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The Limits of Life

Āyuhparyanta

Translated into Tibetan by
Viśuddhasiṃha · Gewé Pal · Bandé Paltsek · Vidyākaraṣiṃha

ཚེ་མཐའི་མདོ།

tshe'i mtha'i mdo

The Sūtra on the Limits of Life

Āyuhparyantasūtra



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Translated by Bruno Galasek with Lama Kunga Thartse Rinpoche
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SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life* presents a detailed and systematic account of the lifespans of different beings that inhabit the universe, progressing from the lower to the higher realms of existence as outlined in early Buddhist cosmology. The Buddha describes the lifespans of beings in terms of the relationship or proportion between the lifespans of the devas of the form realm and the lifespans in the eight major hot hells, the latter being significantly longer than the former.

ac.

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

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Sūtra on the Limits of Life contains content and themes that predate the advent of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and it has therefore been regarded by Tibetan tradition as a sūtra of the “Lesser Vehicle” (*Hīnayāna*).¹ This can also be gleaned from the opening verses of its Tibetan translation, which pay homage to the Three Jewels instead of all buddhas and bodhisattvas, as well as from the introductory scene of the sūtra, in which the Buddha is not, as is usual in the sūtras of the Mahāyāna, surrounded by a large number of bodhisattvas. In this sūtra, the Buddha, who is staying in Prince Jeta’s grove in Śrāvastī, addresses the monks directly and teaches in detail about the lifespans of the beings inhabiting the different realms of existence of the Buddhist cosmos.

i.2

According to ancient Indian cosmology, since beginningless time the world has been inhabited not only by humans and animals but by a vast array of different kinds of beings. Moreover, according to the Abhidharma, the Buddhist cosmos is composed of three different realms that form three hierarchical cosmological levels: the desire realm, the form realm, and the formless realm.² Each of these three realms contains several sublevels inhabited by particular classes of beings. When conceptualized as manifestations of different states of consciousness, the three realms may be called *spheres*.³

i.3

In the Buddhist understanding of karmic cause and effect, rebirth in one of the different realms is the karmic result of one’s former actions.⁴ Thus the ten unwholesome courses of action lead to rebirth in the three unfortunate rebirth-destinies: the realms of animals, pretas, and hell beings. Their opposites, the ten wholesome courses of action, lead to rebirth in the fortunate rebirth-destinies: the human realm and the six heavens of the desire realm.⁵

- i.4 Mastery of the stages of meditative absorption leads to rebirth on the different levels of the form realm and the formless realm. In this regard, the karmic result of mastering the first meditative absorption is rebirth in one of the three Brahmā realms. The karmic result of mastering the second meditative absorption is rebirth in the realms of the devas whose names contain the word *Radiance*.⁶ The karmic result of mastering the third meditative absorption is rebirth in the realms of the devas whose names contain the word *Virtue*.⁷ Mastering the fourth meditative absorption leads to rebirth among the devas of the Pure Abodes.
- i.5 The Pure Abodes are subdivided into two levels, and this is where the accounts of different early Buddhist schools seem to differ most. According to Theravāda sources,⁸ there are the levels of the Pure Abodes proper, with the addition of the Heaven of the Insentient Beings⁹ and the Heaven of Great Reward, respectively. These last two have their own karmic cause, namely, the attainment of a meditative absorption called *the attainment of the meditative state without consciousness*, an ordinary attainment of the fourth meditative absorption that can be realized by meditators who are not noble ones.¹⁰ In the Pure Abodes proper, on the other hand, only non-returners can be born, and from there they attain nirvāṇa. The account of the (Mūla-)Sarvāstivāda school seems to have two additional heavens beyond the Heaven of Perfect Virtue, which are absent from the Theravāda sources, namely, the Cloudless Heaven and the Heaven Born from Merit. According to the *Mahāvīyutpatti*, the Cloudless Heaven and the Heaven Born from Merit are the karmic result of attaining the fourth meditative absorption. According to the Theravāda account, however, the fourth meditative absorption (ordinary and non-ordinary) is associated only with the sublevels above the Heaven of Great Reward. *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life* mentions these two additional heavens but does not specify whether they are the karmic result of accomplishing the third or the fourth stage of meditative absorption.
- i.6 In Buddhist cosmology, the *axis mundi* of the terrestrial world, which is thought to be flat, is Mount Meru. It is surrounded by the four continents and is also the axis around which rotate the sun, moon, and stars. The order of the realms of existence is vertical, with the higher realms located above Mount Meru and the hells beneath the earth. *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life* mentions the four continents as the places where humans live.¹¹ Moreover, the world system just outlined, which is experienced differently by the different sentient beings, is not the only world. In fact, the universe consists of numerous similar worlds or world systems just like our own. It is, however, possible for any being—except for the beings in the unfortunate destinies, who have invariably painful sense experiences—to mentally experience all the states of the fortunate and unfortunate rebirth-destinies.¹²

The mental states of the devas may be experienced by humans during advanced states of meditative absorption. Moreover, rebirth-destinies are not static or permanent. Every living being has the potential to perform wholesome actions and thus accrue merit that eventually leads to rebirth in a higher realm. Although the lifespans in some of the hells seem so long as to be virtually never-ending, Buddhism does not have the notion of eternal damnation.

i.7 *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life* does not provide us with a detailed account of the structure and the functioning of the universe. It rather presupposes the reader's familiarity with such knowledge. The text's main point, as its title indicates, is to present its audience with detailed information about the duration of life of the different forms of existence in the Buddhist universe. *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life* thus lists the five rebirth-destinies (those of the hell beings, pretas, animals, humans, and devas) together with their subcategories (the four continents inhabited by humans, the eight hot and the eight cold hells, and the different heavens of the form realm and the formless realm) and carves out in a systematic way the relationship between the lifespans in the heavens and the hells.

i.8 Although the presentation of the subject matter appears very scholastic, the sūtra's message is renunciation. Actions of body, speech, and mind bind beings to saṃsāra and lead to fortunate or unfortunate rebirth-destinies for unimaginably long periods of time. Only liberation and the veneration of objects that are worthy of veneration, e.g., the Buddha and his Saṅgha, can end this continuous cycle of death and rebirth. In the concluding section of the sūtra, the Buddha says, "I do not speak with even the slightest praise of the manifestation of existence, however small it may be, however short in duration. Why is that? Because the manifestation of existence is suffering." *Existence* here refers to the five destinies, that is, all the possible kinds and places of rebirth that the sūtra portrays, from the hell Incessant Torture to the Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception, which is the peak—the highest possible form—of existence.

i.9 For the convenience of the reader, we present in the appendix a list of the different states of existence in the order in which they appear in the sūtra, together with their lifespans and their arithmetic relationship to the human lifespan (see [Appendix](#)).

On the Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan Sources

i.10 In the 1989 supplement (no. 2) of the *Sanskrit-Wörterbuch der buddhistischen Texte aus den Turfan-Funden* ("Sanskrit Dictionary of the Buddhist Texts from the Turfan Expeditions"), the Japanese scholar Hisashi Matsumura

presented an edition of the Sanskrit text of the *Āyuhparyantasūtra* together with a critical edition of the Tibetan translation based on five editions (the Narthang, Degé, Choné, Lhasa, and Kangxi Kangyurs). Matsumura prepared his Sanskrit edition on the basis of Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra's (1959–74) facsimile edition of a manuscript from Gilgit in present-day northern Pakistan. Gilgit was an important transit zone for traveling Buddhist monks from India, Iran, and China and an important connector between South Asia and the Central Asian Silk Roads.¹³ During the reign of the Palola Śāhis (c. 585–720 CE), who were patrons of Buddhism, Gilgit was a flourishing Buddhist kingdom, and there is evidence that Buddhism was alive in Gilgit until at least the tenth century,¹⁴ an estimate that sits well with the date of the single Chinese translation. The *Jiaoliang shouming jing* 較量壽命經 was translated in 984 CE by Tianxi Zai, a Kashmiri Buddhist monk who was active as a translator in China from 980–1000 CE; however, Matsumura states that the Chinese translation appears to be based on a different version of the sūtra.¹⁵ It is still possible that Tianxi Zai brought a version of the sūtra with him to China. In any case, the editors of the Gilgit manuscript had given it the mistaken title *Kālasūtra*, which is the name of one of the hells mentioned in the sūtra itself. Concerning its style, the sūtra's syntax is very repetitive, except for the fifty-two verses that make up a considerable part of the text. Some of these verses are also found in the celebrated Buddhist verse collections, the *Udānavarga* and the *Dharmapada*.¹⁶

i.11 Oskar von Hinüber, based on an earlier observation by Gregory Schopen, was able to identify this text with the Tibetan translation of *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life*.¹⁷ While the order of the folios in Vira and Chandra's edition of the Gilgit manuscripts were in disarray, Matsumura restored the order of the folios and the missing or destroyed parts of the Sanskrit text with the help of its Tibetan and Chinese translations, finding the Sanskrit to be more than ninety percent complete. Matsumura furthermore found there to be “the highest degree of congruency” between the Sanskrit text and the Tibetan translation.¹⁸ However, in the process of translating the work from both the Sanskrit and the Tibetan, we found occasional discrepancies between the Tibetan translation and the edited Sanskrit text to be more significant than Matsumura suggests.¹⁹

i.12 As for the Tibetan translation, the translators for this particular text are listed in the Tibetan colophon as the Indian preceptor Viśuddhasiṃha and the Tibetan monk Gewé Pal. Their translation was subsequently revised and finalized by the Indian preceptor Vidyākarasiṃha and the chief editor-translator, Bandé Paltsek. All these contributors flourished during the late eighth and early ninth centuries, and so the Tibetan translation, which we have rendered into English here, would have been completed during the

early translation period, a dating also attested by the text's inclusion in the early-ninth-century Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) inventory of translations into Tibetan.²⁰ We are aware of only one Tibetan commentary on *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life*, a rather late Tibetan commentary by Choné Lama Drakpa Shedrup (*co ne bla ma grags pa bshad sgrub*, 1675–1748).²¹

i.13 The English translation presented here is based on the Tibetan text of the Degé Kangyur. In several cases, however, we have followed the Sanskrit instead of the Tibetan, recording these choices and their rationale in the notes. For example, we adopted the Sanskrit readings of the numerals of the lifespans of the different classes of beings where they seemed to represent the more correct numbers and were furthermore corroborated by other sources. Also, where the Sanskrit text differed significantly from the Tibetan, we have recorded the Sanskrit reading in the notes.

The Sūtra on the Limits of Life

1.

The Translation

[F.139.a] {S74}

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels!

Thus did I hear at one time.²² {S75} The Bhagavān was staying in Śrāvastī, in Prince Jeta’s grove, the cloistered garden donated by Anāthapiṇḍada. There the Bhagavān addressed the monks: “Monks, do you wish to learn about the lifespans of beings?”

1.2 “Yes, Bhagavān, this is the right time for it! Sugata, the time is right for the Bhagavān to teach the monks the lifespans of living beings. Bhagavān, having heard the teaching from the Bhagavān, the monks will retain it.”

“Monks, listen carefully and concentrate! I will teach.²³

1.3 “Monks, the maximum lifespan in the hell realms is one eon. Premature death does occur.

1.4 “Monks, the maximum lifespan in the animal realm [F.139.b] is one eon. Premature death does occur.

1.5 “Monks, one day for the pretas corresponds to thirty days for humans. Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve months constitute one year, pretas have a lifespan of five hundred years by this way of calculating.²⁴ According to human years, this is fifteen thousand years. Premature death does occur.”

1.6 Then, at this time, the Bhagavān spoke these verses:

“With their mouths and throats parched, they suffer intensely.

Their bodies rise high like mountains tall.²⁵

They are all coated in hair,²⁶ their mouths are fretfully agape,²⁷

Their noses extremely thin like needles. {S76}

1.7 “Their skeleton-like, naked bodies are clad only in their own hair—
Deformed figures with hands like cups,²⁸

- They suffer intensely from hunger, thirst, and fatigue.²⁹
They howl, and their aching bodies writhe.
- 1.8 “Constantly experiencing painful sensations, they cry out in agony.
Those who resort to jealousy and spite for others in this world,
Having committed negative actions,
Will be born in the realm of the pretas.³⁰
- 1.9 “Monks, the lifespan of human beings inhabiting the eastern continent
Pūrvavideha³¹ is two hundred fifty years. Premature death does occur.
- 1.10 “Monks, the lifespan of human beings inhabiting the western continent
Avaragodānīya³² is five hundred years. Premature death does occur.
- 1.11 “Monks, the lifespan of human beings inhabiting the northern continent
Uttarakuru³³ is one thousand years. Premature death does not occur.
- 1.12 “Why do the human beings who inhabit the continent Uttarakuru have a
lifespan of one thousand years and not experience premature death?
“Monks, the human beings inhabiting the continent Uttarakuru have no
sense of *mine* and no notion of ownership, and their lifespan is
predetermined. When they die and pass from there, they progress higher
and higher,³⁴ and in the future they go to heaven. Monks, this is why the
human beings inhabiting the continent Uttarakuru have a lifespan of one
thousand years and do not experience premature death.”
- 1.13 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

“Beings who are stricken by poverty [F.140.a]
Hope for the riches of others.³⁵
Because they have not served and relied on noble beings,³⁶
They will become the low and mean servants of others.
- 1.14 “The affluent and rich,
Possessing all kinds of enjoyments, {S77}
As well as money, grains, and servants,
Are those who have served and relied on noble beings.
- 1.15 “Those who live meritorious lives,
By performing virtuous actions here and now,
Will delight in great prosperity
And abundance like a deva.³⁷
- 1.16 “Since what is beyond the range of sense perception is not apparent,
Look directly at what is present:
When people experience happiness in this world,
That is the karmic result of former generosity.³⁸

- 1.17 “The humans³⁹ inhabiting the northern continent
Have no sense of *mine* and no notion of ownership.
They use clothing from the wish-fulfilling tree—
That is the result of former generosity.⁴⁰
- 1.18 “They experience neither cold nor heat,
They are free from illnesses,
And they possess perfect bodies and complexion—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.⁴¹
- 1.19 “On the northern continent
Grows very white rice
Whose grains are unbroken, smooth, pure, and clean—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.⁴²
- 1.20 “Pure light-generating crystals
Shine for beings continuously
And cook their food—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.⁴³
- 1.21 “They have no vegetables,
And not even a little dahl.
They always eat rice
Endowed with perfect color, smell, and taste.
- 1.22 “With only one serving of that food,
Until they get up from their seats
The food on their plates is inexhaustible—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.⁴⁴
- 1.23 “A fruit that resembles the bottle gourd⁴⁵
Grows on branches even when cut.
One can eat them off the vine—⁴⁶
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.24 “The rivers there carry cool water that
When drunk, does not harm the stomach
And that possesses the eight superior qualities⁴⁷—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.25 “The people of Uttarakuru constantly divert themselves
With magical trees that emit music.
Their minds are always happy—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.⁴⁸

- 1.26 “The lovely magical music-trees,
The many magical garment-trees,
The perfect-smelling perfume-trees—
They are the karmic result of former generosity. [F.140.b]
- 1.27 “Perfume, flowers, music,
And garments too—
Whatever the heart desires
Manifests exactly as imagined.
- 1.28 “On lush green meadows,
With grass soft like cotton wool,
They enjoy themselves all day— [91]
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.29 “They are without anger.
Never begrudging or jealous,
They enjoy one another⁴⁹—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.30 “During the first watch of the night⁵⁰
A rain shower falls for only an instant
And cleans the air of dust—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.31 “Since they are not possessive,
Even the mother-and-son relationship is unknown to them.⁵¹
When nothing unpleasant exists, sorrow is nonexistent⁵²—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.32 “Mothers can even leave their children
On empty roads and go their way,
Because milk trickles from everyone’s thumbs—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.33 “No one cries there.
When someone dies, they just leave the body and go on their way.
Birds come and clean the island of the corpses—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.
- 1.34 “The whole of Uttarakuru is enclosed by a moat,
Within which Uttarakuru’s inhabitants safely enjoy and divert themselves
With songs and dance, most beautiful to behold—
That is the karmic result of former generosity.

