མར་མེ་འབུལ་བའི་མདོ།

The Sūtra on Offering Lamps

Pradīpadānīyasūtra

འཕགས་པ་མར་མེ་འབུལ་བ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

’phags pa mar me ’bul ba zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “Offering Lamps”

Āryapradīpadānīyanāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 204 ·

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For referencing Tibetan sources, please see our Scholar’s Edition

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Summary

s.1 *The Sūtra on Offering Lamps* consists of a teaching given by the Buddha to the venerable Śāriputra while in Śrāvastī. The Buddha begins by describing the qualities of the buddhas that make them worthy objects of offering, and he then teaches at length on the benefits of offering even the most meager of lamps, with the aspiration to attain complete buddhahood, to the stūpa of a buddha who has passed into parinirvāṇa. The Buddha details the karmic results for a person who makes such an offering, narrating their future birth in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and their subsequent rebirth as a distinguished and fortunate human being.

Acknowledgments

ac.1 Translated, introduced, and annotated by Laura Goetz, in consultation with a draft translation by the Vikramashila Translation House. Dr. Channa Li kindly provided a translation of the Chinese for the opening passage and compared it with the Tibetan.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. Dawn Collins copyedited the text and Sameer Dhingra was in charge of the digital publication process.

Introduction

i.1 *The Sūtra on Offering Lamps* consists almost entirely of a teaching given by the Buddha to the venerable Śāriputra while in Śrāvastī. The sūtra is largely structured according to the pattern of providing a teaching in prose followed by a verse summary.

i.2 The Buddha begins his teaching by describing the qualities of the buddhas that make them worthy objects of offering. He then teaches at length the benefits of offering even the most meager of lights—such as a flaming blade of grass or a candle quickly extinguished by the wind—to the stūpa of a buddha who has passed into parinirvāṇa while forming the aspiration to attain complete buddhahood in the future. The Buddha details the karmic results for a person who makes such an offering, narrating their future birth as a chief of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three and subsequent rebirth as a distinguished and highly fortunate human being.

i.3 The Buddha emphasizes the importance and effectiveness of maintaining certain positive states of mind when one makes an offering and how this supersedes the material worth of the offering. For instance, based on having made offerings while mindful of one's actions and intentions, this quality of mindfulness will resurface at the moment of death. This is described as a series of "visions," from recalling that one has made offerings to the Buddha to seeing one's future birthplace in the god realm. And similarly, when one passes away as a god, one will do so with clarity of mind, teaching the Dharma to the other gods. When one takes birth as a human, one will remember one's past lives. The Buddha also points out that because the karmic causes and results related to offering a lamp can only be known or described by a fully awakened buddha, it is important to make offerings with faith in the Buddha's teaching on karma.

i.4 We are not aware of any extant Sanskrit version of this sūtra, although one verse, identified here as an *udāna* (Tib. *ched du brjod pa*, "inspired utterance"),

is found in the Sanskrit *Udānavarga*.[1] A Chinese translation (*Shi deng gong de jing* 施燈功德經, Taishō 702) was produced by Narendrayaśas in 558 CE.[2]

i.5 This sūtra is listed in both the Denkarma and Phangthangma imperial-period catalogs, thus dating it to the late eight–early ninth centuries.[3] This date is confirmed by the colophon to the Tibetan translation, which lists as translators the Indian scholar Prajñāvarman and the Tibetan translator-editor Bandé Yeshé Dé. In the Kangyur collection, this text is appropriately placed just before a short sūtra called *The City Beggar Woman*,[4] which tells the story of a woman in Śrāvastī who offers a lamp with only a meager amount of oil to the Buddha. Because she makes her offering with the aspiration to become a buddha, she surpasses even King Prasenajit, who has set out a thousand cauldrons of oil as an offering. Moreover, her lamp cannot be extinguished, despite the great efforts of the disciple Maudgalyāyana.[5]

i.6 Our translation was based on the Degé Kangyur edition in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and Stok Palace (*stog pho brang*) Kangyur. We relied on the Chinese translation to reconstruct a brief passage in the first folio.

The Translation

1.

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra

Offering Lamps

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in Śrāvastī, in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park. The Blessed One said to the venerable Śāriputra,[6] "Śāriputra, as for these four immeasurable qualities, buddhas are endowed with thoroughly refined attributes that cause beings to attain immeasurable fruits, immeasurable radiance, immeasurable stores of merit, immeasurable form, and immeasurable stores of bliss. They engage beings in discipline, and they engage beings in absorption, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and vision of liberation.[7] They engage beings in correct discernment, and they bring about the cessation of the defilements without further appropriation.

1.3 "What are the four? They are thus, Śāriputra: (1) Because he has attained the perfection of discipline, the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha[8] is endowed with immeasurable discipline. (2) Because he has attained the perfection of absorption, he is endowed with immeasurable absorption. (3) Because he has attained the perfection of wisdom, he is endowed with immeasurable wisdom—he is endowed with vast wisdom, he is endowed with penetrating wisdom, he is endowed with wisdom that ascertains reality just as it is, and he is endowed with incalculable wisdom, endowed with definitive wisdom, and endowed with definitive seeing. (4) He is endowed with a mind that is supremely liberated and thoroughly liberated, endowed with an unwavering mind, endowed with an undisturbed mind, and a mind that is properly applied.

1.4 “Śāriputra, the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha has abandoned all nonvirtuous dharmas and is endowed with all virtuous dharmas; he is perfect in his conduct, his attention never wanes, he teaches the truth and sees the truth, he is immeasurable in illumination and immeasurable in the accumulations, he overpowers, and he has obtained the fully developed power of discipline, absorption, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and vision of liberation that cannot be overpowered. He has obtained the fully developed power of the ten powers, he has obtained the fully developed power of the buddha qualities,[9] he has obtained the fully developed power of great loving-kindness and great compassion, and he has obtained the fully developed power of correct discernment. His past intentions have been perfected, and his past purification has been perfected. He is endowed with precious wisdom. He has not discarded effort and is immeasurable in his diligence. He is free from sorrow and hurt and without grasping. He is all-seeing and all-knowing, the great elephant, immeasurable, without aggregates, and an unsurpassed field of merit.

1.5 “In that regard, Śāriputra, if a monk or nun, layman or laywoman—one who has a faithful mind and strives for merit, is focused on merit, acts as an instrument for merit, wishes for merit, focuses their attention on recollecting in accordance with the practice, and has perfected their past endeavors—offers, delivers, or provides so much as a small or inferior wick anointed with oil or butter and sets it down at the stūpa of a thus-gone one—one who is a field of merit, a thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect buddha who planted roots of virtue over many hundreds of sextillions of eons and was endowed with the three types of knowledge—then, by striving for the sake of virtue, they will become a thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect buddha, a blessed one who has once and for all abandoned the cycle of rebirth.

1.6 “If that is the case, if they furthermore, by focusing their attention on taking hold of discipline, absorption, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and vision of liberation, focusing their attention on any of the qualities that arise from

that, focusing their attention on the goal of attaining the state of a thus-gone one and on that basis the Thus-Gone One himself,[10] generating the intentio[11]n to offer to a thus-gone one for the sake of[12] attaining the state of a thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect buddha, and thinking, 'I will light this lamp, I will make it blaze, I will offer it, I will offer it completely, and I will set it in place,' or having faith in their mindstream, venerate a stūpa of a thus-gone one—one who possessed the bountiful merit of countless thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect buddhas endowed with pure discipline and discipline equaled to the unequaled—and then light merely that lamp, or a trifling one, or a small one, or a paltry one, or a mere insignificant one, or even one that lasts no longer than a flash of lightning, even if it illuminates only a single step, then, Śāriputra, the ripening of that action could not be described by śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas. Rather, Śāriputra, it is a thus-gone one who engages in teaching that ripening of merit—the fruit of the act of completely relinquishing with no hope of reward and with faith, joy, and clarity.

