

༄༅། །འཇམ་དབལ་གྱིས་རྗེས་བཤམ།

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## The Question of Mañjuśrī

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*Mañjuśrīpariṣcchā*

འཕགས་པ་འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱིས་དྲིས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

*'phags pa 'jam dpal gyis dris pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Question of Mañjuśrī”

*Āryamañjuśrīpariṣcchānāmamahāyānasūtra*

· Toh 172 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 60 (mdo sde, ma), folios 1.b–5.a



Translated by the Kīrtimukha Translation Group  
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2021

Current version v 1.0.19 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.26.1

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co.

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## SUMMARY

- s.1 The bodhisattva Mañjuśrī approaches the Buddha and asks about the extent of the merit represented by the Buddha's "Dharma conch," which here seems to mean the Buddha's voice. The Buddha proceeds to illustrate the vastness of this merit by means of a cosmic multiplication—sequentially compounding the merit of all beings in a certain realm if they each possessed the merit of a cakravartin, a brahmā god, a bodhisattva, and so forth, each having more merit than the previous one. The expansion continues through a list of the eighty designs marking the body of a buddha and the thirty-two signs of a great being, which, multiplied inconceivably, are said to be equal in merit to the Dharma conch. The Buddha then explains how the voice, body, and light of the Buddha are made known throughout countless realms and take on numberless manifestations to tame beings.

ac.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 This sūtra was translated by the Kīrtimukha Translation Group. Celso Wilkinson, Laura Goetz, and L.S. Summer translated the text from the Tibetan and Sanskrit. William Giddings provided comparisons to the Chinese versions of the text.

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

## INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Question of Mañjuśrī* presents a dialogue between the Buddha and the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, in which the Buddha illustrates the vastness of the merit represented by the Buddha's Dharma conch and how, by means of his conch and other auspicious qualities, the Buddha and his teaching pervade countless worlds and manifest in countless guises according to the myriad needs and dispositions of beings.

i.2 The sūtra opens with Mañjuśrī approaching the Buddha and asking him to explain the measure of the merit represented by the Buddha's "Dharma conch," which in this sūtra seems to mean the Buddha's voice. The conch symbolizes the far-reaching power of the Buddha's word and the vast extent to which the teachings resonate among the incalculable realms. The conch shell is also one of the eight auspicious emblems that each symbolize various beneficent aspects of the Buddha's teaching.

i.3 In order to express the vast magnitude of the merit of the Dharma conch, the Buddha proceeds to present a sequence of hypothetical scenarios in which all beings in a given realm possess the merit of a previously introduced figure or attribute. That merit is then multiplied by varying amounts to equal that of an even greater figure or attribute—from the cakravartin monarch to Māra, to brahmā gods of increasingly vast domains, to pratyekabuddhas and bodhisattvas, to the pores of the Buddha's body and his eighty excellent signs—culminating in lists of the eighty designs marking the Buddha's hands and feet and the thirty-two signs of a great being. Finally, the Buddha states that the sum of multiplying these eighty designs by an inconceivable amount is equal to the sum of merit generated by the Dharma conch. A very similar passage, with the same sequence of meritorious figures and signs culminating in the Buddha's voice, can be seen in the *Ratnameghasūtra* (Toh 231),<sup>1</sup> while a somewhat less similar presentation of the exponential superiority of the Dharma conch is found in another sūtra, the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra* (Toh 175, placed nearby in the Degé Kangyur).<sup>2</sup>



- i.4 The list of eighty designs on the Buddha's hands and feet is a unique feature of this sūtra. Peter Skilling has compiled an analysis of the various sources that list the designs and symbols found on the body or on the hands and feet of the Buddha.<sup>3</sup> Such lists are well known in the Theravādin traditions, which include an early list of around forty designs given by Buddhaghosa in his commentaries on the Dīgha and Majjhima Nikāyas, and several later lists of one hundred and eight signs found in Pali sources from the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. In the Kangyur this list of eighty designs is found exclusively in *The Question of Mañjuśrī*, but there are two texts in the Tengyur that contain similar lists: Śamathadeva's *Abhidharmakośaṭīkōpayikā* (Toh 4094) contains two lists—one short and one long—of designs found on the body of the Buddha, cited from texts that no longer exist, and Daśabalaśrīmitra's *Samskṛtāsamskṛtaviniścaya* (Toh 3897) also contains a short and long list of designs found on the hands and feet of the Buddha. In this latter text the long list is, with some exceptions, nearly identical to that found in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* and likely drawn from the same source. Skilling points out that although *The Question of Mañjuśrī* is a Mahāyāna sūtra, this list must have been taken from a Vaibhāṣika or (Mūla)Sarvāstivādin source.<sup>4</sup>
- i.5 The eighty designs differ from the more commonly known eighty excellent signs on the body of a buddha. The eighty designs are adornments on the hands and feet that are said to be greater in the hierarchy of merit than the eighty excellent signs on the body, which, although not enumerated in Tibetan sources of *The Question of Mañjuśrī*, are listed in two of the Chinese versions.<sup>5</sup> The thirty-two signs listed in this sūtra align roughly with other standard enumerations in the canonical literature.
- i.6 The Buddha goes on to explain that the Dharma conch, with its power to tame beings, causes the teachings to pervade countless world systems, as do his body, light, and conduct—all of which manifest according to the needs and inclinations of beings. In the end, Mañjuśrī praises the Buddha, and the audience rejoices in his teaching.
- i.7 There was no known Sanskrit original of *The Question of Mañjuśrī* available until recently, when a manuscript containing a collection of twenty texts, all of them sūtras, was found in the Potala Palace in Lhasa. Bhikṣuṇī Vinītā published a critical edition of this collection, along with an English translation, in the series Sanskrit Texts from the Autonomous Region (2010). Unfortunately, due to the inaccessibility of the manuscript collection and because it is missing a final colophon, its origin and date are currently unknown.<sup>6</sup> In our translation, citations of the Sanskrit are given using Vinītā's emendations of the handwritten manuscript.

- i.8 *The Question of Mañjuśrī* is the last in the manuscript collection and is abruptly cut off about one third of the way through, ending in the middle of the third folio (F.2.b) of this sūtra as found in the Degé Kangyur. In the Sanskrit manuscript, this sūtra is titled *Dharmaśaṅkhasūtra*, or *The Dharma Conch Sūtra*, while in Tibetan manuscripts it is only ever called *The Question of Mañjuśrī* (*Mañjuśrīparipṛcchāsūtra*).
- i.9 There are three versions of the text found in the Chinese Tripiṭaka: one (Taishō 473) translated by Faxian (法賢, 337–422 CE), which combines the titles *The Question of Mañjuśrī* and *The Dharma Conch* (佛說妙吉祥菩薩所問大乘法螺經); another (Taishō 661) translated by Divākara (地婆訶羅, 613–687 CE) called *The Mahāyāna Sūtra on the Hundred Meritorious Marks* (大乘百福相經); and a third (Taishō 662), said to be translated by Divākara, called *The Mahāyāna Sūtra on the Marks Adorned with a Hundred Merits* (大乘百福莊嚴相經).<sup>7</sup>
- i.10 No information is given in the colophon as to the translator or editor of the Tibetan. The Denkarma and Phangthangma imperial catalogs both mention a *Question of Mañjuśrī* among the registry of sūtras, although there is a slight ambiguity owing to the length of ninety *ślokas* (one *śloka* equaling sixteen syllables in the Sanskrit source) described in both catalogs,<sup>8</sup> which seems a bit short for this text. Nonetheless, considering the sūtra's early presence in the Chinese canon, this is most likely the same text, and assuming this is the case we can surmise that it was translated into Tibetan in the early translation period at a date no later than that of the Denkarma, 812 CE.
- i.11 We have based our translation primarily on the Degé edition of the Tibetan Kangyur, but we have also consulted the Sanskrit as well as the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*) and several other Kangyur editions, including those from Tshalpa, Thempangma, and independent lines. These recensions are generally consistent and roughly correspond to the Sanskrit and Chinese sources, but there are occasional differences such as additions or omissions of stages in the hierarchical sequence of merit.<sup>9</sup> There are also, as is to be expected, some variations between the Chinese and Tibetan translations of the lists found in the sūtra.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra  
The Question of Mañjuśrī**

1.

## The Translation

[B1] [F.1.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in the Samanta Assembly Hall in Śrāvastī together with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks, innumerable bodhisattva mahāsattvas, and many hundreds of thousands of beings to be tamed, and other bodhisattva mahāsattvas headed by Avalokiteśvara.

1.3 The Blessed One sat unwavering upon a jeweled lion throne. Through the power of the Buddha, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Mañjuśrī rose from his seat, draped his upper robe over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. Joining his palms toward the Blessed One, [F.2.a] he said, “Blessed One, how extensive is the great merit of the Tathāgata’s Dharma conch,<sup>10</sup> the great merit by which the wishes of the many hundred sextillions of beings to be tamed are completely fulfilled?”

1.4 The Blessed One replied to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, the great merit of the Tathāgata’s Dharma conch,<sup>11</sup> the great merit by which the wishes of a hundred sextillion beings to be tamed are completely fulfilled, arises from insight and is imbued with great compassion.<sup>12</sup> It is inconceivable.<sup>13</sup>

1.5 “Mañjuśrī, if all of the beings in the world were to engage in the path of the ten virtuous actions, and if that collection of merit, which is the collection of merit of all those beings, were multiplied by a hundred, it would equal that of a cakravartin king who has dominion over the four continents and possesses the seven treasures. The seven treasures are as follows: the precious wheel, the precious elephant, the precious horse, the precious jewel, the precious woman, the precious steward, and the precious minister.

He has a thousand heroic sons who are courageous, have excellent well-built bodies, and utterly defeat opposing armies. Mañjuśrī, such is the cakravartin king's great miraculous powers and might. [F.2.b]

1.6 “Mañjuśrī, if all beings in the world with its four continents were to possess the cakravartin king's merit, and if that merit, which is the merit of all those beings, were multiplied by a hundred,<sup>14</sup> it would equal that of Śakra, lord of the gods. Such is the lord of the gods' great miraculous powers and great might.

