

地藏菩薩本願經淺釋

THE SUTRA OF THE PAST VOWS OF EARTH STORE BODHISATTVA WITH COMMENTARY

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這部經的名字是以人法為名，地藏菩薩是人，本願是法。這個本，就是根本，也就是本來，本來和根本就是「以前」的意思。表示這是地藏菩薩以前所發的願。他在無量劫以前，生生世世都發願盡孝道，孝順父母，為父母捨棄自己的生命，去救度父母，這是地藏王菩薩的願力。

這個「經」字講過很多次了，不過在每一個講經法會，都應該講一講。為什麼呢？聽過經的，雖然明白這個道理；沒有聽過經的人，對於這個道理還不清楚，所以不妨重覆再說一下。有聽過經的人，對於這個道理還不清楚，所以不妨重覆再說一下。

「經」者，「徑」也。徑，就是徑路，修行的一條徑路；這條徑路是人人可以從這條路走的。你想要成佛，必須要經過這條路，所以這條路就是成佛的道路，因此說經者，徑也。「經」又有繩墨的意思。什麼叫繩墨呢？好像中國的木匠有一個墨斗，線放在裏面，要畫直線時，這一條線拉出來，用手一彈，就有一條黑的直線畫出來，這叫繩墨。經就如繩墨，可以幫助我們分辨邪正。「經」也有結鬘的意思。結鬘就是用一條線，穿著一朵一朵的花，成為一串；而經把義理貫串起來，就如同結鬘一樣。

此外，經還有四個意思：貫、攝、常、法。貫是貫穿起來。怎樣貫穿呢？貫穿所說義，將所說的道理和義理，就如同用一條線穿起來似的，一點都不會失去，不會遺漏。攝，就像吸鐵石似

This Sutra bases its title on a person and a dharma, with “Earth Store Bodhisattva” being the person and his “past vows” the dharma. Past can be interpreted as meaning ‘original’ 根本 gen ben, and as ‘previous’ 本來 ben lai. Both these interpretations indicate that these are vows Earth Store Bodhisattva made in the past. Previously – countless eons ago – and in life after life he constantly makes these vows to perfect his filiality, to serve his parents with filial devotion, and to rescue them even if it cost him his own life – such is Earth Store Bodhisattva’s vow-power.

I have explained the term sutra on many previous occasions, but it helps to go over it in every sutra lecture. Some of you learned it from prior lectures, yet others have not been to one until now and are not clear about its principles.

Sutras are a path. This path is the way of cultivation open to anyone who wishes to follow it. If you wish to become a Buddha, you must take this route. This is the way to Buddhahood. Thus sutras are a path. Sutras also are likened to a carpenter’s inked line. When a carpenter needs a straight line, he inks a string, draws it taut, and lets it snap back to mark a straight black line. Sutras are like the inked line in that it can help us tell the proper from the deviant. Sutras are also likened to garlands. Flowers are strung to create a garland just as the principles are strung together in the sutras. Thus, comes the analogy of a garland.

There are four more meanings: threading, attracting, permanent, and law. Threading is as if stringing the meanings in the sutra together on a thread so none will be left out or lost. Attracting has the function of a magnet which, when aimed at iron filings will draw the filings to it. What do sutras attract? They draw in those who are ready to be Buddhas and speak Dharma in order to transform beings

的。你用吸鐵石往這兒一動，鏘！鐵就吸上來了。這攝，吸什麼呢？攝持所化機。佛所說的法，度化眾生的機緣。所化的「機」，就是佛所說的經典，好像吸鐵石似的，把應受化的眾生都吸來了。

好像我現在講經，你們大家都來了，這都是吸來。講經時，你們為什麼都來了呢？就是這個攝的力量攝來的。力量小，就攝來少一點人；力量大，就攝來多一點人。所以把某人從西雅圖也攝來了，這都是一種攝的力量。這個攝的力量，就像吸鐵石似的。吸鐵石攝鐵，你看見它其中有一種什麼力量把東西吸上來，可是無形中已經吸來了，這就是攝。

