མཆོད་རྟེན་བསྐོར་བའི་ཚིགས་སུ་བཅད་པ།

The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines

Caityapradakṣiṇagāthā

· Toh 321 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 72 (mdo sde, sa), folios 198.b–201.a

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

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Summary

s.1 In response to a question from Śāriputra, the Buddha extols the benefits that result from the practice of circumambulating shrines, that is, walking around them while keeping them on the right-hand side. Such benefits include being reborn in beautiful and healthy bodies with intelligent minds and virtuous qualities, in fortunate and privileged circumstances, and in various heavenly realms. Ultimately, the Buddha says, such practice may even result in the achievement of different types of awakening.

Acknowledgments

ac.1 Translated, introduced, and annotated by David Fiordalis and George FitzHerbert, in consultation with a draft translation made from the Tibetan by Khenpo Kalsang Gyaltsen and Chodrungma Kunga Chodron of the Sakya Pandita Translation Group.

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

Introduction

i.1 *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* concerns the benefits of performing the practice known in Sanskrit as *pradakṣiṇa* (Pali: *padakkhiṇa*). This term means "on the right-hand side," and refers to the practice of paying homage to or venerating something (or someone) through circumambulation. This usually entails walking around the sacred object or person in a clockwise direction so that one keeps whatever is being circumambulated on one's right-hand side as a gesture of respect. This ancient Indian practice remains prevalent throughout contemporary South Asia and its cultural diasporas, and among Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike. Translated into Tibetan as *bskor ba* ("circumambulate" or "circle"), *pradakṣiṇa* continues to be one of the main devotional practices for Buddhists in Tibet and around the world. Such a practice may involve walking around a holy site, a sacred mountain or lake, a sacred tree, a holy person, or the shrine that houses such a person's remains. The practice can also be accompanied by prayer, song, or the recitation of mantras. As such, it is possible to imagine reciting a text like *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* translated here as part of the practice,[1] even though it reads more like a hymn or encomium to such a practice than a liturgy for one.

i.2 *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* focuses specifically on the benefits of ritual circumambulation of a stūpa or caitya of a buddha. The word *stūpa* refers to the mounds or domed reliquary monuments that are among the most visible features of Buddhist material culture and appear to date from at least the time of King Aśoka in the third century BCE.[2] The word *caitya* can be understood as almost synonymous with stūpa. However, it can also have a somewhat broader designation in reference to a holy place or natural object, such as a cave or tree, as well as the shrine or construction that marks the site as holy. The latter may even be something as simple as a pile of rocks. Both *caitya* and *stūpa* are translated with the same Tibetan term, *mchod rten*, meaning a "sup-

port" or "basis" (*rten*) for an "offering" or "veneration" (*mchod*), and so we have chosen to translate this term as "shrine."

i.3 While stūpas or caityas may have been simple constructions at first, and they still may be, they also came to feature ornate designs rich in layers of story and symbolism, such as at the great stūpas in India at Bhārhut, Sāñcī, and Amaravati, and the stūpa complex at Borobodur in Indonesia.[3] While many stūpas are said to contain physical relics of a buddha, they may also contain ritually empowered representations of a buddha or of the awakened state in the form of statues, texts, mantras, and so forth, which represent the body, speech, and mind of an awakened buddha. Some Buddhist texts also speak of the value of making even small mounds of dirt or clay and treating them as stūpas or caityas, which may be related to the practice of making small clay votive offerings (Tib. *tsa tsa*).[4] In any case, the practice of making stūpas or caityas and venerating them goes back to the first millennium of Buddhism in India. [5]

i.4 The benefits of sponsoring, making, ornamenting, cleaning, and otherwise venerating stūpas or caityas are mentioned in numerous Buddhist texts found in the Kangyur and elsewhere. For instance, one that bears a particularly close relationship to *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* is *The Verses for Prasenajit*, *Toh 32*2, the very next work in the Degé Kangyur. Also, *The Sūtra on Dependent Arising* (*Pratītyasamutpādasūtra*, Toh 212/520/980) describes the merit earned by making a stūpa where one did not exist before, even if it is only the size of a fruit "with a central pillar the size of a needle and a parasol the size of a flower" (Toh 212, 1.6).[6] *The White Lotus of the Good Dharma* (Toh 113, 2.105–2.123) mentions the rewards of worshiping stūpas and images of the buddhas, while *Describing the Benefits of Producing Representations of the Thus-Gone One* (*Toh 320*) focuses exclusively on the benefits of producing images of them.

i.5 *The Avalokinī Sūtra* (*Toh 195*), another text that discusses the benefits of worshiping stūpas, has a number of stanzas containing lines that are quite close or

identical to some found in *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* translated here. *The Avalokinī Sūtra* has a close relationship with the *Avalokitasūtra* of the *Mahāvastu*, a Vinaya work said to belong to the Lokottaravāda strand of the Mahāsāṅghika monastic lineage, and some of its stanzas are also quoted in Śāntideva's compendium, *The Training Anthology* (*Śikṣāsamuccaya*).[7] Additionally, the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, which was translated into Tibetan and formed the basis for the Tibetan monastic lineages, contains further stanzas, in sections detailed later in the introduction, that are nearly identical to some found in *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines*.

i.6 In addition to these parallel stanzas found in other texts, previous scholarship has identified a number of Sanskrit witnesses to different versions of this work, with the title *The Verses on Circumambulation* (*Pradakṣiṇagāthā*) given when a colophon is extant. These witnesses include some fragments found at Bamiyan (in present day Afghanistan), Kucha (in present day Xinjiang Autonomous Region), and Gilgit (in present day northern Pakistan).[8] The Gilgit manuscripts, which date approximately to the sixth or seventh century CE, include two separate fragments of several stanzas each and a complete version of the text that corresponds to the first forty-four verses of the Tibetan translation.[9]

i.7 In addition to the above Sanskrit witnesses, there is another, somewhat later Sanskrit manuscript—likely of northern Indian origin, although purchased in Nepal—containing another complete version of the work. This version is slightly longer than the fifty-eight verses found in the canonical Tibetan translation of the work, but seems to correspond quite closely to what has been preserved in Tibetan.[10] The colophon to the work in this manuscript refers to it by the title *Pradakṣiṇāgāthā* (*The Verses on Circumambulation*), and in the manuscript it directly precedes another version of the aforementioned *Verses for Prasenajit*, *Toh 322*.