1.7 “Mañjuśrī,<sup>15</sup> if all of the beings in the realm of the world with its four continents were to possess Śakra's merit, and if that merit, which is the merit of all those beings, were multiplied by a hundred thousand,<sup>16</sup> it would equal that of Māra, lord of the desire realm, who understands the teachings within the desire realm.<sup>17</sup> Such is Māra of the desire realm's great miraculous powers and great might.

1.8 “Mañjuśrī,<sup>18</sup> if all of the beings in the realm of the world with its four continents were to possess Māra's merit, and if that merit, which is the merit of all of those beings, were multiplied by a hundred thousand, it would equal that of a brahmā, sovereign of a chiliocosm,<sup>19</sup> whose love pervades the domain of a chiliocosm.

1.9 “Mañjuśrī, if all of the beings in this chiliocosm were to possess the merit of a brahmā god, sovereign of a chiliocosm, and if that merit, which is the merit of all those beings, were multiplied by a hundred thousand, it equal that of a brahmā god, sovereign of a dichiliocosm,<sup>20</sup> whose love pervades the domain of a dichiliocosm.

1.10 “Mañjuśrī, if all of the beings in this dichiliocosm were to possess the merit of a brahmā god, sovereign of a dichiliocosm, and if that merit, which is the merit of all of those beings, were multiplied by a hundred thousand, it would equal that of a supremely great almighty brahmā, sovereign of a trichiliocosm,<sup>21</sup> [F.3.a] whose love pervades the domain of a great trichiliocosm.

1.11 “Mañjuśrī, consider a supremely great almighty brahmā. In a single intermediate eon following the rise of the waters after the eon of destruction,<sup>22</sup> the trichiliocosm fills up with rainfall with its droplets of water. A supremely great almighty brahmā knows all the drops of water that have amassed in his world. Therefore, he is endowed with great wisdom and has great miraculous powers and great might. The root of virtue of a great almighty one is no trifling thing.

1.12 “Mañjuśrī, if all of the beings in this trichiliocosm were to possess the merit of a great brahmā, sovereign of a trichiliocosm, and if that merit, which is the merit of all those beings, were multiplied by many hundred sextillions, it would equal that of a pratyekabuddha who had obtained great might.<sup>23</sup>

- 1.13 “Mañjuśrī, put aside this great trichiliocosm. Mañjuśrī, if all the beings in the domain of the buddhas, the realm of the worlds of the ten directions, were to possess the merit obtained by a pratyekabuddha who had obtained great might, and if that merit, which is the merit of all of those beings, were multiplied by many hundred sextillions, it would equal that of a single bodhisattva in their final existence.
- 1.14 “Mañjuśrī, if all of the beings in the realm of the worlds of the ten directions of space—beings born from an egg, born from a womb, born from heat and moisture, and born miraculously; those with form and those without; and those with perception, those without perception, and those with neither perception nor nonperception<sup>24</sup> [F.3.b]—were to possess the merit of a bodhisattva in their final existence, and if that merit, which is the merit of all of those beings, were multiplied by many hundred sextillions, it would equal that of a single hair pore on the body of the Tathāgata. Each of the nine million nine hundred thousand hair pores on the body of the Tathāgata are established in the same way.
- 1.15 “Mañjuśrī, if the merit that is equal to the merit contained in all those hair pores were multiplied many hundred sextillions, it would equal that of one of the eighty excellent signs on the body of the Tathāgata.<sup>25</sup> Each of the eighty excellent signs is established on the body of the Tathāgata in the same way.
- 1.16 “Mañjuśrī, if that merit, which is the merit contained in the eighty excellent signs, were multiplied by many hundred sextillions, it would be like that of one of the designs marking the Tathāgata’s hands and feet.
- 1.17 “The eighty designs are as follows:<sup>26</sup> (1) a parasol, (2) a victory banner, (3) a *śrīvatsa*, (4) a garland, (5) a hook, (6) a diadem, (7) a staff,<sup>27</sup> (8) a vase, (9) an elephant, (10) a horse, (11) a tiger, (12) a makara, (13) a fish, (14) a turtle, (15) a peacock, (16) a kalaviṅka bird, (17) a partridge, (18) a cāṣa bird,<sup>28</sup> (19) a cakravāka shelduck, (20) a parrot, (21) a goose, (22) a dove, (23) barley, (24) the great medicine, (25) bamboo, (26) a gayal, (27) a nāga, (28) a goat, (29) a bull, (30) a mountain, (31) a bilva fruit tree,<sup>29</sup> (32) a black antelope, (33) a precious jewel, (34) a supreme sword, (35) a vajra, (36) a bow, (37) an arrow, (38) a lance, (39) a trident, (40) a plow, (41) a mace, (42) an axe, (43) a lasso,<sup>30</sup> (44) a boat, (45) a pearl ornament, (46) a cloud, (47) Brahmā, (48) Indra, (49) Dhṛtarāṣṭra,<sup>31</sup> (50) Varuṇa, (51) Virūḍhaka, (52) Virūpākṣa, (53) Dhanada, (54) a great sage, (55) Śrī, (56) a sun, (57) a moon, [F.4.a] (58) a fire, (59) wind, (60) a lotus, (61) a *nandyāvarta*, (62) a triangle,<sup>32</sup> (63) an excellent throne, (64) a mirror, (65) a tail whisk, (66) dūrvā grass, (67) *puroḍāśa* cake, (68) a boy, (69) a girl, (70) a drum, (71) a conch, (72) a *mṛdaṅga* drum,<sup>33</sup> (73) a bracelet, (74) an armband, (75) an earring,<sup>34</sup> (76) a ring, (77) a dangling earring, (78) an

excellent flower, (79) a wish-granting tree, and (80) a lion at the center of a wheel.<sup>35</sup> These are the eighty designs. They appear on the palms of the Tathāgata's hands and the soles of his feet.

1.18 “Mañjuśrī, if that merit, which is the merit contained in those eighty designs, were multiplied by many hundred sextillions, it would be like one of the signs of a great being on the Tathāgata's body; each of the thirty-two signs of a great being are established in the same way. They are as follows:<sup>36</sup> (1) the uṣṇīṣa on the head, (2) right-curling dark blue hair on the head, (3) an even forehead, (4) being adorned with a beautiful complexion,<sup>37</sup> (5) an *ūrṇā* hair between the eyebrows, (6) dark blue eyes with bovine eyelashes, (7) forty close-fitting teeth, (8) white canine teeth, (9) cheeks like a lion, (10) a large and slender tongue, (11) a torso like a lion, (12) an arm span and height that are identical like the banyan tree, (13) a hair growing from every pore,<sup>38</sup> (14) a concealed male organ, (15) full and rounded thighs, (16) calves like those of Eṇeya, king of antelopes, (17) broad heels, (18) palms and soles that are soft and supple, (19) webbed fingers and toes, (20) long fingers and toes, (21) feet with high arches, (22) a supreme organ of taste, (23) round shoulders, (24) the seven prominent parts, (25) fine skin the color of gold, (26) the ability to reach the hands to the knees without bending, (27) well-positioned feet, (28) palms and soles with the mark of the wheel, [F.4.b] and (29) the voice of Brahmā. These are the thirty-two signs of a great being. They appear on the body of the Tathāgata.

1.19 “Mañjuśrī, if that merit, which is the merit contained in the thirty-two signs of a great being, were multiplied innumerable times, multiplied inconceivably, multiplied incalculably, and multiplied beyond expression, it would be like that of the Tathāgata's Dharma conch. By the power of taming with the Dharma conch, with his voice the Tathāgata engenders understanding throughout limitless and countless world realms. Just as with his voice, so it is with his light and his body.<sup>39</sup>

1.20 “In this way, Mañjuśrī, this great merit, arisen from great insight, imbued with compassion, generated through skill-in-means and aspirations, completely pure in moral discipline,<sup>40</sup> and authentically born from the distinctions of practice, is inconceivable to all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.<sup>41</sup>

1.21 “Mañjuśrī, the form body of the Tathāgata is especially exalted for two reasons. What are these two reasons? They are the power of aspiration and the power of the complete ripening of the virtue of sentient beings to be tamed. Mañjuśrī, for these two reasons the form body of the Tathāgata is especially exalted.

1.22 “Mañjuśrī, just as the form body of the Tathāgata is especially exalted,<sup>42</sup> the Dharma taught is also especially exalted.

- “Mañjuśrī, just as the Dharma taught by the Tathāgata, his light is also especially exalted.
- “Mañjuśrī, just as the light of the Tathāgata is especially exalted, his conduct is also especially exalted.
- 1.23 “Mañjuśrī, the Tathāgata pervades the entire world with his body.<sup>43</sup>
- “Mañjuśrī, whatever particular color, shape, or conduct will tame sentient beings, [F.5.a] sentient beings will see the Tathāgata accordingly as having that particular color, shape, and conduct.
- 1.24 “Mañjuśrī, whatever particular signs will tame sentient beings, sentient beings will see the Tathāgata accordingly as having those particular signs.
- 1.25 “Mañjuśrī, whatever Dharma teachings will fully ripen sentient beings, sentient beings will understand the particular Dharma teachings of the Tathāgata to be Dharma teachings of that kind.
- 1.26 “Mañjuśrī, whatever conduct tames sentient beings and causes them to engage with the teachings of the Tathāgata, sentient beings will see the Tathāgata abiding by that conduct.
- 1.27 “Mañjuśrī, in this way the tathāgata, arhat, perfect Buddha comes into the world, benefits and brings happiness to many beings, has love and affection for the world, and takes birth in order to help, benefit, and bring happiness to gods, humans, and the host of beings.”
- 1.28 Then the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī rose from his seat and, approaching the Blessed One, pressed his palms together and said, “Blessed One—my unparalleled, matchless teacher, supreme protector in the three realms and benefactor for all sentient beings, unperturbed by worldly phenomena, unblemished like the sky, inconceivable, a worthy inspiration, desirable to behold, and beautiful to behold—I have truly found a great treasure! Sugata, I have truly found a great treasure!”
- 1.29 Youthful Mañjuśrī was overjoyed at what the Tathāgata had said. The bodhisattva great beings and the monks praised the words of the Blessed One.
- 1.30 *This completes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “The Question of Mañjuśrī.”*



ab.

