

The Hell Realm

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Good morning! Welcome to the International Buddha Dharma Society for Cosmic Law to listen to today's Dharma talk. Today, we will start a new subject: Transmigration in the Six Realms. The six realms are the realm of hell, the realm of ghost, the realm of animals, the realm of humans, the realm of asura and the realm of heaven. Transmigration in the Six Realms means that living beings in the six realms cannot get rid of birth and death and keep cycling in the six realms, so it is called Transmigration in the Six Realms.

Out of the six realms, the realm of heaven, the realm of asura and the realm of human are the three good realms; and the realm of hell, the realm of animal and the realm of ghost are the three evil realms. Some sutra says Five Realms instead of Six Realms because they include the Asura Realm to the Heavenly Realm. There are actually asuras in all the realms except the Hell Realm. For example, people who are fond of fighting, wars, or who are always grumpy have the character of asura.

In the Nirvana Sutra, one time, the Buddha picked up a little bit of dirt with his one nail and asked Kasyapa Bodhisattva, "Which one is more, dirt in the nail or dirt in the worlds of ten directions?" Kasyapa Bodhisattva answered, "Dirt in the worlds of ten directions." The Buddha said, "Living beings in the evil realms are the dirt in the worlds of ten directions, and living beings of the heaven realm and human realm are the dirt in the nail."

In the sutra, it also said that the living beings in the hell are the dusts on the earth; ghosts are the sands in the Ganges river; animals are the draft; asuras are the snows in the sky; humans and heavenly beings are the dirt in the nail.

So living beings in the six realms are like a pyramid, those in the hell are the most and those in the heaven and human realms are the least.

Today, we will recite Chapter 3, 4 and 5 of *the Original Vows of Earth Store Bodhisattva* (Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva) to know about the living beings in the hell.

Na Mo Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva!
Na Mo Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva!
Na Mo Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva!

Chapter 3. Contemplating the Karmic Conditions of Beings

At that time, the Buddha's mother, Lady Maya, placed her palms together respectfully and asked Earth Store Bodhisattva, "Great Sage, could you tell us about the different kinds of karma that beings of Jambudvīpa create, and the resulting retributions that they undergo?"

Earth Store replied, "There are millions of worlds and lands that may or may not have women, may or may not have hells, may or may not have the Buddhadharmas, and so forth up to having or not having Hearers and Pratyekabuddhas. Since the worlds differ, the retributions in the hells also differ."

Lady Maya spoke again to the Bodhisattva, “Could you please tell us about the offenses committed by those in Jambudvīpa that result in retributions in the evil destinies?”

Earth Store replied, “Worthy Mother, please listen as I speak briefly about that.”

The Buddha’s mother answered, “Great Sage, please do tell us about it.”

Then Earth Store Bodhisattva said to the worthy mother, “Retributions that result from offenses committed in Jambudvīpa are described like this:

“Beings who are not filial to their parents, even to the point of harming or killing them, will fall into the Relentless Hell where for thousands of billions of eons they will seek escape in vain.

“Beings who shed the Buddha’s blood, slander the Triple Jewel, and do not venerate Sutras, will fall into the Relentless Hell where for thousands of billions of eons they will seek escape in vain.

“Beings who usurp or damage the property of the Eternally Dwelling, who defile Bhikshus or Bhikshunis, who commit sexual acts within the Sangharama, or who kill or harm beings there, will fall into the Relentless Hell where for thousands of billions of eons they will seek escape in vain.

“Beings who seem to be Shramanas but in their minds are not Shramanas, who destroy the things of the Eternally Dwelling, who deceive lay people, who go against the precepts, and who commit many other evil deeds, will fall into the Relentless Hell where for thousands of billions of eons they will seek escape in vain.

“Beings who steal the wealth and property of the Eternally Dwelling, including its grains, food and drink, and clothing, or who take anything at all that was not given to them, will fall into the Relentless Hell where for thousands of billions of eons they will seek escape in vain.”

Earth Store continued, “Worthy Mother, beings who commit such offenses will fall into the Fivefold Relentless Hell where they will constantly seek temporary relief from their suffering but will never receive even a moment’s relief.”

Lady Maya further asked Earth Store Bodhisattva, “Why is that hell called Relentless?”

