

3. *Sūtra of the Whole-Body Relic Treasure Chest Seal Dhāraṇī*

Sūtra of the Whole-Body Relic Treasure Chest Seal Dhāraṇī The Heart Secret of All Tathāgatas 一切如來心祕密全身舍利寶篋印陀羅尼經

Translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the Tang Dynasty by The Tripiṭaka Master Great Vast Knowledge [Amoghavajra](#)

Thus I have heard:

At one time the [Buddha](#) was at the Jewel Brightness Pond in the Immaculate Garden of the city kingdom [Magadha](#). Surrounding Him were countless hundreds of thousands of [Mahāsattvas](#), great [voice-hearers](#), [gods](#), [dragons](#), [yakṣas](#), [gandharvas](#), [asuras](#), [garuḍas](#), [kiṛṇnaras](#), [mahoragas](#), human, nonhumans, and others. At that time, in the assembly was a great [Brahmin](#) named Immaculate Light, who was well educated and intelligent. People delighted in seeing him. Having taken refuge in the [Triple Jewel](#), he persistently performed the [ten good deeds](#). Benevolent, wealthy, and wise, he had the intention to make other people acquire benefits, great fortune, and prosperity. At that time the Brahmin Immaculate Light rose from his seat, went to the place where the Buddha was, circumambulated Him seven times, and offered the [World-Honored One](#) incense and flowers. He also covered the Buddha with priceless wonderful garments, necklaces, and garlands of gems. After bowing down at the Buddha's feet, he stepped back to one side and made a request, saying, "I pray that the World-Honored One and the huge assembly will come to my house tomorrow morning to accept my offerings." At that time the Buddha gave him permission in silence. Knowing that the Buddha had accepted his invitation, the Brahmin hurried home. In the evening, he ordered extensive preparation of food and beverage of a hundred flavors for the banquet. Water was sprinkled and the halls were swept clean, and canopies with streamers set up.

In the next morning, holding incense, flowers, and musical instruments, together with his retinue, the Brahmin went to the place where the Buddha was. He said, "The time has come, and I pray that You will grace my house." At that time the Buddha greeted the Brahmin Immaculate Light with kind words and made an announcement to the huge assembly: "All of you should go to this Brahmin's home to accept his offerings, for the purpose of letting him receive great benefits." Then the World-Honored One rose from His seat. Just as the Buddha stood up, His body emitted all kinds of bright light intermingled with wonderful colors, illuminating and touching the space in the [ten directions](#). Being thus alerted, all set off on the road. At that time, respectfully escorting the Buddha, the Brahmin held wonderful incense and flowers with a reverent heart. He led the way, along with his retinue, the [Brahma-kings](#), the god-king [Śakra](#), the [four god-kings](#), and the [eight classes of Dharma protectors](#) such as gods and dragons.

At that time, the [World-Honored One](#), having traveled not too far on the road, came to a garden called Abundant Wealth. In that garden were the ruins of an ancient pagoda, dilapidated and collapsed. With the courtyard covered by thistles and the doors sealed by creeping weeds, the buried rubbles resembled a mound of dirt. At that time the Buddha went straight to the pagoda. Forthwith, the pagoda issued vast, bright light, illuminating and glowing. A voice from the heap of earth praised, "Very good! Very good! Śākyamuni, Your

action today is excellent! And you, Brahmin, will receive great benefits today!" At that time the World-Honored One paid respects to the ruined pagoda by circumambulating it to the right three times. He took off His upper garment, placed it over the pagoda, and wept tears with blood. After weeping, He then smiled. Meanwhile, all the Buddhas in the ten directions, looking on together, also shed tears, each emitting light to illuminate this pagoda.

At that time the huge assembly was so astonished as to lose their color and wanted to resolve their bewilderment. Meanwhile, Vajrapāṇi and other Bodhisattvas also shed tears. Twirling the [vajra](#) in glowing flames, he went to the place where the Buddha was. He asked, "World-Honored One, for what causes and conditions are these lights manifesting; why did the [Tathāgata](#) shed these tears from His eyes; and why do the Buddhas in the ten directions manifest the sign of vast, auspicious light? I pray that the Tathāgata will resolve, in this huge assembly, my bewilderment."