## ABBREVIATIONS

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| C                                | Choné ( <i>co ne</i> ) Kangyur   |
| D                                | Degé ( <i>sde dge</i> ) Kangyur  |
| F                                | Phukdrak ( <i>phug brag</i> ) Kangyur  |
| Go.                              | Gondhla Collection   |
| H                                | Lhasa ( <i>zhol</i> ) Kangyur  |
| J                                | Lithang ( <i>li thang</i> ) Kangyur  |
| K                                | Peking ( <i>pe cin</i> ) or “Kangxi” Kangyur   |
| N                                | Narthang ( <i>snar thang</i> ) Kangyur   |
| S                                | Stok Palace ( <i>stog pho brang bris ma</i> ) Kangyur  |
| Sanskrit                         | Sanskrit manuscript found in the Potala Palace<br>(see <a href="#">Introduction</a> and Bibliography)  |
| <i>Samṣkṛtāsamṣkṛtaviniścaya</i> | A commentary by Daśabalaśrīmitra found within<br>the Tengyur containing a list of the eighty designs<br>found on the hands and feet of the Tathāgata (see<br>Bibliography) |
| <i>Taishō 473</i>                | 4th–5th century Chinese translation by Faxian (法<br>賢)   |
| <i>Taishō 661</i>                | 7th century Chinese translation by Divākara (地婆<br>訶羅)   |
| <i>Taishō 662</i>                | 7th century Chinese translation by Divākara (地婆<br>訶羅)   |
| U                                | Urga ( <i>ku re</i> ) Kangyur  |
| Y                                | Yongle ( <i>g.yung lo</i> ) Kangyur  |

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 See Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans., *The Jewel Cloud* (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2019), 1.233–4 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh231.html#UT22084-064-001-310>)
- n.2 See Jens Braarvig and David Welsh, trans., *The Teaching of Akṣayamati*, (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2020), 1.102–3 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh175.html#UT22084-060-004-129>).
- n.3 Skilling (1992), pp. 67–79.
- n.4 Skilling (1992), p. 68.
- n.5 Taishō 661 and 662; see n.25.
- n.6 Currently the manuscript is kept in the Potala. Vinītā’s critical edition is based on a copy of the manuscript that is kept in the China Tibetology Research Center. For further details on the state of this manuscript see Vinītā (2010), pp. xv–xvii.
- n.7 There is also another text in the Chinese canon similarly called *The Question of Mañjuśrī* (文殊師利問經, Taishō 468), which is, however, longer and differs thematically from the text translated here. There are no known Sanskrit or Tibetan versions of this longer sūtra.
- n.8 Denkarma, folio 299.b; see also Herrmann-Pfandt, p. 112 (no. 211). Phangthangma (2003), p. 17. Note also the *zhus pa* (“question”) used in the title *’phags pa ’jam dpal gyis zhus pa*, rather than *dris pa* found in the majority of the Kangyur recensions’ titles, although *zhus pa* is found among a few of them.
- n.9 See n.13, n.15, n.18 and n.23.

- n.10 Here we followed the Sanskrit, Y, F, S, and U, which have “Dharma conch” (*chos kyi drung*); C, D, and J have “in the presence of the Tathāgata” (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i drung*); H, K, and N, have “in the presence of the Dharma of the Tathāgata” (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i chos kyi drung*). In these cases, *drung* is likely a scribal error for *dung*.
- n.11 Following Sanskrit, Y, F, S, and U. See [n.10](#).
- n.12 Go. adds several descriptions qualifying this great merit: “it is engendered by skill in means and aspirations, and it is authentically born from special meditation that fully purifies discipline. This great merit is inconceivable to all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas” (*thabs la mkhas pa chen po smon lam gyis bskyed pa/ thul khriims dang / ting nge 'dzind shind tu rnam par dag pa bsgoms pa'i khyad par gis yang dag pa grub pa ste/ nyan thos dang / rang sang rgyas thams cad kyis bsam gyis myi khyab pa yin no/*). This correlates with the description of the Dharma conch at the end of the sūtra.
- n.13 "Following this, the Sanskrit text includes an additional stage in the hierarchy of merit not attested in the Tibetan translation. This stage, for a *rājā jambudvīpeśvaraḥ* (“a king who is lord of Jambudvīpa”), ranks below a cakravārtin king, the first stage in the hierarchy of merit as listed in the Tibetan text.
- n.14 From here throughout the rest of the text, the numbers for multiplying merit vary in the different sources. Here, for example, Go., Taishō 473, Taishō 662, and the Sanskrit have “multiplied by a thousand”; Taishō 661 has “multiplied by a hundred thousand.” For the sake of simplicity, we have translated the text from D and refrained from annotating these numerical variations from the sources unless they significantly change the meaning.
- n.15 Taishō 473 adds an additional stage in the hierarchy of merit comparing that of Śakra to that of Nārāyaṇa, before going on to compare Nārāyaṇa to Māra.
- n.16 The Sanskrit witness of this sūtra abruptly ends here.
- n.17 D: *'dod pa'i khams su bstan pas go bar byed pa*. Our translation here is corroborated by Taishō 662: 教受護持 “who upholds and bears in mind the teachings.” The implication of this remark is not clear. Taishō 473 adds “in the heaven of Paranirmitavaśavartin.” This implies that Māra is the highest deity presiding within the bounds of the desire realm, where Paranirmitavaśavartin is the highest heaven according to Abhidharma cosmology.

- n.18 The following passage is omitted in Taishō 473, which skips to the next stage in the hierarchy of merit, comparing the merit of Māra to that of a brahmā, sovereign of a dichiliocosm, in the same format.
- n.19 Taishō 662 adds that this is a brahmā “of the first *dhyāna*.” This is consistent with the cosmology presented in the sūtra. As Māra represents the highest deity of the desire realm, “a brahmā, sovereign of a chiliocosm,” represents a god in one of the three lowest strata of the form realm, which is associated with the first *dhyāna*, while the brahmās of a dichiliocosm and trichiliocosm represent gods of the higher strata associated with the second and fourth *dhyānas* respectively. There are some sources that seem to give the *dhyānas* and the spatial locations they encompass in the form realm progressively greater dimensions. For instance, the *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* states that while each chiliocosm contains a thousand sets of four continents, along with a thousand suns, moons, Mount Merus, and so forth up to the desire realms, there is one position that states that the first *dhyāna* encompasses a single world system, the second *dhyāna* a chiliocosm, the third *dhyāna* a dichiliocosm, and the fourth *dhyāna* a trichiliocosm. The text goes on to state that there is a differing opinion in which the first *dhyāna* encompasses a chiliocosm, the second *dhyāna* a dichiliocosm, and the third *dhyāna* a trichiliocosm, and the fourth *dhyāna* is without measure. The first of these two opinions would seem to be validated by the context of this sūtra, where the sequential brahmās are described as being “sovereign” of exponentially larger domains. See Vasubandhu, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*, in Sangpo (2012), pp. 1075–6.
- n.20 Taishō 662 adds “a brahmā of the second *dhyāna*.”
- n.21 Taishō 662 adds “a brahmā of the fourth *dhyāna*.”
- n.22 All the Chinese versions of the sūtra describe this moment as the destruction of the world through fire rather than water, and then, following this, the great brahmā commands the rain to come down and fill the trichiliocosm up to the brahmā heavens in the form realm. Go. has the phrase “when the eon of incineration arises” (*'sreg pa'i bskal pa 'byung ba de'i tshé*), and following this it also describes the trichiliocosm filling up with rain and drops of water. The *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* describes the destruction of the world through water up to the top of the first *dhyāna*, through fire up to the top of second *dhyāna*, and through wind up to the top of the third. See Vasubandhu, *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya*, in Sangpo (2012), pp. 1109–15.
- n.23 Go. adds an additional stage in the hierarchy of merit, comparing the merit of a great brahmā, sovereign of a trichiliocosm, to that of a great śrāvaka with

great miraculous powers (*nyan thos chen po rdzu 'phrul chen po dang ldan pa*). Then, in the next passage, the śrāvaka's merit is compared to that of a pratyekabuddha, and it continues in the same form as in the other versions.

- n.24 This is a truly all-inclusive list of possible beings found in Buddhist cosmology. The latter categories, including those with and without forms or perceptions all the way up to those with neither perceptions nor the absence of them, is representative of beings abiding in formless realms. See also the glossary entry for “beings with neither perception nor nonperception.”
- n.25 Taishō 661 and Taishō 662 provide a list of the eighty excellent signs here.
- n.26 There are many minor spelling variations found among the Kangyur recensions for the eighty designs. For the sake of clarity, variant readings have not been noted unless they affected the meaning or interpretation of the term; however, all the attested spelling variations have been represented in the glossary. For a detailed analysis of the eighty designs compared across various sources see Skilling (1992), pp. 67–79.
- n.27 Go. has *dbyig tog*; all other Tibetan recensions have *dbyig to*. The meaning of “staff” is derived from correlation with Taishō 473 and from consultation with a series of dictionary entries. The meaning of *dbyig to(g)* could also be “jewel” or “crest jewel.” For more details on this see Vinīta (2010), p. 741, note d. Also see Skilling (1992), p. 73.
- n.28 Go. omits.
- n.29 Go.: *bil shing ba*; F: *bil ba dang*; C, D, H, J, K, Y, N, S, and U: *bil ba dang / shing dang* (“a bilva fruit, a tree” as two items). In addition to Go., F and the *Samṣkṛtāsamṣkṛtaviniścaya* also omit “a tree” as a separate item. We have chosen to translate this as one item, “bilva fruit tree,” following Go., as this results in a list of exactly eighty items, and the “wish-granting tree” already appears as item number 79 in the list.
- n.30 F omits.
- n.31 C, D, H, J, N, and U: *'khor srung*. This form is listed as an alternate spelling for Dhṛtarāṣṭra in the *Mahāvīyutpatti* (the imperial period Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary), no. 3381. K and Y: *'khor bsrung*; S: *'khor bsrungs*; Go.: *yul 'khor srung*.
- n.32 Go. omits.
- n.33 F and S: *mri tang ga* (transliteration of the Sanskrit *mṛdaṅga*). Go. and the *Samṣkṛtāsamṣkṛtaviniścaya* have *rdza rṅga*, which has the same translated

meaning as the former transliteration. D, H, J, and N: *smri ga*; K: *smri dang ga/ ga dang /*; Y: *smri dang ga*; C and U: *smrig*.

