

地藏菩薩妙難倫—萬佛聖城地藏七心得分享

The Power of Earth Store Bodhisattva's Vows

—Participants in the Earth Store Session Share Their Stories at CTTB

編輯部 整理

Compiled by the Editorial Staff

• Thomas Fletcher

I first read the *Earth Store Sutra* many years ago, perhaps twelve or thirteen years ago. The first time I read the sutra, I was mesmerized by it and felt as if struck in a trance, as if everything I looked at was no longer something material. The *Earth Store Sutra* was so wonderful that I felt completely transported to another world. I remember I was driving to the airport in Toronto, Canada to pick the Master. On the trip there, we were driving past forests and lakes and it seemed like everything was alive. The *Earth Store Sutra* says that a Buddha can appear as a lake or a mountain or as a forest. The sutra talks a lot about the spiritual realm and I remember that, like I said, everything became alive and otherworldly.

As we were waiting for the Master's plane to land and for him to get through customs, I was sitting in the airport finishing the sutra. As I finished it, I placed it down and placed it on the table in front of me; I was still struck, mesmerized, and hypnotized in a trance. I just sat there staring at the sutra. An elderly woman sitting beside me said, "Yes, the *Earth Store Sutra* is wonderful!" as if she sensed the reaction I had to the sutra.

• Thomas Fletcher

第一次讀《地藏經》大概是在十二、三年前，非常震撼而且著迷。經文非常美妙，彷彿帶我進入另一個世界。當時我要開車到多倫多機場接我的師父，沿途經過的山林湖泊彷彿都是活生生的。因為《地藏經》上說，諸佛菩薩會化身為山林川原、河池泉井，也描述了很多鬼王神眾，因此《地藏經》令我著迷之處，就是所見萬物不再只是物質世界的呈現。

在機場等待師父過海關的時候，我把《地藏經》讀完了。當我把經書放在面前的桌子上，坐在那兒盯著經書，內心震撼久久未散之際，突然身旁的一位老太太對我說：「對，《地藏經》就是這麼妙！」彷彿知道我的感觸一樣。



To me, I feel that the amazing sections of the *Earth Store Sutra* are the parts describing the darkest places—the hells. When I read it, I feel that it uplifts me, almost as if I'm lifted up to the heavens where the Buddha is speaking the sutra. You get the whole spectrum of samsara, everything from the heavens to the pits of the hells. It almost expands your horizons and you're left with this really wide and wonderful view, whereas normally we see everything in our own narrow perspective. The *Earth Store Sutra* widens that outlook.

Just as a closing story, around seven or eight years ago, I was living in Chile and I found out that a childhood friend of mine had hepatitis and passed away in the hospital. I had not stayed in touch with him for quite a while, but we were best friends when we were very young. I decided to recite the *Earth Store Sutra* for him. I remember having a dream; it was a very brief dream but vivid. After I had recited the sutra and transferred the merit to him, he appeared and thanked me. Such is the potency of reciting a sutra like the *Earth Store Sutra*! We can take the goodness we accrue from reciting it and then channel it to someone in need.

I have to leave for Argentina in a couple of days. I'm grateful that I had the chance before my departure to pay my respects to Earth Store Bodhisattva on his birthday. I think that's a good way to leave before a big trip. Thank you. Amitofo.

• 黃果玉

今天跟各位結法緣，講一講我是如何開始念《地藏經》，以及參加聖城地藏法會後發生的一些事情。

我的先生病了很多年。我幸運地得到善知識的指點，建議每天除了禮佛外，同時拜〈水懺〉以及念《地藏經》。就這樣，我開始念《地藏經》，持續多年不間斷。先生的病很不簡單，但是他沒有什麼病苦。先生自知時至，於是那天不讓我上班，把我留在家裡。他一直睡到傍晚，忽然抬起頭來往上看，說：「就這麼走了嗎？」然後把手錶脫下給我，這就是他的遺言。我的先生是蘇格蘭人，佛教徒，吃素。我相信念《地藏經》給了他很大的幫助，他走得非常殊勝安詳。

第二件事情發生在2015年，我在聖城參加地藏七，週六圓滿日那天開車回到Cow Mt.的家。我不知道那天下午加州發生森林大火，回到Cow Mt.才發現回不了家，於是在外面住了兩週。當時大家都認為房子一定燒沒了，因為火就是從我們家附近的Cow Mt.開始的。結果是，再差四分之一哩就燒到了，我的屋子連灰都沒有。這真是一個奇蹟。

