

# The Prophecy of the Superior Maitreya

A new translation from the Sanskrit and Tibetan<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

The Buddhist genre known as “Legends”, or Avadāna,<sup>2</sup> refers to stories that demonstrate the workings of karma by connecting a previous life’s virtuous or non-virtuous actions to a subsequent life’s beneficial or harmful outcomes respectively. Early versions of such stories are found throughout the Buddhist canon, with “birth-stories” of the Buddha (*jātakas*, जातक, རྩེས་རབས་) being the most well-known example. According to Winternitz, the collection of these birth-stories was even at some point dubbed the “Legends of the Bodhisattva”—or as he translates “The Garland of Great Achievements by the Bodhisattva” (*bodhisattvāvadāna*).<sup>3</sup> For him, the Avadāna genre stands evenly “with one foot in the Hīnayāna literature, and the other in that of the Mahāyāna.”<sup>4</sup> In short, early examples of these “legends” are completely within the realm of pre-Great Vehicle Buddhism, while later ones are firmly situated within the established Great Vehicle doctrine.

The *Prophecy of the Superior Maitreya*<sup>5</sup> belongs to a sub-genre of the Avadāna known as “prophecy” or “revelation”.<sup>6</sup> The designation of “prophecy” is given to these works, because in them a

- 1 The primary Sanskrit edition used here is आर्यमैत्रेय-व्याकरणम्, ed. by Prabhas Chandra Majumder (Calcutta: Calcutta Oriental Press, 1959). Its sigla is *AMV*. This is identical to the version found in *Gilgit Manuscripts*, ed. by Nalinaksha Dutt, Vol. 4, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1984), 187-214. It is a critical edition of the two extant manuscript versions of the Sanskrit text: one preserved in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society (Edition A) brought to the attention of modern scholars by Sylvain Lévi’s article “Maitreya Le Consolateur” in *Mélanges Linossier, Études D’orientalisme*, vol II (1932): 355–402, and the other found in the stūpa at Gilgit (Edition B). Two versions of the Tibetan translation were also utilized: རྩེས་རབས་ལུང་བསྟན་པ། in *bKa’ ’gyur (Lhasa)*, vol. 74 (སླ), 982-996 (BDRC W26071, digital copy accessed June 1, 2018: [https://www.tbrc.org/#library\\_work\\_ViewByOutline-01PD110161PD11461%7CW26071](https://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_ViewByOutline-01PD110161PD11461%7CW26071)) and རྩེས་རབས་ལུང་བསྟན་པ། in *bKa’ ’gyur (Narthing)*, vol. 74 (སླ), 958-969 (BDRC W22703, digital copy accessed June 1, 2018: [https://www.tbrc.org/#library\\_work\\_ViewByOutline-001JW00501JW15936%7CW22703](https://www.tbrc.org/#library_work_ViewByOutline-001JW00501JW15936%7CW22703)). Their sigla are LH and NT respectively. Except for the differences in pagination, the two Tibetan versions seem nearly identical. I could not locate a version of the text in the *sDe dge* edition of the *bKa’ ’gyur*. The Sanskrit editions are missing the first 24 (A) and 30 (B) verses. The first 24 verses are supplied by the Tibetan, from which Majumder reconstructs the Sanskrit. Lévi’s article includes a transcription of edition A and a French translation of the text. Edward Conze has also translated select portions of this text (Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*, 238-242). In the English translation that follows, verse numbers will be included in parentheses at the end of the verse. Page numbers for the three primary editions used (Majumder’s edition of the Sanskrit and the two Tibetan translations) will be in brackets in smaller font. No sigla is given for the Sanskrit with these intertextual paginations, but the sigla *AMV* is used in footnotes.
- 2 अवदान, རྩེས་རབས་བརྗོད་པ།. Also translated as “Great Achievements” and so forth. “Legends” seems the best choice (for now). The Sanskrit derives from अव- “down, off” and दान meaning “giving”. While I have not seen this attested to, the impression from the etymology of “down-giving” is “passed down” as with legends. The Tibetan is clearer meaning “description (བརྗོད་པ།) of realization (རྩེས་རབས་པ།)”.  
3 See Winternitz, Maurice, *History of Indian Literature, Vol. 2: Buddhist Literature and Jaina Literature* (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1933, rep. 1972), 277-294.  
4 Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, p. 277.  
5 आर्यमैत्रेयव्याकरणम्, རྩེས་རབས་ལུང་བསྟན་པ།, hereafter *AMV*.  
6 व्याकरण, ལུང་བསྟན་པ།.

Buddha foretells the future enlightenment of one of their disciple-Bodhisattvas. The prophecy genre is considered by adherents of the Great Vehicle as one of the twelve branches of Buddha's discourse, and indeed several texts of this style are found in the Tibetan collection of the *Translated Word of the Buddha*. The text focused on here, as the title makes explicit, concerns the prophecy of the future enlightenment of the Bodhisattva Maitreya. Maitreya is commonly considered to be the next Buddha to come to this world and has been the focus of an extensive cult throughout Asia at various times.

The text of the *आर्यमैत्रेयव्याकरणम्* has already been translated into French by Sylvian Lévi in 1932. Sections of it were also translated by Edward Conze in his collection *Buddhist Scriptures* in 1959. I have decided to retranslate it mainly in order to refresh and practice my woefully inadequate knowledge of Sanskrit but also with the motivation to provide a full, fresh English translation of this treatise for faith-based Buddhism. For the sake of practice, I refrained from using Lévi's translation until I had made a first draft and rarely referred to Conze at all. The translation here was done from the critical Sanskrit manuscript using the Tibetan translations as a reference, except for the beginning where the Sanskrit manuscripts are missing some pages and all that we have is the Tibetan. The Sanskrit critical edition was compiled by Prabhas Chandra Majumder in 1959. Lévi for his translation relied on a manuscript from the H. P. Shastri Collection No. 4806 of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta. Majumder however used both the Shastri Collection manuscript and a second one found at Gilgit that might not have been available to Lévi in 1932. As for the origin of the first version, Majumder says:

The Asiatic Society manuscript of the text was written during the 57th year of Gopāladeva of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal. he was probably Gopāla II whose approximate date of accession was 940 A.D.... The present text, as edited here, is mainly based on the manuscript discovered at Gilgit.<sup>7</sup>

Gilgit manuscripts date between 400 to 600 C.E.<sup>8</sup> This date range corresponds with the explosion of Great Vehicle "epic" literature such as the *Mound of Jewels* collection and the *Garland of Buddhas* collection.<sup>9</sup> These texts describe a grandiose vision of the Buddhist cosmos that is full of an inestimable number of Buddhas and saints, replete with miracles, and populated by untold hosts of non-human beings. However, the vision of the *Prophecy of Maitreya*, while containing hints of those elements, is distinctly more limited than those later Great Vehicle epics. The Buddha describes long lifespans of 80,000 years, but the stage of the sūtra and its prophecy do not extend beyond this Buddha realm. The future Maitreya Buddha will come to this world in its utopian form, and there is no mention of other worlds.

The narrative however does participate in the glorification of the Buddha that had become common-place by the early days of the Great Vehicle. The future life of Maitreya as described by the Buddha in this text makes use of several of the elements of the Gautama Buddha's own hagiography—memorialized in the famous work, *The Acts of the Buddha*,<sup>10</sup> by Aśvaghōṣa (c. 80-150 CE)—but with

<sup>7</sup> *AMV*, Introduction, i.

<sup>8</sup> Jeremy Norman, "The Gilgit Manuscripts, the Oldest Manuscript Collection Surviving in Pakistan and India", <https://www.historyofinformation.com/detail.php?id=4213> (Accessed February 14, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> These are respectively *रत्नकूटसूत्र*, *བོད་མཚོ་གཤམ་སྐྱེས་པའི་མཛོད་* and *बुद्धावतंसकसूत्र*, *སངས་རྒྱལ་པལ་པོ་ཚེའི་མཛོད་*. The latter is known, especially in East Asian circles, as "The Flower Garland/Ornament Sūtra", which the Tibetan translate as the *Host of Buddhas Sūtra*.

<sup>10</sup> This popular work has been translated many times. One recent translation is: Aśvaghōṣa and Patrick Olivelle, *Life of the*

notable differences. Maitreya will come from one of the upper castes, but instead of being from the warrior caste, he will be from the priestly caste of Brāhmaṇas. As with Siddhārtha, Maitreya's future mother will have an idyllic pregnancy, and, while she holds a branch of a tree, the baby will emerge from her side to avoid the "crud" of birth. However, here the tree is a Nāga tree (*Citrus sinensis*?) instead of the Peepal tree (*Ficus religiosa*). Furthermore, upon his birth Maitreya's father will see his son's two potential destinies—becoming a world ruler or a Buddha—but unlike Śuddhodana, the Buddha's father, Maitreya's father will take no steps to prevent his son's renunciation. Instead, he happily joins the community of renunciates upon his son's awakening.

Maitreya's disillusionment with the world also takes a different form. Instead of the four signs of suffering and release that inspires Siddhārtha to renounce his home, the future Maitreya is disillusioned by the *sundering of the sacrificial post* (verses 50-51). This act of the Brāhmaṇas dividing up the sacrificial post (as souvenirs?) illuminates to Maitreya the transitory, decaying nature of the world and prompts him to leave his home. Once he renounces worldly life, it takes Maitreya only a day to achieve enlightenment.

Why the shift from Warrior caste to Priestly caste? Within the narrative it seems to be part of a trend to describe Maitreya's world as a step above Siddhārtha's. People live longer; the world is vaster, and the Buddha comes from the highest class. However, it could also be the case that in the age when the *AMV* was written, the dominance of the Brāhmaṇical culture was so strong that it prompted the author of the text to derive the future Buddha from their class to show that Buddhists were as good or in fact better than the Brāhmaṇas, the Hindu priests. Indeed, in this future time, Maitreya's father's name is Subrahmaṇa, which means "good priest", and he is the skilled minister of the then world-ruling king. Thus, Subrahmaṇa, Maitreya's father, is the highest ranking Hindu priest of the day. Moreover, the figure of Indra, another mainstay of Brahmāṇic culture, seems to have played an increasingly prominent role in the story over time. Both Indra and Brahmā (the two main gods of Hinduism prior to the rise of Śiva and Viṣṇu)<sup>11</sup> join the Buddhist ranks in this story. The account of Maitreya's prophecy, as we have it, clearly presents Buddhism as a superior alternative *for the lay-person* to the dominant Brahmāṇic religion.

