdom that is not born and

does not cease. He taught and guided sentient beings of the ten directions. Manifesting in the form of an elder, he joined his palms in respect and inquired of Earth Store Bodhisattva, “Mahasattva! After sentient beings of Jambudvipa die, their family and relatives may cultivate virtues and merits for their sake, offer vegetarian meals and so forth, and plant many virtuous causes. Will these deceased people gain great benefits and liberation?”

Earth Store replied, “Elder! Now through the Buddha’s awesome power, I will explain this in general terms for the sake of all sentient beings in the present and future.

“Elder! When sentient beings in the present and future are nearing death, those who hear a Buddha’s name, a Bodhisattva’s name or a Solitary Buddha’s name will gain liberation regardless of whether they have offenses or not.

“There may be men and women who did not cultivate virtuous causes but committed many offenses when they were alive. After their death, their family and relatives do holy deeds to make merit and virtues on their behalf. Then, the deceased



person will receive one-seventh of the benefits, and the living relatives will receive the rest six-sevenths of the benefits.

“Therefore, in the present and future, kind men and kind women should cultivate virtues and merits for themselves while they have good health and good hearing. They will receive the full benefits.

“The great ghost of impermanence can come unexpectedly at any time. The deceased wanders in darkness, uncertain of his offenses and merits. During the ensuing seven seven-day periods, the deceased is as if deaf or without consciousness, or he is at various authorities being examined and judged regarding his karma and the effects. Once the result is determined, he undergoes rebirth in accordance with his karma. During this time of uncertainty, he is tormented by thousands of millions of worries. How much more anguished will he be if he falls into the evil realms!

“Throughout the seven seven-day periods, the deceased one who has not yet undergone rebirth hopes in every thought that his parents, children and relatives will engender the strength of

merit to rescue him. After this period, he will undergo the ripened effects according to his karma. If he is a wrongdoer, he will pass through hundreds of thousands of years without a day of liberation. If he committed any of the Five Heinous Crimes, he will fall into the great hell and receive everlasting sufferings for thousands of millions of eons.

“Furthermore, Elder! After the death of such a being with wrongdoing karma, his relatives and retinues may make vegetarian meal offerings to help him in his karmic path.

“From the preparation of such a meal until the completion of the meal offering, rice washings and vegetable pieces should not be wasted or thrown away; and before the food has been offered to the Buddha and the Sangha, no one should eat it.

“Any negligence or breach in this matter would represent a lack of diligence and would render the work for the deceased person ineffective. If purity is diligently maintained in making the offering to the Buddha and the Sangha, the deceased one will receive one-seventh of the benefit.

“Therefore, Elder! If after the death of parents, relatives and retainers, sentient beings of Jambudvīpa are able to make vegetarian meal offerings in their behalf with diligence, sincerity and a resolute mind, they will benefit both the living and the deceased.”

As these words were spoken, thousands of millions of nayutas of ghosts and deities of Jambudvīpa who were in the Trayāstrimsa Heaven have realized immeasurable bodhicitta.

Great Eloquence Elder paid respect and withdrew.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **The Praises of King Yama and His Retinue**

At that moment, from within the Iron-Enclosed Mountains, King Yama and countless ghost kings all arrived at the Trayastrimsa Heaven and came to where the Buddha was.

They were Evil Poison Ghost King, Many Evils Ghost King, Great Quarrels Ghost King, White Tiger Ghost King, Blood Tiger Ghost King, Red Tiger Ghost King, Disaster-Disseminating Ghost King, Flying Body Ghost King, Lightning Flash Ghost King, Wolf Teeth Ghost King, Thousand Eyes Ghost King, Beast Devouring Ghost King, Rock Carrying Ghost King, Ghost King of Depletion, Ghost King of Calamities, Ghost King of Food, Ghost King of Wealth, Ghost King of Domestic Animals, Ghost King of Birds, Ghost King of Beasts, Ghost King of Monstrous Creatures, Ghost King of Birth, Ghost King of Life, Ghost King of Illnesses, Ghost King of Danger, Three Eyes Ghost King, Four

Eyes Ghost King, Five Eyes Ghost King, Chislis King, Great-Chislis King, Chiliksa King, Great-Chiliksa King, Anato King and Great Anato King.

There were great ghost kings such as these, each with hundreds of thousands of minor ghost kings. They all reside in Jambudvipa and each of them has duties to carry out and preside over.

Through the awesome supernormal power of the Buddha and the power of Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva, King Yama and these ghost kings all came to the Trayastrimsa Heaven and stood to one side.

At that time, King Yama knelt with palms joined and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! It is through the awesome supernormal power of Buddha and the power of Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva that the ghost kings and I are now able to come to this great assembly in the Trayastrimsa Heaven. We can therefore gain virtuous benefits, too. Now, there is a little question that I dare to ask World-Honored One. World-

Honored One, with your kindness and compassion, please expound on it.”

The Buddha told King Yama, “Ask whatever you wish. I will explain it to you.”

At that time, King Yama gazed and paid reverence to the World-Honored One, turned to behold Earth Store Bodhisattva and then said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! I observe that Earth Store Bodhisattva uses hundreds of thousands of skillful means in the Six Realms of Samsara to guide wrongdoing suffering beings across to liberation, and he persists tirelessly. This is only possible because of this great Bodhisattva’s inconceivable supernormal power.

“Yet, multitudes of beings will fall into the evil realms again soon after their release from the karmic effect of wrongdoings. World-Honored One! Since Earth Store Bodhisattva has such inconceivable supernormal power, why do sentient beings not take refuge in the virtuous path and attain eternal liberation? World-Honored One, please explain this to me.”

The Buddha told King Yama, “Sentient beings of the Jambudvīpa are stubborn and adamant by nature. They are difficult to regulate and difficult to tame. This great Bodhisattva has been rescuing such beings everywhere throughout hundreds of thousands of eons, helping them to attain liberation early.