- 1.35 “The people there live for one thousand years,
And they certainly use it up.
They do not die prematurely⁵³—
That is the karmic result of former generosity!⁵⁴
- 1.36 “Having fully enjoyed this beauty and abundance,⁵⁵
Even though they will have to forsake their human bodies,
They will take rebirth among the devas⁵⁶—
That is the karmic result of former generosity. {S78}
- 1.37 “Monks, the lifespan of the humans of the southern continent of
Jambudvīpa⁵⁷ is not fixed; it varies.⁵⁸ More precisely, monks, the maximum
lifespans of the humans of Jambudvīpa are unlimited, eighty thousand
years, one hundred years, and ten years.⁵⁹
- 1.38 “Monks, the lifespan at the present time of the humans of Jambudvīpa
amounts to one hundred years.⁶⁰ Monks, presently those among the humans
of Jambudvīpa who live long can reach an age of one hundred years, or a
little more than that, when looked after with proper care.⁶¹
- 1.39 “Monks, during a lifespan of one hundred years, people undergo ten
stages.⁶² [F.141.a] At the first stage, they are infants, feeble and lying on their
back. At the second stage they are children, disposed to playing. At the third
stage, as youths, they chase after pleasure. At the fourth stage they are
endowed with physical strength and strong enthusiasm. At the fifth stage
they possess prudence and self-confidence.⁶³ At the sixth stage they are
experienced and more given to reflection. At the seventh stage they practice
religion with all their heart.⁶⁴ At the eighth stage they are venerable and
people of distinction.⁶⁵ At the ninth stage they are old, fragile, and weakened
by age. At the tenth stage life is exhausted and only death remains.⁶⁶ Monks,
in a hundred years, their lives undergo those ten stages.
- 1.40 “Monks, living for one hundred years, they live for one hundred times
each the three seasons: one hundred winters, one hundred summers, and
one hundred rains.⁶⁷ Living three seasons one hundred times each, they live
for twelve months one hundred times: four months each of winters, four of
summers, and four of rains. Living for twelve months one hundred times,
they live for twenty-four times one hundred half-months, or two thousand
four hundred half-months: eight half-months each of winters, eight half-
months of summers, and eight half-months of rains. Living twenty-four times
one hundred half-months, they live for thirty-six thousand days: twelve
thousand days each of summer, winter, and rains.
- 1.41 “Living for thirty-six thousand days, they eat seventy-two thousand
meals, except for when there is something that prevents them from eating.⁶⁸
These meal interruptions are as follows: when they are angry, they do not

eat; when they suffer, they do not eat; when impoverished,⁶⁹ they do not eat; during fasting,⁷⁰ they do not eat; because of loss, they do not eat; because of gain, too, they do not eat; when sleeping, they do not eat; when drunk, [F.141.b] they do not eat; due to being drowsy, they do not eat. Thus, in sum, the meals that are eaten and the meals that are not eaten are altogether seventy-two thousand meals during one lifetime, including the milk from their mother that they have drunk. {S79}

1.42 “Monks, I have expounded and itemized the lives of human beings in Jambudvīpa in terms of seasons, months, half months, days, meals, and even the interruptions to meals.⁷¹

1.43 “Monks, fifty human years corresponds to one day and night in the life of the devas belonging to the retinue of the Four Great Kings. Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve months constitute one year, the lifespan of the devas belonging to the retinue of the Four Great Kings is five hundred divine years by this way of calculating. According to human years, this is nine million years. Premature death does occur.

1.44 “This—that is, nine million years—corresponds to one day and night for the beings⁷² in the great hell Revival.^{73 74} Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of beings in the great hell Revival is, by this way of calculating, five hundred years. In human years, this is 1 trillion 620 billion years. Premature death does occur.”

1.45 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

“By committing harmful actions
With body, speech, and mind,
And whatever other actions that bring harm,
Beings are reborn in the hell Revival.
For one thousand times ten million years
They are tortured and killed, only to be revived.

1.46 “People who kill other people,
Because they are tied to one another by hatred,
Will, by virtue of this karma,
Be reborn in Revival.

1.47 “Monks, one hundred human years corresponds to one day and night for the devas of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of the devas of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three is one thousand divine years by this way of calculating. [F.142.a] According to human years, this is thirty-six million years. Premature death does occur.

- 1.48 “This—that is, thirty-six million years—corresponds to one day and night for the beings in the great hell Black Thread.⁷⁵ Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of beings in the great hell Black Thread is one thousand years by this way of calculating. According to human years, this is 12 trillion 960 billion years.⁷⁶ Untimely death⁷⁷ does occur.” {S80}
- 1.49 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:
- “Those who harm⁷⁸ their father or mother,
Or buddhas or śrāvakas,
Will be born in the great hell Black Thread
And experience painful bodily sensations.
- 1.50 “Those who are lackadaisical and brag about it,⁷⁹
And people who create discord among friends,
Are reborn in Black Thread.
Likewise, those who repeatedly tell lies⁸⁰
Are reborn in the great hell Black Thread
Because of that karma.
- 1.51 “Monks, two hundred human years corresponds to one day and night for the devas of the Heaven Free from Strife. Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of the devas of the Heaven Free from Strife is two thousand divine years by this way of calculating. According to human years this is 144 million years.⁸¹ Premature death does occur.
- 1.52 “This—that is, one hundred forty-four million years—is one day and night for the beings in the great hell Crushing.⁸² Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of the beings in the great hell Crushing is two thousand years by this way of calculating. According to human years, this is 103 trillion 680 billion years.⁸³ Premature death does occur.”
- 1.53 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:
- “Having committed the threefold⁸⁴ unwholesome deeds,
And having neglected the threefold wholesome ones,
Through this karma one will be reborn
In the great hell Crushing.⁸⁵
- 1.54 “Having slain cows,⁸⁶ goats, water buffalo, [F.142.b]
Game, fowl,⁸⁷ pigs,
Or other such animals,

One will be reborn in Crushing.

1.55 “Monks, four hundred human years corresponds to one day and night for the devas of the Heaven of Joy. Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of the devas of the Heaven of Joy is four thousand divine years by this way of calculating. According to human years, this is 576 million {S81} years. Premature death does occur.

1.56 “This—that is, five hundred seventy-six million human years—corresponds to one day and night for the beings in the great hell Wailing.⁸⁸ Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of the beings in the great hell Wailing is four thousand years by this way of calculating. According to human years, this is 829 trillion 440 billion years.⁸⁹ Premature death does occur.”

1.57 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

“Those whose hands are smeared with blood,
Whose appearance is dreadful, fierce, and terrifying,
Through their evil conduct
Will forever go to Wailing.

1.58 “Flatterers and conjurers,⁹⁰ and those who use deceit to cheat others,⁹¹
May not utter terrifying sounds,
But because they ruin people,
They will burn in hell for a long time.

1.59 “Monks, eight hundred human years corresponds to one day and night for the devas of the Heaven of Delighting in Emanations. Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of the devas of the Heaven of Delighting in Emanations is eight thousand years by this way of calculating. According to human years, this is 2 billion 304 million years. Premature death does occur.

1.60 “This—that is, 2 billion 304 million years—corresponds to one day and night for the beings inhabiting the great hell Loud Wailing. Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months constitute one year, the lifespan of the beings inhabiting the great hell Loud Wailing⁹² [F.143.a] is eight thousand years by this way of calculating. According to human years, this is 6 quadrillion 635 trillion 520 billion years.⁹³ Premature death does occur.”

1.61 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

“Those who are obstructed by the thicket of wrong views

- And blinded by the veil of craving
 Will certainly go to Loud Wailing⁹⁴
 Due to their evil conduct. {S82}
- 1.62 “People who violate friendship and confidentiality⁹⁵
 Will burn in the blazing,
 Bloodcurdling hell Loud Wailing,
 Where they are imprisoned in a circular house.⁹⁶
- 1.63 “There, swords will cut to pieces the bodies
 Of people who have engaged in backbiting.
 Vultures, crows, owls, and dogs
 Will shake their bodies to and fro before devouring them.
- 1.64 “Monks, one thousand six hundred⁹⁷ human years corresponds to one day
 and night for the devas of the Heaven of the Masters of Others’ Creations.⁹⁸
 Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months
 constitute one year, the lifespan of the devas of the Heaven of the Masters of
 Others’ Creations is sixteen thousand years by this way of calculating.
 According to human years, this is 9 billion 216 million years. Premature death
 does occur.
- 1.65 “This—that is, nine billion two hundred sixteen million years—
 corresponds to one day and night for the beings inhabiting the great hell
 Heat.⁹⁹ Since thirty such days constitute one month, and twelve such months
 constitute one year, the lifespan of the beings inhabiting the great hell Heat
 is sixteen thousand years by this way of calculating. According to human
 years this is 53 quadrillion 84 trillion 160 billion years.¹⁰⁰ Premature death
 does occur.”
- 1.66 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

 “Those who repeatedly¹⁰¹ afflict¹⁰²
 Good monks and brahmins,¹⁰³
 As well as their father and mother,¹⁰⁴
 Will be reborn in Heat.
- 1.67 “Someone who inflicts a lot of pain
 On many beings in this world
 Will be reborn in Heat
 On account of this karma. [F.143.b]
- 1.68 “Monks, do you want to hear about the lifespan of beings who have been
 reborn in the Blistering Hell?”¹⁰⁵

- “Yes, Bhagavān, the time is right for that. Sugata, this is the right time for it. We, the monks, having heard the teaching from the Blessed One about the lifespan of beings that have been reborn in the Blistering Hell, will retain the teaching well.”¹⁰⁶
- 1.69 “Monks, in that case, listen carefully and concentrate! I will teach. Monks, it is like this: Imagine a container¹⁰⁷ with a capacity of twenty khārī¹⁰⁸ that contains a full measure of twenty khārī of Kosalan sesame seeds and is filled to the brim with them. {S83} Now imagine that someone were to remove a single seed from that container every hundred years.¹⁰⁹ I say, monks, that the contents of that container holding twenty khārīs of sesame seeds would quickly be emptied out completely by this method, but, monks, not so the lifespan of beings who have been reborn in the Blistering Hell.
- 1.70 “Twenty times the lifespan in the Blistering Hell is that in the Bursting Blister Hell.¹¹⁰ Twenty times the lifespan in the Bursting Blister Hell is that in the Hell of Chattering Teeth. Twenty times the lifespan in the Hell of Chattering Teeth is that in the Hell of Lamentation. Twenty times the lifespan in the Hell of Lamentation is that in the Cold Whimpering Hell. Twenty times the lifespan in the Cold Whimpering Hell is that in the Splitting Open Like a Blue Lotus Hell. Twenty times the lifespan in the Splitting Open Like a Blue Lotus Hell is that in the Splitting Open Like a Lotus Hell. Twenty times the lifespan in the Splitting Open Like a Lotus Hell is the Great Splitting Open Like a Lotus Hell.¹¹¹ Devadatta’s¹¹² partisan,¹¹³ the monk Kokālika, because he felt anger toward¹¹⁴ the monks Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana,¹¹⁵ will be reborn in the Great Splitting Open Like a Lotus Hell with his own body.¹¹⁶
- 1.71 “Therefore, monks, you should train the mind thus: not even toward the burnt stump of a tree should you generate an attitude of hatred, let alone toward a conscious being! You should train in that way, monks!”
- 1.72 Then, at this point, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:¹¹⁷
- “Some people are born [F.144.a],
With a hatchet in their mouth,
With which they only cut themselves
When speaking words of evil. {S84}
- 1.73 “Those who praise the ones who are to be reproached
And those who reproach the ones who are to be praised
Accumulate with their mouths that evil,
Due to which they cannot find happiness.
- 1.74 “This is a small sin:
Losing all one’s wealth through gambling.

This is a great sin:
Getting angry at the Tathāgata.¹¹⁸

- 1.75 “Those who abuse the noble ones,
Having thus directed evil words and thoughts against them,
Will go to hell for one hundred thousand nirarbudas
And thirty-six arbudas.¹¹⁹
- 1.76 “Speaking untruth with a mind intending evil
Is what destroys one and hurls one into hell.¹²⁰
A mind that is not tainted by these stains,
That is blameless, is steadfast. {S85}
- 1.77 “Monks, the lifespan of beings inhabiting the great hell Intense Heat¹²¹ is
half an eon. Premature death does occur.”
- 1.78 Then, at that point, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:

“Having abandoned wholesome actions
Through which one is reborn in heaven,
And having done harmful actions here, in this world,
One is reborn in Intense Heat.
- 1.79 “Those who harm good ascetics or brahmins,
Or their father or mother,
Or any other teacher
Will boil in Intense Heat.
- 1.80 “Monks, the lifespan of the beings in the great hell Incessant Torture¹²² is
one eon. Premature death does occur. This is where the fool Devadatta was
reborn with his own body because he split the undivided Saṅgha¹²³ and,
with evil intentions, drew the Tathāgata’s blood¹²⁴ and beat a nun, who was
an arhantī, to death.”¹²⁵
- 1.81 Then, at that time, the Bhagavān spoke the following verses:¹²⁶

“Those who are so foolish as to treat with contempt and reject
The teaching of those noble ones who worthily live according to the truth,
Because they have resorted to evil views,
Cultivate a deadly fruit, like the fruit of the thorny bamboo.^{127 128}
- 1.82 They should only speak benevolently.
They should not speak maliciously. [F.144.b]
When they speak benevolently, things will turn out well.
When they speak maliciously, they will burn.