1.7 "Furthermore, Śāriputra, suppose a noble son or noble daughter—one who is faithful, who is free from guile with respect to abiding in faith and not wavering, and who has certainty of mind with regard to the qualities of a buddha—has given rise to virtuous intention and then lit a mere trifling lamp,[13] or just a small one, and suppose that by lighting that lamp only so much as a single step of that stūpa of a thus-gone one is illuminated, or that only the surrounding walkway, or the lower part, or the parasol, or everything is illuminated—whatever the case may be—and suppose that lamp were to go out after a very short time, whether because it is stirred by the wind or touched by rain, or because the butter runs out or the wick runs out.

1.8 "To give an example, Śāriputra, it is like this: when there is disturbance by nāgas, lightning emerges from the sky out of a dense net of thick clouds and then disappears. Even the clouded eyes of beings, Śāriputra, can cognize[14] that fleeting occurrence. The Thus-Gone One, Śāriputra, knows the fruition, unfathomable as it may be, that comes from having taken hold of the heap of merit of of-

fering a lamp, however small, by a monk, nun, layman, or laywoman—or even a being other than those who has not taken up the fundamental precepts—who strives after roots of virtue, who is deeply devoted to the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, who continually guards themselves, and who desires merit.

1.9 "Śāriputra, except for the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha, the mass of beings, including the world with its gods and its brahmās and including monks and brahmins, Śāriputra, is unable to explain the ripening of that heap of merit accomplished by offering a single lamp.

1.10 "Śāriputra, the perceptual domain of the blessed buddhas is inconceivable. Śāriputra, the Thus-Gone One knows the significance of having taken hold of the heap of merit, however hard to fathom, that comes from making an offering of a lamp. Śāriputra, if even the result that comes from offering a lamp as miniscule as that is inconceivable, why even speak of making or causing someone to make a distinguished offering to the stūpa of a thus-gone one who has passed into the parinirvāṇa of a thus-gone one, or making or causing someone to make a distinguished offering by means of incense, flowers, parasols, banners, or a multifaceted succession of various kinds of lamps?

1.11 "Furthermore, Śāriputra, one should understand these four dharmas through faith. What are the four?[15] Thinking, 'The qualities of the Buddha are inconceivable,' one should understand through faith. One should understand through faith that the ripening of a root of virtue, however small, will be immeasurable. The fruit of the enactment of a deed done in faith to the Three Jewels is to see the Teacher. Śrāvakas, if even you cannot imagine or conceive of that in all its aspects, why speak of the ability of others who do not abide in the noble lineage to directly cognize or understand for themselves the ripening of an action. That is otherwise to be understood through faith.

1.12 "Śāriputra, śrāvakas can neither contemplate nor perceive the ripening of the actions of all beings. So, Śāriputra, you all must all be without thought when it comes to this point. Why? Because, Śāriputra, the Thus-Gone One has taught

that the ripening of the actions of beings is inconceivable. Śāriputra, the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect buddhas of the past also taught that the ripening of the actions of beings is inconceivable. Śāriputra, the future thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect buddhas, too, will teach that the ripening of the actions of beings is inconceivable. Śāriputra, since the thoughts, mind, and insight of a being are inconceivable, they are to be known through faith.

1.13 "Śāriputra, if even you yourselves, who dwell in the noble lineage, do not perceive the cognition of any being, neither what is seen nor what is known, why even speak of those with untrained minds who are lacking in discipline, absorption, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and vision of liberation—others who are forgetful, whose eyes are shrouded by the darkness of ignorance, and who do not even contemplate their own dharmas by asking, 'What is the self?' 'Who is the self?' 'What is the self like?' 'Where does the self come from?' 'What is the extent of the self?' 'How is the self?' 'Is it my nature to be endowed with a self, or is it not my nature to be endowed with a self?' 'Is the self forgetful, or does the self remain mindful?' 'Does the self engage in wise activity, or does the self engage in immature activity?' 'Where does the self come from?' 'Where does the self go?' Śāriputra, if ordinary immature beings do not even contemplate the self, how will those with mistaken views come to know the ripening of actions? It is impossible.

1.14 "Śāriputra, the Thus-Gone One is not without discipline, not without absorption, not without wisdom, not without liberation, not without the knowledge and vision of liberation, and not without awareness. Śāriputra, the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha has immeasurable discipline. His discipline is without attachment. His discipline is inconceivable. His discipline is immeasurable. His discipline is complete. His discipline is pure. He[16] knows actions and the ripening of actions just as they truly are.

1.15 "Śāriputra, in what way does the Thus-Gone One know actions and the ripening of actions just as they truly are? Śāriputra, the Thus-Gone One knows it in

this way: ‘This being has exhausted their virtuous dharmas and has filled up with nonvirtuous dharmas.’ ‘For this being virtuous dharmas will arise and nonvirtuous dharmas will cease.’ ‘For this being virtuous dharmas will be generated and nonvirtuous dharmas will cease.’ By engaging in this way, Śāriputra, the Thus-Gone One knows these beings, their actions, and the variety of the results of their actions that follow. In this regard, Śāriputra, he is endowed with such a knowledge that sentient beings are obscured and unskilled. Endowed with such skill, he expounds upon the inconceivable ripening of the actions of sentient beings.

1.16 “In that regard, Śāriputra, those who are faithful will have conviction, and those who are not faithful and have fallen from this teaching will denigrate it and dispute it. For a long time it will bring them no benefit, be meaningless, cause them to suffer, and propel them into the lower realms.

1.17 “In that regard, Śāriputra, if a being who offers a lamp to a stūpa of a thus-gone one, who offers, provides, and delivers a lamp offering and who has enacted actions by which roots of virtue are gathered, who desires the happiness that results, who is endowed with joy and delight, and who is faithful, by having accumulated offerings, will in this very life attain three certainties of mind. What are the three? They will think, ‘I have honored the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha; I have come to understand that my body can be either a meaningful attainment of a body or a meaningless one, and so I should make a meaningful gift.’ Thinking thus, they understand material enjoyments to be flawed. This making a meaningful gift out of meaningless material enjoyments, Śāriputra, is the first certainty of mind with regard to having honored the stūpa of a thus-gone one.

1.18 “Furthermore, Śāriputra, they will think, ‘Since I have honored those supreme recipients of gifts who are unsurpassed fields of merit worthy of offerings, I fear neither rebirth as a hell being, taking birth as an animal, nor the realm of Yama. I will joyfully migrate to the five places: I will attain the heavenly

realms, I will attain a human birth, I will attain a fine form, I will attain material enjoyments, and I will attain awakening.' This, Śāriputra, is the second certainty of mind with regard to having honored the stūpa of a thus-gone one that will be attained.

1.19 "Furthermore, Śāriputra, they will think, 'Since I have succeeded in making a lamp offering to a stūpa of a thus-gone one, I have made a gift, and I have also generated merit and given up miserliness.' They will think, 'I am the giver, and I have also given a gift.' In this way, the mind and the act of giving are without distress and without disrespect. This, Śāriputra, is the third certainty of mind with regard to having honored the stūpa of a thus-gone one that will be attained.

1.20 "Śāriputra, a noble son or daughter who has made a lamp offering to a stūpa of a thus-gone one will attain three visions at the time of their death. What are the three? The virtue they have enacted will clearly manifest, and they will attain mindfulness and will not forget those virtuous actions. Śāriputra, in this way, at the time of their death they will recall the roots of virtue that have been generated in relation to a thus-gone one. This is the first vision.

1.21 "Furthermore, Śāriputra, that being who has honored the stūpa of a thus-gone one will attain great joy, recalling at the time of their death, 'I have honored the Buddha.' Thinking in this way while recalling the Buddha, Śāriputra, is the second vision.

1.22 "Furthermore, Śāriputra, when at the time of death that being sees other beings giving gifts, they will think, 'I have made a lamp offering. In the future, too, I will give a gift.' Having made the intention to give in the future and being undisturbed by feelings of suffering, in that regard and in the same way they will have recalled the Dharma. This act of focusing the attention on roots of virtue just as they truly are, Śāriputra, is the third vision.

1.23 “Furthermore, Śāriputra, that noble son or daughter who has made a lamp offering to a stūpa of a thus-gone one will attain four visions at the time of their death. What are the four? They are seeing the circle of the sun rise before them, seeing the circle of the full moon rise before them, seeing the presence of the assembly of gods, and seeing the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha abiding in the essence of awakening and awakened to complete and perfect buddhahood. They will see that while remaining in a state of reverence and with folded palms. Because of having made a lamp offering to a stūpa of a thus-gone one, Śāriputra, they will attain these four visions at the time of their death.”