“For people who undergo the karmic effects of wrongdoing, even those who have fallen into the very evil realms, the Bodhisattva uses the power of skillful means to extract their fundamental karmic conditions and lead them to realize the events of their previous lives. However, sentient beings of Jambudvīpa have severe bad habits of forming evil. As soon as leaving the evil realms, they fall back in again. Thus, requiring the Bodhisattva to work hard throughout many eons in guiding them across to liberation.

“Suppose there was a person who lost his way home and, by mistake, entered a dangerous path, in which there were many yaksas, tigers, wolves, lions, lizards, snakes, vipers and scorpions. Such a lost person on that dangerous path would be harmed or killed within a short time.

“Suppose there was a being who was knowledgeable of many great skills and good at stopping and keeping out the injurious and poisonous, including yaksas and other evil fierce beings. If he encountered the lost traveler who was about to walk further on that dangerous path and said to him, ‘Hey! Fellow! Why are you entering this road? What special means do you have to avoid these poisons?’

“Upon hearing these words, suddenly the lost traveler realized that he was on a dangerous path and immediately turned back, seeking a way out. That virtuous friend took him by the hand, led him off the dangerous path so that he avoided the evils and poisons, and helped him reach the good path so that he would gain peace and happiness.

“Then the virtuous friend said to the lost traveler, ‘Well! Lost one! From now on, do not walk on that path again. Those who enter it will have difficulty getting out; moreover, they will suffer harm to their lives.’

“The lost traveler realized how dangerous that path was and became extremely grateful. As they were about to part, the



virtuous friend said, ‘If you see relatives, friends, as well as other travelers, men or women, tell them that, on that dangerous path, there are many poisons and evils which will cause them to lose their lives. Do not allow them to unintentionally bring about their own deaths.’

“In the same way, Earth Store Bodhisattva, full of great kindness and compassion, rescues wrongdoing suffering beings and enables them to be reborn among humans and heavenly beings so that they experience wondrous joy.

“These wrongdoing beings would realize how agonizing the suffering in the evil realms are. After they obtain release, they would never go on those paths again.

“They are like the lost traveler who by mistake entered the dangerous path. Having met a virtuous friend who led him out, he would never enter it again. Whenever he would come upon others, he would advise them not to enter that path.

He would say, ‘I took that path before when I was confused. Now that I have gained liberation, I would not enter that path again.’

“If he was lost or had gone astray and were to walk on that path again, he would be unaware that it is the dangerous path he had fallen into before. He may even lose his life. This is like falling into the evil realms.

“By virtue of Earth Store Bodhisattva’s power of skillful means, beings obtain liberation and gain rebirth among humans and heavenly beings. But shortly thereafter, they fall into the evil realms again. If they commit severe offenses with heavy karmic effects, they will remain in the hells forever, without a time of release.”

At that time, Evil Poison Ghost King joined his palms in respect and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! There is a countless number of ghost kings. Each of us has a different way of benefiting or harming people in Jambudvīpa. However, the karmic effects cause us to travel the world doing many bad deeds and few virtuous deeds.

“We pass through people’s homes, cities, villages, manors or houses. We may find that there are men or women who cultivate virtuous deeds as minute as hair fibers. They may hang a banner or a canopy, offer a little incense or a few flowers or make offerings to the images of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. They may read the sacred sutras or burn incense as an offering to even a sentence or a verse in the sutras.

“All of us ghost kings will respect and revere such people just as we do for the Buddhas of the past, present and future. We command our subordinate ghosts, each of whom has great power, as well as the earth deities, to protect them. We will prevent evil events, sudden calamities, severe illnesses, sudden illnesses, as well as any undesirable events to come near these houses and places, much less enter the doors.”

The Buddha praised the ghost kings, “Excellent, excellent! All you ghost kings and Yama can support and protect kind men and kind women in this way. I will tell Brahmā and Śakra to protect all of you as well.”

As these words were spoken, a ghost king in the assembly named Ghost King of Life said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! In accordance with my fundamental karmic conditions, I preside over a human’s life in Jambudvīpa. I am in charge of both the birth and the death.

“As in my vows, I wish very much to benefit sentient beings. However, sentient beings do not realize my intention and are unable to find peace in either birth or death.

“Why is this?

“When people of Jambudvīpa are just pregnant with children, whether boys or girls, or when they are about to give birth, they should do good deeds to increase the benefits of the household. Then naturally the local earth deities will be immeasurably joyful and will protect the mother and child so that they obtain great peace and happiness. The protection also benefits their relatives.

“After the birth of a child, do not kill or harm sentient beings to offer fresh meat to the mother. Do not gather relatives and retinue to drink alcohol, eat meat, sing or play instruments.

Because, these acts can disturb the peace and happiness of the mother and child.

“Why is this?

“During the difficult time of childbirth, there are countless evil ghosts, monstrous creatures and spirits who want to consume the foul blood. I command the local earth deities of that household early on to care and protect the mother and child so that they are peaceful and happy, thereby gaining benefits. When people in such households see that the mother and child are peaceful and happy, they should cultivate merit in gratitude to the earth deities. Instead, if they kill, harm and gather relatives for feasting, their violations will bring misfortune to themselves and harm the mother and child.

“Moreover, for people of Jambudvīpa who are on the verge of death, regardless of whether they are good or evil, I wish to prevent these dying beings from falling into the evil realms. How much more can I do so when they have cultivated virtuous roots and thus increasing my ability to help!

“In Jambudvipa, even when a person who has performed virtuous deeds is about to depart this life, there too are hundreds of thousands of ghosts and deities of the evil realms who disguise themselves as his parents or other relatives in an attempt to lead him into the evil realms. How much more is this the case for those who have committed evil acts!

“World-Honored One! When a man or woman of Jambudvipa is on the verge of death, his consciousness is confused and dim, he is unable to distinguish between good and evil, and his eyes and ears are unable to see and hear. His relatives should then make great offerings, read the sacred sutras and chant the names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Such virtuous conditions can help the deceased one to avoid the evil realms, and the demons, ghosts, and deities will all withdraw and disperse.