- 1.83 When fools utter malicious speech,
They become enchained.
Only fools speak maliciously;
Noble ones never utter them!¹²⁹
- 1.84 “Having committed heinous acts in this world,
Which lead to unfortunate rebirth-destinies,
Through this karma,
One will be reborn in Incessant Torture. {S86}
- 1.85 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Brahmā’s Retinue¹³⁰ is
half an eon. Premature death does occur.
“Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Brahmā’s Ministers is
three quarters of an eon.¹³¹ Premature death does occur.
- 1.86 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Great Brahmā is one
eon.¹³² Premature death does occur.
“Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Limited Radiance is
two eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.87 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Boundless Radiance is
four eons. Premature death does occur.
“Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Luminous Radiance¹³³
is eight eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.88 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Limited Virtue¹³⁴ is
sixteen eons. Premature death does occur.
“Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Boundless Virtue¹³⁵ is
thirty-two eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.89 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Perfect Virtue¹³⁶ is
sixty-four eons. Premature death does occur.
“Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Cloudless Heaven¹³⁷ is one
hundred twenty-five eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.90 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven Born from Merit¹³⁸ is two
hundred fifty eons. Premature death does occur.
“Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Great Reward¹³⁹ is five
hundred eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.91 “Monks, the lifespan of both the Insentient Beings and the devas of the
Unlofty Heaven¹⁴⁰ is one thousand eons.¹⁴¹ Premature death does occur.
{S87}
“Monks, the lifespan of the devas in Sorrowless Heaven¹⁴² [F.145.a] is two
thousand eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.92 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Sublime Vision¹⁴³ is
four thousand eons. Premature death does occur.

- “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Heaven of Great Vision¹⁴⁴ is eight thousand eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.93 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas in the Highest Heaven¹⁴⁵ is sixteen thousand eons. Premature death does occur.
- “Monks, the lifespan of the devas belonging to the Sphere of the Infinity of Space is twenty thousand eons.¹⁴⁶ Premature death does occur.
- 1.94 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas belonging to the Sphere of the Infinity of Consciousness is forty thousand eons. Premature death does occur.
- “Monks, the lifespan of the devas belonging to the Sphere of Nothingness is sixty thousand eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.95 “Monks, the lifespan of the devas belonging to the Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception is eighty thousand eons. Premature death does occur.
- 1.96 “Monks, from the hell Incessant Torture up to the Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception—which, monks, is the peak of existence—these states respectively demarcate the upper and lower limits of the whole of existence. These states are the manifestation of existence. They are the places where living beings of the five rebirth-destinies come and go, live, die, and are reborn. Enough with the manifestation of existence!¹⁴⁷ I do not speak with even the slightest praise of the manifestation of existence, however small it may be, however short in duration.¹⁴⁸ Why is that? Because the manifestation of existence is suffering. Take, for instance, something that is impure: when even a little of it stinks, how much more so does a lot of it! In the same way, I do not speak with even the slightest praise of the manifestation of existence, however small it may be, however short in duration. Why is that? Because, monks, the manifestation of existence is suffering. Ordinary, worldly people, uneducated in the Dharma,¹⁴⁹ continually cycle again and again in the five rebirth-destinies; [F.145.b] again and again they rush to the hells, again and again to the animal realm, again and again to evil states, to unfortunate rebirth-destinies, to destruction. Therefore, monks, you should train in this way: ‘I shall strive to cut off the stream of existence at any point and not let saṃsāra unfold!’ Monks, you should train in this way!”
- 1.97 After the Blessed One had thus spoken, the monks were deeply overjoyed and rejoiced in the Blessed One’s words.
- 1.98 *This concludes “The Sūtra on the Limits of Life.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated by the Indian preceptor Viśuddhasiṃha and the monk Gewé Pal. It was revised and finalized by the Indian preceptor Vidyākarasiṃha and the chief editor-translator Bandé Paltsek.

ap.

Appendix

TABLES

Lifespans of States of Existence in The Sūtra on the Limits of Life

ap1.1 UNFORTUNATE REBIRTH DESTINIES

Destiny: Hell beings

Lifespan: Maximum one eon.

Destiny: Animals

Lifespan: Maximum one eon.

Destiny: Pretas

Lifespan: Five hundred years.

ap1.2 HUMAN REALMS

Location: Pūrvavideha

Lifespan: Two hundred fifty years.

Location: Avaragodānīya

Lifespan: Five hundred years.

Location: Uttarakuru

Lifespan: One thousand years.

Location: Jambudvīpa

Lifespan: Not fixed: unlimited, eighty thousand, one hundred, or ten years, depending on the eon.

ap1.3 HEAVENS AND HELLS OF THE DESIRE REALM

Location: The retinue of the Four Great Kings

Lifespan: Five hundred years = 9 million human years (one day = 50 human years).

Location: Revival (hell)

Lifespan: Five hundred years = 1 trillion 620 billion human years (one day = 9 million human years).

Location: Heaven of the Thirty-Three

Lifespan: One thousand years = 36 million years (one day = 100 human years).

Location: Black Thread (hell)

Lifespan: One thousand years = 12 trillion 960 billion human years (one day = 36 million human years).

Location: Heaven Free from Strife

Lifespan: Two thousand years = 144 million human years (one day = 200 human years).

Location: Crushing (hell)

Lifespan: Two thousand years = 103 billion 680 million human years (one day = 144 million human years).

Location: Heaven of Joy

Lifespan: Four thousand years = 576 million human years (one day = 400 human years).

Location: Wailing (hell)

Lifespan: Four thousand years = 829 trillion 440 billion human years (one day = 576 million human years).

Location: Heaven of Delighting in Emanations

Lifespan: Eight thousand years = 2 billion 304 million human years (one day = 800 human years).

Location: Loud Wailing (hell)

Lifespan: Eight thousand years = 6 quadrillion 635 trillion 520 billion human years (one day = 2 billion 304 million human years).

Location: Heaven of the Masters of Others' Creations

Lifespan: Sixteen thousand years = 9 billion 216 million human years (one day = 1,600 human years).

Location: Heat (hell)

Lifespan: Sixteen thousand years = 53 quadrillion 84 trillion 160 billion human years (one day = 9 billion 216 million human years).

Location: Eight Cold Hells

Lifespan: Unspecified, exceedingly long timespans. (In relative terms, the lifespan of each subsequent cold hell is prolonged by a factor of twenty, e.g., the lifespan in Bursting Blister Hell is twenty times longer than the lifespan in Blistering Hell).

Location: Intense Heat (hell)

Lifespan: Half an eon.

Location: Incessant Torture (hell)

Lifespan: One eon.

ap1.4 HEAVENS OF THE FORM REALM

Location: Heaven of Brahmā's Retinue

Lifespan: Half an eon.

Location: Heaven of Brahmā's Ministers

Lifespan: Three quarters of an eon (one eon according to the Sanskrit).

Location: Heaven of Great Brahmā

Lifespan: One eon (one and a half eons according to the Sanskrit).

Location: Heaven of Limited Radiance

Lifespan: Two eons.

Location: Heaven of Boundless Radiance

Lifespan: Four eons.

Location: Heaven of Luminous Radiance

Lifespan: Eight eons.

Location: Heaven of Limited Virtue

Lifespan: Sixteen eons.

Location: Heaven of Boundless Virtue

Lifespan: Thirty-two eons.

Location: Heaven of Perfect Virtue

Lifespan: Sixty-four eons.

Location: Cloudless Heaven

Lifespan: One hundred twenty-five eons.

Location: Heaven Born from Merit

Lifespan: Two hundred fifty eons.

Location: Heaven of Great Reward

Lifespan: Five hundred eons.

ap1.5 THE PURE ABODES

Location: Insentient Beings

Lifespan: One thousand eons.

Location: Unlofty Heaven

Lifespan: One thousand eons (Insentient Beings = five hundred eons according to the Sanskrit).

Location: Sorrowless Heaven

Lifespan: Two thousand eons.

Location: Heaven of Sublime Vision

Lifespan: Four thousand eons.

Location: Heaven of Great Vision

Lifespan: Eight thousand eons.

Location: Highest Heaven

Lifespan: Sixteen thousand eons.

ap1.6 HEAVENS OF THE FORMLESS REALM

Location: Sphere of the Infinity of Space

Lifespan: Twenty thousand eons.

Location: Sphere of the Infinity of Consciousness

Lifespan: Forty thousand eons.

Location: Sphere of Nothingness

Lifespan: Sixty thousand eons.

Location: Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception

Lifespan: Eighty thousand eons.

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AK* *Abhidharmakośakārikā* of Vasubandhu.
- AKBh* *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* of Vasubandhu.
- AKBh(D)* *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* in Śāstrī 1981.
- AKBh(P)* *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam* in Pradhan and Haldar 1975.
- AN* *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* in Morris and Hardy 1883–1910.
- Arv* *Arthaviniścayasūtra*. See Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans. *Distinctly Ascertaining the Meanings* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh317.html>), Toh 317.
- Avś* *Avadānaśataka*. GRETIL edition.
- BHSD* Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2: Dictionary.
- BHSG* Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol 1: Grammar.
- DPPN* Malalasekera, G. P. *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*.
- Dhp* *Dhammapada* in Hinüber and Norman 1995.
- GDhp* *Dhammapada* in Brough 1962.
- Mvy* *Mahāvvyutpatti*. See Braarvig and Liland, “Mahāvvyutpatti with sGra sbyor bam po gñis pa.”
- Negi* Negi, J. S. *Tibetan–Sanskrit Dictionary*.
- PDhp* *Dhammapada* in Roth 1980.
- PED* Rhys Davids and Stede, *Pali English Dictionary*.
- SN* *Samyutta-Nikāya*. GRETIL edition.
- Skt. verses* Sanskrit verse numbers refer to those found in Matsumura’s edition (Matsumura 1989) of the Sanskrit text of the Gilgit manuscript.
- Sn* *Suttanipāta*. GRETIL edition.

- Uv* *Udānavarga* in Bernhard 1965.
- [*F.XYZ.x*] folio no. and side (a = *recto*, b = *verso*) in the Degé edition of the Kangyur vol. 72 (mdo sde, sa), folios 139.a–145.b.
- pw* Böhlingk, Otto. *Petersburger Wörterbuch*.
- {*SXY*} Numbers in curly brackets preceded by S indicate page number in Matsumura's edition (Matsumura 1989) of the Sanskrit text of the Gilgit manuscript.
- Āps* *Āyuhparyantasūtra*.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 This is how the sūtra is classified in the Degé edition of the Kangyur, which no doubt followed the classification of the text in the Denkarma catalog (see Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, 156, no. 284). The term *Hīnayāna* is problematic for its derogatory connotations. On the problems with the common distinction of two “vehicles” (*Hīnayāna*/*Mahāyāna*), see Skilling 2013, 75–79.
- n.2 Skt. *kāmāloka*/*kāmadhātu*, *rūpaloka*/*rūpadhātu*, and *arūpaloka*/*arūpadhātu*/*ārūpyadhātu*. We have adopted Gethin’s English translations of these terms (Gethin 1998, ch. 5, especially pp. 116–17). This summary of the Buddhist understanding of the cosmos according to the Abhidharma follows Gethin 1998 and *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life* itself. Gethin’s account follows mainly the Abhidharma tradition of the Theravādins. The accounts of other early Buddhist schools are largely in agreement and deviate only in certain details.
- n.3 Thus, *kāmāvacara*, *rūpāvacara*, and *arūpāvacara* in Sanskrit. Skt. *avacara* here means the range or scope of the mind’s activity, i.e., what is or can be experienced.
- n.4 *Realms* of existence (also *sublevels*) here translates Skt./Pāli *bhūmi* (see Gethin 1998, 116).
- n.5 The ten wholesome courses of action are usually expressed as the opposites of the ten unwholesome courses of action, thus, e.g., *not* killing living beings (Skt. *apraṇātighāta*), etc. The Skt. collective term for the fortunate rebirth-destinies is *sugati*; the Tib. is *bde ’gro*.
- n.6 The Heaven of Limited Radiance, the Heaven of Boundless Radiance, and the Heaven of Luminous Radiance.
- n.7 The Heaven of Limited Virtue, the Heaven of Boundless Virtue, and the Heaven of Perfect Virtue.

- n.8 For the Theravāda account, see Gethin 1998, 116–17.
- n.9 Alternative translations that are often met with in secondary literature are “unconscious devas” or “unconscious beings,” “Concept-Free Gods,” etc. R. Sharf (Sharf 2014) argues that the Insentient Beings constitute a nominal category, necessitated by the internal logic of the Abhidharma system of meditation that designates a certain divine state of existence which, according to the Buddhist conception of the cosmos, is located in the form realm, and which is characterized by no conscious experience at all. This state of total mental calm is said to be the specific result of a meditative absorption called *the attainment of the meditative state without consciousness* (*asaṃjñīsamāpatti* or *asaṃjñāsamāpatti*). This appears to be phenomenologically indistinguishable from the cessation of sensation and conceptualization (*samjñā-vedayita-nirodha* or, in short, *nirodha-samāpatti*), a praised state of meditative absorption that is achieved only by non-returners or arhats as a result of mastering the complete sequence of the eight absorptions. We have adopted the translation “Insentient Beings” from Robert Sharf (see Sharf 2014). A good alternative translation may be “Concept-Free Gods,” since it is not at all clear that this state entails a complete loss of consciousness, although in nontechnical usage Skt. *saṃjñā* can have this meaning (e.g., in expressions like *vilupta-saṃjñā*, “lost consciousness”).
- n.10 “Ordinary” here means that this state is also attained by ordinary persons (*prthagjana*), i.e., those who have not achieved one of the stages that characterize noble persons (*ārya-pudgala*). Vasubandhu explains in the AKBh (AKBh(P), 68–69 on AK II.42): “To which *bhūmi* does it belong? 42b. In the Fourth Dhyāna. In order to cultivate this absorption, the ascetic should have entered the Fourth Dhyāna. Why does one cultivate it? 42c. Through desire for deliverance. The ascetic falsely imagines that *āsaṃjñīka*, the non-consciousness that constitutes the result of the non-conscious absorption, is true deliverance. *Āsaṃjñīka*, being retribution, is necessarily morally neutral. As for the non-conscious absorption, it is 42d. Good. It produces as its retributive result the five *skandhas* of a nonconscious god, who, as we know, is conscious at birth and at death [...]. This absorption is cultivated only by *Prthagjanas*. 42f. Not by *Āryans*. The *Āryans* consider this absorption as a precipice, a calamity, and do not value entering it. On the contrary, *Prthagjanas* identify non-consciousness (*āsaṃjñīka*) with true deliverance; they have no idea of ‘going out’ with respect to it; hence they cultivate the absorption that leads to it. But *Āryans* know that the impure cannot be true deliverance. Hence they do not cultivate this absorption” (tr. Pruden 1988–90, vol. 1, 223–24; the numbers followed by letters in the citation indicate the *pādas* of the verse that is commented upon).

