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# آكاسكربا

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# Ākāśagarbha



Ākāśagarbha statue in Jingoji, 9th century

**Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva** (Sanskrit: आकाशगर्भ बोधिसत्त्व; traditional Chinese: 虛空藏菩薩; pinyin: *Xūkōngzàng Púsà*; Korean: 허공장보살; Japanese: *Kokūzō Bosatsu*; Tibetan: *Namkhai Nyingpo*) is a Mahāyāna bodhisattva who is associated with the great element (*mahābhūta*) of space (*ākāśa*).

## 1 Overview

Ākāśagarbha is regarded as one of the eight great bodhisattvas. His name can be translated as “boundless space treasury” or “void store” as his wisdom is said to be boundless as space itself. He is sometimes known as the twin brother of the “earth store” bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha, and is even briefly mentioned in the *Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva Pūrvapraṇidhāna Sūtra*.

Kūkai, the founder of Shingon Buddhism, met a famous monk who is said to have repeatedly chanted a mantra of Ākāśagarbha as a young Buddhist acolyte. Kūkai took a tutorial with him on Kokuzou-Gumonji (a secret doctrine method, 虛空求聞持法).<sup>[1]</sup> As he chanted the mantra, he experienced a vision whereby Ākāśagarbha



Painting of Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva. Japan, 13th century

told him to go to China to seek understanding of the *Mahāvairocana Abhisambodhi Sūtra*.<sup>[2]</sup> Later he would go to China to learn Esoteric Buddhism from Huiguo, and then go on to found the Shingon school in Japan.

## 2 Sūtras

Two Mahāyāna sūtras are known to survive in which Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva is a central figure:

- 《虛空藏菩薩經》 (*Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva Sūtra*)
- 《虛空藏菩薩神咒經》 (*Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva Dhāraṇī Sūtra*)

Additionally, he appears briefly in the final chapter of the Earth Store Bodhisattva Sutra, requesting that the Buddha preach on the benefits of praising that sutra, and of Ksitigarbha.\*[3]

### 3 Mantras

The mantra of Ākāśagarbha is popularly used by Shingon Buddhists, Chinese Buddhists following esoteric practices, and by artists. It is believed to give rise to wisdom and creativity, and dispel ignorance.\*[4]

- **Chinese:** Namō Xukongzang Pusa
- **Korean:** Namu Heogongjang Bosal
- **Vietnamese:** Nam Mo Hu Khong Tang Bo Tat
- **Translation:** Homage to Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva

Another mantra also exists for Ākāśagarbha Bodhisattva:

- **Sanskrit:** namo ākāśagarbhāya om ārya kamari mauli svāhā
- **Chinese:** 南牟，阿迦捨，揭婆耶，唵，阿唎，迦麼唎，慕唎，莎訶！
- **Japanese pronunciation:** nōbō akyasha kyarabaya on arikyā mari bori sowaka
- **Translation:** In the name of ākāśa-garbhāya Om Flower-Garland Lotus-Crown may it be accomplished

Tantric rituals surrounding Ākāśagarbha are only given to students initiated in esoteric Buddhist lineages by an approved teacher. Currently the Chinese (Hanmi) Esoteric School is teaching his tantric ritual to the general public.

### 4 See also

- Akasha
- Akashic records

### 5 Literature

Visser, M. W. de. The Bodhisattva Akasagarbha (Kokuzo) in China and Japan, Amsterdam: The Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences, 1931.

## 6 References

- [1] Koya-san Fudojin 高野山不動院
- [2] Abe, Ryuichi (1999). *The Weaving of Mantra: Kukai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse*. Columbia University Press. p. 74. ISBN 0-231-11286-6.
- [3] Shih, Tao-tsi. *The Sutra of Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha's Fundamental Vows* (2nd ed.). Sutra Translation Committee of the United States and Canada. pp. 89–93.
- [4] The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching by Thich Nhat Hanh

## 7 External links

- Gumonji : A possible cure for memory loss The Japan Times
- Japanese Buddhist Statuary: Kokuzo
- The Koyasan Shingon-shu Lay Practitioner's Daily Service
- Headquarters of The Chinese (Hanmi) Esoteric School: Prajna Akasagarbha Teachings available to the general public

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# List of bodhisattvas



Relief image of the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara from Mt. Jiuhua in China's Anhui province

In Mahayana Buddhist thought, a **Bodhisattva** (Ch.: 菩薩 pú sà, Jp.: bosatsu) is a being who is dedicated to achieving complete Buddhahood. That is their reason for “being” or *raison d'être*. Conventionally, the term is applied to beings with a high degree of enlightenment. Bodhisattva literally means an “enlightenment (bodhi) being (sattva)” in Sanskrit.

The following is a partial list of bodhisattvas, respected in Indian, Mongolian, Tibetan, Japanese and Chinese traditions.