“World-Honored One! All sentient beings who are nearing the time of death, if they are able to hear a Buddha’s name, a Bodhisattva’s name or a sentence or a verse from the Mahayana sutras, I observe that these people will be quickly liberated from minor evil karma, which would have caused their fall into evil

realms, with the exception of those who have committed the Five Heinous Crimes of killing and harming that lead to incessant torments.”

The Buddha told Ghost King of Life, “Because of your great compassion, you are able to make such great vows and protect all beings amid their births and deaths. In the future, when men and women reach their time of birth and death, do not regress from your vows; be sure to help all of them to be liberated and gain eternal peace and happiness.”

The Ghost King said to the Buddha, “Please do not be concerned. Until the end of my present form, in every thought I will support and protect sentient beings of Jambudvīpa so that they gain peace and happiness both at birth and death. I only wish that at the time of birth and death, these sentient beings will believe and accept my words, so that they will all be liberated and gain great benefits.”

At that time, the Buddha said to Earth Store Bodhisattva, “This great ghost king, who presides over life, has been a great ghost king for hundreds of thousands of lives. He has been

supporting and protecting sentient beings amid their births and deaths. It is only because of this Mahasattva's compassionate vows that he manifests in the form of a great ghost. In reality, he is not a ghost.

“After one hundred and seventy eons, he will become a Buddha named Absence of Appearance (*Nirabhasa*) Tathagata, his eon will be called Peace and Happiness, and his world will be named Pure Abode. The lifespan of that Buddha will be incalculable eons.

“Earth Store! So inconceivable are the matters about this great ghost king. He has also guided immeasurable heavenly beings and humans across to liberation.”



## Chapter Nine

### Chanting the Names of Buddhas

At that time, Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! Now, I would like to expound on beneficial matters for sentient beings of the future, so that they may obtain great benefits while in the cycle of birth and death. World-Honored One, please allow me to speak on this.”

The Buddha told Earth Store Bodhisattva, “You now wish to aspire kindness and compassion, to rescue all wrongdoing suffering beings in the Six Realms of Samsara, and to expound on inconceivable matters. The time is right. You should speak at once. Soon I will enter nirvana and if you fulfill your vows early, I will not need to worry about all the beings in the present and future.”

Earth Store Bodhisattva said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! In the past, immeasurable asaṃkhyeya eons ago, there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Boundless Body (*Anantakaya*) Tathagata. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name and as soon as they develop reverence to him, they will transcend forty eons of severe punishments of birth and death. How much more so when they sculpt and paint his image, make offerings and sing his praises! These people will gain merit that is immeasurable and boundless.

“Moreover, in the past, as many eons ago as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River, there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Jewel Nature (*Ratnasuabhava*) Tathagata. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name and, within the time of a finger snap, aspire to take refuge in this Buddha, these people will never regress from the Unsurpassed Way.

“Moreover, in the past there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Supreme Lotus (*Padma*) Tathagata. If there are men and women who hear this Buddha’s name, who have the sound pass through their ears, these people will be reborn a thousand

times in the Six Heavens of the Desire Realm. How much more so when they chant and meditate on his name with a resolute mind!

“Moreover, in the past, inexpressibly-inexpressible asaṃkhyeya eons ago, there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Lion’s Roar (*Simhananda*) Tathagata. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name and in one thought take refuge in him, they will meet countless Buddhas. Each Buddha will place his hands on the crowns of each person’s head and give a prediction of future Buddhahood.

“Moreover, in the past there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Krakucchanda Buddha. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name and pay reverence with a resolute mind or also sing his praises, these people will become great Brahmā kings in the Thousand-Buddha Assembly of the present Auspicious Eon and receive superior prediction of their future Buddhahood.

“Moreover, in the past there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Vipasyin Buddha. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name, they will never fall into the evil realms and will

always be reborn among humans or heavenly beings and experience excellent, wondrous joy.

“Moreover, in the past, as many eons ago as there are grains of sand in immeasurable, countless Ganges Rivers, there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Jewel-Born (*Ratnasambhava*) Tathagata. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name, they will never fall into the evil realms and will frequently be in the heavens and experience excellent, wondrous joy.

“Moreover, in the past there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Jewel-Appearance (*Ratnalaksana*) Tathagata. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name and develop reverence, these people will soon attain arhatship.

“Moreover, in the past, immeasurable asaṃkhyeya eons ago, there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Buddhist Robe Banner (*Kasayadhvaja*) Tathagata. If men and women hear this Buddha’s name, they will transcend a hundred great eons of punishments of birth and death.

“Moreover, in the past there was a Buddha in the world. His name was Great Penetration Mountain King (*Mahabhijna-*

*Sumeru*) Tathagata. If men and women hear this Buddha's name, they will meet as many Buddhas as there are grains of sand in the Ganges River. The Buddhas will extensively expound the Dharma for them and they will certainly attain bodhi.

“Moreover, in the past, there was Pure Moon (*Sudhacandra*) Buddha, Mountain King (*Sumeru*) Buddha, Wisdom Excellence (*Jnanajina*) Buddha, Pure Name King (*Vimalanamanraja*) Buddha, Wisdom Accomplished (*Jnanasaddhi*) Buddha, Unsurpassed (*Anuttara*) Buddha, Wondrous Sound (*Sughosa*) Buddha, Full Moon (*Purnacandra*) Buddha and Moon Face Buddha – there were inexpressibly many Buddhas such as these.

“World-Honored One! All sentient beings in the present and future – whether they are heavenly beings or humans, men or women – as long as they chant one Buddha's name, they will attain immeasurable merits and virtues. How much more so when they chant many Buddhas' names. These sentient beings will gain great benefits during birth and death and they will never fall into the evil realms.

“If a person is on the verge of death and his relatives or retainers, even just one of them, loudly chant a Buddha’s name on behalf of the dying person, the dying person’s karmic effects will be eliminated, with the exception of the Five Heinous Crimes that lead to incessant torments.