The *Prophecy of Maitreya* does not focus in detail on the doctrine taught by the future Buddha. Out of the 108 verses of the text only two are devoted to describing Maitreya's doctrine, and these are simply a summary of the Four Noble Truths. There is no mention of dependent arising, nor of selflessness, or any other of the early Buddhist doctrines. Instead, after the summary of the Four Noble Truths, the text describes how people flock to the community renouncing the world and becoming monks and nuns, including Maitreya's whole family. It is then that the main focus of the story becomes apparent. To a vast audience that stretches for miles, Maitreya explains at relative length (8 verses) how the whole audience is there only because in the past they followed the teaching of Śākyamuni Buddha and performed pious acts, such as donating to monasteries, worshiping at Stupas, and so forth. These words are put in the mouth of Maitreya, whereas the Four Noble Truths are presented simply as a paraphrase. With these teachings, the narrative explicitly makes a connection between the current lay

*Buddha*, Clay Sanskrit library (New York: New York University Press, JJC Foundation, 2008),

<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015077136920?urlappend=%3Bsignon=swle:urn:mace:incommon:virginia.edu>.

11 The Shaivite and Vaiṣṇavite movements were just beginning to emerge and gain popularity at the beginning of the Common Era, but when *The Prophecy of Maitreya* was written, these small cults had nowhere near the dominance they would come to have centuries later.

Buddhist community and the future audience of Maitreya. It is a story written primarily for lay Buddhist practitioners saying to them that if they believe in the Buddha and his teachings and perform acts of devotion, they will sit at the feet of the future Buddha Maitreya as renunciants.

Maitreya lists a number of such devotional actions *of the lay community* that will result in a follower being part of Maitreya's retinue in the future: worshiping at stūpas (he mentions this twice), giving gifts to the Saṅgha, taking vows according to the teaching, observing *upoṣadha* (Pāli *uposatha*) fasting days<sup>12</sup> (a primarily lay ritual), and going for refuge. The text claims that these current activities of devotion will be the present act that causes lay adherents of Buddhism to be born in the future as part of the vast retinue of Maitreya, and that under Maitreya's guidance they will then "attain the truth, the highest stage." In that future time, Maitreya will guide them with "three types of miracles" so that they eliminate their "outflows" and are joyful (verse 77-78). His congregation will be so vast that it could encompass all current followers of Śākyamuni (verses 79-81). That such a claim is followed by a display of miraculous signs and the adoration of the world's kings and gods (verse 83-84) clearly demonstrates that the narrative is intended for a lay audience for whom the primary practice was from the earlier Hearer path (there is no mention of Bodhisattvas or any Great Vehicle doctrine) but an audience that was increasingly concerned with acts of devotion. The message to lay people is that faith is enough for this life now; in the future they can actually practice the path of renunciation under Maitreya, and at that point it will not be so hard.

*The Prophecy of Maitreya's* overall message for lay people is that through faith in the Buddha (and his doctrine) one will be reborn in that time of Maitreya and therein achieve enlightenment. This is made abundantly clear not only in the teachings that come from the mouth of Maitreya in the story, but in its closing verses (104-107) as well:

Thus, when one calms their thoughts by placing them on the conqueror, the sage of the Śākyas, then you will see the thoroughly enlightened Maitreya, the best of bipeds. ... By propitiating such a one like the compassionate Maitreya, best of bipeds, in time you will proceed to nirvāṇa. Having heard this extraordinary tale and having seen such abundant good fortune, what wise person would not have faith, since even those in dark rebirths do so?

In this way, the text lays out a clear an active path for the lay Buddhist, one of faith that will lead one to a future situation where one will have the opportunity to practice the demanding path to realization. We can see here one of the central issues that Buddhism struggled with during the early days of the Great Vehicle (and indeed since Buddhism's inception), namely how to can Buddhism—which ostensibly demands renunciation of the householder life style—provide a relevant and satisfying path of practice for the lay person. The answer provided here is not much different from the answer provided in the early days of Buddhism: going for refuge, taking the lay vows, practicing the fasting days, and making offerings to the community. Even the worshiping at stūpas (reliquary mounds) is a fairly ancient

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12 Upoṣadha ("set on fasting", = *uposatha*, Pāli) is an observance of restraint celebrated during certain days of the month in most Buddhist countries. This practice was adopted by the Buddha from other ascetic sects in his day. During these "sabbaths" lay people undertake eight vows: 1. not to kill, 2. not to steal, 3. not to be unchaste, 4. not to lie, 5. not to drink alcohol, 6. only eat before noon, 7. refrain from singing and dancing, and 8. not to sleep in an elevated or large bed. For a brief but interesting discussion of the historical significance of the "*uposatha*", see Sukumar Dutt, *Buddhist Monks and Monasteries of India*, 104-106.

practice, predating the rise of the Great Vehicle. The difference here in *The Prophecy of Maitreya* is in the sole emphasis on faith and the descriptions of its potent efficacy.

The highlighting of faith and the use of elements from the Siddhārtha's hagiography are aspects of Buddhism that coincided and contributed to the rise of the Great Vehicle. Placed in contrast with the text's lack of the inconceivably expansive worldview found in the later Great Vehicle sūtras, such as the *Array of Stalks Sūtra*, one gets the impression that this text does indeed stand, as Winternitz described Avadāna literature in general, "with one foot in the Hīnayāna literature, and the other in that of the Mahāyāna." This would suggest a date of composition slightly earlier than the 400-600 CE of the Gilgit manuscripts. Winternitz claims that this text was also known as the *Meeting with Maitreya* (मैत्रेयसमिति) which was written by the Vaibhāṣika Āryacandra who belonged to the same period as Aśvaghoṣa (c.80-c.150).<sup>13</sup> Having done only minimal research, I wonder whether the title "Meeting with Maitreya" referred to a genre of texts that were prevalent in Central Asia around this time rather than a single, specific text. However, Nakamura also equates the two. According to Nakamura, *Maitreya-Iyākarāṇa* ("Prophecy of Maitreya") or *Maitreya-Samiti* ("Meeting with Maitreya") was composed in the 3rd century A.D. and was translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva (344-413 CE).<sup>14</sup> In dating such texts obscured by the mists of time, there can be no certainty, unless other, more definitive evidence comes to light. However, the text was probably written somewhere between the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE and the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Finally, a word on the translation. I undertook it in order to revive my limited knowledge of Sanskrit which had languished for many years. Prior to translating this text, I had reviewed my favorite primer, Hart's *A Rapid Sanskrit Method* and created an online reference site based on it.<sup>15</sup> Translating the *Prophecy of Maitreya* was the first full translation I undertook. I used the Sanskrit critical edition edited by P. C. Majumder and two editions of the Tibetan, the Lhasa and Narthang. I do not know Chinese and so have not been able to avail myself of those translations as Lévi and Conze did. The translation has been reviewed several of times, but I do not consider it polished. Furthermore, I have done it in isolation without consultation of other scholars from any of these traditions. Any feedback would be appreciated.

When translating, I try to be as faithful as possible to original as far as I understand it. In terms of the age-old translator's dilemma of translating the words versus the meaning, I fall—as most do—somewhere in the middle. Often the literal translation is the most exact, but sometimes idioms and metaphors and the more culturally specific forms of the language need a less restricted translation, these I footnote with the original text. Also, I personally do not like the use of Sanskrit words within an English translation unless those words—like Buddha, nirvāṇa, and karma—have become common loan words in English. (Of course, there are some exceptions like Tathāgata, whose translation "One-Gone-Thus" is too cumbersome to be practical in English, but I try to keep those to a minimum.) In notes and elsewhere, I generally use the language's native script (Tibetan or Devanāgarī) rather than

13 Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, p. 272. The attribution of the text to Āryacandra is notable. Winternitz cites in a note on that page that the name of the author is found only in the Tokharian and Uigurian fragments of the text.

14 Taisho, No. 452. Hajima Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographic Notes*, ed. Alex Wayman, vol. 1, Buddhist Tradition Series (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1989), p. 180. He also mentions an old Khotanese version of the "Meeting with Maitreya" (*maitreyasamiti*).

15 George Hart, *A Rapid Sanskrit Method* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984). For the online Sanskrit reference see Than Grove, [https://pages.shanti.virginia.edu/Sanskrit\\_Language\\_Tools/](https://pages.shanti.virginia.edu/Sanskrit_Language_Tools/) (accessed February 14, 2021).

transliteration. Latin transliteration of non-Latin languages is a remnant of a time when technological limitations made it difficult to incorporate two fonts within the same text (think of typesetters). Modern technology, and especially Unicode, has obviated that difficulty, and I personally cannot help but feel that the continued use of transliteration has latent undertones of vestigial Colonialism, though I do use it parenthetically in some situations where it is unavoidable for a reader's clear understanding.

In the translations, numbers in parentheses at the end of a verse are the verse numbers from the printed edition edited by Majumder. Numbers in brackets without a sigla represent the page number from that same edition. Bracketed page with sigla represent the Tibetan versions: LH being the Lhasa edition and NT referring to the Narthang. Full references are listed in the Bibliography.

I hope anyone who reads this translation both enjoys it and gains something from it.

सर्वमङ्गलम्

## Translation

### The Prophecy of the Superior Maitreya

Homage to the Superior [LH 979] Maitreya!

Out of pity for [all] the worlds, the very wise Śāriputra, universal commander of the doctrine, asked the teacher this:<sup>16</sup> (1)

“Within the earlier and later discourses,<sup>17</sup> you have taught about “Maitreya”, the future Buddha who will serve as leader of the world.<sup>18</sup> (2)

“O best of men, please explain in detail everything about him including his powers

16 According to Lévi, Yijing's Chinese version adds here a more elaborate description that follows the typical Sūtra formula, “[Śāriputra] rose from his seat, covered his right shoulder, kneeled on his right knee, joined his hands together and spoke, ‘I would like to ask you a question. Please have the kindness to lend me an ear.’ The Buddha responded to Śāriputra, ‘As you ask, I will respond.’ Then Śāriputra addressed himself to the Bhagavan and said: ...” (S. Lévi, “Maitreya,” 390).

17 ལྷོན་དང་ཕྱི་མཐའ་མདོ་ལས་ (AMV 3, LH 979.2, NT 958.6). Based primarily on Chinese sources and the Japanese monograph on Maitreya's Pure-land by Matsumoto Bunzaburō, Lévi (362-363) argues that this refers to the name of a Sūtra, “In the *Sūtra on the Past and Future*,” of which the Sanskrit title would be *Pūrvāparānta Sūtra*. See N. Péri, Review of Matsumoto Bunzaburō, *Miroku jōdo ron (Etude de la Terre-Pure de Maitreya)*, BEFEO vol. 11, 1911, 439-457. However, Lévi does not thoroughly source his argument, which seems primarily based on hypothetical reconstructions of Sanskrit titles from Chinese, and as the Tibetan is ambiguous enough to be read either way, I have chosen the translation that makes more sense contextually, following Yijing and Watanabe. Conze simply translates this as “Some time ago” (Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*, 238). Lamotte also maintains there is such a text in the Chinese tradition. See Etienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From the Origins to the Saka Era*, Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain (Louvain-la-Neuve: Université catholique de Louvain, Institut orientaliste, 1988), <http://search.lib.virginia.edu/catalog/u1669356>, p. 703.

