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Translating Biographical & Historical Materials
with Kurtis Schaeffer, Amelia Hall, Dan Martin

Kurtis Schaeffer
(University of Virginia)


Kurtis Schaeffer’s Presentation
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Accounts of the lives of the Shakyamuni Buddha, the Arhats, Dam-chos-pad-dkar,
Bstan-'dzin-don-grub, and Chos-rgyal Shes-rab-dbang-phyug

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1. Mtshungs med chos kyi rgyal po rje btsun dam chos pad dkar gyi rnam par thar pa thugs rje chen po'i dri bsung.
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   Author: Bstan-'dzin-chos-rgyal, 10th Rje Mkhan-po of Bhutan, 1700-1767. Written in 1729 at Spungs-thang (Punakha).
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3. Bcom Idan 'das rgyal ba shakya thub pa'i rnam par thar pa bskal bzang sgron ma stong gi mdzes rgyan.
   Author: Bstan-'dzin-chos-rgyal, 10th Rje Mkhan-po of Bhutan, 1700-1767.
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4. 'Phags pa'i gnas bgtan chen po bcu drug gi rnam par thar pa rdzogs Idan sbyin pa'i rnga dbyangs.
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5. Chos rgyal chen po shes rab dbang phyug gi dge ba'i cho ga rab tu gsal ba'i gtam mu tig dö shal.
   Author: Yon-tan-mtha'-yas, 13th Rje Mkhan-po of Bhutan, 1724-1783.
   (In praise of the pious deeds of Chos-rgyal Shes-rab-dbang-phyug, 14th Sde-srid of Bhutan, 1698-1765 (regn. 1744-1765))
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བོད་སྐྱེལ་ལྷ་ནོརེག་སེམས་དཔོན་པོ་བཅས་པ་རྣམས་བཟང་ནམས་ཤིག་སོགས་བསྡུས་སུ་འབོར་བཀའ་བན་པའི་བོད་བོད་ཤིག་སོགས་ལས་ཀྱིས་བསྟན་ལོག་བྱེད་ཀྱང་།
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ལེགས་པའི་གསར་གསུམ་པར་སྟེ། རྒྱུ་རྒྱ་དིང་སྟེ།
CHAPTER ONE

HEAVEN

ERAS OF THE UNIVERSE

There are Eras of Light.

There are Eras of Darkness.

In Eras of Light a Buddha appears.

In Eras of Darkness no Buddha appears.

In an Era of Light, the Era of Good, one thousand or one thousand and five Buddhas appear. After this there are sixty Eras of Darkness. After this comes the Era of Light called the Great Reknown, during which ten thousand Buddhas appear. After ten thousand Great Eras of Darkness pass, the Era of Light called the Starlike Era comes, during which eighty thousand Buddhas appear. After this come three hundred Eras of Darkness, and after this comes the Era of Light known as the Array of Good Qualities, during which eighty-four thousand Buddhas appear. This is all taught in the Scripture of the Era of Good.

The appearance of the Buddha in this world is extremely rare. So at this very moment you must make an effort to learn. Contemplate. Meditate.
Butön’s History of Buddhism
in India and Its Spread to Tibet

A Treasury of Priceless Scripture

Translated by Lisa Stein & Ngawang Zangpo
IV. The Historical Background of the Teachings

This section has two parts: (1) a general history of Buddhism in this world [and its development in India], and (2) the specific history of Buddhism in Tibet.

1. The Appearance of Buddhism in This World and Its Development in India

When a bodhisattva perfects the accumulations of merit and wisdom or of aspirations and purifies the buddha realms, and when disciples' roots of virtue ripen, a buddha appears and teaches the sacred doctrine. This section has three parts: (1) aeons in which buddhas appear, in general, (2) buddhas' appearance during this specific Fortunate Aeon, and (3) Buddha Shakyamuni's specific appearance in our world-system, Endurance.

A. Aeons in Which Buddhas Appear

In general, among two types of aeons, of light and of darkness, buddhas appear during aeons of illumination, whereas no buddhas appear during dark aeons. *The Fortunate Aeon Discourse* teaches that in [our current] aeon of light, **called** Fortunate, 1,000 or 1,005 buddhas will appear, followed by sixty great aeons of darkness. The ensuing aeon of light, **called Famous**, will see the appearance of ten thousand buddhas. Eighty thousand dark aeons will then pass before the next aeon of light, Starlike, at which time eighty thousand buddhas will appear. This will be succeeded by three hundred dark aeons, and those aeons by the aeon of light **called** Array of Positive Qualities, during which eighty-four thousand buddhas will appear.
History of Buddhism
(Chos-hbyung)
by
Bu-ston

I. Part
The Jewelry of Scripture
Translated from Tibetan by
Dr. E. Obermiller

Heidelberg 1931
In Kommission bei O. Harrassowitz, Leipzig
Nor accumulated the factors (for attaining salvation), —
has written down.
May he (nevertheless) by (the force of) previous virtues,
After his death, which will soon take place,
Partake of Maitreya's religious feast in the regions of Tuṣita.
Finished the investigation of the methods of study and teach-
ing, the first chapter of the History of Buddhism, entitled "The
Jewellery of Scripture".

