

བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཀྱི་ཆོགས་སུ་བཅད་པ།

Verses of Auspiciousness for the Three Jewels and the Twelve Acts

Maṅgalagāthā

དགོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་དང་མཛད་པ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བྲག་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཆོགས་

སྟུ་བཅད་པ།

dkon mchog gsum dang mdzad pa bcu gnyis kyi bkra shis kyi tshigs su
bcad pa

Verses of the Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels and the
Twelve Deeds

· Toh 826 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 96 (rgyud 'bum, wa), folios 262.b–263.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

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Summary

- s.1 *Verses of Auspiciousness* is a series of nineteen stanzas that invoke the auspiciousness of the Three Jewels and the Buddha's twelve deeds to bring peace and well-being to all beings.

Acknowledgements

- ac.1 This publication was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.
- ac.2 The text was translated, edited, and introduced by the 84000 translation team. Lowell Cook produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Torsten Gerloff edited the translation and the introduction, and Ibby Caputo copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

Introduction

- i.1 *Verses of Auspiciousness* is a series of nineteen stanzas that belong to the “verses of auspiciousness” (*maṅgalagāthā*) genre. This work appears twice in the Kangyur, once in the Dedication and Aspiration subsection of the tantras (Toh 826) and once in the Dedication and Aspiration subsection of the dhāraṇī collection (Toh 1103).^{1 2 3} It also appears once in the Tengyur (Toh 4410) where it is attributed to Nāgārjuna (ca. second century CE), perhaps on account of its similarity to his *Praise as a Guide to the Twelve Deeds*.⁴

- i.2 The text's colophon offers an extended title, *Verses of the Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels and the Twelve Deeds*. As alluded to by this title, the first three stanzas invoke the auspiciousness of the Three Jewels. The first stanza praises the Buddha's inner qualities and physical attributes, poetically comparing them to mountains of gold and lotus flowers. The second stanza invokes the auspiciousness of the Dharma—the Buddha's teachings—in terms of its greatness and ability to bring peaceful states of mind to diverse beings. The third stanza invokes the auspiciousness of the venerable Saṅgha through their virtues, such as learning and modesty.
- i.3 The subsequent sixteen stanzas are an ode to the twelve deeds of the Buddha, a set of twelve key events that occur in the lives of all buddhas, which rose to prominence in India during the Pāla dynasty.⁵ The specific list of the twelve deeds can vary according to source. There are also other similar enumerations, possibly predating the twelve associated with Nāgārjuna, such as the ten acts found in canonical texts such as *The Chapter on Medicines*⁶ or the eighth episodes (*baxiang* 八相) in East Asian Buddhism.⁷ Some of the deeds common to these lists—such as the Buddha's birth in Lumbini grove, turning the Dharma wheel, or passing into nirvāṇa—are clearly mentioned in the present work. Other deeds, however, such as entering his mother's womb or demonstrating skill in the arts, are not explicitly mentioned.
- i.4 The correlation to the twelve deeds is further complicated by the fact that there are sixteen stanzas, requiring some to be counted together as a single deed. It thus seems likely that the present text did not originally intend to necessarily represent the twelve deeds but rather key events from the Buddha's life. The specific correlation to the twelve deeds was likely only later established in Tibet when a colophon was appended to the work. There are no mentions of the twelve deeds found in the extant Sanskrit witnesses of the text.