1.24 Thus did the Blessed One proclaim. The Well-Gone One having spoken thus, the Teacher gave the same teaching in a different way:

1.25 “Through the act of making a lamp offering
To the stūpa site[17] of a great sage,
A master of limitless dharmas,
A wise one attains limitless happiness, benefit, and profit.

1.26 “They will not decline at the moment of death
But will see that they have offered a lamp
And attain four unworldly joys.
They will be without delusion at the time of death.

1.27 “Perceiving pure illumination,
They will see the sun and the moon.
They will see a million trillion gods,
And without delusion they will relate the Buddhadharma.

1.28 “Even when their parents, children, and relatives
Encircle them and weep,
They will not turn to them—

At that time their mindfulness will never weaken.

1.29 “They will see before them a sublime celestial palace,
And they will fearlessly behold the goddesses therein.
They will see the four lovely gardens richly adorned
And endowed with the five sense pleasures.

1.30 “By having honored the supreme ones among sages,
They will behold the Well-Gone One abiding in the essence of awakening,
And they will join their own palms together
In the presence of the assembly of gods, nāgas, and asuras.

1.31 “Through being respectful, they will behold the guide of the world.
Having approached him, being overjoyed from having seen the Well-Gone One,
They will then invite him,
And he will consent to join the midday meal.

1.32 “Satisfied with the bliss they have obtained,
They will not suffer at the time of death.
Their mind will delight in the highest, most sublime awakening,
And for them the great fear of death will not arise.

1.33 “The ripening of the act of offering a lamp is this:
Mindfulness will not weaken at the time of death,
And for them the directions will be illuminated.
They will behold lovely forms never seen before.

1.34 “When they pass away, they will certainly go to the heavenly realms,
And they will perceive themselves resting their body on a divine seat.
When they honor the Victor,
They will see goddesses everywhere.

1.35 “Furthermore, Śāriputra, on account of having made a lamp offering to a stūpa of a thus-gone one, they will be reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, and as a god they will be endowed with five pure attributes. In what way, Śāriputra, will that god be endowed with five pure attributes? His body will be pure, and he will be endowed with vast divine powers. His mindfulness and wisdom will be pure, he will hear pleasant sounds in his ears, and he will be endowed with a numerous and pleasing retinue.”

1.36 Thus did the Blessed One proclaim. The Well-Gone One having spoken thus, the Teacher gave the same teaching in a different way:

1.37 “Because they offered a lamp to the stūpa of a sage,
Their body will be luminous,
Impervious to harm from others, and glorious.
They will become chief above a thousand gods.

1.38 “They will hear the melodious and pleasing songs of the gods.
They will be comparable to the other gods yet superior.
They will possess superior mindfulness and intellect,
And they will attain a marvelous and superior retinue.

1.39 “Wherever that god goes,
All the gods will follow.
His body will blaze with light—
Such is the fruit of his past actions.

1.40 “On the grounds of the pleasure grove
There are trees known as ‘supreme moons’ and adorned with vimānas.[18]
He will be radiant like those trees,
Which illuminate everything, just like the moon.

1.41 “He will radiate like a blazing lamp

And send forth a pleasant scent in all directions.[19]
The thousand gods will be captivated, wondering,
‘What is the name of this radiant flower?’

1.42 “Having been adorned by those flowers,
Those in his retinue will become beautiful.[20]
Among a million trillion gods,
He will be especially beautiful, like the rising sun.

1.43 “Śāriputra, by making a lamp offering to a stūpa of a thus-gone one, they will be born among the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. That god will know for himself the duration of time after which he will face the reality of death and transmigration.[21] At the time of his death, that god will bring delight and understanding to his own retinue, and to other gods as well, with a discourse on the Dharma, and then he will pass away from that realm. Even though they have passed away, they will not fall into the lower realms. When they take birth in the human world, it will be during a time in which a buddha has appeared, and they will belong to a highly revered family line and be endowed with faith. Even if it so happens that a buddha has not appeared, they will not have pernicious views, and they will be born to a family that does not adhere to a strange tradition.”

1.44 Thus did the Blessed One proclaim. The Well-Gone One having spoken thus, the Teacher gave the same teaching in a different way:

1.45 “He will arrive at the understanding,
‘For a long time I have dwelled in the state of a god.’
That chief among the gods will further know
When the time of death has arrived.

1.46 “At that time, five signs will appear.[22]
Many tens of millions of gods will gather there,
And he will teach them the Dharma directly:

‘I will pass from here before long.

1.47 “ ‘All existence is impermanent and without happiness.
Others, too, will pass away, and others will be born.
Alas! I am going to die.’
Sitting in their midst, he will speak without tiring.

1.48 “His attendants and, likewise, the many other gods
Will be stricken with grief.
Having seen for himself the five signs,
He will no longer take pleasure in his own seat.

1.49 “He will rise from that spot and move away.
He will also find no pleasure in his abode, his celestial palace.
Many gods will grieve, saying,
‘When we see this, it is the end.’

1.50 “The goddesses will rise up and offer him
The most supreme and excellent seat,
But on seeing that seat he will take no pleasure
In it being his own seat, and he will die.

1.51 “When the lord of the gods passes from the abode of the gods,
He will go directly to the human world.
His memory of what happened to him will not fade,
And he will be happy there and not suffer.

1.52 “From birth he will remember all his lifetimes;
As soon as he is born, he will know his previous existence.
Thinking, ‘The afflictions will bring me harm,’
He will take no delight in sources of suffering.

1.53 “Recalling the glory of having attained the world of the gods,

He will find no happiness in the human world.
If there is suffering in the higher realms, why speak of the human realm?
All states of existence are unstable and without an essence.

1.54 “When his physical strength wanes,
He will be certain to go forth.
This, too, will be the fruit of his actions.
He will never engage in discursive behavior.

1.55 “That is the result of his having offered a lamp.
He will remember all his former lives
And refrain from inappropriate actions.
There is no doubt that he will leave his home behind.

1.56 “He will become neither blind nor crippled,
Nor will he lose his eyes.
He will not fall ill, nor will he have a fearsome voice.
He will be neither foolish nor ignorant.

1.57 “He will never lose his eyes,
Nor will his eyes become diseased.
He will not be one-eyed, nor without eyes at all.[23]
His eyes will not lack clarity.

1.58 “His eyes will be long,
The white and dark parts clearly distinguished.
In that existence, his eyes will be pure,
And like the splendid light of a jewel, he will perceive fine detail.

1.59 “Throughout countless eons his physical eyes
Will never decline.
No disease of the eye will occur for him.

That is the fruit of having offered a lamp.

1.60 “Likewise, he will master the arts
Of calculation by hand, drama,[24] and logic, and he will be patient and fearless.
He will be skilled and intelligent,
And his intelligence will perceive the subtle facets of ultimate reality.

1.61 “He will see that the realms of existence are without activity.
He will gain insight into the Victor’s teachings.
Likewise, he will see the Buddha, the world’s guide,
And on seeing him he will honor him faithfully.

1.62 “His physical form will be excellent and attractive,
And he will please his loved ones and relatives.
He will be wealthy, powerful, and possessed of an abundance of riches,
And he will obtain a perfect, undivided retinue.

1.63 “Just as a lamp dispels darkness,
Pervading everything with light,
So will he shine forth, having illuminated all.
He will surely not fall under the power of darkness.

1.64 “Someone who offers to the stūpa of a buddha
A row of lamps with a faithful attitude
And has a pure intention to offer a lamp
Will attain a supreme birth in the world.

1.65 “He will be charming and a delight to behold
And will delight the whole of the world.
He will desire neither spectacle nor fortune,
Nor will he take to left-handed paths.

1.66 “He will not be inclined

To worldly, mistaken views and deviant paths.
Satisfied with just a minor kingdom, he will take hold of it
And will not cause a dispute with anyone.

1.67 “Trouble will not arise, and he will be free of sorrow;
His mind will be undivided,
And he will not lose his conviction.
He will be without ill intent, and neither will he cause harm.