第三件事情是，在2016年，地藏七開始前的那個禮拜五，我簽約要賣山上的房子，週六就住進聖城參加地藏七。之後的兩週內，有人出現金要買房子，我決定速戰速決。到了觀音七我又住進聖城，房子就在打七期間過戶了，過程十分順利圓滿。

《地藏經》之所以不可思議，在於它雖然描述最黑暗幽冥的地獄，但是讀誦經文之時，我也彷彿親臨了天上的妙境，佛陀為母親演說《地藏經》的地方。透過《地藏經》，我們得知娑婆世界的兩端——天堂和地獄，學會不用狹隘的眼光解讀這個世界。《地藏經》擴展了我的視野。

結束之前和大家分享一個故事。大約七、八年前，當時我還在智利，得知我孩童時代的一位朋友因為肝炎在醫院去世了。雖然我們多年沒有聯絡，但是他是我孩童時代最好的朋友，於是我決定為他誦《地藏經》。當我誦完經並且迴向功德給他以後，我做了一個夢。那個夢不長，但是很生動真實，在夢中他感謝我為他誦《地藏經》。這件事令我認識到讀誦《地藏經》的感應，我們可以將讀誦《地藏經》的功德，迴向給需要幫助的眾生。

再過幾天我就要回阿根廷去了，非常感恩臨走前還有機會參加地藏七，能在地藏菩薩的誕辰日禮拜地藏菩薩，我相信這是遠行前一個很好的道別。感恩大家，阿彌陀佛！

• Huang Guoyu

Today I will share my story of how I started reciting the *Earth Store Sutra* and some things that happened to me after joining CTTB's Earth Store Session.

My husband was very ill for years, but luckily I got some advice from good knowing advisors to recite the *Earth Store Sutra* in addition to bowing to the Buddhas and the Compassionate Samadhi Water Repentance every day. Therefore, I started to read the Sutra and did this for many years. My husband's illness wasn't simple but he didn't have any pain. He knew when he was going to leave this world. That Monday, he kept me at home, so I didn't go to work. For the whole day, he slept. Closer to the evening, he suddenly lifted his head, looked up and asked, "I'm leaving just like this?" He then took off his watch and gave it to me—those were his last words. My husband was from Scotland; he was a Buddhist and vegetarian. I believe reciting the *Earth Store Sutra* helped him leave peacefully and I believe he went to a good place.

The second thing happened to me in 2015. I was at CTTB participating in the Earth Store Session. We finished on a Saturday and I drove back home near Cow Mountain in Lake County. I didn't know there was a big forest fire and the roads were blocked. I temporarily stayed at some places for two weeks. Everyone thought my house burned down as the

為什麼過程能這麼順利圓滿呢？因為我聽說念《地藏經》可以幫助準備要賣房子的人。我認識一個人，房子很久賣不掉，結果念《地藏經》就成功了。所以我也拼命地念《地藏經》，而且又在聖城參加地藏法會，所以也印證在我的身上。南無地藏王菩薩，南無阿彌陀佛！

• Alex Wang

Today I'd like to share some of my reflections about Earth Store Bodhisattva's vows and how to take him as an example in my own cultivation.

Over the past half a year or so I have been trying to pay extra attention to the karma I create from speech. So when I was asked to give this talk a couple of days ago, I started to think about what can I learn from Earth Store Bodhisattva to help me in this endeavor. This eventually led me to think about how Earth Store Bodhisattva made vows to spend uncountable eons helping living beings who are suffering for their offenses. I can barely remember to return a tool or respond to an email in a timely manner, let alone spend the rest of eternity saving living beings. How was he possibly able to make such an inconceivable vow like this and still be fulfilling his vow without becoming weary?

I realized that keeping these ordinary promises that I make to people in my everyday life is a cornerstone for making any vow. When I make a promise to someone, I need to keep my words, just like how Earth Store Bodhisattva sets forth an intention to save all living beings. However, usually if I lack the ability or time, I tend to not fulfill that promise because of my own stupidity, confusion, laziness, or for any other reasons. By making excuses and justifications for my actions, I have already planted the seed for failing in a future vow.

