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The Sūtra on Maitreya's Birth in the Heaven of Joy

Translated into Tibetan by
Pabtong · Sherab Sengé

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'phags pa byang chub sems dpa' byams pa dga' ldan gnam du skye ba blangs pa'i mdo

The Noble Sūtra “The Bodhisattva Maitreya’s Birth in the Heaven of Joy”



Toh 199
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SUMMARY

- s.1 This discourse takes place during the early evening in Śrāvastī and features the Buddha and his retinue. Among them are Maitreya (then known as Ajita) and Upāli, who asks about Ajita's future awakening as Maitreya. The Buddha answers that he will be reborn in the Heaven of Joy. He proceeds to describe its wondrous qualities and the causes of being reborn there. At the conclusion of the discourse, all those present in the retinue rejoice and make aspirations to be reborn in the Heaven of Joy.

ac.

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ac.1 Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the guidance of Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche. The translation was produced by Lowell Cook. Andreas Doctor checked the translation against the Tibetan, wrote the introduction, and edited the text. Felin Chung provided assistance by checking the translation against the Chinese and compiling the Chinese glossary. Further revisions based on the Chinese were made by Ian MacCormack, James Gentry, and Xiaolong Diao.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 According to tradition, Maitreya is a bodhisattva said to be currently abiding in the Heaven of Joy (Skt. Tuṣita), whence he is prophesied to return to our continent of Jambudvīpa as the next buddha of this Fortunate Eon (Skt. *bhadrakalpa*). Maitreya was the first bodhisattva to inspire a devoted following in India, anticipating the later development of other bodhisattva cults, such as those of the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mañjuśrī. The cult of Maitreya flourished in India as early as the first centuries of the Common Era, but the figure of Maitreya became especially popular in Central and East Asia, starting in the fourth century CE. Moreover, in his role as the future buddha, Maitreya has continued to play an important role in practically all forms of Mahāyāna Buddhism up to the present.

i.2 The sūtra translated here, *Maitreya's Birth in the Heaven of Joy*, is part of this larger tradition. It is one of the many sūtras in the Kangyur to have been translated into Tibetan from Chinese.¹ This is immediately clear from the original title of the text, which is transcribed from Chinese rather than Sanskrit, and from the colophon, which indicates that the translation was produced based on a Chinese manuscript.² The Tibetan translation corresponds to a sūtra in the Chinese canon titled (*Fo shuo guan mile pusa shang sheng doushuaitian jing* 佛說觀彌勒菩薩上生兜率天經, Taishō 452). Of the six sūtras in the Chinese canon that center on Maitreya (Taishō 452–57), this is the only one to focus on his “ascendant” rebirth in the Heaven of Joy, whereas the others are primarily concerned with his future descent to be reborn in Jambudvīpa.³

i.3 *Maitreya's Birth in the Heaven of Joy* is also sometimes classified as one of six so-called *visualization sūtras* in the Chinese canon, all of which are thought to have been compiled around the first half of the fifth century CE (Yamabe 1999, 40–46; Quinter 2013). These six sūtras receive that label from the term “visualization” (觀, *guan*, sometimes also translated as “contemplation” or “meditation”), which appears at the beginning of each of their titles. This

raises the question of just what *visualization* means in this context and how it functions specifically within each of these six texts. Several of these sūtras, including *Maitreya's Birth in the Heaven of Joy*, lack detailed visualization instructions, leading some scholars to question whether they were in fact ever intended for visualization practices, or simply emerged within a general milieu of Maitreya worship and contemplation.⁴

i.4 As for the origins of these six visualization sūtras, although traditionally understood as translations of Sanskrit texts, there are today no extant Sanskrit sources, and there is also no mention of them in Indian literature in general or in the travelogues of the Chinese monks Faxian (337–ca. 422 CE) and Xuanzang (ca. 602–64 CE) documenting their visits to India. Moreover, the terminology used in these six sūtras is similar to that of indigenous Chinese meditation manuals composed around the same time. Such things suggest that these texts might not have been composed in India. Instead, there appears to be a growing consensus that they were first compiled in Central Asia, specifically in the Turfan region, around the first half of the fifth century CE (Quinter 2013).⁵ According to the colophon of the Chinese translation, this sūtra was translated in 455 CE by the Chinese translator Juqu Jingsheng (d. ca. 464), an exiled prince of Anyang who traveled to Khotan to study Buddhism and is said to have brought this sūtra back to China sometime after the Northern Wei invasion of the Northern Liang in 439.⁶ A Chinese commentary on the sūtra, of possible Tang provenance, was uncovered at Dunhuang.⁷

i.5 The Tibetan colophon does not provide much detail beyond the fact that it was translated from a Chinese manuscript by the editor-translator Venerable Pabtonḡ and Venerable Sherab Sengé. These two translators are not widely mentioned in other works cataloging the Tibetan translations. The sūtra is also absent from the ninth-century Denkarma catalog (Tib. *dkar chag ldan dkar ma*), which lists the Tibetan translations that had been produced up to that point—an absence that indicates a later date of translation. In producing this translation, we took as our basis the Tibetan Degé xylograph version and compared it to the variant readings recorded in the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*). Furthermore, we compared the Tibetan with the Chinese of Taishō 452.⁸ In terms of Western languages, the sūtra has recently been translated into German from Chinese by Heyryun Koh (2008). This publication also proved helpful for our work on several occasions.

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra

Maitreya's Birth in the Heaven of Joy

1.

The Translation

[F.296.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in Prince Jeta's Grove at Anāthapiṇḍada's park in Śrāvastī, along with a great congregation of monks and many bodhisattva great beings.⁹ Then, during the first watch of the night, golden light rays emerged from the Blessed One's body¹⁰ and circled the Jeta Grove seven times. The light made contact with¹¹ the householder Sudatta and others;¹² then a golden light filled the sky like clouds, raining down golden flowers all over Śrāvastī.¹³ Amidst this golden light appeared an immeasurable number of hundreds of thousands of emanated thus-gone ones. They spoke in unison about the one thousand bodhisattvas to awaken in this eon, from the awakening firstly of Krakucchanda until the awakening finally of Roca.

1.2 After they had spoken, the light of the thus-gone ones roused an entire retinue, which gathered around them like cloud banks. The retinue consisted of Venerable Ājñātakauṇḍinya, who arose from absorption, with a retinue of two hundred fifty monks; Venerable Mahākāśyapa, with a retinue of two hundred fifty monks; Venerable Maudgalyāyana, with a retinue of two hundred fifty monks; Venerable Śāriputra, with a retinue of two hundred fifty monks; one thousand fully ordained nuns including Mahāprajāpatī,¹⁴ three thousand laymen including the householder Sudatta;¹⁵ two thousand laywomen including Viśākhā;¹⁶ the sixteen bodhisattvas of the Fortunate Eon including Samantabhadra;¹⁷ and five hundred bodhisattvas including the Dharma prince Mañjuśrī,¹⁸ as well as gods, nāgas, [F.297.a] yakṣas, and asuras.¹⁹

1.3 The Blessed One then produced a thousand light rays from his tongue. Each ray of light had a thousand colors, and within each color appeared an immeasurable number of emanated thus-gone ones. All these thus-gone

ones then taught in unison the profound *dhāraṇīs* that show the purity of all phenomena, which all great bodhisattvas possess.²⁰ They included the dhāraṇī called *limitless gateway*, the dhāraṇī called *wisdom of emptiness*, the dhāraṇī called *unobscured nature*, and the dhāraṇī called *great liberation without marks*. With a single voice, they spoke billions of such dhāraṇī gateways.²¹ When they had spoken those dhāraṇī gateways, Maitreya, who was present in the retinue, attained ten trillion dhāraṇī gateways at the very instant that he heard what the Blessed One taught. He rose from his seat, adjusted his robes, joined his palms together, and then settled himself before the Blessed One.