18 Possibly the earliest reference to Maitreya in the Buddha's teachings can be found in a sūtra in the “Collection of Long Discourses” or Dīgha Nikāya. The sūtra called the *The Lion's Roar on the Turning of the Wheel Discourse (cakkavattisīhanāda-sutta)*. See Maurice Wallace, tr., *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), pp. 395-405, particularly pp. 403-404.

as well as his supernormal abilities. We indeed wish to hear about this leader.” (3)  
[4]

Upon hearing that, the Fortunate One said, [NT 959] “Listen as I explain<sup>19</sup> to you the accomplishments of that excellent man, the Buddha Maitreya. (4)

“In his day, the oceans will dry up, receding 100 yojana<sup>20</sup> along the shore, and that will become the highway of a world ruling king (*cakravartin*).<sup>21</sup> (5)

“Jambudvīpa<sup>22</sup> in those days will be a plain 10,000 yojanas square,<sup>23</sup> and will be an abode for all beings. (6) [5]

“Also at that time the people of that country will indeed flourish, and their wealth will be without end. They will cause no harm and be virtuous. (7)

“The earth will be free from thorns and level, with verdant plains. Rising and falling [according to one’s needs],<sup>24</sup> [the ground] will be soft like cotton. (8)

“Sweet and fragrant rice will grow that requires no cultivation. Trees will grow that produce beautiful cloth of various colors. (9) [LH 980] [6]

“And the trees will be a league wide, loaded with leaves, flowers and fruit, and in those days their lifespan will be 80,000<sup>25</sup> years. (10)

“The beings there will be faultless, sinless, joyful, and full of life. They will be tall in stature with a beautiful complexion and have great strength. (11)

19 ལུང་བསྟན་པ་, བྲལ་ལྡན་པ་\* (AMV, 4; LH 979.4; NT 959.1). This can also be translated “I prophesy....”

20 དལ་གཙོ་ཚུལ་, ཡོ་ཇན་པ་\* (AMV 4; LH 979.4; NT 959.2) The common equivalency for a yojana is 12-15 km or 7.45-9.32 miles.

However, some have calculated it to be as little as 5 km or 3.11 miles (Richard Thompson, “Planetary Diameters in the Surya-Siddhanta” in *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, Vol. 11, No. 2, 1997, p193-200).

21 འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་, རྩེ་འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་\* (AMV, 4; NT 959.2). LH (979.5) has འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་ The Indian notion of a world-ruling king harkens back to the Veda *Aśvamedha* sacrifice, in which a horse would be released and the king and his army would follow it for a year conquering anyone in its path. At the end of the year the horse would be sacrificed to the gods. Such a king would be called a “Chakravartin,” or “a turner of wheels,” referring the kings chariot wheels having turned in circumscribing his kingdom. The notion here is that the oceans recede creating a path for such a world-ruling king to circumscribe the whole world, presuming there is a single landmass surrounded by ocean.

22 འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་, འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་ (AMV 4). Jambudvīpa (“the continent of Jambu [trees]”) is one of the four main continents surrounding Mount Meru. It is equated with the Indian subcontinent, which for Indians of the Buddha’s time was the civilized world. See note 43 for further details.

23 ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་སྐྱུར་པ་ (AMV 5; LH 979.5; NT 959.2). See note 20.

24 འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་སྐྱུར་པ་ (LH 979.6) AMV (5) and NT (959.4) have འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་སྐྱུར་པ་. Lévi (390-391) translates, “when one jumps on it, it lowers itself and becomes soft like the leaves of cotton” (*quand on y saute, il s'abaisse de lui-même et se fait doux comme des feuilles de cotonnier*). Conze (238) similarly has “when one jumps on it, it gives way, and becomes soft like the leaves of the cotton tree.” They are interpreting འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་ as a continuative, whereas I am interpreting it as one of a pair of opposites: rising up (འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་) and sinking low (ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་སྐྱུར་པ་). Given the breadth of their knowledge and their agreement, they are most likely correct. However, I am not quite clear on their meaning.

25 ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་སྐྱུར་པ་, འཕྲོ་ལོ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་པ་\* (AMV 6; LH 980.1; NT 959.5)

“There will be [only] three discomforts:<sup>26</sup> the need [to relieve oneself], hunger, and old age.<sup>27</sup> Girls will be married when they reach 500 years of age. (12) [7]

“At that time, the royal capital will be called Ketumati,<sup>28</sup> and it will be a place where beings who act virtuously toward [all] creatures<sup>29</sup> live.<sup>30</sup> (13)

“It will indeed be 12 yojanas long and 7 yojanas wide.<sup>31</sup> [NT 960] It will be a pure and pleasant city, created through virtue. (14)

“It will have a wall made of seven jewels, as tall as sound will travel,<sup>32</sup> whose turrets<sup>33</sup> and gates will actually be decorated with various jewels. (15) [8]

“Moats built by jeweled bricks and arrayed with carpets of red and blue lotuses will be adorned with decorative grasses.<sup>34</sup> (16)

“They will be completely encircled by seven rings of Tāla trees<sup>35</sup> that are made of four kinds of jewels and are adorned with lattices of tiny bells. (17)

“A pleasing sound will resound from the wind moving in those palm trees, just like the sweet sound of cymbals in five-part [harmony].<sup>36</sup> (18) [9] [LH 981]

26 ནད། (AMV 6; LH 980.2; NT 959.6). Literally, “illness”.

27 འདོད་དང་མི་ཟ་ཆ་བའོ། (AMV 6; LH 980.2-980.3; NT 959.6-959.7). Literally, “desires, not eating, and old age.” The translation borrows from Conze (238-239), “Three kinds of illness only are known – people must relieve their bowels, they must eat, they must get old,” and Lévi (391) who has “*les besoins, l’inanition, la vieillesse.*”

28 ཉོག་ལྗན། (AMV 7; LH 980.3; NT 959.7). The Sanskrit word, केतु, has many meanings. Some of the relevant ones are “bright appearance, clearness, brightness, lamp, flame, torch” and “sign, mark, flag, banner” (MW 309.1). The other half of the name, मती, means “having, possessing”. So, my first guess at the meaning of the city’s name was “having brightness”. However, the Tibetans interpret it differently, translating केतु as “banner, flag, top ornament” (ཉོག་), the other meaning. So for them केतुमती (ཉོག་ལྗན།) translated *not* as “endowed with brightness” but as “having flags,” or more creatively “festooned.”

29 སྤོག་ཆགས། (LH 980.3; NT 959.7) སྤོག་ཆགས། (AMV 7) . Majumder’s edition of the Sanskrit text, pp. 3-10, gives the Tibetan version of the text since both Sanskrit manuscripts are missing that section.

30 Conze (238) omits the second line of this verse and skips the next seven verses describing the city, resuming with the description of the king in verse 21.

31 Roughly, 100 miles by 60 miles. See note 20.

32 རྐོཤ། This Sanskrit terms often translated as a “league” also means “yell, shriek, shout,” and this is reflected in the Tibetan translation རྐོཤ་གསལ། “distance resounding,” the meaning matching the colloquial English expression “ear shot.”

33 ཤིང་ཐགས། (LH 980.5; NT 960.2). AMV (7) has ཤིང་ཐགས།, འོར་ཀའ་པོ།.

34 ལྷོ་བས་མཛེས་པར་བྱས་པ། (LH 980.6; NT 960.3) AMV (8) has ལྷོ་བས།, but LH and NT clearly have ལྷོ་བས་ though in both texts the ལྷོ་བས་ looks like a ལྷོ་བས་. ལྷོ་བས་ means “duck” whereas ལྷོ་བས་ are long grasses used to make mats. Conze skips this section but Lévi (391) translates it as: “Its moats, dug with elegance, show a profusion of white and blue lotuses (*Ses fossés, creusés avec elegance, etalent une profusion de padmas et d’utpalas*)”.

35 ཉོག་, ཀའ་ལོ། (AMV 8; LH 980.6; NT 960.4). According to MW (444.3) these are the Palmyra or Fan-palm trees (*Borassus flabellifer*). See [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borassus\\_flabellifer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Borassus_flabellifer) (Accessed February 27, 2021).

36 སིལ་སྐྱེད་ལྷན་ལག་ལྗན། (AMV 8; LH 980.7; NT 960.4) Literally, “cymbals with five branches/parts.”



“[These treasures are:] the Piṅgala in Kāliṅga, the Pāṇḍuka in Mithilā, the Elapatra in Gāndhāra, and the Śaṅkha in the town of Vārāṇasī.<sup>47</sup> (25)

“Born through the force of hundreds of meritorious deeds, the king will be a great hero in complete possession of these four treasures. (26)

“The minister<sup>48</sup> of this king will be the brāhmaṇa Subrahmaṇa.<sup>49</sup> A very learned<sup>50</sup> man who knows the four Vedas, he will be the king’s teacher. (27) [LH 982]

“He will be a scholar and holder of mantras, possessing the whole body of sacred knowledge, as well as an expert in the Vedas, ritual science, lexicology, and grammar. (28)

“At that time, a woman with the name of Brahmāvati<sup>51</sup> will be his wife. She will be beautiful, gracious, charming, and popular. (29)

“Now having having died and fallen<sup>52</sup> from [the company of] those in Tuṣita [heaven],<sup>53</sup> Maitreya, the best of persons, will securely bridge the transition between lives<sup>54</sup> [by entering] into the womb of that woman. (30)