Earth Store replied, “Worthy Mother, all the hells are within the Great Iron Ring Mountain. The eighteen great hells and the five hundred subsequent ones each have their own names. There are hundreds of thousands more that also have their own names. The Relentless Hell is found within a city of hells that encompasses more than eighty thousand square miles. That city is made entirely of iron. An unbroken mass of fire extends for ten thousand miles above the city. Within the city are many interconnected hells, each with a different name.

“There is just one hell called Relentless. Its circumference is eighteen thousand miles. The wall of that hell is a thousand miles high, totally made of iron, and covered with a fire burning downward that is met by a fire burning upward. Iron snakes and dogs spewing fire race back and forth along the top of that wall.

“In that hell, there is a bed that extends for ten thousand miles. One person undergoing punishment sees his or her own body covering the entire bed. When hundreds of thousands of people undergo punishment simultaneously, each still sees his or her own body covering the bed. That is how retributions are undergone by those with the same karma.

“What is more, these offenders undergo extreme suffering. Hundreds of thousands of yakshas and other evil ghosts display fangs like swords and eyes like lightning as they pull and drag the offenders with their brass-clawed hands.

Other yakshas wield huge iron halberds that they use to pierce the offenders’ mouths and noses or stab their bellies and backs. They toss the offenders into the air and then catch them by skewering them with the halberds, or they let them drop onto the bed. Iron eagles peck at the offenders’ eyes and iron serpents wrap around their necks. Long nails are driven into all their limbs. Their tongues are pulled out, stretched, and then plowed through. Their internal organs are gouged out, sliced, and minced. Molten copper is poured into their mouths, and their bodies are bound with hot iron. Responses to their karma go on like that throughout hundreds of thousands of deaths and rebirths. They pass through hundreds of millions of eons seeking escape in vain.

“When this world is destroyed, they find themselves in another world. When that world is destroyed, they pass on to another one. When that world, too, is destroyed, they move on to another one. When this world comes into being again, they return here. The situation involving Relentless retribution for offenses is like that.

“Moreover, five karmic responses account for the name Relentless. What are the five? First, it is said to be Relentless because punishment is undergone day and night throughout many eons without ceasing for a moment. Second, it is said to be Relentless because one person fills it in the same way that many people fill it.

“Third, it is said to be Relentless because repeated punishments continue without cease throughout years that stretch into nayutas of eons. Those punishments are inflicted by instruments of torture such as forks and clubs; or by eagles, serpents, wolves, and dogs; or by pounding, grinding, sawing, drilling, chiseling, cutting and chopping; or by boiling liquids, iron nets, iron ropes, iron asses, and iron horses; or by rawhide strips bound around one’s head and molted iron poured over one’s body; or by meals of iron pellets and drinks of molten iron.

“Fourth, it is said to be Relentless because all beings undergo karmic responses based on the offenses that they have committed, whether they be men, women, savages, old, young, honorable, or lowly; whether they be dragons, spirits, gods, or ghosts.

“Fifth, it is said to be Relentless because offenders continually undergo ten thousand deaths and as many rebirths each day and night from the moment they first enter this hell and on through hundreds of thousands of eons. During that time they seek even a moment’s relief but it never comes. Only when their karma is exhausted can they leave the hell and be born elsewhere.”

Earth Store Bodhisattva said to the worthy mother, “That is a brief description of the Relentless Hell. If I were to speak extensively about the names of all the implements of punishment in the

hells and all the sufferings there, I could not finish speaking in an entire eon.”

After hearing that, Lady Maya placed her palms together sorrowfully, made obeisance, and withdrew.

Chapter 4. Karmic Retributions of Beings in Jambudvīpa

At that time Earth Store Bodhisattva said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, because I receive the awesome spiritual strength of the Buddha, Thus Come One, I am able to divide my body and rescue beings who are undergoing karmic retributions everywhere in billions of worlds. If it were not for the great compassionate strength of the Thus Come One, I would be unable to manifest such changes and transformations. Now the World Honored One has entrusted me with rescuing and liberating beings in the Six Paths until Ajita becomes a Buddha. I accept the entrustment, World Honored One. Please have no further concern.”

Then the Buddha told Earth Store Bodhisattva, “Beings who have not yet obtained liberation have unfixed natures and consciousnesses. Their bad habits reap bad karma; their good habits bring rewards. Reacting to situations by committing good or evil deeds causes them to turn in the Five Paths without a moment’s rest. Throughout eons as numerous as dust motes they remain confused, deluded, obstructed, and afflicted by difficulties. They are like fish swimming through waters laced with nets. They may slip through and keep their freedom temporarily, but sooner or later they will be caught. I am concerned about such beings. But since you keep making extensive vows repeatedly throughout successive eons to take such offenders across, what further worries need I have?”

