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Ksitigarbha Sutra

Salutations:

Namo Buddhaya

Namo Dharmaya

Namo Sanghaya

The unsurpassed, profound and intricate dharma is difficult to encounter, even over hundreds and thousands of kalpas. Now that I have seen and heard the dharma, I behold and uphold what the dharma offers. I wish to understand the true meaning of “Tathagata”

Namo root kuru Sakyamuni Buddha

Namo Ksitigarbha Mahasattva

Lecture by Dr. Ching Lo

“Maha” just means big, magnificent Bodhisattva.

We read together ok. (All read chapter 1 together) from page 6 – 18.

Chapter One

Ubiquitous Supernatural Powers of the Exalted Buddha at Trayastrimsa Heaven

(Paragraph 1)

Thus have I heard: At one time the World-Honoured One sojourned at the Trayastrimsa or Tavatimsa Heaven and was preaching on His mother’s behalf. At that time, innumerable Buddhas and Maha-Bodhisattvas from infinite world-systems in the ten quarters of space convened harmoniously, admiring the fully Enlightened One, Sakyamuni, for His transcendental wisdom and infinite powers in guiding erring beings to understand the dissimilarity between the bases of happiness and sorrow in the world. They all escorted their attendants to offer homage to the Honoured One.

(Paragraph 2)

The Honoured One smiled and radiated multi-radiant beams of infinite compassion, supreme wisdom, benevolence, etc., despatching forth into space sounds of the six paramitas; sounds of infinite compassion; sounds of charity; sounds of emancipation; sounds of bliss; sounds of transcendental wisdom; emitting lion-roars; emitting great lion-roars; emitting thunderous sounds; and a great number of other indescribable sounds. Many beings from the ten quarters of space in this world and additional worlds had assembled jointly at Trayastrimsa Heaven. They approached from celestial worlds such as the Catur-meharaja-kayikas – the four Heavens of the four deva kings, Trayastrimsa Heaven, Tusita Heaven, Nirmanarati Heaven, Paranirmita-vasavartin Heaven, Brahmapharisadya Heaven, Brahmaphurohitas Heaven, Mahabrahman Heaven and from numerous other Heavens.

(Paragraph 3)

All devas, spirits and dragons from the seas had combined together, as also beings from various worlds and this human world, such as spirits of the sea, storms, rivers, trees, hills, earth, spring, spirits of the fields, day, night, spirits of the empty spaces, the skies, of drink and food, spirits of the grass and woods, and all the other spirits. Likewise, there came beings from different worlds and the human one; such beings as great kings of pretas, asuras, succubus pretas, preta spirits of sickness, the pretas of poison, the kings of the pretas of joy and prosperity, the kings of pretas of carnal love and prestige and many pretas and kings of pretas had gathered happily together.

(Paragraph 4)

At that time, Sakyamuni Buddha told Manjusri, Prince of the Dhamma; “Now you perceive by mental vision that all the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, devas, dragons, pretas and spirits from this and other worlds from this country, including other lands are assembled together in this Trayas-trimsa Heaven. Do you know the precise number of them all?” Manjusri told the Buddha, “O World Honoured One, even though I have enormous powers developed through innumerable kalpas, I am not well acquainted with the exact number.” The Buddha told Manjusri, “Even though I behold through the eyes of a Buddha, I, too, am unable to disclose to you the accurate number of all these deities. They are all those whom Ksitigarbha has converted and capably guided from long, long ago. Some are to be relieved and directed by him in the future.”

(Paragraph 5)