1.4 Next, Venerable Upāli rose from his seat, bowed his head, and addressed the Blessed One, “Blessed One, long ago, in one of your treasured teachings²² the Blessed One spoke of Ajita’s²³ future awakening. Ajita is not yet free from the body of an ordinary person, and his defilements have not yet been exhausted.²⁴ He has gone forth in this life but has neither cultivated absorption nor abandoned the afflictions. Yet, the Blessed One has said that he is certain to become awakened. Therefore, when Ajita’s life is over, in which realm will he be reborn?”

1.5 The Blessed One responded to Upāli, “Upāli, take heed [F.297.b] and listen. Since the Thus-Gone One is omniscient, I have prophesied that within this retinue,²⁵ the bodhisattva great being Maitreya will fully awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Twelve years from now, he will pass away and undoubtedly take birth in the Heaven of Joy.

1.6 “In the Heaven of Joy, there are five hundred quintillion gods, each of whom practices the profound perfection of generosity. Thus, the gods have used the power of their divine merit to construct celestial palaces to worship this bodhisattva who has only one birth remaining. To do so, they first removed their robes, sandalwood jewelry, and precious crowns. They knelt, joined their palms together, and prayed: ‘With our priceless jewels and divine crowns, we wish to worship the great bodhisattva. We have heard the prophecy that²⁶ Ajita will awaken to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood not long in the future,²⁷ so may our precious crowns transform into substances for the worship of his fully adorned buddha-realm!’ Each god knelt and made this prayer.

1.7 “As soon as all the gods had made this prayer, all their jeweled crowns transformed into five hundred quintillion palaces. Each precious palace contained seven parks,²⁸ each of which was made of seven precious substances. Each precious substance emitted five billion rays of light, from each of which came five billion lotuses. From each lotus emerged five billion rows of trees made of the seven precious substances. The leaves of each tree held five billion light rays in dazzling colors, and each of these dazzling

colors emitted a further five billion light rays the color of Jambū river gold. [F.298.a] From each of these Jambū-gold light rays emerged five billion precious goddesses. Each goddess sat beneath the trees, holding in her hands five billion garlands with countless gems, and singing the loveliest songs about the Dharma wheel of the nonregressing level.

1.8 “Fruit grew in the trees, with a color like beryl, and all these colors were reflected in the beryl. As all the light rays swirled clockwise, many pleasant voices could be heard teaching the Dharma of great love and great compassion. Each palace²⁹ was sixty-two leagues in height and fourteen leagues in width. Five billion nāga kings encircled each palace,³⁰ beautifying it from above by causing rain to fall over the five billion trees³¹ made of the seven precious substances. Natural breezes caused the trees to sway to and fro, so that they resounded with the words of impermanence, suffering, emptiness, selflessness, and all the perfections.

1.9 “At that time, inside his palace, the great king Laodubati³² rose from his seat, prostrated to all the thus-gone ones in the ten directions, and made the following prayer: ‘If I possess the merit to construct a Dharma palace for the bodhisattva Maitreya, may precious gems spontaneously appear from between my eyebrows!’

1.10 “As soon as he made this prayer, one billion jewels appeared. They had formed in all different colors, like beryl and other gems, and were transparent like crystal.³³ The jewels first circled the empty sky and then transformed into an amazing jeweled palace with forty-nine stories.

1.11 “Each railing of each story [F.298.b] was adorned by one trillion jeweled lotuses. Ninety million gods and five billion goddesses, born miraculously, stood among these railings. In the hands of each god were immeasurably many hundreds of millions of lotuses, each made of the seven precious substances. Above each lotus shone immeasurably many millions of lights. Inside these lights were divine musical instruments that spontaneously resounded without being played. As the music played, the goddesses rose, took hold of the musical instruments, danced, and sang lovely songs about the ten virtues, the four aspirations, and so on. All the gods who heard this generated the mind set upon unsurpassed awakening.

1.12 “Inside each park were reservoirs of beryl in eight hues. The interior of each reservoir was made of five billion jewels and filled with water possessing the eight qualities³⁴ that spouted up from below.³⁵ Outside the four entrances were four miraculously arisen lotuses. The water that emerged around these lotuses flowed with the color of the precious blossoms. Atop each lotus were twenty-four goddesses of wondrous beauty, adorned and bearing physical marks like bodhisattvas. Five billion jeweled vessels appeared in their hands. Each vessel was filled to the brim with

divine ambrosia. Draped over their left shoulders were countless garlands, and balanced against their right shoulders were countless musical instruments. Like clouds, they hovered in the sky and came forth from the water. The goddesses extolled the six perfections of the bodhisattvas. Any god born³⁶ in the Heaven of Joy was naturally served by these goddesses.

1.13 “In the palace stood a lion throne made of the seven precious substances. It was four leagues in height and adorned with gold from the Jambū river and countless jewels. [F.299.a] At the four corners of the throne were four lotuses, each made of a hundred precious jewels, each of which emitted a billion rays of light. The light produced the most beautiful flowers, which were made of a variety of gems, which in turn adorned the precious draperies.

1.14 “Ten billion Brahmā kings each brought their own beautiful chimes from the Brahmā heavens and hung them over the draperies. Lesser Brahmā kings likewise draped nets of various jewels over the draperies. A retinue of countless hundreds of thousands of gods and goddesses brought forth a great variety of jeweled lotus flowers and scattered them over the throne. These lotuses in turn produced five billion goddesses, made of gems, who stood among the draperies with white tail whisks in their hands.

1.15 “At the four corners of the palace were four jeweled pillars. Each jeweled pillar consisted of a hundred thousand mansions, and the gems of these goddesses were draped between them.³⁷ On the railings of the palace stood a hundred thousand goddesses of amazing beauty, holding countless musical instruments in their hands. Their music resounded with the words of suffering, emptiness, impermanence, selflessness, and all the perfections. The divine palace³⁸ was filled with immeasurably many billions of beautiful gems, and all the goddesses manifested in colors that matched those gems. Thereupon, all the countless gods throughout the ten directions made prayers for rebirth in this divine palace in the Heaven of Joy.

1.16 “Now, in that palace in the Heaven of Joy there are five great kings. The first great king is known as Ratnadhvaja. A rain of the seven precious substances is released from³⁹ his body and scatters inside the palace. Each precious substance then transforms into countless musical instruments that hang in midair. [F.299.b] Without being played, they spontaneously emit limitless beautiful music that pleases the minds of beings. The second king is known as Flower Scatterer.⁴⁰ A rain of manifold flowers is released from his body, forming parasols of flowers that cover the entire palace.⁴¹ Each parasol has hundreds of thousands of flags and streamers that guide one along the way. The third king is known as Incense Voice. From the pores of his body, he rains down a wondrous incense of the sandalwood found at the ocean shore. The incense forms a cloud with hundreds of colors, which circles the

palace seven times. The fourth great king is known as Joyous Bliss. A rain of wish-fulfilling jewels is released from his body. Each jewel naturally finds its place atop the flags and streamers, where it resounds with teachings on seeking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, as well as the five branches of discipline, countless virtuous qualities, all the perfections, and the aids to Maitreya's awakening.⁴² The fifth great king is known as Fierce Voice.⁴³ He rains down water from all the pores of his body. Five billion lotus flowers float on each water drop, and each lotus supports twenty-five crystal goddesses.⁴⁴ Ringing out from every pore on the body of each crystal goddess is the lovely sound of victory over the divine māra."