- n.34 Go.: *rna cha gdub 'khord* (“round earring”).
- n.35 Translated from Go. and the *Saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtaviniścaya*: *'khor lo'i dbus kyi seng ge*. C, D, H, K, Y, J, N, and U: *'khor lo dang / dpung gi seng ge*; F and S: *'khor lo dpung gi seng ge*.
- n.36 Only twenty-nine of the thirty-two signs of a great being are listed here, although in other sources (6) and (7) are usually counted as two signs each. There are many instances of the list of thirty-two signs found throughout the Kangyur, and significant differences can be found among them. For other examples of the list complete with thirty-two signs, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans., *The Play in Full* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh95.html#UT22084-046-001-474>), Toh 95 (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2013), 7.98; or Padmakara Translation Group, trans., *The Transcendent Perfection of Wisdom in Ten Thousand Lines* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh11.html#UT22084-031-002-270>), Toh 11 (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2018), 2.15 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh11.html#UT22084-031-002-270>) (which contains thirty-three signs). In the latter, see also [note 61](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh11.html#end-note-UT22084-031-002-271>) for further details concerning the various locations of the list found throughout the Kangyur. There is also a standard list found in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* (the imperial period Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary), entries 235–67. If one looks to the latter as a standard, the missing three can be accounted for by entries 242, “even teeth” (*samadanta, tshems mnyam pa*), and 243, “close-fitting teeth” (*aviraladanta, tshems thag bzang ba*), which in the *Mahāvvyutpatti* is separate from the sign of “forty teeth,” whereas in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* they are joined; 251, “collarbones that are well covered” (*citāntarāṃsa, thal gong rgyas pa*); and 257 “body hairs that grow upward” (*ūrdhvagaroma, sku'i spu gyen du phyogs pa*), which is found in Go. (see [n.38](#)). Note that here in *The Question of Mañjuśrī*, the fourth sign in the list, “being adorned with a beautiful complexion,” is not found in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*. Thus by omitting these four and adding one more *The Question of Mañjuśrī* lists a total of twenty-nine signs.
- n.37 Go. omits.
- n.38 Go. adds: “body hairs that grow upward” (*sku'i spu gyend du phyogs pa*). This is usually included in other lists of the thirty-two signs.

- n.39 A very similar passage, with the same sequence of meritorious figures and signs culminating in the Buddha's voice, can be seen in the *Ratnameghasūtra* (Toh 231); see Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans., *The Jewel Cloud* (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2019), 1.233–4 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh231.html#UT22084-064-001-310>). A somewhat less similar calculation of merit beginning with the Buddha's pores, but culminating specifically in the Dharma conch, is found in the *Akṣayamatīnirdeśasūtra*: see Jens Braarvig and David Welsh, trans., *The Teaching of Akṣayamati*, Toh 175, (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2020), 1.103 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh175.html#UT22084-060-004-130>). See also Āryaśūra's *Pāramitāsamāsa* (*pha rol tu phyin pa bsdus pa*, Toh 3944), folios 227a–b.
- n.40 Go. adds “and samādhi” (*dang / ting nge 'dzin*).
- n.41 Go. again adds the passage, “The presence of the Tathāgata's Dharma completely fulfilling the wishes of beings to be tamed” (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i chos kyi mur 'gram gdul bya'i bsam ba yongs su rdzogs par byed par 'gyur ro*).
- n.42 This following sequence of comparison differs in Go., which first compares the Tathāgata's body to his voice (*gsung sgra*), then compares his voice to his “signs” (*mtshan*), and then compares his signs to the Dharma taught (*chos bstan pa*). From there the sequence continues in the same manner as D and the other sources, continuing with his light and so forth.
- n.43 For this sentence Go. has “Mañjuśrī, the Tathāgata's body is vast through all its marks.” (*'jam dpal de bzhin gshegs pa'i sku mtshan thams cad kyi rgyas pa yin*).

b.

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## GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·  
source language

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

g.1 a supreme organ of taste

*ro bro ba'i mchog*

རོ་བློ་བའི་མཚོག་

*rasarasāgratā*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-second of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.2 ability to reach the hands to the knees without bending

*ma btud par phyag pus mo'i lha nga la reg pa*

མ་བཏུད་པར་ཕྱག་པུས་མོ་འི་ལྷ་ང་ལ་རེག་པ།

*anavanatapralambabāhu*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-sixth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.3 adorned with a beautiful complexion

*kha dog gis brgyan pa*

ཁ་དོག་གིས་བརྒྱན་པ།

—

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the fourth of the thirty-two signs of a great being. This sign is not mentioned in any of the other lists of thirty-two that we have investigated.

g.4 almighty

*dbang phyug*

དབང་ཕྱུག

*īśvara*

The Sanskrit *īśvara* literally means “powerful one.” In both Indian and Tibetan literature it is often an epithet applied to Śiva. However, here where the title is given to a “supremely great *almighty* brahmā, sovereign of a trichiliocosm” (*tshangs pa stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi bdag po dbang phyug chen po'i mchog*), the term signifies that Brahmā, or rather a brahmā, is the overseer of an entire trichiliocosm.

g.5 an arm span and height that are identical like the banyan tree

*shing n+ya gro d+ha ltar chu zheng gab pa*

ཤིང་བྱ་གྲོ་རྒྱ་ལྷ་ར་ཚུཞེང་གཤམ་པ།

*nyagrodhaparimaṇḍala*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twelfth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.6 arhat

*dgra bcom pa*

དག་བཅོམ་པ།

*arhat*

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

According to Buddhist tradition, one who is worthy of worship (*pūjām arhati*), or one who has conquered the enemies, the mental afflictions (*kleśa-ari-hata-vat*), and reached liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. It is the fourth and highest of the four fruits attainable by śrāvakas. Also used as an epithet of the Buddha.

g.7 armband

*dpung rgyan*

དུང་རྒྱལ།

\**keyūra*<sup>RS</sup> . \**aṅgada*<sup>RS</sup>

Seventy-fourth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.8 arrow

*mda'*

མདའ།

\**śara*<sup>RS</sup> . \**iṣu*<sup>RS</sup>

Thirty-seventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.9 Avalokiteśvara

*spyan ras gzigs dbang po*

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་པོ།

*avalokiteśvara*

One of the eight “close sons” of the Buddha, the embodiment of compassion. He first appeared as a bodhisattva beside Amitābha in the *Sukhāvātī Sūtra*. The name has been variously interpreted. In his name meaning “the lord of *avalokita*,” *avalokita* has been interpreted as “seeing,” although as a past passive participle, it is literally “lord of what has been seen.” One of the principal sūtras in the Mahāsamghika tradition, not translated into Tibetan, was the *Avalokita Sūtra*, in which the word is a synonym for awakening, as it is “that which has been seen” by the buddhas. In the early tantras, he is one of the lords of the three families, as the embodiment of the compassion of the buddhas.

g.10 axe

*sta re · sta gri · dgra sta*

སྟ་རེ། ་ སྟ་གྲི། ་ དག་སྟ།

*\*paraśu* <sup>RS</sup> . *\*kuṭhārikā* <sup>RS</sup>

Forty-second of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.11 bamboo

*'od ma*

འོད་མ།

*veṇu*

Twenty-fifth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.12 barley

*nas*

ནས།

*yava*

Twenty-third of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.13 beings with neither perception nor nonperception

*'du shes med 'du shes med min gyi sems can*

འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་འདུ་ཤེས་མེད་མིན་གྱི་སེམས་ཅན།

*naivasaṃjñānāsamañjñāsattva*

This refers to the category of beings abiding in the fourth and highest level of the formless realm. These are either the gods that abide there or persons who have reached this state through meditative equipoise. This state is also referred to as the “peak of existence” (*bhavāgra*; *srid rtse*) and is located at the apex of saṃsāra. Abiding there, such beings do not experience perceptions and yet cannot be said to be without perceptions.

g.14 bilva fruit tree

*bil shing ba*

བིལ་ཤིང་བ།

*bilvavṛkṣa*

*Aegle mermelos*, also known as Indian bael or wood apple. Thirty-first of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. Some sources seem to list the fruit and tree as separate designs (see [n.29](#)).

g.15 black antelope

*ri dags nag po · ri dwags nag po*

རི་དྭགས་ནག་པོ། . རི་དྭགས་ནག་པོ།

*kr̥ṣṇamṛga*

Most likely refers to the blackbuck (*Antilope cervicapra*), also known as the Indian antelope. Thirty-second of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.16 boat

*gru*

ལྷ།

\**nau*<sup>RS</sup> . \**jalayāna*<sup>RS</sup>

Forty-fourth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.17 born from a womb

*mngal las skyes pa*

མངལ་ལས་སྐྱེས་པ།

*jārāyuja*

One of the four modes of birth (*caturyoni*; *skyes gnas bzhi*).