The reason why is because in this process of debating whether or not I should keep my word because I'm feeling tired or because I found something more interesting to do, I am leaving room for excuses to not do what is proper. I have then opened up the opportunity to not take what I say seriously, to not honor my word, and to not live up to my principles. This is the place where one will lose sight of their discernment from what

fire started close to my home. Luckily, the fire was a fourth of a mile away from reaching my house and my neighbors' homes. My house was untouched and there weren't any ashes around. It was a miracle.

In 2016, the Friday before the Earth Store Session started at CTTB, I signed some papers to sell my house by Cow Mountain. On Saturday, I went to stay at CTTB for the session. Two weeks later, someone placed a cash offer to buy my house. I decided to sell it as soon as possible. Then I stayed at CTTB for the Guan Yin session and after a day, the sale closed within the week. The sale of my home went smoothly.

How did I sell my home so quickly and smoothly? I've heard reciting *Earth Store Sutra* can help people sell their home easily. I happened to know of someone who had a similar response from reciting *Earth Store Sutra*. So I know that my participation in CTTB's Earth Store Session and my daily recitation of the *Earth Store Sutra* really helped me. Namó Earth Store Bodhisattva. Namó Amitabha Buddha!

• 王智通

今天想和大家分享一下學習地藏菩薩的願力，並將之付諸實踐的心得。

過去一年半的時間，我一直在思考口業的問題。幾天前受邀來分享心得，就開始思索自己如何從菩薩的身上來學習口業清淨，甚至想到地藏菩薩累劫以來發弘誓願，救度罪業眾生，而我卻連歸還用具或回覆郵件，這些可以馬上做好的事情都經常忘記，更不用提救度眾生這件事了。地藏菩薩到底是怎麼做到的，甚至迄今依然不辭勞苦地履行他的大願？

我發現平常對別人許下的承諾，其實就是給將來發弘誓願打基礎。當我答應別人要完成某件事，內心就有一個想去完成的動機，如同地藏菩薩也是有一個救眾生的動機。除非是我能力不足或者時間不夠，否則如果因為愚痴、困惑、懶惰或者其他的藉口，而無法履行自己的諾言，無形之中就給將來的願力種下負面的種子。

因為無論是太累，或者有更想做的另一件事，當開始猶豫是否要遵守諾言之際，其實就在準備幫自己找一個藉口，可以不必做該做的事。如此一來，我開始養成不把自己所說的話當一回事的習慣；逐漸就會失去分辨是非的能力，錯誤的知見和行為也離我不遠了。

這就讓我想到，日常生活中有多少次或者忘記，或是覺得疲倦、不容易完成或是有其他更重要的事，而把答應的事情拖到明天或者改天再做？如果明明知道有人等著我們履行諾言，我們都還能不守信用，那麼當沒人提醒我們該做什麼的時候，豈不是更輕易放棄？

也許有人覺得：「這很嚴重嗎？如果太累或者想做其他更有趣的事，就把這件事情留到明天就行啦！」想想地藏菩薩發的願，菩薩可不是說：「喔，只要不太困難，或者等我晚餐吃飽，

is right and wrong. From here wrong views and misconduct are not far away.

This made me think, “How often in our everyday lives do we say that we’ll do something and forget? How often do we put it off for another day because it’s too hard or because we’re tired or have something more important to do?” If no one reminds us that a person is waiting for us to fulfill our promise, then we might forget to do what is proper even more easily.

Now, you may be thinking, “What’s the big deal? If I’m too tired or if there is something more interesting, can I just do it tomorrow?” Earth Store Bodhisattva didn’t say “I vow to save all living beings as long as it’s not too hard, or as long as I have had enough dinner and there isn’t anything good on TV.” Earth Store Bodhisattva said that he would spend uncountable eons using expansive expedient means to save living beings. Think about it. Here in America we complain about having to work nine hours a day with only an hour lunch break. Can you even imagine doing a 10,000-eon shift of saving living beings?

This reminds me of a section from Dharma Master Xing An’s *Exhortation to Resolve Upon Bodhi*:

“If he hears that the road to Buddhahood is long and far, yet does not retreat in fear; if he observes that beings are hard to transform, yet does not become weary, if he proceeds as though climbing a ten-thousand-foot mountain, determined to reach the summit or proceeds as though ascending a nine-storied stupa, fixed upon advancing to the top, then his resolve is true.”