1.17 The Blessed One continued addressing Upāli, "In the Heaven of Joy, beings practice the ten virtues, return the kindness of the victorious ones, and have the merit to produce great wonders.⁴⁵ Even if I were to spend an entire lesser eon explaining the fruits of how a bodhisattva bound by one life will return kindness and practice the ten virtues, it would not be exhaustive. Nevertheless, I will now briefly teach you [F.300.a] and the others about this.

1.18 "Upāli,⁴⁶ whether it is a single monk or the entire retinue, anyone who has not yet grown weary of birth and death, and wishes to be reborn in a divine realm, must generate the mind set upon unsurpassed awakening. The observances for those who wish to serve Maitreya are as follows: perfect the observance of the eight precepts including the five requisites;⁴⁷ be ceaseless in physical and mental diligence; practice the ten virtues; desire abundant happiness; and maintain a one-pointed desire to be reborn in the Heaven of Joy. This is known as the right observance, while any other observance is known as a wrong observance."

1.19 Then Upāli rose from his seat, adjusted his robes, bowed his head, and asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, as there is such sublime happiness in the Heaven of Joy, when will this great being be reborn from Jambudvīpa into that divine realm?"

1.20 The Blessed One replied, "Twelve years from now, on the fifteenth day of the second month of spring, Maitreya will return to the place where he took birth: the household of the great Brahmin Bāvarī,⁴⁸ in the village of Kapāli,⁴⁹ in the region of Vārāṇasī. There he will sit in the lotus posture, as if he were resting in utter absorption. His body's golden luster and the red rays of light it emits will be brighter than a hundred thousand suns, reaching up to the Heaven of Joy above. His physical remains will stay still and unmoving, like a golden statue. From the sphere of light that surrounds his body, the syllables of the threefold liberation⁵⁰ and the perfection of insight will distinctly emerge.

- 1.21 “Gods and humans will all be drawn there to worship the precious stūpa with his physical remains. Maitreya will then be miraculously reborn in the Heaven of Joy, in that palace made of the seven precious substances. As he sits cross-legged on a lotus flower atop the lion throne within the palace, [F.300.b] his body will shine like gold from the Jambū river. His body will be sixteen leagues tall and fully adorned with the thirty-two major marks and the eighty excellent minor marks. There will be a topknot on his head, and his hair will resemble the color of beryl.⁵¹ His divine crown will be adorned with jewels such as *śakrābhilagna* and *kiṃśuka*. The gems in his divine crown will shine with the colors of a billion jewels. In each of the colors there will be immeasurably many billions of emanated thus-gone ones, along with a multitude of emanated bodhisattvas who act as their servants. All the bodhisattvas from other pure lands will display the eighteen miracles and take up residence inside the divine crown as they wish.
- 1.22 “White rays of light will then emerge from between Maitreya’s eyebrows. The light will cause the thirty-two major marks to manifest in the colors of hundreds of jewels. Within each major mark will be the minor marks, which in turn will manifest in the colors of five billion jewels. Also, within each minor mark, gods will manifest whose major and minor marks blaze in the colors of five billion gems. Each god will sit on a lotus within an orb of eighty-four thousand light rays.⁵² Maitreya will continuously turn the Dharma wheel of the nonregressing level, day and night. He will set these five billion gods toward a single destination, accomplish their aims,⁵³ and make them nonregressing from unsurpassed and complete awakening. Day and night within the Heaven of Joy, he will continuously establish all gods in the Dharma wheel of the nonregressing level.⁵⁴ Then, after fifty-six trillion Jambudvīpa years, the discourse called *Maitreya’s Birth from the Heaven of Joy into Jambudvīpa* will be taught.⁵⁵
- 1.23 “Upāli,⁵⁶ the qualities associated with the bodhisattva Maitreya passing away from this world and being reborn in the Heaven of Joy are as follows. After the Thus-Gone One passes into nirvāṇa, [F.301.a] some among my attendant retinue will diligently accumulate merit, maintain their vows, sweep stūpas, construct maṇḍalas, burn fragrant incense, offer flowers, practice the threefold liberation,⁵⁷ practice the profound and true Dharma, recite the sūtras and continuously keep them single-pointedly in mind, acquire the six superknowledges,⁵⁸ make statues of the thus-gone ones,⁵⁹ recite the name of Maitreya, and other such things. When it comes time for them to pass away—after they have received the eight vows, purified all misdeeds,⁶⁰ and made prayers—they will instantly be born in the Heaven of Joy, just as quickly as a strong man can stretch out his arm.

- 1.24 “Then they will sit cross-legged atop lotus flowers, as hundreds of thousands of gods play divine music, scatter *mandāra* and great *mandāra* flowers, and praise them, saying ‘Excellent! Excellent! Noble sons, you have accumulated vast merit in Jambudvīpa; and now, upon dying, you have arrived here in the Heaven of Joy. You should request refuge from the divine king Maitreya and prostrate to him.⁶¹ When you prostrate to him, white light will emerge from the *ūrṇā* hair between his eyebrows and touch you, liberating you from ninety eons of birth and death and purifying your misdeeds.’
- 1.25 “Now that I have explained the marvelous Dharma of the benefits of affiliating oneself with this bodhisattva, sentient beings should not abandon their diligence, but should bring to mind the nonregressing Dharma wheel and the unsurpassed path. As they purify their misdeeds and engage in the six practices,⁶² they will undoubtedly be born in the Heaven of Joy and come face-to-face with the noble Maitreya. Having entered into Maitreya’s service, they will then first hear his Dharma in Jambudvīpa. [F.301.b] They will come face-to-face with all the future buddhas of this present eon, as well as all the buddhas in as many other eons as there are stars in the sky. In the presence of all those buddhas, they will receive prophecies of their own awakening.
- 1.26 “Upāli,⁶³ after the Thus-Gone One has passed into nirvāṇa, within all my retinues of monks, nuns,⁶⁴ gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, anyone who hears the name of the bodhisattva great being Maitreya and venerates him with joy and respect shall attain all that was just mentioned in the mere snap of a finger, once they pass away. Upon hearing Maitreya’s name, they will no longer fall into the realms of darkness upon death, nor will they be reborn in any outlying regions, nor among people with wrong views or nonvirtuous behaviors. Such people will be reborn in every lifetime where the view is proper, the retinue is abundant, and the Three Jewels are never disgraced.
- 1.27 “Upāli, if those noble sons or daughters who have broken their vows or committed unwholesome misdeeds hear the name of the bodhisattva of great compassion, call out his name,⁶⁵ place their full body on the ground, and confess with an undistracted mind, the entirety of their misdeeds will swiftly be purified. If anyone in the future speaks⁶⁶ the name of the bodhisattva of great compassion, paints⁶⁷ his image, offers him incense, flowers, fabrics, parasols, banners, or flags, venerates him, or recalls his name, then upon passing away, the bodhisattva Maitreya will radiate light from the *ūrṇā* hair between his eyebrows—one of the marks of a great being—and all the gods will send down a rain of *mandāra* flowers [F.302.a] to welcome them as they are instantly reborn in the divine realm. They will meet face-to-face with the noble Maitreya and bow their heads to him. At

that very moment, they will hear the Dharma, attain the path of unsurpassed awakening, and obtain the nonregressing wheel of Dharma. In future lives, they will behold as many thus-gone ones as there are grains of sand in the Ganges river.

1.28 “Upāli,⁶⁸ listen attentively and pay heed. When sentient beings in the future take refuge in the bodhisattva Maitreya, those who do so will attain the unsurpassed path and the nonregressing wheel of Dharma. Then, once the bodhisattva Maitreya attains the state of a thus-gone one, a worthy one, a perfect buddha, those people will see the light of that thus-gone one and receive a prophecy.