- i.5 Furthermore, it seems likely that the three stanzas to the Three Jewels and the sixteen stanzas to the twelve deeds were, at one point, two independent texts that were later combined, perhaps in the context of tantric *abhiṣeka* rituals. There are several instances where the three stanzas to the Three Jewels appear independently, in works such as *The Vajra Garland*⁸ by Abhayākaragupta (ca. eleventh to twelfth century CE), and the *Compendium of Sādhana*s (*sgrub thabs kun btus*) compiled by Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo (*jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po*, 1820–92). Moreover, in Sanskrit, the verses are composed in different meters. The stanzas of the Three Jewels employ the *indravajrā* meter, while those of the twelve deeds use the *vasantatilakā* meter.
- i.6 The extant Sanskrit witnesses contain only some of the nineteen stanzas found in *Verses of Auspiciousness*. Abhayākaragupta’s *Vajrāvalī* preserves the first three stanzas to the Three Jewels whereas Padmaśrīmitra’s *Maṇḍalopāyikā* and Ānandagarbha’s (ninth century CE) *Sarvavajrodayā Maṇḍalopāyikā*⁹ preserve the first three stanzas in their entirety, in addition to several of the subsequent sixteen stanzas. While Padmaśrīmitra and Ānandagarbha were writing around the time that *Verses of Auspiciousness* was being translated into Tibetan, the extant Sanskrit manuscripts postdate the Tibetan translation.
- i.7 The colophon to the Tibetan version states that *Verses of Auspiciousness* was co-translated by the Indian scholar Jinamitra and Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé, one of the most prolific teams from the Tibetan imperial period (*btsan po’i skabs*, 629–842 CE). *Verses of Auspiciousness* is listed in the Denkarma (*lhan kar ma*) and Phangthangma (*’phang thang ma*) catalogs, the inventories of works translated during the early spread of Buddhism in Tibet.¹⁰ The translation, therefore, must have been completed during the early years of the ninth century.¹¹ Fragments of the work are also found among the Dunhuang manuscripts.¹² We may assume that the stanzas on the twelve deeds also served as an inspiration for later generations of Tibetan authors, particularly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, who penned their own verses in praise of the Buddha’s twelve deeds.¹³

- i.8 *Verses of Auspiciousness* does not appear to have been the subject of any academic study. The first three stanzas have been translated into English by Adam Pearcy of Lotsawa House (2022) based on a version that appears in the *Compendium of Sādhana*s. The present translation was prepared primarily based on the Degé Kangyur and Tengyur. This was compared against variant readings listed in the Comparative Edition of the Kangyur and Tengyur, while also considering the above-mentioned Sanskrit witnesses.

The Translation

1. Verses of Auspiciousness

- 1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels.
- 1.2 Imbued with good fortune, like a mountain of gold, The lord of the three worlds devoid of the three stains Is the Buddha with eyes like the petals of a lotus in bloom. This is the first auspiciousness that brings peace to myriad beings.¹⁴
- 1.3 The exalted teachings that he delivers never falter. Famed throughout the three worlds, they are worshiped by devas and humans. The sublime Dharma that inspires peace in myriad beings Is the second auspiciousness that brings goodness to the world.
- 1.4 Imbued with true Dharma and rich in the auspiciousness of learning, The Saṅgha is an object of worship for humans, devas, and asuras. The supreme assembly, the ground of modesty and glory, Is the third auspiciousness that brings goodness to the world.
- 1.5 Possessing awakening for the benefit of all beings, Fully endowed with the resolve to accomplish the aims of all, The Sage auspiciously delighted in the path of accumulation. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.

- 1.6 The Thus-Gone One auspiciously came here to benefit beings From the center of the palace of devas in the Heaven of Joy, Accompanied by an entourage of devas including Indra. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.¹⁵
- 1.7 When the lord auspiciously took birth, attended by many devas In the charming Lumbini grove glistening with leaves and flowers, He had reached the end of cyclic existence. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.8 When Śuddhodana's son, the well-gone teacher, Took birth in the king's palace in the capital city of Kapilavastu, He was auspiciously bathed with ambrosial waters to swiftly grow.¹⁶ May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.9 In the sublime capital city named Kapilavastu, He auspiciously performed infinite virtues with heaps of merit, Which were marvelously praised by the devas of great renown. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.¹⁷
- 1.10 Full of joy, he auspiciously left the supreme city at midnight For the forest of austerities where Brahmā And a host of other devas encircled him. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.¹⁸
- 1.11 With a body shining brilliantly like gold, He auspiciously sat with crossed legs, supreme and unmoving, On top of a mat of grass as blue as beryl. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.12 On the riverbanks, encircled by lines of cāṣa birds, He auspiciously dispelled cyclic existence in a marvelous manner, And the king of the nāgas bowed down to him. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.13 Having come to the foot of the king of trees, he tamed The multitude of Māra's hordes with the strength of his loving-kindness, The Blessed One's auspiciousness arose in manifold ways on the earth and in the sky. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.