Master Hua’s commentary: A resolve like that where we don’t give up half-way or quit before we get there, but see it through to the end, indicates a proper resolve upon Bodhi.

• 葉鑽鑽

我喜歡誦經，每天習慣誦一部《地藏經》，今晚就講一講開始誦《地藏經》的因緣。

大概八年前，九個來自不同國家的人被安排住在國際譯經院（IITBT）。那是一棟很大的建築物，我們九個人住六間房間，晚上的時候很黑，伸手不見五指，總是讓我想到恐怖電影裡的那種別墅。因為很怕鬼，所以萌生誦經的念頭。誦經可以讓我的心踏實一點，而且希望誦經之後，能與無形的眾生和平共處。

那時候想，要誦哪一部經呢？因為剛搬來不久就遇上地藏法會，結緣處放了很多《地藏經》，於是我請了一部《地藏經》開始誦。道場生活非常緊湊，每天只有時間念一卷，《地藏經》有上、中、下三卷，我就分三天唸完一部。每天念，每



或者精彩的電視節目都播完了，我就發願救度一切眾生。」地藏菩薩的願是：盡未來際不可計劫，為是罪苦六道眾生，廣設方便，盡令解脫。想想在美國這個國家，人們抱怨一天工作九個小時，卻只有一個小時的午餐休息時間。你能想像菩薩盡未來際不可計劫，都在救度罪苦的眾生嗎？

這讓我想起了省庵大師的《勸發菩提心文》，其中有一段說：「聞佛道長遠，不生退怯；觀眾生難度，不生厭倦。如登萬仞之山，必窮其頂；如上九層之塔，必造其顛。如是發心，名之為『真』。」上人說像這樣的發心，不中道自劃，不半途而廢，有始有終，這就叫「真正發菩提心」。

• Juan-Juan Yeap

I do like reciting sutras very much and recite the *Earth Store Sutra* once daily. I'll share why I started to recite the *Earth Store Sutra*.

About eight years ago, about nine of us from different countries were arranged to stay in the IITBT building. It is a ginormous building and there were only nine of us living in six rooms. At night, it's pitch black and you cannot see your hand in front of you. It was as if we living in a haunted building in a horror film. I'm very scared of ghosts so I thought I should start to recite sutras to calm my mind and to share the blessings with invisible beings so we can live in harmony.

I started wondering what sutra I should recite and it happened to be Earth Store session at that time. The donation department had many copies of the *Earth Store Sutra* so I took a copy and started reciting. Life at the

天迴向給周圍的眾生，跟他們打好關係，就這樣相安無事地住了四、五個月。

開始念《地藏經》之後，發現兒子變乖了。他有一個毛病困擾我們兩年多，在來聖城之前，我們每年暑假都到法界聖城參加兒童夏令營。跟大眾一起上晚課時，那時候女兒比弟弟年紀大，人家念什麼，她就氣定神閒地拿著課誦本跟著唸。但是抱在我手裡的弟弟就一點也不自在，一直打滾，我都深怕他會摔下來。

有一天知客法師告訴我，她發現每次一開始放蒙山，弟弟就會開始鬧，希望我把他抱出去，等蒙山結束後再進來。所以從此以後，我們晚課做了一半，就會很識趣地消失一陣子。但是持誦《地藏經》之後，狀況就改善了。他變得非常安靜，晚課念完《彌陀經》或《八十八佛》，多半他就睡著了，大概在繞佛的時候才再醒來。這就省了我很多的麻煩。

為了孩子能在聖城讀書，2009年我們計劃搬來瑜伽鎮，卻一直不成功。我意識到自己的業障真的很重，一天只念三分之一的《地藏經》太少了，於是2012年增加到每天念一部。持續一、兩年之後，情況不但沒有改善，反而變得更為不利，真的是「要學好，冤孽找」！難道沒有感應就不唸了嗎？

我開始改變自己的心境，《地藏經》還是唸，但是每一句都是為眾生而唸，希望眾生能夠離苦得樂。無論誦經、參加法會，乃至在道場做的一切，都迴向給法界所有的眾生。出發點不一樣，感覺就不一樣。

由於簽證的關係，這種異國遊學的生涯不知道什麼時候才會結束，我們的經濟能力也負擔不起奢侈的旅遊生活。我跟孩子們說，儘管最後不能留在聖城讀書也沒關係，我們盡了力就好。然而五年過去了，孩子還能繼續在聖城讀書，我們還可以在這裡跟大家一起共修，應該是地藏菩薩默默中在幫助我們吧？阿彌陀佛！

• 施果橋

我在這邊參加過兩次地藏七，每一次參加都有很好的感應。但是上人說，有感應也不要動心，所以也就不提了。在

way-place is very busy; I could only recite one roll of the sutra in a day. The *Earth Store Sutra* has three rolls and it took me three days to finish the whole sutra once. I did this recitation and merit dedication everyday for about four months. And the days were very peaceful.