1.29 “Upāli,⁶⁹ after the Thus-Gone One’s nirvāṇa, when the time comes for anyone—whether they are in the four retinues or a god, nāga, or yakṣa—to be reborn in the Heaven of Joy, then they must engage in the following contemplations: Thinking of the Heaven of Joy, they should take up the vows of the Thus-Gone One. Then, whether for a single day or for up to seven days, they should contemplate the ten virtues and practice the path of the ten virtues. Then the merit from this practice should be dedicated, and the aspiration made to be in the presence of Maitreya. Those who carry out these contemplations will behold a god and a lotus. Those who recite the name of Maitreya even once will be freed from twelve hundred eons of birth and death and will have their misdeeds purified. Those who hear the name of Maitreya and join their palms together⁷⁰ will be freed from fifty eons of birth and death. Those who respectfully prostrate to Maitreya will be liberated from one billion eons of birth and death and will have their misdeeds purified. They will not be attached to the heavenly realms, [F.302.b] but will generate the mind set upon unsurpassed awakening in the future, under the bodhi tree, the tree of the nāgas.”⁷¹

1.30 Then⁷² the immeasurably great retinue rose from their seats. They bowed their heads at the feet of the Blessed One, and then bowed at the feet of Maitreya. They circled the Blessed One and Maitreya a hundred thousand times. Those who had not yet attained the path each made the following aspiration: “By fervently making aspirations here in the presence of the Blessed One, may all of us—gods, humans, the eight classes of nonhuman beings, and so forth—in the future, having abandoned our bodies, behold noble Maitreya, and be reborn in the Heaven of Joy.”

1.31 Then the Blessed One said, “In the future, all of you will create merit, guard your discipline, and take birth in the presence of the bodhisattva Maitreya. The bodhisattva Maitreya will then bless all of you.”

1.32 The Blessed One then spoke to Upāli, “Upāli, if you have such a view, it is said to be right view. Any other view would be a wrong view.”

1.33 The venerable Ānanda then rose from his seat, knelt down, joined his palms, and addressed the Blessed One, “Excellent! The Blessed One has wonderfully explained Maitreya’s qualities. In the future, we shall strive to become such beings who attain the results of creating such merit. Therefore, Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma discourse? How should we retain it?”

The Blessed One replied, “Ānanda, you should retain what the Thus-Gone One has taught without forgetting anything. [F.303.a] For the sake of future times, you shall reveal the path that leads to rebirth in the divine realms, disclose the marks of awakening, and prevent the lineage of the thus-gone ones from being interrupted. This discourse shall be known as *The Niroāṇa of the Bodhisattva Maitreya*. It shall also be known as *The Bodhisattva Maitreya’s Birth in the Heaven of Joy and Encouragement for the Seat of Awakening*. You must retain it!”

1.34 When the Blessed One said this, a million bodhisattvas who had arrived from other pure lands⁷³ attained the *śūramgama* absorption.⁷⁴ Eight hundred thousand gods generated the mind set upon unsurpassed awakening. They all made the aspiration to follow Maitreya and be reborn in Jambudvīpa.

1.35 After the Blessed One had spoken, the four retinues, as well as the eight classes of nonhuman beings—gods, nāgas, and so forth—rejoiced in what the Blessed One had said. They bowed to the Blessed One and then departed.

1.36 *This completes “The Noble Sūtra: The Bodhisattva Maitreya’s Birth in the Heaven of Joy.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated from a Chinese manuscript by the editor-translator Venerable Pabtong and Venerable Sherab Sengé.

NOTES

n.

- n.1 See Silk 2019.
- n.2 For more on the translation of this text from Chinese, see Li 2016.
- n.3 The first five of these are also sometimes grouped as the three most central Maitreya texts: Taishō 452, Taishō 453–55 (counted as one), and Taishō 456 (translated in Iida and Goldstone 2016). For an overview of the Maitreya sūtras in the Chinese canon, see Iida and Goldstone 2016, 5–6. See also Mai 2009, 157–62.
- n.4 For example, Mai remarks that “the author/authors of some of the fifth-century *guan* texts deliberately used the term in an imprecise way, more to invoke the cultural and religious prestige of the word *guan* than to describe a specific technique of meditation” (Mai 2009, 164n13).
- n.5 These two points may seem at odds—affinity with indigenous Chinese meditation manuals, on one hand, and Turfan origins, on the other. It should be noted, however, that many Chinese meditation manuals have Central Asian origins (Yamabe 1999, 59ff.; also Mai 2009, 166–67).
- n.6 Yamabe 1999, 42–44. However, Silk (2019, 234) claims that it is “attributed wrongly to Juqu Jingsheng 沮渠京聲; this is rather a Central Asian composition.”
- n.7 Pelliot Chinois 3093; see Mai 2009, 159n6.
- n.8 The exact relationship between the Tibetan text and Taishō 452 deserves further study. Most discrepancies in the body of the text appear to us to be explicable in terms of translation choices (syntax, grammar, etc.) and occasionally what seem to be misunderstandings of the source (such as the failure to recognize a reference to the title of another Chinese sūtra, or a Sanskrit word that was rendered phonetically in Chinese).

- n.9 The phrase "...along with a great congregation of monks and many bodhisattva great beings" is missing in the Chinese.
- n.10 The Chinese reads 舉身 ("whole body").
- n.11 Rather than "made contact with" (Tib. *'od kyis reg par byas*) the Chinese has simply 照 ("illuminate").
- n.12 The Chinese version reads differently here: (光)照須達舍,亦作金色 ("the light illuminated Sudatta's house, which also turned golden in color").
- n.13 The Chinese version has 有金色光,猶如段雲,遍舍衛國;處處皆雨金色蓮花 ("The cloud-like golden light filled Śrāvastī in its entirety; everywhere there was a shower of golden lotuses"). Note that "filled the sky" is missing in the Chinese.
- n.14 The Chinese reads 摩訶波闍波提比丘尼,與其眷屬千比丘尼俱 ("the nun Mahāprajāpatī with a retinue of one thousand nuns").
- n.15 The Chinese has 須達長者與三千優婆塞俱 ("the elder Sudatta with three thousand lay practitioners").
- n.16 The Chinese reads 毘舍佉母與二千優婆夷俱 ("Viśākhā with two thousand lay women").
- n.17 Here the Chinese has 復有菩薩摩訶薩,名跋陀婆羅,與其眷屬十六菩薩俱 ("also the bodhisattva great being named Bhadrāpāla with a retinue of sixteen bodhisattvas").
- n.18 The Chinese reads 文殊師利法王子,與其眷屬五百菩薩俱 ("the Dharma prince Mañjuśrī with the five hundred bodhisattvas").
- n.19 The Chinese instead has 乾闥婆 ("gandharvas").
- n.20 The Chinese gives a different sense: 皆說清淨諸大菩薩甚深不可思議諸陀羅尼法 ("taught the profound and unimaginable *dhāraṇīs* of the pure, great bodhisattvas").
- n.21 The Chinese indicates that the Blessed One alone is speaking here: 世尊以...說陀羅尼門。 ("...the Blessed One spoke billions of such *dhāraṇī* gateways").
- n.22 Here the Chinese version is more specific about the sources: 於毘尼中及諸經藏中 ("in the Vinaya and various sūtras").
- n.23 Ajita is none other than Maitreya in a life prior to his awakening.