“The Five Heinous Crimes are extremely severe and the offender would pass through millions of eons without release. Nevertheless, by the virtues of other people chanting and meditating on the names of Buddhas in the offender’s behalf when he is on the verge of death, even the torments from such severe offenses can gradually diminish.

“How much more so when sentient beings chant and meditate for themselves. They will gain immeasurable merits and eradicate immeasurable offenses.”

## Chapter Ten

### Comparing the Merits and Virtues of Generosity

At that time, through the Buddha’s awesome supernormal power, Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva rose from his seat, knelt with palms joined and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! I observe sentient beings in the karmic paths and compare their acts of generosity: some acts are small and some are great. Some receive blessings for one life, some receive blessings for ten lives, and some receive great blessings and benefits for hundreds of lives, for thousands of lives. Why is this? World-Honored One, please explain this to me.”

At that time, Buddha told Earth Store Bodhisattva, “Now, in this assembly in the Trayastrimsa Heaven, I will speak on the giving done by beings of Jambudvīpa and compare the merits and virtues therein. You should listen attentively. I will explain to you.”

Earth Store said to Buddha, “I have questions about this matter, and I joyfully wish to listen.”

The Buddha told Earth Store Bodhisattva, “In Jambudvīpa, there are kings, high government officials, great elders, great Kṣatriyas, great Brahmins and others. They may encounter those who are the lowest or poorest; or those who are hunchbacked, incapacitated, mute, deaf, mentally deficient or blind – people who are disabled in various ways such as these.

“When these great kings and others wish to give alms, they do so with great compassion, a humble mind and a smile. They give alms with their own hands or through their representatives and comfort them with gentle words. Such kings and others will obtain blessings and benefits that are equivalent to those obtained from the merits and virtues of making offerings to as many Buddhas as there are grains of sand in a hundred Ganges Rivers.

“Why is this?

“These kings and others will receive such meritorious and beneficial karma because they have great compassion toward



the poorest, lowest people and those who are disabled. For hundreds of thousands of lives, they will always have an abundance of the Seven Jewels, not to mention food, clothing and other necessities of life!

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, there may be kings, Brahmans and others who encounter Buddhist stupas, monasteries or images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Sound-hearers or Solitary Buddhas. They may personally prepare and make offerings. Such kings and others will be reborn as Śākras for three eons and experience excellent, wondrous joy. If they can dedicate the merits and benefits of that generosity to the Dharma Realm, these great kings and others will be reborn as great Brahmā kings for ten eons.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, there may be kings, Brahmans and others who encounter ancient Buddhist stupas, monasteries, sutras or images that are damaged or dilapidated, and they are aspired to restore them. Such kings and others then do so themselves or they encourage hundreds of thousands of other people to make offerings and form karmic

connections. Such kings and others will always be reborn as Wheel-turning Kings for hundreds of thousands of lives. Those who make offerings along with them will always be reborn as kings of smaller countries for hundreds of thousands of lives. Moreover, if the kings and others aspire to dedicate the merits and virtues in front of the stupas and temples, they will all attain Buddhahood, for such karmic attainment are immeasurable and boundless.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, there may be kings, Brahmans and others who see the old, the sick or women in childbirth. Their hearts are instantly filled with compassion. They provide them with medicine, food, drink, and bedding to make them peaceful and happy. Such deeds will bring the most inconceivable blessings and benefits. For a hundred eons, they will always be reborn as kings of the Pure Abode Heavens. For two hundred eons, they will always be reborn as kings of the Six Heavens of the Desire Realm. They will ultimately become Buddhas and never fall into the evil realms. For hundreds of thousands of lives, they will not hear the sounds of suffering.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, if there are kings, Brahmans and others who can give in such ways, they will gain immeasurable merits. Moreover, if they dedicate the merit, be it a lot or a little, they will ultimately become Buddhas, not to mention harvesting the karmic effects to be reborn as Śakras, Brahmās or Wheel-turning Kings. Therefore, Earth Store! Encourage all sentient beings to follow these examples.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, if kind men and kind women plant virtuous roots in Buddhadharma, even as little as a strand of hair, a grain of sand or a speck of dust, they will receive incomparable merits and blessings.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, if there are kind men and kind women who encounter the images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Solitary Buddhas or Wheel-turning Kings and make offerings or donations to them, they will gain immeasurable merit. They will always be reborn in the human and heaven realms and experience excellent, wondrous joy. If they can dedicate that merit to the Dharma Realm, they will receive incomparable merits and blessings.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who encounter the Mahayana sutras or just hear a verse or a sentence of the sutra. If they are eagerly attentive and sincerely respectful, if they sing praises and pay reverence, if they make offerings and donations, they will harvest great karmic attainments which are immeasurable and boundless. If they make dedication to the Dharma Realm, their merits will be beyond comparison.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who encounter Buddhist stupas, monasteries or Mahayana sutras. If these structures and sutras are new, they can make offerings and donations, gaze and pay reverence, sing praises and join their palms in respect.

“If these structures and sutras are old or damaged ones, and they make repairs and restorations – they may be aspired to do so by themselves or they encourage many others to assist in the effort – such beings will always be reborn as kings of smaller countries for thirty lives. The leaders of such efforts will always

be reborn as Wheel-turning Kings and will teach and transform the kings of smaller countries through virtuous Dharma.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who plant virtuous roots in Buddhadharma by making offerings and donations, repairing stupas or monasteries, rebinding sutras or even doing deeds as little as a strand of hair, a speck of dust, a grain of sand or a drop of water.

“If they dedicate these virtuous deeds to the Dharma Realm, they will receive merits and virtues that allow them to experience superior, wondrous joy for hundreds of thousands of lives. However, if they dedicate the virtuous deeds to their family, relatives, retainues, or for their own benefits, the result will be to experience joy for only three lives.

“To give one is to receive ten thousandfold in return.

