

The Inconceivably Wondrous Power of the Bodhisattva's Vows

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摘錄自恆實法師於地藏法會之開示

Excerpted from Dharma Master Heng Sure's talk during the Earth Store Dharma assembly

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我自己本身最初聽到地藏菩薩的名字的時候，還不太認識地藏菩薩到底是哪一位菩薩，《地藏菩薩本願經》又是哪一部經？最初出家的時候，是在三藩市十五街舊的金山寺。出家之前，我已經皈依三寶三年；後來做沙彌已九個月了，但是24年不好的習氣還是很重。三年零九個月的佛法善習才剛剛開始建立，還很容易帶著一些不好的習氣到廟上來。第一個就是兩舌，也就是講是講非；因為跟我一起在辦公室的另外一位出家人，他跟我差不多背景，所以很容易在不知不覺中，跟他談談話，就講一些六隻蛤蟆九隻眼睛——三隻蛤蟆有多少眼睛，也說不過來。也就是說，講了很多廢話，講了一些是非非，李家長、王家短的一些不應該說的話。很容易的，卻不認為是錯的！

好了！怎麼樣呢？結果肺臟就覺得痛；去醫院檢查，說有TB的種子在肺裏面。哇！怎麼會有這種情形？本來人很健康，竟有TB的種子！從醫院回來，那天晚上師父講經，他說：「出家人——尤其是修道的人，包括在家居士——願意修道，不能用口錯因果。」他繼續說：「錯因果，就是用自己的舌頭去挖地獄的路。惡口有四種，包括妄語、兩舌、惡口、綺語；在道場裏邊講是講非，你就不想墮地獄，你也會墮地獄。所以，我若不說出，就會害你的；因此要趕快痛改前非，我不願意看我的弟子惡用舌頭，然後墮地獄。」



When I personally first heard the name of Earth Store Bodhisattva, I didn't yet know which Bodhisattva he was; nor did I know the sutra called *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*. When I first became a monk I was at the old Gold Mountain Monastery on 15th Street in San Francisco. I had taken refuge with the Triple Jewel three years before leaving home and then I trained as a Shramenera for nine months. But the bad habits of the previous twenty-four years of my life were still very strong, and the good habits of three years and nine months of Buddhадharma were just beginning to establish themselves. So it was very easy

to bring a number of my bad habits into the temple with me. The first one was the habit of "divisive speech"—in other words, gossiping. There was another monastic in the office with me and we were of similar background, so it was very easy for us to start saying pointless things without even thinking about it like "six frogs with nine eyes—three frogs with how many eyes, still cannot count it." In other words, we gossiped and talked a lot of nonsense, things that should not be said like: "the Lee family is good, but the Wong family is bad." This all happened very casually—it did not even occur to us that we were doing something wrong.

So! What was the result of all that? A lung infection! I went to get examined at the hospital and was told there were TB spores in my lungs. What? How could this be possible? I had always been very healthy and now suddenly there were TB spores in my lungs! That night, after I returned from the hospital, my teacher gave a talk on the sutras. He said, "Monastics, especially those who are cultivating—including householders—and those who want to cultivate, should be careful not to create bad karma with mouth." He continued: "To do

聽師父這麼講，我覺得奇怪！師父好像在講我；我不知旁人有沒有那個感覺，我就覺得師父是針對我的情形，直接對我講話。所以，第二天師父下來，我有機會對師父說：「師父啊！我出家不到一年，我已經走錯了！」師父說：「是的！如果不是這樣子，地藏菩薩不需要發他的大願力。」喔！地藏菩薩？「師父，我怎麼樣痛改前非，回到正確的道路上？」他說：「我沒說只是地藏菩薩的願力啊！師父舉一角，其他三個角自己要提起來！」