- n.24 The Chinese contains an additional phrase: 此人命終當生何處 (“...so when this person dies, how on earth could that be his next life?”).
- n.25 The Chinese reads differently: 今於此眾 ... 記 (“I am prophesying to this retinue”).
- n.26 “We have heard the prophecy that” is absent in the Chinese text. Instead, it reads simply 此人 (“this person”).
- n.27 The phrase 我於彼佛莊嚴國界得受記者 (“as we have received the assurance of attaining buddhahood in that buddha’s ornamented realm...”) is absent in the Tibetan.
- n.28 Instead of “seven parks,” the Chinese has 七重垣 (“seven successive [encircling] walls”), indicating that the palace is spacious.
- n.29 The Chinese here reads 垣牆 (“wall”).
- n.30 Rather than “each palace,” the Chinese has 此垣 (“these walls”).
- n.31 The Chinese reads 行樹 (“rows of trees”).
- n.32 This name in the Tibetan text is transliterated from the Chinese 牢度跋提. We have been unable to determine the meaning of this name or a Sanskrit equivalent. Kitsūdo (2011, 338) hypothesizes that the Chinese 牢度跋提 is a transliteration from a Uighur transliteration of Skt. Rḍḍhibhadra. The first two characters 牢度 could also be either Rudra or Raudra, just like 牢度叉 Raudrākṣa, while the latter two characters 跋提 could be Skt. *bhadrika*, *pati*, or *vati*. In the Chinese sūtra, this figure (like the five kings below) is also described as a “great god” rather than a “great king.”
- n.33 The Chinese offers more detail here: 如紫紺摩尼表裏暎徹 (“just like a violet gem whose color is reflected inside and out”).
- n.34 The Chinese also includes 八色具足 (“possessing eight hues”).
- n.35 The Chinese version gives more detail: 其水上湧游梁棟間 (“...that spouted up from below and moved in between the pillars”).
- n.36 The Chinese has 若有往生 (“Any being that is reborn...”).
- n.37 The Chinese has 梵摩尼珠以為交絡 (“...the Brahmā gems intertwined and draped between them”).
- n.38 We have translated this as singular, although the Tibetan has the plural marker *de dag*.

- n.39 Here (and below with the second and fourth kings), *la* is read as *las*, which also agrees with the Chinese.
- n.40 The Chinese here reads 花德 (“Quality of Flowers”).
- n.41 The Chinese has 宮牆 (“walls of the palace”).
- n.42 Rather than “Maitreya’s awakening,” the Chinese reads 菩提意者 (“those with a mind set upon awakening”).
- n.43 The Chinese reads 正音聲 (“Correct Voice”).
- n.44 Here the Chinese reads simply 玉女 (“beautiful goddesses”).
- n.45 The Chinese has 此名兜率陀天十善報應勝妙福處。 (“This is called the Heaven of Joy, the place which consists of the results of ten virtues and great wonders”).
- n.46 The Chinese here has 佛告優波離 (“The Blessed One spoke to Upāli”) and does not include the name Upāli in the quotation.
- n.47 This most likely refers to the five vows of a layperson (abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication) as well as the additional three vows (thus making eight in total) of abstaining from eating after noon, indulging in entertainment, and sleeping on beds.
- n.48 A Brahmin who sent his sixteen students, including Ajita, to visit the Buddha. On Ajita and Maitreya, see also Karashima 2018.
- n.49 On the possible name of this village, see Lamotte 1988, 700–701 and Yamabe 1999, 45.
- n.50 Here the Tibetan is *rnam par thar pa gsum*, while the Chinese is *sanmei* 三昧, which is a common Chinese translation of the Sanskrit *samādhi*. The usual Chinese term for “threefold liberation” (Skt. *trivimokṣa*) is *san jie tuo* 三解脫. We have chosen to follow the Tibetan in translating this as “threefold liberation.”
- n.51 The Chinese specifies the color of the beryl: 紺瑠璃色 “the color of blue beryl.”
- n.52 The Chinese reads differently and adds more detail here: 一一相好艷出八萬四千光明雲。與諸天子各坐花座。 (“Each major and minor mark shines forth an orb of eighty-four thousand clouds. Maitreya and each god sit on their lotus seats”).

- n.53 The Chinese reads 經一時中成就五百億天子 (“he will aid fifty billion gods in an instant to accomplish their aims...”).
- n.54 The Chinese has 說此法，度諸天子 (“explain this Dharma and liberate all the gods”).
- n.55 Here, we have opted for faithfulness to the Tibetan translation, although it seems to have overlooked an intertextual reference in the Chinese sūtra. The latter actually makes two separate claims: first, that after fifty-six trillion years have passed, Maitreya will leave Tuṣita to take birth in Jambudvīpa; and second, that this fact was taught in a text entitled the *Sūtra on the Descent of Maitreya*. That text (its title in Chinese is 彌勒下生經) may refer to the earliest of the Maitreya sūtras, translated in 303 CE by Dharmarakṣa (Taishō 453), which goes by this name. The similarly-titled *Sūtra on the Descent and Enlightenment of Maitreya* (彌勒下生成佛經) was translated by Kumārajīva (Taishō 454). In sum, either the Tibetan translators were not familiar with this Chinese sūtra or were working from a source manuscript with another reading.
- n.56 The Chinese here has 佛告優波離 (“The Blessed One spoke to Upāli”) and does not include the name Upāli in the quotation.
- n.57 Here the Chinese version adds 入正受 (“enter into a state of complete concentration”).
- n.58 The Chinese includes an additional clause here: 雖不斷結如得六通 (“even though they have not completely broken away from the afflictions, it is as if they have acquired the six superknowledges”).
- n.59 We here are translating *de bzhin gshegs pa'i sku gzugs byed pa* as “make statues of the thus-gone ones,” though the Chinese gives a different sense: 應當繫念念佛形像 (“they ought to harness their minds to a single point of remembering the image of the Blessed One...”).
- n.60 Rather than “purified all misdeeds,” the Chinese reads 修諸淨業 (“practiced pure deeds”).
- n.61 The Chinese reads 今此天主名曰彌勒，汝當歸依 (“The lord of this heaven is called Maitreya, and you should take refuge in him”). Note that in the Chinese version, the speech given by the gods ends here, and what follows is a continuation of the Buddha speaking to Upāli.
- n.62 In the Chinese version of this sūtra, the six practices (六事法) appear to refer to (1) accumulating merit, (2) maintaining a proper way of conduct, (3)

sweeping the ground around stūpas, (4) offering numerous wondrous incenses and beautiful flowers, (5) practicing the threefold concentration and entering into a state of complete concentration, and (6) reading and reciting sūtras. The corresponding list of practices given in the Tibetan above is longer.

- n.63 The Chinese here has 佛告優波離 (“The Blessed One spoke to Upāli”) and does not include the name Upāli in the quotation.
- n.64 The Chinese also includes 優婆塞、優婆夷 (“laymen and laywomen”).
- n.65 This clause is absent in the Chinese.
- n.66 The Chinese instead reads 聞 (“hears”).
- n.67 The Chinese here has 造立 (“produces”).
- n.68 The Chinese here has 佛告優波離 (“The Blessed One spoke to Upāli”) and does not include the name Upāli in the quotation.
- n.69 The Chinese here again has 佛告優波離 (“The Blessed One spoke to Upāli”) and does not include the name Upāli in the quotation.
- n.70 The Chinese offers additional detail: 合掌恭敬 (“join their palms together and show respect”).
- n.71 The Chinese reads a little differently here: 設不生天，未來世中龍花菩提樹下亦得值遇發無上心 (“Even if they will not be reborn in heavenly realms, they will meet [Maitreya] and generate the excellent mind set upon awakening under the flower of the nāgas, the bodhi tree, in future rebirths”).
- n.72 The Chinese reads 說是語時 (“When the Blessed One spoke thus...”).
- n.73 The Chinese reads 他方來會 (“who had arrived from other directions”).
- n.74 Tentative translation from the Chinese: 他方來會十萬菩薩。得首楞嚴三昧.