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- 47 The Sanskrit editions begin with this verse. The concept of the four treasures is found in both Buddhism and Jainism. Their names are the same as the kings who guard them, though in some versions, they are guarded by nāgas. Each treasure is associated with a different region of ancient India. Piṅgala (“tawny, gold-colored”) is located in Kāliṅga, a historical region on the east coast of India below Calcutta. Pāṇḍuka (“yellowish-white”) is located in Mithilā, also on the east coast of India south of Kāliṅga. Elapatra (probably a simplification of *elāpattra*, एलापत्र meaning “cardamom leaf”) is found in Gāndhāra on the north-west on the border with Pakistan, and Śaṅkha’s treasure is in Vārāṇasī, in Uttar Pradesh, India—the center of the Buddhist and Hindu world of the time. The Tibetan has སེར་སྐྱུ་ for Piṅgala, though that Tibetan term is usually equated with Kapila. For Mithilā, the Tibetan has བཞོམ་བརྒྱུག་ which usually translates the name of the city Mathura (*AMV* 10-11; LH 981.5-981.6; NT 961.2-961.3).
- 48 पुरोहित (*AMV* 11), སུ་རྒྱུ་ན་འདོན་ (LH 981.7; NT 961.4). The Sanskrit term more commonly refers to a type of “family priest.” In this context, following the modern English translations of the Tibetan, “minister” seems more apt (<https://mandala.shanti.virginia.edu/terms/98742/overview/nojs>, accessed Aug. 25, 2018). Lévi (392) has “chaplain”.
- 49 सुब्रह्मणः (*AMV* 11), སུ་བླ་མེ་ཚོང་ས་པས་ (LH 981.7, NT 961.4). One would expect the form सुब्राह्मणः (“good Brāhmaṇa”), though in verse 42, we find the priest’s name in the form of सुब्रह्मा which would be the nominative of सुब्रह्मन् (“he for whom Brahmā is good?”). सुब्रह्मणः is the genitive or ablative of that form. But it would then be the name of the king or an adjective modifying “king”, and there would be no name for the priest. The Tibetan, Lévi (392) and Conze (239) all interpret it as the nominative name of the priest, सुब्राह्मणः.
- 50 Literally, “one who has heard a lot” (बहुश्रुत *AMV* 11, བཞོམ་པས་ LH 981.7, NT 961.4). All teaching was done orally in ancient Indian culture.
- 51 ब्रह्मावती (*AMV* 11), ཚོང་ས་ལྷ་ན་མ་ (LH 982.2; NT 961.5). Literally, “she who has Brahmā”.
- 52 च्यवित्वा (*AMV* 11), སྒྲིལ་པོམ་ (LH 982.3; NT 961.6).
- 53 The translation here represents the Tibetan: དགའ་ལྷན་གནས་ནས་ཤི་འཕོས་ནས། The Sanskrit is unclear. The printed text has: तुषितेभ्यश्च्यवित्वा and the digital version has तुषितेभ्यश्चयवित्वा (<http://www.dsbcproject.org/canon-text/content/415/1880> accessed May 8, 2018). In neither case can I make sense of the continuative. What is the root?
- 54 नियतं प्रतिसन्धं ग्रहीष्यति (*AMV* 11), དེས་པར་ཉིང་མཚམས་སྐྱེར་བར་འགྱུར་ (LH 982.3; NT 961.7). The translation here follows the Tibetan more closely under the assumption that it represents a deeper understanding of the Sanskrit or an interpretation based on oral instruction.

“Having borne [the baby] with great majesty<sup>55</sup> for ten complete months, the mother of Maitreya will then be in a grove abundant with flowers. (31) [12] [NT 962]

“Neither lying down nor sitting, that woman, who will have fulfilled her duty,<sup>56</sup> will stand, grasp the branch of a tree, and give birth to Maitreya. (32)

“The best of men will exit the womb from the right side [of his mother], just like the shining sun coming out from behind a mass of clouds. (32b)<sup>57</sup>

“He will be unsoiled by the crud of the womb like a water-lily [is unsoiled] by [dirty] water. The whole three realms<sup>58</sup> will be filled with light. (33)

“Then, very pleased, the thousand-eyed king of the gods,<sup>59</sup> Śacī’s husband,<sup>60</sup> [Indra] will take hold of that [just] born Maitreya, the best of bipeds.<sup>61</sup> (34) [13]

“And as soon as he is born, [LH 983] that [boy] will take seven steps and under each step a lotus will form. (35)

“Looking upwards in the four directions, he will proclaim these words: ‘This is my last life. There will be no more rebirths. I will not visit [this world] again.<sup>62</sup> Without contaminations I will go to uncontaminated Nirvāṇa.<sup>63</sup> (36)

55 महावृत्ति (AMV 11), གཞི་བརྗེད་ཆེན་པོ་ (LH 982.3, NT 961.7).

56 धर्मचारिणी (AMV 12), རྩོམ་སྟོན་མ་ (LH 982.4, NT 962.1).

57 Majumder says this verse is found in A—the Asiatic Society of Calcutta Manuscript—and the Tibetan but that it is omitted from B, the Gilgit manuscript. (AMV 12 n. 2).

58 त्रैधातु (AMV 12), ལམས་གསུམ་ (LH 982.6, NT 962.2-962.3). These are the Desire Realm (कामधातु, འདོད་ལམས་), Form Realm (रूपधातु, གཞུགས་ལམས་), and Formless Realm (अरूपधातु, གཞུགས་མེད་ལམས་). The Desire Realm is composed of six sub-realms where beings, primarily motivated by desire, are reborn, either as gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, or hell beings. The Form Realm is populated by higher level beings who in their past life have achieved one of four meditative stabilizations. One still has a body here but not the coarser aspects of desire. In the Formless Realm, one no longer even has a body, because such a person has achieved one of four even more rarified meditative stabilizations. However, no matter the level of concentration, all three realms are still within the cycle of cyclic existence (संसार, འཁོར་བ་) because eventually the merit accrued to attain any of these rebirths is exhausted. One then dies and is reborn in another of the realms. It is only upon penetrating the truth of existence (according to the Buddhists) that one is liberated from this cycle of existence and achieves lasting peace, or nirvāṇa (निर्वाण, སྤྱི་རྣལ་ལས་འདས་པ་).

59 सहस्राक्षो देवराजा (AMV 12), བརྒྱུ་ཕྱིན་ལྔ་དབང་པོ་ (LH 982.6; NT 962.3).

60 शचीपति (AMV 12), བདེ་སོགས་མའའབདག་ (LH 982.6-981.7, NT 962.3). The Sanskrit translates literally as “Lord of aid/might (śacī)”, while the Tibetan translates as “Lord of bliss and so forth”. Śacī was the goddess of beauty. A daughter of an Asura, a semi-divine being that can be either malevolent or benevolent, Śacī became the wife of Indra when he slew her father.

61 This verse breaks the flow of the narrative. For, having taken up the baby, no more mention is made of Indra. Lévi explains this abrupt shift by interpolating a line, the source of which he does not give, but one can surmise it is from the Chinese versions, of which there are several. Lévi (21) adds after this verse: “... Maitreya bearer of the thirty-two marks. But he, barely out of the womb, will say, ‘Let go! Let go, Thousand-Eyes!’ and ... (Maitreya porteur des trente-deux marques. Mais lui, à peine né, parlera: «Laisse, laisse, Mille-Yeux», et).” In either case, the vignette seems distinctly out of place.

62 Tibetan says “again and again” or “repeatedly” (ཡང་དང་ཡང་དུ་བྱིང་མི་འོང་, LH 983.2, NT 962.5).

63 निर्वास्यामि निरास्रवः (AMV 13), ཟག་མེད་སྤྱི་རྣལ་འདས་འགྲོ་ (LH 983.2, NT 962.5). आस्रवः (Tibetan ཟག་) literally translates as

“I will effect the liberation of sentient beings immersed in the sea of cyclic existence, who experience great suffering and are bound by the fetters of thirst.”<sup>64</sup> (37)

“And the gods will hold up a white parasol over the head of that [boy]. Two nāga kings will bathe him with streams of warm and cool water.”<sup>65</sup> (38) [14]

“And having taken Maitreya who will have the 32 marks of greatness, the midwife will bring that [newborn] blazing with good fortune to [his] mother.”<sup>66</sup> (39) [NT 963]

“And, [like] a goddess,<sup>67</sup> she will ride mounted in an attractive palanquin decorated with various jewels, bearing her son. (40)

“Then, with many thousands of musical instruments<sup>68</sup> being played, a rain of flowers will fall on Maitreya, when he enters that city.”<sup>69</sup> (41) [LH 984]

“Having seen thus that his son has the 32 marks of an exceptional man and

“outflow” and refers to the outflowing of psychic energy toward objects of desire, but is commonly translated as “contamination”. Lévi (393) translates the negative as “without stains (*souillures*)”; Conze (239), merely “all pure”. The verb in Sanskrit is निर्वा (*nirvā*), the root of “Nirvāṇa”, meaning to “I will be extinguished/blown out” (निर्वास्यामि). The Tibetan translates as “I will go to the uncontaminated [the state] beyond sorrow”.

64 This verse is found only in edition B of the text. Both A and the Tibetan omit it (*AMV* 13 n. 4). Both Lévi (393) and Conze (239) omit it. Conze’s redacted translation omits the next four verses about Indra, the midwife, and the mother.

65 *AMV* (13) gives B as the preferred reading, though Majumder says the Tibetan agrees with A, which reads:

“Serpent demons (*pannaga*) will bathe him with streams of warm and cool water. From the face of the sky celestial clothes and flowers will fall. The gods will hold up a white parasol over the head of that [boy].

Lévi (393) also agrees with A. Conze (239) omits this verse.

66 The main translation here follows version B (*AMV* 14) with which the Tibetan agrees: “Having properly lifted that [boy] Maitreya, blazing with glory and possessing the thirty-two marks, the midwife will give him into the hands of his mother” (མཚན་མཚན་གསུམ་ཅུ་གཉིས་མངའ་བ། བྱ་མ་ལ་དཔལ་གྱིས་འབར་བ་དེ། མ་མས་ཡང་དག་སྐྱངས་ནས་སུ། ཡུམ་གྱི་ཕྱག་ཏུ་འབྲུལ་བར་འཇུག།, LH 983.4-983.5, NT 962.7-963.1). Lévi (393) follows version A more closely: “[and the king of the gods, the thousand-eyes husband of Śacī, will take] the infant with thirty-two marks, this Maitreya sparkling with splendor, his nurse will put him in the hands of his mother” ([*et le roi des dieux, l’époux de Śacī, Mille-Yeux, prendra*] *l’enfant aux trente-deux marques, ce Maitreya étincelant de splendeur, sa nourrice le remettra aux mains de sa mère*). Leaving out the midwife but consistent with Indra snatching the baby in verse 34, version A translates: “Thrilled indeed, the thousand-eyed, king of the gods, husband of Śacī will take that youth with the thirty-two marks. He will present Maitreya blazing with glory into the hands of his mother” (हृष्टश्चैव सहस्राक्षो देवराजो शचीपतिः ग्रहीष्यति तङ्कुमारं द्वात्रिंशद्वरलक्षणं । श्रिया ज्वलन्तं मैत्रेयं मातुर्हस्ते प्रदास्यति।, *AMV* 14, n.1).

67 देवता (*AMV* 14). Lévi has “as a divinity (*comme une divinité*)”. Conze does not translate this section. The Tibetan has “with/by the gods” (ལྷ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་, LH 983.5, NT 963.1).

68 तूर्य (*AMV* 14), which MW simply as a “musical instrument”. Tibetan has སིལ་སྐྱན་རྩོད་ཐག་དུམ་དག (LH 983.5, NT 963.2).