g.18 born from an egg

*sgo nga las skyes pa*

སྒོ་ང་ལས་སྐྱེས་པ།

*aṅḍaja*

One of the four modes of birth (*caturyoni*; *skes gnas bzhi*).

g.19 born from heat and moisture

*drod gsher las skyes pa*

དྲོད་གཤེར་ལས་སྐྱེས་པ།

*saṃsvedaja*

One of the four modes of birth (*caturyoni*; *skes gnas bzhi*). Tiny bugs and microbes are understood to be born from the confluence of heat and moisture.

g.20 born miraculously

*rdzus te skyes pa*

རྩུ་ཏེ་སྐྱེས་པ།

*upapādukaja*



One of the four modes of birth (*caturyonī; skes gnas bzhi*). Those who take miraculous birth are spontaneously born fully mature at the time of their birth. There are many categories of beings that can be born under these circumstances including gods, hungry ghosts, beings born in hell, beings born in the intermediate state (*antarābhava; bar ma do*), and even humans in special circumstances or in the pure realms.

g.21 bow

*gzhu*

གཞུ།

\**dhanu*<sup>RS</sup> . \**cāpa*<sup>RS</sup>

Thirty-sixth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.22 boy

*khye'u*

ཁྱེ།

—

Sixty-eighth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.23 bracelet

*gdu bu*

གདུ་བུ།

\**valaya*<sup>RS</sup> . \**parihāṭaka*<sup>RS</sup>

Seventy-third of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.24 Brahmā

*tshangs pa*

ཚེངས་པ།

*brahmā*

One of the primary deities of the Brahmanical pantheon, Brahmā occupies an important place as one of two deities (the other being Indra/Śakra) that are said to have first exhorted 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 multiple universes and world systems, there are also multiple Brahmās presiding over them; however, *The Question of Mañjuśrī* describes

sequentially higher brahmā gods as ruling over sequentially more numerous world systems. The image of the singular deity, Brahmā, is depicted as the forty-seventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.25 broad heels

*zhabs kyi rting pa che ba*

ཞབས་ཀྱི་རྟིང་པ་ཚེ་བ།

*āyatapādapārṣṇi*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the seventeenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.26 bull

*khyu mchog*

ལྷ་མཚོ་བ།

*vṛṣabha · ṛṣabha*

A bull. Also the second zodiac sign, *vṛṣabha*, which corresponds to Taurus. Both *vṛṣabha* and *ṛṣabha* can be used as respectful epithets implying preeminence, usually in phrases such as “a bull among men” (a frequent epithet of the Buddha), “a bull among sages,” and the like. Here, the bull is the twenty-ninth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.27 cakravāka shelduck

*ngur pa*

ངུར་པ།

*cakravāka*

*Tadorna ferrugine* or ruddy shelduck. Nineteenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.28 cakravartin

*'khor los sgyur ba*

འཁོར་ལོས་སྐུར་བ།

*cakravartin*

A cakravartin is a king who rules over at least one continent and gains his territory by the rolling of his magic wheel over the land. Therefore he is called a king with the revolving wheel. This is as the result of the merit he

has accumulated in previous lifetimes. An illustrative passage about the cakravartin and his wheel can be found in Toh 95, *The Play in Full* 3.3–3.6 (here translated as “universal monarch”).

g.29 calves like those of Eṇeya, king of antelopes

*byin pa ri dags kyi rgyal po e ne ya 'dra ba*

བྱིན་པ་རི་དགས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཞེ་ཡ་འདྲ་བ།

*eṇeyamrgarājajaṅgha*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the sixteenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being. Eṇeya (sometimes Aiṇeya) is the mythical king of ungulates, usually depicted as an antelope.

g.30 cāṣa bird

*tsA sha · tsa sha*

ཙཿ་ཤ། · ཙཿ་ཤ།

*cāṣa*

Eighteenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. This most likely refers to the Indian Roller, *Coracias indica*, a small bird with bright blue plumage.

g.31 cheeks like a lion

*'gram pa seng ge'i 'dra ba*

འགྲམ་པ་སེང་གེ་འི་འདྲ་བ།

*siṃhahanu*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the ninth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.32 chiliocosm

*stong gi 'jig rten gyi khams*

སྟོང་གི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

*sāhasralokadhātu*

In Buddhist cosmology, a universe that itself contains a thousand world systems, each made up of its own Mount Meru, four continents, sun, moon, and god realms.

g.33 cloud

*sprin*

སྤྲིན།

*megha*

Forty-sixth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.34 concealed male organ

*pho mtshan mi snang bar nub pa*

ཕོ་མཚན་མི་སྒྲང་བར་རུབ་པ།

—

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the fourteenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being. In the *Mahāvvyutpatti* and other sources this sign is expressed as “genitals concealed in a sheath” (*kośagatavastiguhya*; ‘doms kyi sba ba sbubs su nub pa).

g.35 conch

*dung*

དུང།

*śaṅkha*

Seventy-first of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. This design of the conch is represented separately from the Dharma conch found at the apex of the hierarchy of merit described in *The Question of Mañjuśrī*.

g.36 dangling earring

*rna cha phyang phrul can*

རྩ་ཚུའུ་སྤུལ་ཅན།

—

Seventy-seventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.37 dark blue eyes with bovine eyelashes

*spyan mthon mthing la ba’i rdzi ma ‘dra ba*

སྤྱན་མཐོན་མཐིང་ལ་བའི་རྩི་མ་འདྲ་བ།

*abhinīlanetragopakṣman*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the sixth of the thirty-two signs of a great being. This matches the list found in the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, no. 240, but in other lists this is represented as two separate signs: “dark blue eyes” and “bovine eyelashes.”

g.38 desire realm

*'dod pa'i kham*

འདོད་པའི་ཁམས།

*kāmadhātu*

In Buddhist cosmology, this is our own realm, the lowest and most coarse of the three realms of saṃsāra. It is called this because beings here are characterized by their strong longing and attachment to the pleasures of the senses. The desire realm includes hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals, humans, asuras, and the lowest heavens of the gods. Located above the desire realm is the form realm and formless realm.

g.39 Dhanada

*nor sbyin*

ནོར་སྤྱིན།

*dhanada*

Dhanada (“Wealth Giver”) is another name of Vaiśravaṇa (*rnam thos sras*, “Prince of the Distinctly Hearing One”), one of the Four Great Kings (*rgyal po chen po bzhi*) ruling the four directions of the desire realm. Vaiśravaṇa rules the northern direction and the yakṣas (*gnod sbyin*) that reside there. In *The Question of Mañjuśrī* his image is the fifty-third of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.40 Dharma conch

*chos kyi dung*

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དུང།

*dharmasāṅkha*

One of the eight auspicious emblems. As a musical instrument, the conch is blown like a trumpet, and throughout India’s history it has been a symbol of power, authority, and auspicious beginnings. In Buddhism, the Dharma conch has been variously described to represent the Buddha’s speech, his thought or intention (*dgongs*), or the sound of his teachings—in essence the Dharma itself. The sound of blowing the Dharma conch awakens beings from their sleep of delusion and ignorance.

g.41 Dhṛtarāṣṭra

*'khor srung po · yul 'khor srung · 'khor srung*

འཁོར་སྲུང་པོ། · ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྲུང། · འཁོར་སྲུང།

*dhṛtarāṣṭra*

One of the Four Great Kings (*rgyal po chen po bzhi*) ruling the four directions of the desire realm. Dhṛtarāṣṭra rules the eastern direction and the gandharvas (*dri za*) that reside there. In *The Question of Mañjuśrī* the image of him is the forty-ninth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.42 dhyāna

*bsam gtan*

བསམ་གཏན།

*dhyāna*

One of the synonyms for meditation, referring specifically to states of mental stability or one-pointed abiding in an undistracted state of mind free from afflicted mental states. The term also refers to the specific states of absorption of the form and formless realms. Abiding in these absorptions can cause one to be reborn into these realms, and the states themselves also seem to have a spatial correlation to the form and formless realms. In this way there are eight progressive dhyānas; the first four *rūpāvacaradhyāna* correspond to the form realm and the latter *ārūpāvacaradhyāna* correspond to the formless realms. See also [n.19](#).

g.43 diadem

*cod pan*

ཙོད་པན།

*\*mukūṭa*<sup>RS</sup> . *\*kirīṭi*<sup>RS</sup> . *\*kirīṭa*<sup>RS</sup>

Sixth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.44 dichiliocosm

*stong gnyis kyi 'jig rten gyi khams*

སྟོང་གཉིས་གྱི་འཛིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

*dvisāhasralokadhātu*

In Buddhist cosmology, a dichiliocosm is a galaxy or aggregate of universes that itself contains a thousand chiliocosms, or one million world systems.

g.45 dove

*thi ba*

ཐི་བ།

*kapota*

Twenty-second of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.46 drum

*mṅa*

རྟ།

—

Seventieth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.47 dūrvā grass

*rtswa dur ba*

རྩ་དུ་བ།

*dūrvā*

*Cynodon dactylon* (syn. *Panicum dactylon*), a kind of grass that is used in a variety of Buddhist ceremonies. It is also one of the eight auspicious substances (*bkra shis rdzas brgyad*). Here it is sixty-sixth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.48 earring

*rna cha*

རྩ་ཚ།

\**karṇika*<sup>RS</sup> . \**kuṇḍala*<sup>RS</sup>

Seventy-fifth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.49 eight auspicious emblems

*bkra shis rtags brgyad*

བཀྲ་ཤིས་རྟམ་བུ་བརྒྱ།

*aṣṭamaṅgala*

Eight Indian emblems signifying fortune and auspiciousness. They include the lotus, the *śrīvatsa*, the pair of golden fish, the parasol, the victory banner, the treasure vase, the conch, and the wheel. They are not discussed particularly in this sūtra, although several of the eight are also included in the list of eighty designs found on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.50 eighty designs

