

## Recite the Earth Store Sutra with Sincere Filial Devotion

# 用真正的孝心誦《地藏經》

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A talk given by Xiao Dan Jin on August 23, 2011 in the Buddha Hall of CTTB

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《地藏菩薩本願經》是一部孝經，地藏王菩薩在因地修行時感動天地的孝心，使在三惡道中的母親脫離苦難。同時，也為眾生發大願，願我們也能離苦得樂。《地藏經》多處提到：地藏菩薩於閻浮提有大因緣，所以，業障現前或有疾病、苦難時，我們讀誦《地藏經》祈求消除業障。

應以什麼樣的心態來誦《地藏經》呢？我讀誦《地藏經》時，腦子裡常常打很多妄想，不能專心。曾經讀誦了很多遍，讀起來也有時很熟的，念了上句，常常知道下句是什麼，有時甚至可以順著背下來。看到地藏菩薩的孝心和為眾生發的大願，又覺得自己很難做到。所以，我誦《地藏經》時，只是在文字上用功夫，並沒有在自己的心地上真正有所改變。

今年婆婆過八十大壽，暑假回大陸時，先到婆家。我雖然生病了，仍每天堅持誦一部《地藏經》。因為有病，心想：「自己究竟做過什麼惡業，會讓自己生病呢？」所以就專心、誠心地誦《地藏經》。婆婆幾年前小中風，所以都是由我的小姑來幫她洗澡；小姑有時會忙得忘記回來給我婆婆洗澡。

我同修曾經問我可不可以為婆婆洗澡？我說可以。但我知道，自己並不是真心願意去做。我們常常聽上人教導我們：做人要孝順。可到自己真正要做時，就往後縮。這次回國，我就想：不應該只是聽，而不做。所以，這次真的很誠心地想要幫婆婆洗澡。

我很認真地為婆婆洗頭、洗身體，才真正感受到，人老了真是需要人關懷。在洗澡中，腦子裡突然有個念頭，就是我

We all know that the *Earth Store Sutra* is the sutra of filial respect, which the Earth Store Bodhisattva practiced during the formative stages of his spiritual practice. His filial devotion moved heaven and earth and helped his parent leave the hardships of the unwholesome paths. He had made vows to help beings such as you and me to leave suffering and find happiness. The *Earth Store Sutra* mentions in several places that Earth Store Bodhisattva has great affinities with the beings in Jambudvīpa, which is why whenever our karmic obstacles manifest or we suffer illness or difficulties, we like to recite the *Earth Store Sutra* to eradicate our karmic obstacles.

What should our attitude be when we recite the *Earth Store Sutra*? Take me, for an example. Many discursive thoughts arise when I recite the *Earth Store Sutra*, to the point that I cannot focus on my recitation. I have recited the *Earth Store Sutra* so many times and am so familiar with it that I know what passage comes next. Sometimes I can even recite by memory. Reading about the filial devotion of Earth Store Bodhisattva and his great vows for beings, I feel it is rather difficult for me to do the same. So, whenever I recite the *Earth Store Sutra*, I had only applied efforts to the text itself without trying to make any changes in my own mind ground.

This summer when I went back to China, I first visited my mother-in-law to celebrate her 80th birthday. Though I was sick again, I continued to recite the *Earth Store Sutra* once every day. Due to the illness, I thought, "What evil karma had I done to cause me to be ill?" So, I was really focused and sincere when I recited the *Earth Store Sutra*. My mother-in-law had a mild stroke a few years ago, so her daughters, my husband's elder sisters, would come home to bathe her. My sisters-in-law sometimes were too busy to remember to come home to bathe my mother-in-law.

My husband had asked me if I would bathe my mother-in-law, and I gave a positive answer. However, I knew I wasn't really willing to do so. We had often heard the Venerable Master teach and remind us repeatedly— as human beings, we should practice filiality. I was really happy to hear it, but I retreat when it's time for me to truly practice it. During this trip home, I thought I should practice filiality. I shouldn't just listen without actually practicing it. So I was sincerely willing this time to bathe my mother-in-law.