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for Sanskrit names and terms ·

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in the Sanskrit manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other Sanskrit manuscripts of the Kangyur or Tengyur.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionaries.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where Tibetan-Sanskrit relationship is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source Unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

Ajita

ma pham pa

མ་ཕམ་པ།

ajita

阿逸多

The name of Maitreya before his awakening.

g.2 Ājñātakauṇḍinya

kun shes kauN+Di n+ya

ཀུན་ཤེས་ཀོངྩི་ཅུ།

ājñātakauṇḍinya

阿若憍陳如

One of the Buddha's first five disciples.

g.3 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

ānanda

阿難

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A major śrāvaka disciple and personal attendant of the Buddha Śākyamuni during the last twenty-five years of his life. He was a cousin of the Buddha (according to the Mahāvastu, he was a son of Śuklodana, one of the brothers of King Śuddhodana, which means he was a brother of Devadatta; other sources say he was a son of Amṛtodana, another brother of King Śuddhodana, which means he would have been a brother of Aniruddha).

Ānanda, having always been in the Buddha's presence, is said to have memorized all the teachings he heard and is celebrated for having recited all the Buddha's teachings by memory at the first council of the Buddhist saṅgha, thus preserving the teachings after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The phrase "Thus did I hear at one time," found at the beginning of the sūtras, usually stands for his recitation of the teachings. He became a patriarch after the passing of Mahākāśyapa.

g.4 Anāthapiṇḍada

mgon med zas sbyin

མགོན་མེད་བཟའ་སྦྱིན།

anāthapiṇḍada

給孤獨

An important benefactor of the Buddha who donated the Jeta Grove outside of Śrāvastī to the Buddhist community.

g.5 Anāthapiṇḍada's park

mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

anāthapiṇḍadasya ārāmaḥ

給孤獨園

Also known as Jetavana; an important early site for the Sangha provided by the wealthy patron Anāthapiṇḍada outside Śrāvastī.

g.6 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A type of nonhuman being whose precise status is subject to different views, but is included as one of the six classes of beings in the sixfold classification of realms of rebirth. In the Buddhist context, asuras are powerful beings said to be dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility. They are also known in the pre-Buddhist and pre-Vedic mythologies of India and Iran, and feature prominently in Vedic and post-Vedic Brahmanical mythology, as well as in the Buddhist tradition. In these traditions, asuras are often described as being engaged in interminable conflict with the devas (gods).

g.7 Bāvarī

pa pa li · pa ba li

པ་པ་ལི། · པ་བ་ལི།

bāvarī

波婆利

A brahmin into whose family Ajita was born.

g.8 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān

世尊

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to “subduing” the four *māras*, *ldan*

to “possessing” the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to “going beyond” *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as “one who destroys the four *māras*.” This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root $\sqrt{bhañj}$ (“to break”).

g.9 Brahmā heavens

tshangs pa'i lha

ཚངས་པའི་ལྷ།

brahmadeva

梵天

The three heavens of Brahmā in the form realm. Subordinates of Brahmā dwell in the first, attendants and officials dwell in the second, and the third and highest heaven is Mahābrahmā or “Great Brahmā.”

g.10 Brahmā king

tshangs pa'i rgyal po

ཚངས་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

brahmarāja

梵王

A king of the Brahmā heavens in the form realm.

g.11 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

陀羅尼

The term *dhāraṇī* — in some *sūtras* a mnemonic formula and also the ability of realized beings to retain ($\sqrt{dhṛ}$) in their transmundane memory any teachings — refers, in its most general use, to *dhāraṇīs* as understood in the context of the *Dhāraṇī* genre and Mahāyāna Buddhism. Such *dhāraṇīs* are divinely revealed prayer formulae that are dedicated to a particular deity and typically include homage, praise, supplication, exhortation to act, and, most importantly, the heart mantra or mantras of the deity. The specific meaning of “retention” is also present in this inasmuch as *dhāraṇīs*, once obtained, are never lost but stay with the person who obtained them. They function as

doors (*dhāraṇīdvāra*) or access points (*dhāraṇīmukha*) to infinite qualities of buddhahood. When they are regarded to function as such, even shorter mantras can be designated as *dhāraṇī*.

g.12 *dhāraṇī* gateway

gzungs kyi sgo

གཟུངས་ཀྱི་སྒོ།

dhāraṇīmukha

陀羅尼門

A method, often in the form of a spell, that leads to the infinite qualities of awakening.

g.13 divine ambrosia

lha'i bdud rtsi

ལྷའི་བདུད་རྩི།

devāmr̥ta

天諸甘露

A divine nectar, panacea against death.

g.14 divine m̥ara

lha'i bdud

ལྷའི་བདུད།

devamāra

One of four m̥aras or demonic forces that hinder progress on the path.

g.15 eight classes of nonhuman beings

sde brgyad po

སྡེ་བརྒྱུད་པོ།

—

八部

Gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas.

g.16 eight precepts including the five requisites

yan lag lnga'i khriṃs brgyad

ཡན་ལག་ལྔའི་ཁྲིམས་བརྒྱུད།

—

五戒八齋

A reference to the practice of a lay disciple (Skt. *upāsaka*) who ordinarily observes the five precepts, taking all eight vows for the fortnightly fast (Skt. *upavāsa*).

g.17 eighty excellent minor marks

dpe byad bzang po brgyad cu

དཔེ་བྱད་བཟང་པོ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ།

aṣṭīyanuvyañjanāni

八十種好

A secondary series of identifying physical features of a great being.

g.18 Fierce Voice

sgra dbyangs drag po

སྒྲ་དབྱངས་དྲག་པོ།

—

正音聲

Fifth of the five great kings.

g.19 five branches of discipline

yan lag lnga'i tshul khrim

ཡན་ལག་ལྔ་འི་ཚུལ་སྲིམས།

pañcaśīla

五戒

g.20 five great kings

rgyal po chen po lnga

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ལྔ།

—

五大神

The five great deities of the Heaven of Joy. In the Tibetan translation, they are specified as kings.

g.21 Flower Scatterer

me tog thob ba · me tog 'thor ba

མེ་ཏོག་ཐོབ་བ། · མེ་ཏོག་འཐོར་བ།

—

花德

Second of the five great kings.

g.22 Fortunate Eon

bskal pa bzang po

བསྐྱལ་པ་བཟང་པོ།

bhadrakalpa

賢劫

The present eon, in which one thousand buddhas will appear.

g.23 four aspirations

smon lam bzhi

སྣོན་ལམ་བཞི།

—

四弘誓愿

The four aspirations of bodhisattvahood defined variously in East Asian Mahāyāna works.

g.24 four retinues

'khor bzhi po

འཁོར་བཞི་པོ།

catuḥpariṣad · catasraḥ pariṣadaḥ

四部弟子

Monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen.

g.25 fully ordained nun

dge slong ma

དགེ་སློང་མ།

bhikṣuṇī

比丘尼

A fully ordained Buddhist nun.

g.26 gandharva

dri za

དྷི་ཟ།

gandharva

乾闥婆

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of generally benevolent nonhuman beings who inhabit the skies, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds, and more specifically to dwell on the eastern slopes of Mount Meru, where they are under the jurisdiction of the Great King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They are most renowned as celestial musicians who serve the gods. In the Abhidharma, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by any sentient being in the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*) during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

g.27 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗིང་།

garuḍa

迦樓羅

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.28 great liberation without marks

mtshan ma med par rnam par grol ba chen po

མཚན་མ་མེད་པར་རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ་བ་ཆེན་པོ།

—

Name of a dhāraṇī.