69 Edition A adds a verse here: “And on that day pregnant women will deliver. Those women will give birth to sons with ease and well-being.” Majumder has नार्याङ्गुविण्यः (*AMV* 14, n. 2), but Lévi (386, v. 44) gives भार्यागुरविण्य, literally “pregnant wives”. The Tibetan is ལྷུ་མ་ལྷི། །བྱང་མེད་རྣམས་ཀྱང་བཙའ་བར་འཇུག། (LH 983.7, NT 963.2-963.3).

examining them with mantras,<sup>70</sup> Subrahmā<sup>71</sup> will be joyful.<sup>72</sup> (42)

“Just as, through mantras, two [different] destinies of a youth can be seen, [Subrahmā will see that his son will be] either a world-ruling leader of men or a Buddha, the greatest of bipeds. (43) [15]

“And Maitreya, the best of people,<sup>73</sup> upon reaching his youth, will think about the nature of reality, that all creatures are indeed [afflicted with] suffering. (44)

“He will have a voice<sup>74</sup> [like] Brahmā with great resonance,<sup>75</sup> have golden colored [skin of] great splendor. His shoulders will be broad, and his chest, full. His eyes will be like the petals of a lotus.<sup>76</sup> (45)

“His body will have a height of 50 hands,<sup>77</sup> and thus with abundance he will grow up and out into a handsome form.<sup>78</sup> (46)

“[At an assembly] attended by 84,000 people, [NT 964] that [youth] Maitreya will teach about mantras.<sup>79</sup> (47) [16]

“Then, Śaṅkha, the lord of men, will erect a sacrificial post 32 arms wide by 2000 arms tall.<sup>80</sup> (48)

“The lord of men will decorate that sacrificial post with various jewels. Having

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- 70 Sanskrit has प्रत्यविक्षाथ मन्त्रेषु or प्रत्यवेक्ष्य च मन्त्रेषु (*AMV* 14 verse 42 and note 3); Tibetan has གསང་ཚིག་དག་ལ་རབ་བརྟུན་ནས་ (LH 984.1, NT 963.4). Lévi (393) has “and considering what the sacred formulas say (*et en considérant ce que disent les Formules sacrées*)”. Conze (239) has “and considers their implications in the light of the holy mantras”.
- 71 सुब्रह्मा (*AMV* 14), ཚོངས་རབ་ (LH 983.7, NT 963.3). In verse 27 the name is given as Subrahmaṇa (सुब्रह्मणः). See note 49.
- 72 Conze’s translation (239) resumes here with “And when his father sees that his son has the thirty-two Marks of a superman, and considers their implications in the light of the holy mantras, he will be filled with joy.”
- 73 A has “Maitreya indeed the pinnacle of people” (मैत्रयो ह्यग्रपुद्गलः, *AMV* p15., n.1) and the Tibetan repeats “the greatest of bipeds” (ཀློང་གཉིས་མཚོག་, LH 984.2, NT 973.5).
- 74 Reading ब्रह्मस्वरो for ब्रह्मखरो (*AMV* 15). Tibetan has ཚོངས་པའི་རྒྱུངས་ (LH 984.3, NT 963.6).
- 75 महाघोषो (*AMV* 15), རྒྱུངས་ཚེ་ (LH 984.3, NT 963.6). Edition A of the Sanskrit has “very shrill”, literally “greatly agitated” (महादीप्तो, *AMV* 15. n 2).
- 76 पद्मपत्रनिभक्षणः (*AMV* 15), སུདྲའི་འདས་མ་འདྲ་བའི་སྐྱུན། (LH 984.4, NT 963.6-963.7).
- 77 हस्तः पञ्चाशदुच्छ्राय (*AMV* 15). Tibetan has “80 cubits” (ལྷུན་གྲུ་དུམ་དྲུ་འཇུར། LH 984.4, NT 963.7).
- 78 विसृतश्च ततोऽर्द्धेण शुभवर्णसमुच्छ्रायः (*AMV* 15), reading आर्द्धेण for अर्द्धेण, “with abundance”. Edition A has “By way of height, his body will be 80 hands; his width, twenty hands, [and] the circle of his face, half of that” (समुच्छ्रायेण हस्ताशीतितस्तस्य कायो भविष्यति । विस्तारं विंशहस्तानि ततोऽर्द्धं मुखमण्डलं, *AMV* 15, n. 4; དེལྱི་སྐྱུ་ལྷུན་དུ་ནི། །ལྷུ་ནི་བརྒྱ་དུམ་དྲུ་འཇུར། །ལེང་ནི་ལྷུ་རྩམས་ཉི་ཤུ་སྟེ། ལལ་གྱི་དྲུ་ལྷུ་འཕོར་དེལྱི་ལྷུ་ལ། LH 984.4-984.5, NT 963.7). In this case they are reading अर्द्ध as अर्ध, “half”. Lévi (393) follows edition A and the Tibetan, “une taille de quatre-vingts longueurs de main, une largeur de vingt mains, le disque du visage moitié moins”. Conze (240) has “His body is eighty cubits high, and twenty cubits broad.”
- 79 Conze (240) skips the next five verses until verse 53.
- 80 The measurements given are षोडशव्यामम् and व्यामसहस्रकम् literally “16 vyāma” and “1000 vyāma” (*AMV* 16). The Indian measurement vyāma (व्याम) is equivalent to “two extended arms” (MW, 1038.1). So the translation “arms” has been used as the unit of measurement, and the numbers have been doubled. The Tibetan has “64 fathoms side to side, 1000 top to bottom” (སྟོང་མ་སུ་འདྲིམ་ནི་དུག་ལུ་བཞི། །འཕར་དུ་འདྲིམ་ནི་སྟོང་ལྷུང་ལྷུང་ལ།, LH 984.6, NT 964.1).

first performed a sacrifice, he will offer it to the twice-born.<sup>81</sup> (49)

“And<sup>82</sup> upon his bestowing of the charming, bejeweled sacrificial post to them, [LH 985] the thousands of Brāhmaṇas will immediately divided it [among themselves].<sup>83</sup> (50)

“And having seen this transitoriness of the sacrificial post, Maitreya will contemplate the whole of cyclic existence, and he will long to go forth from home [in renunciation]. (51) [17]

“[Then he will think,] ‘Having renounce all this [for wandering] wherever, let me reach<sup>84</sup> the state of deathlessness.<sup>85</sup> Let me liberate people from the fear of sickness, death, and old age.’<sup>86</sup> (52)

“That Maitreya, the highest of people, accompanied by the 84,000 [followers] will leave to go forth in renunciation.<sup>87</sup> (53) [18]

“In those days, his tree of enlightenment will be the Nāga tree,<sup>88</sup> the branches of

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- 81 Use of this term only became prominent during the first or second century CE. See Patrick Olivelle, “Patañjali and the Beginnings of Dharmaśāstra: An Alternative Social History of Early Dharmasūtra Production,” in *Aux Abords de La Clairière: Études Indiennes et Comparées En l’Honneur de Charles Malamoud*, by Silvia D’Intino and Caterina Guenzi, vol. 154, Bibliothèque de l’Ecole de Hautes Études, Sciences Religieuses (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2012), 123-128.
- 82 Before this line, A inserts: “He will give the sacrificial pillar made of seven jewels to the Brāhmaṇas.” (सत्तरत्नमयं यूपं ब्राह्मणेभ्यः प्रदासति [sic.] *AMV* 16 n. 5). Lévi (393) includes this line in his translation.
- 83 विकिरिष्यन्ति. The Tibetan is བགོད་པར་འགྱུར། (LH, p 985.1; NT 964.3) The closest root for that Sanskrit future tense is विकृ (to scatter, disperse, cleave or split) but its future 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural should be विकिरिष्यन्ति, though this could be accounted for by BHS. The closest Tibetan words to བགོད་ are either འགྱུར། which means “to split” or བགོད། which means “To make laugh, smile.”
- 84 Literally “may I touch” स्पृशेयम् (*AMV* 17). The Tibetan also uses the verb to touch: རྟོག་འགྱུར། (LH 985.2, NT 964.4).
- 85 The Tibetan reads བདེན་མེད་ལྗང་ལྗང་ here (LH 985.2; NT 964.4), which literally translates as “the state of the nectar [of immortality].” The Sanskrit अमृत is the name in Brahmanic culture for the nectar of immortality, but here it is used in its literal sense of deathlessness, which in a Buddhist context must refer to nirvāṇa.
- 86 In the Sanskrit there appears to be no indication that this is a quote from Maitreya except the use of the pronoun “I” अहम्. The Tibetan does have ལྟོན་ཞེས། (LH 985.3; NT 964.5), literally “thinking thus.” After this version the Tibetan translates verses 58 and 59 from the Sanskrit, but these will be translated in the Sanskrit order. (*AMV* 17 n.2). Both Conze (240) and Lévi (394) follow the Sanskrit.
- 87 There is a slight and inconsequential dissimilarity in word order between edition A and edition B. Majumder claims the second line of edition A starts with the word नराधिपो, but it is missing in the Tibetan and edition B, “which is evidently a scribal mistake” (*AMV* 17, n.3). It is surprising he does not notice that the addition of the word would break the metre of the verse (*anuṣṭubh*, 4 verse of 8 syllables), but perhaps the text is so irregular in this regard such deviation is commonplace. Lévi’s transcription (386, v. 56) does not have this extra word.
- 88 “Tree of enlightenment” is a literal translation of the Sanskrit for Bodhi Tree (बोधिवृक्ष), or Bo Tree. It refers to the tree under which Śākyamuni Buddha (Siddhārtha Gautama) gained enlightenment. Also known as a Peepal tree, it is a type of fig tree (*Ficus religiosa*). Common Buddhist lore is that in Maitreya’s time in the future his tree of enlightenment will be the Nāga-tree (नागवृक्ष [*AMV* 18], ལྟུང་ལྗང་ [LH 985.2; NT 964.7]). MW (533.2) equates this with the Nāgaruka tree, or the Sweet Orange tree (*Citrus sinensis*). Lévi (394) translates it more literally as “Dragon Tree” (*l’arbre du dragon*), as does Conze (240).

this [tree] rising 50 yojanas<sup>89</sup> in height.<sup>90</sup> (54) [NT 965]

“And having sat down under those [branches] of that [tree], Maitreya, the highest of people, the leader, [LH 986] will reach the unsurpassable, auspicious enlightenment.<sup>91</sup> (55)

“And on that very night when he will set forth in renunciation [of the world], he will indeed attain the other side of enlightenment.<sup>92</sup> (56) [19]

“Thereupon, with a voice that possesses the eight [supreme] qualities,<sup>93</sup> that best of [all] people<sup>94</sup> will teach the true doctrine that disperses all suffering and is peaceful. (57)

“Seeing that the crowd is well-disposed,<sup>95</sup> he will talk about the truths of suffering, the arising of suffering, and the transcendence<sup>96</sup> of suffering.<sup>97</sup> (58)

“Along with the peaceful, holy eightfold path that leads to the extinction [of sorrows] (*nirvāṇa*), and having listened attentively to that doctrine they will begin to progress in the teaching.<sup>98</sup> (59)

89 Roughly 675 kilometers or 420 miles. See note 20. Lévi (394) has “fifty leagues” (*à cinquante lieues*).

90 Edition A uses different words with nearly identical meaning (*AMV* 18 n.1), but the Tibetan is significantly different: “The branches of that [tree] will be truly high, [reaching] nearly a yojana into the sky.” (རྗེལྷ་ཡལ་ག་གནས་འཕང་དུ། །དཔག་ཚད་ཚལ་དུ་ཡང་ དག་འཕགས། LH 985.6; NT 964.7-965.1).