- 1.14 To eradicate suffering entirely, he sat on the Vajra Seat And, by daybreak, tamed the enemies, the four māras, Auspiciously becoming the teacher, the Well-Gone One. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.15 Residing in the city of Vārāṇasī, the supreme seer¹⁹ Auspiciously turned the supreme wheel of Dharma, Bringing great marvel to the deva realms and this world. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.16 The Blessed One, Śākyamuni the lion, auspiciously taught That which brings benefit and supreme purity, Creates merit, and is praised by noble beings. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.17 To break the pride of all tīrthakaras And bring beings happiness, he auspiciously created Displays of miracles as the Victorious One. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.18 To benefit beings, he auspiciously came here from the higher realms While Brahmā and a host of other devas encircled him, Holding a variety of fly whisks and parasols. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.19 When the Thus-Gone One departed for supreme peace, He was auspiciously showered with many mandārava flowers And praised by the supreme devas. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.20 Venerated by Devendra, and nāga and human kings, And worshiped by garuḍa, yakṣa, and gandharva kings, The Thus-Gone One is auspiciously imbued with the ten powers. May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings.
- 1.21 This concludes “Verses of the Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels and the Twelve Deeds.”²⁰

Colophon

- c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Jinamitra and the senior editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

Notes

1. [note 4cb21b80...]
2. Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 1103 version of this text within vol. 101 or 102 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 1103, n.1, for details.
3. [note ee422377...]
4. *Praise as a Guide to the Twelve Deeds (Dvādaśakāranāmanayastotra*, Toh 1135). For more on Nāgārjuna's *Dvādaśakāranāmanayastotra*, see Dargyay 1984.
5. Buswell 2014, p. 930.
6. *The Chapter on Medicines (Bhaiṣajyavastu*, Toh 1-6), 9.152.
7. For two enumerations of the eighth episodes, see Buswell 2014, p. 100.
8. *Vajrāvalī* (Toh 3140). See Mori 2009, vol. 2, p. 418–19.
9. These are Padmaśrīmitra's *Maṇḍalopāyikā* (Tokyo University Library MS no. 280, folio 9rv) and Ānandagarbha's *Sarvavajrodayā Maṇḍalopāyikā* (MS "National Archives, Kathmandu, 3-360 (NGMPP 48-7)"), folios 62r–63. A preliminary edition of the latter is available online at: <https://dharmalekha.info/texts/CritEdSarvavajrodaya>.
10. Denkarma, folio 304.b.1. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 273–74, no. 478.
11. According to Situ Pañchen, the Phangthangma was the first of the two catalogs and the Denkarma was produced some years later. However, there is disagreement on this issue among both traditional Tibetan scholars and modern historians, as discussed by Herrmann-Pfandt 2008. In her introductory survey of these two catalogs, Herrmann-Pfandt provides an overview of the various opinions and proposes that the most likely dating for the Phangthangma is the year 806 (pp. xxiv–xxvi), while for the Denkarma she suggests the year 812 (pp. xviii–xxii).
12. See Pelliot tibétain 757. One difference is that, in the Dunhuang witness, the refrain that repeats at the end of each stanza reads *bkra shis des ni deng 'dir bdag la zhi byed shog* ("May this auspiciousness bring me peace today") instead of *bkra shis des ni skye dgu rnams la zhi byed shog* ("May this auspiciousness bring peace to myriad beings"). Interestingly, the surviving Sanskrit attestations of these stanzas are similar to the Dunhuang witness, except for attesting the second-person pronoun *tava* ("to you") instead of the first-person pronoun *bdag la* ("to me").
13. While the number of poems composed by Tibetan authors in praise of the Buddha's twelve deeds defy count, some well-known examples include those of the second Dalai Lama Gendün Gyatso (1476–1542, *tA la'i bla ma sku phreng gnyis pa dge 'dun rgya mtsho*), the fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Losang Gyatso (1617–82, *tA la'i bla ma sku phreng lnga pa ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*), Changkya Rolpai Dorjé (1717–86, *lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje*), the seventh Riwoché Jedrung Jampa Jungné (1856–1922, *ri bo che rje drung byams pa 'byung gnas*), Khyentsé Wangpo (1820–92, *mkhyen brtse'i dbang po*), and Düjom Jikdral Yeshé Dorjé (1904–87, *bdud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje*).