Manjusri told the Buddha, “O Honoured of the World, I have long practised meritorious deeds and long ago attained unobstructed wisdom. Undeniably, I will trust your words, but those who pursue the Arahata path, the path of Heavens, the worship of dragons, and many beings who will be born in future, will be doubtful and reluctant to adopt what you have strongly emphasized as the truth. Devas, nagas, yaksas gandharvas, asuras, kinnaras, maho-rags, and others of the eight classes with humans to be born in the future will be filled with suspense and hesitant, although you have pronounced the truth most

zealously. If you compel them to believe, they will instead seek to spread evil of the Teaching. Thereupon, I earnestly anticipate that the Honoured of the World will narrate to us the original vows of this Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva as he commenced his Bodhisattva career and how he laboured to gain such inconceivable success and authority.” The Buddha told Manjusri, “Suppose that every blade of grass, wood, forest, paddy-field, hill, stone, dust mote, every material thing – though numerous as the sands of the Ganges, and though each sand-grain is one world and each dust mote is one kalpa and all numbers are reversed into kalpas, that which he has done to accomplish the Dasabhumi – (ten stages of the fifty-two sections of development), even though they are more than can be manifested by words, they are surpassed by the deeds of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva in his Arahat and Pratyoka Buddha stages.”

(Paragraph 6)

“Manjusri, this Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, his vows and his powers, are indeed inconceivable. If beings, both males and females, to be born in the future, shall listen to and hail the name of Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva, institute homage to Ksitigarbha by chanting his name, communicating offerings to Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva and draw or carve his image or make likenesses of him, all these beings shall be born for one hundred births into a special heaven, this is the Indra Trayastrimsa Heaven (thirty-three in number), the second of the six Heavens of formation, and shall never descend into the three evil states forever.”

(Paragraph 7)

“Manjusri, this Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva had been the son of a respected elder of unaccountable kalpas ago. At the time when he established his first resolve there was a Buddha by the name of Lion-Power. The youth examined with awe the majestic appearance of the Buddha and questioned what he had conducted as a Bodhisattva and what vow he had performed to accomplish such a divine appearance. The Buddha imparted to the youth, “If you want to gain such an appearance, you must attempt your utmost to relieve the sufferings of all sorrowful beings and continue this practice for a long, long time.” Then the Sakyamuni Buddha told Manjusri that the Buddha Lion-Power had counselled the youth to decide on a vow, as follows – “I now determine to relieve the sufferings of beings in the six realms of suffering and sorrow, skilfully leading those to Salvation through innumerable kalpas, before I myself attain Buddhahood.” By the youth disciplining such a strong vow before the Buddha Lion-Power, thereupon, for unaccountable kalpas, he has remained in the Bodhisattva stage.

(Paragraph 8)

Again, there was another Buddha, at a time inconceivably long ago, who was named Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment and who survived to a very great age of millions of kalpas. There are three stages for discharging respect to a Buddha –

to the Buddha incarnate,
to his image, and
a declaration of faith and respect.

At the second stage of offering respect to a Buddha, there was a Brahman girl who had in past ages practised great benevolences. Apart from being respected and honoured by people, she had also been bestowed with relief and protection from devas ever since the beginning of her career of charity. But her mother refused to respect the truth of the Dhamma and always uttered evil against the Triple-Gems. Although the "Sacred Daughter," as she was called, subjected herself to excessive persuasion over her mother to embrace Right Understanding, the mother was thickly prejudiced against her daughter's counsel and guidance.

When the mother died, she was reborn in the Avici Hell (Hell of unceasing sufferings), the last of the eight hot Hells where punishment continued without intermission. The Brahman girl was fully aware that her mother did not accord to the Doctrine of Cause and Effect and committed many evils in her life; by such bad deeds, therefore, she would surely sink into an evil birth in the lower Hells of intense suffering. Conscious of this Karma, the daughter parted with all her property and belongings by the offering of flowers and other forms of offering at the temple or pagoda of the Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment. The image of the Buddha therein was magnificently carved and was to be admired in all appearances. She insinuated deep respect to this Buddha and sought reasoning solely by herself, "This Buddha is fully enlightened and all-pervading in wisdom. If he were still embodied in this world of manifestation, I would request of him where my mother has been cast. I feel sure he would know the exact realm of her person." After such a thought, she knelt before the Buddha's image and was in a most tearful disposition for a considerable length of time.