g.29 Heaven of Joy

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྗན།

tuṣita

兜率天

Maitreya's heavenly abode in the desire realm, where future buddhas are said to dwell prior to their awakening in our world.

g.30 Incense Voice

spos kyi dbyangs

སྣོས་ཀྱི་དབྱངས།

—

香音

Third of the five great kings.

g.31 Jambū river gold

'dzam bu'i gser

འཛམ་བུའི་གསེར།

jāmbūnadasuvarṇa

閻浮檀金

A particularly fine type of gold deposited in the Jambū river, sometimes said to be remains of the fruits from the rose-apple trees growing there which fall into the river and are consumed.

g.32 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུའི་གླིང།

jambudvīpa

閻浮提沒

The southern continent according to Indian cosmology, named for the Jambu or rose-apple tree.

g.33 Jambudvīpa years

'dzam bu'i gling gi tshe lo'i grangs

འཛམ་བུའི་གླིང་གི་ཚེ་ལོའི་གྲངས།

—

閻浮提歲

The length of a year as experienced by a sentient being born on Jambudvīpa in the desire realm.

g.34 Jeta Grove

rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

jetavana

祇樹林

Prince Jeta's Grove.

g.35 Joyous Bliss

dga' ba bde ba

དགའ་བ་བདེ་བ།

—

喜樂

Fourth of the five great kings.

g.36 Kapāli

kra pa li

ཀྲ་པ་ལི།

kapāli

劫波利

The area of Vārāṇasī where Maitreya (as Ajita) is said to have been born.

g.37 kiṃśuka

gyen shugs · rkyen shugs

གྱེན་ལུགས། · རྒྱེན་ལུགས།

kiṃśuka

A type of gem, presumably red as in the blossoms of the kiṃśuka tree.

g.38 kinnara

mi 'am ci

མི་འམ་ཅི།

kinnara

緊那羅

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings that resemble humans to the degree that their very name—which means “is that human?”—suggests some confusion as to their divine status. Kinnaras are mythological beings found in both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, where they are portrayed as creatures half human, half animal. They are often depicted as highly skilled celestial musicians.

g.39 Krakucchanda

log par dad sel

ལོག་པར་དད་སེལ།

krakucchanda

拘留孫

The first buddha in the present Fortunate Eon.

g.40 Laodubati

le'u du pa ti

ལེ་ལུ་དུ་པ་ཏི།

—

牢度跋提

This name is transcribed from the Chinese 牢度跋提. We have been unable to determine the meaning of this name, or a Sanskrit equivalent. In the Chinese, this figure is described as a “great god” rather than a “great king.”

g.41 laymen

dge bsnyen

དགེ་བསྟེན།

upāsaka

優婆塞

A male lay devotee.

g.42 laywomen

dge bsnyen ma

དགེ་བསྟེན་མ།

upāsikā

優婆夷

A female lay devotee.

g.43 league

dpag tshad

དཔག་ཚད།

yojana

由旬

A unit of distance.

g.44 limitless gateway

a nan ta mu dra

ཨ་ནན་ཏ་མུ་དྲ།

anantamukha

Name of a dhāraṇī.

g.45 lion throne

seng ge'i khri

སང་གེ་ཀྲི།

siṃhāsana

師子座

Seat of a buddha or royal throne.

g.46 Mahākāśyapa

'od srung chen po

འོད་སྲུང་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākāśyapa

摩訶迦葉

One of the principal disciples of the Buddha, known for his ascetic practice.

g.47 Mahāprajāpatī

ma ha pa sha pa ti

མ་ཧ་པ་ཤ་པ་ཏི།

mahāprajāpatī

摩訶波闍波提

The maternal aunt and adoptive mother of the Buddha as well as the first woman to be ordained.

g.48 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

摩侯羅伽

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally “great serpents,” mahoragas are supernatural beings depicted as large, subterranean beings with human torsos and heads and the lower bodies of serpents. Their movements are said to cause earthquakes, and they make up a class of subterranean geomantic spirits whose movement through the seasons and months of the year is deemed significant for construction projects.

g.49 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya

彌勒

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The bodhisattva Maitreya is an important figure in many Buddhist traditions, where he is unanimously regarded as the buddha of the future era. He is said to currently reside in Tuṣita heaven, as Śākyamuni's regent, where he awaits the proper time to take his final rebirth and become the fifth buddha in the Fortunate Eon, reestablishing the Dharma in this world after the teachings of the current buddha have disappeared. Within the Mahāyāna sūtras, Maitreya is elevated to the same status as other central bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, and his name appears frequently in sūtras, either as the Buddha's interlocutor or as a teacher of the Dharma.

Maitreya literally means "Loving One." He is also known as Ajita, meaning "Invincible."

For more information on Maitreya, see, for example, the introduction to *Maitreya's Setting Out* (Toh 198).

g.50 mandāra

man dA ra ba · ma n+da ra ba

མན་རྒྱ་བ། · མ་ནྲ་བ།

mandāra · *mandārapuṣpa*

曼陀羅花 · 曼陀羅花

Flowers of the heavenly Mandāra tree, whose blossoms often rain down in salutation of buddhas and bodhisattvas.

g.51 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

文殊師利

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Mañjuśrī is one of the "eight close sons of the Buddha" and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right

hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. In addition to the epithet Kumārabhūta, which means “having a youthful form,” Mañjuśrī is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.52 Maudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu · mo'u 'gal gyi bu

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ། ་ མོ་འུ་འགལ་གྱི་བུ།

maudgalyāyana · mahāmaudgalyāyana

大目犍連 · 大目犍連

A close disciple of the Buddha, famous for his mastery of supranormal powers.

g.53 mind set upon unsurpassed awakening

bla na med pa'i byang chub tu sems

བླ་ན་མེད་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཏུ་སེམས།

anuttarabodhicitta

無上道心

The resolution to seek the highest level of enlightenment.

g.54 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

龍

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments, where they guard wealth and sometimes also teachings. Nāgas are associated with serpents and have a snakelike appearance. In Buddhist art and in written accounts, they are regularly portrayed as half human and half snake, and they are also said to have the ability to change into human form. Some nāgas are Dharma protectors, but they can also bring retribution if they are disturbed. They may likewise fight one another, wage war, and destroy the lands of others by causing lightning, hail, and flooding.

g.55 nonregressing level

phyir mi ldog pa'i sa

ཕྱིར་མི་ལྷོག་པའི་ས།

avaivartyabhūmi

不退轉地

A level of no retrogression, the attainment of which assures further progress. Such a state is associated variously with different stages of the path or bodhisattva levels, as well as with pure lands such as Sukhāvātī or, in this case, Tuṣita heaven.

g.56 nonregressing wheel of Dharma

phyir mi ldog pa'i sa'i chos kyi 'khor lo

ཕྱིར་མི་ལྷོག་པའི་སའི་ཚོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ།

avaivartyabhūmidharmacakra

不退轉法輪

See nonregressing level.

g.57 only one birth remaining

skye ba gcig gis thogs pa

སྐྱེ་བ་གཅིག་གིས་ཐོགས་པ།

ekajātipratibaddha

一生補處

A term for a bodhisattva held back from buddhahood by only a single remaining lifetime, as exemplified by Maitreya.

g.58 Pabtong

pab tong

པབ་ཏོང་།

—

The editor of this sūtra. No details of this person are known.

g.59 perfection of generosity

sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa

སྤྱིན་པའི་པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

dānapāramitā

檀波羅蜜

First of the six perfections.

g.60 perfections

pha rol tu phyin pa

པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

pāramitā

波羅蜜

Generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and insight.

g.61 physical marks

lus mtshan

ལུས་མཚན།

kāya-lakṣana

身相

The characteristic marks of the body of a divine being.