廣東話說，父母對小孩子很愛護的，這就叫攝——攝受。那麼佛用一種慈悲心對待眾生，眾生對佛有一種恭敬心，這就是佛攝受一切眾生。

經還有「常」的意思，不變曰「常」。經，一字不可去，一字不可添；不能增，不能減，這叫常。常就是不變的意思，永遠不變。你想改變嗎？那你就下地獄。這不是指專制強權，經的道理是像鐵一般似的，不可改變，這叫常。

第四個意思是「法」。什麼叫法呢？是三世同遵。前面「常」是古今不變。過去世、現在世、未來世，這叫三世，三世都要依照這個法去修行。這是永久、永久性的一種憲法，不是臨時的憲法，是永久的法。

經，梵語「修多羅」，翻譯成中文就叫「契經」。在中國，古人有契約。那時候，買賣產業不需要到政府去註冊，登記產權；而是把合約寫在一張紙上，然後把它疊好了，用剪刀剪成一長一短，像狗牙似的，你拿這一段，我拿這一段，就互相買賣地業、產業。你說：「我的地賣給你啦！」我就說：「我買了你的地。」這有什麼證據？把買方和賣方的一段紙，各拿出來，這麼一對狗牙一合在一起，一點都不錯，這叫「契」，這叫「若合符節」。合就是契合了；這個契，合起來了。

那契經是什麼意思呢？往上講是「上契諸佛之理」，和諸佛的理相合；諸佛的理也就是諸佛的心，合佛的心。「下契眾生之機」，往下契合眾生的機宜。

according to their potentials and affinities. That is why the sutras the Buddhas speak are like magnets that draw in sentient beings who are due to be transformed.

Similarly, you have come to my sutra lectures because this attracting power brought you here. When the power is less, fewer people are drawn to it; when the power is strong, more people come. This attracting power has drawn some of you all the way from Seattle to here. Like the invisible pull that a magnet has on iron filings, before you know it, you have been drawn in – attracted.

In the Cantonese dialect, parents' loving care for their children is referred to as attracting and accepting. So, too, Buddhas treat sentient beings with kindness and compassion, and in turn sentient beings regard the Buddhas with respect. Here, attracting refers to how Buddhas attract and accept sentient beings.

Another meaning for sutra is permanent, meaning that it does not change. Not one word can be omitted and not one word can be added to sutras, thus they are described as unchangeable forever. Anyone who decides to change them will have to endure the hells. This is not some strong-arm autocracy at work. It is simply that the principles in the sutras are as if composed of steel and as such cannot be altered – they remain permanent.

The fourth meaning is law. Law is respected by those throughout the three periods of time – past, present, and future. Above, the description of 'permanent' means unchanged from antiquity to the present. Here, the description of 'law' means all in the three periods of time should abide by the law in their practice. This law is eternal. It is an eternal – not temporary – constitution.

Sutra (經jing) is a Sanskrit word which is transliterated in Chinese as xiu do lo (修多羅) and which means a 'text that tallies.' In olden days in China, property was not transferred at the County Recorder's Office. Instead, the contract would be written on a piece of paper that was then folded and cut zigzag with scissors into two halves, one for each of the parties to hold on to. So what proof would we have if, say, you offered to sell me your lot and I agreed to buy your land? We would each produce our tally and the zigzags should match perfectly. Thus, the Chinese expression: A match like the two tallies of a halved bamboo. That is the meaning of tallying – making a match.

What is the meaning of 'a text that tallies.'

Above, they tally with the principles of the Buddha.

The principles of all Buddhas are just the minds of the Buddhas, i.e., upward, they match the Buddhas' minds.

Below, they tally with the potentials of sentient beings.

Downward, they are in keeping with sentient beings' propensities.

待續

To be continued