After that was said, a Bodhisattva Mahasattva in the assembly named Samadhi Self-Mastery King said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, what vows has Earth Store Bodhisattva made during so many successive eons that now cause him to receive the World Honored One’s special praise? We hope the World Honored One will tell us about this.”

Then the World Honored One replied to Samadhi Self-Mastery King, “Listen attentively, listen attentively, and reflect well on the examples I am about to give you. One time, limitless asamkhyeyas of nayutas of inexpressible eons ago, a Buddha named All-Knowledge-Accomplished Thus Come One, One Worthy of Offerings, One of Proper and Pervasive Knowledge, One Perfect in Clarity and Conduct, Well-Gone One, Unsurpassed Knight Who Understands the World, Taming and Subduing Hero, Teacher of Gods and People, Buddha, World Honored One, appeared in the world. That Buddha’s life span was sixty thousand eons. Before he became a monk, he was the king of a small country and was friendly with the king of a neighboring country. Both kings practiced the Ten Wholesome Deeds and benefited beings. Because the citizens of those two neighboring countries did many bad things, the two kings made a plan using far-reaching expedients. One king vowed to quickly become a Buddha and then rescue absolutely all the other beings.

“The other king vowed, ‘I do not want to become a Buddha until I first rescue all those who are suffering for their offenses, enabling them to find peace and finally to reach Bodhi.’”

The Buddha told the Bodhisattva Samadhi Self-Mastery King, “The king who vowed to quickly become a Buddha is All-Knowledge-Accomplished Thus Come One. The king who vowed to

keep saving beings who are suffering for their offenses rather than become a Buddha is Earth Store Bodhisattva.

“Another time, limitless asamkhyeya eons ago, a Buddha named Pure-Lotus-Eyes Thus Come One appeared in the world. His life span was forty eons. In his Dharma-Image Age, an Arhat who had accumulated blessings from rescuing beings met a woman named Bright Eyes, who offered a meal to him once while he was teaching and transforming beings.

“‘What is your wish?’ asked the Arhat.

“Bright Eyes replied, ‘On the day of my mother’s death I performed meritorious deeds to rescue her, but I do not know where my mother is now.’

“Sympathizing with her, the Arhat entered samadhi to contemplate and saw that Bright Eyes’ mother had fallen into a bad destiny where she was undergoing extreme suffering. The Arhat asked, ‘Bright Eyes, what unwholesome karma did your mother create while alive that makes her now have to undergo such terrible suffering in a bad destiny?’

“Bright Eyes replied, ‘My mother enjoyed eating fish, turtles, and other sea creatures. She especially liked to fry or broil fish and turtle eggs. Every time she ate those she took thousands of lives. Oh, Venerable One, please be compassionate and tell me how she can be saved!’

“The Arhat took pity on Bright Eyes and used his skillful means. He urged Bright Eyes thus, ‘With sincere resolve, be mindful of Pure-Lotus-Eyes Thus Come One and also make carved and painted images of him. When you do so, both the living and the dead will be rewarded.’

“Bright Eyes heard that, quickly renounced everything she loved, and swiftly commissioned painted images of the Buddha. Then she made offerings before them. The reverence she felt moved her to tears and she wept in grief as she beheld and bowed to the Buddha. Suddenly near the end of the night, in a dream, she saw that Buddha’s body, dazzling gold in color and as large as Mount Sumeru, emitting great light.

“He said to Bright Eyes, ‘Your mother will be born in your household before long and as soon as that infant can feel hunger and cold, he will speak.’

“Shortly thereafter, a maidservant in the house bore a son who spoke before he was three days old. Lowering his head and weeping, he said to Bright Eyes, ‘The karmic conditions we create during our lives and deaths result in retributions that we ourselves must undergo. I am your mother and have been in darkness for a long time. Since you and I parted, I have repeatedly fallen into the great hells. Upon receiving the power of your blessings, I have been reborn as a servant’s child with a short life span. Thirteen years from now, I will fall into the evil paths again. Do you have some way to free me so that I can avoid them?’

“When Bright Eyes heard those words, she knew without a doubt that they were her mother’s. Choked with sobs, she said to the servant’s child, ‘Since you were my mother, you should know your own past offenses. What unwholesome karma did you create that made you fall into the Evil Paths?’