Since I started reciting *Earth Store Sutra*, my son is calmer and behaves better. My son had problems for almost two years. Before we came to CTTB, we would go to CDR for the summer camp and we would join Evening Ceremony. Because my daughter was older, she would hold the recitation book by herself and recite with everyone else while standing beside me. But I had to hold my son in my arms because he would fidget and wiggle around. I was afraid he'd fall out of my arms and injure himself.

A Dharma Master noticed that every time when the Meng Shan ceremony started, my son would fidget and want to crawl around. She suggested to us that when the Evening Ceremony got to the Meng Shan part, we should quietly step out and come back to join the assembly after that section finishes. We did this for quite a while when we participated in Evening Ceremony. However, ever since I started reciting the *Earth Store Sutra*, things have changed. My son started behaving well. When we finished reciting the *Amitabha Sutra* or the *Eighty-eight Buddhas Repentance*, he would be asleep and would wake up for circumambulation. It saved me many troubles.

In 2009, we first started thinking of moving to Ukiah to study at CTTB schools, but we always failed to make it there. We realized there were lots of karmic obstacles preventing us from moving. I thought that reciting a third of the *Earth Store Sutra* a day was not enough, so since 2012, I started reciting the entire sutra once a day. A year or two after this daily recitation, the situation did not improve, and it in fact became worse. It's like the saying "When you want to do better, your karmic obstacles come knocking at the door." Should I stop reciting?

I decided to change my intention of reciting. I dedicated every sentence of my recitation and everything I did at the way-place toward crossing over all living beings. All the merit from my cultivation was transferred to all beings of the dharma realm. As I changed my intentions, my frame of mind changed.

We didn't know how long the situation was going to last and if we would have to commute between cities as we became frequent visitors of CTTB. We couldn't afford to travel back and forth all the time, either. Although the situation wasn't favorable, we thought we'd do our best, even if we couldn't stay at CTTB, it would be fine. But after five years, not only are we living at CTTB, but we also cultivate with the assembly. Isn't this due to the help from Earth Store Bodhisattva? Amitufo!

• Shi Guoqiao

This is my second time attending the Earth Store session. I have always received great responses in such ceremonies; however, the Master said to not take your responses too seriously and get attached to them, so I will not mention mine. In studying Buddhism, there are three people who are very important in my life. The first is Mr. Chu because he brought me to learn Buddhism. The second is my father. It is only when my father passed away did I believe in the

我學習佛法的過程中，有三個人對我非常重要。第一個人當然就是帶我來學佛的朱居士；第二個是我的父親，因為父親往生以後我才開始信佛，才願意皈依上人；第三位就是我的母親，因為直到母親往生時，我才確定此生的重要工作就是要念佛往生。

跟參禪比起來，我都認為念佛是最簡單的法門。可是很奇怪的，為什麼我母親一生念佛，到了臨終的時候卻怎麼樣都念不下去？我跟我媽媽講：「妳念佛就好了。」她用台語回答我：「我痛得要死，唸不下去！」我心想，這個念佛法門不是很簡單嘛？於是決定自己來試試看！其實，念佛法門哪有那麼簡單？念佛如果沒有唸入心，等於在嘴巴上唸。到了業風一來，病痛來的時候，每個人都豎白旗投降，往生絕對沒有把握。

《地藏經》裡有一品特別重要，第九品〈稱佛名號品〉，跟念佛是息息相關的。釋迦牟尼佛把他的法藏都交給了地藏王菩薩，也把這個法傳承下來，所以第九品等於是我們念佛的一個根據。今天有一個師兄問我，地藏王菩薩為什麼他的行願這麼大，念佛一天一夜後，就能到地獄救出他的母親，他為什麼有這樣的功德？我說那是菩薩的定力，不是我們凡夫所能夠想像的。