14. The Sanskrit differs here slightly. Padmaśrīmitra's *Maṇḍalopāyikā* reads *trimaṅgalaṃ śāntikaraṃ tavādya* ("[May] the triple auspiciousness that brings peace [be] yours today!"), whereas Ānandagarbha's *Sarvavajrodayā Maṇḍalopāyikā* and Abhayākara Gupta's *Vajrāvalī* read *tan maṅgalaṃ bhavatu śāntikaraṃ tavādya* ("May the auspiciousness that brings peace be yours today!").
15. From this stanza forth, the refrain that repeats at the end of each stanza reads *tan maṅgalaṃ bhavatu śāntikaraṃ tavādya* ("May that auspiciousness bring you peace today") in the Sanskrit preserved in Padmaśrīmitra's *Maṇḍalopāyikā* and Ānandagarbha's *Sarvavajrodayā Maṇḍalopāyikā*. This is similar to Pelliot tibétain 757, which reads *bkra shis des ni deng 'dir bdag la zhi byed shog* ("May this auspiciousness bring me peace today").
16. The translation of *myur skrun* ("swiftly grow") is tentative. Takahashi 1988 reconstructs it as *aśuvṛddhyai*.
17. The Sanskrit attested in Padmaśrīmitra's *Maṇḍalopāyikā* reads *yan maṅgalaṃ puravare kapilāhvaye ca devair mahātmabhir abhiṣṭutam acyutādyaiḥ | āsīd anantakuśalasya tathāgatasya tan maṅgalaṃ bhavatu śāntikaraṃ tavādya ||* ("The auspiciousness [with which the tathāgata] was praised by the noble-minded devas from [the realm of] Acyuta, and so forth, in the sublime (capital) city named Kapila / May this auspiciousness of the tathāgata whose virtue is infinite bring you peace today!").
18. The Sanskrit attested in Padmaśrīmitra's *Maṇḍalopāyikā* reads *yan maṅgalaṃ vividhaduḥkhavināśānāya tuṣṭyā tapovanam abhivrajato 'rdharātre | pakṣaiḥ surair anugatasya tathāgatasya tan maṅgalaṃ bhavatu śāntikaraṃ tavādya ||* ("The auspiciousness [with which the tathāgata] joyfully left for the forest of austerities at midnight in order to destroy the various kinds of suffering, / May that auspiciousness of the tathāgata who was followed on [either] side (*pakṣa*) by the devas bring you peace today!").
19. Here, the Sanskrit in Padmaśrīmitra's *Maṇḍalopāyikā* and Ānandagarbha's *Sarvavajrodayā Maṇḍalopāyikā* reads *sugatasya śāstuh* ("the teacher, the Well-Gone One"), similar to the preceding stanza instead of "the supreme seer."
20. The colophon in Toh 4410 adds the statement "composed by the noble master Nāgārjuna."