Book II. (Part IV). [39 a. 2.]
The History of Buddhism.

The main subject of this fourth subdivision will be the history
of Buddhism, — (a description of): —
IV A. The way, in which the Doctrine took its origin in this world
in general, and —
IV B. How it appeared in the country of Tibet — particularly.

IV A. The Rise of Buddhism and its Development in
India.

When the Bodhisattva brings to accomplishment the accumu-
lation of merit, or, otherwise, when the sphere of his activity (as a
Buddha\(^{77b}\)) has become completely pure, and when the roots of
virtue in the converts have attained maturity, then the Buddha
appears (in his chosen world) and expounds his Doctrine.
(There are many Buddhas, that have already appeared during
the different aeons, and many that are still to come, so we have
to distinguish): —

a) The aeons, in which the Buddhas appear — in general,
b) The rise of Buddhas during the Fortunate Aeon\(^{77b}\),
c) The appearance of the Highest of Sages (the Buddha
Čākyamuni) in this world of suffering,\(^{77a}\) — the most
particular (subject of our narrative).

The different Aæons.

IV Aa. The different aeons are to be divided into the bright and
the dark ones. The former are those, that are marked by
the appearance of Buddhas, and the latter, those, during which
no Buddhas arise. In the bright aeon, which is called the Fortunate (that, in which we live), the (number of) Buddhas (that have already come and are still to appear), is 1000 or 1005.\(^{777}\) (The Fortunate Aeon) is to be followed by 60 great dark aeons. Then there will come a great bright aeon, named Mahāyāṇa\(^{778}\) and during it 10,000 Buddhas (will arise). Thereafter 10,000 dark aeons will pass away, and will be succeeded by the bright aeon, call the Starlike, with 80,000 Buddhas. 300 dark aeons will then follow, and, after they have passed away, the bright age named Guṇavyūha\(^{779}\) will come, during which 84,000 Buddhas are to appear. So says the Bhadrakalpika-sūtra.\(^{780}\)

The rise of Buddhas during the Fortunate Aeon.

IV A b. (Here we meet with) two (versions): —

a₁) The rise of 1005 Buddhas according to the Karuṇā-puṇḍarīka\(^{781}\) [39 b], and

b₂) That of 1000 Buddhas according to the Tathāgata-acintya-guhyā-nirdeśa.\(^{782}\)

The version of the Karuṇāpuṇḍarīka.

IV Abₐ. In olden times, when the great aeon named Dhāraṇa\(^{783}\) was lasting in this world, there lived a king, whose name was Araṇemi,\(^{784}\) — a universal sovereign,\(^{785}\) ruling over all the four continents. (This king) had a thousand sons, Animiṣa\(^{786}\) and the rest, and was the Lord Paramount of 84,000 tributary sovereigns. His chief household priest\(^{787}\) was the Brāhmaṇa Samudrareṇu,\(^{788}\) who had 80 sons and 1000 young Brāhmaṇas for his pupils. One of (the eighty) sons, the Brāhmaṇa Samudragarbha,\(^{789}\) attained Supreme Enlightenment (and became) a Buddha, known by the name of Ratnagarbha.\(^{780}\) The great sovereign Araṇemi worshipped (this Buddha) uninterruptedly for three months and so did each of his 1000 sons, 250 years and 3 months having passed away in this manner.

Then (the Buddha's) father, the Brāhmaṇa Samudrareṇu worshipped him for seven years, and after having heard the Doctrine from him, he had a dream.\(^{791}\) He saw, that the king Araṇemi was eating (the flesh of) many living beings and was (finally) himself devoured by wild beasts, tigers etc.\(^{792}\) He saw likewise some (of the king's) ministers who, mounted on chariots, were intending to travel by a wrong way.\(^{793}\) Having le-
The Treasury of Knowledge
JAMGÖN KONGTRUL
BUDDHISM’S JOURNEY TO TIBET

Translated and introduced by Ngawang Zangpo
KALU RINPOCHÉ TRANSLATION GROUP
Distinguishing Our Teacher from Buddhas in General [I]

Among infinite numbers of victors, guides of this world,
In the midst of this Fortunate Age’s thousand buddhas,
One was praised as like a white lotus: the incomparable King
of the Shakyas.