“Thus, Earth Store! These are the causes and conditions of giving.”

## Chapter Eleven

### Earth Deities Protecting the Dharma

At that time, Solid Earth Deity (*Pr̥thivī*) said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! Since long time past, I have gazed, paid reverence and prostrated to countless Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas. All of them have great, inconceivable supernormal power and wisdom. They all guide sentient beings far and wide across to the other shore. Among the Bodhisattvas, Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva has made particularly profound vows.

“World-Honored One! Earth Store Bodhisattva has a great karmic connection with Jambudvīpa. Other Bodhisattvas, such as Mañjuśrī, Samantabhadra, Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya, also transform into hundreds of thousands of forms to liberate those in the Six Realms of Samsara. However, their vows will ultimately come to completion. Earth Store Bodhisattva has made these vows to teach and transform all beings in the Six

Realms of Samsara throughout eons as numerous as grains of sand in hundreds of thousands of millions of Ganges Rivers.

“World-Honored One! I observe that present and future sentient beings may find a pure place in the south side of their residences and build a shrine or place of worship with clay, stone, bamboo or wood. Within such places, they may sculpt or paint the image of Earth Store using gold, silver, bronze or iron. They may burn incense, make offerings, gaze, pay reverence and sing his praises. Such people will gain ten kinds of benefits around their residences.

“What are the ten?

1. Their lands will be fertile;
2. Their families and homes will forever be in peace;
3. Their deceased ancestors will be reborn in the heavens;
4. The living will enjoy ever greater longevity;
5. Their wishes will be fulfilled;
6. They will not suffer disasters of flood or fire;
7. Events that waste money or resources will not happen;
8. They will not have nightmares;

9. They will be protected by deities in their daily activities, both inside and away from the residence;
10. They will encounter many Causes for Holiness;

“World-Honored One! If sentient beings in the present and future can make offerings in their residences in such ways, they will gain these benefits.”

Solid Earth Deity further said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who have this Bodhisattva’s sutra and image in their residences. If these people can read this sutra and make offerings to the Bodhisattva, I will always use my divine power to protect them day and night. I will eliminate flood, fire, robbery, theft, major calamities, minor calamities and all harmful events for them.”

The Buddha told Solid Earth Deity, “Few deities can match your great divine power. Why is this? You protect all the land of Jambudvīpa. The grasses, trees, sand, stones, cereal crops, hemp plants, bamboos, reeds, grains and treasures all come from the earth because of your power.



“Moreover, you frequently praise the beneficial deeds of Earth Store Bodhisattva. Your merits, virtues and supernormal powers are hundreds of thousands of times greater than that of average earth deities.

“In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who make offerings to the Bodhisattva and read this sutra. As long as they cultivate and practice according to even one aspect of the Earth Store’s Vow Sutra, you should use your divine power to protect them. Do not allow any disasters or unfortunate events to even reach their ears, much less experiencing it themselves.

“You will not be alone in protecting them. Śakra, Brahmā, other deities, heavenly beings and their retinues will all support and protect such people. Why will these people receive support and protection from holy and virtuous beings? It is because they respectfully gazed at and paid reverence to Earth Store’s image and read this vow sutra. Naturally, they will leave the sea of suffering and ultimately attain the joy of nirvana. Therefore, they will receive great support and protection.”

## Chapter Twelve

### The Benefits of Seeing and Hearing

At that time, the World-Honored One, from his ushnisha, sent forth hundreds of thousands of millions of rays of great light. There were rays of white light, great white light, auspicious light, great auspicious light, jade light, great jade light, purple light, great purple light, blue light, great blue light, azure light, great azure light, red light, great red light, green light, great green light, golden light, great golden light. Light in the form of celebratory clouds, great celebratory clouds, thousand-spoked wheel, great thousand-spoked wheel, jewel wheel, great jewel wheel, sun, great sun, moon, great moon, palaces, great palaces, ocean-like clouds and great ocean-like clouds.

After sending forth such rays of light from the ushnisha, the Buddha issued forth his sublime, wondrous voice. He told the great assembly, the Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings, humans, non-humans and others, “Hear me

now in the Trayastrimsa Heaven. Hear my praise of Earth Store Bodhisattva for how he benefits those in the human and heaven realms and so forth – on inconceivable matters, on matters that transcend the Causes for Holiness, on matters of attainment of the Tenth Stage and on matters of ultimately being irreversibly on course to Anuttarā-Samyak-Saṃbodhi.”

As these words were spoken, a Bodhisattva-Mahasattva in the assembly named Avalokiteśvara rose from the seat, knelt with palms joined and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva has great kindness, compassion and pity for wrongdoing suffering beings. He transforms into thousands of millions of manifestations in thousands of millions of worlds. He has great merits, virtues and inconceivable awesome divine powers. I have heard World-Honored One and immeasurable Buddhas of the ten directions unanimously praise Earth Store Bodhisattva; and say that even all Buddhas of the past, present and future cannot fully express his merits and virtues.

“Just now, World-Honored One has told the assembly that you wish to praise how Earth Store benefits sentient beings and so forth. World-Honored One, for the sake of all sentient beings in the present and future, please expound on the inconceivable matters of Earth Store so that the Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings can respectfully gaze, pay reverence and receive merits.”

The Buddha told Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, “You have a great karmic connection with Saha World. There may be heavenly beings, dragon-like beings, men, women, deities, ghosts or any wrongdoing suffering beings of the Six Realms of Samsara who will hear your name, see your image, feel great love and admiration for you or sing your praises. These beings definitely will not regress or turn away from the Unsurpassed Way. They will forever be reborn as humans or heavenly beings and experience excellent, wondrous joy. When their karma comes to maturity, they will meet Buddhas and receive predictions of their future Buddhahood.

“You have great kindness and compassion. You take pity on sentient beings and Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings. Listen as I expound on Earth Store Bodhisattva’s inconceivable deeds of benefiting sentient beings. You should listen attentively. I will speak on them now.”