Suddenly, she contacted a voice from outer space, addressing her thus, "Sacred Girl, whimper not so sorrowfully. I will impart to you where your mother has gone." The Brahman girl clasped her hands in deep respect and replied to the voice, "What divine being will relieve me of my worries and apprehensions? Since my mother's death, I have been remembering her day and night in prayers but I fail to discover where she is being reborn." Then the voice responded to her filial love, "I am the Buddha whom you are now leading your Faith to and I am aware of your devotion to your mother, which is quite different from that of other children; thereby, I am here to enlighten you about her." When the Brahman girl took heed of this, she fell to the ground and again wept bitterly in an almost endless state. She feared that she would soon perish from the human world and implored the Buddha to avail her anxiety as to where her mother had been reborn. The Buddha replied, "Sacred Girl, after your offering, return home early, be seated and compose yourself in meditation, then concentrate on my name quietly and you will then cherish the idea of associating where your mother is."

When the Brahman girl had finished paying homage, she went home and did as she had been instructed. After meditating for a day and night, she suddenly found herself on a great shore. She beheld many fierce iron-skinned animals hurrying back and forth, up and down, East and West in a boiling sea. She also saw thousands and millions of men and women emotionally moving among the waves of the sea, attempting to escape from the cruel monsters with iron skins. Moreover, she attested Yaksas (demons on earth, or in the air, or in the lower planes which are malignant, violent and carnivorous. They have many feet, eyes and heads, and have sword-like teeth). These Yaksas were driving the poor men and women to the cruel monsters, and they themselves confronted the men and women angrily. The sight was so dreadful that the girl dared not prolong her gaze, although by the power of the Buddha, she was not struck with any fear for herself.

At that time, there existed a king of the sea-devils named "King No-poison" (the poison caused by actions, words and thoughts) who revealed his hospitality to her and entertained her saying, "Sacred Girl, you are a good Bodhi-sattva, why do you venture to come to such a place like this?" The Brahman girl then requested for the name of the place. The poison-less Devil-king told the girl, "This is Mahachakravala (the first great sea in the West). The girl replied, "I was directed that there is a Hell in the interior of this great circular iron enclosure. Is this true?" King No-poison replied, "Yes, this is true." Then the girl asked, "Why is it that I have come to a Hell?" King No-poison interpreted that it was either through the power of the Buddha or through her own good Karmic power as other-wise she would never be able to visit Mahachakravala. The girl then queried why the water of the great ocean was boiling and had so many sinners and fierce animals within.

Then King No-poison answered, "Those sinners are the new deaths from the human world. After having passed away for forty-nine days with no descendants to do good deeds to relieve them from their sufferings and as a result of their having raised nothing for the benefit of humanity during their lifetime but only that of committing sins in one way or another, their first punishment is to cross this Sea of Suffering which extends ten million miles east-wards. There is another Sea, where sinners suffer double punishments. East of this latter Sea in view is yet another Sea of Suffering where sinners suffer extreme tortures."

"The above three Seas are called Seas of Sufferings. Those who have committed sins through actions, words and thoughts, are cast into these Seas to be punished, as they should be, for their evil deeds."

The Sacred Girl asked King No-poison, "Where is Hell?" King No-poison answered, "Within the three Seas of Sufferings, there are thousands of varieties of Hells. There are eighteen great Hells and five hundred smaller ones where sinners have to undergo

boundless punishments. Also, there are thousands of others where leniency is bestowed on all those who have not committed too serious offences during their lifetime.”

The Sacred Girl said to King No-poison, “My mother has passed away recently. I am anxious to know where she has been sent.”

King No-poison questioned the Sacred Girl, “What has your mother done during her lifetime?” The Sacred Girl replied, “My mother, during her lifetime, had envious views of the Triple-Gems and had spoken evil against them. Many a time, she did strive to embrace Faith in the Exalted Buddha, but was insufficiently firm over it. She expired only a few days ago, and I have no idea where she is at the moment.”

King No-poison asked, “What is your mother’s name?”

The Sacred Girl responded, “Both my parents were Brahmans. The name of my father was Sila Sen-sen and the name of my mother was Yuet Tee-li.”

King No-poison answered the Sacred Girl with clasped hands and said, “My Sacred Girl, pray do not feel distressed and return home with a joyful heart as your mother has ascended to Heaven just three days ago. It was your earnest and filial devotion of making offerings to the Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment that your mother was relieved. Not only did your mother receive deliverance from Hell, but all sinners of the Avici Hell also benefited from it, for they ascended to Heaven on the same day.