As long as the element of space exists, the realms of sentient beings to
be guided to enlightenment will continue endlessly. During that time,
enlightened beings’ compassion, aspirations, and activity will be inex-
haustible. Therefore, in the ten directions’ measureless world-systems,
those celebrated with the titles of “victor,” “leader who guides the way,” and
“supreme human being,” such as Transcendent Buddha Moon of Human-
ity and Transcendent Buddha Jewel Heart, have appeared in the past in
inexpressible numbers. At present, incalculable buddhas live and impart
the teachings, such as Buddha Unshakable in the world-system Truly
Joyous, Buddha Infinite Light in the world-system Blissful, and Buddha
Splendid Excellence in the world-system Lotus Splendor. In the future,
indeterminable numbers of inconceivable guides, lions of humanity, will
appear in succession, such as wondrous Transcendent Buddha All-Seeing
Lord in the world-system called Perfect Collection Without Particles.

Ages during which buddhas appear are called ages of illumination.
Ages when none appear are called dark ages. Dark ages are very numer-
ous; ages of illumination are rare. After this present Fortunate Age has
passed, sixty-five great ages of darkness will elapse until an illuminated
age called Great Fame, during which ten thousand buddhas will appear.
Eighty thousand dark ages will ensue, after which eighty thousand bud-
dhas will appear during an illuminated age called Star-like. Then, after
three hundred dark ages have elapsed, eighty-four thousand buddhas
will appear in an illuminated age called Array of Qualities. These details
are presented in The Fortunate Age Discourse and serve here to illustrate
this point.

Some believe that among the infinite [buddhas] mentioned within the
scriptures of the Buddha’s word, an undetermined number of so-called
buddhas of the interval will appear during our specific Fortunate Age,
which was heralded by the [gods’] sight of one thousand lotuses. Never-
MIND TRAINING

The Great Collection

Translated by Thupten Jinpa
PART ONE

[293] To the conquerors and their spiritual children,
I respectfully pay homage through all three doors;
I shall present here briefly the four preliminaries,
Which are the bases of the path of Mahayana mind training.

The presentation of the four preliminary practices, which constitute the basis of Mahayana mind training, has four parts.

A. Reflection on the difficulty of obtaining a human existence of leisure and opportunity

First, reflection on the difficulty of obtaining a human existence of leisure and opportunity is as follows: In order to become liberated from the ocean of cyclic existence and attain the state of omniscience, you need to engage in its cause, which is the perfect Dharma practice that unites method and wisdom, and to engage in such Dharma practice it is necessary to possess as its support the perfect human existence of leisure and opportunity. Letter to a Student states:

That which illuminates the Sugata’s path and helps you embark on saving beings,
A powerful, courageous spirit found by humans:
Gods, nāgas, or demigods cannot find this path,
Nor can garuḍas, smell-eaters, human-or-what, or belly-crawlers.²²⁰

Therefore, as stated above, we should contemplate by cultivating the thought “It is extremely difficult to obtain this human existence of leisure
4. You possess complete sensory faculties
5. You possess faith in the sacred objects

(1) It is rare for a buddha to appear in the world. Generally speaking, an era during which a buddha appears is called an “era of light,” while an era during which [a buddha] does not appear is called an “era of darkness.” As a thousand buddhas will appear in our present era, it is called a “fortunate era of light.” It is said that after this will come sixty eons of darkness; after that, one light era called the “array of enlightened attributes,” after which will come ten thousand eons of darkness. After that will come one light eon called the “greatly famed one”; after this, three hundred eons of darkness; after which will appear one light era known as the “exemplary starlike eon.” Thus during four eras of light, it is said, will appear 10,360 eras of darkness. Even within an era of light, which has two parts—one part when the life spans of the people are on the rise and the other when they are on the wane—it is said that the buddhas do not appear when the life span is on the rise. The Individual Liberation Sutra states:

The appearance of a buddha in the world is once in a million.

Also the Enlightenment of Vairocana states:

The appearance of an omniscient in the world
Is like the blossoming of an *udumbara* flower.
If at all, it occurs once in a hundred eons,
Never to reappear again.

(2) It is also rare that a buddha has revealed the Dharma. Even following his full awakening, it is stated that the teacher required repeated supplications to turn the wheel of Dharma.

(3) It is rare, too, for his teaching to remain extant. Even this fortunate era contained an extremely long gap when the teaching was not present between the completion of the period of Buddha Krakucchanda’s teaching and the emergence of the teaching of Buddha Kanakamuni. Similarly, in the interval between the cessation of the teaching of an earlier buddha and the emergence of the teaching of a later buddha, almost always the teaching remains absent. So most times go by without the abiding of the teaching.

(4) It is also rare for there to be others who continue to follow the teaching.