聽到師父的教誨之後，我就到書櫃上拿起一本《地藏菩薩本願經》，這部經我竟然還沒有打開過。我把經放在佛前頂禮三拜，燃一支香，恭恭敬敬地打開經書。「南無本師釋迦牟尼佛，無上甚深微妙法……《地藏菩薩本願經》第一，忉利天宮……」開始念下去。因為那個時候在金山寺吃完了飯大概有40分鐘後，就要拜《大悲懺》，我就只念第一卷。奇怪，不知不覺在我的心中好像有一股清淨的風在刮，我覺得它在我生命中開了一個窗戶。然後，拜完了《大悲懺》馬上就念第二卷，一字一字念下去，第二天又念第三卷；因為當時沒有英文的本子，只有中文的本子，所以我念得非常慢，要兩天才念完。

念完了一部《地藏經》，覺得我的生命方向改過來了，好像一個指南，那個指南好像1、2、3、4度，讓我漸漸地回到正確的道路。地藏菩薩的願力真是不可思議的，地藏菩薩的慈悲不可思議！他的願力不可思議！他的辯才不可思議！他的方便不可思議！

從那天之後，我就慢慢地認識地藏菩薩到底是怎麼一位大菩薩；也就是說，釋迦牟尼佛把這個娑婆世界末法時代眾生的前途放在地藏王菩薩的身上，就是他要救度我們。所以他的責任是多麼大！我們越念《地藏菩薩本願經》，不論是在廟上，或是在家裏，我們慢慢地就越認識這位大尊師，他是這麼樣偉大！

that is to use your own tongue to dig a tunnel into hell. There are four types of wrong speech: lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and lewd talk. If you gossip in a place of cultivation then even if you don't want to fall into hell, you will fall into hell anyway. I have to make this clear or you risk coming to harm. So quickly resolve to change your ways. I don't want to see any of my disciples fall into hell as a result of misusing their tongues."

Hearing my teacher say such things, I was amazed! He seemed to be addressing me. I am not sure if others had this feeling or not; but I felt that his words were aimed directly at me and referred specifically to my situation. So the next day when he came down, I took the opportunity to say: "Shifu! I became a monk less than a year ago and already I have gone astray!" To which he replied, "Yes! If things were otherwise, Earth Store Bodhisattva would not have needed to make his great vows." Oh! Earth Store Bodhisattva? "Shifu," I asked, "how can I make the resolve to correct my past mistakes and return to the proper path?" "I do not say that you could do this merely through the power of the Earth Store Bodhisattva's vows! The master raised but one corner; the other three you must raise for yourself."

After hearing Shifu's teaching, I immediately walked over to the bookcase and picked up a copy of the *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*. Surprisingly, I had never before opened this sutra. I placed it in front of the Buddha and bowed three times in homage, lit a stick of incense and respectfully opened the book. "Namo the Original Teacher Shakyamuni Buddha, unsurpassed, very deep, subtly miraculous Dharma ..." Then I began to read: "*Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*", Part One, In the Palace of the Trayastrimsa Heaven ..." I was only able to finish reading the first scroll because at that time at Gold Mountain Monastery, the bowing of the "Great Compassion Repentance" began 40 minutes after the daily meal. Amazingly enough, and although I didn't notice it at first, it was like a pure, clean wind was blowing in my mind. I felt like a window had been opened in my life. Then, after the bowing of the "Great Compassion Repentance," I immediately started reading the second scroll, one word at a time. By the second day I had reached the third scroll. I read extremely slowly—it took me two days to finish—because only the Chinese text was available at that time. No English translation existed.

After I finished reading the whole *Earth Store Sutra*, I felt like my life had been reoriented. The sutra was like a compass, helping me to change my position by one degree, then two, then three, than four, until at last I was able to return to the correct path. I realized then how incredible was the power of Earth Store Bodhisattva's Vows, how incredible his compassion, how incredible his skill in debate, how incredible his expedient means!

From that day on I discovered more and more just how great a Bodhisattva Earth Store Bodhisattva is. Shakyamuni Buddha made it so that the future of all samsara-bound beings during the Dharma Ending Age depends on Earth Store King Bodhisattva. Since it is up to him to save us, his responsibility is enormous! The more we recite the *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*, whether in the temple or at home, the better we will come to understand this teacher who is so very worthy of our respect. How great he is!