i.8 Given the many and various Buddhist works that discuss themes related to constructing and worshiping stūpas and caityas, and the evidence from the different versions of *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* preserved in Sanskrit, it is possible to take a text-critical approach to analyzing the content of this work. *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* can be analyzed in several parts. The first part corresponds to the first forty-five stanzas, which can be seen as a complete work in itself. These verses are framed by a narrator's voice telling the audience that Śāriputra asked the Buddha a question about the benefits of circumambulating shrines. It quotes Śāriputra's question in direct speech, and then gives the Buddha's response in forty-two verses detailing the many future benefits of such a practice. This part of the work is further linked thematically and poetically by the refrain, "Those who circumambulate a shrine…" (Tib. *mchod rten bskor ba byas pas ni*, Skt. *stūpaṃ kṛtvā pradakṣiṇaṃ*), which is found in most of these stanzas.

i.9 While verse 45 can be seen as a concluding verse to those preceding it, it can also serve as a kind of bridge to the verses that follow. The identity of the speaker of the latter verses is not made clear in the work itself, but almost identical parallels to verses 46–48 are found in *The Chapters on Monastic Discipline* (*Vinayavastu*), *Toh*1, of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya—located both in *The Chapter on Shelter* (*Śayanāsanavastu*, Toh 1-15) and in *The Chapter on Schisms in the Saṅgha* (*Saṅghabhedavastu*, Toh 1-17)—in the context of a narration describing Anāthapiṇḍada's approach as he first encounters the Buddha.[11] Although the extant Sanskrit for these verses does not mention either shrines or circumambulation explicitly, the stanzas are linked thematically and poetically to what comes before them in *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* by the idea that "taking a single step" has a value that cannot be measured by vast quantities of gold. In the Vinaya it is a step taken toward the Buddha, while in *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines*, the implication—as made explicit in the Tibetan translation—is that it is a step taken along the route of circumambulation.

i.10 The remaining verses, 49–58, have an almost identical parallel in a series of verses found in *The Chapter on Medicines* (*Bhaiṣajyavastu*, Toh 1-6, 9.51–9.67) in the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya. Here, they are spoken by the Buddha Śākyamuni to King Prasenajit and others in relation to the veneration of the former Buddha Kāśyapa's relics, which the Buddha Śākyamuni had just made visible.[12] It is also worth mentioning that this same episode is also found twice in the *Divyāvadāna*.[13] Such parallels aside, these verses are linked thematically and poetically to what comes before them in *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* by the fact that in them the Buddha Śākyamuni extols the tremendous value—described as exceeding vast quantities of gold from the Jambu River—of various acts of worship "at shrines of a buddha" (Skt. *buddhacaityeṣu*, Tib. *sangs rgyas mchod rten la*). The first of these acts is "taking a step" at shrines of a buddha, and subsequent verses mention other acts of worship "at shrines of a buddha," such as offering a lump of clay, flower petals, a garland, scented water, and so forth.

i.11 *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* concludes with two significant claims.[14] The first is that the merit earned from venerating a living buddha is the same as one earns by venerating a buddha who has entered nirvāṇa, so long as one does so with the same quality of mind. In the Sanskrit, this quality is described as one of serene confidence or faith (*prasannacitta*), which the Tibetan translation appears to interpret slightly more along the lines of a joyful mind (*dga' ba sems pa*). The second claim is that, since buddhas and their qualities are both inconceivable (or inconceivably great (Skt. *acintya*, Tib. *bsam mi khyab*)), those who have faith (Skt. *prasannānām*, Tib. *dad rnams*) in what is inconceivable will receive karmic results that are also inconceivable; that is, they will become inconceivably great.

i.12 Apart from the various Sanskrit witnesses mentioned above and the canonical Tibetan translation in the Kangyur, a Chinese translation of the work was made by Śikṣānanda 實叉難陀 between 695 and 704 CE, entitled *You rao fo ta gong de jing* (右繞佛塔功德經 Taishō 700).[15] It is located in the Chinese canon

immediately after *The Sūtra on the Merit of Building a Stūpa* (造塔功德經 Taishō 699),[16] a text which corresponds closely to the aforementioned *Sūtra on Dependent Arising*, Toh 212/520/980, in the Tibetan canon.

i.13 There is also a Khotanese version of the work in the Saka language, which survives in a manuscript from the cave library at Dunhuang. This version has been tentatively dated to around 995 CE,[17] and a transliteration and English translation of it were published by Harold W. Bailey.[18] Unlike the extant Sanskrit and Tibetan versions, however, it refers to itself as a sūtra and begins in a style typical of a sūtra in that it is set at Prince Jeta's Grove in Śrāvasti. Although it shares a general theme with other versions of the work, as well as being an encomium on the benefits of circumambulation, its wording and details are different from those preserved in Sanskrit and Tibetan.

i.14 Finally, there is another Tibetan version of the work that is worthy of mention here. It is inscribed in the southern niche of the *mchod rten* opposite the entrance of the Sumtsek (Tib. *gsum brtsegs*) temple at Alchi in Ladakh. This inscription, now fragmentary, has been tentatively dated to the thirteenth century, and was the focus of a detailed philological study by Kurt Tropper (2010).

i.15 Not only does all this evidence add to the complexity of the textual history of *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines*, but it would also seem to point to the widespread popularity of the practices of creating and worshiping shrines and representations of the buddhas. It is indicative of the depth and breadth of support for such practices in Buddhist literature.