的病會變好，果然一星期後，我的病就好了。我才發自內心有了這麼一點點孝心，就和《地藏經》有了相應，原來我們眾生要用真正的孝心去誦《地藏經》，才能與這部孝經有感應。所謂「德未修，感未至」。

上人第一次誦《地藏經》時，就感動不已，覺得地藏菩薩對眾生這樣悲心切切，太慈悲了！便發願每天定時跪在佛前，虔誠地念一部《地藏經》，一跪就要大約兩個小時。膝蓋跪破了，他也不知道痛，越念越高興，身心非常清靜舒暢，又被人罵、被人打也不灰心。有時我誦《地藏經》時，就會想：怎麼一點兒也沒有上人的那種感覺呢？原來上人是真正有孝心的人，而我沒有。上人在他母親生病時，也是給他母親洗澡，伺候他母親。而且十九歲時，為母親廬墓守孝三年。他圓滿了小孝，最終成就了大孝。

我們都稱地藏菩薩是大願地藏王菩薩。他發的大願，就是要度我們這些六道中一切苦難的眾生。下面我和大家分享，地藏菩薩幫助我的故事。

《地藏經》中有一段經文：「若未來世中，閻浮提內，刹利、婆羅門、長者、居士，一切人等及異姓種族有新產者，或男或女，七日之中，早與讀誦此不思議經典，更為念菩薩名，可滿萬遍。是新生子，或男或女，宿有殃報，便得解脫，安樂易養，壽命增長。」

我同修看到這段經文，便從邁可出生的第一天起，每天為邁可誦一部《地藏經》。當時本想邀請我婆婆和我媽媽從中國過來幫忙，結果兩位老人的美國簽證，都被拒簽了四五次。從醫院回到家裡，收到電話留言：我媽媽又被拒簽了。心情一下子很沉重，覺得不知所措。

邁可回家不久，就開始哭個不停，到夜裡哭得更大聲。大概是我的母乳不足，便把醫院送的嬰兒牛奶給他喝，沒想到，他喝了兩口便不要了，哭得更來勁了。聽他的小肚子似乎嘖嘖咕咕地叫，是不是他的肚子痛？便輕輕地揉他的小肚子，又用溫毛巾來熱敷他的肚子，這麼折騰到凌晨三四點鐘。最後實在不行了，只好給兒科醫

I took it seriously washing my mother-in-law's hair and her body. Then, I truly felt that people in their old age do need care and attention. When I was bathing her, a thought suddenly came to my mind that I would recover from my illness. A week later, I did get well. I thought, I had only brought forth a tiny devotion to practice filiality, but I was already getting a response from reciting the *Earth Store Sutra*. I realized that only if we recited the *Earth Store Sutra* with sincere filial devotion, could we truly connect with this sutra of filiality. As it is said, "One cannot have any response without cultivating virtues."

When the Venerable Master recited the *Earth Store Sutra* for the first time, he was so moved by Earth Store Bodhisattva's great compassion towards beings that he vowed to kneel in front of the Buddhas and sincerely recite the entire *Earth Store Sutra* each day. The recitation took him about two hours, after which he would have broken skin on his knees, but he didn't even feel the pain. The more he recited, the happier he was. He felt serene and pleasant in both body and mind such that he wouldn't retreat even if scolded or beaten up. I sometimes think when I am reciting the *Earth Store Sutra*, "How come I don't feel a bit like the Venerable Master?" Then I realize that the Venerable Master was a person with true filial devotion, and I am not. The Venerable Master had bathed and waited on his mother when she was sick. He also observed mourning by her grave for three years at the age of nineteen. He fulfilled his filial obligations to his family and also extended his filial practice to a much greater scale.

We address Earth Store Bodhisattva as "Earth Store Bodhisattva, King of Great Vows," because his great vows can liberate beings undergoing hardships in the six paths. I would like to share a story about how Earth Store Bodhisattva has helped me.

A passage in the *Earth Store Sutra* says, "In the future in Jambudvīpa when the wives of Kshatriyas, Brahmans, Elders, Upasakas, and those of other names and clans are about to give birth to sons or daughters, the family members should recite this sutra, and recite the Bodhisattva's name a full ten thousand times during the seven days before or after the birth of their children. If those infants, whether male or female, were destined to undergo a terrible retribution for things done in past lives, they will be liberated from those retributions. They will be peaceful, happy, easily raised, and will have long lives. If those children were due to receive blessings, then their peace and happiness will be increased, as well as their lifespan."

Upon reading this, my husband recited the *Earth Store Sutra* once every day in the hospital for Michael from the day he was born. At that time I had invited my mother-in-law and my mom from China to come help me; however, both of their visa applications were turned down four or five times. As soon as we got home, we received the phone messages that my mom's application got turned down again. I felt completely depressed and did not know what to do.