- n.11 Detailed explanations on the traditional concepts of the universe can be found, e.g., in Vasubandhu's AKBh (= Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, ch. 3, especially pp. 451–74 (vol II) or in Jamgön Kongtrul 2003, ch. 2).
- n.12 Cf. Gethin 1998, 121–22.
- n.13 See Neelis 2011, 61–62.
- n.14 See Sarao 2012, 55.
- n.15 The title of the Chinese translation is given by Matsumura as *Fo-shuo chiao-liang shou-ming ching*. The sūtra is found in Taishō no. 759 (Taishō shinshū daizōkyō, vol. 17, pp. 601a1–604a22). See Matsumura 1989, 73. For more information on this version of the sūtra, see Lewis R. Lancaster, “K 1105 (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k1105.html),” *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*.
- n.16 For example, the verses 42–46 in Matsumura's Sanskrit edition (cf. 1.72–1.76 in this translation) correspond to *Udānavarga*, *Vācavarga* (*varga* VIII), verses 2–6; see Bernhard 1965, 161–63. The sūtra does not indicate that these verses are found also in other Buddhist works.
- n.17 See Matsumura 1989, 72.
- n.18 See Matsumura 1989, Introduction: pp. 72–75. Matsumura has also published his own Japanese annotated translation of the *Āyuhīparyantasūtra*, which unfortunately could not be consulted in its original language by the present translator. Those who read Japanese are referred to Hisashi Matsumura, “Bonbun Kyōryōjumyō-kyō,” *Review of International Buddhist University Faculty of Letters* 14 (1982): 59–81.
- n.19 Occasionally the Tibetan translation contains unexpected and unusual terms when compared to the *Mahāvīyutpatti*, the famous Sanskrit–Tibetan lexicon used to help standardize translations in the massive state-sponsored translation program of the early translation period in Tibet. For example, Skt. verse 40 (cf. 1.66) has in Tib. *dge slong* (“[fully ordained] monk”) instead of the expected *dge sbyong* for the Sanskrit *śramaṇa*. However, Skt. verse 48 (cf. 1.79) pādas ab, which is identical to the passage in verse 40, does have the expected translation equivalent *dge sbyong*. To give another, perhaps more substantial, example, the Sanskrit text lists the Insentient Beings and the devas of the Unlofty Heaven with different lifespans, five hundred and one thousand eons respectively, while the Tibetan translation lists these two classes of devas together as having the same lifespan, namely, one thousand

- eons. See Matsumura 1989, 86 (Sanskrit) and 99 (Tibetan), paragraphs 57 and 58.
- n.20 The Denkarma catalog is dated to c. 812 CE. See Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 156, no. 284.
- n.21 For detailed information on Drakpa Shedrup, see [Treasury of Lives](https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Drakpa-Shedrub/2931) (<https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Drakpa-Shedrub/2931>). The larger first part of this commentary contains a concise, summarized version (*don bsdus*) of the two *Karmavibhaṅgasūtras* (Toh 338 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh338.html>) and Toh 339 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh339.html>); see Galasek-Hul and Lama Kunga Thartse Rinpoche 2023 and 2021), which largely follows the structure of Toh 339. The second part of Drakpa Shedrup's text contains the commentary on *The Sūtra on the Limits of Life*. While Drakpa Shedrup's commentary does not add any new information that is not available from the sūtra itself, it does stand out for its conciseness and very clear language.
- n.22 This is the standard sūtra beginning, which is missing in the Skt. edition of our text. We know from other Buddhist texts in Skt. that the formulaic beginning of sūtras may also be translated as, "This I have heard: At one time the Bhagavān was staying at..." etc. (Skt. *evam mayā śrutam. ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā...*, etc.) The matter continues to be debated by scholars. However, our translation follows the punctuation as found in the Tib. translation of the Āps, and in the majority of the Tib. translations of Skt. sūtras.
- n.23 According to the Tib. The Skt. text additionally contains the monks' reply: " 'Yes, master,' the monks replied to the Bhagavān. Then the Bhagavān spoke to the monks thus: (*evaṃ bhadanteti. te bhikṣavo bhagavataḥ pratyāśroṣuḥ. atha bhagavān tān bhikṣūn idam avocat*; Matsumura 1998, 75)."
- n.24 According to the Tib. For a similar passage, cf. *dwags po thar rgyan* in Guenther 1971, 62. It is interesting to note that syntax and lexis in a parallel passage in the *dwags po thar rgyan* are very similar to that of the Āps: *rgyal chen rigs bzhi'i tshes tshad ni gang yin pa de ni dmyal ba yang sos kyi nyin zhag gcig yin la | de sum cu la zla ba gcig | zla ba bcu gnyis la lor brtsis pa'i yang sos kyis rang lo lnga brgya thub bo | | mi lo ltar na bye ba phrag 'bum drug khri nyis stong yod do | |*. The Skt. locution appears to be idiomatic and is difficult to render literally in English (Matsumura 1989, 75, paragraph 4): *tena rātri(ṃ)divasena tṛṃśad rāt[r]akena māsenā, dvādaśa māsakena saṃvatsareṇa, tayā saṃvatsara[ga]ṇanayā pañca varṣasātāni pretānām āyuṣaḥ pramāṇam.*

- n.25 For the Skt. *āśraya* in the sense of “body,” cf. BHSD; the Tib. translation has *lus* (“body”), which is not attested as a standard translation equivalent for *āśraya* in the Mvy. For a similar passage in the *Divyāvadāna* describing the appearance of the pretas, see [n.26](#).
- n.26 A similar passage describing the appearance of pretas can be found in the *Divyāvadāna*, tr. Rotman 2008, 47: “Soon five thousand pretas who looked like scorched wooden pillars, raised up skeletons covered with hair from head to toe, with stomachs like mountains and mouths like pinholes, surrounded Śroṇa Koṭikarṇa” (*yāvāt pañcamātraiḥ pretasahasrair dagdhasthūṇāsadrīśair asthiyantravaducchritaiḥ svakeśaromapraticchannaiḥ parvatodarasaṃnibaiḥ sūcīchidropamamukhair anuparivāritaiḥ Śroṇaḥ Koṭikarṇaḥ*. Ed. Cowell & Neil 1886, 7).
- n.27 Tib. *kha gdangs gnam du lta*, Skt. *vidāritonmukhā* (“with their mouths turned up and gaping”). The image that is being invoked here is perhaps that of extreme hunger that makes them gape their mouths and turn their faces upward in anxious expectation of any food or drink that might come their way.
- n.28 We interpret the Skt. compound *kapālapāṇayo* (*ghorāḥ*) as a *karmadhāraya* here (see Matsumura 1989, 76, v. 2c). For the only other occurrence of this term in Skt. Buddhist texts that we have come across so far, see *Mahāvadānasūtra*, where it clearly means “having /carrying a bowl in his hand” (see *Mahāvadānasūtra*, 16, §36.6, *passim*). The Tib. reads somewhat differently and its meaning is unclear: *gzugs mi sdug pa ’greng zhing thod pa thogs* (“Their deformed bodies stand erect and they hold bowl[s]”). Lama Kunga Rinpoche suggests either of two interpretations of the Tib.: (1) They are holding (skull? -)cups or bowls in their hands (constantly searching for food?); or (2) some feature of ugliness—referring to the form of their foreheads?—is being described (but the wording in Tib. is obscure). In later Skt. *kapālapāṇi* is used as an epithet of Śiva.
- n.29 The Tib. omits *vyasana*.
- n.30 The Tib. translators changed the order of the pādas of the Skt. verses 2–4 (Matsumura 1989, pp. 75–76) from six lines (= 12 verse-quarters) with 12 syllables per line (= the Skt. meter *vaṃśastha*) to eight lines (= two verses?) with nine syllables each. The content, however, is mostly identical. My translation follows more closely the Tib. translation here.
- n.31 Tib. *shar gyi lus ’phags*, “Majestic Body” (Jamgön Kongtrul 2003, 113). Skt. variant: *Prāgvideha* (so in AKBh; see also BHSD, s.v.). We leave the names of the four great continents untranslated in the main body of the text since the

original form of the words in Skt. Buddhist literature is not consistent. For extensive explanations on the Buddhist world system itself, see Jamgön Kongtrul 2003, pp. 107–47; for the AKBh, see Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, ch. 3.

- n.32 Tib. *nub kyī ba lang spyod*, “Bountiful Cow” (Jamgön Kongtrul 2003, 113). Variants of the name in Skt. and Pāli: *Aparagoyāna*, *Goyānīya* (Pāli), *Aparagodānika*, °*godānīya* (*Mahāvastu*), *Godānīya* (AKBh), *Avaragodānīya* (*Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, Gilgit), *Aparagoḍānī* (*Lalitavistara*), *Aparagodāni* (*Dharmasaṃgraha*); see BHSD.
- n.33 Tib. *byang gi sgra mi snyan*, “Unpleasant/Harsh Sound.” The Tib. translation of the Skt. *uttarakuru* derives from a folk etymology (Skt. *nirukti*): Skt. *ku* (-*kumṣita*?) = Tib. *ngan pa* (“bad”) and Skt. *ru* (= *rava*) = Tib. *sgra* (“voice/sound”); cf. Mvy, s.v. *uttarakuruḥ*. The Skt. word, though, seems to have originated from the designation of an actual geographical location.
- n.34 The Tib. *khyad par du ’gro ba* means literally, “they achieve distinction.” For the Skt. equivalent *viśeṣagāmin*, cf. the similar phrase at SN V 370: | | *Yañca khvassa cittaṃ dīgharattaṃ saddhāparibhāvitaṃ sīla-suta-cāga-paribhāvitaṃ | | tam uddhagāmi hoti viśeṣagāmi | | | 5. Seyyathāpi Mahānāma puriso sappikumbham vā telakumbham vā gambhīram udakarahadam oḡāhetvā bhindeyya | | tatra yā assa sakkharā vā kaṭhalā vā sā adho-gāmī assa | | yañca khvassa tatra sappi vā telaṃ vā tam uddhaṃgāmī assa viśeṣagāmī | |*. Tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, 1808–9: “But his mind, which has been fortified over a long time by faith, virtue, learning, generosity, and wisdom—that goes upwards, goes to distinction. Suppose, Mahānāma, a man submerges a pot of ghee or a pot of oil in a deep pool of water and breaks it. All of its shards and fragments would sink downwards, but the ghee or oil there would rise upwards.”
- n.35 According to the Tib. The Skt. is ambiguous (pāda b: *āśaṃsanti dhanam param*). Matsumura (1989, 76) edited the manuscript reading *parāṃ* to *param*. But *parāṃ* is a possible genitive plural (see BHSG, 60, § 8.124.) which would match the Tib. translation. Matsumura’s edition means, “they hope for later riches.”
- n.36 Matsumura (1989, 76, note 3 to § [11]) gives the translation of the Chinese for this passage: “because they never accumulated positive actions, they will become low servants for others.”
- n.37 According to the Tib. The Skt. pādas cd of this verse are missing.
- n.38 According to the Tib. The pādas 8 ab are missing in the Skt. The verse presents an interesting argument for analogy (Skt. *upamāna*) as a source of

knowledge with reference to the law of karma: the law of karma is generalized so as to apply also to cases that are not apparent or directly perceptible (Skt. *parokṣa*).

- n.39 All the four main and the eight intermediate continents of the world are inhabited by humans (except for Cāmara, which is said to be inhabited by the rākṣasas); see Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 455–57.
- n.40 Cf. AN IV 396: 1. *Tīhi bhikkhave ṭhānehi Uttarakurukā manussā deve ca Tāvatiṃse adhiḡaṇhanti Jambudīpake ca manusse. Katamehi tīhi?* 2. *Amamā apariggahā niyatāyukā visesabhuno Imehi kho bhikkhave tīhi ṭhānehi Uttarakurukā manussā deve ca Tāvatiṃse adhiḡaṇhanti Jambudīpake ca ma-nusse.* “Bhikkhus, in three respects the people of Uttarakuru surpass the Tāvatiṃsa devas and the people of Jambudīpa. What three? (1) They are without selfishness and possessiveness; (2) their life span is fixed; and (3) their living conditions are exceptional. In these three respects the people of Uttarakuru surpass the Tāvatiṃsa devas and the people of Jambudīpa” (tr. Bhikkhu Bodhi 2012, 1277).
- n.41 Cf. AKBh(P) 269,24–269,25 on AK IV.116: *surūpatvaṃ yaśasvī vā | priyatā sukumārartusukhasparśāṅgatā tataḥ | | AK IV.116 | | varṇasampannaṃ dattvā surūpo bhavati | gandhasampannaṃ dattvā yaśasvī bhavati | gandhavād yaśaso dikṣu vidhāraṇāt | rasasampannaṃ dattvā priyo bhavati | rasa iva svāduḥ | sparśasampannaṃ dattvā sukumārāṅgās ca bhavati ṛtusukhasparśāni cāsyāṅgāni bhavanti yathā strīratnasya | “ ‘Whence results beauty, glory, love, tenderness (of youth), and a body with pleasant sensations, always perfectly adapted to the seasons.’ Beauty comes from giving perfect-colored objects; fame comes from giving perfect-smelling objects, since, like a fragrance, fame is carried into all directions. By giving perfect-tasting objects, one becomes loved, just as a sweet taste [is loved by all]. By giving (things) that are excellent in their tactile quality one becomes someone whose body is ever youthful and has pleasant sensations that are always perfectly adapted to the seasons [i.e., cool when it is hot and warm when it is chilly; cf. AKBh(P)(D), 743,23–25], like the jewel-like wife [of a universal monarch].”*
- n.42 According to the Tib. The word order is different in the Skt. Pāda b is missing, and pāda c is incomplete.
- n.43 According to Skt. The Tib. is unclear: “Through the gleam of a light-causing gem they are always beautified. It is [also] that which allows them to digest their food.”
- n.44 According to the Tib., which permutes the order of the Skt. pādas bc.

- n.45 According to the Tib. The Skt. speaks of the *alābu*, i.e., the bottle gourd (*Lagenaria siceraria*).
- n.46 Literally, “after harvesting them, they can be eaten without having to prepare them.” The Tib. is slightly ambiguous, however: *btso mi dgos par* can mean “not needing to cook” or perhaps “not needing to prepare,” i.e., the fruits can be eaten “as is.” (cf. Jäschke, s.v. *btso*: “purification, refining; *ser la tso tang ba* ‘to refine gold’ (which term eventually is the same as ‘to boil’).” The Skt. *apakṣalūnāṃ* is obscure (*a + prakṣalu*, “without washing”?). Lama Kunga Rinpoche favors the translation “there is no need to wash them.”
- n.47 The water with eight superior qualities is an Indian Buddhist trope. The eight qualities are cool, sweet, light, soft, clear, flavorsome, not upsetting to the stomach, and smooth in the throat.
- n.48 The Tibetan and Chinese versions insert this extra stanza (cf. Matsumura 1989, 76, n. 13, [11]).
- n.49 According to the Tib. The verb *rtse* (= Skt. verbal root *krīḍ*) can have a sexual connotation, but it can also mean just “to frolic, play.”
- n.50 Skt. *prathame yāme*: traditionally, the night is subdivided into three periods of three hours each; cf. MW, s.v. *yāma*.
- n.51 According to the Tib. The Tib. translation brings out a causal relationship between *pādas ab*. The Skt. just reads, “A mother does not recognize her son. The idea of possession and ownership does not exist.” See Skt. verse 22, *pādas ab*: *mātā puttram na jānīte nāsti teṣāṃ parigrahaḥ*.
- n.52 According to the Tib. The Skt. is different: *na śocaṃti pryair nāśaṃ*, “They do not lament the death of a loved one.”
- n.53 Dhere reads *bar ma don ni 'chi med pa*, which seems to be scribal error. We follow the readings of the other Tib. editions and the critical ed. of Matsumura here and read *bar ma dor ni 'chi med pa*.
- n.54 According to the Tib. The syntax of the Skt. (*pādas abc*) is slightly different: “After they have spent one thousand human years there, they die, but not before their time” (*āyur varṣasahasraṃ hi kṣapayitvātra mānuṣaṃ | mriyaṃte nāntareṇeti*).
- n.55 According to the Tib. The Skt. seems to suggest a reading, “Having spread and increased their glory, they will not be reborn among the devas” (*(kṛtvā) ca vipulaṃ śriyaṃ*).