i.16 The identity of the translator(s) of the canonical version of *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* into Tibetan is unknown. The work bears no colophon in any version of the Kangyur. However, the title is found in both the Denkarma and the Phanthangma imperial catalogs, where it is listed among translated sūtras of the "Lesser Vehicle" (Tib. *theg pa chung ngu*) and preceded by the

aforementioned *Verses for Prasenajit* (Toh 322).[19] Its inclusion therein thus suggests a translation no later than the early ninth century.

i.17 We are aware of two prior translations of *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines* from Tibetan into English by Warner Belanger (2000) and Elizabeth Cook (1977). In addition, Tropper (2010) includes an English translation of the verses found on the inscription in Alchi.

i.18 Our translation was made from the Tibetan as found in the Degé Kangyur, in consultation with the alternative readings recorded in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*), the Stok Palace Kangyur, and in certain instances other versions of the Kangyur. We also consulted the Sanskrit manuscript held at the Cambridge University Library and its readings informed our work.

The Translation

1.

The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels.

Śāriputra, the greatly wise one,
Foremost among those with wisdom,[20]
Who turns the wheel of Dharma in the world,
Asked the Teacher a question.

1.2 “What karmic result will there be
For those who circumambulate a shrine?
Illustrious one, supreme in the world,
Perfect guide, please tell me.”

1.3 The best of those who walk on two feet,
The teacher, the perfect Buddha, answered,
“I will only teach a portion of the virtues
Of those who circumambulate a shrine.

1.4 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Shall be honored everywhere
By devas, nāgas, and likewise by yakṣas,
And, indeed, by piśācas and rākṣasas.[21]

1.5 “Those who circumambulate a shrine,
Even only a single time,
Having gained the opportunity so hard to find,
Will be freed from the eight inopportune states.

1.6 “Those who circumambulate a shrine

Will possess mindfulness, intelligence,
Beauty, and clearsightedness,
And be honored everywhere.

1.7 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will acquire a long lifespan
As a god or likewise as a human,[22]
And great renown too.

1.8 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be born possessing intelligence[23]
And also a lineage that is pure
In the foremost clan in Jambūdvīpa.

1.9 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will have a kind and pure countenance,
A good complexion, and be bright too.[24]
They will dwell in happiness.

1.10 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will have great wealth and riches.
They will not be miserly, but generous,
And will take pleasure in giving.

1.11 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will achieve great prosperity.
They will be beautiful and gorgeous,
With an attractive and lovely skin tone.

1.12 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will not be deluded about phenomena,
Seeing conditioned things as empty,[25]

And will quickly obtain happiness.

1.13 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be born as a most excellent *kṣatriya*,
Surrounded by a wife and children,
And endowed with strength and vigor.

1.14 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be born as a great landowning brahmin,
Endowed with moral discipline and learning,
With knowledge of the Vedas and mantras.

1.15 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be born as a great landowning householder,
Having much wealth and many riches,
With grain and cattle in abundance.

1.16 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will become lord and sovereign of Jambūdvīpa,
A righteous king whose rule extends
To the ends of the earth.

1.17 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will become a wheel-turning king,
Possessing the seven royal treasures,
And roll the wheel according to the Dharma.

1.18 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will go to higher realms once they pass on from here,
Find joy in the Buddha’s teachings,[26]
Become yogins, and gain great miraculous powers.

1.19 “Those who circumambulate a shrine,

After passing on from the divine realms,
Will be reborn again among humans,
Entering the womb without delusion.

1.20 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will not become tainted
By the impurities and flaws of the womb;
They will be like a pure jewel.[27]

1.21 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will dwell at ease inside their mothers.
They will be at ease as they are born;
At ease they will suckle their mothers’ breasts.

1.22 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be supported and nourished by many servants,
As well as by their fathers,
And always cared for by nurses.[28]

1.23 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will prosper right from birth,
Be dearly beloved of relatives,
And especially doted upon by parents.

1.24 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will not be able to be harmed[29]
By piśācas or rākṣasas.
They will enjoy unhindered abundance.

1.25 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will have an immaculate body
And never be blind or crippled,

Through hundreds of eons.

1.26 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will have perfectly clear eyes,
Long and shapely, dark, alluring,
And also obtain the divine eye.

1.27 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be steady in body,[30] steady in mind,
Steady too in diligence,
And have steady, rounded shoulders.[31]

1.28 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be strong, perfect in shape and form,
And their limbs will be well adorned
With all auspicious marks.

1.29 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be the great lord of the gods,
Śakra, whose miraculous powers are great,
Lord of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

1.30 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be king of the gods in the Heaven Without Strife,
Or likewise in the Heavens of Joy,
Joyful Emanation, or Controlling Others’ Emanations.[32]

1.31 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be lord of brahmās
In the Brahmā World,
Honored by tens of millions of gods.

1.32 “Those who circumambulate a shrine

Will have wisdom and continually be honored
Over tens of billions of eons or, indeed,
For millions upon billions of eons.

1.33 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will have clean bodies, clean clothing,
And the immaculate Dharma,
For tens of millions of eons.

1.34 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be endowed with strength and vigor,
Have no laziness at all,
And achieve the greatest accomplishment.

1.35 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will be steady in diligence, steady in power,
Steady in skill, be their own master,
And swiftly accomplish their goals.

1.36 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will have melodious speech,
A fine, pleasant voice,
And be free from harm and illness.

1.37 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will quickly achieve a rebirth
In a place I myself have described
And have a great urgency there.[33]

1.38 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will obtain the four applications of mindfulness,
The four immeasurable states of mind,

And control over the bases of miraculous power.

1.39 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will obtain the four noble truths,
The faculties, the powers,
And the fruition of the factors of awakening.

1.40 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will become arhats, ones with great miraculous powers,
Possessing the six supernormal faculties,
Without defilement, and all their afflictions dispelled.

1.41 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will release attachment and aversion,
Release all enmities,[34]
And achieve the awakening of a pratyekabuddha.