At that time the World-Honored One said to Vajrapāṇi, "This great treasure pagoda of accumulated whole-body relics of Tathāgatas contains immeasurable [koṭis](#) of the heart [dhāraṇīs](#), the secret seal of the essence of the [Dharma](#) of all Tathāgatas. Vajrapāṇi, because of the essence of the Dharma contained in it, the pagoda has become tiered seamlessly like sesame seeds. You should know that the bodies of hundreds of thousands of koṭis of Tathāgatas are also like sesame seeds. Contained in the pagoda is the accumulation of the whole-body relics of hundreds of thousands of koṭis of Tathāgatas and even the [store](#) of 84,000 Dharmas. Also contained in it are ninety-nine billion koṭi [Tathāgata-crowns](#). Because of these wondrous things, the site of this pagoda has great spiritual efficacy and superb, awesome virtue. It can fill the entire world with auspicious events."

When the huge assembly heard the Buddha's words, they abandoned their emotional defilements, ended their [afflictions](#), and obtained the pure [Dharma-eye](#). Since the capacities of the multitudes were so varied, the benefits they obtained were different. Each of them acquired one of the following accomplishments: some attained the fruit of Śrotāpanna, Sakradāgāmin, Anāgāmin, [Arahat](#), or [Pratyekabuddha](#); some accomplished the non-regress [sarvajña](#) on the Bodhisattva [Way](#); some attained the First [Ground](#), Second Ground, or even the Tenth Ground on the Bodhisattva Way; and some fulfilled the six [pāramitās](#). The Brahmin abandoned his emotional defilements and accomplished the [five Transcendental powers](#).

At that time, Vajrapāṇi, having witnessed these unusual, very rare occurrences, said, "World-Honored One, how wonderful and how extraordinary! Since people can achieve such excellent virtue by merely hearing about this matter, how much virtue will they achieve if they hear the profound truth and invoke their faith with an earnest mind?"

The Buddha said, "Hearken! Vajrapāṇi, in future times, if male and female believers and the [four groups of my disciples](#) are inspired to copy this Sūtra, it will be as though they copy all the sūtras pronounced by ninety-nine billion [koṭi](#) Tathāgatas. It will surpass the [good roots](#) they had already been planting for a long time in the presence of ninety-nine billion koṭi Tathāgatas. All the Tathāgatas will support, protect, and remember them like cherishing their own eyes or like loving mothers caring for their young children. If a person chants this one-chapter Sūtra, it will be as though he chants all the sūtras pronounced by the Buddhas—past, present, and future. For this reason, ninety-nine billion koṭi Tathāgatas, who are Arhats, [Samyak-Sarṇibuddhas](#), will come, jam-packed sideways without any gap between them, like

sesame seeds in a pile. Day and night they will appear and support that person. Thus, all the Buddha-Tathāgatas, innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, will come. The first group of them has not yet left, and the next has arrived. They all instantly move away and return again, like fine sands whirling in quick water. Unable to stop, they come again as soon as they turn away. If a person makes offerings of incense, flowers, solid perfumes, garlands, apparel, and wonderful decorative objects to this Sūtra, it will be as though he makes an entire offering before ninety-nine billion koṭi Tathāgatas in the ten directions, of divine incense, flowers, apparel, and decorative objects made of the [seven treasures](#), all piled high like Mount Sumeru. Planting good roots can be accomplished in the same way."

At that time, having heard these words, the eight classes of Dharma protectors such as gods and dragons as well as humans, nonhumans, and others, each harboring wonderment, said to one another, "How marvelous is the awesome virtue of this old pile of earth! Its miraculous manifestation must have been caused by the spiritual powers of the Tathāgata."

Vajrapāṇi next asked the Buddha, "World-Honored One, for what causes and conditions has this pagoda made of the seven treasures now become a pile of dirt?"

The Buddha said to Vajrapāṇi, "This is not a pile of dirt, but a wonderful, great treasure pagoda! It is hidden because of the bad karmic fruits of sentient beings. Although the pagoda is hidden, the bodies of the Tathāgatas are indestructible. How could the [vajra-store](#) bodies of the Tathāgatas be destroyed? After I have abandoned my body, the ending of the Dharma will be unrelenting in future times. Sentient beings that act not according to the Dharma are bound to fall to hell because they neither believe in the Triple Jewel nor plant good roots. Because of these causes and conditions, Buddha Dharma should be hidden. However, this pagoda will still be solid and will not be demolished because it is supported by the spiritual powers of all the Tathāgatas. However, ignorant beings, obscured and obstructed by their delusions, not knowing how to excavate and make use of it, would leave the treasure in disuse. For this reason, I now shed tears, and other Tathāgatas all shed tears as well."