- n.56 According to the Tib. The Skt., curiously, reads (verse 27c): *deveṣu nopapadyate*, “they will *not* be reborn among the devas.”
- n.57 The Skt. text has the orthographic variant *jambūdvīpa* (in the secondary *vṛddhi*-formation *jāmbūdvīpakā manuṣyā*). The Tib. phonetically transcribes this name ‘*dzam bu’i gling*; this (i.e., our) continent is named after the *jambu* tree (“rose apple”? But probably a mythical tree) that grows on it, and it is the only continent where bodhisattvas and cakravartins (universal monarchs) can be born. Cf. DPPN; Jamgön Kongtrul 2003, 112.
- n.58 The lifespan of human beings in Jambudvīpa decreases and increases according to the kalpas. A more literal translation of the Skt. and Tib. would be, “Monks, for the human beings of Jambudvīpa, there exists increase as well as decrease [of the lifespan].”
- n.59 The respective maximum lifespan depends on the current kalpa: In the first kalpa it is unlimited, in the last kalpa it is ten years (cf. AKBh on AK III.78 = Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 470). These numbers concur with the Pāli tradition; cf., e.g., *Cakkavattisīhanādasutta* (DN 26).
- n.60 According to the Tib. The Skt. stresses “the present time” (*etarhi*) by placing it in sentence-initial position.
- n.61 This is an idiomatic expression in Sanskrit Buddhist texts: *samyaksukhena parihṛyamāna* = Tib. *legs par bde bar gnas na* (cf. Avś: Speyer, I.194 = Vaidya, 88: *samyak sukkena parihriyete*); cf. also the Skt. idiom *sukha-(sparśa-)vihara*, “to be comfortable, to be at ease.”
- n.62 The Tib. omits “during a lifespan of one hundred years” (*varṣaśataṃ khalu jīvaṃ*) and reads instead “Monks, with respect to the stages of life...” (*dge slong dag ’tsho ba’i gnas skabs ni*). The term *avasthā* (or *daśā*; Tib. ‘*tsho ba’i gnas skabs*) is a technical term in Abhidharma literature denoting the different particular constellations (?) or states of the five *skandhas* within the chain of the twelve links of the formula of dependent arising (Skt. *pratītyasamutpāda*). Cf. Bronkhorst 2009, 94: “each of its twelve elements was a state (*daśā* or *avasthā*) of the five aggregates (*skandha*).” See also AKBh(P), p. 231,12–13 on AK IV,53 ab, where Vasubandhu mentions a different set of *avasthā*: five stages of the embryo and five stages of a grown-up human being: *pañca hi garbhāvasthāḥ | kalalārbudapeśīghanaprasākhāvasthāḥ | pañca jātāvasthāḥ | bālakumāravamadhyaṽṛddhāvasthāḥ*.
- n.63 The Tib. reads *stobs dang ldan pa*, rendering the Skt. *pratibhānavān*, which is very likely an error; the expected translation equivalent of *pratibhāna* would

be *spobs pa* (cf. Mvy, s.v.).

- n.64 According to the Tib. The Skt. text is corrupt here; although the meaning of the passage seems to be quite straightforward, the remaining Skt. fragment of the corresponding part of the sentence seems to have a different reading compared to the translation equivalent of the Tib. given in the Mvy: *khong du chud pa, avabodha* (see Mvy, s.v. avabodhaḥ; cf. Matsumura 1989, 78 [14]).
- n.65 According to the Skt. The Tib. reads, “In the eighth stage one is revered as an elder, and even kings show their respect” (*gnas skabs brgyad pa ni rgyal pos bkur zhing rḡan rabs su bkur ba yin no*).
- n.66 According to the Skt. The Tib. reads, “At the tenth stage one has reached the end of life and is near to death” (*gnas skabs bcu pa ni tshē'i mthar thug pa ste 'chir nye bar yin no*).
- n.67 The three seasons are a common trope in Indian Buddhist literature; cf. AKBh(P), 177,19–21 on AK III 88c–89d (= tr. Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 475). Yaśomitra, the commentator of the AKBh, makes an interesting remark about this in his commentary, *Sphuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā* (http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskrit/6_sastra/3_phil/buddh/yabhkoyu.htm): *pravacane traya eva rtavo na yathā loke ṣaḍ iti. śiśiro hi śītasāmānyād dhemanta ity uktāḥ. vasanto 'py uṣṇasāmānyād grīṣma ity uktāḥ. śarad api vṛṣṭisāmānyād* [Tib. 320.b] *varsā ity ukteti*, “In Scripture, only three seasons [are mentioned], not six as there are in the world.”
- n.68 According to the Tib., but the passage is not entirely clear. The Skt. reads *sārdham* (*bhaktāntarāyāḥ*) (Matsumura 1989: 78 [16]). The Tib. has *ma gtogs par*, which would rather correspond to Skt. *vinā*. Either way, the meaning here is *all the meals*, i.e., inclusive and/or exclusive of the times when one can or does not eat (i.e., the times in between meals as well as, and perhaps inclusive of, in-between meals). The Skt., on the other hand, as given above, may rather translate to “including that which one eats in between main meals.”
- n.69 According to the Tib., which is quite clear: *phongs pa byung nas*, “having become poor/when impoverished”; the Skt. is more ambiguous with the adjective *kṛcchraprātaḥ*, literally “being filled with difficulty (or pain, calamity, danger).”
- n.70 According to the Tib. (*bsnyungs ba byas te ma zos pa*). The Skt. manuscript is defective here. Twelve *akṣaras* are missing, along with a missing word or compound ending in *-pano: apatarpaṇam* (“fasting during illness”?). Cf. Negi,

s.v. *bsnyung ba*. *bsnyung gnas* is a well-known fasting practice in Tibetan Buddhism centering on a manifestation of Avalokiteśvara.

- n.71 For another account of the lifespans of beings in the desire realm, see AKBh on AK III. pp.78–85 (English tr. Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 470–74).
- n.72 Here and throughout according to the Tib. (*de ni sems can dmyal ba chen po yang sos kyi nyin zhag gcig go*). The Skt. translates literally to “This is one day and night in the great hell Revival.”
- n.73 This hell derives its name from the fact that the beings reborn there must spend their time tied to one another and beating and killing each other. They are subsequently revived by a cold wind and then start all over again (see Guenther 1986, 57).
- n.74 For detailed descriptions of the hells, explanations of their names, and the lifespan of beings in Gampopa’s *dwags po thar rgyan*, see Guenther 1986, 57–61.
- n.75 From Gampopa we learn that in this hell, beings wake up and find lines drawn with a black thread all over their bodies, which mark the places where flaming axes and saws will cut them into pieces (cf. Guenther 1986, 57).
- n.76 According to the Skt., which has the arithmetically correct number. The Tib. is unclear: *lo bye ba phrag sa ya nyis ’bum dgu khri drug stong rtsa cu gnyis*. The number of years mentioned in Gampopa’s *dwags po thar rgyan* (cf. Guenther 1986, p. 59) is identical with the Skt.: “twelve times one hundred thousand ten million years, and ninety-six thousand times ten million (= 12,960,000,000,000) years.”
- n.77 The diction has changed in the Tib.: *dus ma yin par ’chi ba ni yod do*. The Skt. is the same as in the other paragraphs (*asty antareṇa kālakriyā*). According to Negi (Negi 2000, vol. 6, 2230, column II, s.v. *dus ma yin pa’i ’chi ba*), one would rather expect Skt. *akāla-maraṇa*.
- n.78 The Skt. passive past participle *drugdha* has active meaning (lexicalized), cf. pw, s.v. *druh*.
- n.79 In other words, people who openly neglect their religious duties and practice. The Skt. (pāda a) of this verse is defective. Matsumura (1998, 80 [23]) reads as the first word of the defective line *adhura* (= Tib. *mi brtson pa?*). Cf. BHSD, s.v. *dhura*: “burden,” esp. religious obligation or duty (corresponds to the Pāli *gantha* (“study of texts”), *vipassanā* (“reflection”), *saddhā* (“faith”), *sīla* (“moral discipline”), and *paññā* (“knowledge”)).

- n.80 According to the Tib. The Skt. (pāda d) is unclear (+*cakā nyatikā mṛṣāḥ*).
- n.81 The Skt. contains the arithmetically correct number. The Tib., however, deviates (*lo bye ba phrag bcu bzhi dang* | *lo khri bzhi stong* = ?).
- n.82 See Guenther 1986, 57. The beings reborn there are pressed between mountains or iron plates, and their crushed bodies are revived again only to experience the same kind of suffering again until their time there is over.
- n.83 According to the Skt., which has the arithmetically correct number. The Tib. deviates (*lo bye ba phrag sum 'bum drug khri brgyad stong rtsa gcig* = ?). See Guenther 1986, 59: "this is ten million times ten million years and three hundred and sixty-eight thousand times ten million years." Konchog Gyaltzen's translation of Gampopa (1998, 99) has: "The life span in the Crushing hell is 2,000 years, which is similar to that of the Free-of-Combat devas. In human terms, this is equal to 103,680,000,000,000 years."
- n.84 Threefold here means the actions carried out with body, speech, and mind.
- n.85 According to the Tib.
- n.86 According to the Tib. (*ba lang*, "cow, ox") The Skt. manuscript has a lacuna here. Matsumura suggests reading *balākān* ("crane," *balāka*). Cf. MW, s.v. *balāka*: "a kind of crane (the flesh of which is eaten)."
- n.87 According to the Tib. (*bya gag*), which may mean either waterfowl (e.g., ducks) or chickens or other kinds of (wild) birds hunted as game. The Skt. has *kuk[k]uṭa* ("chicken"). The Mvy lists Skt. *vakaḥ*, "heron, crane" (cf. MW), as the standard translation equivalent for *bya gag*.
- n.88 See Guenther 1986, 58: "so named, because the inhabitants there utter terrifying cries."
- n.89 This is the arithmetically correct number according to the Skt. if we interpret the word *nayuta* as "one million" (= *prayuta*?): *tad bhavati māṇuṣikayā gaṇanayā aṣṭau varṣakoṭīna(yutāny ekona)ttrimśac ca varṣakoṭīśatasahasrāṇi [catuścatvāriṃ]śac ca varṣakoṭīśahasrāṇy āyusaḥ pramāṇam* (Matsumura 1989, 95, [28]). The Tib. seems to have listed the numbers of the numerical expression in a different order: *lo bye ba phrag sa ya gnyis dang* | *bye ba phrag dgu 'bum bzhi khri bzhi stong dang* | *bye ba phrag brgyad* (= 82.944 x 10¹⁰ or 29,440,080,000,000 years?). Cf. *dwags po thar rgyan*, 43: *mi lo ltar na* | *bye ba phrag bye ba brgyad dang* | *bye ba phrag lnga 'bum bzhi dang* | *bye ba phrag sa ya lnga bzhi khri nyis stong yod do*, which seems to suggest yet another number. See, however, Guenther's tr. (Guenther 1986, 59): "eight million times ten million years and two million

times ten million years and nine hundred and forty-four thousand times ten million years.” Cf. also the arithmetically correct number in Konchog Gyaltzen’s translation of the *dwags po thar rgyan* (Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 99): “829,440,000,000,000 years.”

- n.90 According to the Skt. The Tib. is unclear (*gzhal lugs* [L *glugs*] *g.yo dang sgyu* [L *sgyur*] *byed mi*). The Skt. words *tūṭaka* and *vaṭika* in pāda d are problematic. *Vaṭika* seems to be just a variant spelling for *vātika*, for which see MW: “m. a man of mere words, noisy talker, flatterer; m. a juggler or conjurer.” The word *tūṭaka* seems to be a misspelling of the Skt. *kūṭaka*, for which the PED gives the following meanings: “a trap, a snare; fig. falsehood, deceit,” etc., and MW: “mfn. false, untrue, deceitful [...]; n. counterfeited objects (of a merchant).” The Skt. in pāda c reads *na datto bhairavaṃ nādaṃ*, which makes sense in this context. The Tib. translation does not seem to have picked up the negation (Skt. *na*) and reads, “And who use their voice to terrify others” (*’jigs su rung ba’i sgra ’byin cing*).
- n.91 The comparative list of the *dpe bsdur ma* Kangyur edition gives two variant readings here: Yongle has *gzhan la* for *gzhal* (*lugs?*), and Choné, too, according to Matsumura’s critical edition, reads *gzhan*. We follow Yongle here.
- n.92 See also Guenther 1986, 58; Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 99.
- n.93 According to the Skt., which has the arithmetically correct number. The Tib. reads *bye ba phrag sa ya gsum dang bye ba phrag lnga ’bum khri nyis stong drug cu rtsa drug* ($\neq 663.552 \times 1010$). See also Konchog Gyaltzen (1998, 99): “6,635,520,000,000,000 years.”
- n.94 According to the Skt. The Tib. reads just “Wailing” (*ngu ’bod*).
- n.95 According to the Tib. The Skt. reads *viśvāsaghātaka* (“traitor”), which is paraphrased in the Tib. translation.
- n.96 According to the Tib. (*bskor ba’i khyim gyi nang chud nas*). The Skt. of this pāda is defective. Matsumura’s reading is unclear (*dahyante nta* [xx] *ruddhā*); See Matsumura 1989, 82, [32].
- n.97 The restored Skt. text (Matsumura 1989, 82) reads *ṣo[ḍaśa varṣa]śatāni*, “one thousand six hundred years.”
- n.98 See also AKBh on AK III.71a and b, tr. Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 466: “There are beings whose objects of desire are created by others but who themselves dispose of these objects created by others. These are the Paranirmitavaśavartins.”