After intimating to the Sacred Girl of her mother’s Salvation, the King of the Devils retreated with clasped hands. With this enlightening message about her mother, the Sacred Girl felt that her earlier fears were unfounded. She then knelt before the Buddha of Flower of Meditation and Enlightenment and expressed this strong vow, “I shall exercise my best to relieve people of their sufferings forever in my future lives of kalpas to come.”

Sakyamuni Buddha then told Manjusri Bodhisattva that the King of the Devils, No-poison, is now the Bodhisattva of Wealth and that the Sacred Girl has been named Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva.

0:22:50:295 Sutra recitation ended and lecture begins.

Dr. Lo: Let us go back to the beginning of Chapter 1 and there I shall begin explaining each passage in the sutra.

INTRODUCTIONS

Origination of this sutra talk

Ladies and gentlemen and sentient beings of all the 6 realms, it gives me extreme pleasure to speak on the Ksitigarbha sutra today due to the compassionate request, compassionate heart of Ms. Chi Nguyen. She made this request for compassion of her suffering friend in Montreal, who is dying because of the unwholesome karma that she accumulated.

Ksitigarbha Sutra in the context of Mahayana Buddhism

This sutra is the most fundamental sutra when it comes to classical teaching of Mahayana. In all sects of Buddhism, we start learning Buddhism by learning the original teaching of the Buddha Shakyamuni, the 4 Noble Truths. After hearing the 4 Noble Truths, the fourth Noble Truth is the 8-fold path. From the 8th fold path, it developed into the 37 meritorious avenues. All those are the fundamentals of Shakyamuni's teaching. It is taken for granted that those of us who have been studying Buddhism for a while would understand all the fundamental prerequisites. So both Mahayana and Theravada studied those entire things that I mentioned.

But for Mahayana Buddhism, after having studied those subjects mentioned, Mahayana Buddhism takes a step further. It progresses further with a higher form of ideology. That is why I do not lecture on classical sutra until approaching the last semester of the 3rd Year of AWE or Academy of Wisdom and Enlightenment; because at the academy, our 1st Year, we first establish the correct knowledge of the 8-Fold Path, the 1st path of the 8-Fold Path. Then in the 2nd year, we refine our correct view, which is the 2nd path of the 8-Fold Noble Path; followed by a lot of working, devotion, refining the curriculum, teaching the curriculum; all that has to do with the rest of the Noble Paths. So once we have walked that Noble Path in the 2nd Year; in the 3rd Year, we then learn about the 10 milestones in the human journey of the heart, in pursuit of the true.

During that 3rd Year curriculum, in the 1st semester, we learn why the Theravada tradition and the Mahayana tradition separated almost 2000 years ago when this rift, this division happened. Generally speaking, the Theravada ancestors are known as the Vibhajyavadin and their ideology is analytical reductionism. As opposed to that ideology is the new school called the Sarvastivadin and their ideology is anabolic holism. A better term for analytical reductionism is reductive analysis. A better term for anabolic holism is holistic synthesis. Now, in this sutra talk, I will not go into explanation of those terms because it is all covered in our 3rd Year, Semester-1 curriculum.

Dual level approach to explaining the Sutra

The way I will talk about this Ksitigarbha sutra will be at 2 levels. One is the literal level which is what the word said here. The literal level or ordinary level would suite most of the audience. But I will also explain this sutra at the advance level, the enlightenment level, at a much higher level just like what I now said about the Vibhajyavadin / Sarvastivadin split in ideology. These higher level teachings are addressed particularly and specifically only to students who are in the final semester of the 3rd Year curriculum of Academy of Wisdom and Enlightenment. Only those students would have sufficient prerequisites to relate to this talk at the enlightenment level. Okay?

Now, so I've given a brief introduction explaining how I am going to talk about this sutra. This is a Mahayana sutra. In fact, this is the Mahayana sutra by which the Sarvastivadins provide answers to why their ideology digressed from the Vibhajyavadins.