“The maidservant’s son answered, ‘I am undergoing retribution for two kinds of karma: killing

and slandering. Had I not received the blessings you earned to rescue me from difficulty, I would not yet be released from that karma.'

"Bright Eyes asked, 'What happens in the hells when beings undergo retribution for their offenses?

"The maidservant's son answered, 'I can't bear to speak of the ways in which beings suffer for their offenses. Even if I were to live for a hundred thousand years, I would find it hard to talk about."

"When Bright Eyes heard that, she wept bitterly and spoke into the air, saying, 'I vow that my mother will be released from the hells forever. At the end of these thirteen years, she will be done with her heavy offenses and will not go back to the Evil Paths. O Buddhas of the Ten Directions, with your compassion and sympathy, please listen to the vast and mighty vow that I am making for the sake of my mother. If my mother never again enters the Three Evil Paths, is never again born into low stations, and will never again be female, then here before the image of Pure-Lotus-Eyes Thus Come One, I vow that from this day on, throughout millions of billions of eons I will respond to all beings who are undergoing suffering for their offenses in the hells or the Three Evil Paths of any world. I vow to rescue them from the bad destinies of the hells, hungry ghosts, animals, and the like. Only after beings with such retributions have all become Buddhas will I myself achieve Proper Enlightenment.'

"After making that vow, she clearly heard Pure-Lotus-Eyes Thus Come One say to her, 'Bright Eyes, your own great compassion and sympathy will reach your mother through this mighty vow that you are making. My contemplation shows me that after thirteen years your mother will be done with this retribution and will be born as a Brahman with a life span of one hundred years. After that retribution, she will be born in the Land of No Concern with a life span of uncountable eons. Later she will realize the fruition of Buddhahood and save people and gods as numerous as sand grains in the Ganges.'"

Shakyamuni Buddha told Samadhi Self-Mastery King, "The Arhat whose blessings helped Bright Eyes then is now Inexhaustible Intention Bodhisattva. The mother of Bright Eyes is now Liberation Bodhisattva. Bright Eyes herself is now Earth Store Bodhisattva. He has been extending his compassion and sympathy like that from distant eons onward by making vows as many as Ganges' sands to rescue vast numbers of beings.

"Men and women in the future may fail to do good deeds and only do evil; may not believe in cause and effect; may indulge in sexual misconduct and false speech; may use divisive and harsh speech; and may slander the Great Vehicle. Beings with karma like that should certainly fall into bad destinies. But if they encounter Good and Wise Advisors who exhort them and lead them to quickly take refuge with Earth Store Bodhisattva, then those beings will just as quickly be released from their retributions in the Three Evil Paths. If those beings are determined and respectful, if they behold, bow to, and praise the Bodhisattva, and if they make offerings of flowers, incense, clothing, jewels, food, and drink to him, they will enjoy supremely wonderful bliss in the heavens for millions of billions of eons. When their blessings in the heavens end and they are born as people, throughout hundreds of thousands of eons they will have the potential to be national leaders able to remember all aspects of causes and effects from previous lives. O Samadhi Self-Mastery King, Earth Store Bodhisattva has such inconceivably great awesome spiritual power that he uses expansively for the benefit of beings.

All of you Bodhisattvas should remember this sutra, and proclaim and spread it far and wide.”

Samadhi Self-Mastery King Bodhisattva said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, please do not be concerned. We thousands of billions of Bodhisattvas Mahasattvas, based on the Buddha’s awesome spiritual strength, will certainly proclaim this sutra widely throughout Jambudvipa for the benefit of beings.”

Having spoken thus to the World Honored One, Samadhi Self-Mastery King Bodhisattva put his palms together respectfully, bowed, and withdrew.

At that time the Four Heavenly Kings rose from their seats, put their palms together respectfully, and said to the Buddha, “World Honored One, Earth Store Bodhisattva has been making such great vows from distant eons past until now. Why is it that even now he has not yet finished taking beings across? Why does he continue to renew his vast and mighty vows? Please, World Honored One, explain that for us.”

The Buddha told the Four Heavenly Kings, “Excellent, excellent. Now, to benefit you and to extend that benefit to people and gods of the present and future, I will speak about how Earth Store Bodhisattva out of compassion and pity uses expedient devices, within the paths of birth and death in Jambudvipa in the Saha world to rescue, take across, and liberate beings who are undergoing suffering for their offenses.”