Not long after we returned home, Michael started to cry nonstop, and the situation worsened at night time. I guess it was due to the

生打電話。醫生說，有的小孩子有可能對牛奶過敏等等；講了一大堆，還是沒有解決問題。

我把他抱在懷裡，他哭累了，就睡一會。醒了喝幾口母乳，繼續哭。開始哭時，他的臉是漲紅的，到後來哭時，整個臉都變得發紫，十幾秒鐘上不來氣，沒了聲音。嚇得我抱起他，拍他的後背，趕緊念觀音菩薩，等他哭出聲來，懸著的心才落下來。此時的我已筋疲力盡，精神和身體的雙重壓力，使我一生從來沒有覺得這麼難過。不知道自己應該怎麼去做；內心充滿了無助，不知誰能幫我度過這次難關。

這個時候，我同修在另外一個房間裡為邁可誦《地藏經》，我也抱著他，為他誦地藏王菩薩聖號，當誦到最後，唱地藏菩薩贊時：「地藏菩薩妙難倫，化現金容處處分……」我已淚流滿面地痛哭流涕。人在急難時，求菩薩的心最誠。我邊哭邊望著虛空，心裡對地藏王菩薩說：「大慈大悲地藏王菩薩，請您化現一個金身來幫幫我吧！哪怕只讓我看看您的金身，我也滿足了。」

不到一個小時，突然有人敲門，覺得非常奇怪：因為我們還沒有通知任何朋友邁可出生的消息，打開門一看，原來是對面鄰居家的女主人。大約兩個月前，在公寓走廊裡碰過一次面，她正好帶著她三個月大的女兒看醫生回家，彼此打過一聲招呼而已。她一進門，就很著急地問：「小孩子怎麼樣了？」我就把邁可的情況告訴她。她二話不說抱起邁可餵食母乳，邁可喝足了，一聲不哭地呼呼睡了幾個小時。她告訴我們：可以買些嬰兒豆奶餵他。

從此以後，邁可變得安靜了，再也不哭了，非常好養。兩個星期便自己常常笑，一個月時就好像被氣吹起來一樣，又胖又壯；兩三個月後，便可自己通宵睡大覺，醒著的時候常常開心地笑，非常快樂。所以那時，我在七天內念完一萬聲地藏王菩薩聖號，同修在廿一天裏誦了廿一部《地藏經》。所以，《地藏經》中講的真是真實不虛！

insufficiency of breast milk, so I made him some infant formula provided by the hospital. Who knew he would stop drinking it after two sips and cry even harder? His little tummy seemed to growl, so we wondered if he had a stomachache. We gently massaged his little tummy, and tried to warm up his tummy with warm towels. We struggled until three or four o'clock in the morning. We were so anxious and hopeless that we called the pediatrician. We were told that some babies were allergic to milk. It still didn't resolve our problem after a long conversation with different assumptions.

I held him in my arms. Being tired from crying, he would sleep a while. When he awoke, he would continue to cry after a few sips of breast milk. When he first started crying, his face would turn red, and then purple. At one point, he could not catch his breath for ten odd seconds and did not make a sound. In shock, I picked him up, patted his back, and recited Guanyin Bodhisattva's holy name immediately. Not until I heard him cry out loud did I stop worrying. I was already really tired from giving birth to him. With all these torments, I was even more exhausted. I had never felt this kind of physical and spiritual pressure all my life. I didn't know what to do. I felt hopeless and didn't know who could help me get through this difficulty.

My husband was again reciting the *Earth Store Sutra* in a different room for Michael. I had also held him in my arms and recited Earth Store Bodhisattva's holy name. At last, when it came time to recite the Praise to Earth Store Bodhisattva, He chanted "Earth Store Bodhisattva, wonderful beyond compare, gold-hued in transformation body he appears..." Tears rolled down on my face. I couldn't stop crying out loud when I chanted. When people need help, they must be most sincere in seeking help. I looked up into the air while crying and said to Earth Store Bodhisattva, in my mind "Kind and compassionate Earth Store Bodhisattva, please appear in a gold-hued transformation body to help me. I'll be satisfied if I can just see your gold-hued transformation body."

Less than an hour later, someone knocked at the door. We all felt odd because we hadn't informed any friend of the birth of the baby since we were so busy. Who could it be? It was the woman living right across from us. We had only met and greeted each other once in the corridor about two months ago when she returned home with her three-month-old daughter after their visit to the doctor. Upon entering, she anxiously asked, "How is the baby?" I told her how Michael was crying. She didn't say anything else, but picked up Michael and fed Michael the breast milk. Michael indulged in it and fell asleep for a few hours after he was satisfied. She suggested we buy some infant soy formula for him.

Ever since that day Michael has been quiet. He never cried again, and was easily raised. Two weeks later, he was smiling all the time. A month later, he became strong and chubby. Two or three months later, he slept through the night, and often happily laughed when he awoke. During that time, I was able to recite Earth Store Bodhisattva's holy name ten thousand times within seven days, and my husband recited the *Earth Store Sutra* twenty-one times within twenty-one days. All that is said in the *Earth Store Sutra* is true and real.