幾年前，有因緣去參訪中國九華山地藏王菩薩的道場，在這邊跟大家分享回來之後的一個感想。地藏王菩薩教我們地獄絕對不能去，那麼地獄在哪裡？在我們的一念心，我們生氣的時候就到地獄了。所以我用白話來講地藏菩薩的兩個大願——「地獄不空，誓不成佛；眾生度盡，方証菩提」，第一個就是：「不生氣，不生氣，氣死自己沒人替！」第二句是：「要爭氣，要爭氣，積極大家成佛去！」成佛之後，接受世尊的讚揚。

• Daisy Guo

My whole family just recently relocated from Maryland to Ukiah, near CTTB. My practice of Buddhadharma began by reciting the *Sutra of the Past Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva*, so I would like to share my experience with and understanding about the text.

My first encounter with the *Earth Store Sutra* was in 2009. During my pregnancy, I heard that reciting this

Buddha and decided to take refuge with the Venerable Master. The last one is my mother. It is only when my mother passed away did I realize the goal of my life is to practice reciting the Buddha's name.

In comparison to meditation, reciting the Buddha's name has always been easier for me. But what I found strange was that although my mother recited the Buddha's name for her entire life, she found it difficult to do so before she passed away. When I told her to recite the Buddha's name, she responded in Taiwanese, "I'm suffering and cannot recite the Buddha's name." I thought reciting the Buddha's name was really easy, so I tried to recite myself and found that it wasn't so. If you don't recite with your heart and only use your mouth, then when your karmic obstacles manifest and you have aches and pains, you'll throw in the towel and retreat from your resolve. When you're dying, there's no guarantee that you can focus on reciting the Buddha's name.

The 9th chapter of the *Earth Store Sutra, Names of the Buddhas*, relates how extraordinarily important it is to recite the Buddha's name. Shakyamuni Buddha passed on this Dharma treasure to Earth Store Bodhisattva who then passed it on to us. This chapter is the foundation of reciting the Buddha's names. Today a Dharma brother asked me, "Why is Earth Store Bodhisattva's vow power so great? How did he travel to the hells in a day to rescue his mother? Why does he have such merit and virtue?" I replied that it must be the Bodhisattva's Samadhi; it's not something us ordinary people can understand.

A few years ago I went to Mount Jiuhua, China, which is the way place of Earth Store Bodhisattva. I had a great insight after the trip and would like to share it with you. Earth Store Bodhisattva said we should not visit the hells. Where are the hells? In a single thought whenever we get angry, we go down to the hells immediately. I will explain the great vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva in plain language. The first part of his vow, "When the hells aren't empty, I won't become a Buddha" can be explained as, "Don't get angry, don't have a temper; when you get so furious, no one will sympathize with you." The second part, "When all living beings are crossed over, I will obtain Bodhi" can be explained as, "Strike up your vigor, gather your proper energy, and work toward attaining Buddhahood." When we become Buddhas, we will receive offerings and praise.

• 郭宇濤

我們全家剛剛從馬里蘭州搬到聖城附近，由於我學佛是從《地藏經》開始，所以今天就以誦《地藏經》的粗淺體會和大家分享。

末學和《地藏經》結緣，是2009年懷孕時，聽說誦《地藏經》對孩子非常好，所以就開始每天念誦。孩子出生後也果然如《地藏經》中所提到的，非常安樂易養。如今，蒙地藏王菩薩加持，孩子更有了殊勝的緣分，來聖城讀小學。

sutra could benefit my daughter and clear her karmic obstructions. Therefore, I started reciting *Earth Store Sutra* on routine basis. After she was born, it turned out she was just like what's recorded in the sutra: peaceful, happy, and easily raised. Today, thanks to Earth Store Bodhisattva, my daughter is even more blessed to have the rare opportunity of attending the elementary school at CTTB.

Since then I have taken the recitation of *Earth Store Sutra* as part of my routine practices. The *Earth Store Sutra* has been often considered an entry point sutra to the Buddhadharmā. It contains thorough explanations of cause and effect, the five precepts and the ten good deeds. It is also a “filial piety” sutra in Buddhism. Some text in the sutra are critical: Chapter 8 mentions, “Because beings of Jambudvīpa are so bound up by their own heavy bad habits, they keep revolving in and out of the various paths over and over, as this Bodhisattva labors throughout many long eons to entirely effect their rescue and release;” and Chapter 11 says, “Earth Store Bodhisattva keeps renewing his vows to teach and transform beings in the Six Paths throughout eons as numerous as the number of sand grains in thousands of billions of Ganges Rivers.” This means, no matter how heavy our obstructions and bad habits are, no matter how many times we have lost ourselves in the Six Paths, Earth Store Bodhisattva will never exhaust his effort to rescue and release us!