1.68 “In whatever royal palace he speaks,
He will gain renown with the king and royal retinues.

1.69 “He will never be stricken with jaundice,
And he will be neither a ṣaṇḍha nor a paṇḍaka.
He will be comfortable and happy,
And diseases will not arise in his body.

1.70 “In dreams he will not dream of evil deeds,
And so he will understand at that moment just as it was taught,
And so will he find treasure again and again.
Thus will it come to be through honoring a stūpa of a thus-gone one.

1.71 “By having made a lamp offering to the stūpa of a thus-gone one, that being will fulfill four wishes. What are the four? They are the wish for a body, the wish for material wealth, the wish to be born into a venerable family line, and the attainment of wisdom. By having made a lamp offering to the stūpa of a thus-gone one, Śāriputra, they will fulfill those four wishes.”

1.72 Thus did the Blessed One proclaim. The Well-Gone One having spoken thus, the Teacher gave the same teaching in a different way:

1.73 “One who has offered a lamp to the stūpa of a great sage
Will have a perfect body with great strength.

They will never resort to strife,
And they will enjoy uncontested sovereignty over the ten directions.

1.74 “One who has offered a lamp to the stūpa of a great sage
Will be endowed with material wealth of great renown
And will be born into a prominent family endowed with supreme qualities.
Once born, they will recall their past succession of lifetimes.

1.75 “They will be possessed of a perfect retinue of attendants
And will always show kindness toward living creatures.
They will always do no harm and will be exceedingly gentle.
They will not be born into a household that is headed for downfall.

1.76 “Śāriputra, by having made a lamp offering to the stūpa of a thus-gone one, four purities will be attained. What are the four? They are the purity of the body, the purity of speech, the purity of mind, and the purity of one’s companions.

1.77 “Śāriputra, wherever that noble son or daughter takes birth, they will give up killing, and so they will not kill. They will give up stealing. They will give up sexual misconduct, and so they will not engage in improper relations, even with their own spouse. They will give up drinking surā and maireya. They will not harm any sentient being with sticks, blades, clods of earth, their fists, or anything else that can be used as a weapon, and they will turn away from sinful, nonvirtuous dharmas. Those, Śāriputra, are known as the purity of the body.

1.78 “What, then, is the purity of speech? It is giving up speaking falsely, that is to say speaking about something when one has neither seen it nor heard of it for oneself, not speaking at the wrong time even when questioned about what one has seen or heard, and speaking truthfully about what one has seen or heard when asked. It is not misrepresenting oneself or another. It is sticking to the

truth when one is sure of it, even when another person encourages one to tell a lie. They will give up those impurities of speech.

1.79 “It is not telling an opponent something heard from this one in order to divide them, and it is not relating to this one something heard from an opponent in order to divide them. They will bring them to conciliation according to their common grounds and cause them to reconcile their differences.

1.80 “It is giving up harsh speech—having given up speech such as speech that cuts to the quick, speech that is abusive, harsh toward others, unpleasant to others, ugly, unwanted, repugnant, and disagreeable, speech that causes harm to others, and speech that is vindictive, they will speak words that are tender, gentle, pleasing, truthful, pleasant to the ears, affectionate, and friendly, that gladden many beings, that many beings are drawn to, that are joyful and pleasant, and that pacify all enemies. This relinquishment of those impure activities in that way, Śāriputra, should be known as the pure activity of speech.

1.81 “It is giving up impure mental activity—they will not engage in covetous thoughts, and they will not generate covetous thoughts with regard to the wealth, property, or belongings of others. It is not engaging in malicious thoughts, thus relinquishing malicious thoughts. It is furthermore giving up mistaken views, thus not having unwholesome views. This relinquishment of those impure activities of mind in that way should be known as the pure activity of mind.

1.82 “They will also attain purity in terms of their companions—they will keep company with those who have given up lying and drinking surā and maireya and with those who are gentle, kind, disciplined, and possessed of an authentic view. And, beyond that,[25] they will even keep company with blessed buddhas, bodhisattvas, pratyekabuddhas, and śrāvakas and then attend to and honor them. This is the fourth purity, Śāriputra—it should be known as the purity of one’s companions.

1.83 “By making a lamp offering to the stūpa of a thus-gone one, Śāriputra, one will attain those four purities.”

1.84 Thus did the Blessed One proclaim. The Well-Gone One having spoken thus, the Teacher gave the same teaching in a different way:

1.85 “Their body, speech, and mind fully restrained,
For the sake of purification and in accord with the words of the Thus-Gone One,
Keeping pure discipline until the view is attained,
Their eye will be born from the mind.[26]

1.86 “Like the sun, they will illuminate all directions.
They will quickly realize the cessation of defilements.
Their mind will become one of great miraculous power,
And there will be the divine eye, stainless and uncontaminated.

1.87 “That intelligent one will know worldly minds,
The clairvoyance of the gods, and correct discernment.[27]
They would easily attain a śrāvaka’s awakening if they so desired.
Such is the fruit of offering a lamp.

1.88 “Should one who has offered a lamp to the stūpa of a great sage
Desire even a buddha’s awakening, it will be easy.
That intelligent one will be unimpaired with regard to three factors.
They will be endowed with the eye of wisdom and possess great wealth.

1.89 “Śāriputra, if a noble son or daughter who has entered the Great Vehicle has made a lamp offering to the stūpa of a thus-gone one, they will, in each and every one of their future births, attain the eight most desired attributes. What are the eight? They are the attainment of the supreme physical eye, the attainment of mindfulness like the invisible uṣṇīṣa, the attainment of meditation, the attainment of the supreme divine eye of the perfected stages of

penetrating insight, the attainment of unflagging discipline due to wisdom having been perfected, the attainment of the higher realms due to the past accomplishment of merit, the attainment of abundant leisure due to the excellent accomplishment of merit, and pleasing the present buddhas by having become the eye of all beings. By the roots of virtue of having offered a lamp, Śāriputra, a noble son or daughter will attain the kingdom of a universal monarch. They will be endowed with a mind free from hostility and supremely lovely to behold, or they will obtain the great miraculous power of Śakra lord of the gods and attain the state of being endowed with a thousand eyes, or else become a brahmā[28] who is skilled in the brahmā abodes, thus obtaining renowned concentration. By having dedicated roots of virtue for the sake of awakening, they will attain those eight most desired attributes.[29]

1.90 "They will moreover attain eight attributes. What are the eight? They are the attainment of the immeasurable buddha eye, the attainment of the immeasurable eloquence of the Buddha, the attainment of the immeasurable miraculous power of the Buddha, the immeasurable discipline of the Buddha, the immeasurable absorption of the Buddha, the immeasurable wisdom of the Buddha, the immeasurable liberation of the Buddha, and the attainment of engagement with the immeasurable minds and thoughts of beings. Because of having offered a lamp, Śāriputra, they thus take hold of immeasurable fruits.

1.91 "Moreover, Śāriputra, beings who, when the Thus-Gone One teaches the Dharma, exclaim, 'Oh, how marvelous! He is teaching the Dharma! Oh, how marvelous! He is explaining the Dharma!' having previously believed the lamp they have offered to be made of oil, will come to understand it to be a lamp of the Dharma.

1.92 "By the roots of virtue from having offered a lamp, they will obtain eight immeasurable accumulations. What are the eight? They are the attainment of the immeasurable accumulation of mindfulness and the immeasurable accumulations of intelligence, faith, diligence, wisdom, absorption, eloquence,

and merit. They will attain those eight immeasurable accumulations. They will also obtain the four correct discernments up to, in stages, omniscient gnosis.

1.93 "Moreover, Śāriputra, by the roots of virtue that result from joining one's palms together toward the thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha with a faithful mind, one will attain eight distinguished attributes. What are the eight? They are the attainment of a distinguished physical form, the attainment of a distinguished retinue of attendants, distinguished discipline, distinguished birth as a god or human, distinguished faith, and distinguished eloquence, the attainment of the noble path free of defilements, and unsurpassed awakening to complete and perfect buddhahood.

1.94 "Why are they called *immeasurable*, Śāriputra? Because the fruits of having honored the Thus-Gone One are immeasurable, the benefits are immeasurable."