*ri mo'i rjes kyi mtshan brgyad cu*

རི་མོ་འི་རྟེས་ཀྱི་མཚན་བརྒྱ་དུ།

—

Eighty images found on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. See [Introduction](#) and [1.17](#).

g.51 eighty excellent signs

*dpe byad bzang po brgyad cu*

དཔེ་བྱད་བཟང་པོ་བརྒྱད་ཅུ།

*aśītyānuvyañjana*

A set of eighty bodily characteristics and insignia borne by both buddhas and cakravartins. For a complete list see the *Aṣṭādaśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā Sūtra* (*The Perfection of Wisdom in Eighteen Thousand Lines*), [73.93](#).

g.52 elephant

*glang po · glang po che*

གླང་པོ། · གླང་པོ་ཆེ།

*hastin*

Ninth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.53 eon

*bskal pa*

བསྐྱལ་པ།

*kalpa*

A cosmic period of time. According to the traditional Abhidharma understanding of cyclical time, a great eon (*mahākalpa*) is divided into eighty lesser or intermediate eons. In the course of one great eon, the external universe and its sentient life takes form and later disappears. During the first twenty of the lesser eons, the universe is in the process of creation and expansion (*vivartakalpa*); during the next twenty it remains created; during the third twenty it is in the process of destruction or contraction (*saṃvartakalpa*); and during the last quarter of the cycle it remains in a state of destruction (*saṃvartasthāyikalpa*).

g.54 eon of destruction

*bskal pa 'jig pa*

བསྐྱལ་པ་འཇིག་པ།

*saṃvartakalpa*

The third period of destruction in the in the four-part cycle of creation and destruction of a world system or universe (here in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* it seems to be applied to an entire trichilocosm). See also “eon.”



- g.55 even forehead  
*dpral ba mnyam pa*  
 དཔྱལ་བ་མཉམ་པ།  
*samalalāṭa*  
 Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the third of the thirty-two signs of a great being.
- g.56 excellent flower  
*me tog bzang po*  
 མེ་ཏོག་བཟང་པོ།  
 —  
 Seventy-eighth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.
- g.57 excellent throne  
*dge ba'i stan · dge ba'i bstan · khri stan bzang po*  
 དགེ་བའི་སྤྲན། · དགེ་བའི་བསྤྲན། · ཁྱི་སྤྲན་བཟང་པོ།  
*\*bhadraṣana*<sup>RS</sup>  
 Sixty-third of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.
- g.58 feet with high arches  
*zhabs kyi steng mtho ba*  
 ཞབས་ཀྱི་སྤྲོང་མཐོ་བ།  
*utsaṅgapāda*  
 Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-first of the thirty-two signs of a great being. In some lists this sign is rendered “inconspicuous ankles bones” (*ucchaṅkhapāda*; *zhabs kyi long mo'i tshigs mi mngon pa*). Because of the similar and ambiguous meaning of the Sanskrit, both Tibetan translations are found attested for *utsaṅgapāda*.
- g.59 fine skin the color of gold  
*pags pa srab la gser gyi mdog 'dra ba*  
 པགས་པ་སྲབ་ལ་གསེར་གྱི་མདོག་འདྲ་བ།  
*sūkṣmasuvarṇacchavi*  
 Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-fifth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.
- g.60 fire

*me*

མེ།

*agni*

Fifty-eighth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.61 fish

*nya*

ཉ།

*matsya*

Thirteenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.62 form realm

*gzugs kyi kham*

གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ཁམས།

*rūpadhātu*

In Buddhist cosmology, the sphere of existence one level more subtle than our own (the desire realm), where beings, though subtly embodied, are not driven primarily by the urge for sense gratification. See the “three realms.”

g.63 formless realm

*gzugs med pa'i kham*

གཟུགས་མེད་པའི་ཁམས།

*ārūpyadhātu*

In Buddhist cosmology, the sphere of existence two levels more subtle than our own (the desire realm), where beings are no longer physically embodied, and thus not subject to the sufferings that physical embodiment brings. See the “three realms.”

g.64 forty close-fitting teeth

*so bzhi bcu thags bzang ba*

སོ་བཞི་བརྒྱུ་ཐགས་བཟང་བ།

*catvāriṃśadaviraladanta*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the seventh of the thirty-two signs of a great being. In the *Mahāvīyūtpatti* and other lists this is represented as two separate signs: “forty teeth” (*catvāriṃśaddanta; tshems bzhi bcu mnga' ba*) and “close-fitting teeth” (*aviraladanta; tshems thags bzang ba*).

g.65 four continents

*gling bzhi*

ལྷིང་བཞི།

*caturdvīpa*

According to Abhidharma cosmology, each world system has four continents surrounding a central Mount Meru: to the east, Videha (*lus 'phags po*, “superior body”); to the south, our continent of Jambudvīpa (*'dzam bu gling*, “Rose Apple Continent”); to the west, Aparagodānīya (*ba glang spyod* “Rich in Cattle”); and to the north, Uttarakuru (*sgra mi snyan*, “Unpleasant Sound”).

g.66 full and rounded thighs

*brla gang zhing zlum pa*

བརྗེ་གང་ཞིང་རྒྱུ་མ་པ།

*suvartitoru*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the fifteenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.67 garland

*phreng ba*

ཕྲེང་བ།

*mālā*

Fourth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.68 gayal

*ba men*

བ་མེན།

*gavaya*

*Bos frontalis*, a species of ox also known as gayal. Twenty-sixth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.69 girl

*bu mo*

བུ་མོ།

—

Sixty-ninth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.70 goat

*ra*

༢།

*aja*

Twenty-eighth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.71 goose

*ngang pa*

ངང་པ།

*hamsa*

Twenty-first of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.72 great medicine

*sman chen po*

སྐྱེན་ཆེན་པོ།

*mahaṣadhi · mahauṣadha*

Twenty-fourth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. This term is applied to a number of different medicinal herbs or herb mixtures.

g.73 great sage

*drang srong chen po*

ངར་སྲོང་ཆེན་པོ།

*maharṣi*

Indian sage, often a wandering ascetic or hermit; in other contexts the term is also an epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the fifty-fourth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. As this “great sage” is listed in the eighty designs among a group of gods (47–55), it could be that this is an epithet referring to a specific god, but to whom cannot be deciphered with certainty from this narrow context.

g.74 hair growing from every pore

*spu khung bu re re nas skyes pa*

སྤྱ་ཁུང་བུ་རེ་རེ་ནས་སྐྱེས་པ།

—

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the thirteenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.75 having an excellent well-built body

*yan lag mchog gi gzugs dang ldan pa*

ཡན་ལག་མཚོག་གི་གཟུགས་དང་ལྷན་པ།

*varāṅgarūpin*

Literally “having a form excellent in all body parts.”

g.76 hook

*kyo ba thang · lcags kyu*

ཀྱོ་བ་ཐང་། · ལྷགས་ཀྱུ།

*aṅkuśa*

Fifth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.77 horse

*rta*

རྟ།

*aśva*

Tenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.78 hundred sextillion

*bye ba khrag khrig brgya stong*

བྱེ་བ་ལྷག་ལྷིག་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 as to express a number so large as to be inconceivable.

g.79 Indra

*dbang po*

དབང་པོ།

*indra*

In most Buddhist texts he is known as Śakra; however, as the forty-eighth of the designs on the Tathāgatha’s hands and feet his name Indra, meaning “lord,” is used.

g.80 insight

*shes rab*

ཤེས་རབ།

*prajñā*

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 other contexts it refers to the mental factor responsible for ascertaining specific qualities of a given object, such as its characteristics or whether it should be taken up or rejected.

g.81 intermediate eon

*bar gyi bskal pa*

བར་གྱི་བསྐྱལ་པ།

*antarakalpa*

A cosmic period of time. Following the Abhidharma system, eighty intermediate eons together compose one great eon (*mahākālpā*).

g.82 kalaviṅka bird

*ka la ping ka · ka la bing+ka*

ཀ་ལ་ཕིང་ཀ་ · ཀ་ལ་བིང་།

*kalaviṅka*

An Indian bird renowned for its beautiful song. There is some uncertainty regarding the identity of the kalaviṅka, as some dictionaries declare it to be a type of Indian cuckoo (probably *Eudynamis scolopacea*, also known as the asian koel) or a red and green sparrow (possibly *Amandava amandava*, also known as the red avadavat). Within the Buddhist sūtras, the bird is usually linked to its pleasing or striking voice. In some cases, it has also taken on mythical characteristics, being described as part human, part bird. Here it is the sixteenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.83 lance

*shag ti · mdung thung*

ཤག་ཏི། · མདུང་ཐུང་།

*śakti*

Thirty-eighth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.84 large and slender tongue

*lce che zhing srab pa*

ལྷེ་ཆེ་ཞིང་སྲབ་པ།

\**prabhūtatanujihva* <sup>RS</sup>

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the tenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being. In most other sources, the Tibetan is rendered as “very long and slender tongue” (*ljags shin tu ring zhing srab pa*), but the underlying Sanskrit is likely the same or similar at the very least.

g.85 lasso

*zhags pa*

ཞགས་པ།

*pāśa*

Forty-third of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.86 lion at the center of a wheel

*'khor lo'i dbus kyi seng ge* · *'khor lo dang dpung gi seng ge*

· *'khor lo dpung gi seng ge*

འཁོར་ལོའི་དབུས་ཀྱི་སེང་གེ། · འཁོར་ལོ་དང་དཔུང་གི་སེང་གེ། · འཁོར་ལོ་དཔུང་གི་སེང་གེ།

—

Eightieth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.87 long fingers and toes

*sor mo ring ba*

སོར་མོ་རིང་བ།

*dīrghāṅguli*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twentieth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.88 lotus