So for someone with bad habits like me, I feel great affinities and reliance on Earth Store Bodhisattva. The Buddha also said in the sutra that after his entering of Nirvana, until future Buddha Maitreya is born, during such long period of darkness, Earth Store Bodhisattva is entrusted to care for the multitudes of beings in the Six Paths. Therefore, relying on Earth Store Bodhisattva is equivalent to relying on Buddha.

Frankly I didn't like the *Earth Store Sutra* in the past. This was not only because I felt it was too long, but also I didn't fully understand it. Later on when I gradually realized the power of Earth Store Bodhisattva's vows, it became not hard at all to recite the whole sutra with knees down. When my mother-in-law passed away earlier this year, I continuously recited the *Earth Store Sutra* ten times with knees down over a whole night. I had a lot of responses that night.

However, as I became more and more familiar with the sutra text, it became harder for me to avoid false thoughts. Then my husband suggested to me to try to memorize the whole text. I tried for a few weeks and by now I have memorized about 90% of it. The experience of memorizing the text was different from just reading. I was very focused, I felt that the space in my heart expanded, and sometimes the text was displayed vividly in my mind. If during a day I didn't get chance to recite *Earth Store Sutra*, I felt as if something was missing and as if I didn't have enough energy like a cell phone that was insufficiently charged.

I believe that the purpose of reciting *Earth Store Sutra*, or Earth Store Bodhisattva's name, is not only to make me understand cause and effect and purify my mind, but also to remind myself constantly that I should bring forth the Bodhi mind. Just like the Brahman woman and Bright Eyes who extended their filial piety toward their closest relatives to the all beings. By reciting the Bodhisattva's name, we learn to become the Bodhisattva as well.

後來就把誦《地藏經》作為日常功課之一。《地藏經》是佛教入門經典，從根本上把因果、五戒十善這些道理講得透徹，同時又是佛門的孝經。有幾句經文讓我印象特別深刻，〈閻羅王眾讚嘆品第八〉裏面說：「自是閻浮眾生，結惡習重，旋出旋入，勞斯菩薩，久經劫數，而作度脫。」還有〈地神護法品第十一〉裏面講的：「是地藏菩薩，教化六道一切眾生，所發誓願劫數，如千百億恒河沙。」就是說不管我們業障習氣多重，在六道甚至是地獄這樣苦難惡濁的地方，迷失多少次、多少劫，地藏菩薩都會不厭其煩地度脫我們，無有窮盡！

對於像我這樣的習氣凡夫，覺得地藏菩薩是最親切的，也是最適合作為依靠的。經文中也提到，在釋迦牟尼佛涅槃之後、彌勒佛出世之前，這段漫長的黑暗歲月裏，世尊把所有六道眾生託付給地藏菩薩來教化和救度。因此依靠地藏菩薩，就是依靠佛力！

末學以前不喜歡讀《地藏經》，因為覺得經文很長，也因為自己不明理。後來漸漸體會到地藏菩薩的加持力和願力，跪經真的就不費力了。今年年初婆婆往生時，我通宵連續跪誦十遍《地藏經》，當時有很深的感應。

不過經讀熟了之後，妄念也開始多了起來。我同修建議我，既然我和《地藏經》有緣，不妨試試把《地藏經》背起來。於是用了幾個星期，現在差不多能背百分之九十了。背經的感覺和讀經不一樣，感覺很專注，心裏空間很大，經文偶爾會很形象地映現出來。如果哪天太忙沒誦經，感覺就好像缺點什麼，能量不足，好像手機忘了充電一樣。

誦《地藏經》或者稱唸地藏菩薩聖號，我覺得不僅僅是讓自己明白因果，內心清淨；更重要的是，時時提醒自己也要發大菩提心，能像婆羅門女、光目女那樣，把對於自己親人的小孝，延伸為普度一切眾生的大孝。稱唸菩薩名號，就是學習做菩薩。

• Thao Phi

My name is Thao Phi. I currently work on-campus at Dharma Realm Buddhist University. Despite the challenges that come with work, I have to remember that one of the most valuable aspects of working at CTTB is that it allows me the opportunity to focus on cultivation. Of course, cultivation can occur anywhere and in every moment, but I cannot imagine an environment more conducive to cultivation.