1.95 Then, at that time, the Blessed One proclaimed the following inspired utterance:

1.96 "Rise up! Go forth!
Apply yourself to the Buddha's teaching!
Trample the army of the Lord of Death
Like an elephant a house of reeds!"[30]

1.97 Then the Blessed One said to the venerable Śāriputra, "Śāriputra, these five attributes are extremely difficult to acquire. What are the five? They are the attaining birth as a human, going forth in the Buddha's teaching, rejoicing in them, having perfect discipline, and the cessation of the defilements. Śāriputra, it is extremely difficult for any being to acquire those five attributes, but you have already attained them."

1.98 Thus did the Blessed One proclaim. The Well-Gone One having spoken thus, the Teacher gave the same teaching in a different way:

1.99 “By the act accomplished by the wise one
Who has made an offering to this stūpa of a thus-gone one
For the sake of awakening and out of the desire to benefit beings,[31]
They will be exceptional throughout all lifetimes.

1.100 “When they pass on from this place,
They will attain a superior incarnation praised by gods and humans.
They will be steady like Mount Meru,
And they will illuminate and beautify every direction with rays of light.

1.101 “When the hosts of gods behold them, they will be reverent,
And their devotion will give way to delight.
They will praise them and honor them
And will not be satisfied in looking upon them again and again.

1.102 “The one with the signs of merit will be worthy to be honored by the gods
And as beautiful as a brahmā[32] in the brahmā abodes.
Whoever attends to them, whatever the activity,
Will have an exceedingly beautiful body.[33]

1.103 “Who here does not desire merit?
Who would not serve the noble ones who are skilled in discipline?[34]
On beholding the sage, one cannot have enough of looking at him.
Having heard the Dharma, who would not pay heed?

1.104 [35]“ ‘By having offered a lamp to the stūpa of a thus-gone one
And having followed in the teaching of the Thus-Gone One
When he was dwelling in the world of humans,
I have now attained a great fortune as a supreme god.

1.105 “ ‘May I attain a human body,
And may I attain supreme faith in the Victor’s teachings.

If I become careless, this body may be cast away,
But I will not discard the genuine Dharma.

1.106 “ ‘When they have attained a human body so difficult to find,
Why do foolish ones not act for their own good?
If one is intent on harming the teaching of the Thus-Gone One,
Upon death one will fall into the great abyss.’

1.107 “When the gods hear of his vast fortune,[36]
They will feel a sense of disenchantment and make the aspiration,
‘May I attain a human body,
And having reached this excellent goal, may I exhibit pure conduct.’

1.108 “Accordingly, even at the time of death,
They will be of benefit with regard to the Dharma and have clarity of mind,
And ten billion gods, accompanied by goddesses,
Will rejoice, saying ‘He is one of us!’

1.109 “The beautiful goddesses with their adornments
Will enjoin him to play in the four pleasure gardens.
The sweet scent of incense will rise up,
And the sound of pleasant melodies will be heard.

1.110 “Wherever that celebrated god goes,
He will behold those who are beautiful,
Never those who are unpleasant or ugly.
This is the result of offering a lamp to the stūpa of a victorious one.

1.111 “Then, when they pass on from that place, their memories intact,
They will come to rest in a mother’s womb, here in this human existence.
Due to the power of the gnosis of noble beings, after they are born,

Their memory of the series of lives from which they have passed on will not decline.

1.112 “One who has offered a lamp to the stūpa of a thus-gone one
Will, by that very deed,
Become a universal monarch, a powerful lord of humans
With a pleasing, beautiful body that is a joy to behold.

1.113 “The one who has performed that action will have a long life
And be endowed with the bliss of a singular purity.
Their body will not be pained by sickness.
Such is the karmic fruit of offering a lamp.

1.114 “By having honored a well-gone one with a lamp,
They will be free from the harm of thieves and the punishment of kings,
Free from murderers, and free from adulterous spouses.
By that action they will never encounter calamity.

1.115 “They will be happy, know good harvests, and always be without fear.
They will always have wealth and prosperity, riches and grain,
And their supreme pleasure grove will be ornamented
With a variety of flower garlands, verdure, vines, and leaves.

1.116 “They will look upon the buddhas, the world leaders,
And seeing that, moreover, they will be enraptured;
Thus will they honor them respectfully.
They will give up their kingdom and take to the monk’s life.

1.117 “By offering a lamp to the stūpa of a thus-gone one
Who is of limitless praise, limitless vision, and limitless intelligence,
They will themselves be endowed with limitless intelligence
And illuminate every direction like a lamp.

1.118 “Having illuminated with a great lamp
The stūpa of a sage, a supreme being,
They will attain the stainless, uncontaminated awakening,
And with the pure eye they will illuminate all directions like a lamp.

1.119 “By having offered a lamp to the stūpa of a well-gone one,
They will be endowed with liberation, intelligence, and the ten powers,
And they will cross to the far shore of the unshared qualities of a thus-gone one.
They will become a well-gone one endowed with the universal eye.

1.120 “And with the flickering of their lamp-like flame,
They will illuminate unceasingly and without exception
The full sum of each and every world system
That exists in all directions.

1.121 “Such are the powers that arise
From having offered a lamp to a noble being.
All beings who have served the lamp-like ones
Will have great power and see the ultimate truth.[37]

1.122 “Suppose that for the sake of honoring the pratyekabuddhas
Someone has made an offering of a single lamp
And has made a lamp-wick the size of Mount Meru,
And suppose it illuminates all worlds without exception.

1.123 “And suppose they have made an offering of lamps
With similar attributes into infinity in all directions,
And with aspirations for the awakening of a pratyekabuddha
They keep them burning for infinite hundreds of eons.

1.124 “Compared to that, if someone who, aspiring for complete awakening,[38]

Illuminates a supreme stūpa with the fire from a blade of grass,
This act is superior, and its results much greater—
So say the buddhas, who see the ultimate truth.

1.125 “Suppose that countless beings in the ten directions,
Because they wish for the state of a pratyekabuddha,
Have likewise each offered lamps
And kept them burning for countless eons.

1.126 “And suppose that someone, for the sake of the world, wishes for the state of a well-gone one
And offers a lamp or prostrates one time
To the stūpa of the most excellent one in the world.
Compared to that, this one will be exceptionally distinguished by the merit that results.

1.127 “The domain of the buddhas is difficult to see and impossible to conceive of.
Hearing of it generates faith and delight,
But immature ones who are faithless and have not received the supreme Dharma
Will lose heart.

1.128 “Therefore, since the protectors of entire worlds,
Those whose domains are the pure Dharma, are rarely encountered,
With a faithful mind one should make aspirations for the sake of buddhahood
In the presence of the sages.”

1.129 The Blessed One having thus spoken, the venerable Śāriputra, the entire assembly, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

1.130 *This concludes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “Offering Lamps.”*

Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman, the chief editor and translator, Bandé Yeshé Dé, and so forth.

Notes

1. See 1.96 and n.30.

2. Lewis R. Lancaster, K 408, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, accessed January 30, 2025. CBETA; SAT.

3. Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 91, no. 169.

4. *Nagarāvalambikā, grong khyer gyis 'tsho ba*, Toh 205. This story of the beggar woman was itself a very popular narrative found in several iterations. See the introduction to *The City Beggar Woman*, i.1. In other versions, because of her great vow to become a buddha her lamp cannot be extinguished (i.2).

5. *The City Beggar Woman*, 1.2–1.6.