Furthermore, the Buddha said to Vajrapāṇi, "If a person copies this Sūtra and enshrines the copy in a pagoda, this pagoda will then become the vajra-store [stūpa](#) of all the Tathāgatas as well as the stūpa supported by the heart secret of the Dhāraṇī of all the Tathāgatas. It will become the stūpa of ninety-nine billion koṭi Tathāgatas as well as the [Buddha-crown](#) and [Buddha-eye](#) stūpa of all Tathāgatas and will be protected by their spiritual powers. If you enshrine this Sūtra inside a Buddha's statue in a stūpa, the statue will be made of the seven treasures. This statue will be so efficacious and responsive that all wishes will be fulfilled without exception.

"According to your ability, construct for a stūpa these things: canopies, nets, columns, dew-catching wheels, fine eaves, bells, foundations, or steps. Whether you use earth, wood, stones, or bricks, all will turn into the seven treasures because of the awesome power of the Sūtra. Moreover, all the Tathāgatas will increase the power of this Sūtra. Keeping a sincere promise, they support it incessantly.

"If a sentient being makes obeisance and gives offerings of only a little incense and one flower to this pagoda, his grave sins [which would entail*](#) eighty koṭi kalpas of birth and death will all be expunged at once. He will be free from catastrophes during this life and, after death, be reborn in Buddha's family. Even for a person who should fall to [Avīci Hell](#), if

he makes one obeisance to the pagoda or circumambulate it once to the right, the door to hell will be blocked and the [bodhi](#) road will be opened.

"Furthermore, the place of the pagoda or of its image will be protected by the spiritual powers of all the Tathāgatas. The place will not be damaged by hurricanes, lightning, or thunderbolt. It will be neither disturbed by venomous snakes, vipers, or poisonous insects and animals, nor harmed by lions, rampaging elephants, tigers, wolves, jackals, or scorpions. It will be free from the terror of [yakṣas](#), [rakṣasas](#), [pūtanās](#), [piśācas](#), spirits, monsters, and epilepsy. It will not be troubled by diseases such as chills, fevers, skin ulcers, carbuncles, scabies, or psora. One can avert all disasters by seeing the pagoda briefly. Also, at the place of the pagoda, people including young boys and girls, horses, and six kinds of livestock will not be plagued by epidemics. They will not die unnatural, accidental deaths, or be harmed by knives, sticks, water, or fire. They will be neither plundered by bandits or enemies nor worried about famine or poverty. They will not be subjected to the power of sorcery or curses. The [four great god-kings](#) and their retinue will protect them day and night. In addition, the twenty-eight classes of yakṣa generals, the sun, the moon, the five planets, and cloudlike comets will protect them day and night. All dragon kings will increase their vital energy and bring rainfall at the right time. All the gods including those in [Trayastrīṃśa Heaven](#) will descend during the [three periods of the day](#) to make offerings. All fairies will gather during the three periods to sing songs of praise, circumambulate, give thanks, and pay respects. The god-king [Śakra](#) and goddesses will descend during the three periods of the day and of the night to make offerings. The place will be remembered and supported by all the Tathāgatas. Such will be the pagoda because it contains this Sūtra!

"If people build a pagoda using earth, stone, wood, gold, silver, bronze, and lead, and if they copy this spiritual Mantra and enshrine the copy in the pagoda, as soon as it is enshrined, the pagoda will be made of the seven treasures: The upper and lower steps, dew-catching wheels, canopies, bells, and columns will all be made of the seven treasures. Also, the four sides of the pagoda will have the images of the Tathāgatas. Because of the essence of the Dharma, all the Tathāgatas firmly protect and support the pagoda, staying in it day and night without departing. Because of the awesome power of the Mantra, the pagoda made of the seven treasures, which contains the wonderful treasure of the whole-body relics, will soar high up into midst of the palaces of [Akaniṣṭha Heaven](#). Wherever a pagoda stands like a mountain, all gods will view it with reverence, stand guard, and make offerings day and night."

Vajrapāṇi asked, "Due to what causes and conditions has this Dharma such superb virtue?"

The Buddha replied, "You should know that it is because of the spiritual power of this Treasure Chest Seal Dhāraṇī."

Vajrapāṇi requested, "I pray that the Tathāgata, out of compassion for me and all others present, will pronounce this Dhāraṇī."

The Buddha said, "Hearken, contemplate, and do not forget it! The radiance of the emanations of all the Tathāgatas of the present and of the future as well as the whole-body relics of all the Buddhas of the past is in this Treasure Chest Seal Dhāraṇī. The [three bodies](#) of every Tathāgata are also in it."