Glossary

null

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

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).

null

byang chub

བྱང་ཆུབ།

null

ba ra Na si

བ་ར་ཏ་སྐ།

Also known as Benares, one of the oldest cities of northeast India on the banks of the Ganges, in modern-day Uttar Pradesh. It was once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kāśī, and in the Buddha's time it had been absorbed into the kingdom of Kośala. It was an important religious center, as well as a major city, even during the time of the Buddha. The name may derive from being where the Varuna and Assi rivers flow into the Ganges. It was on the outskirts of Vārāṇasī that the Buddha first taught the Dharma, in the location known as Deer Park (Mṛgadāva). For numerous episodes set in Vārāṇasī, including its kings, see The Hundred Deeds, Toh 340.

null

ban+de ye shes sde

བན་པ་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

Yeshé Dé (late eighth to early ninth century) was the most prolific translator of sūtras into Tibetan. Altogether he is credited with the translation of more than one hundred sixty sūtra translations and more than one hundred additional translations, mostly on tantric topics. In spite of Yeshé Dé's great importance for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet during the imperial era, only a few biographical details about this figure are known. Later sources describe him as a student of the Indian teacher Padmasambhava, and he is also credited with teaching both sūtra and tantra widely to students of his own. He was also known as Nanam Yeshé Dé, from the Nanam (*sna nam*) clan.

null

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

In Buddhist literature, this is an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (bhaga) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to “subduing” the four māras, *ldan* to “possessing” the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to “going beyond” saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit bhagavat is interpreted, in addition, as “one who destroys the four māras.” This is achieved either by reading bhagavat as bhagnavat (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word bhaga to the root √bhañj (“to break”).

null

bde bar gshegs pa

bde bshegs

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

བདེ་བཤེགས།

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. A recurrent explanation offers three different meanings for su- that are meant to show the special qualities of “accomplishment of one’s own purpose” (svārthasampad) for a complete buddha. Thus, the Sugata is “well” gone, as in the expression su-rūpa (“having a good form”); he is gone “in a way that he shall not come back,” as in the expression su-naṣṭa-jvara (“a fever that has utterly gone”); and he has gone “without any remainder” as in the expression su-pūrṇa-ghaṭa (“a pot that is completely full”). According to Buddhaghosa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. gata) is good (Skt. su) and where he went (Skt. gata) is good (Skt. su).

null

bdud

འདྲེན།

Māra, literally “death” or “maker of death,” is the name of the deva who tried to prevent the Buddha from achieving awakening, the name given to the class of beings he leads, and also an impersonal term for the destructive forces that keep beings imprisoned in saṃsāra:

(1) As a deva, Māra is said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations (paranirmitavaśavartin), the highest paradise in the desire realm. He famously attempted to prevent the Buddha’s awakening under the Bodhi tree—see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.1—and later sought many times to thwart the Buddha’s activity. In the sūtras, he often also creates obstacles to the progress of śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. (2) The devas ruled over by Māra are collectively called mārakāyika or mārakāyikadevatā, the “deities of Māra’s family or class.” In general, these māras too do not wish any being to escape from saṃsāra, but can also change their ways and even end up developing faith in the Buddha, as exemplified by Sārthavāha; see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.14 and 21.43. (3) The term māra can also be understood as personifying four defects that prevent awakening, called (i) the divine māra (devaputramāra), which is the distraction of pleasures; (ii) the māra of Death (mr̥tyumāra), which is having one’s life interrupted; (iii) the māra of the aggregates (skandhamāra), which is identifying with the five aggregates; and (iv) the māra of the afflictions (kleśamāra), which is being under the sway of the negative emotions of desire, hatred, and ignorance.

null

bdud bzhi po

བདུད་བཞི་པོ།

The deities ruled over by Māra are also symbolic of the defects within a person that prevent awakening. These four personifications are (1) the divine māra (devaputramāra, lha'i bu'i bdud), which is the distraction of pleasures; (2) the māra of the Lord of Death (mr̥tyumāra, 'chi bdag gi bdud); (3) the māra of the aggregates (skandhamāra, phung po'i bdud), which is the body; and (4) the māra of the defilements (kleśamāra, nyon mongs pa'i bdud).