6. This passage, starting here and running until the end of this paragraph, is difficult to make good sense of based the Tibetan alone, so our translation is informed by the Chinese translation (Taishō 702.16. 803c22–27). Here, the Chinese does not begin with "these four immeasurable qualities" (*dpag tu med pa bzhi po 'di dag*) but "four kinds of supreme marvelous qualities" (四種勝妙善法), probably corresponding to *legs par yongs su sbyangs pa'i chos rnams*. It makes it clear that it is the buddhas who possesses these four qualities and that, moreover, it is they who cause beings to attain the "immeasurable" (無量) results, the five uncontaminated aggregates, and so forth. We thus understand *dpag tu med pa bzhi po 'di dag* to refer to the four qualities possessed by the buddhas that are enumerated in the following paragraph. The Chinese can be translated as follows: "O, Śāriputra! Buddhas have four kinds of supreme marvelous qualities, which can make sentient beings attain immeasurable fruits, immeasurable radiance, immeasurable marvelous form, immeasurable stores of merit, immeasurable stores of bliss, immeasurable stores of discipline, absorption, insight, liberation, knowledge and wisdom of liberation, eloquence, and unattached and untainted qualities" (爾時世尊告舍利弗言：舍利弗！佛有四種勝妙善法，能令眾生得無量果、無量光明、無量妙色、無量福藏、無量樂藏，無量戒、定、智慧、解脫、解脫知見、辯才之藏，一切無著無漏之法。). The Tibetan might be literally translated *prima facie* as follows: "These four immeasurable qualities are endowed with thoroughly refined attributes and are immeasurable ripening, immeasurable radiance, immeasurable stores of merit, immeasurable form, and immeasurable stores of bliss; they are engagement in discipline, in absorption, in wisdom, and in the knowledge and wisdom of liberation, they are engagement in correct discernment, and they become the cessation of the defilements without further appropriation" (*dpag tu med pa bzhi po 'di dag ni legs par yongs su sbyangs pa'i chos rnams dang ldan pa/ rnam par smin pa dpag tu med pa/ snang ba dpag tu med pa/ bsod nams la yang dag par gzhol ba dpag tu med pa/ gzugs dpag tu med pa/ bde ba la yang dag par gzhol ba dpag tu med pa dag ste/ de dag ni tshul khrims la 'jug pa dang/ ting nge 'dzin dang/ shes rab dang/ rnam par grol ba dang/ rnam par grol ba'i ye shes mthong ba la 'jug pa dang/ so so yang dag par rig pa la 'jug pa dang/ len pa med par zag pa zad par 'gyur ba dag go//*). Given the context of the teaching that follows, it is appropriate that here the Buddha teaches on the qualities of buddhas that make them worthy of offering and based on which beings can reach such attainments.

7. These five (discipline, absorption, wisdom, liberation, and the knowledge and vision of liberation) are together known as the "five uncontaminated aggregates" (*pañca-anāsravaskandha, zag med kyi phung po lnga*) or the five aggregates beyond the world (*lokottaraskandha, 'jig rten las 'das pa'i phung po*

lnga) that characterize noble beings, in contrast to the ordinary five aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations, and consciousness). They are listed frequently in sūtras such as the *Prajñāpāramitā* sūtras (see for instance *The Perfection of Wisdom in Twenty-Five Thousand Lines* [Toh 9], 59.18).

8. From this point up to the beginning of the third "immeasurable quality," the Tibetan simply reads *bsam gtan par gyur pa/* ("...has become endowed with concentration [*dhyāna*]"), which perhaps makes little sense following the perfection of discipline. It seems something has gone missing in the transmission here, as we would expect to find an enumeration of all four qualities. We have thus reconstructed this segment (i.e., regarding the first and second qualities) on the basis of the Chinese translation (Taishō 702.16. 803c27–804a3), which indeed suggests such an omission in the Tibetan text. The Chinese also explicitly numbers the four items. Where the Chinese and Tibetan do line up in this paragraph, they correspond quite closely. The Chinese reads, "O, Śāriputra! What are the four? (1) First is called that a thus-gone, worthy, complete and perfect Buddha has accomplished the perfection of discipline and is endowed with immeasurable discipline. (2) Second, having accomplished the perfection of concentration, he is endowed with immeasurable concentration. (3) Third, having accomplished the perfection of wisdom, he is endowed with immeasurable wisdom, vast wisdom, penetrating wisdom, wisdom of the nature of reality, incalculable wisdom, definitive wisdom, and knowledge and wisdom that is definitive. (4) Having accomplished a mind free from pollution, a mind with excellent thoughts, he is endowed with [the state of] marvelous liberation, the foremost liberation. These are the four kinds of supreme marvelous qualities" (舍利弗！何等為四？一者謂如來、應、正遍知得尸波羅蜜，具無量戒；二者、得禪波羅蜜，具無量定；三者、得波若波羅蜜，具無量慧及廣智慧、觀達慧、如性慧、無數慧、決定慧、畢定知見；四者、得無濁心、善勝作心，具妙解脫、第一解脫。是為四種勝妙善法。).

9. s*angs rgyas kyi chos* (**buddhadharma*) might also refer to the teachings (Dharma) of a buddha.

10. Our translation of *de bzhin gshegs pa'i phyir dang gzhi de las de bzhin gshegs pa yid la byed* as "focusing their attention on the goal of attaining the state of a thus-gone one and on that basis the Thus-Gone One himself" is tentative and is based on the following sentence, the meaning of which is clear. Later on, the Blessed One explains that offerings should be made with the aspiration to attain the state of a buddha, not, for example, the state of a pratyekabuddha (1.122).

11. Reading Stok *ngan ngon*. Degé reads *dan ngon*.

12. Reading Stok *cung zad tsam ma*. Degé reads simply *tsam mam*.

13. Reading Stok *cung zad tsam ma*. Degé reads simply *tsam mam*.

14. Reading Stok, Choné, Kangxi, Lithang, Narthang, and Yongle *shes byed pa*. Degé reads *zhes byed pa*.

15. It is not evident here what the four dharmas to be understood through faith are. One possibility is the set given in the next paragraph: that of the actions (*las*), thoughts (*bsam pa*), mind (*sems*), and insight (*lhag mthong*) of a being.

16. Reading Choné, Kangxi, Lithang, Narthang, and Yongle *de*. Degé reads *de la* ("therefore" or "in that regard").

17. Reading Choné, Kangxi, Lithang, Narthang, and Yongle *mchod rten gnas* (**caityasthāna*). Degé reads *mchod rten rnams* ("stūpas").

18. The translation of these two lines is tentative. The Tibetan term *gzhal med khang*, literally meaning "immeasurable palace," usually translates the Sanskrit *vimāna*, which can refer to an aerial chariot or a palace, usually of seven stories. *Vimāna* can also refer to a grove, arbor, or estate. It is also an element of Indian temple design, equivalent to *śikhara*, in which case the meaning varies but often refers to a tower or dome connected to the main shrine or inner sanctum. Given the range of possibilities here, we have used the likely Sanskrit equivalent. Rather than *gis brgyan* in the second line, Peking and Yongle read *gos brgyan*. For the first line, Stok reads *skyed mos tshal gyi gzhi ni* rather than *na*; in this case, it could be the grounds that are adorned with the trees or the trees and vimānas.

19. Reading Choné, Kangxi, Lhasa, Lithang, and Narthang *gtong byed la*. Degé reads *gtong byed pa*, which might suggest that it is the flowers that are sending forth fragrance. It is not clear where the gods' question begins.

20. The translation of these two lines is also tentative. In the previous verse, the flower was singular (*me tog 'di*), and so this does not appear to refer to the same flower.

21. Reading Stok *lha'i bu de bdag yun ji srid cig na*. Degé reads *lha'i bu de dag yun ji srid cig na*, which indicates either that the duration of the life of all the gods or gods in general is known or that all the gods know the duration of their own lives. The reading in Stok accords with the verse summary.

22. The five signs of the impending death of a god are enumerated in *The Application of Mindfulness of the Sacred Dharma* (*Saddharmasmṛtyupasthāna*, Toh 287, 4.B.876) as follows: (1) dust will begin to gather on the god, (2) his faculties will weaken, (3) he will no longer appreciate the five sense pleasures, (4) when the other gods see him they will feel embarrassed, and (5) his goddesses will leave him for other gods.

23. "Nor without eyes at all" is a tentative translation for *khog long mig ma yin*. Choné, Kangxi, Lithang, Narthang, and Yongle read *khrog long mig ma yin*.

24. The term *gzugs*, referring by context to one of the traditional arts and sciences, might translate the *rūpa* (one of the many meanings of *rūpa* [= *rūpaka*] being drama or theater. In *The Play in Full* (*Lalitavistara*, Toh 95, 12.65), *rūpa* is found in a long list of traditional skills between "painting" (*ri mo*, *citra*) and "dramatic action" (*gzugs kyi las*, *rūpakarman*).