One of the many benefits about working here is the opportunity to try different Dharma doors. While I was not planning on attending very much of the session, timing worked out so I was in fact able to participate in most of it. While responsibilities come first, when sessions happen at CTTB, I constantly come back to the same question: “What is more important than saving and transforming myself?”

As a child, my go-to session was always the Guan Yin session and I always could feel Guan Yin Bodhisattva's great compassion in the session, whereas I feel that the Earth Store session very serious and almost intense. This seriousness, however, is not a bad thing. Like different phases of life, there are times when it is appropriate to be serious. While each chapter tells different stories, the main message emphasizes eradicating karma and saving yourself and others from hell. It is a wakeup call.

All beings have been our kin at some point or another, and the *Earth Store Sutra* is about filial piety. The text explains how to aid those who are being born and how to aid those who are dying. Hence, those closest to us may benefit from our help. Relationships play a significant role in this sutra.

Recently, an old disciple from the community passed away. One of the stories shared about him was about reconciling relationships. A few weeks prior to his passing, his relatives were very nervous. But in the days leading up to his death, he was able to resolve what he needed to and tied up loose ends with relationships. We should resolve any animosity in our current relationships or express appreciation for thriving ones. We may not feel the same immediacy to work on and to reconcile relationships as those who are dying, but the truth is causes and conditions can change in an instant, and most of us don't know when our last moment will be.

Cultivating diligently and planting good roots is beneficial, but we cannot be isolated in our own solitude. Earth Store Bodhisattva is a true vision of what it means to advocate for social justice. He did not just practice by himself, apart from others. He immersed himself in the worst of the worst—liberating those suffering in the hells. Let us also cultivate to that degree of courage, strength, compassion, and resolve. May all living beings save themselves from the hells that they created. Amitufo. ❀

• Thao Phi

我叫ThaoPhi，目前在法界大學工作。儘管工作上常常遇到挑戰，但是我必須提醒自己，在這邊工作的最重要原因是為了修行。當然，修行可以在任何時候、任何地方，但是我想像不到還有哪個地方，可以提供比聖城更好的修行環境。

在聖城工作的另一個好處，就是可以嘗試各種不同的修行法門。原本沒有打算全程參加地藏七，但是我的時間剛好可以配合法會時間，所以我幾乎全程參加，當然得先把工作做完。打七期間，我還是不斷問自己同樣的問題：「什麼事情比拯救和轉變自己更重要？」

小時候我經常參加觀音法會，感覺得到觀音菩薩的慈悲加持；參加地藏法會的感覺完全不一樣，是非常嚴肅而緊湊的。嚴肅並不是一件壞事，就像生命中的不同時段，有時候是需要認真而嚴肅的。雖然《地藏經》每一品描述的故事道理不同，但是主要就是教導我們拯救自己和他人，不要往地獄裡頭去。這對我們來說是一個警醒！

一切眾生無始劫來都曾做過我們的六親眷屬，而《地藏經》的宗旨之一就是孝道。《地藏經》不但講孝道，還指示如何協助新生兒和臨命終人。這些都可能是我們身邊的眷屬需要的幫助，因此《地藏經》很重視人我之間的關係。

不久前，在上人一位老弟子的追悼會中，聽到他如何在臨終前修復家庭關係的故事。去世前的幾個禮拜，他的家庭關係仍是十分緊張；但是往生的前幾天，所有的問題都化解了。這也鼓勵我們要即時化解與他人的惡緣，同時適時地表達對他人的感恩。我們也許不用像臨命終時這樣地迫切，但是因緣無常，誰能保證下一秒鐘這口氣是否還在。

修行讓人獲益良多，並能栽培自己的善根，但是我們不能做個自了漢，只顧自己。地藏菩薩就是利他的最好寫照，地藏菩薩不是遠離眾生，只顧自己的修行；相反地，他行人所不能行，到地獄裡救度眾生。希望我們也能效法地藏菩薩，那樣來修行勇氣、堅忍與慈悲，願一切眾生都能從自己所造的地獄中解脫出來。阿彌陀佛！❀