null

srid pa

སྤྱིད་པ།

Denotes the whole of existence, i.e., the five forms of life or the three planes of existence—all the possible kinds and places of karmic rebirth. It is also the tenth of the twelve links of dependent origination (often translated as “becoming”).

null

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

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” (sahāmpati) and Great Brahmā (mahābrahman).

null

sangs rgyas

སངས་རྒྱས།

null

chos kyi dam pa

dam pa'i chos

ཆོས་ཀྱི་དམ་པ།

དམ་པའི་ཆོས།

The buddhadharma, or the Buddha's teachings.

null

tsa sha

ཙ་ཤ།

This most likely refers to the Indian Roller, *Coracias indica*, a small bird with bright blue plumage.

null

stobs bcu

སྟོབས་བརྒྱ།

The ten powers of a realized one (tathāgata), a list that overlaps with some of the supernormal faculties (abhijñā). The ten are (1) knowing what is possible and what is impossible; (2) knowing the results of actions or the ripening of karma; (3) knowing the various inclinations of sentient beings; (4) knowing the various elements; (5) knowing the supreme and lesser faculties of sentient beings; (6) knowing the paths that lead to all destinations of rebirth; (7) knowing the concentrations, liberations, absorptions, equilibriums, afflictions, purifications, and abidings; (8) remembering one's previous lives; (9) knowing the death and rebirth of sentient beings, which is the same as the divine eye; and (10) knowing that the defilements have been destroyed.

null

dbang

དབང་།

The lord of the Trāyastriṃśa heaven on the summit of Mount Sumeru. As one of the eight guardians of the directions, Indra guards the eastern quarter. In Buddhist sūtras, he is a disciple of the Buddha and protector of the Dharma and its practitioners. He is often referred to by the epithets Śatakratu, Śakra, and Kauśika.

null

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

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.

null

lha

ལྷ།

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.

null

lha dbang

ལྷ་དབང་།

Another name for Śakra, or Indra; literally “Lord of Devas.”

null

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྷན།

Tuṣita (or sometimes Saṃtuṣita), literally “Joyous” or “Contented,” is one of the six heavens of the desire realm (kāmadhātu). In standard classifications, such as the one in the Abhidharmakośa, it is ranked as the fourth of the six counting from below. This god realm is where all future buddhas are said to dwell before taking on their final rebirth prior to awakening. There, the Buddha Śākyamuni lived his preceding life as the bodhisattva Śvetaketu. When departing to take birth in this world, he appointed the bodhisattva Maitreya, who will be the next buddha of this eon, as his Dharma regent in Tuṣita. For an account of the Buddha’s previous life in Tuṣita, see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 2.12, and for an account of Maitreya’s birth in Tuṣita and a description of this realm, see *The Sūtra on Maitreya’s Birth in the Heaven of Joy*, (Toh 199).

null

dge 'dun

དགེ་འདུན།

Though often specifically reserved for the monastic community, this term can be applied to any of the four Buddhist communities—monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen—as well as to identify the different groups of practitioners, like the community of bodhisattvas or the community of śrāvakas. It is also the third of the Three Jewels (*triratna*) of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community.

null

dka' thub tshal

དཀར་ཐུབ་ཚལ།

A place, usually in a forest or jungle, where austerities and other spiritual practices are performed.

null

dkon mchog gsum

དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ།

The Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha—the three objects of Buddhist refuge. In the Tibetan rendering, “the three rare and supreme ones.”

null

drang srong

བླ་མ་རྣམས་།

An ancient Indian spiritual title, often translated as “sage” or “seer.” The title is particularly used for divinely inspired individuals credited with creating the foundations of Indian culture. The term is also applied to Śākyamuni and other realized Buddhist figures.

null

dri ma gsum

དྲི་མ་གསུམ།

The same as the three poisons: desire, hatred, and delusion.