This is how the Sarvastivadins answer the Vibhajyavadins because the Sarvastivadins were exiled. They were kicked out of India by King Asoka after the 3rd congregation. The Sarvastivadins were kicked out because the king and the Vibhajyavadins regarded the Sarvastivadins as traitors, their ideology was wrong; it was not what the Shakyamuni Buddha taught. So the Sarvastivadins in their exile outside India, they wrote many Mahayana sutras and this sutra, the Ksitigarbha sutra, is in fact the most fundamental sutra, the basic sutra of the Mahayana teaching. Alright, and this is “THE” classical sutra. Now in AWE, we have already simplified this (extract hidden meanings) and we do other things with it (incorporated in AWE values, definitions and curriculum) but these things are also contained in the sutra as you will see. It will all make sense as I go into it.

Three Reasons Why Mahayana students should begin with the Ksitigarbha Sutra

(Be patient please!) Do not find the introduction of my talk boring. Okay! After you listen to this 10 times over; you will understand precisely what this is all about. Now Ksitigarbha in Chinese is called "地藏" or "Dia Tang" in Vietnamese. What that mean is the Garbha, “Tang” is Garbha or the embryonic potential, the unearthed wealth (mine), or the hidden database. The database, database of what? Database of all the karma. "De" or "地" means the earth, the rock, the foundation, the basic – the basic of the database. Wow! Listen, “the basic of the database”. Okay! For us, the destination for our life to change; we have to change our karma; we have to change our database. This is how we affect that database. This sutra tells us how to change our karma, how to change that database. That is the meaning of the "Dia Tang" (Vietnamese) /"De cang" (Chinese). That is why this is the beginner, the first sutra. Every time when I come to reason that this is the fundamental, the very first sutra that Mahayana students should study if you choose the classical path and I will come to name them (the reasons). So the first (reason) is because it is the database. It is “De, 地”. "De" is the foundation okay. De, this will change the database for us (Reason Number 1).

32:16:280

Reason Number 2: You've all heard about the earth, water, fire and wind. These 4 elements progress in that order depending on the amount of energy in that element. When the element has very little energy e.g. if you take water when it has no energy, it is a rock, a piece of ice. That is earth; that is "De, 地". When it acquires more energy, it becomes water. When it acquires even higher energy, it becomes fire, fire means hot. You can feel it hot (water). As it acquires even more energy, it evaporates into steam as wind. In the Mahayana (anthropomorphic) tradition we personified these 4 elements according to the energy content or what we call the life force. The earth element is personified as Ksitigarbha. The water element is personified as Quan Yin (Avalokiteshvara). The fire that means active, warmth is personified as Manjusri. The final element of wind is personified as Samantabhadra or (Pho Hien). Pho Hien in Chinese is "Pu Hsien"-普賢. What is in the heart of these Bodhisattvas? In the heart of the Ksitigarbha sutra is

like a rock that means his vow, his determination is strong like the rock. What is in the heart of Quan Yin? Softness, compassion, water, formless, it herself has no form. It just goes with the flow of the sentient being by great compassion. By being formless, water can migrate into every crack, every facet of existence. So compassion is not a strong (forceful) thing, it is a very fluid thing. Manjusri's heart is fire, is wisdom; because wisdom is transformation. Fire transforms. Okay? Transform uncooked rice into rice, into porridge. You need that energy of transformation, that transformation is wisdom. Without wisdom we can be told many things, many times nothing happens, nothing will be transformed. And finally, Samantabhadra, Pho Hien, sits on the elephant, meaning with great strength; great strength to do what? The elephant does work for people; it works for the benefit of all sentient being with great power, great determination and non-stop labor. So you can see now accordingly why the 4 Bodhisattvas have increasing amount of energy in them. So for all beginners, we are still very ordinary energy. And therefore, we must start with Ksitigarbha. There is no point to start studying right away Quan Yin, or start doing what Samantabhadra does; because we are not even at that energy level. So we must all start from the basic, beginning at the Ksitigarbha Sutra. Alright? So, this is now the 3rd reason I mention. The first reason (is why), it changes the karma; the 2nd reason is (what) you look at the 4 elements (earth is bottom); and the 3rd reason is (how) you look at the energy content of those 4 elements. This is the 3rd reason why Mahayana practitioner or student must start with the Ksitigarbha Sutra. So there are 3 good reasons, remember that. As I go along I will give more reasons.