The Four Heavenly Kings replied, “Please, World Honored One, we would like to hear about his work.”

The Buddha told the Four Heavenly Kings, “From distant eons past up to the present, Earth Store Bodhisattva has been rescuing and liberating beings. Since his vows are still not fulfilled, he continues with compassion and sympathy to help beings suffering for their offenses in this world. Moreover, he sees the ceaseless tangle of their causes extending on through infinite future eons. Because of that he renews his vows. Thus, in this Saha world, on the continent of Jambudvipa, this Bodhisattva teaches and transforms beings by means of millions of billions of expedient devices.

“O Four Heavenly Kings! To killers, Earth Store Bodhisattva says that short life spans will be the retribution. To robbers, he says that poverty and acute suffering will be the retribution. To those who indulge in improper sex, he says that rebirth as pigeons or as mandarin drakes or ducks will be the retribution. To those who use harsh speech, he says that quarrelling families will be the retribution.

“To those who slander, he says that being tongueless and having cankerous mouths will be the retribution. To the hateful, he says that being ugly and crippled will be the retribution. To the stingy, he says that not getting what they seek will be the retribution. To gluttons, he says that hunger, thirst and sicknesses of the throat will be the retribution. To hunters, he says that a frightening insanity that destroys one’s life will be the retribution.

“To those who oppose their parents, he says that being killed in natural disasters will be the retribution. To arsonists who burn mountains and forests, he says that trying to take their own lives in the confusion of insanity will be the retribution.

“To cruel parents or step-parents, he says that being flogged in future lives will be the retribution. To those who net and trap young animals, he says that being separated from one’s own children will be the retribution. To those who slander the Triple Jewel, he says that being blind, deaf, or mute will be the retribution. To those who slight the Dharma and regard the teachings with arrogance, he says that remaining in the bad paths forever will be the retribution. To those who destroy or misuse possessions of the Eternally Dwelling, he says that revolving in the hells for hundreds of millions of eons will be the retribution. To those who defile the pure conduct of others and bear false witness against members of the Sangha, he says that remaining in the animal realm forever will be the retribution. To those who scald, burn, behead, maim, or otherwise harm beings, he says that undergoing the very same suffering will be the retribution.

“To those who violate precepts and the regulations of pure eating, he says that being born as birds or beasts that must suffer from hunger and thirst will be the retribution. To those who make unprincipled and destructive use of things, he says that being unable to ever obtain what they seek will be the retribution. To the arrogant and haughty, he says that being servile and of low station will be the retribution. To those who use backbiting to cause discord among others, he says that being tongueless or having speech impediments will be the retribution. To those with deviant views, he says that being reborn in backward regions will be the retribution.

“The bad habits involving body, mouth, and mind karma that beings of Jambudvipa perpetuate, result in hundreds of thousands of retributions like those. I have only listed a few examples here. Since the varying karma created by beings of Jambudvipa brings about different responses, Earth Store Bodhisattva uses hundreds of thousands of expedient means to teach and transform beings. Those beings must first undergo retributions such as those, and then fall into the hells, where they pass through eons without being able to escape. You should therefore protect people and nations. Do not allow the accumulation of karma to confuse beings.”

Upon hearing that, the Four Heavenly Kings wept in sorrow, placed their palms together, and withdrew.

Chapter 5. The Names of the Hells

At that time, Universal Worthy Bodhisattva Mahasattva said to Earth Store Bodhisattva, “Humane One, for the sake of gods and dragons, those in the Fourfold Assembly, and all other beings of the present and future, please tell us the names of the hells where beings in the Saha world on the continent of Jambudvipa must suffer retributions for offenses they commit. Please also describe what happens during retributions undergone for evil deeds, so that beings in the future Dharma Ending Age will know what those retributions are.”

Earth Store Bodhisattva replied, “Humane One, based on the awesome spiritual power of the Buddha and relying on your strength, great Bodhisattva, I will give a general list of the names of the hells and describe some of what happens during retributions undergone for offenses and evil deeds.

“Humane One, in eastern Jambudvipa there is a mountain range called Iron Ring. That mountain range is pitch black because the light of the sun and moon does not shine on it. A

great hell named Ultimately Relentless is located there. Another hell is called Great Avici. There is also a hell called Four Horns, a hell called Flying Knives, a hell called Fiery Arrows, a hell called Squeezing Mountains, a hell called Piercing Spears, a hell called Iron Carts, a hell called Iron Beds, a hell called Iron Oxen, a hell called Iron Clothing, a hell called Thousand Blades, a hell called Iron Asses, a hell called Molten Copper, a hell called Embracing Pillar, a hell called Flowing Fire, a hell called Plowing Tongues, a hell called Hacking Heads, a hell called Burning Feet, a hell called Pecking Eyes, a hell called Iron Pellets, a hell called Quarreling, a hell called Iron Ax, and a hell called Massive Hatred.”