Avalokiteśvara replied, “Yes, World-Honored One! I joyfully wish to listen!”

The Buddha told Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, “In various worlds in the present and future, there are heavenly beings who have exhausted their heavenly merit and display the five signs of decay; some of them are about to fall into the evil realms.

“When such heavenly beings, whether male or female, display these signs, if they see Earth Store Bodhisattva’s image or hear Earth Store Bodhisattva’s name and they pay reverence to him once, these heavenly beings will increase their heavenly merit, and experience great happiness. They will never fall into and experience karmic effects in the three evil realms. How much more so for those who see and hear the Bodhisattva and make offerings to him with incense, flowers, clothing, food,

drink, treasures, and jewelries. The virtues, merits and benefits that they will obtain will be immeasurable and boundless.

“Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara! In various worlds in the present and future, when sentient beings in the Six Realms of Samsara are on the verge of death, if they can hear Earth Store Bodhisattva’s name, even if the sound passes through their ears just once, such beings will not undergo the sufferings of the three evil realms.

“How much more so when a person is on the verge of death, and his parents, relatives and retainers use the dying one’s house, wealth, treasures and clothing to commission the sculpting or painting of Earth Store’s image. If the sick person has not yet passed away, the relatives can try to help him to see, hear and understand that they are using his house, treasures and so forth for the sculpting or painting of Earth Store Bodhisattva’s image for his benefit. If this person’s karmic effects are such that he would have to undergo severe illness, through these merits and virtues, he will soon recover and his lifespan will be prolonged. If this person’s karmic effects are such that his life would end

and the burden of his offenses and karmic obstacles will send him to the evil realms; through these merits and virtues, at the end of his life, he will be reborn among humans or heavenly beings. He will experience excellent, wondrous joy. All the offenses and hindrances will be eliminated.

“Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva! In the future, there may be men or women who have lost their fathers, mothers, brothers or sisters during infancy or at the age of three, five or under ten. As adults, these people think of their deceased parents and relatives and wonder which realm are they in? Which world or heaven have they been reborn in?

“These people may sculpt or paint Earth Store Bodhisattva’s image. They may gaze and pay reverence to him whenever they hear his name or see his image. They may continue to pay reverence and make offerings whenever they hear his name or see his image for one to seven days without regressing their initial resolve.

“These people’s deceased relatives may have fallen into the evil realms due to their karma and would remain there for many

eons. However, through their sons', daughters', brothers' or sisters' merits and virtues of sculpting or painting Earth Store's image and paying reverence to him, they will quickly gain release, be reborn among humans or heavenly beings, and experience excellent, wondrous joy.

“These people's deceased relatives may have already been reborn as humans or heavenly beings and are already experiencing excellent, wondrous joy by the strength of their own merit. Then, by these merits and virtues, their Causes for Holiness will increase and they will experience immeasurable happiness. Furthermore, these people may sincerely gaze at and pay reverence to Earth Store's image wholeheartedly for three seven-day periods, and chant the Bodhisattva's name a full ten thousand times. Then, the Bodhisattva will manifest his boundless body and describe to them the realms into which their relatives have been reborn. In their dreams, the Bodhisattva will manifest his great divine power and personally lead them to those worlds to see their relatives.



“Furthermore, if these people can chant the Bodhisattva’s name one thousand times per day for one thousand days, the Bodhisattva will send the earth deities, ghosts and other deities in the vicinity of these people to guard and protect them for the rest of their lives. In the present life, they will have abundant food and clothing, and will not suffer from illnesses or other afflictions. Sudden calamities will not enter the doors of their homes, much less affect them personally. The Bodhisattva will ultimately place his hand on the crown of their head and give predictions of their future Buddhahood.

“Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who aspire great compassion to help and liberate all sentient beings, beings who aspire to cultivate the unsurpassed bodhi, and beings who aspire to transcend the Three Realms. These people may see Earth Store’s image, hear his name and wholeheartedly take refuge in him. They may make offerings of incense, flowers, clothing, treasures, food and drink; and pay reverence to him. Such kind men and women will soon fulfill their vows and will never be obstructed.

“Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who wish to fulfill hundreds of thousands of millions of wishes and succeed in hundreds of thousands of millions of undertakings in both the present and future. These people should take refuge in this Bodhisattva, respectfully gaze, pay reverence, make offerings and sing praises to Earth Store Bodhisattva’s image. Then, they will achieve all their aspirations and goals. Moreover, should they pray to the great compassionate Earth Store Bodhisattva to support and protect them forever, the Bodhisattva will come to their dreams, place his hand on the crowns of their heads and give predictions of their future Buddhahood.

“Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who have profound reverence for the Mahayana sutras and have inconceivable aspirations to read and recite them. Yet, even with the instruction of a wise teacher showing them how to learn the sutras by heart, they quickly forget what they had just learned. Months and even years go by, they are still unable to read and recite those sutras. These kind men and others have karmic

obstacles from past lives that have not yet been resolved; therefore, they are unable to read and recite the Mahayana sutras.

“When such people hear Earth Store Bodhisattva’s name and see Earth Store Bodhisattva’s image, they should sincerely and reverently state their situation to the Bodhisattva. In addition, they should make offerings of incense, flowers, clothing, food, drink and all material objects that they enjoy to the Bodhisattva. They should place a cup of pure water before the Bodhisattva for a day and a night. Afterward, join palms and pray reverently facing the south. Drink the water with wholehearted sincerity and solemnness. After drinking the water, avoid the five pungent plants, alcohol, meat, sexual misconduct, false speech, killing and harming for one or three seven-day periods. Then, in their dreams, these kind men and kind women will see Earth Store Bodhisattva manifest his boundless body pouring water on the crowns of their heads. When they wake up, they will be endowed with keen intelligence. Should these sutras be heard in their ears but once, they will

forever remember them and never forget or lose a single sentence or verse.

“Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva! In the future, there may be people who lack food and clothing, who cannot obtain whatever they seek, who have frequent illnesses, who encounter much misfortune and decline, whose families or homes are without peace, whose relatives are separated or dispersed, who physically experience frequent sudden calamities or who are often terrified in their sleep. If such people hear Earth Store’s name, see Earth Store’s image and with wholehearted reverence chant his name a full ten thousand times, these unfortunate situations will gradually disappear. They will have peace and happiness thereafter. Their food and clothing will be abundant. They will be peaceful and happy even in dreams.

“Furthermore, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva! In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who — for the sake of livelihood, public or personal matters, events of birth and death or other emergencies — need to enter mountains or forests;

cross rivers, oceans or other large bodies of water; or travel along dangerous paths. If these people first chant Earth Store Bodhisattva's name a full ten thousand times, the ghosts and deities on the lands they pass through will guard and protect them. Whether they are walking, standing, sitting or lying down, their peace and happiness will be safeguarded. Even when they encounter tigers, wolves, lions or all that are poisonous or dangerous, they will not be harmed."

The Buddha told Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, "Earth Store Bodhisattva has a great karmic connection with Jambudvīpa. Suppose I were to describe the benefits and so forth derived by sentient beings who see his image and hear of his name, I could not finish in hundreds of thousands of eons. Therefore, Avalokiteśvara! You should use your supernormal power to propagate this sutra and enable sentient beings of Saha World to always have peace and happiness throughout hundreds of thousands of millions of eons."

At that time, the World-Honored One spoke in verse, saying:

“I observe that Earth Store’s awesome divine power cannot be told fully even in eons as many as grains of sand of Ganges River. Seeing, hearing, gazing at or respecting him in a thought-moment will benefit humans and heavenly beings in immeasurable ways. Men, women, dragon-like beings or deities, those who are nearing the end of the present karmic effect may fall into evil realms. By sincerely taking refuge in this Mahasattva, their lifespans will be extended and evil karma will be eliminated.

“Those who lost their parents or loved ones in their youth may wonder to which realm have their spirits gone. Whether brothers, sisters or other kin, the grown surviving ones do not know their whereabouts. If these people sculpt or paint this Mahasattva’s image, gaze up longingly, pay reverence to him continuously and chant his name for three seven-day periods, the Bodhisattva will

manifest his boundless body, reveal the realms that their relatives have been reborn in. Even if they have fallen into evil realms, they will soon gain release. If beings do not regress from their initial resolve, the Bodhisattva will place his hand on the crown of their head and give them holy predictions.

“People who want to cultivate the unsurpassed bodhi and be liberated from the Three Realm’s sufferings should aspire to have great compassion. They should first gaze up at and pay reverence to this Mahasattva’s image. All their vows will soon be fulfilled and no karmic obstacles can ever hinder or stop them.

“People may aspire to recite the sutras and wish to liberate confused beings over to the other shore.

Although their vow is so inconceivable, they soon forget what they read – much is wasted and lost. Because these people have karmic obstacles deluding them, they cannot remember the Mahayana sutras. They should make offerings to Earth Store with incense, flowers, clothing, food, drink and objects they enjoy. Place pure water before this Mahasattva for a day and a night. Then pray reverently and drink the water with sincerity and solemnness. Avoid the five pungent plants, alcohol, meat, sexual misconduct and false speech. Refrain from killing or harming for three seven-day periods and wholeheartedly meditate on this Mahasattva's name. Then soon in dreams, they will see his boundless body. When they wake up, they will gain a keen hearing. Once the sutras and teachings pass through their ears, they will never forget them throughout thousands of lives. Because this Mahasattva is so inconceivable, he can enable these people to gain such wisdom.



“Beings who are poor or afflicted by illnesses, whose households are in misfortune and decline, whose relatives or retinues are separated, whose sleep and dreams are not peaceful, who cannot obtain whatever they seek and nothing goes their way, should wholeheartedly gaze up at and pay reverence to Earth Store’s image. Then all the unfortunate events will disappear. They will be peaceful even in their dreams. Food and clothing will be abundant. Deities and ghosts will protect them.

“There may be people who will be entering mountains or forests or crossing the seas, where there are ferocious and poisonous fowls and beasts, evil people, evil deities, evil ghosts, ill winds or all sorts of calamities, sufferings and distress. They should gaze up, pay reverence and make offerings to the image of Earth Store Bodhisattva-

Mahasattva. Then, in the forests and mountains and on the great seas, those evils will all disappear.

“Avalokiteśvara, wholeheartedly listen to me. Earth Store’s inconceivable deeds are endless. Hundreds of thousands of eons are not enough to extensively expound on this Mahasattva’s powers. If people hear his name ‘Earth Store’ and see his image, gaze up, pay reverence, make offerings of incense, flowers, clothing, food and drink, they will experience wondrous joy for hundreds of thousands of eons. If they can dedicate such merits to the Dharma Realm, they will transcend the cycle of birth and death. They will ultimately become Buddhas. Therefore, Avalokiteśvara, you should know this and tell everyone throughout lands as many as Ganges’ sand.”

## **Chapter Thirteen**

### **Entrusting Humans and Heavenly Beings**

At that time, the World-Honored One raised his golden arm, placed his hand on the crown of Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva's head again and spoke these words, "Earth Store! Earth Store! Your supernatural power is inconceivable. Your kindness and compassion are inconceivable. Your wisdom is inconceivable. Your eloquence is inconceivable. Even if all the Buddhas of the ten directions were to praise and speak on the inconceivable matters about you, they could not describe fully in thousands of millions of eons.

"Earth Store! Earth Store! Remember that today in the Trayastrimsa Heaven, in this great assembly of hundreds of thousands of millions of inexpressibly-inexpressible number of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings, I once again entrust to you humans, heavenly beings and other beings who have not yet left the Three

Realms, who are still in this burning house. Do not allow these sentient beings to fall into the evil realms even for a single day and night, much less fall into the Hell of Fivefold Incessant Suffering or the Avici Hell, where they would pass through thousands of millions of eons without a time of release.