25. Reading Stok, Choné, Kangxi, Lithang, Lhasa, Narthang, and Yongle *gong du yang*. D reads *gang du yang*.

26. The eye that is born from the mind is the eye of wisdom, the result of training.

27. We take *so so rig pa* to be a metrically expedient form of *so so yang dag par rig pa* (Skt. *pratisaṃvid*/*-vedana*). The four correct discernments are those of meaning, phenomena, language, and eloquence. These are the essential means by which the buddhas impart their teachings, and four aspects by which a bodhisattva or thus-gone one makes correct discernment that is without mistake and does not confuse one phenomenon with another. Knowing worldly minds, the clairvoyance of the gods, and the correct discernments are perhaps the "three factors" mentioned in the next verse.

28. It is not clear whether *tshangs pa* refers to Brahmā himself or simply a member of the class of brahmā gods.

29. There appear to be more than eight attainments listed here.

30. This verse, described here as an "inspired utterance" or *udāna* (Tib. *che du brjod pa*), appears in the *Udānavarga* (verse 4.37): *ārabhadhvaṃ niṣkramadhvaṃ yujyadhvaṃ buddhaśāsane | dhunidhvaṃ mṛtyunaḥ sainyaṃ naḍāgāram iva kuñjaraḥ*.

31. Reading Stok, Peking, and Yongle *sems can phan 'dod pas* (Choné and Narthang similarly read *'dod phas* according to the Comparative Edition). Degé reads *sems can phan 'dogs pa*, meaning that they currently benefit beings.

32. It is not clear whether *tshangs pa* refers to Brahmā himself or simply a member of the class of brahmā god.

33. Our translation of these two lines is tentative. Degé reads *ci yi las shig nges par des bsten na//gang gis de yi lus ni shin tu mdzas*. This accords with other statements that the divine retinue will be very attractive and never unpleasant to look at. See, for example, 1.110.

34. The translation of this line is also tentative. Degé reads *'phags pa'i tshul khrims mkhas pa su mi sten*. We have suggested reading the verb *sten pa* (= Skt. √*sev*) as "to serve" or "to attend to," both here and in the previous verse, although in both cases it might also mean "to apply oneself to" or "to take recourse"; thus, in this case, "What wise one would not take recourse to the discipline of the noble ones?"

35. It is not clear where this quotation begins and ends. The following verse uses the first-person pronoun *bdag*, and given the context it is possible that this contemplation or aspiration begins here. The pronoun "I" in the fourth line here is thus added by us, as are those in the following verse, except in the first line, where it occurs in the Tibetan.

36. Reading Stok *de'i 'byor ba*. Degé reads *de yis 'byor ba*.

37. This line comprises a tentative translation of the highly condensed phrase *mthu chen don dam mthong*.

38. The Tibetan reads simply *byang chub* ("awakening") here, however, in accordance with the context, this must be distinct from the awakening of a pratyekabuddha (*rang rgyal byang chub*).

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Glossary

absorption

ting nge ’dzin

ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

samādhi

The second of the five uncontaminated aggregates (*pañca-anāsravaskandha, zag med kyi phung po lnga*).

affliction

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

Use standard definition

asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

Use standard definition

attention

yid la byed, yid la byed pa, yid la mdzad pa

ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད།, ཡིད་ལ་བྱེད་པ།, ཡིད་ལ་མཛད་པ།

manasikāra, manasi√kṛ, manaskāra, manas√kṛ

Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

Use standard definition

blessed one

bcom ldan ’das

བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

bhagavat

Use standard definition

Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā

A class of gods ruled over by Brahmā, they are said in some sources to inhabit the first three form realms (*rūpadhātu*), while in others they encompass all twenty form and formless realms (*ārūpyadhātu*).

brahmā abodes

tshangs pa’i gnas

ཚངས་པའི་གནས།

brahmavihāra

In The Sūtra on Offering Lamps this term seems to refer to both the realm of the brahmā gods (= *brahmaloka*) and to the related meditative state, which is generally considered to be the first concentration (*dhyāna*). In other contexts this term often refers to the four “immeasurables” of love, compassion, joy, and equanimity.

buddha eye

sangs rgyas kyi spyan

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་སྤྱན།

buddhacakṣus

The omniscience seeing both how things are ultimately and how they manifest in their variety. The fifth of the five eyes (*pañcacakṣus*), the superior levels of vision experienced by realized beings, the other four being the physical eye (*māṃsacakṣus*), the wisdom eye (*prajñācakṣus*), the Dharma eye (*dharmacakṣus*), and the buddha eye (*buddhacakṣus*).

calculation by hand

lag rtsis

ལག་རྩིས།

mudrā

One of the traditional arts, it refers to a method of calculation and is associated with mathematical terms in lists of traditional skills such as the one found in The Play in Full (*Lalitavistara*, Toh 95), 12.65.

cessation of the defilements without further appropriation

len pa med par zag pa zad pa

ལེན་པ་མེད་པར་ཟག་པ་ཟད་པ།

concentration

bsam gtan

བསམ་གཏན།

dhyāna

Use standard definition

correct discernment

so so yang dag par rig pa

སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ།

pratisaṃvid

defilement

kun nas nyon mongs pa

ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

saṃkleśa

Use standard definition

dharma

chos

ཆོས།

dharma

Use standard definition

discipline

tshul khrims

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

śīla

The first of the five uncontaminated aggregates (*pañca-anāsravaskandha*, *zag med kyi phung po lnga*).

divine eye

lha'i mig

ལྷའི་མིག

divyacakṣus

Clairvoyance, i.e., the supernormal ability to see to an unlimited distance, observe events on other worlds, see through mountains, and so forth. This is the first of the six (or sometimes five) superknowledges (*ṣaḍabhijñā*) and the second of the five eyes (*pañcacakṣus*). The five eyes are five superior levels of vision experienced by realized beings, the other four being the physical eye (*māṃsacakṣus*), the divine eye (*divyacakṣus*), the wisdom eye (*prajñācakṣus*), and the Dharma eye (*dharmacakṣus*).

drama

gzugs

གཟུགས།

rūpa

One of the traditional arts occurring in lists of arts and sciences such as the one found in The Play in Full (*Lalitavistara*, Toh 95), 12.65.

eloquence

spobs pa

སྤོབས་པ།

pratibhāna

The capacity to speak in a confident and inspiring manner.

eon

bskal pa

བསྐལ་པ།

kalpa

Use standard definition

four correct discernments

so so yang dag par rig pa bzhi

སོ་སོ་ཡང་དག་པར་རིག་པ་བཞི།

catuḥpratisaṃvid

The four correct and unhindered discriminating knowledges of (1) the doctrine or Dharma, (2) meaning, (3) language, and (4) eloquence. These are the essential means by which the buddhas impart their teachings.

fundamental precept

bslab pa'i gzhi

བསླབ་པའི་གཞི།

śikṣāpada

Use standard definition

gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

Use standard definition

Gnosis

ye shes

ཡེ་ཤེས།

jñāna

go forth

rab tu ’byung ba

རབ་ཏུ་འབྱུང་བ།

pra √vraj

Use standard definition

god

lha, lha’i bu

ལྷ།, ལྷའི་བུ།

deva, devaputra

Standard definition (but here there is an exception to being a “diversion from the spiritual path” when it results from offering a lamp to the stūpa of a buddha)

goddess

lha mo, lha yi bu mo

ལྷ་མོ།, ལྷ་ཡི་བུ་མོ།

Standard definition (“god”)

Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་ཅུ་རྩ་གསུམ།

trayastriṃśa, trāyastriṃśa

Use standard definition

heavenly realms

mtho ris

མཐོ་རིས།

svarga

Although *mtho ris* can refer to all three of the higher realms (those of humans, asuras, and devas), in The Sūtra on Offering Lamps it is described specifically as the abode of the devas, distinct from a human existence.

inspired utterance

ched du brjod pa

ཆེད་དུ་བརྗོད་པ།

udāna

A genre of Buddhist literature included among the nine or twelve types, *udāna* consists of a formal mode of expression, usually on a religious topic. A specific text in the Pali canon, the *Udāna*, comprises a number of such stories, which give a short prose narrative concluding with the Buddha giving an inspired utterance in verse. The *Udāna* in Chinese does not include the frame story, but only the verses. In Sanskrit, thirty-three of such works, also in verse, are collected in the *Udānavarga*.