- n.99 See Guenther 1986, 58; Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 99, for descriptions of this hell.
- n.100 According to the Skt., which has the arithmetically correct number. The Tib. reads *lo bye ba sa ya phrag brgyad dang | bzhi 'bum dang | lo bye ba phrag khri drug stong lnga brgya sum cu yod de* (= 80,165,300,400,000?).
- n.101 According to the Tib. (*rtag tu*). This is not reflected in the Skt. The Skt. verse additionally contains *śiṣṭais* (a translation equivalent is missing in the Tib.): *śramaṇān brāhmaṇān sādḥūn mātaraṃ pitaraṃ tathā | saṃtāpayati yo śiṣṭais tapane sa prapadyate*, “He who vexes the good ascetics and brahmins or his parents with leftover food (*śiṣṭa*?) will fall into [the great hell] Heat.”
- n.102 Our reading here follows the Degé edition (which reads *gdung*, “to torment, to scorch”) against the readings of Yongle, Lithang, Narthang, and Choné (Kangxi reads *rdud*), which all read *rdung*, “to strike, hit” (the Skt. equivalent for that would be *kuṭṭayati*, cf. Mvy, s.v.). The Tib. *gdung byed pa* corresponds roughly to the Skt. *saṃtāpayati* (one would perhaps expect *yongs su gdung bar byed pa*), which reflects the older name (Tib. *gdung*) of the hell Heat (Skt. *tapana*), which in later Tibetan translations is rendered *tsha ba*. See also the next verse, where we translated *gdung byed ba* as “inflicts pain.”
- n.103 The Tib. reads *dge slong* (usually = *bhikṣu / bhikṣuka*; cf. Negi, s.v. *dge slong*). The Skt., however, has *śramaṇa*, which usually designates, together with *brāhmaṇas*, non-Buddhist practitioners (however, see also Beckwith 2015, ch. 2). The Mvy lists *dge sbyong* as possible translation equivalent for *śramaṇa*. Cf. also [1.79](#).
- n.104 Here our translation follows the edition of Yongle and Kangxi instead of Degé, which reads *las*.
- n.105 Here starts an explanation of the so-called cold hells. According to Vasubandhu, the Skt. names of the cold hells indicate either the shape of the beings reborn in a particular hell or the noise that the denizens of a particular hell make (e.g., Skt. *Hell of Chattering Teeth*; see Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 459 and 473 on the lifespan in *arbuda*). According to Gampopa’s *dwags po thar rgyan*, the names indicate the kind of physical torment one experiences in them, e.g., in Blistering Hell (Skt. *arbuda*, Tib. *chu bur can*), blisters are said to appear on the skin and burst open due to the intense cold in this hell. Other names, like in Vasubandhu’s explanation, are clearly onomatopoeic (e.g., the Hell of Lamentation, Skt. *hahava*, Tib. *kyi hud zer ba* or Skt. *huhuva*, Tib. *a chu zer ba*). See Guenther 1986, 60–62; Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 101–3. For another version of this story including the concluding verses, see *The Hundred Deeds*, Toh 340,

[3.366 \(https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-073-001.html#UT22084-073-001-1945\)](https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-073-001.html#UT22084-073-001-1945)–[3.374 \(https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-073-001.html#UT22084-073-001-1956\)](https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-073-001.html#UT22084-073-001-1956).

- n.106 Syntax according to the Tib.
- n.107 The Tib. reads literally, “a *khal bcu tshad nyi shu pa* that fits *khal bcu tshad nyi shu* Kosalan sesame seeds.” It is not known what exactly this expression means, but it is clearly referring to some kind of container with fixed measurements. The equivalent in the Skt. text seems to be the word *vāha*, which here seems to refer to some sort of measuring cup with the dimension of one *khārī* (see the following notes [n.108](#) and [n.109](#)).
- n.108 The Tib. *khal* (Skt. *khārī*) is a Tibetan measure of capacity for commodities, especially barley, etc. (1 *khal* = 20 *bre*). According to Jäschke 1977, this constitutes “a bushel.” See also Goldstein 2001, s.v.: “a standard Tib. measure of volume, equal to about thirty pounds of barley.” According to MW, however, the ancient Indian measure of capacity, one *khārī*, equals 3 bushels, i.e., 4 pecks (= 2,150.42 cubic inches or 35.24 liters according to the American system, and equal to 2,219.36 cubic inches or 36.37 liters in the British Imperial System; see American Heritage Dictionary, s.v. bushel). See, however, Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 539, note 474: “Tib. *khal* = *khārī*”? and Guenther 1986: p. 61: “a sesame store containing eighty bushels.” According to Negi, the Skt. equivalent of Tib. *khal brgyad bcu pa* is *viṃśatikhārīka*, which indicates that eighty *khal* in the Tib. system corresponds to twenty *khārī* of the Indian measurement system (see Negi 1993, vol. 1, 333). However, the Tib. translation of the Āps has *khal bcu tshad nyi shu* (“twenty of the 10-*khal* measure” or “twenty ten-bushel vessels”; see *The Hundred Deeds*, Toh 340, 3.372 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-073-001.html#UT22084-073-001-1954>)). Despite the uncertainties in both the Tib. and the Skt. readings (this passage has been restored by Matsumura based on parallel versions in other texts; see Matsumura 1989, 82 [37], note 1), we are using the Sanskrit terms in our translation. The uncertainties involved in determining the exact modern Western equivalents of these measurements seems even greater.
- n.109 To get an idea of the dimensions spoken of here, the reader may be referred to Thomas 1874, 26–28: “2,867,200 *ratis* = 1,638,400 grains = 20 *dronas* = 1 ¼ *khārīs* = 1 *kumbha* 17,920.” See also Crook & Osmaston 1994, 123–28 (the table on p. 124 states for contemporary Ladakh: 20 *bre* [= 1 *khal*] = 12–14 liters, 9–10 kg of barley).

- n.110 The Tibetan says literally, “Just as are twenty Blistering Hells, so is one Bursting Blister Hell.” The English translations for the *hahava* and *huhuwa* hells are Rotman’s (Rotman 2008, 378). For alternative English translations (based on the Tibetan) of the other cold hells, cf. Könchok Gyaltzen 1998, 100; see also Guenther 1986, 60–62 (which also contains a translation of our passage here relating the simile of the emptying of the sesame store). For other versions of the simile, see AKBh(P) on AK III, 84, English tr. Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 459, 473; *The Hundred Deeds*, Toh 340, 3.372 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-073-001.html#UT22084-073-001-1954>); Sn III.10 (*Kokāliyasutta*).
- n.111 Almost verbatim parallels of this paragraph are found in AKBh(P) 175, pp.19–24 = SN I 152 = AN V 173. For further references to the Chinese canon, see Matsumura 1989, 83, notes on [37], [38].
- n.112 We follow Narthang *lhas byin*, Skt. *Devadatta*.
- n.113 For Kokālika, cf. DPPN, s.v.
- n.114 According to the Tib. The Skt. reads literally, “because he has defiled his mind in the presence of the monks Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana (*śāriputtra-maudgalyāyanayor bhikṣor antike cittam pradūṣya*).
- n.115 See the *Kokālikasutta* for his story, Sn III.10, especially vv. 657–78 (Engl. = Norman 2001, pp. 85–87); AN V 171–74 and II 3; SN I 149ff; Netti (<http://what-buddha-said.net/library/DPPN/abbreviations.htm#Netti>).132.
- n.116 “With his own body” here means without taking on a new form in the intermediate state between death and rebirth (Tib. *bar ma do*, Skt. *antarābhava*) or new *skandhas* after being reborn. The AKBh explains, “Actions very grave (by intention and in scope) and complete (that is, “accumulated,” iv.12) ripen before death itself. Mara then felt a retribution in this life before feeling a retribution in hell. The text thus means that Mara was enveloped, while still alive, by the fires of hell” (Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 388).
- n.117 Translation according to the Skt. unless noted otherwise. Other versions of the verses and the foregoing prose portion can also be found in the Pāli *Kokāliyasutta*, Sn III.10, vv. 657–61 (prose text and vv. 657–60 = SN I 152–54 (cf. AN V 170–74), and in the Uv VIII.2–6; Sn verses 661–62 = Dhṛp. 306, one hundred twenty-five; as well as in the *Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna*, Roy 1971, 314 (English tr. Rajapatirana 1974, 120).
- n.118 According to the Tib. The (Buddhist Hybrid) Skt. version of this verse is a pun on the Sanskrit word *kali* that is lost in the Tibetan translation. The

Tibetan translators chose to render *kali* as *sdig pa*, literally, “sin.” The word *kali* is employed here twice in its two senses: “the losing throw at dice,” and “calamity” or “evil” (see Norman 2001, 292, note to Sn verse 659). The Skt. (in Matsumura’s restored version of the verse) means, “A small measure indeed is that unlucky throw of the dice, through which one loses one’s own wealth. That is a greater calamity, which consists in getting angry toward the Sugata (*alpamāttro hy ayaṃ kalir / ya ihāksaiḥ svadhanaṃ parājayet / ayam attra mahattaraḥ kalir / yaḥ sugateṣu manaḥ pradūṣyet // 44 //* See Matsumura 1986, 84).

- n.119 According to the Skt. and the Pāli. Cf. the parallel verses in the Sn (v. 660) and the *Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna* (Roy 1971, 313–14). The Skt. words *arbuda* and *nirarbuda* / *nyarbuda* here are numerals (= ten million and one hundred million, respectively; cf. MW and pw). See also Norman’s comment on this verse (Norman 2001, 292): “The names are not names of hells, but of numerals.” The number here expressed may be ten trillion thirty-six (and five?) million (10,000,036,000,000). But the numerals are ambiguous. For a parallel passage containing different numbers, see *The Hundred Deeds* (Toh 340), 3.364 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-073-001.html#UT22084-073-001-1942>). The Tib. of pādas cd reads *stong phrag brgyar ni chu bur rdol nas su | chu bur can du sum cu rtsa drug go*. The Tib. translators seem to have interpreted *chu bur rdol* and *chu bur can* as designating the two cold hells: “(Those who abuse a noble being will go to hell.) After one hundred thousand [years? lives?] in the Bursting Blister Hell, they [will go] to the Blistering Hell for thirty-six [years? lives?].” However, the Tib. does not indicate a time unit (years? lives?). It is likely that the Tibetan translators were unfamiliar with the use of Skt. *arbuda* and *nirarbuda* as numerals. Rajapatirana seems to have taken the parallel passage in *Suvarṇavarṇāvadāna* as expressing the number of *arbuda* and *nirarbuda* hells, which is likely wrong (Rajapatirana 1974, 120): “For they are a hundred thousand Nirarbudas, and thirty-six and five Arbudas, to which hells he who blames an Ārya goes.”
- n.120 According to the Tib.: *sdig pa’i sems kyis bden par mi smra ba | | bdag nyid brlag cing dmyal bar ’phen par byed | |*. The Skt. reads *asatābhivadanti (pā)[pa]citta | narakān ātmavadhāya varddhayant(e)*, “Those who intend evil speak untruth. [Thus] they perpetuate hell and work for their own demise.” Matsumura compares a parallel verse in the Uv and notes its greater similarity to the Skt. Āps (see Matsumura 1989, 85, n. 21).
- n.121 Guenther 1986, 58: “(vii) Rab.tu tsha.ba (Pratāpana, Intense Heating Hell) is so called, because beings there are tormented in a very special way. When they have been burnt with molten metal so that no skin is left and while fire flames from the nine openings of the body, they are pierced through with

three-spiked weapons from the anus and the soles of the feet to the head and shoulders: Some are boiled in a / Burning stream of molten bronze, / Others are impaled / On red-hot thorny iron stakes.” See also Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 98.

- n.122 Guenther 1986, 58, 59: “(viii) The torture of the denizens of the mNar.med (Avīci) hell consists in being thrust into huge iron kettles filled with molten (32a) bronze or copper from vast cauldrons and then being boiled over an unbearably hot fire. As has been written: Some are cast into iron kettles / Head down like the ingredients of rice soup. / Because of the uninterrupted pain this hell is called mNar.med (Avīci).” See also Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 98.
- n.123 We here read with Narthang and Lhasa: *mthun pa*. Cf. Mvy, s.v. samagraḥ, which is also the attested reading in our Skt. text.
- n.124 Devadatta’s intention was to kill the Buddha. The story of how Devadatta schemed to kill the Buddha in order to inherit his leadership of the Saṅgha is relayed in several Buddhist texts (for the Theravāda tradition see the entry on Devadatta in DPPN).
- n.125 According to the Tib. (*dge slong ma dgra bcom pa bsad pas*). The Skt. reads *bhiksuniṃ vārhantiṃ ghātayitvā*, “having slain a nun or an arhantī.” No such incident is mentioned in the extant Pāli canonical accounts about Devadatta. Neither the Skt. text nor the Tib. translation of the Āps mentions the name Utpalavarṇā. But this incident, the beating of the bhikkhunī and arhantī Utpalavarṇā by Devadatta, is well known from the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, a comparatively late Vinaya; see Lamotte 1988, 657–59. On Devadatta and his murder of the nun Utpalavarṇā in connection with the “sins of immediate retribution” (*ānantaryakarma*), see Silk 2009, 236, n. 6. For a summary of the episode itself in the *Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, see Panglung 1981, 123.
- n.126 Almost identical to the Āps verses 49–51 are the verses Uv VIII.7–9; the last line of verse 49 is missing in the Skt. of Uv. Verses similar to Āps 49 and 50 can be found in the different extant versions of the Dhammapada (Patna, Gandhārī); for references cf. Matsumura 1989, 85, note [44].
- n.127 *Bambusa bambos* or *Bambusa arundinacea*. Translated according to the Tib. The Skt. reads (Matsumura 1989, 85 [44]): *yaḥ [śā]sanam āryāṇāṃ arhatāṃ dharmajīvināṃ | pratikrośati durmedhā dṛṣṭiṃ niśṛtya pāpikāṃ | phalaṃ kaṅṭhakaveṇur vā [phalat]y [ātmavadhāya saḥ | | 49 | |*, “He who, having resorted to evil views, scorns the teachings of the noble ones who live by the Dharma and are worthy of respect, cultivates the fruit that leads to his own

destruction, like the fruit of the bamboo. (Cf. the variant readings: Dhṛ 164: *phalāni kaṭṭhakasseva*; GDhp 258 *phalāni kaḍakasseva*; and PDhp 316 *phalāni kaṇṭakasseva*, given in Matsumura 1989, 85, note on [44].) The bamboo plant is said to blossom and carry fruit very rarely, at large intervals. But when it does bear fruit, the whole plant or forest dies immediately thereafter. This is a well-known trope in Sanskrit Buddhist literature.