91 Edition A has: “Its branches will extend six *krośa* on all sides. And there is no doubt that having sat down at the foot of that tree, Maitreya, the best of bipeds, will obtain the unsurpassable, complete enlightenment” (*AMV* 18, n. 2). The Tibetan essentially corresponds to A (LH 985.6-985.7; NT 965.1-965.2). Lévi (394) has “Its foliage extend for six lengths of the voice. Sitting at the foot of this tree, Maitreya, the best of bipeds, will reach total, unsurpassable illumination; this is without doubt!” (*son feuillage s’étend sur six portées de voix. Assis au pied de cet arbre, Maitreya, le meilleur des bipèdes, arrivera à l’illumination totale et insurpassable; pas de doute là-dessus!*). Conze follows suit (240).

92 Edition A omits this verse, but it is found in both B and the Tibetan. (*AMV* 18 n.3). Lévi (394) also omits it, but Conze (240) has “And he will win his enlightenment the very same day (*sic.*) that he has gone forth into homeless life.”

93 अष्टाङ्गोपेतया वाचा (*AMV* 19). Literally, “voice possessing eight parts” of the eight parts (अष्टाङ्ग) Edgerton (81.2) says, “*having 8* (unspecified good) *qualities*, substantially = *excellent, fine, supreme.*” I cannot find any other reference to the eight qualities or parts of the voice.

94 Edition A and Tibetan have “the best of sages” (*AMV* 19 n.1).

95 प्रसन्नां जनतां दृष्ट्वा (*AMV* 19). The Tibetan has: རྗེས་ལོ་རབ་དང་གཞིགས་ནས་ནི། (LH 985.3; NT 964.5), which translates simply “seeing the excellent beings.”

96 समतिक्रम (*AMV* 19). MW (1154.1) translates this as “going entirely over or beyond.” The Tibetan text differ in their translation, though this is possibly a scribal error: ཡང་དག་འོང་བ་ (NT 964.5), ཡང་དག་འགོག་པ་ (LH 985.3-985.4). *AMV* 17 n.2 agrees with NT. The first is literally “coming correctly”. LH’s term translates as “correctly ceasing.” Though neither text uses the most common Tibetan word for “transcendence,” འདས་པ་, that term best fits all the parameters here.

97 Sanskrit verses 58 and 59 are translated after verse 52 in the Tibetan (LH 985.3-985.5; NT 964.5-964.6). See *AMV* 17 n.2 and 19 n.4 and here note 86.

98 Version A combines verses 58 & 59 in a different way: “Suffering, the arising of suffering, the complete passing beyond suffering, the holy eightfold path that is peaceful and leads to *nirvāṇa*—seeing that the crowd is well-disposed, he will relate these truths. And thus, having heard the doctrine, they will progress in the teaching” (*AMV* 19 n. 3; Lévi 387 vv.



forth. (65) [21]

“And there at that time, hundreds of thousands living beings<sup>109</sup> [LH 987] will go forth [from the householder life] under the instruction of Maitreya. (66)

“In a garden filled with flowers, there will be a gathering. His assembly will be 100 yojanas [deep] on all sides.<sup>110</sup> (67)

“Then, the teacher Maitreya, the highest of humans, looking down<sup>111</sup> on the crowd with compassion, will proclaim this topic:<sup>112</sup> (68)

““All you [people]<sup>113</sup> were seen by the Lion of the Śākya, the protector with the best qualities, the world sovereign, and having been entrusted with the sphere<sup>114</sup> of the good doctrine, [you] were in fact sent through the path of liberation into my teaching.<sup>115</sup> (69) [22]

““Having worshipped Śākyamuni<sup>116</sup> at the stūpas<sup>117</sup> with parasols, banners, pendants, perfumes, garlands, and ointments, you have come into my teachings. (70)

““Because you have given to the Sangha<sup>118</sup> gifts of clothes, food and drink, and

109 प्राणिनः (AMV 21); རྣམ་པར་གཟིགས་ནས་ནི། (LH 986.7, NT 966.2).

110 This is essentially a repeat of verse 60 (AMV p. 21).

111 व्यवलोक्याथ (AMV 21). I am parsing this as a continuative व्यवलोक्य plus अथ, which seems to be supported by the Tibetan: རྣམ་པར་གཟིགས་ནས་ནི། (LH 987.2, NT 966.3).

112 इममर्थं प्रवक्ष्यति (AMV 21), རྣམ་པར་གཟིགས་ཏུ་གསུང་བར་འགྱུར། (988.1).

113 सर्वेते (AMV 21), འདི་དག་ཀུན་ (LH 987.2, NT 966.4). Literally, “all these” but translating in the second person as more colloquial following Lévi (395) and Conze (240).

114 धातुना (AMV 21); རྒྱུ་ལས་ (LH 987.2; NT 966.3).

115 This is a very difficult verse to translate from Sanskrit:

सर्वेते शाक्यसिंहेन गुणिश्रेष्ठेण त्रायिना ।

अर्थतो लोकनाथेन दृष्ट्वा सद्धर्मधातुना ।

रोपिता मोक्षमार्गेण विक्षिप्ता मम शासने । (AMV p. 21)

In particular the referent of “all these” (सर्वेते) is vague. The Tibetan is not any clearer on that account:

།འགྲུ་མེ་རྗེ་ལུག་པ་སྟེ། །གཙོ་བོ་སྟོན་པར་མཛད་པ་ལོ། །དམ་པའི་ཚེས་དབྱིངས་གཟིགས་གྱུར་པ། །འཛིག་རྗེ་མགོན་པོས་འདི་དག་ཀུན། །ཐར་པའི་ལམ་དེ་བསྐྱེད་ནས་ཀྱང། །དོན་གྱིས་ངའི་བསྟན་པ་

བཏང། (LH 987.2-987.3, NT 966.3-966.4).

Lévi (395) has “All you, Śākyamuni had you before him, the best of sages, the savior, the true protector of the world, in whom the Law rests; he planted you on the path of deliverance, but you have had to wait for my teaching (*Vous tous, Çākyamuni vous a eus sous les yeux, lui le premier des sages, le sauveur, le vrai protecteur du monde, en qui repose la Loi; il vous a plantés sur le chemin de la délivrance, mais vous avez dû attendre mon enseignement.*)” Conze (240) follows, or agrees with, Lévi. However, I see nothing explicitly indicating the notion of having to wait and prefer a more literal translation.

116 Edition B leaves out “Śākyamuni” (AMV 22 n. 1).

117 Reliquary mounds usually containing the relics of the Buddha or a Buddhist saint.

118 The Buddhist community. संघे (AMV p. 22; རྣམ་པར་གཟིགས་པ་ལ།, NT 966.5): this is a locative used like a dative. See Whitney, *Sanskrit Grammar*, 102-103 (§ 304).

various cures for the weary, you have indeed come into my teachings.<sup>119</sup> (71)

“Having sprinkled saffron water and rubbed sandalwood paste on the stūpas of the sage of the Śākya, you have indeed come into my teachings.<sup>120</sup> (72) [23]

“It is because you placed your vows in the teachings of the Lion of the Śākya clan and have in fact thoroughly guarded them that you have indeed come into my teachings.<sup>121</sup> (73)

“You have spent the noble, auspicious, eight-limbed *upoṣadha* days<sup>122</sup> fasting, on the 14<sup>th</sup>, the 15<sup>th</sup> and likewise the 8<sup>th</sup> of the month, and moreover you were very focused on the eight-limbed [*upoṣadha* vows] during the Miraculous fortnight.”<sup>123</sup> (74) [LH 988] [NT 967]

“Having accepted the well-obtained precepts and the teachings, those beings have gone to the teachings, and you beings have gone [for refuge] to the Buddha, the teaching, and the community, and because of performing that meritorious deed, you have approached my teachings.<sup>124</sup> (75)

“You beings are impelled by that, and so you have met with me. You have been

119 This verse, with a slightly different word order, comes after verse 73 in edition A and the Tibetan (*AMV* 22 n. 3, LH 987.6-987.7, NT 966.7-967.1).

120 The Tibetan has “having worshipped the stūpas of Śākyamuni by sprinkling saffron water and rubbing sandalwood”. Following this verse, Edition A and the Tibetan have inserted: “Having continually gone for refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha and having then performed virtuous actions, you have indeed come into my teachings.” (*AMV* 22 n. 7; LH 987.4-987.5; NT 966.6-966.7).

121 शिक्षापदानि चाधाय शाक्यसिंहस्य शासने । परिपाल्य यथाभूतं आगता हि ममान्तिकम् । (*AMV* 23) The Tibetan has: “It is because you have well taken vows in the teachings of the Lion of the Śākya and having achieved them just as they are described that you have indeed come into my teachings.” (ཤུལ་སྐྱེའི་བསྟན་པ་ལ། །བསྐྱབ་གཞི་ཡང་དག་ལྟངས་ནས་སུ། །རི་ལྷ་རྒྱུད་བཞིན་བསྐྱབས་ནས་ནི། །ངས་ཡི་བསྟན་ལ་ལྷགས་པ་ཡིན། LH 987.3-987.4)

122 A lay Buddhist rite of fasting on certain days of the month. See note 12 for more detail.

123 Edition B does not have the standard refrain for this section. Version A, which the Tibetan follows, does: “Having given to the Saṅgha gifts of clothes, food and drink, and various medicines for the weary, you have come into my teachings. Having spent *upoṣadha* days fasting on the 14<sup>th</sup> day, the 15<sup>th</sup> day, as well as the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the fortnight, and because during the Miraculous Fortnight you were well-focused on the eight-limbed [vows] and purified yourselves through fasting, you indeed have come into my teachings.” (*AMV* 23 n. 1). The Tibetan is: དགོ་འདུན་ལ་ཡང་ཚོས་གོས་དང། །ཞལ་ཟས་དང་ནི་བཏུང་བ་དང། །སྟུན་གསོས་སྣ་ཚོགས་སྦྱིན་པ་རྣམས། །ཕྱལ་ནས་ངཡི་བསྟན་ལ་ལྷགས། །བཏུ་བཞི་དང་ནི་བཅོ་ལྔ་དང། །དེ་བཞིན་རྒྱ་གཅིག་ཚོས་བརྒྱད་དང། །ཚོ་འཕྲུལ་མ་ཡི་རྒྱ་བ་ལ། །ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་ལེགས་མཉམ་བཞག་ཅིང། །བསྟེན་གནས་གསོ་སྦྱང་བྱས་ནས་ནི། །ངཡི་བསྟན་ལ་ལྷགས་སོ་ཞེས། (LH 987.6-988.1; 966.7-967.2). Since the Tibetan ends with the ཞེས་ (*zhes*), this indicates the end of Maitreya’s speech in the story in the Tibetan translation. The next two verses continue Maitreya’s speech, but they are only found in edition B, not in A or in the Tibetan. The “Miraculous Fortnight” (པ་རྒྱུ་འཛིན་ལྷ་ལྷ་བ་) refers to a religious holiday commemorating the legend of the Buddha’s competition in the performance of miracles with six other ascetic sages of his day, during which the Buddha demonstrates his complete supremacy and thereby converts his opponents.