null

dri za

དྲི་བ།

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.”

null

shing rgyal

ཤིང་རྒྱལ།

A generic term for a tree under which a tathāgata sits, and a synonym for the Bodhi tree.

null

mdzad pa bcu gnyis

མཛད་པ་བརྒྱ་གཉིས།

A series of actions that all buddhas are said to perform during their lifetime. The specific deeds can vary depending on the source.

null

dzi na mi tra

ཇི་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

Jinamitra was invited to Tibet during the reign of King Tri Songdetsen (khri srong lde btsan, r. 742–98 CE) and was involved with the translation of nearly two hundred texts, continuing into the reign of King Ralpachen (ral pa can, r. 815–38 CE). He was one of the small group of paṇḍitas responsible for the Mahāvīyutpatti Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary.

null

mkha' lding

མཁའ་ལྷིང་།

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.

null

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

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.

null

rgyal ba

རྒྱལ་བ།

null

ser skya'i gnas

ཤེར་སྐྱའི་གནས།

The capital city of the Śākya kingdom, where Prince Siddhārtha grew up, located in the foothills of the Himalayas. At present, there are two archeological sites, one on either side of the present border between Nepal and India, that have been identified as its remains.

null

klu

ལྷ

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.

null

lum bl

ལུམ་བླ

The place where the Buddha was born, located in what is now southern Nepal.

null

man dA ra ba

མན་དྲ་བ།

One of the five trees of Indra's paradise, its heavenly flowers often rain down in salutation of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and are said to be very bright and aromatic, gladdening the hearts of those who see them. In our world, it is a tree native to India, *Erythrina indica* or *Erythrina variegata*, commonly known as the Indian coral tree, mandarava tree, flame tree, and tiger's claw. In the early spring, before its leaves grow, the tree is fully covered in large flowers, which are rich in nectar and attract many birds. Although the most widespread coral tree has red crimson flowers, the color of the blossoms is not usually mentioned in the sūtras themselves, and it may refer to some other kinds, like the rarer *Erythrina indica alba*, which boasts white flowers.

null

mkhan po

མཁན་པོ།

A person's particular preceptor within the monastic tradition. They must have at least ten years of standing in the saṅgha, and their role is to confer ordination, to tend to the student, and to provide all the necessary requisites, therefore guiding that person for the taking of full vows and the maintenance of conduct and practice. This office was decreed by the Buddha so that aspirants would not have to receive ordination from the Buddha in person, and the Buddha identified two types: those who grant entry into the renunciate order and those who grant full ordination. The Tibetan translation *mkhan po* has also come to mean “a learned scholar,” the equivalent of a paṇḍita, but that is not the intended meaning in Indic Buddhist literature.

null

mu stegs byed pa

མུ་སྟེགས་བྱེད་པ།

A member of a religion, sect, or philosophical tradition that was a rival of, or antagonistic to, the Buddhist community in India.

null

thub pa

ཐུབ་པ།

A title that, like buddha, is given to those who have attained realization through their own contemplation and not by divine revelation.

null

tshogs kyi lam

ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ལམ།

The first of the five paths, a common framework of the path to awakening used in both the Śrāvakayāna and the Mahāyāna.

null

rdo rje'i gdan

རྡོ་རྗེའི་གདན།

The site of the Buddha's ultimate awakening.

null

shAkya thub pa

ཤཱཀ་ཐུབ་པ།

An epithet for the historical Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama: he was a muni (“sage”) from the Śākya clan. He is counted as the fourth of the first four buddhas of the present Good Eon, the other three being Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kāśyapa. He will be followed by Maitreya, the next buddha in this eon.

null

'jig rten gsum

འཇིག་རྟེན་གསུམ།

The desire realm, form realm, and formless realm. Also referred to as the “three realms” (khams gsum).

null

zas gtsang

ཟས་གཙང་།

The Buddha's father and king of the Śākyas.

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