“Earth Store! The sentient beings of Jambudvipa have irresolute aspirations and nature; most of them are accustomed to evil. Even if they resolve to be virtuous, soon they will regress. If they encounter evil karmic connections, the maliciousness increases thought upon thought. For this reason, I transform into hundreds of thousands of millions of manifestations to guide them across to liberation, in accordance with their foundations and natures.

“Earth Store! I now earnestly entrust heavenly beings, humans and the multitudes of beings to you. In the future, there may be heavenly beings, kind men and kind women who plant a few virtuous roots in Buddhadharma, even as little as a strand of hair, a speck of dust, a grain of sand or a drop of water. You should use dharma power to support and protect them so that

they gradually cultivate the Unsurpassed Way. Do not let them regress from it.

“Furthermore, Earth Store! In the future, there may be heavenly beings or humans who fall into the evil realms to undergo their karmic effects. When on the verge of falling into these evil realms or when approaching the entrance of these evil realms, if these sentient beings can chant a Buddha’s name, a Bodhisattva’s name, a sentence or a verse from the Mahayana sutras, you should use your supernormal power to rescue these beings skillfully. Manifest your boundless body wherever they are and shatter the hells for them. Enable them to be reborn in the heavens and experience excellent and wondrous joy.”

At that time, the World-Honored One spoke in verse,

“Heavenly beings, humans and  
sentient beings of the present and future,  
I now earnestly entrust them to you:  
Use great supernormal power and  
skillful means to liberate them.  
Do not let them fall into the evil realms.”

At that time, Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva knelt with palms joined and said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! I pray World-Honored One not to be concerned. In the future, if there are kind men and kind women who have a single thought of respect in Buddhadharma, I will use hundreds of thousands of skillful means to guide these people across to liberation so that they will be freed from the cycle of birth and death quickly. How much more so for those who hear virtuous deeds and practice those deeds thought upon thought! Naturally they will never regress or turn away from the Unsurpassed Way.”

As these words were spoken, in the assembly there was a Bodhisattva named Void Space Store (*Ākāśagarbha*) who said to the Buddha, “World-Honored One! Since I came to the Trayastrimsa Heaven, I have heard Tathagata praise Earth Store Bodhisattva’s inconceivable and awesome supernormal power. In the future, there may kind men, kind women and Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings who hear this sutra, hear Earth Store’s name or gaze and pay reverence to his image. How many types of merits and benefits will these beings gain? World-Honored One, for the sake of all the

multitudes of beings in the present and future, please briefly speak about this.”

The Buddha told Void Space Store Bodhisattva, “Listen attentively! Listen attentively! I will describe them separately to you.

“In the future, there may be kind men and kind women who see Earth Store’s image and hear this sutra; who moreover read and recite it; who make offerings and donations of incense, flowers, food, drink, clothing or treasures; who sing his praises, gaze up at and pay reverence to him. These people will gain twenty-eight kinds of benefits:

1. Heavenly beings and dragon-like beings will protect them;
2. Their virtuous karma will increase daily;
3. They will accumulate superior Causes for Holiness;
4. They will not regress from bodhi;
5. Their food and clothing will be abundant;
6. They will not be affected by illness or infectious disease;

7. They will not be in disasters of flood or fire;
8. They will not be burglarized or robbed.
9. People who see them will admire and respect them;
10. Deities and ghosts will help and support them;
11. Women, who wish to, will be reborn as men;
12. Women, who wish to, will be reborn as women, and they will be daughters of kings and ministers;
13. They will have a dignified appearance and perfect features;
14. They will frequently be reborn in the heavens;
15. They may be emperors or kings;
16. They will attain the supernormal power of knowing their past lives;
17. Their wishes will be fulfilled;
18. Their families and retinues will be happy;
19. Sudden calamities will be eliminated;
20. They will forever avoid the suffering realms;
21. They will always arrive at their destination safely;
22. Their dreams at night will be peaceful and happy;
23. Their deceased relatives will leave suffering behind;
24. They will be reborn on the strength of their past merit;



25. Holy ones will praise them;
26. They will be intelligent and have keen faculties;
27. They will be replete with kindness and compassion;
28. They will ultimately become Buddhas.

“Furthermore, Void Space Store Bodhisattva! In the present and future, there may be heavenly beings, dragon-like beings, ghosts and deities who hear Earth Store’s name, pay reverence to Earth Store’s image or hear Earth Store’s vows, deeds and practices. If these beings sing his praises, gaze respectfully at and pay reverence to him, they will gain seven kinds of benefits:

1. They will quickly ascend the stages of holiness;
2. Their evil karma will be extinguished;
3. Many Buddhas will protect and be near them;
4. They will never regress from bodhi;
5. Their innate abilities will increase;
6. They will know their past lives;
7. They will ultimately become Buddhas.”

At that time, after hearing Sakyamuni Buddha praising and expounding all of Earth Store Bodhisattva's great awesome

supernormal powers, all the attendees from the ten directions – including all of the inexpressibly-inexpressible numbers of Buddhas, Tathagatas, Bodhisattva-Mahasattvas and Eight Legions of Heavenly Beings and Dragon-like Beings – marveled, exclaiming that there had never been anything like it.

At that time, immeasurable amounts of incense, flowers, heavenly clothing and jeweled ornaments rained down in the Trayastrimsa Heaven as offerings to Sakyamuni Buddha and Earth Store Bodhisattva. Afterward, the entire assembly again gazed and paid reverence. They joined their palms and withdrew.

**Namo Earth Store Bodhisattva-Mahasattva**  
(Repeat Three Times)

**Merit Dedication Verse**

May these merits and virtues  
adorn Buddhas' Pure Lands,  
repay the fourfold kindness from above,  
and relieve the suffering of the three realms below.  
May all who see or hear of this,  
aspire the bodhicitta and  
at the end of this life,  
be reborn together in the Land of Ultimate Bliss.



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