1.42 “Those who circumambulate a shrine
Will become a tathāgata in the world,
With a body the color of gold
And adorned with the marks.

1.43 “Circumambulation is an act of the body.
Circumambulation is an act of speech.
Circumambulation is an act of the mind.
Circumambulation is also the making of a vow.
Here, one easily achieves through circumambulation
Goals that are difficult to reach.[35]

1.44 “Mere words cannot well convey,
Even slightly, the virtues of those
Who perform a circumambulation

At a shrine of the World Protector.”

1.45 When asked by Śāriputra,
The World Protector explained
The virtues of venerating shrines,
Out of compassion for beings.

1.46 “A hundred horses, a hundred gold pieces,
A hundred mule carts,
And a hundred mare-drawn carriages
Filled with all manner of jewels
Do not add up to even a sixteenth of the worth
Of a single step of a circumambulation.[36]

1.47 “A hundred Kamboja girls[37]
Wearing jeweled earrings and bangles,
Their upper arms bearing golden armlets,
Their necks well adorned with gold necklaces,
Do not add up to even a sixteenth of the worth
Of a single step of a circumambulation.

1.48 “A hundred Himalayan elephants,[38]
With huge bodies, broad chests,
And trunks like plows,
Adorned with gold and jewels,
Do not add up to even a sixteenth of the worth
Of a single step of a circumambulation.

1.49 “Hundreds of thousands of gold pieces from the Jambu River
Are not equal to a single step
Taken with a thought of joy by a wise one[39]
At shrines of a buddha.[40]

1.50 “Hundreds of thousands of nuggets[41] of Jambu River gold
Are not equal to a single lump of clay
Offered with a thought of joy by a wise one
At shrines of a buddha.

1.51 “Hundreds of thousands of bowls of Jambu River gold
Are not equal to a handful of flower petals
Scattered with a thought of joy by a wise one
At shrines of a buddha.

1.52 “Tens of millions of bushels of Jambu River gold
Are not equal to a flower garland
Held up with a thought of joy by a wise one
At shrines of a buddha.

1.53 “Hundreds of thousands of heaps of Jambu River gold
Are not equal to scented water
Sprinkled with a thought of joy by a wise one
At shrines of a buddha.

1.54 “Hundreds of thousands of grams of Jambu River gold
Are not equal to an oil lamp
Lit with a thought of joy by a wise one
At shrines of a buddha.

1.55 “Hundreds of thousands of mountains of gold
Are not equal to a banner or canopy
Raised with a thought of joy by a wise one
At shrines of a buddha.

1.56 “This is the teaching on the benefits
Of making offerings to tathāgatas,

Perfect buddhas, peerless caravan leaders,
Who are limitless, just like the ocean.[42]

1.57 “Whether one makes offerings to a living buddha
Or makes them to one who has passed into nirvāṇa,
There is no difference in merit
If the thought is equally devout.[43]

1.58 “In this way, buddhas are inconceivable;
A buddha’s qualities are also inconceivable.
For those who have faith[44] in the inconceivable,
The karmic fruit is also inconceivable.”[45]

1.59 *This concludes “The Verses On Circumambulating Shrines.”*

Abbreviations

D Degé Kangyur

MS Cambridge MS Os.131

S Stok Palace Kangyur

T Taishō Tripiṭaka (Chinese Buddhist canon)

Toh Tōhoku Catalog of Tibetan Buddhist canons.

Notes

1. Skilling 2016, p. 36, n. 65, points out that verses similar to those found in this work are recited in contemporary Thailand during various types of merit-making activities.

2. For a survey of references to the terms *stūpa*, *mahāstūpa*, *caitya*, and *mahācaitya* in early Buddhist literature and inscriptions, see Skilling 2016. For Tibetan perspectives on the culture of the stūpa, see Dorjee 1996. See the 84000 Knowledge Base article, "Stūpa."

3. There are many scholarly studies of these monuments. One relatively recent collection of essays on the Buddhist stūpas of South Asia is Hawkes and Shimada 2009. See Gómez and Woodward 1981 for a collection of essays focused on Borobudur.

4. For instance, the practice of making such small clay stūpas or *saccakas*—a term that is etymologically related to the Tibetan word *tsa tsa*—is described in *ādikarma* literature such as the *Ādikarmapradīpa* and *Kudṛṣṭinirghātana*. For a pioneering (abridged) translation of the relevant passage in the former, see Beyer 1974, p. 59.

5. See Walters 1997 for a study that connects Buddhist narrative literature to the emergence of a culture of stūpa construction in early Buddhist India.

6. Into this stūpa, one is instructed to insert the sacred stanza on dependent arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*) that begins with *ye dharmāḥ*…, "Those things…," a practice that is well attested by archaeological and epigraphic record. For further information on the latter, see Boucher 1991.

7. For more information on the parallels between *The Avalokinī Sūtra*, the *Mahāvastu*, and the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, see sections i.4–i.6 of the introduction to the 84000 translation of *The Avalokinī Sūtra*.

8. See Melzer 2010, pp. 55–57, for references to these Sanskrit manuscripts: four fragments in the Hoernle collection (likely from Kucha, Xinjiang) held at the British Library in London, three iterations (one complete) in the Buddhist manuscripts from Gilgit (Pakistan) held at the National Archives of India in New Delhi, and two fragments (likely from Bamiyan, Afghanistan) in the Martin Shøyen collection in Oslo.

9. According to Melzer 2010, pp. 56–57, the complete version is found in Vira and Chandra, eds., *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts*, vol. 10, folio 1585 and continues on folios 1524–1528.3. Two fragmentary versions are also found in vol. 7, folios 3249.3–3250, comprising the ten opening stanzas, and vol. 10, folios 3356–3357, containing approximately seven stanzas.