EXPLANATIONS ON THE SUTRA CHAPTER 1

(Paragraph 1)

The first paragraph said: the World Honor One means Shakyamuni Buddha has gone up to the 2nd level of heaven called the Trayastrimsa Heaven and he is not preaching on his mother's behalf. Okay? That implies his mother was preaching, but now he is preaching on the mother's behalf. No, his mother was not preaching. Shakyamuni's mother died 7 days after Shakyamuni was born. And some said she died at child birth. So Shakyamuni or Prince Gautama never in his life time had an opportunity to repay his mother's gift of life. Therefore, as soon as Shakyamuni was enlightened, the first thing he did, was to repay his mother's gift of life. So he elevated himself to the 2nd level of heaven where his mother resides. Being the mother of Buddha, after she passed away, she ascends to the 2nd level of heaven. Now, why is it the 2nd level of heaven? I won't go into it because it is too much to talk about. You think about that later on. If you think about this kind of thing then you will understand the linguistic of this Mahayana Sutra, what they trying to convey, read behind the lines, between the lines, what these all mean. So at that time innumerable Buddha and Maha-Bodhisattvas from infinite world-system, all 10 dimensions of space, they all converged to admire Shakyamuni. They admire Shakyamuni, his transcendental wisdom and infinite powers in guiding erring being. This erring being refers to samsara world. In fact, it refers mainly to the samsara world with the five poisons, the five contaminants, the five defilements. So I won't go into what the 5 defilements are. You look it up yourself. So the word 'erring' includes 5 defilements to understand the dissimilarly between the bases of happiness and sorrow in the world.

Now, that is a deceptively simple and yet very profound sentence – the difference between happiness and sorrow. Everybody knows when they are happy. Everybody knows when they are sorrowful. Why does it take a Buddha to guide beings to understand happiness and sorrow? Because when beings think they indulge in the indulgences, they think they are happy. When you ask them to be disciplined and to work hard to enlightenment, they think this is very, very sorrowful. It is the opposite. That is why sentient beings are sentient beings in samsara because they don't even know what is happiness and causes of happiness. What is suffering and causes of suffering? So they indulge themselves in the infernal of the 5 aggregates and they think that is happiness. Infernal of the 5 aggregates is perceived as happiness.

41:15

And no one, very few of us can actually stay the course, stay the path, the enlightenment path, and go through 1st year, 2nd year and 3rd year of our curriculum. Finally come to the final semester of the 3rd year of our course to understand happiness and sorrow. So, that is why this statement (is profound).

They all escorted their attendants to offer homage to the Honoured One. (First paragraph ended).

(Paragraph 2)

Let's keep going (to the second paragraph). Now, the Honoured One smiled, very happy. How happy? He is as happy as I am right now. He radiated multi-radiant beams of infinite compassion, supreme wisdom and benevolence. Now, in their translations there are some key points missing. In other words, infinite compassion sounds of charity, sounds of bliss, sounds of transcendental wisdom. And then it comes to emitting lion-roar, great lion roar, emitting thunder sound, great number of indescribable sounds and that is finish. I am sorry the translator has missed. Now, in the original Chinese, it says this: "And the Tathagata smiles and emits tens of thousands, millions of great cloud of light." So that is fine (first light) and then sound. Okay.

43:01

Now, when it comes to the sound: sound of wisdom, sound of great wisdom; sound of the lion's roar, sound of the great lion's roar; sounds of thunder, sounds of great thunder. Now, why thunder and then great thunder; i.e. ordinary thunder, great thunder; ordinary lion roar, great lion roar? Why these 2 levels? Remember when I first began my lecture I said I will talk about this sutra at 2 levels. One at the literal level, another is at the enlightenment level, specifically for AWE students, right? So, there are 2 levels. One is the ordinary sound (yana); the other is the great sound (Mahayana). (Ksitigarbha Sutra metaphors implicitly proclaim the Buddha preached both Theravada and Mahayana).