- n.128 According to the Skt. The Tib. made “those who live by the teaching of the noble ones” into the object of contempt instead of the teaching itself (*‘phags pa rnams kyis bstan pa yi | chos kyis ‘os par ‘tsho rnams la*).
- n.129 The Skt. (Matsumura 1989, 85) reads *saced muñcet pratimuñced mu(ñ)camāno hi vadhyate | na tām āryā vimuñcanti bālā muñcanti pāpikān | | 5 | |*. The Tib. translation seems to have taken the different Skt. uses of the verbal root *muc* (“to liberate,” “to emit words”), in a different sense (cf. Matsumura 1989, 89: *gal te smra na dge ba smra’i | sdig pa smras na rlag par ‘gyur*). We have followed the first two lines of another version of this verse found in Uv (Tib. and Skt.) that makes better sense; see Bernhard 1965: *na ca mukte pramuñcet tām muñcamāno hi bādhyate | naiṣam āryāḥ pramuñcanti muktā bālair hi pāpikā | | 8.9 [189], Tib.: byis pa sdig can smra byed pa | | smra ba’i tsho na ‘ching ‘gyur la | | gal te smra na gzhan spong ba | | de dag ‘phags pa mi gsung ngo | |*.
- n.130 DPPN, s.v. brahmaloka: “The term Brahmakāyikā-devā seems to be used as a class name for all the inhabitants of the Brahma-realms.” [AN I 210: *Kathaṇ ca Visākhe upakkilīṭṭhassa cittassa upakkamena pariyodapanā hoti? Idha Visākhe ariyasāvako devatānussarati—santi devā Cātummahārājikā, santi devā Tāvatiṃsā, santi devā Yāmā, santi devā Tusitā, santi devā Nimmānaratino, santi devā Paranimitavasavattino, santi devā Brahmakāyikā, santi devā tatuttariṃ.*] In our text here, however, the *brahmakāyikā devāḥ* correspond to the *brahmaparisajjā devā* in the Theravāda canon instead of being a collective term. In the following, translations of the names of devas other than our own are stated in the notes; we have consulted Walshe 1995, 39; Samtani 2002, pp. 98–99; and Gethin 1998, 116.
- n.131 According to the Tib. The Skt. reads *kalpa āyusaḥ pramāṇam*, “one eon,” which is the same as in the AKBh(P) on AK III.80; cf. AKBh(D), pp. 532ff. The Pāli scholastic tradition presents yet different numbers for the lifespans of the three Brahma-devas (cf. Gethin 1998, 117): *brahma-pārisajjā*: “ $\frac{1}{3}$ aeon; *brahma-purohitā* $\frac{1}{2}$ aeon; *mahā-brahmā* 1 aeon.”
- n.132 According to the Tib. The Skt. reads *addhyardhakalpa*, “one and a half (elsewhere this is numeric) eons.”

- n.133 Walshe: “Devas of Streaming Radiance”; Samtani: they are so called “because they flash radiance in all directions, illuminating all locations.”
- n.134 Walshe: “Gods of Limited Glory”; Samtani: “devas of limited auspiciousness.”
- n.135 Walshe: “Gods of Unbounded Glory”; Samtani: “their auspiciousness is unlimited.”
- n.136 Walshe: “Gods of Refulgent Glory”; Samtani: “[These devas are] wholly auspicious”; Gethin: “Complete Beauty.”
- n.137 This class of devas has no equivalent in the Pāli sources. Instead, the list of the Theravāda school has *Vehapphalā devā* following on the *Śubhakṛtsnā devā* (Pāli *Subhakiṇṇā devā*; Walshe: “Devas of Refulgent Glory”; Gethin: “Complete Beauty”). Samtani: “The devas [float] like clouds, never in contact with the earth. Hence they are Anabhrakā devas, the Cloudless Heaven devas.”
- n.138 No Pāli equivalent. Samtani: “Gods of virtuous birth who take birth from imperturbable (*āniñjya*) karma. Their birth (*prasava*) is due to merit.” Cf. also Samtani 2002, 228, note 64.
- n.139 Pāli *Vehapphalā devā* (Walshe: “Very Fruitful devas”; Gethin: “Heaven of Great Reward”). Samtani: “Gods destined to take birth in an ordinary place [...], who nonetheless obtain the great and best reward.”
- n.140 According to the Tib. The Skt. has two separate paragraphs for the two categories, the *asaṃjñā-satvāḥ* and the *avṛhā devāḥ* (Matsumura 1989, 86, nos. [57] and [58] respectively) and gives different lifespans for each: five hundred and one thousand eons, respectively. The Skt. reads in English translation, “Precisely that—i.e., five hundred eons—is also the lifespan of the Insentient Beings. Premature death does occur. The lifespan of the devas of the Unlofty Heaven is one thousand years. Premature death does occur.” According to Matsumura (1989, 86, n. on [57]) the Chinese translation confirms the Sanskrit version.
- n.141 According to the Tib. The *asaṃjñāsatvā* are not listed in the Arv (Samtani 2002; Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2021 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh317.html>)). For *avṛhā devāḥ*, cf. Samtani: “not great” (for a more detailed description see Samtani 2002, 99: from this stage upward to Akaniṣṭha there are five Pure Abodes). For the term *asaṃjñāsatvā*—and the somewhat unsatisfactory translation “Unconscious beings”—see the discussion in the AKBh: Pruden 1988–90, vol. 1, 221–23.

- n.142 Walshe's translation; Samtani: "The devas who acquire through special samādhī immunity from the searing heat of the defilements are called Atapā devas."
- n.143 Walshe: "The Beautiful (or Clearly Visible) devas (Pāli *sudassā devā*). Gethin: "Lovely"; Samtani: "Those who through pure vision see rightly are [called] Sudṛśa devas." The Tib. translation inverts these two levels of the Pure Abodes: according to Mvy (s.v. sudarśanāḥ), the Tib. word that here seems to render Skt. *sudṛśa* (= *shin tu mthong ba* in Āps) usually corresponds to Skt. *sudarśana*, while the Tib. *gya nom snang gi lha rnams* usually renders the Skt. *sudṛśā devāḥ*. The *Arv* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh317.html>) gives the order as *sudṛśa* > *sudarśana* (which corresponds to the Skt. ed. of the Āps) and the Pāli, too, has first *sudassā* and next *sudassī* (see Walshe 1995, 39).
- n.144 Walshe: "Clear-Sighted devas" (Pāli: *Sudassī devā*). Samtani: "Gods in this realm are delightful in appearance."
- n.145 Walshe's translation (Pāli: *akaniṭṭhā devā*). Samtani: "There being no higher stage than this, the devas of this realm, being the eldest, are called the Akaniṣṭhā."
- n.146 The Skt. manuscript breaks off after *ākā]śānaṃtyāyatanopagānāṃ*. Matsumura provides his restoration of the Skt. text, based on the Tib. translation and the terminology found in Mvy 3107–13, in the notes on paragraph [63].
- n.147 Tib. *srid pa'i 'byung bas chog shes par gyis shig*. Literally, "Be content with the manifestation of existence." However, the meaning cannot be contentment here. The Buddha's command is rather meant in the sense, "do not perpetuate saṃsāra any further."
- n.148 The Tibetan here may refer to a technical unit of time (Tib. *de'i skad cig*, Skt. *tatkṣaṇa*; in the order of magnitude of seconds) according to the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma (cf. Rospatt 1995, 99).
- n.149 "In the Dharma" is added here for clarification.

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.

g.1 Abhidharma

chos mngon pa

ཚུལ་མཐོན་པ།

abhidharma

The Buddha's teachings regarding subjects such as wisdom, psychology, metaphysics, and cosmology.

g.2 Anāthapiṇḍada

mgon med zas sbyin

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན།

anāthapiṇḍada

A wealthy merchant of Śrāvastī who became an early follower of the Buddha and an important donor; the spelling in Pali texts is Anāthapiṇḍika.

g.3 arbuda

chu bur can

ཚུབུར་ཅན།

arbuda

A word for a high number (ten million). Also translated as “Blistering Hell” when it designates one of the eight cold hells. See also [n.119](#).

g.4 arhantī

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhantī

In Sanskrit, *arhat* is the masculine form, and *arhantī* is the feminine form of the word; the Tibetan translation of the *Āyuhṣparyantasūtra* does not distinguish a masculine and a feminine form. It refers to one who has achieved the fourth and final level of attainment on the śrāvaka path, and who has attained liberation with the cessation of all mental afflictions. The Sanskrit literally means “worthy one.” The Tibetan interpretation explains the Middle Indic form *arahat* as *ari-hata*, “someone who has killed his foes (i.e., mental afflictions).”

g.5 arhat

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat

One who has achieved the fourth and final level of attainment on the śrāvaka path, and who has attained liberation with the cessation of all mental afflictions. The Skt. means literally “worthy one.” The Tibetan interpretation explains the Middle Indic form *arahat* as *ari-hata*, “someone who has killed his foes (i.e., mental afflictions).”

g.6 attainment of the meditative state without consciousness

'du shes med pa'i snyoms par 'jug pa

འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་པའི་སྣོམ་པར་འཇུག་པ།

asaṃjñāsamāpatti · asaṃjñīsamāpatti

An ordinary or worldly form of the fourth meditative absorption. It is variously interpreted as a positive attainment or a counterfeit state of liberation (see Buswell and Lopez 2014, 67).

g.7 Avaragodānīya

nub kyi ba lang spyod

ནུབ་ཀྱི་བ་ལང་སྟོད།

avaragodānīya

The western continent according to Buddhist cosmology. See also [n.32](#).

g.8 Bandé Paltsek

ban de dpal brtsegs

བན་དེ་དཔལ་བརྟེན།

—

A Tibetan translator (fl. late eighth–early ninth centuries).

g.9 bhagavān

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān

The Sanskrit word *bhaga* means, among other things, “good fortune,” “happiness,” “prosperity,” and “excellence.” The suffix *-vat/vant* indicates possession. Thus the term *bhagavān* (masculine singular nominative form) means “blessed one” or “one endowed with fortune.” The three syllables of the Tibetan translation mean that a buddha has overcome or conquered (*bcom*), is endowed [with qualities] (*ldan*), and has gone beyond [saṃsāra and nirvāṇa] (*'das*).

g.10 Black Thread

thig nag

ཐིག་ནག

kālasūtra

Name of one of the great hells; see also [n.75](#).

g.11 Blistering Hell

chu bur can

ཚུབུར་ཅན།

arbuda

Name of one of the eight cold hells. Its inhabitants are tormented by a cold wind that causes their bodies to be covered in sores. The Skt. *arbuda* in other contexts may refer to a number; see [n.119](#).

g.12 Bursting Blister Hell

chu bur rdol

ཚུབུར་རྗོལ།

nirarbuda

Name of one of the eight cold hells. Its inhabitants are tormented by a cold wind that causes their bodies to be covered in sores that burst open. The Skt. *nirarbuda* in other contexts may refer to a number; see also [n.119](#).

g.13 Cloudless Heaven

sprin med

སྤྲིན་མེད།

anabhraka

The tenth of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the third or, according to the Mvy, fourth meditative absorption. See also [n.137](#).

g.14 Cold Whimpering Hell

a cu zer

ཨ་ཅུ་ཟེར།

huhuva

Name of one of the eight cold hells. It is named for the sounds its inhabitants make while enduring unthinkable cold.

g.15 Crushing

bsdus 'joms · bsdus gzhom

བསྐྱུས་འཛོམས། · བསྐྱུས་གཙོམ།

saṃghāta

Name of one of the great hells; see also [n.82](#).

g.16 desire realm

*'dod pa'i kham*s

འདོད་པའི་ཁམས།

kāmadhātu · kāmaloḥka

In Buddhist cosmology, our sphere of existence where beings are driven primarily by the urge for sense gratification and attachment to material substance. It is one of the three basic divisions of the realms of existence that constitute saṃsāra. The other two are the form realm and the formless realm. See Gethin 1998, 116–18.

g.17 Devadatta

lha sbyin · lhas byin

ལྷ་སྤྱིན། · ལྷས་བྱིན།

devadatta

The historical Buddha’s cousin, and brother of Ānanda. He became notorious through his schemes to become the Buddha’s successor—to the point of attempting to kill the Buddha—and through the splitting of the Saṅgha.

g.18 eon

bskal pa

བསྐྱལ་པ།

kalpa

According to Buddhist cosmology it designates the timespan in which an entire universe evolves and dissolves again, thus completing a cosmic cycle. For the different kinds of kalpas according to Abhidharma teachings, see AKBh on AK III.89d–93 (for English tr., see Pruden 1988–90, vol. 2, 475–81).

g.19 evil state

ngan song

ངན་སོང།

apāya

A synonym of “unfortunate rebirth-destiny.”

g.20 existence

srid pa

སྲིད་པ།

bhava

Here, *srid pa* denotes the whole of existence, i.e., the five rebirth-destinies or the three worlds—all the possible kinds and places of karmic rebirth. It is also the tenth of the twelve links of dependent origination (often translated as “becoming”).

g.21 five rebirth-destinies

'gro ba lnga

འགྲོ་བ་ལྔ།

pañcagati

A shorter form of the six classes of beings, these are (1) hell beings, (2) pretas, (3) animals, (4) human beings, and (5) devas. The fifth category is divided into devas and demigods when six realms are enumerated.

g.22 form realm

gzugs kyi khams

གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ཁམས།

rūpadhātu · rūpaloka

In Buddhist cosmology, the sphere of existence one level more subtle than our own (the desire realm), where beings, though subtly embodied, are not driven primarily by the urge for sense gratification. It is one of the three basic divisions of the realms of existence that constitute saṃsāra. The other two are the desire realm and the formless realm. See Gethin 1998, 116–18.

g.23 formless realm

gzugs med kyi khams

གཟུགས་མེད་ཀྱི་ཁམས།

ārūpyadhātu · arūpadhātu · arūpaloka

In Buddhist cosmology, the sphere of existence two levels more subtle than our own (the desire realm), where beings are no longer physically embodied, and thus not subject to the sufferings that physical embodiment brings. It is one of the three basic divisions of the realms of existence that constitute saṃsāra. The other two are the desire realm and the form realm. See Gethin 1998, 116–18.

g.24 Gewé Pal

dge ba'i dpal

དགེ་བའི་དཔལ།

—

A Tibetan translator.

g.25 great hell

dmyal ba chen po

དམྱལ་བ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahānaraka

The great hells are also often called *hot hells* in secondary literature because beings there suffer from heat and being burned. They are Wailing, Loud Wailing, Black Thread, Crushing, Revival, Heat, Intense Heat, and Incessant Torture. Within in the Kangyur, one elaborate description of the eight hells is found in *The Application of Mindfulness of the Sacred Dharma* (Toh 287), 2.294–2.1280.

g.26 Great Splitting Open Like a Lotus Hell

pad ma ltar gas chen po

པད་མ་ལྷ་ར་གས་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāpadma

Name of one of the eight cold hells. The extreme cold of this hell turns the skin of its denizens blue, red, and then extremely red until they crack apart into a hundred or more pieces like the petals of a great lotus.

g.27 Heat

tsha ba

ཚ་བ།

tapana

Name of one of the great hells (Skt. *mahānaraka*). Inhabitants of this hell are boiled in cauldrons, roasted in pans, beaten with hammers, and skewered with spears as their bodies burst into flame. See Guenther 1986, 58; Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 99, for descriptions of this hell.

g.28 Heaven Born from Merit

bsod nams skyes

བསོད་ནམས་སྐྱེས།

punṅyaprasava

The eleventh of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the third or, according to the Mvy, fourth meditative absorption. See also n.138.

g.29 Heaven Free from Strife

'thab bral

འཕམ་བྲལ།

yama

The third of the six heavens of the desire realm. The Tibetan translation *'thab bral*, “free from strife or combat,” derives from the idea that these devas, because they live in an aerial abode above Mount Meru, do not have to engage in combat with the asuras who dwell on the slopes of the mountain.

g.30 Heaven of Boundless Radiance

tshad med 'od

ཚད་མེད་འོད།

apramāṇābha

The fifth of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the second meditative absorption.

g.31 Heaven of Boundless Virtue

tshad med dge ba

ཚད་མེད་དགེ་བ།

apramāṇaśubha

The eighth of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the third meditative absorption. See also [n.135](#).