10. The preserved fragments of this Sanskrit manuscript (Cambridge MS Os.131) are held at the Cambridge University Library and are available online through the Cambridge Digital Library. This manuscript has largely escaped the notice of recent scholarship since it was first acquired by Cecil Bendall at the end of the nineteenth century, although Bendall's original handwritten notes to the manuscript indicate that he had identified it as containing a version of *The Verses on Circumambulating Shrines*, among other works. We became aware of its existence thanks to a blog post by Dorji Wangchuk in which he cites Péter-Dániel Szántó. Szántó then gave us further information on the manuscript via personal communication, which helped us to make our own preliminary analysis of it.

11. For references to these three verses as found in Sanskrit witnesses to the *Śayanāsanavastu* and *Saṅghabhedavastu*, see Melzer 2010, pp. 58–59. See also Matsumura 1985 and Belanger 2000.

12. For more on these parallels, see Belanger 2000, pp. 12–14, and Melzer 2010, pp. 58–59.

13. For English translations of these passages from the *Divyāvadāna*, see Rotman 2008, pp. 155–59, and Rotman 2017, pp. 176–80.

14. In his brief discussion of this work, Skilling 2016, p. 33, also highlights these two claims as significant ones.

15. Appendix A in Tropper 2010, p. 53, shows parallels between the Chinese of Taishō 700 and the partial Tibetan inscription of this text at Alchi in Ladakh.

16. Taishō 699 was translated by Divākara during the Tang Dynasty (680 CE). An English translation has been published by Boucher 1991, pp. 8–10.

17. Belanger 2000, p. 11, n. 48.

18. For the Khotanese transliteration see Bailey 1951, pp. 72–74; and for a translation, see Bailey 1974.

19. Denkarma, fol. 301.a; Herrmann-Pfandt, pp. 159–60; Phangthangma, p. 22.

20. Following the Cambridge Sanskrit MS, which reads *yo 'graḥ prajñāvatāṃ*, and a handful of Kangyurs, such as London and Namgyal, which have *shes rab ldan mchog*. Most editions of the Kangyur, including Degé, Stok, and those collated in the Pedurma, read *shes rab blo ldan*, "possessing wisdom and intelligence."

21. Following Stok, which reads: *lha klu de bzhin gnod sbyin dang// sha za de bzhin srin rnams kyis// thams cad du yang mchod par 'gyur*. Stok is supported by the Cambridge MS, which reads *devair nāgais tathā yakṣaiḥ | piśācair atha rākṣasaiḥ | sarvatra pūjāṃ prāpnoti*…. The last three lines of the Degé read a bit differently here, *lha klu gnod sbyin dri za dang // lha min mkha' lding mi'am ci// lto 'phye che rnams mchod byed 'gyur*, "…shall be honored by devas, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas."

22. The Degé reads *lha dang de bzhin mi rnams kyis*, while the Cambridge MS has *divyaṃ mānuṣyakaṃ tathā*.

23. The Tibetan reads *blo ldan*, "possessing intelligence," while the Cambridge MS has *vīro*, "a hero."

24. Here and in verse 6, the Cambridge MS uses the same word, *vicakṣaṇa* ("clear sighted" or "bright"), whereas the Degé in verse 6 has *mdzangs pa* and here reads *mkhas pa*, "wise." We have chosen "bright" here because it conveys both the physical and mental quality of the term.

25. The Tibetan reads *'du byed stong par mthong na kyang*, apparently reading *dṛṣṭvā saṃskāraśunyatāṃ*, whereas the Cambridge MS reads *dṛṣṭvā saṃsāraśunyatāṃ*, "seeing saṃsāra as empty."

26. The Tibetan has *sang rgyas bstan la dga' ba dang*, while the Cambridge MS reads *prasanno buddhaśāsane*. This is the first of several instances in this Tibetan translation in which the Tibetan term *dga' ba*, more commonly used to translate words meaning "joy," appears to translate the Sanskrit term *prasanna*, which typically means "faithful," "serenely confident," or "trusting," but which can also sometimes mean "pleased" or "glad." Other occurrences of these terms are found in verses 49–55 and 57, while in the translation of verse 58 the Tibetan translates *prasanna* with *dad*, "faithful."

27. The Tibetan has *de ni nor bu dag pa bzhin*, while the Cambridge MS reads *maṇivatpariśuddho sau*, "… pure like a jewel."

28. Tib. *ma ma* and Skt. *dhātrī* may indicate female caregivers more broadly, such as wet nurses, nannies, and so on, and may even refer to mothers, though the former sense seems the more primary usage. The overall sense of the verse suggests something about the affluent circumstances into which one is born.

29. For this line, S reads *de la gnod ba mi nus te*, while D has *de la gnod par mi 'gyur te*, but the Cambridge MS, which has *nāsau laṃghayituṃśakyaḥ*, would seem to support the former.

30. S has *lus brtan*, while D reads *lus bde*, "comfortable body," but the Cambridge MS has *sthirakāya*, which again supports the former.

31. Tib. *dpung mgo zlum zhing brtan par 'gyur*. "Rounded shoulders" (Tib. *dpung mgo zlum*, Skt. *saṃvṛttaskandha*) are among the thirty-two auspicious marks of a great being. This line may indicate a variation, since the Cambridge MS reads *sthirasthaḥ sarvadharmeṣu*, "abides in steadiness in regard to all things."

32. The Degé has *'thab bral lha yi rgyal po*, "king of the gods of the Heaven Without Strife," while S has *'thab bral lha yi dbang po*, "lords of the gods of the Heaven Without Strife," and the Cambridge MS has *suyāmo devaputraś*, "the god Suyāma," who is said to be the divine ruler of the Yāma Heaven or Heaven Without Strife.

33. Tib. *shas cher*, Skt. *samvegabahula*. The concept of *saṃvega* ("agitation," "intensity") is one that is sometimes applied in Buddhist literature to persons who are practicing the Buddhist path with a persistent mindset.

34. The Degé has*'khor rnams tham cad*, "all assemblies," but the Stok has *khon rnams tham cad*…, which is indeed supported by the Cambridge MS, which reads *sarvavaira*.