*pad mo*

པད་མོ།

*padma*

Sixtieth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.89 mace

*gtun* · *gtun shing*

གཏུན། · གཏུན་ཤིང།

*musala*

The Sanskrit has the meaning of both a club or mace-like weapon, and a pestle used for grinding, which as a cylinder of wood or stone can also be utilized as a weapon. The former meaning makes sense in the context of the short list of weapons (34–43) found among the eighty designs, although the Tibetan has the meaning of “pestle.” *Mahāvīyutpatti* no. 5890 equates *gtun shing* with *musala*. Here its image is the forty-first of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.90 makara

*chu srin · chu srin ma ka ra*

ལྷ་སྲིན། · ལྷ་སྲིན་མ་ཀ་ར།

*makara*

A legendary sea monster often described as an amalgamation of several terrestrial and/or aquatic animals such as an elephant, a crocodile, and a boar, although the term is sometimes associated with the dugong, the crocodile, or the dolphin. Here its image is the twelfth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.91 Mañjuśrī

*'jam dpal*

འཇམ་དཔལ།

*mañjuśrī*

One of the eight “close sons” of the Buddha, the embodiment of insight (*prajñā*). In Tibetan tradition he is known as *rgyal ba'i yab gcig*, the “sole father of buddhas,” as he inspires them in their realization of the profound. He is represented as bearing the sword of insight in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left.

g.92 Māra

*bdud*

བདུད།

*māra*

Said to be the principal deity in Paranirmitavaśavartin, the highest paradise in the desire realm. He is also portrayed as attempting to prevent the Buddha's awakening. The name *māra* is also used as a generic name for the deities in his realm and also as an impersonal term for the factors that keep beings in saṃsāra.

g.93 mirror



*me long*

མེ་ལོང་།

\**ādarśa* <sup>RS</sup> . \**darpaṇa* <sup>RS</sup>

Sixty-fourth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.94 moon

*zla ba*

ཟླ་བ།

*candra*

Fifty-seventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.95 mountain

*ri*

རི།

*parvata*

Thirtieth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.96 mṛdaṅga

*smri tang ga* . *rdza rnga* . *smri ga* . *smri dang ga*

སྐྱི་ཏང་ག། . རྩ་རྩ། . སྐྱི་ག། . སྐྱི་དང་ག།

*mṛdaṅga*

A two-headed hand drum that is played horizontally, wider in the middle with one drum head smaller than the other. Seventy-second of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.97 nāga

*klu*

ལྷ།

*nāga*

A mythical being usually depicted as having the top half of a human and the bottom half of a snake. However, the nāga has a myriad of associations within Buddhism and Indian traditions in general; the term may be associated with deities, snakes (more specifically cobras), elephants, subterranean spirits, water spirits, or ethnic groups of people from the Indian subcontinent. In Tibet they became specifically associated with water spirits (*klu*), and in China they came to be associated with dragons. Here the image of the nāga is the twenty-seventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.98 nandyāvarta

*g.yung drung*

གཡུང་རྩུང་།

*nandyāvarta*

An auspicious design resembling a *svastika* with an elaborate pattern around its border. In the *Mahāvīyutpatti*, *nandyāvarta* is translated into the Tibetan as *g.yung drung*; however, later on the same Tibetan was used to translate *svastika*, which is translated by the Tibetan *bkra shis ldan* in the *Mahāvīyutpatti*. Sometimes the distinction is made with the extended term *g.yung drung 'kyil ba*, a “rotating *svastika*/ *g.yung drung*,” since the border pattern of the *nandyāvarta* gives the impression that the *svastika* in the center is rotating. Here the image is the sixty-first of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.99 palms and soles that are soft and supple

*zhabs dang phyag gi mthil 'jam zhing mnyen pa*

· *zhabs dang phyag gi mthil 'jam zhing gzhon sha chags pa*

ཞབས་དང་ཕྱག་གི་མཐིལ་འཇམ་ཞིང་མཉེན་པ། · ཞབས་དང་ཕྱག་གི་མཐིལ་འཇམ་ཞིང་གཞོན་ཤ་ཆགས་པ།

\**mṛdutaruṇahastapādātala*<sup>RS</sup>

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the eighteenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.100 palms and soles with the mark of the wheel

*zhabs dang phyag gi mthil na 'khor lo'i mtshan yod pa*

ཞབས་དང་ཕྱག་གི་མཐིལ་ན་འཁོར་ལོའི་མཚན་ཡོད་པ།

*cakrāṅkitahastapādātala*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-eighth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.101 parasol

*gdugs*

གདུགས།

*chattrā*

First of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. In general Indian iconography it is a symbol of protection and royalty. In Buddhism it symbolizes protection from blazing heat of afflictions, desire,

illness, and harmful forces, just as a physical parasol protects one from the blazing sun or the elements. It is also included in the eight auspicious emblems.

g.102 parrot

*ne tso*

ནེ་ཙོ།

*śuka*

Twentieth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.103 partridge

*shang shang te'u*

ཤང་ཤང་ཏེ་འུ།

*jīvaṃjīva · jīvaṃjīvaka*

Some times translated as “pheasant.” The Sanskrit, *jīvaṃjīva* refers to the chukar partridge (*Alectoris chukar*). In Tibet and China, this became a mythical bird depicted as a half human and half bird, or as a bird with two heads. Here its image is the seventeenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.104 peacock

*rma bya*

རྨ་བྱ།

*mayūra*

Fifteenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.105 pearl ornament

*mu tig gi rgyan · mu tig gi brgyan*

མུ་ཏིག་གི་རྒྱུན། · མུ་ཏིག་གི་བརྒྱུན།

—

Forty-fifth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.106 plow

*gshol*

གཤོ།

*hala*

The Sanskrit may also refer to a weapon or a plow repurposed as a weapon, which would make sense in the context of the short list of weapons (34–43) found among the eighty designs, although the Tibetan meaning itself doesn't connote this secondary meaning. Here its image is the fortieth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.107 pratyekabuddha

*rang sangs rgyas*

རང་སངས་རྒྱལ།

*pratyekabuddha*

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally, “buddha for oneself” or “solitary realizer.” Someone who, in his or her last life, attains awakening entirely through their own contemplation, without relying on a teacher. Unlike the awakening of a fully realized buddha (*samyaksambuddha*), the accomplishment of a pratyekabuddha is not regarded as final or ultimate. They attain realization of the nature of dependent origination, the selflessness of the person, and a partial realization of the selflessness of phenomena, by observing the suchness of all that arises through interdependence. This is the result of progress in previous lives but, unlike a buddha, they do not have the necessary merit, compassion or motivation to teach others. They are named as “rhinoceros-like” (*khadḡgaviṣāṇakalpa*) for their preference for staying in solitude or as “congregators” (*vargacārin*) when their preference is to stay among peers.

g.108 precious elephant

*glang po rin po che*

གླང་པོ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

*hastiratna*

One of the seven treasures of the cakravartin king. The precious elephant is described as having magical abilities and sometimes as having six tusks. A passage about the precious elephant is found in Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.7. See also Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñāpti*, folio 119.b.

g.109 precious horse

*rta rin po che*

རྟ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

*aśvaratna*

One of the seven treasures of the cakravartin king. The precious horse is described as having magical abilities, and a passage about it is found in Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.8. See also Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, folio 120.b.

g.110 precious jewel

*nor bu rin po che*

ནོར་བུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

*maṇiratna*

One of the seven treasures possessed by the cakravartin king. It is often equated with or described as a wish-fulfilling jewel (*yid bzhin gyi nor bu*). It is additionally included as the thirty-third of the eighty designs found on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. A passage about the precious jewel is found in Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.9. See also Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, folio 121.b.

g.111 precious minister

*blon po rin po che*

སྤོན་པོ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

*pariṇāyakarātna*

One of the seven treasures of the cakravartin king. See also Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.12. See also Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, folio 126.a.

g.112 precious steward

*khyim bdag rin po che*

ཁྱིམ་བདག་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

*gṛhapatiratna*

One of the seven treasures of the cakravartin king. See also Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.11. See also Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, folio 124.b.

g.113 precious wheel

*'khor lo rin po che*

འཁོར་ལོ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

*cakraratna*

One of the seven treasures of the cakravartin king. The precious wheel has one thousand spokes and is the treasure that gives the cakravartin his name, as a king with a “revolving wheel.” This magical wheel floats in the air and travels, followed by the cakravartin king and his army, to the continents they will conquer. In some descriptions the wheel is made of iron, copper, silver,

or gold, depending on the degree of his power and the number of the four continents he will conquer. A illustrative passage about the precious wheel is found Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.3–3.6 (where “cakravartin” is translated as “universal monarch”). See also Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, folio 112.b.

g.114 precious woman

*bud med rin po che*

བུད་མེད་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

*strīratna*

One of the seven treasures of the cakravartin king. Here the term is translated literally, but elsewhere she is referred to as *btsun mo rin po che*, “the precious queen.” See also Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.10. See also Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, folio 122.a.

g.115 puroḍāśa

*pu ro da sha*

པུ་རོ་དཀ།

*puroḍāśa*

Cakes of grain and/or clarified butter offered as oblations in a fire ritual. The sixty-seventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.116 right-curling dark blue hair on the head

*dbu'i mthon mthing la g.yas phyogs su 'khyil ba*

དབུ་འི་མཐོན་མཐིང་ལ་གཡས་ཕྱོགས་སུ་འཁྱིལ་བ།

—

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the second of the thirty-two signs of a great being. In other sources the “dark blue” (*abhinīla*; *mthing*) color isn’t mentioned with this sign. *Mahāvīyūtpatti* no. 237 has “right-curling hair on the head” (*pradakṣiṇāvartakeśa*; *dbu skra gyas su 'khyil ba*).

g.117 ring

*sor gdub*

སོར་གདུབ།

\**aṅgulīyaka*<sup>RS</sup> . \**valaka*<sup>RS</sup>

Seventy-sixth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata. More specifically, it is a “finger ring.”

g.118 round shoulders

*dpung mgo zlum pa*

དཔུང་མགོ་རླུང་པ།

*saṃvṛtaskandha*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-third of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.119 Śakra