g.32 Heaven of Brahmā's Ministers

tshangs pa'i mdun na 'don

ཚངས་པའི་མདུན་ན་འདོན།

brahmapurohita

The second of the heavens of the form realm and of the three Brahmā heavens. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the first meditative absorption.

g.33 Heaven of Brahmā's Retinue

tshangs ris

ཚངས་རིས།

brahmakāyika

The lowest of the heavens of the form realm and of the first of the three Brahmā heavens. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the first meditative absorption. See also [n.130](#).

g.34 Heaven of Delighting in Emanations

'phrul dga'

འཕྲུལ་དགའ།

nirmāṇarati

The fifth of the six heavens of the desire realm. Its inhabitants magically create the objects of their own enjoyment and dispose of them themselves.

g.35 Heaven of Great Brahmā

tshangs chen

ཚེངས་ཚེན།

mahābrahmā

The third of the heavens of the form realm and the third of the three Brahmā heavens. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the first meditative absorption.

g.36 Heaven of Great Reward

'bras bu che ba

འབྲས་བུ་ཚེ་བ།

vṛhatphala

The twelfth of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing an ordinary form of the fourth meditative absorption. See also [n.139](#).

g.37 Heaven of Great Vision

shin tu mthong ba

ཤིན་ཏུ་མཐོང་བ།

sudarśana

The third highest of the Pure Abodes in the form realm; non-returners and those who have mastered the fourth meditative absorption are reborn there. See also [n.144](#).

g.38 Heaven of Joy

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྷན།

tuṣita

The fourth of the six heavens of the desire realm. The heaven from which Śākyamuni descended to be born into this world and where all future buddhas dwell prior to their awakening.

g.39 Heaven of Limited Radiance

'od chung

འོད་ཚུང་།

parittābha

The fourth of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the second meditative absorption.

g.40 Heaven of Limited Virtue

dge chung

དགེ་ཚུང་།

parittāsubha

The seventh of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the third meditative absorption. See also [n.134](#).

g.41 Heaven of Luminous Radiance

'od gsal

འོད་གསལ་།

ābhāsvāra

The sixth of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the second meditative absorption. See also [n.133](#).

g.42 Heaven of Perfect Virtue

dge rgyas

དགེ་རྒྱས་།

śubhakarṣna

The ninth of the heavens of the form realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the third meditative absorption. See also [n.136](#).

g.43 Heaven of Sublime Vision

gya nom snang

གྲོ་མོ་སྒྲོང་།

sudṛśa

One of the heavens of Buddhist cosmology belonging to the form realm. The fourth-highest heaven of the Pure Abodes. Non-returners and those who have mastered the fourth meditative absorption are reborn there. See also [n.143](#).

g.44 Heaven of the Masters of Others' Creations

gzhan 'phrul dbang byed

གཞན་འཕྲུལ་དབང་བྱེད།

paranirmitavaśavartin

The sixth and highest of the heavens of the desire realm. The inhabitants enjoy objects created by others and dispose of them themselves. See also [n.-98](#).

g.45 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་རུ་རྩ་གསུམ།

trayastrimśa

The second of the six heavens of the desire realm. It is traditionally located atop Mount Meru, just above the terrace of the abodes of the Four Great Kings. Its chief is Śakra/Indra.

g.46 hell being

sems can dmyal ba

སེམས་ཅན་དམྱལ་བ།

naraka

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, hell beings are engendered by anger and powerful negative actions. They are dominated by great suffering and said to dwell in eight different hells, each with specific characteristics.

g.47 Hell of Chattering Teeth

so thams thams

སོ་ཐམས་ཐམས།

aṭaṭa

Name of one of the eight cold hells. It is named for the sounds its inhabitants make while enduring unthinkable cold.

g.48 Hell of Lamentation

kyi hud zer

ཀྱི་ཁུད་ཟེར།

hahava

One of the eight cold hells. It is named for the sounds its inhabitants make while enduring unthinkable cold.

g.49 Highest Heaven

'og min

འོག་མིན།

akanisṭha

The highest of the seventeen heavens of the form realm and the fifth and highest of the five Pure Abodes. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the fourth meditative absorption. See also [n.145](#).

g.50 Incessant Torture

mnar med

མནར་མེད།

avīci

The lowest and worst of the major hot hells according to Buddhist cosmology; see also [n.122](#).

g.51 Insentient Beings

'du shes med pa'i sems can

འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་པའི་སེམས་ཅན།

asaṃjñāsatoa

A class of beings in the form realm, and the thirteenth heaven of the form realm on a level just below the devas of the Pure Abodes. The Insentient Beings are characterized by having a body but no conscious experience at all; this state is the karmic result of an ordinary or worldly form of the fourth meditative absorption called *the attainment of the meditative state without consciousness*. See also [n.9](#).

g.52 Intense Heat

rab tu tsha ba

རབ་ཏུ་ཚ་བ།

pratāpana

One of the great hells; see also [n.121](#).

g.53 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུ་རི་གླིང།

jambudvīpa

The southern continent where humans live according to ancient South Asian cosmology. For one explanation of the name, see *Exposition of Karma*, Toh 338, 1.34. See also [n.57](#) in the present text.

g.54 khārī

khal

ཁལ།

khārī

A measure of capacity for commodities, especially barley, etc. (1 *khal* = 20 *bre*). See [n.108](#).

g.55 Kokālika

ko ka li ka

ཀོ་ཀ་ལི་ཀ།

kokālika

A Buddhist monk who sided with Devadatta and defended him when the latter's schemes to usurp the Buddha were exposed.

g.56 Loud Wailing

ngu 'bod chen po

ངུ་འབོད་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāraurava

Name of one of the great hells. See also Guenther 1986, 58; Konchog Gyaltzen 1998, 99.

g.57 manifestation of existence

srid pa'i 'byung ba

སྲིད་པའི་འབྱུང་བ།

—

g.58 Maudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ།

maudgalyāyana

One of the two chief disciples of the historical Buddha.

g.59 meditative absorption

bsam gtan

བསམ་གཏན།

dhyāna

Designates mental states of deep concentration and the specific meditative practices leading to them. These states are characterized by a gradual withdrawal of one's awareness from external sense data. There are four meditative absorptions associated with the form realm and four meditative absorption associated with the formless realm. In the course of the four meditative absorptions associated with the form realm, the meditator gradually eliminates the five hindrances (sensuous desire, ill will, sloth and torpor, restlessness and worry, and doubt) and cultivates the seven constituents of enlightenment (Skt. *bodhyaṅga*). In the four meditative absorptions associated with the formless realm, the meditator gradually refines the object of the fourth meditative absorption associated with the form realm to the point of the complete dissolution of subject-object differentiation.

g.60 nirarbuda

chu bur rdol

ཚུབུར་རྡོ།

nirarbuda

A word for a high number (one hundred million). A variant of the Skt. *nyarbuda*. Also translated as “Bursting Blister Hell” when it designates one of the eight cold hells. See also [n.119](#).

g.61 noble one

'phags pa

འཕགས་པ།

ārya

Someone who has entered the “path of seeing,” i.e., who has a direct and stable realization of selflessness, ceases to be an “ordinary person,” and has entered the path that culminates in becoming an arhat.

g.62 non-returner

phyir mi 'ong ba

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བ།

anāgāmin

The third of the four stages of the śrāvaka path that culminate in becoming an arhat. At this stage, a being will not be reborn in this world but will remain there until liberation.

g.63 premature death

bar ma dor 'chi ba

བར་མ་དོར་འཆིབ།

antareṇa kālakriyā

g.64 preta

yi dags

ཡི་དགམ།

preta

The Sanskrit *preta* literally means “departed” and generally refers to the spirits of the dead. More specifically in Buddhism, it refers to a class of sentient beings who belong to the lower or unfortunate rebirth-destinies and who suffer from moderate to extreme dearth and want as a karmic result of negative actions based on craving, hatred, and attachment (see *Exposition of Karma*, Toh 338, 1.37). The common English rendering “hungry ghost” is a literal translation of the Chinese translation of *preta*, 餓鬼 *e gui*.

g.65 Prince Jeta’s grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

jetavana

A grove that was bought by the Buddha’s wealthy follower and supporter Anāthapiṇḍada from a prince named Jeta and donated to the Buddha and his saṅgha (the story of the purchase and the events leading to it is told in the Cullavagga of the Pāli Vinaya).

g.66 Pure Abodes

gnas gtsang ma

གནས་གཙང་མ།

śuddhāvāsa

The five Pure Abodes are the highest heavens of the form realm and result from mastery of the fourth meditative absorption. They comprise the heavens of the Insentient Beings, Unlofty Heaven, Sorrowless Heaven, Heaven of Sublime Vision, Heaven of Great Vision, and Highest Heaven.

The Pure Abodes are never destroyed during the cycles of the destruction and creation of the universe. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing the fourth meditative absorption.

g.67 Pūrvavideha

shar gyi lus 'phags

ཤར་གྱི་ལུས་འཕགས།

pūrvavideha

The eastern continent according to Buddhist cosmology. See also [n.31](#).

g.68 realm of the pretas

yi dags 'jig rten

ཡི་དགས་འཛིག་རྟེན།

pretaloka

The realm of the dead or the ghosts, where Yama, the Lord of Death, is the ruler and judges the dead. Yama is also said to rule over the hells. This term is also the name of the Vedic afterlife inhabited by the ancestors (Skt. *pitr*). The Pāli commentarial tradition, and possibly other early Buddhist schools, identified Yama's domain (Pāli *yamavisaya*) with the realm of the pretas (Pāli *petaloka*).

g.69 retinue of the Four Great Kings

rgyal chen bzhi'i ris

རྒྱལ་ཚེན་བཞིའི་རིས།

cāturmahārājika

The realm of the Four Great Kings and their retinue constitutes the first and lowest heaven of the form realm on the slopes of Mount Meru. The Four Great Kings are Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the east, Virūḍhaka in the south, Virūpākṣa in the west, and Vaiśravaṇa in the north.

g.70 Revival

yang sos

ཡང་སོས།

saṃjīva

Name of one of the great hells (Skt. *mahānaraka*); see also [n.73](#).

g.71 Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ལྷ་འཁོར་གྱི།

śāriputra

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.72 Sorrowless Heaven

mi gdung ba

མི་གདུང་བ།

atapa

One of the heavens of Buddhist cosmology, second of the five Pure Abodes. See also [n.142](#).

g.73 Sphere of Neither Perception nor Non-perception

'du shes med 'du shes med min skye mched

འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་མིན་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

naiṇvasaṃjñānāsaṃjñāyatana

The highest of the four heavens of the formless realm, so termed because conceptions there are weak but not entirely absent. Also called "the peak of existence."

g.74 Sphere of Nothingness

ci yang med pa'i skye mched

ཅི་ཡང་མེད་པའི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

ākimcanyāyatana

Third of the four heavens of the formless realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing one of the formless meditative absorptions.

g.75 Sphere of the Infinity of Consciousness

rnam shes mtha' yas skye mched

རྣམ་ཤེས་མཐའ་ཡས་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

vijñānānantyāyatana

Second of the four heavens of the formless realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing one of the formless meditative absorptions.

g.76 Sphere of the Infinity of Space

nam mkha' mtha' yas skye mched

ནམ་མཁའ་མཐའ་ཡས་སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

ākāśānaṃtyāyatana

First of the four heavens of the formless realm. Rebirth there is the karmic result of accomplishing one of the formless meditative absorptions.

g.77 Splitting Open Like a Blue Lotus Hell

ud pa la ltar gas pa

ལུད་པ་ལ་ལྷ་ར་གས་པ།

utpala

Name of one of the eight cold hells. The extreme cold of this hell turns the skin of its inhabitants blue until they crack apart.

g.78 Splitting Open Like a Lotus Hell

pad ma ltar gas pa

པད་མ་ལྷ་ར་གས་པ།

padma

Name of one of the eight cold hells. The extreme cold of this hell turns the skin of its denizens blue and then red until they crack apart into ten or more pieces like lotus petals.

g.79 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

སམ་མཁའ་ཡོད།

śrāvastī

The capital town of the ancient Indian kingdom of Kośala. It has been identified with present-day Sāhet Māhet in Uttar Pradesh on the banks of the Rapti (cp. DPPN, s.v. Sāvatti: the majority of the suttas in the Pāli canon mention Sāvatti as the place where the Buddha gave sermons).

g.80 sugata

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

An epithet of the buddhas meaning “well-gone one.”

g.81 ten unwholesome courses of action

mi dge ba bcu'i las kyī lam

མི་དགེ་བ་བརྒྱའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ལམ།

daśakuśalāḥ karmapathāḥ

The three unwholesome actions of the body (killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct), the four of speech (lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and senseless speech), and the three of the mind (covetousness, ill will, and wrong views).

g.82 ten wholesome courses of action

dge ba bcu'i las kyī lam

དགེ་བ་བརྒྱའི་ལས་ཀྱི་ལམ།

daśakuśalāḥ karmapathāḥ

Usually expressed as the opposites of the ten unwholesome courses of action, i.e., *not* killing living beings, etc.

g.83 Three Jewels

dkon mchog gsum

དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ།

triratna

The Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha are three sources or objects of refuge for Buddhists. The Tibetan translators rendered the Sanskrit *ratna* (“jewel”) as “the [three] rare and superior ones” (*dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*, 143).

g.84 unfortunate rebirth-destiny

ngan 'gro

ངན་འགྲོ།

durgati

A collective name for the realms of animals, pretas, and hell beings. The term is also referred to in this translation as “evil state.”

g.85 Unlofty Heaven

mi che ba

མི་ཆེ་བ།

avṛha

The lowest of the five classes of the devas that constitute the Pure Abodes. The literal meaning (“not great”) of Tib. *mi che ba*, Skt. *avṛha*, and Pāli *aviha* may be based on a folk-etymological explanation (i.e., Skt. *a-br̥hat* may be a faulty Sanskritization of Middle Indic *aviha*; see Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*, vol. 2, s.v. *avṛha*).

g.86 Uttarakuru

byang gi sgra mi snyan

ཐུང་གི་སྐྱ་མི་སྐྱན།

uttarakuru

The northern continent according to Buddhist cosmology. See also [n.33](#).

g.87 Vidyākarasiṃha

bidyA ka ra sing ha

བིདྲཱ་ཀ་ར་སིང་ཉ།

vidyākarasiṃha

An Indian preceptor.

g.88 Viśuddhasiṃha

bi shud dha sing ha

བི་ཤུད་རྩ་སིང་ཉ།

viśuddhasiṃha

An Indian preceptor.

g.89 Wailing

ngu 'bod

ངུ་འབོད།

raurava

Name of one of the great hells; see also [n.88](#).

g.90 wish-fulfilling tree

dpag bsam

དཔག་བསམ།

kalpavṛkṣa

A mythical tree granting all desires. The Kalpavṛkṣa is usually depicted as being located in a heaven or Indra’s paradise, but the wish-fulfilling tree mentioned in *The Limits of Life* is said to be located in Uttarakuru.