35. In Tibetan, this verse interrupts the preceding series of four-line verses with a verse of six lines. This six-line verse appears to be an elaboration of the extant Sanskrit versions from Gilgit and Central Asia, on which see Melzer 2010, p. 64. However, it is supported textually, at least in part, by the Cambridge MS, which includes the line *praṇidhiśca pradakṣiṇaṃ* (Tib. *smon lam btab pa'ang bskor ba yin*), "circumambulation is also the taking of a vow," which none of the others have. Nonetheless, the Cambridge MS still does not seem to contain anything corresponding to the Tibetan *bgrod dka' bde dgur*…, "easily" and "…that are difficult to reach." Further work is required here to establish a textual basis for the underlying Sanskrit.

36. In this and the following two verses, the Tibetan has *bskor ba'i gom pa gcig*, "a single step of a circumambulation," but none of the extant Sanskrit versions, including the Cambridge MS, include a word corresponding to *bskor ba*, in keeping with what seems to be the original context of their utterance in the Vinaya. It is worth noting that the Tibetan translation of the Vinaya passage does not include the word *bskor ba* either. In the Tibetan, verses 46–48 are six-line verses with seven syllables per line.

37. D *kam bod za yi bu mo brgya*; Skt *śataṃ kāmbojikākānyāḥ*; S *tho gar yul gyi bu mo brgya* ("one hundred Tocharian girls").

38. The Tibetan has *gangs kyi glang chen*, “elephants of the snows,” while the Sanskrit has *haimavatā nāgāḥ*, *haimavat* being another word for himālaya, which in Sanskrit means “abode of snow.”

39. Here and in the next several verses, Tib. *mkhas pa gang gis*, “by a wise one,” and *dga’ ba’i sems kyis*, “with a thought of joy,” translate Skt. *vidvān* and *prasannacittaḥ*, respectively. For *dga’ ba’i sems* / *prasannacitta*, we have chosen to prioritize the Tibetan interpretation, although other renderings are possible. For more on these terms, see the introduction and notes n.26 and n.43 for further discussion.

40. In the Tibetan, verses 49–55 are four-line verses with nine syllables per line, reflecting the fact that the meter of the Sanskrit verses also changes from eight syllables to eleven syllables per line.

41. The Degé has *pho drang*, “palaces,” while the Stok has *pha bong*, “nuggets,” which works better with the comparison made in the verse and is closer to the Sanskrit *piṇḍā*.

42. The final three verses in the Tibetan translation return to a pattern of four lines of seven syllables each, reflecting a return to *anuṣṭubh* meter in the Sanskrit.

43. Here we have chosen to vary the translation of *dga’ ba* in the phrase *sems dga’ ba ni mtshungs ’gyur na*, which translates *saṃaṃ cittaṃ prasādyeha*, choosing “devout” as a translation for it here even though “joyful” would remain consistent with the Tibetan interpretation. The term again translates a form of the Sanskrit verb *prasad*, “to settle down,” “to become clear,” “to be pleased or glad,” “to have faith or trust,” of which *prasanna* is the past passive participle. For more on this verse and the general idea it expresses, see Schopen 1997, pp. 131–33 and note 75.

44. Here the Tibetan translation of *prasanna* varies from *dga’ ba* to *dad rnams*, “those who have faith.”

45. This verse has parallels or close variants in other canonical texts, including the Vinaya passages cited in the introduction, as well as Toh 189 (1.25) and Toh 846a (1.2).

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Glossary

affliction

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

The essentially pure nature of mind is obscured and afflicted by various psychological defilements, which destroy the mind's peace and composure and lead to unwholesome deeds of body, speech, and mind, acting as causes for continued existence in saṃsāra. Included among them are the primary afflictions of desire (*rāga*), anger (*dveṣa*), and ignorance (*avidyā*). It is said that there are eighty-four thousand of these negative mental qualities, for which the eighty-four thousand categories of the Buddha's teachings serve as the antidote.
Kleśa is also commonly translated as "negative emotions," "disturbing emotions," and so on. The Pāli *kilesa*, Middle Indic *kileśa*, and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *kleśa* all primarily mean "stain" or "defilement." The translation "affliction" is a secondary development that derives from the more general (non-Buddhist) classical understanding of √*kliś* ("to harm," "to afflict"). Both meanings are noted by Buddhist commentators.

applications of mindfulness

dran pa nye bar gzhag pa

དྲན་པ་ཉེ་བར་གཞག་པ།

smṛtyupasthāna

The application of mindfulness to the body, the application of mindfulness to feeling, the application of mindfulness to mind, and the application of mindfulness to dharmas.

asura

lha min

ལྷ་མིན།

asura

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

at shrines of a buddha

sangs rgyas mchod rten la

སངས་རྒྱས་མཆོད་རྟེན་ལ།

buddhacaityeṣu

A phrase that recurs in this text in verses 49–55.

auspicious marks

mtshan

མཚན།

lakṣaṇa

The thirty-two primary physical characteristics of a "great being," *mahāpuruṣa*, which every buddha and cakravartin possesses. They are considered "major" in terms of being primary to the eighty minor marks or signs of a great being.

awakening of a pratyekabuddha

rang rgyal byang chub

རང་རྒྱལ་བྱང་ཆུབ།

pratyekabodhi

One of the different types of awakening (*bodhi*). Often given in a list of the types of awakening between the awakening of a śrāvaka ("disciple") or an

arhat, as in the previous verse, and “the perfect and complete awakening” (*samyaksambodhi*) of a buddha or tathāgata, as in the next verse. A pratyekabuddha is someone who has attained awakening, but not as the disciple of a complete buddha (*sambuddha*), and does not teach the Dharma to others, like a complete buddha does.

bases of miraculous power

rdzu ’phrul rkang pa

རྫུ་འཕྲུལ་རྐང་པ།

ṛddhipāda

Four foundational practices or traits that are said to provide a basis for cultivating the miraculous powers.

brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā

A high-ranking deity presiding over a divine world; he is also considered to be the lord of the Sahā world (our universe). Though not considered a creator god in Buddhism, Brahmā occupies an important place as one of two gods (the other being Indra/Śakra) said to have first exhorted the Buddha Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma. The particular heavens found in the form realm over which Brahmā rules are often some of the most sought-after realms of higher rebirth in Buddhist literature. Since there are many universes or world systems, there are also multiple Brahmās presiding over them. His most frequent epithets are “Lord of the Sahā World” (*sahāṃpati*) and Great Brahmā (*mahābrahman*).