## 1 Bodhisattvas

- **Akasagarbha**

(Ch. 阿閼鞞, *Xu Kong Zang*, Kr. *Huh Gong Zang*, Jp. *Kokuzo*, Viet. *Hư Không Tạng*) The Bodhisattva of in-

finite happiness generated by helping countless numbers of sentient beings.

- **Avalokitesvara**

(Ch. 觀音, *Guan Yin*, Kr. *Guan Um*, Jp. *Kannon*, Tib. *Chenrezig*, Viet. *Quán Thế Âm*) The bodhisattva of compassion, the listener of the world’s cries who uses skillful means to come to their aid; the most universally acknowledged Bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhism. Known as Guan Yin in East Asia, Chenrezig in Tibet, and Migjid Janraisig in Mongolia.

- **Ksitigarbha**

(Ch. 地藏, *Di Zang*, Kr. *Ji Zang*, Jp. *Jizo*, Tib. *Sai Ny-ingpo*, Viet. *Địa Tạng*). The bodhisattva of the beings suffering in hellish realms, or the bodhisattva of great vows.

- **Mahasthamaprapta**

(Ch. 大智度論, *Da Shì Zhì*, Kr. *Dae Sae Zhi*, Jp. *Seishi*, Viet. *Đại Thế Chí*) Represents the power of wisdom, seen on the left of Amitabha in Pure Land Buddhism.

- **Maitreya**

(Ch. 彌勒, *Mi Le*, Kr. *Mi Ruk*, Jp. *Miroku*, Viet. *Di Lạc*) The bodhisattva to be reborn and to become enlightened, thus succeeding Gautama Buddha in the future. Known for his benevolence.

- **Manjusri**

(Ch. 文殊, *Wen shu*, Kr. Moon Soo, Jp. Monju, Tib. Jampal Yang, Viet. Văn Thù) Bodhisattva of keen awareness and wisdom.

- **Nagarjuna**

(Ch. 龍樹, *Long Shu*, Viet. *Long Thọ*) The founder of the Madhyamaka (Middle Path) school of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

- **Niō**

Two strong guardians of the Buddha, standing today at the entrance of many Buddhist temples in **Japan** and **Korea** under the appearance of frightening wrestler-like statues. They are manifestations of the Bodhisattva Vajrapani.

- **Padmasambhava**

(Ch. 莲花生, *Lianhuasheng Shang Shi*, Tib. *Padma Jungne* or *Guru Rinpoche*) Most associated with **Tibetan Buddhism** and **Bhutanese Buddhism**. The **Nyingma** school regards Padmasambhava as a second Buddha.

- **Samantabhadra**

(Ch. 普贤, *Pu Xian*, Kr. *Bo Hyun*, Jp. *Fugen*, Tib. *Kuntu Zangpo*, Viet. *Phổ Hiền*) Represents the practice and meditation of all Buddhas.

- **Sangharama**

(Ch. 僧伽, *Qie Lan*, Viet. *Già Lam*) Only revered in Chinese Buddhism-Taoism, Sangharama refer to a group of devas who guard Buddhist monasteries and the faith, but the title is usually referring to the legendary Chinese military general **Guan Yu**, who became a Dharmapala through becoming a Buddhist and making vows.

- **Shantideva**

Eighth century scholar, wrote about Bodhisattvas.

- **Sitatapatra**

The goddess of the White Parasol and protector against supernatural danger.

- **Skanda**

(Ch. 韦陀, *Wei Tuo*) A Dharmapala who guards the Dharma, with links to Vajrapani and is somewhat the direct forbear to Murugan, a Hindu deity. Primarily worshiped in Chinese Buddhism.

- **Supushpachandra**

Mentioned in Shantideva's *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way Of Life*.

- **Suryavairocana**

(Ch: 日光, *Ri Guang*, Kr. *Il Guang*, Jp: *Nikkō*) One of two attendants of Bhaisajyaguru Buddha.

- **Tara**

(Ch. 度母, *Du Mu*) Female bodhisattva, or set of bodhisattvas, in Tibetan Buddhism. She represents the virtues of success in work and achievements. Also a manifestation of **Avalokiteśvara**.

- **Vajrapani**

(Ch. 金刚杵, *Jin Gang Shou*, Kr. *Kum Kang Soo*, Jp. *Shukongojin*, Tib. *Channa Dorje*, Viet. *Kim cương thủ*) An early bodhisattva in **Mahayana** and the Chief Protector of the Buddha and earthly Bodhisattvas. Also linked to Seishi **Mahasthamaprapta** and **Nio Kongo Rikishi** and said to wield the power of all five Tathagathas.

- **Vasudhara**

Bodhisattva of abundance and fertility. Popular in **Nepal**.

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