What is lion roar? Lion roar is to wake up the sleepy animals. All the animals become alert. Great lion roar is to wake up even further; those who are the Bodhisattvas already on the Bodhisattva path. Same with thunder and great thunder. So there are 2 levels. So, that is the point. There are 2 levels of reading this sutra, the literal level and the enlightenment level.

So after that there are 4 heavens of 4 Devas, kings plus Trayastrimsa heaven, all these heavenly beings from all these heavens. So basically, in the Mahayana tradition all layers of heaven have been clearly defined and it is very complicated. There are many, many different levels of heaven. So I will not go into the meaning of the heaven in this lecture. Imagine all the beings from all the different layers of heaven and how many layers of heaven? Well you have to open your mind to visualize this (multitude).

This (visualization) is already taught in the open mind lecture in Year-1. Okay? Dimensions, keep on adding different dimensions. All these heaven are heavenly dimensions. Open the mind to accept all the different dimensions of heaven. All the beings from heaven have to come down from their high level of heaven down to the 2nd level, where Shakyamuni's mother is. So they descend to the 2nd level of heaven from many, many, multi, multi layers of higher levels. They descend.

(Paragraph 3)

Now let's go to the next (3rd) paragraph. Devas, spirits meaning ghosts, dragons, all these other beings are way below the heavenly level. Spirit of the sea, spirit of the storm, spirit of the rivers, all these spirits, they are below the human realm. So they ascend up to the 2nd level of heaven, right? Spirit of grass, spirit of roots, these are very low level of spirit. In other word, low life force, low energy level, right? And again they all have to ascend, that means someone is giving them the power to ascend. "Preta"- preta means ghost.

(Paragraph 4)

Now we have Shakyamuni and Manjusri talking. Shakyamuni says: "Manjusri, do you know the number of beings here today in this 2nd level of heaven in attendance of this congregation." And Manjusri said: "not even with my power of sight can I see the end of it." So we don't know. "It's not I am not well acquainted with the exact number" he said, "I cannot see the end of it."

It's infinite sea of beings, that even with the power of sight he can't even see the end of it. And even the Buddha told Manjusri, now this is very important, "Even me, the eyes of a Buddha, I am unable to tell you how many deities, how many beings are here today." Even the Buddha don't know, cannot see, the infinite number of beings from all 6 realms are there. Okay?

What is this statement saying? Now the answer is here. They are all those who Ksitigarbha has converted and capably guided from long, long ago, in the past, in the present and in the future. Past, present and future, they are all Ksitigarbha's convertees. They are all his followers. They are all his disciples, all his students; everyone who has been released from suffering by Ksitigarbha. This is why the Buddha himself cannot know. Now two very important points here: this is the answer of Sarvastivadin to Vibhajyavadin. You see, in this paragraph, the Buddha is saying "Ksitigarbha is greater than me!" Got it? It clearly says "Ksitigarbha has greater power than me. Me as a Buddha, I cannot see the number." Now seeing is easy, liberating is difficult. Can you compare liberating to seeing? Ksitigarbha not only sees, he liberated all these beings. Isn't that the Sarvastivadin's answer to Vibhajyavadin? Very clear! That is why here is the 4th reason. Reason #4: why Mahayana Buddhist must start from this sutra (in order) to understand the position of the Buddha, the position of Ksitigarbha and the position of Manjusri. Do not be mistaken that Samantabhadra has more energy than Manjusri, has more energy than Avalokiteshvara, (who in

turn) has more energy than Ksitigarbha. No! The Bodhisattvas, themselves are equal in energy level. It is the beings that they try to say has different levels of energy. So Ksitigarbha receives beings of lowest energy. Quan Yin (Avalokiteshvara) receives beings that already have hearts of compassion; already have hearts of compassion, Alright? Already! That means Ksitigarbha deals with those people who haven't got the compassion yet. That is why the Ksitigarbha Sutra, reason #5 is the fundamental sutra because it starts with igniting compassion. Okay? Start with igniting compassion is Reason #5.