Brahmā World

tshangs pa’i ’jig rten

ཚངས་པའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

brahmāloka

Refers to the first three heavenly planes of the form realm, reached via rebirth or through the first *dhyāna*. Rebirth as a brahma in the Brahmā World reflects a very high degree of merit. For a discussion of this topic, see Skilling 2021, pp. 253–66.

brahmin

bram ze

བྲམ་ཟེ།

brāhmaṇa

A member of the highest of the four castes in Indian society, which is closely associated with religious vocations.

conditioned things

’du byed

འདུ་བྱེད།

saṃskāra

Anything, mental or physical, that arises from causes and conditions.

Controlling Others’ Emanations

gzhan ’phrul dbang byed

གཞན་འཕྲུལ་དབང་བྱེད།

nirmāṇavaśavartin

The Heaven of Controlling Others’ Emanations is the highest (or sixth) of the six heavens of the desire realm.

deva

lha

ལྷ།

deva

In the most general sense the devas—the term is cognate with the English *divine*—are a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend and celebrate the teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni and other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In Buddhist cosmology the devas occupy the highest of the five or six "destinies" (*gati*) of saṃsāra among which beings take rebirth. The devas reside in the *devalokas*, "heavens" that traditionally number between twenty-six and twenty-eight and are divided between the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), form realm (*rūpadhātu*), and formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). A being attains rebirth among the devas either through meritorious deeds (in the desire realm) or the attainment of subtle meditative states (in the form and formless realms). While rebirth among the devas is considered favorable, it is ultimately a transitory state from which beings will fall when the conditions that lead to rebirth there are exhausted. Thus, rebirth in the god realms is regarded as a diversion from the spiritual path.

diligence

brtson 'grus

བརྩོན་འགྲུས།

vīrya

Also translated here as "vigor."

eight inopportune states

mi khom brgyad

མི་ཁོམ་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭākṣaṇa

A set of circumstances that do not provide the freedom to practice the Buddhist path: being born in the realms of (1) the hells, (2) hungry ghosts (*pretas*), (3) animals, or (4) long-lived gods, or in the human realm among (5) barbarians or (6) extremists, (7) in places where the Buddhist teachings do not exist, or (8) without adequate faculties to understand the teachings where they do exist.

factors of awakening

byang chub yan lag

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཡན་ལག

bodhyaṅga

The factors of awakening are counted as seven: mindfulness, discrimination, diligence, joy, pliancy, absorption, and equanimity.

gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

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

garuḍa

mkha’ lding

མཁའ་ལྡིང་།

garuḍa

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

Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་ཅུ་རྩ་གསུམ།

trayastriṃśa

Presided over by Indra/Śakra and located on the summit of Mount Sumeru. Among the six heavens of the desire realm.

Heaven Without Strife

'thab bral

འཐབ་བྲལ།

yāma

The third of the six heavens of the desire realm.

immeasurable states of mind

sems kyi tshad med

སེམས་ཀྱི་ཚད་མེད།

apramāṇa

This refers to the four meditations on love (*maitrī*), compassion (*karuṇā*), joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekṣā*), as well as the states of mind and qualities of being that result from their cultivation.

Jambu River

'dzam bu chu klung

འཛམ་བུ་ཆུ་གླུང་།

jāmbūnada

The Sanskrit here literally means "from the Jambu River," and in this text it describes the gold (Skt. *suvarṇa*, Tib. *gser*) of this mythical river. The river was said to carry the golden fruit fallen from the legendary jambu tree after which the southern continent is named.

Jambūdvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུའི་གླིང་།

jambūdvīpa

The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology, which can signify either the known human world, or more specifically the Indian subcontinent, literally “the *jambu* island/continent.” Jambu is the name used for a range of plum-like fruits from trees belonging to the genus *Szygium*, particularly *Szygium jambos* and *Szygium cumini*, and it has commonly been rendered “rose apple,” although “black plum” may be a less misleading term. Among various explanations given for the continent being so named, one (in the *Abhidharmakośa*) is that a jambu tree grows in its northern mountains beside Lake Anavatapta, mythically considered the source of the four great rivers of India, and that the continent is therefore named from the tree or the fruit. Jambudvīpa has the Vajrāsana at its center and is the only continent upon which buddhas attain awakening.

Joy

dga’ ldan

དགའ་ལྡན།

saṃtuṣita

Joyful Emanation

’phrul dga’

འཕྲུལ་དགའ།

nirmāṇarati

The Heaven of Joyful Emanation, or “delighting in emanations” is the second highest (or fifth) of the six heavens of the desire realm.

Kamboja

kam bo dza

ཀམ་བོ་ཛ།

kamboja

A land in the north of Jambūdvīpa, included in some Pali texts as one of the sixteen great kingdoms of ancient India at the time of the Buddha. Also attested in early non-Buddhist literature as a land corresponding to part of contemporary Afghanistan. In this text, the term *kāmbojikā*, “from Kamboja,” is used to describe a group of girls (*kanyā*).

kinnara

mi’am ci

མིའམ་ཅི།

kinnara

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

kṣatriya

rgyal rigs

རྒྱལ་རིགས།

kṣatriya

The ruling caste in the traditional four-caste hierarchy of India, associated with warriors, the aristocracy, and kings.

mahoraga

lto ’phye che

ལྟོ་འབྱེ་ཆེ།

mahoraga

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

mantra

gsang sngags

གསང་སྔགས།

mantra

A formula of words or syllables that are recited aloud or mentally in order to bring about a magical or soteriological effect or result. The term has been interpretively etymologized to mean “that which protects (*trā*) the mind (*man*)”.

nāga

klu

ཀླུ།

nāga

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

nirvāṇa

mya ngan las ’das pa

མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ།

nirvāṇa

In Sanskrit, the term *nirvāṇa* literally means “extinguishment” and the Tibetan *mya ngan las ’das pa* literally means “gone beyond sorrow.” As a general term, it refers to the cessation of all suffering, afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), and causal processes (*karman*) that lead to rebirth and suffering in cyclic existence, as well as to the state in which all such rebirth and suffering has permanently ceased.