124 The verses 75-77 are omitted from the Tibetan and edition A (*AMV* 23 n. 2). The Tibetan ends the previous verse about practicing the eight-limbed *upoṣadha* vows with “... you have approached my teachings” and clearly ends the quote.

encompassed<sup>125</sup> by the sage, the best of teachers, whose intelligence is great.<sup>126</sup> (76)

“Seeing that the audience is receptive, [Maitreya] will speak these truths, and having heard them, they will thus attain to the truth,<sup>127</sup> the highest stage. (77) [24]

“He<sup>128</sup> will guide the Hearers with the three [types of] miracles.<sup>129</sup> Thereby, all of them will cast away their outflows and be joyful.<sup>130</sup> (78)

“His first congregation<sup>131</sup> will be a full 960 million Hearers. These will be Hearers who have cut off existence. (79)

“His second congregation will be a full 940 million Hearers. These will be pacified Hearers with great intelligence.<sup>132</sup> (80)

“His third congregation will be of a full 220 million Hearers. These will be pacified Hearers whose minds are pacified.<sup>133</sup> (81)

“Having set in motion the wheel of the doctrine, and indeed having educated gods and men, he will go [begging for] food in the city, accompanied by the community of Hearers. (82) [25]

“Then, when a hundred sages cast saffron flowers ... his ..., there will be wonders,

125 परीत (*AMV* 23) = “seized, filled, taken possession of, encompassed”

126 The next verse found only in edition B clearly returns to the third person, thus signifying the end of Maitreya’s speech, as is made clear in the Tibetan. Edition A also returns to the third person in its next verse 78. After this one, Conze skips the next fourteen verses and resumes his translation with verse 91.

127 धर्म (*AMV* 23). I often translate this word as “doctrine,” but in this context there is enough dissonance with that standard translation to merit a deviation from it. The meaning here seems to be closer to धर्मता (“reality”) since it is described as “the highest level” (पदमुत्तमम्), whereas to our modern secular ears the word “doctrine” connotes more of a dogmatic rule than a true description of reality.

128 Tibetan formally closes the quote with ཞེས། །དོན་འདིར་རབ་ཏུ་གསུང་པར་འགྱུར། which is not in the Sanskrit and resumes following the Sanskrit (LH 988.1, NT 967.2).

129 These are magical miracles (ऋद्धि प्रातिहार्य), mind-reading miracles (आदेशना प्रातिहार्य), and miracles of admonition (अनुशासनी प्रातिहार्य) (*BHSD* 392.1).

130 The form of the verb in the second sentence is puzzling: क्षिपयिष्यन्ति. It is not a form I can identify. It looks most like a future causative, though for क्षिप् that would be क्षेपयिष्यन्ति. The word “outflows” (आस्रवाः) appears to be in the nominative plural, but this would require the verb to be passive which would be क्षिप्यिष्यन्ते. Based on the Tibetan, it seems the verb is causative future with an unmodified root vowel, and the आस्रवास्तत्र should really be आस्रवांस्तत्र, making “outflows” in the accusative plural or the object of the cause. The Tibetan reads: དེ་ཚོ་དེད་ག་ཐམས་ཅད་ནི། །ཟག་ཟད་འགྲོགས་ན་བདེ་བར་འགྱུར། (LH 988.2, NT 967.3).

131 सन्निपात, འདུས་པ་ (*AMV* 24, LH 988.2, NT 967.3).

132 Edition A and the Tibetan reads: “[Hearers] who are freed from the bonds of afflictive emotions” (मुक्तानां क्लेशबन्धनात्; མྱོན་མོངས་འཛིང་བ་ལས་གྲོལ་བའི་) (*AMV* 24 n. 1; LH 988.3, NT 967.4).

133 Edition A and the Tibetan reads: “a full 920 million liberated [Hearers] whose minds are pacified” (पुष्पां द्वाणवतिः कोट्टा (sic) मुक्तानां शान्तचेतसां, སེམས་ཞི་རྒྱལ་པར་གྲོལ་གྱུར་པ། རུང་ལྷུང་ཕྱག་དབྱེ་ཕྱག་གཉིས། ཚྲོང་བའི་...) (*AMV* 24 n. 2, LH 988.4, NT 967.5).



“On that road, they will lay out everywhere carpets as soft as cotton. They will spread various beautiful flower garlands in his path.<sup>143</sup> (89)

“The people will honor him with parasols, flags, and banners, and the minds of men will be soothed by the pleasant resounding of music.<sup>144</sup> (90) [27]

“And Śakra (Indra), the thousand-eyed<sup>145</sup> king of the gods, the husband of Śachī,<sup>146</sup> bristling with delight, will cup his hands together<sup>147</sup> and praise the Conqueror Maitreya,<sup>148</sup> (91)

“I do homage to you, noble blooded one! I bow to you, highest of beings!<sup>149</sup> O your eminence,<sup>150</sup> you who are the pinnacle of men, have compassion on the community!’ (92)

“At that point Māra, son of the gods, with his great magical powers, will be there. He also will cup his hands together and praise the guide of the world. (93)

“And Maitreya, guide and lord of the world, will be surrounded by many

143 पथि भूम्यास्तरं तत्र मृदुतूलपिचोपमम् । विचित्रञ्च शुभं माल्यं विकिरिष्यन्ति ते तदा ॥ (AMV 26). བེད་བལ་འདབ་ལྷ་ར་འཇམ་ལ་ཡི། །ས་ཤེར་གདིང་བརྒྱ་ཆེར་འདིང། །དེད་ག་ལམ་གར་མང་བ་ནི། །སྤྲོ་ཚོགས་མཛེས་པ་རྣམ་པར་འགྲེམ།། (LH 989.2). I am following the Tibetan here, as the Sanskrit somewhat eludes me. Lévi (p. 396) has: “In his path, they will make the ground as soft as cotton and cotton-padding, and they will spread in his way a variety of garlands” (*sur son chemin rendront le sol aussi doux que le coton et la ouate, et ils répandront sur sa route des guirlandes variées*). Conze does not translate this verse.

144 Edition A and Tibetan has: “Those men with clear minds, the sons of the gods who have great supernatural powers, will worship the teacher [Maitreya] with parasols, flags, banners, incense and anointed garlands, along with the sound of music that is pleasant [to hear]” (छत्रध्वजपताकाभिर्गन्धमाल्यानुलेपनैः शुभैश्च तूर्यनिघोषैः प्रसन्नमनसो नराः । शास्तुनः पुजां करिष्यन्ति देवपुत्रा महर्द्धिकाः॥ [AMV p. 26], ལྷ་འི་སུ་ནི་མཐུ་ཆེན་དང། མི་རྣམས་ཡིད་ནི་རབ་དང་བ། །གདུགས་དང་རྒྱལ་མཚན་བ་དན་དང། རྗེས་དང་མེད་བ་བྱུག་པ་དང། རོལ་མོ་སྤྲོ་སྤྲོན་བསྐྱུགས་པ་ཡིས། རྗེན་པ་ལ་ནི་མཚན་པར་འགྲུམ། [LH 989.2-989.3]).

145 “thousand-eyed” (सहस्राक्षः, མིག་རྗེད་) refers to the legend of Indra and Ahalyā, wife of the sage Gautama. Enamored with Ahalyā’s beauty, Indra lures Gautama away from his home and, assuming his form, seduces his unsuspecting wife. Gautama grows suspicious, returns, and catches them in the act. The sage curses Indra. As with most Hindu myths, there are several versions. One later version of the curse is for Indra to grow 1,000 vulva all over his body to shame him for his lust. Despite her innocence, Ahalyā is also cursed to become part of the Gautami, or Godavari, River. When Indra bathes in this river, the 1,000 vaginas turn into eyes. See Renate Söhnen-Thieme, “The Ahalyā Story Through the Ages” in *Myth and Mythmaking: Continuous Evolution in Indian Tradition*, ed. by Julia Leslie (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press, 1996), 39-62. As Śachī is the goddess of jealousy whose father was an asura (demigod), one cannot help but wonder if the author of this text is purposefully alluding to Indra’s less than god-like attributes.

146 Version A has “whose splendor is great” (महाद्युतिः). Tibetan agrees with version B (the reading above): བདེ་སོགས་བདག་ལོ་དེ། (LH 989.4, NT 968.3-968.4). The Tibetan translation for the name of Indra’s wife, Śachī, is བདེ་སོགས་མ་, though it is unclear how the Tibetan is derived from the Sanskrit.

147 The text says, “having made the *prāñjali*” (प्राञ्जलिभूत्वा/प्राञ्जलिं कृत्वा, ཐལ་མོ་སྤྲུང་ནས་, AMV 27). The *prāñjali* is a gesture of cupping the hands together and offering them to the person as a sign of respect.

148 Version A and Tibetan have “Guide of the world” (लोकनायक, འཇིག་རྟེན་མགོན།) instead of “Conqueror” (AMV 27 n. 4).

149 The Sanskrit word for both “do homage” and “bow to” is *namaste*, नमस्ते (AMV 27). However, the Tibetan translates the two uses as རྗེད་ལ་འདུད། and རྗེད་ལ་བྱུག་འཚེས་.