Then after the compassion (matured) the practitioner, the truth seeker, starts seeking wisdom that is when Manjusri receives them. After that they want to do things (action), they want to contribute. That is when Samantabhadra receives them.

Jenny: Aren't these three personifications or the manifestations of one Bodhisattva?

Dr. Lo: Yes we can be Ksitigarbha in one lifetime and we can be Manjusri in another lifetime but everybody who is in AWE is walking the path of Samantabhadra. The curriculum is designed that way.

Tammy: We can be four of them in 1 lifetime just like you are now.

Dr. Lo: Yes, okay, clear now? It is not just literal. You know the thunder sound is just that; Oh! Buddha and Manjusri are praising Ksitigarbha. Okay?

The great thunder sound, this is Sarvastivadin's answers to the Vibhajyavadin — that the Ksitigarbha in past, present and future. You see: Past, present and future. Past is real, all the beings from the past. Present is real. Future beings are real. What is this ideology? Sarvastivada ideology! There is reality in every dimension. Got it? Reality is in every dimension. Okay? This is the great thunder. Next paragraph.

(Paragraph 5)

Then Manjusri said: I am already such a devoted Bodhisattva who accumulated so much merits and I understood what you are saying. I trust your words. But those who pursue the Arahats path ... Look at them (Arahats) right here, isn't that what the Sarvastivadin is accusing? Okay? Charging the Vibhajyavadins as "those who pursuit Arahats path." The path of the heaven is of course sentient beings. Worship dragon now. Look at that: Arahats then path of heaven which is going to the Brahmanism and theism (follow by) the worship of dragon Okay. What is about worship of dragon? Going down to paganism, Got it! That is why I never teach sutra until you have gone through my 3rd Year (Heart Journey). You see how the whole sutra is in my (Heart Journey) curriculum. Or I design the curriculum in such a way that makes every sentence of the sutra is clearly profoundly meaningful. Okay? Those who pursuit the Arahats and then the theism and then the paganism they would no doubt, have no idea what you talking about because you are at such a high level of a milestone. [Pointing at the Spreadsheet of Milestones throughout the 3rd-Year "Heart Journey" Lecture]. You are on this (right) side of the milestone, the Mahayana, the Avatamsaka kind of milestone. So those are even higher beings already i.e. Arahats and heavenly beings. What about the deva, naka, yaka, asura etc and all that? They are hopeless, right? They are -1 on the (left of the) milestone (scale). What are we going to do about that? So if you compel

them to believe, they will instead seek to spread evil of the teaching. That means they will insult the sutra. Not only will they deny it, they will bad mouth it. They would sacrilege. Okay? This is the difficulty of teaching Mahayana.

(Last sentence in Paragraph 5)

So please narrate to us; tell us the original vow of this Ksitigarbha. How did he become more powerful than you, my lord, Buddha? What kind of vow is this?

As he commands his career how he is able to gain such inconceivable success and authority? How can he bring all the...you see the different realms, the 6 different realms, right? The layers: the heaven beings dwell in the heaven; hell beings dwell in hell. Where does he get this incalculable, indescribable, in expressible power to get everybody to this congregation? He broke through all the thinking boxes. He broke through all the barriers in order for all beings to be in one place. You have to break through all that barriers, right? That is why, now you see how the AWE curriculum works? It is breaking through the thinking boxes, the barriers. It is adding the dimensions. It is a continuum. It is non-fixation at any one dimension. Therefore, we can meet in any dimensions. We can meet in any heaven or any hell level because there is no fixation; because there is reality in every dimension. See how the Sarvastivadin is talking? How that ideology pushes forward just like the rain storm. Then the Buddha explains. Now, for anyone who have not gone through the AWE curriculum of counting number, how to open your mind. Okay? By opening the mind and the macro/micro view of things will have major difficulty with this paragraph. But for us, who have opened the mind and have a macro/micro view there is no problem. Now, suppose every blade of grass, wood, forest, hill, stone, dust even numerous as the sand of the Ganges and then each sand grain is one world. What is he trying to do? 59:04