More specifically, three main types of nirvāṇa are identified. (1) The first type of nirvāṇa, called nirvāṇa with remainder (*sopadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*), is the state in which arhats or buddhas have attained awakening but are still dependent on the conditioned aggregates until their lifespan is exhausted. (2) At the end of life, given that there are no more causes for rebirth, these aggregates cease and no new aggregates arise. What occurs then is called nirvāṇa without remainder (*anupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*), which refers to the unconditioned element (*dhātu*) of nirvāṇa in which there is no remainder of the aggregates. (3) The Mahāyāna teachings distinguish the final nirvāṇa of buddhas from that of arhats, the nirvāṇa of arhats not being considered ultimate. The buddhas attain what is called nonabiding nirvāṇa (*apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*), which transcends the extremes of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, i.e., existence and peace. This is the nirvāṇa that is the goal of the Mahāyāna path.
It is to the second of these three types of nirvāṇa, the nirvāṇa without remainder (*anupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*) that this text is referring.

noble truths

’phags pa’i bden pa

འཕགས་པའི་བདེན་པ།

āryasatya

Also explained as the truths of the noble ones (*ārya*), a paradigmatic set of teachings traditionally believed to have been taught by the Buddha in the first sermon. They are the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path that leads to the cessation of suffering.

opportunity so hard to find

dal ba rnyed dka’

དལ་བ་རྙེད་དཀའ།

kṣaṇadaurlabhya

“Opportunity” in this phrase, found frequently in the commentarial literature, refers to the leisure and freedom to study and practice the Dharma characteristic of a human lifetime free of the eight inopportune states (q.v.); “so

hard to find” is a reminder of the rarity of such a lifetime, seen both from a numerical comparison to other forms of existence and from the improbability that an individual might gather together the meritorious causes and conditions that give rise to it.

piśāca

sha za

ཤ་ཟ།

piśāca

A class of nonhuman beings that, like several other classes of nonhuman beings, take spontaneous birth. Ranking below rākṣasas, they are less powerful and more akin to pretas. They are said to dwell in impure and perilous places, where they feed on impure things, including flesh. This could account for the name *piśāca*, which possibly derives from √*piś*, to carve or chop meat, as reflected also in the Tibetan *sha za*, “meat eater.” They are often described as having an unpleasant appearance, and at times they appear with animal bodies. Some possess the ability to enter the dead bodies of humans, thereby becoming so-called *vetāla*, to touch whom is fatal.

rākṣasa

srin

སྲིན།

rākṣasa

A class of nonhuman beings that are often, but certainly not always, considered demonic in the Buddhist tradition. They are often depicted as flesh-eating monsters who haunt frightening places and are ugly and evil-natured with a yearning for human flesh, and who additionally have miraculous powers, such as being able to change their appearance.

Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

śakra

The lord of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (*trāyastriṃśa*). Alternatively known as Indra, the deity that is called “lord of the gods” dwells on the summit of Mount Sumeru and wields the thunderbolt. The Tibetan translation *brgya byin* (meaning “one hundred sacrifices”) is based on an etymology that *śakra* is an abbreviation of *śata-kratu*, one who has performed a hundred sacrifices. Each world with a central Sumeru has a Śakra. Also known by other names such as Kauśika, Devendra, and Śacipati.

Śāriputra

shA ri’i bu

ཤཱ་རིའི་བུ།

śāriputra

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.”

seven royal treasures

rin chen bdun

རིན་ཆེན་བདུན།

saptaratna

The seven royal treasures of the wheel-turning king or *cakravartin* are the wheel, jewel, queen, minister, elephant, horse, and general.

six supernormal faculties

mngon shes drug

མངོན་ཤེས་དྲུག

ṣaḍabhijñā

The six supernormal faculties are (1) miraculous powers, (2) divine hearing, (3) knowledge of others' minds, (4) recollection of former lives, (5) divine sight, and (6) knowledge that the defilements have been extinguished.

tathāgata

de bshin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

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

those who circumambulate a shrine

mchod rten bskor ba byas pas ni

མཆོད་རྟེན་བསྐོར་བ་བྱས་པས་ནི།

stūpaṃ kṛtvā pradakṣiṇaṃ

This phrase recurs throughout the first forty-two verses of the text; the Sanskrit literally says, "Having done *pradakṣiṇa* at a stūpa…" The Sanskrit term *pradakṣiṇa* (Tib. *bskor ba*) is the devotional practice of circumambulating or walking around a holy site, object, or person, while keeping the sacred object on one's right-hand side as a gesture of respect.

Veda

rig byed

རིག་བྱེད།

veda

A word that can simply mean knowledge, but in this text refers specifically to the Vedas, the sacred texts of the Brahmanical tradition.

virtue

yon tan

ཡོན་ཏན།

guṇa

A good quality, characteristic, or trait.

wheel-turning king

’khor los sgyur ba’i rgyal po

འཁོར་ལོས་སྒྱུར་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

cakravartin

World Protector

’jig rten mgon po

འཇིག་རྟེན་མགོན་པོ།

lokanātha

An epithet of the Buddha.

yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled

through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the rule of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.
Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just-mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.

yogin

rnal ’byor

རྣལ་འབྱོར།

yogin

One who practices yoga—used in a Buddhist context to refer to various forms of meditative practice.