jaundice

skya rbab nad

སྐྱ་རྦབ་ནད།

pāṇḍuroga

Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ་མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

jetavanam anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ

Use standard definition

knowledge and vision of liberation

rnam par grol ba'i ye shes mthong ba

རྣམ་བར་གྲོལ་བའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཐོང་བ།

vimuktijñānadarśana

The fifth of the five uncontaminated aggregates (*pañca-anāsravaskandha*, *zag med kyi phung po lnga*). In Nāgārjuna's explanation of this compound there are two stages: (1) one knows the destruction of the impurities (*kṣayajñāna*), and (2) one attains liberation (*vimukti*), which is seen (*darśana*) clearly (*Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* 44.3, Lamotte 2001, p. 1547).

liberation

rnam par grol ba

རྣམ་བར་གྲོལ་བ།

vimokṣa

The fourth of the five uncontaminated aggregates (*pañca-anāsravaskandha*, *zag med kyi phung po lnga*).

lower realms

log par ltung ba

ལོག་པར་ལྟུང་བ།

vinipāta

Literally “falling down” or “ruin,” a collective name for the three lower realms: those of animals, pretas, and hell beings.

maireya

bcos pa’i chang

བཅོས་པའི་ཆང་།

maireya

A spiced, sugar-based alcoholic drink made with a secondary fermentation process, it is mentioned in Sanskrit sources from the later centuries bce, often in compound with *surā*. Pali *meraya*. See McHugh 2021a; McHugh 2021b, pp. 50–53.

Maudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ།

maudgalyāyana

Use standard definition MARKUP: This is only mentioned in the introduction.

miraculous power

rdzu ’phrul

རྫུ་འཕྲུལ།

ṛddhi

Use standard definition

Mount Meru

ri rab

རི་རབ།

meru, sumeru

Use standard definition

nāga

klu

ཀླུ།

nāga

Use standard definition

noble lineage

’phags pa’i rigs

འཕགས་པའི་རིགས།

noble path

’phags pa’i lam

འཕགས་པའི་ལམ།

āryamārga, āryapatha

The noble eightfold path comprises (1) right view, (2) right intention, (3) right speech, (4) right conduct, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right absorption.

one hundred sextillion

bye ba khrag khrig brgya stong

བྱེ་བ་ཁྲག་ཁྲིག་བརྒྱ་སྟོང་།

koṭiniyutaśatasahasra

If the Abhidharma system is followed, this is a number calculated by multiplying a *koṭi* (*bye ba*), or ten million; by a *niyuta* (*khrag khrig*), or a hundred billion; and by a *śatasahasra* (*brgya stong*), or one hundred thousand, which all together equals ten to the 23rd power or a hundred sextillion. This term is often used to express a number so large as to be inconceivable.

paṇḍaka

ma ning

མ་ནིང་།

paṇḍaka

In the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, the term *paṇḍaka* encompasses diverse physiological and behavioral conditions such as intersexuality, erectile dysfunction, and fetishes that imply an inability to engage in normative sexual behavior. The criteria for being designated a paṇḍaka are not strictly physiological, but neither are they grounded exclusively in gender identity or sexual orientation. Paṇḍaka is, in effect, a catchall category and, as such, defies easy translations like “neuter,” “androgyne,” “intersexual,” “transgender,” or “paraphiliac.”

perfection of wisdom

shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa

ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་ཕ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ།

prajñāpāramitā

Use standard definition

Prajñāvarman

pradz+nya bar+ma

ཟླཀྱེ་བརྨ།

prajñāvarman

Indian Bengali paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Arriving in Tibet at the invitation of the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen, he assisted in the translation of numerous canonical scriptures. He also authored several philosophical commentaries contained in the Tengyur collection.

pratyekabuddha

rang rgyal, rang sangs rgyas

རང་རྒྱལ།, རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

pratyekabuddha, pratyekajina

Use standard definition

Preceptor

mkhan po

མཁན་པོ།

upādhyāya

Use standard definition

pure conduct

tshangs spyod

ཚངས་སྤྱོད།

brahmacarya

Use standard definition

realm of Yama

gshin rje'i 'jig rten

གཤིན་རྗེའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

yamaloka

Use standard definition

sage

thub, thub pa

ཐུབ།, ཐུབ་པ།

muni

An epithet of a buddha. The Sanskrit term connotes "silence" or "quiescence," which is regarded as a central quality of sages. The Tibetan *thub pa* means "capable one."

Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

śakra

Use standard definition

ṣaṇḍha

za ma

ཟ་མ།

ṣaṇḍha

Someone whose sexual organs (or part of them) have been removed, or who is sexually impotent for some other reason.

Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ཤཱ་རི་བུ།

śāriputra

Use standard definition

śrāvaka

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

Use standard definition

Śrāvastī

mnyam yod

མཉམ་ཡོད།

śrāvastī

Use standard definition

stages of penetrating insight

nges par ’byed pa’i cha dang ’thun pa

ངེས་པར་འབྱེད་པའི་ཆ་དང་འཐུན་པ།

nirvedhabhāgīya

Four stages in the development of insight on the path of application (*prayogamārga*), which are given the following names in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*: heat (*uṣmagata*), peak (*mūrdha*), tolerance (*kṣānti*), and highest worldly dharma (*laukikāgradharma*).

Store

yang dag par gzhol ba

ཡང་དག་པར་གཞོལ་བ།

samavasaraṇa

stūpa

mchod rten

མཆོད་རྟེན།

caitya, stūpa

Use standard definition

surā

’bru’i chang

འབྲུའི་ཆང་།

surā

An intoxicating fermented drink made from grains, it is mentioned in Sanskrit sources from the later centuries bce, often in compound with *maireya*. See McHugh 2021b, pp. 19–23.

ten powers

stobs bcu

སྟོབས་བཅུ།

daśabala

Ten things that a buddha knows: (1) what is possible and what is impossible, (2) karmic cause and result, (3) various elements, (4) various inclinations, (5) levels of ability, (6) every path of travel, (7) the pure and afflicted sides of concentration, meditative states, and absorptions, (8) memory of former abodes, (9) death and rebirth, and (10) that the defilements have been eliminated.

three types of knowledge

rig pa gsum

རིག་པ་གསུམ།

trividyā

The three kinds of knowledge obtained by the Buddha on the night of his awakening. These comprise the knowledge of the death and rebirth of sentient beings, the knowledge of remembering previous lives, and the knowledge of the cessation of defilements.

thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

Use standard definition

universal monarch

’khor los sgyur ba

འཁོར་ལོས་སྒྱུར་བ།

cakravartin

Use standard definition

unshared qualities of a thus-gone one

de bzhin ma ’dres chos

དེ་བཞིན་མ་འདྲེས་ཚོས།

Use standard definition

uṣṇīṣa

spyi gtsug

སྤྱི་གཙུག

uṣṇīṣa

Use standard definition <Markup: please add that the uṣṇīṣa extends upward so far that the top of it cannot be seen—to help the reader understand it as a simile for profound mindfulness.>

vimāna

gzhal med khang

གཞལ་མེད་ཁང་།

vimāna

The Sanskrit term *vimāna* can refer to a multistoried mansion or palace, or even an estate, but is more often used in the sense of a celestial chariot of the gods, sometimes taking the form of a multistoried palace. It is also an element of Indian temple design, equivalent to or including a *śikhara*, in which case the exact meaning varies, but the term often refers to a tower or dome connected to the main shrine or inner sanctum.

well-gone one

bde bar gshegs, bde bar gshegs pa, bde gshegs

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས།, བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།, བདེ་གཤེགས།

sugata

Use standard definition

wisdom

shes rab

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā

In general, this is the mental factor of discerning the specific qualities of a given object. As the sixth of the six perfections, it refers to the profound understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena, the realization of ultimate reality. In The Sūtra on Offering Lamps, this term also refers to the third of the five uncontaminated aggregates (*pañca-anāsravaskandha, zag med kyi phung po lnga*).

without activity

byed pa med pa

བྱེད་པ་མེད་པ།

niśceṣṭa

worthy

dgra bcom pa

དགྲ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat

Use standard definition