Earth Store Bodhisattva said, “Humane One, within the Iron Ring are endless hells like that. There is also the Hell of Crying Out, the Hell of Pulling Tongues, the Hell of Dung and Urine, the Hell of Copper Locks, the Hell of Fire Elephants, the Hell of Fire Dogs, the Hell of Fire Horses, the Hell of Fire Oxen, the Hell of Fire Mountains, the Hell of Fire Rocks, the Hell of Fire Beds, the Hell of Fire Beams, the Hell of Fire Eagles, the Hell of Sawing Teeth, the Hell of Flaying Skin, the Hell of Drinking Blood, the Hell of Burning Hands, the Hell of Burning Feet, the Hell of Hanging Hooks, the Hell of Fire Rooms, the Hell of Iron Cells, and the Hell of Fire Wolves.

“Each of those hells contains lesser hells numbering from one, two, three, four, to hundreds of thousands. Each of those lesser hells has its own name.”

Earth Store Bodhisattva told Universal Worthy Bodhisattva, “Humane One, such are the karmic responses of beings in Jambudvīpa who commit evil deeds. The power of karma is extremely great. It rivals Mount Sumeru in its heights. It surpasses the great oceans in its depths. It obstructs the path leading to sagehood. For that reason, beings should never think that minor bad deeds are unimportant or assume that they do not count as offenses. After death, there will be retributions to undergo that reflect all those details. Fathers and sons have the closest relationship, but their roads diverge and each must go his own way. Even if they met, neither would consent to undergo suffering in the other’s place. Now, based on the awesome spiritual power of the Buddha, I will describe some of the retributions for offenses that take place in the hells. Please, Humane One, listen for a moment to what I am going to say.”

Universal Worthy replied, “I have long known of the retributions that come about in the Three Evil Paths. My hope in asking the Humane One to describe them is that when beings in the future Dharma-Ending Age who are committing evil deeds hear the Humane One’s descriptions, they will be moved to take refuge with the Buddha.”

Earth Store said, “Humane One, this is what happens during retributions in the hells. Offenders may go to a hell in which their tongues are stretched out and plowed through by cattle; or to a hell in which their hearts are pulled out and eaten by yakshas; or to a hell in which their bodies are cooked in cauldrons of boiling oil; or to a hell in which they are forced to embrace red-hot copper pillars; or to a hell in which they are burned by a fire that constantly pursues them; or to a hell in which cold and ice are all-pervasive; or to a hell in which excrement and urine are endless; or to a hell in which flying maces are unavoidable; or to a hell in which fiery spears stab them repeatedly; or to a hell in which they are constantly beaten on the chests and backs; or to a hell in which their hands and feet are burned; or to a hell in which they are bound by iron snakes that coil around them; or to a hell in which they are pursued by racing iron dogs; or to a hell in which their bodies are stretched by iron mules.

“Humane One, to inflict these retributions in each hell, hundreds of thousands of instruments made of copper, iron, stone, or fire arise from karmic forces. Those four materials come into being in response to the kinds of karma that offenders create. If I were to explain in detail what happens during retributions in the hells, then I would need to tell of the hundreds of thousands of sufferings that must be undergone in each specific hell. How much more would that be the case for the sufferings in all the many hells! Now, having based myself upon the awesome spiritual power of the Buddha, I have given a general answer to the Humane One’s question, for if I were to speak in detail, it would take eons.”

Amitabha! Na Mo Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva! That’s all for today. Of course, what you learned today is just a corner of an iceberg. You may recite the whole sutra when you get back. Recite sutra everyday. It’s the best way to know the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, the best way to respond to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the best way to open your wisdom inside. Thank you! See you next week!

Verse of Transference

May the merits and virtues accrued from this work,
Adorn the Buddhas' Pure Lands;
Repaying four kinds of kindness above,
And aiding those suffering in the paths below.

May those who see and hear of this,
All bring forth resolve for Bodhi.
And when this retribution body is over,
Be born together in Ultimate Bliss,