Then the Buddha pronounced the Dhāraṇī:
namas tryadhvikānāṃ |
sarva tathāgatānāṃ |
oṃ bhuvi-bhavana-vare vacana-vacati |
suru suru |
dhara dhara |
sarva tathāgata dhātu dhare padmaṃ bhavati |
jaya vare mudre smara tathāgata dharma-cakra pravartana |
vajre bodhimaṇḍa-alaṅkāra-alaṅkr̥te | s
arva tathāgata-adhiṣṭhite |
bodhaya bodhaya |
bodhi bodhi |
budhya budhya |
saṃbodhani saṃbodhaya |
cala cala calantu |
sarva-āvaraṇāni |
sarva pāpa vigate |
huru huru |
sarva śoka vigate |
sarva tathāgata hṛdaya vajriṇi |
sambhāra sambhāra |
sarva tathāgata guhya dhāraṇī mudre |
bhūte subhūte |
sarva tathāgata-adhiṣṭhita dhātu garbhe svāhā |
samaya-adhiṣṭhite svāhā |
sarva tathāgata hṛdaya dhātu mudre svāhā |
supraṭiṣṭhita stūpe tathāgata-adhiṣṭhite huru huru hūṃ hūṃ svāhā |
oṃ sarva tathāgatoṣṇīṣa dhātu mudrāṇi |
sarva tathāgata sadhātu vibhūṣita-adhiṣṭhite hūṃ hūṃ svāhā ||

When the Buddha finished chanting this spiritual Mantra, all the Buddha-Tathāgatas from the pile of earth voiced their praises: "Very good! Very good! Śākya the World-Honored One, you have appeared in this turbid, evil world to expound the profound Dharma for the benefit of sentient beings that have nothing and nobody to depend upon.

Therefore, the essence of the Dharma will remain a long time in the world, bringing wide, abundant benefits and joyful peace."

Then the Buddha said to Vajrapāṇi, "Hearken! Hearken! The essence of this Dharma has inexhaustible spiritual power and boundless benefits! It is like a wish-fulfilling jewel on the top of a cylindrical banner, constantly raining down treasures and fulfilling all wishes. I will now speak briefly about one ten thousandth thereof. You should memorize and uphold it for benefiting all sentient beings.

"If an evil man falls to hell after death, he will have to suffer uninterruptedly without a date of release. However, if his descendants address his name and then recite this spiritual Mantra, upon completion of only seven repetitions, the molten copper and burning iron in the hell will suddenly turn into a pond of [eight virtues](#). [This deceased] will have a lotus flower supporting his feet and a jeweled canopy over his head. The door of hell will break and the Bodhi [Way](#) will open. His lotus flower will fly him to the Land of Ultimate Bliss. There, his [all-encompassing knowledge](#) will unfold spontaneously. Delighting in expounding the Dharma endlessly, he will attain the rank of realizing Buddhahood in the next life.

"Furthermore, for a person who, in retribution for his grave sins, is suffering from a hundred diseases with a heavy heart, he should recite this spiritual Mantra twenty-one times. Then a hundred diseases and ten thousand distresses will be eliminated at once. His lifespan will be extended, and his fortune and virtue will become infinite.

"Suppose a person has been born into a poor family because of his karma of stinginess and greed. His clothing cannot cover his body and his food cannot sustain his life. Emaciated and haggard, he is despicable to others. This person, ashamed of himself, goes to the mountain and plucks wild flowers not owned by anyone. He grates rotten wood for incense powder. Then he goes to the pagoda to make obeisance and give offerings, circumambulating it seven times, repenting in tears. Because of the power of this spiritual Mantra and the awesome virtue of the pagoda, his poverty retribution will terminate and fortune will suddenly arrive. The seven treasures will appear like abundant rain. However, at this time, he should give to the poor and needy, completely honoring the Buddha Dharma. If he is reluctant to give, his riches will suddenly vanish.

"Suppose a person, planting [good roots](#) for himself, builds a pagoda at his pleasure, using earth or bricks that he can afford. The pagoda is as big as a mango, with its height about four times the length of a finger. He copies this spiritual Mantra and enshrines the copy in the pagoda. Then he makes obeisance and offers incense and flowers. Because of the power of the Mantra and his faithful heart, vast, fragrant clouds will come out of the little pagoda. The fragrance and the light of the clouds will pervade the dharma realm, infusing fragrance with dazzling radiance, doing Buddha work widely. The virtues he will gain are just as I have already stated. In sum, all his wishes will be fulfilled without exception. During the [Dharma-ending age](#), if the four groups of my disciples and good men and women, following the unsurpassed Way, do their best to build pagodas and enshrine this Mantra in them, the virtues they will acquire will be too numerous to recount.