*brgya byin*

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

*śakra*

Common epithet of the god Indra, in Skt. meaning “Mighty One,” and in Tib., “Hundred Gifts.” The Tibetan translation is based on an alternate etymology that *śakra* is an abbreviation of *śata-kratu*, “one who has performed a hundred sacrifices.” This epithet often appears together with the title *devendra* “Lord of Gods.” He is ruler of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

g.120 Samanta Assembly Hall

*kun nas mdzes pa*

ཀུན་ནས་མཛེས་པ།

*samantaprāsāda*

The name of an assembly hall in Śrāvastī. It could be that *samanta*, meaning “universal,” just refers to the assembly hall in general. However, both the Tibetan and Chinese seemed to translate this word literally, which suggests it may be a proper noun.

g.121 seven prominent parts

*bdun mtho ba*

བདུན་མཐོ་བ།

*saptotsada*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-fourth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.122 seven treasures

*rin po che sna bdun*

རིན་པོ་ཆེ་སྣ་བདུན།

*saptaratna*

The seven possessions of a cakravartin including the precious wheel, the precious elephant, the precious horse, the precious jewel, the precious woman, the precious steward, and the precious minister. In some forms of the list the steward or minister is variably replaced by the precious general (*senāpatiratna; dmag dpon rin po che*) or the precious sword (*khadgaratna; ral gri rin po che*). A more detailed description of these seven can be found in Toh 95, *The Play in Full*, 3.2–3.12. There is also a detailed description of the seven treasures and the corresponding causal conditions for obtaining them in Toh 4087, the *Kāraṇaprajñapti*, folio 111.b. The term should not be confused with seven precious substances, a set of seven precious stones or minerals, which is a term found elsewhere but also rendered *rin po che sna bdun*.

g.123 śrāvaka

*nyan thos*

ཉན་ཐོས།

*śrāvaka*

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Sanskrit term *śrāvaka*, and the Tibetan *nyan thos*, both derived from the verb “to hear,” are usually defined as “those who *hear* the teaching from the Buddha and *make it heard* to others.” Primarily this refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat seeking their own liberation and nirvāṇa. They are the practitioners of the first turning of the wheel of the Dharma on the four noble truths, who realize the suffering inherent in saṃsāra and focus on understanding that there is no independent self. By conquering afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), they liberate themselves, attaining first the stage of stream enterers at the path of seeing, followed by the stage of once-returners who will be reborn only one more time, and then the stage of non-returners who will no longer be reborn into the desire realm. The final goal is to become an arhat. These four stages are also known as the “four results of spiritual practice.”

g.124 Śrāvastī

*mnyan du yod pa*

མཉན་དུ་ཡོད་པ།

*śrāvastī*

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

During the life of the Buddha, Śrāvastī was the capital city of the powerful kingdom of Kośala, ruled by King Prasenajit, who became a follower and patron of the Buddha. It was also the hometown of Anāthapiṇḍada, the wealthy patron who first invited the Buddha there, and then offered him a



park known as Jetavana, Prince Jeta's Grove, which became one of the first Buddhist monasteries. The Buddha is said to have spent about twenty-five rainy seasons with his disciples in Śrāvastī, thus it is named as the setting of numerous events and teachings. It is located in present-day Uttar Pradesh in northern India.

g.125 Śrī  
*dpal*

དཔལ།

*śrī*

The goddess of fortune and prosperity, she is also known as Lakṣmī. In *The Question of Mañjuśrī* her image is the fifty-fifth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.126 śrīvatsa  
*dpal be'u*

དཔལ་བེའུ།

*śrīvatsa*

An auspicious symbol for eternity, taking the design of an endless looping knot; the Tibetan translates the term as “glorious knot,” while the Sanskrit literally means “beloved of Śrī” as an epithet of Viṣṇu (the consort of Śrī), because the emblem is seen on Viṣṇu's chest. In Buddhism the design represents the endless insight and compassion of the Buddha and is included among the eight auspicious emblems. It is also here the third of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.127 staff  
*dbyig to · dbyig tog*

དབྱིག་རྟོ། · དབྱིག་རྟོག།

—

Seventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.128 sun  
*nyi ma*

ཉིམ།

*sūrya*

Fifty-sixth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.129 supreme sword

*ral gri mchog · ral gyi mchog*

རལ་གྱི་མཚོག་ · རལ་གྱི་མཚོག་

—

Thirty-fourth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.130 tail whisk

*rnga yab*

རྩ་ཡབ།

*cāmara*

Sixty-fifth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.131 tathāgata

*de bzhin gshegs pa*

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

*tathāgata*

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.132 ten virtuous actions

*dge ba bcu'i las*

དགེ་བ་བརྒྱུ་ཉི་ལམ།

*daśakuśalakarman*

Refraining from the ten unvirtuous actions, i.e., not killing, not stealing, not engaging in sexual misconduct, not lying, not speaking divisively, not speaking harshly, not gossiping, not being covetous, not being malicious, and not having wrong views.

g.133 the voice of Brahmā

*tshangs pa'i dbyangs*

ཚངས་པའི་དབྱངས།

*brahmasvara*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-ninth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.134 thirty-two signs of a great being

*skyes bu chen po'i mtshan sum cu rtsa gnyis*

སྐྱེས་བུ་ཚེན་པོའི་མཚན་སུམ་རྩ་གཉིས།

*dvātriṃśanmahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa*

Thirty-two of the 112 identifying physical characteristics of both buddhas and cakravartins, in addition to the eighty excellent signs. There are significant variations found in this list from source to source. See [n.36](#).

g.135 three realms

*khamṣ gsum*

ཁམས་གསུམ།

*tridhātu*

The formless realm, the form realm, and the desire realm: the three realms that comprise saṃsāra.

g.136 tiger

*stag*

སྟག།

*vyāghra*

Eleventh of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.137 torso like a lion

*ro stod seng ge 'dra ba*

རོ་སྟོད་སེང་གེ་འདྲ་བ།

*siṃhapūrvārdhakāya*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the eleventh of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.138 triangle

*gru gsum*

གུ་གསུམ།

*trikoṇa*

Sixty-second of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.139 trichiliocosm

*stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi kham*

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཛིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

*trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu*

A term from Abhidharma cosmology referring to one thousand dichiliocosms, or one billion world systems.

g.140 trident

*mdung rtse gsum pa*

མདུང་རྩེ་གསུམ་པ།

*triśūla*

Thirty-ninth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.141 turtle

*rus sbal · ru sbal*

རུས་སྒལ། · རུས་སྒལ།

*kūrma*

Fourteenth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.142 ūrṇā hair between the eyebrows

*smin mtshams kyi mdzod spu*

སྐྱིན་མཚམས་གྱི་མཛོད་སྒྲུ།

—

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the fifth of the thirty-two signs of a great being. The *ūrṇā* or the “hair-treasure” (*mdzod spu*) is the circlet of hair between the Buddha’s eyebrows. In the *Mahāvayutpatti* this sign is expressed without mention of the eyebrows, (*ūrṇākeśa; mdzod spu*).

g.143 uṣṇīṣa

*gtsug tor*

གཏུག་ཏོར།

*uṣṇīṣa*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as first of the thirty-two signs of a great being. In its simplest form it is a pointed shape of the head like a turban (the Sanskrit term, *uṣṇīṣa*, in fact means “turban”), or more elaborately a dome-shaped extension. The extension is described as having various magical attributes such as emitting and absorbing rays of light or reaching an immense height.

g.144 vajra

*rdo rje*

རྡོ་རྗེ།

*vajra*

Thirty-fifth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.145 Varuṇa

*chu'i lha*

ཚུའི་ལྷ།

*varuṇa*

The Vedic deity understood in later periods to be the lord of waters; thus the Tibetans translate his name as “God of Water” (*chu'i lha*). In *The Question of Mañjuśrī* his image is the fiftieth of the eighty designs on the palms of the hand and feet of the Tathāgata.

g.146 vase

*bum pa*

བུམ་པ།

—

Eighth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.147 victory banner

*rgyal mtshan*

རྒྱལ་མཚན།

*dhvaja*

Second of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.148 Virūdhaka

*'phags skyes po*

འཕགས་སྐྱེས་པོ།

*virūdhaka*

One of the Four Great Kings (*rgyal po chen po bzhi*) ruling the four directions of the desire realm. Virūḍhaka rules the southern direction and the kumbhāṇḍas (*grul bum*) that reside there. In *The Question of Mañjuśrī* his image is the fifty-first of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.149 Virūpākṣa

*mig mi bzang*

མིག་མི་བཟང་།

*virūpākṣa*

One of the Four Great Kings (*rgyal po chen po bzhi*) ruling the four directions of the desire realm. Virūpākṣa rules the western direction and the nāgās (*klu*) that reside there. In *The Question of Mañjuśrī* his image is the fifty-second of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.150 webbed fingers and toes

*zhabs dang phyag gi sor mo'i bar dra bar 'brel ba*

ཞབས་དང་ཕྱག་གི་སོ་འཛི་བར་དྲ་བར་འབྲེལ་བ།

*jālāvanaddhāṅgulipāṇipāda*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the nineteenth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.151 well-positioned feet

*zhabs rab tu gnas pa*

ཞབས་རབ་དུ་གནས་པ།

*supraṭiṣṭhitapāda*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the twenty-seventh of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.152 white canine teeth

*mche ba dkar ba*

མཚེབ་དཀར་བ།

*śukladanta*

Listed in *The Question of Mañjuśrī* as the eighth of the thirty-two signs of a great being.

g.153 wind

*rlung*

ལྷན།

*vāyu*

Fifty-ninth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.

g.154 wisdom

*ye shes*

ཡེ་ཤེས།

*jñāna*

g.155 wish

*bsam pa*

བསམ་པ།

*abhiprāya*

g.156 wish-granting tree

*dpag bsam gyi shing*

དཔག་བསམ་གྱི་ཤིང།

*kalpavṛkṣa*

Seventy-ninth of the eighty designs on the palms and soles of the Tathāgata.