150 भगवन् (AMV 27), བཅོམ་པ་ལྷན་འདས། (LH 989.5, NT 968.4).

thousands of gods from the pure abodes,<sup>151</sup> and he will enter [those realms].<sup>152</sup> (94)

“Moreover, [accompanied] by [his] assembly of brāhmaṇas Brahmā will, with clear speech,<sup>153</sup> relate the true doctrine, speaking with his Brahma-voice. (95)

“The whole earth will be filled with Foe-Destroyers whose defilements<sup>154</sup> will have been destroyed; faults, thrown away; and bonds of existence, cast off. (96) [28] [LH 990]

“Thrilled, the gods, people, gandharvas, yakṣas, and rākṣasas will perform pūja<sup>155</sup> for the teacher and so will the Nāgas who have great magical powers. (97)

“Those [beings] will assuredly be faultless and without doubt. They will have eliminated obstacles. Being intelligent, without grasping, and desireless, they will practice the way of a priest<sup>156</sup> under Maitreya’s instruction.<sup>157</sup> (98) [NT 969]

“Being absolutely devoid of egotism, without possessions,<sup>158</sup> without gold and silver,<sup>159</sup> without a home, and without attachments,<sup>160</sup> they will practice the way of Brahman under Maitreya’s instruction. (99)

“They indeed will go to the far shore, having thus severed the hold on

151 शुद्धावास (AMV 29). Tib. གནས་གཙོང་མ་ (not found in the Tibetan). These are the Buddhist Pure Lands that the highest realm of cyclic existence. Only Buddhist practitioners who are “Non-returners” (अनागामिन्, ལྷོ་མི་ལོང་པ་) are “born” there. The highest of these realms is the oft-mentioned Akaniṣṭha Heaven.

152 This verse is only in edition B (AMV 27, n. 6).

153 गिरास्फुटम् (AMV 27) This follows edition B. Edition A has पुरस्कृत (“accompanied by”) which the Tibetan translates as ཡོངས་བསྐྱོར་ཅིང་ and མདུན་བདར་ཏེ (AMV 27 n. 8, Lévi 389, LH 989.6, NT 968.5).

154 क्षीणाश्रव, ཟག་ཟད་ (AMV 27, LH 989.7, NT 968.6).

155 Pūja is the Indian ritual of honoring and worshipping a deity or a human seen as a deity.

156 The “way of a priest” (brahmacarya, ब्रह्मचर्य, ཚོངས་པར་སྦྱོང་པ་) refers to religious practitioners in India who have renounced the world, practicing chastity, continence, and study the scriptures.

157 The Sanskrit verse of edition B is problematic:

ते वै नूनं भविष्यन्ति च्यानघाशिच्छन्नसंशयाः।

उत्क्षिप्तपरिखाः धीरा अनादाना निरुत्सकाः।

ब्रह्मचर्यञ्चरिष्यन्ति मैत्रे यस्यानुशासने ॥

The च्यानघाः is uncertain. I am interpreting it as च्य (=च) plus अनघ (faultless). Edition A has अखिला (Lévi 389, v. 94). Lévi apparently translates this as “plus de péchés” (“without sins”) (Lévi 396). The middle line of the Sanskrit verse, उत्क्षिप्तपरिखाः धीरा अनादाना निरुत्सकाः, is only found in edition B. The last word निरुत्सकाः is also uncertain. I am reading उत्सव which can mean “joy, wish.” Edition A has rather different reading for the last half of this verse: “they will be those whose stream [of existence] has been severed, without grasping, and who have left the ocean of existence” (छिन्नस्रोता अनादीना (sic.) उत्तीर्णभ्रवसागराः, AMV 28 n. 1), while the Tibetan for the whole verse reads: “Those who practiced the way of a priest in the teaching of Maitreya [will be] without negativity, without afflictive emotions, and without doubt” (གཤམ་དག་གུམ་མ་པའི་བསྐྱེད་པ་ལ། ཚོངས་པར་སྦྱོང་པ་སྦྱོང་གུར་པ། །དེ་དག་གཤོར་མི་བར་ནི། །ཉིན་མོངས་མེད་ཅིང་གེ་ཚོམ་མེད། LH 990.1-990.2, NT 968.7-969.1).

158 अपरिग्रहाः (AMV 28), ཡོངས་འཛོལ་ (LH 990.3, NT 969.1).

159 अजातरूपरजताः (AMV 28), གསེར་དང་དུལ་འཛོལ་མེད་ (LH 990.3, NT 969.1).

160 असंस्तवाः (AMV 28), ཚགས་པའང་ཡོད་པ་མིན་ (LH 990.3, NT 969.1).

[attachment’s] net,<sup>161</sup> and having obtained the meditative states, they will be in complete possession of joy and happiness and will practice the way of a priest under Maitreya’s instruction. (100) [29]

“Having compassion on the world,<sup>162</sup> the teacher Maitreya, best of bipeds, will teach the good doctrine for 60,000 years. (101)

“After having led hundreds of thousands of living creatures with the body of his doctrine,<sup>163</sup> that guide will then enter nirvāṇa. (102)

“And after the intelligent Maitreya, the best of bipeds, has passed [into final nirvāṇa],<sup>164</sup> the true doctrine will remain on earth for 10,000 years.”<sup>165</sup> (103)

Thus, when one calms their thoughts [by placing them] on<sup>166</sup> the conqueror, the sage of the Śākya, then you will see<sup>167</sup> the thoroughly enlightened Maitreya, the best of bipeds. (104) [30]

So, [when] one places their thoughts on the Doctrine, the Buddha, [LH 991] and the best of assemblies, the Saṅgha, they will become very powerful.<sup>168</sup> [105]

Through propitiating<sup>169</sup> such a one like the compassionate Maitreya, best of bipeds,

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- 161 छित्वा जालमेव भुजात् (AMV 28). This is found only in B. The translation is somewhat free, the literal translation being “having thus cut the net [of attachment] from [their] hand.” Edition A reads: “those who have the power to rend the net” (छिन्नजालविशक्तिकाः), and the Tibetan has “those who have torn the net of attachment” (མྱེད་པོ་འི་དྲ་བ་གཅད་པ་, LH 990.4, NT 969.2). Lévi (397) appears to follow the Tibetan, “they will have torn the net of desires” (*ils auront déchiré le filet des désirs*).
- 162 लोकानुकम्पया according to Edition B (AMV 29). Tibetan and Edition A have “Having compassion for all beings...” (सर्वभूतानुकम्पकं, འཇུག་པོ་ཀུན་ལ་བྱུགས་ཅེས་, AMV 29 n.1, LH 990.4, NT 969.2).
- 163 धर्मकायेन (AMV 29), literally “with [his] Truth Body”. The truth body is one of the three bodies (त्रिकाय) of the Buddha, along with the enjoyment body (संभोगकाय) and the emanation body (निर्माणकाय). However, here the term is used ambiguously and does not necessarily refer to that doctrine of the three bodies, which was fully developed by the Yogācārins in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. In this context it could simply mean, “with the body of the [true] doctrine/religion.” This is the way it is used in the Pāli canon (*Aggañña Sutta*, DN 409 n. 822). This interpretation is supported by the Tibetan and edition A have: “Having trained them in the excellent doctrine” (AMV 29 n. 3, LH 990.4-990.5, NT 969.3).
- 164 निर्वृते (AMV 29), ཡོངས་སུ་སྐྱུང་འདས་ནས་ཀྱང་ (LH 990.6, NT 969.4).
- 165 Edition A has: “Then, the true doctrine of this truly great sage who has gone beyond will remain for 10,000 years” (परिनिर्वृतस्य ... तस्यैव ... महामुनेः दशवर्षसहस्राणि सद्धर्मं स्थास्यते तदा, AMV 29 n. 5) The Tibetan has: “Even though he will have entered nirvāṇa, the excellent doctrine spoken by the great sage will then remain for 10,000 years” (ཐུབ་པ་ཚེན་པོས་གསུངས་པ་དེ། ཡོངས་སུ་སྐྱུང་འདས་ནས་ཀྱང་། དེ་ཚེ་དེ་ཡི་དམ་ཚེས་ནི། ལོ་ཁྲི་དགུ་གནས་པར་འགྱུར། LH 990.6-990.7, NT 969.4). There is no clear indication of the end of the Buddha’s speech.
- 166 प्रसादयति चित्तानि तस्मात् (AMV 29). Tibetan has “when one thoroughly believes in...” (... ལ་སེམས་ནི་རབ་དུ་དད་པར་གྱིས་, LH 990.7, NT 969.4).
- 167 ततो द्रक्ष्यथ (Lévi 389). AMV (29) has ततोदृश्यथ. The “you” here is plural or honorific. The Tibetan has མཐོང་བར་འགྱུར་ (LH 990.7, NT 969.5). The first half of the sentence uses the third person singular, प्रसादयति.
- 168 महर्द्धिकम् (AMV 30). Tibetan has “you will achieve great things” (དོན་ཚེན་རབ་དུ་འགྲུབ་བར་འགྱུར་, LH 991.1, NT 969.5). The form of the verb in this verse is third person singular.
- 169 आराधयित्वा (AMV 30, missing in edition A/Lévi). Tibetan has “when you please” (མཉེས་པར་བྱེས་ནས་, LH 991.2, NT 969.6),

in time you will proceed to nirvāṇa.<sup>170</sup> [106]

Having heard this extraordinary [tale] and having seen such abundant good fortune,<sup>171</sup> what wise person would not have faith,<sup>172</sup> since even those in dark rebirths do so? [107]

Therefore, those who, here and now, are desirous of emancipation<sup>173</sup> and long for magnanimity<sup>174</sup> should remember the teachings of the Buddha and make the good doctrine their teacher. [108]

Thus ends *The Prophecy of Maitreya*.<sup>175</sup>

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though Jim Valby has “honor” as a definition of མཉམས་པ་

(see [http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal\\_definitions/public\\_term/58502](http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal_definitions/public_term/58502) accessed Nov. 4, 2018).

170 Verses 105 and 106 are not found in edition A.

171 विभव (*AMV* 30), འཕྲིན་པ་ (LH 991.2, NT 969.6).

172 प्रसीदेत् optative, middle, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular of प्रसद् - to settle down, become clear. The Tibetan consistently translates this as རྣོ་ which generally means “faith” but has a secondary meaning of “serenity, confidence”.

173 आत्मकामेन (*AMV* 30), བདག་ལ་མེགས་འདོད་པས་ (LH 991.3).

174 माहात्म्यमभिकांक्षता: (*AMV* 30) or माहात्म्यमभिकांक्षिना: (*AMV* 30 n. 4) The Tibetan is: བདག་ཉིད་ཆེ་འདོད་ (LH 991.3).

175 The Tibetan adds: “Translated by the Indian Scholar Jinamitra and the [Tibetan] translator-monk (ལོ་རྒྱུ་བ་བརྗེ་) Peltsek Rakṣhita.” (LH 991.4-991.5, NT 969.7). NT adds: མཁྲུ་ལོ།, “May it be auspicious!”

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## Abbreviations

- AMV — *Ārya Maitreya-Vyākaranam, The Prophecy of the Superior Maitreya*, ed. by Prabhas Chandra Majumder
- BHS — “Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit” as a language form.
- BHSD — Franklin Edgerton’s *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*.
- CD — (Sarat) Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*.
- MW — Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit Dictionary*
- NT — Narthang edition of the Tibetan text of the *Prophecy of the Superior Maitreya*.