g.62 Prince Jeta's Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

jetavana

祇樹給孤獨園

The park outside of Śrāvastī, donated to the Buddha by Anāthapiṇḍada.

g.63 Ratnadhvaja

rin po che'i rgyal mtshan

རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

ratnadhvaja

寶幢

First of the five great kings.

g.64 Roca

snang mdzad

སྣང་མཛད།

roca

樓至

The last buddha to come in the present Fortunate Eon, according to *The Good Eon* (*Bhadrakalpikasūtra*), Toh 94.

g.65 śakrābhilagna

shi kra bi li kra · shi kra pa la kra

ཤི་ཀྱ་བི་ལི་ཀྱ། · ཤི་ཀྱ་པ་ལ་ཀྱ།

śakrābhiḥnamāṇi

釋迦毘楞伽摩尼

“Jewel wielded by Indra,” the name of a particular gem.

g.66 Samantabhadra

kun tu bzang po

ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ།

samantabhadra

跋陀婆羅

One of the eight great bodhisattvas.

g.67 Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ཤ་རི་བུ།

śāriputra

舍利弗

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, he was renowned for his discipline and for having been praised by the Buddha as foremost of the wise (often paired with Maudgalyāyana, who was praised as foremost in the capacity for miraculous powers). His father, Tiṣya, to honor Śāriputra's mother, Śārikā, named him Śāradvatīputra, or, in its contracted form, Śāriputra, meaning “Śārikā's Son.”

g.68 seat of awakening

byang chub kyi snying po

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

bodhimāṇḍa

菩提心

The place where Śākyamuni Buddha achieved awakening and where countless other buddhas are said to have achieved awakening. This is understood to be located under the Bodhi tree, in present-day Bodhgaya, India.

g.69 seven precious substances

rin po che sna bdun

རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྣ་བདུན།

saptaratna

七寶

Ruby, sapphire, beryl, emerald, diamond, pearl, and coral. At times, the list varies to include gold and silver at the expense of some of the other precious substances.

g.70 Sherab Sengé

shes rab seng ge

ཤེས་རབ་སེང་གེ

—

The monk who translated this sūtra from Chinese. No details of this person are known.

g.71 six superknowledges

mngon par shes pa drug

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་དུག

ṣaḍabhijñā

六通

Divine sight, divine hearing, knowledge of the minds of others, remembrance of past lives, the ability to perform miracles, and the knowledge of the destruction of all mental defilements.

g.72 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod · mnyan yod kyi yul

མཉམ་ཡོད། · མཉམ་ཡོད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ།

śrāvastī

舍衛國

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

During the life of the Buddha, Śrāvastī was the capital city of the powerful kingdom of Kośala, ruled by King Prasenajit, who became a follower and patron of the Buddha. It was also the hometown of Anāthapiṇḍada, the wealthy patron who first invited the Buddha there, and then offered him a park known as Jetavana, Prince Jeta's Grove, which became one of the first Buddhist monasteries. The Buddha is said to have spent about twenty-five rainy seasons with his disciples in Śrāvastī, thus it is named as the setting of numerous events and teachings. It is located in present-day Uttar Pradesh in northern India.

g.73 stūpa

mchod rten

མཚོད་ཉེན།

stūpa

塔

A Buddhist sacred monument, usually holding the relics of a Buddha or some highly revered Buddhist master.

g.74 Sudatta

su ta sha

སུ་ཏ་ཤ།

sudatta

須達

Praised as the foremost of male lay practitioners.

g.75 śūraṃgama absorption

brgyan pa'i ting nge 'dzin

བརྒྱན་པའི་ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

śūraṃgamasamādhi

The Tibetan here, which could be translated “the ornamented absorption,” is tentatively assumed to represent the same absorption as the Chinese, usually used for the *śūraṃgama* absorption, a meditative state that enables one to overcome obstacles, with widespread mentions in the canonical texts but in Tibetan usually rendered *dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin*.

g.76 ten virtues

dge ba bcu

དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

daśakuśala

十善

Abstaining from killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, lying, uttering divisive talk, speaking harsh words, gossiping, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

g.77 thirty-two major marks

mtshan sum cu rtsa gnyis

མཚན་སུམ་རུཚ་གཉིས།

dvātriṃśadvaralakṣaṇa

三十二相

A series of identifying physical features characteristic of a great being (Skt. *mahāpuruṣa*), exemplified by a buddha or *cakravartin* king.

g.78 threefold liberation

rnam par thar pa gsum

རྣམ་པར་ཐར་པ་གསུམ།

trivimokṣa

三昧

The threefold liberation refers to emptiness (Tib. *stong pa nyid*), signlessness (Tib. *mtshan ma med pa*), and wishlessness (Tib. *smon pa med pa*). Note that 三昧 usually corresponds to the Sanskrit *samādhi* rather than *trivimokṣa*.

g.79 thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

如來

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A frequently used synonym for *buddha*. According to different explanations, it can be read as *tathā-gata*, literally meaning “one who has thus gone,” or as *tathā-āgata*, “one who has thus come.” *Gata*, though literally meaning “gone,” is a past passive participle used to describe a state or condition of existence. *Tatha*(*tā*), often rendered as “suchness” or “thusness,” is the quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Therefore, this epithet is interpreted in different ways, but in general it implies one who has departed in the wake of the buddhas of the past, or one who has manifested the supreme awakening dependent on the reality that does not abide in the two extremes of existence and quiescence. It also often used as a specific epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.80 topknot

thor tshugs · thor tsugs

ཐོར་ཚུགས། · ཐོར་ཚུགས།

—

肉髻

A tuft or protuberance on the head. It may refer to the *uṣṇīṣa*, a coil of flesh or hair atop a buddha's head. This Tibetan expression can also translate *śikhābandha*, a topknot of hair.

g.81 unobscured nature

sgrib pa med pa'i dngos po

སྒྲིབ་པ་མེད་པའི་དངོས་པོ།

—

無礙性

Name of a dhāraṇī.

g.82 Upāli

u pA li

ཉུ་ལྷ་ལེ།

upāli

優波離

One of the foremost disciples of the Buddha, known for his knowledge of monastic discipline (Skt. *vinaya*).

g.83 ūrṇā hair

smin mtshams kyi mdzod spu

སྐྱོན་མཚམས་ཀྱི་མཛོད་སྐུ།

ūrṇā

白毫

One of the marks of a buddha. A tuft of hair between the eyebrows capable of projecting a very bright light.

g.84 Vārāṇasī

ba ra ni

བ་ར་ནི།

vārāṇasī

波羅捺

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Also known as Benares, one of the oldest cities of northeast India on the banks of the Ganges, in modern-day Uttar Pradesh. It was once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kāśī, and in the Buddha's time it had been absorbed into the kingdom of Kośala. It was an important religious center, as well as a major city, even during the time of the Buddha. The name may derive from

being where the Varuna and Assi rivers flow into the Ganges. It was on the outskirts of Vārāṇasī that the Buddha first taught the Dharma, in the location known as Deer Park (*Mṛgadāvā*). For numerous episodes set in Vārāṇasī, including its kings, see *The Hundred Deeds*, Toh 340.

g.85 Viśākhā

byi shwa khra 'pho ta · byi sha khra 'bo ta

བྱི་ཤ་ཁ་འཕོ་ཏ། · བྱི་ཤ་ཁ་འབོ་ཏ།

viśākhā

毘舍佉母

Praised as the foremost of female lay practitioners.

g.86 wisdom of emptiness

stong pa nyid kyi ye shes

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཡེ་ཤེས།

—

Name of a dhāraṇī.

g.87 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

夜叉

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the jurisdiction of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.

Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.