"If a person, wishing for fortune, goes to the pagoda, he should make obeisance and offer a flower and a little incense to the pagoda, and circumambulate it to the right. From his virtuous act, rank and glory will arrive unsought. Longevity and prosperity will increase without effort. Foes and bandits will fail without being subjugated. Vengeful thoughts and

curses will return to their source without resistance. Epidemics and evil forces will turn away without being purged. A good husband or good wife will come without being persuaded. Beautiful good children will be born without being prayed for. All wishes will be fulfilled at will. Even for ravens, owls, turtledoves, owlets, wolves, jackals, mosquitoes, ants, and the like, which momentarily come in the shadow of the pagoda and step on the grass there, their [hindrance of afflictions](#) will be destroyed, and they will recognize their ignorance. They will suddenly enter Buddha's family and freely receive Dharma wealth. Not to mention human beings who have seen the form of the pagoda, heard its bell tolling, heard of its name, or been in its shadow. Their hindrance of sins will all be annihilated, and their wishes fulfilled. Their present lives will be peaceful, and they will be reborn in the Pure Land of Ultimate Bliss.

"If a person, without extra effort, applies a glob of mud to the damaged wall of a pagoda or uses a fist-sized stone to support a leaning pagoda, from this virtuous act his fortune will increase and his lifespan will be extended. After death, he will be reborn as a [Wheel-Turning King](#).

"After I have abandoned my body, the four groups of my disciples, in order to rescue sentient beings in miserable existence, should come before this pagoda, make offerings of incense and flowers, and recite this spiritual Mantra, making vows in earnest. Then each and every word and phrase [they utter] will radiate vast, bright light, illuminating the three evil [life-journeys](#) to extinguish all sufferings. Once those sentient beings are delivered from sufferings, their seeds of Buddhahood will germinate. They will then be reborn as they wish in [any of] the Pure Lands in the ten directions.

"If a person recites this Mantra earnestly at the top of a high mountain, all living beings within the scope of his sight, including those in furs, feathers, scales, and shells, residing near and far in mountain valleys, forests, streams, lakes, rivers, and oceans, will break their hindrances of delusion and recognize their ignorance. They will manifest the [three kinds of Buddha nature](#) they innately have and ultimately attain the great [nirvāṇa](#). If people take the road walked by this person and if they are touched by the wind blown through his clothes, step on his footprints, see his face, or converse with him briefly, their grave sins will all be expunged and their [siddhis](#) perfected."

At that time the Buddha said to Vajrapāṇi, "I now entrust this secret spiritual Mantra and Sūtra to you and all others present. Revere, protect, uphold, and propagate them in the world. Do not allow transmission [of the Dharma] to end for sentient beings."

Vajrapāṇi said, "I am now honored to receive the trust of the World-Honored One. I pray only that we will repay the World-Honored One for his profound lovingkindness, day and night protecting, upholding, propagating, and pronouncing [the Mantra and the Sūtra] to the world. If there are sentient beings that copy, uphold, and remember them unceasingly, we will command the Brahma-kings, the god-king Śakra, the four great god-kings, and the eight classes of Dharma protectors to protect them day and night without even leaving temporarily."

The Buddha said, "Very good! Vajrapāṇi, for the benefit of all sentient beings of the future, protect and uphold this Dharma, and make it endless."

At that time the World-Honored One pronounced this Treasure Chest Seal Dhāraṇī and did Buddha work widely. Then He went to the Brahmin's home and accepted his offerings, causing humans and gods to receive great benefits. Afterwards, He returned to the place where He was staying.

At that time the assembly of [bhikṣus](#), [bhikṣuṇīs](#), [upāsakas](#), [upāsikās](#), gods, dragons, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṁnaras, mahoragas, humans, nonhumans, and others greatly rejoiced. They all believed in, accepted, and respectfully carried out the teachings.

—*Sūtra of the Whole-Body Relic Treasure Chest Seal Dhāraṇī the Heart Secret of All Tathāgatas* Translated from the Chinese Canon, Vol. 19, Text no. 1022B

*The rendition of this clause agrees with the similar passages in J. Takakusu's English translation of the *Sūtra of Meditation on Buddha Amitāyus*, included in *Buddhist Mahāyāna Texts* edited by E. B. Cowell (New York: Dover publications, 1969). ([Return to text](#))