



# Studying the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* on Chotrul Düchen

His Holiness the 42<sup>nd</sup> Sakya Trizin, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche



"The Sakya Tradition" Publications



Published by “The Sakya Tradition”

<https://sakyatradition.org>

Email : [info@sakyatradition.org](mailto:info@sakyatradition.org)

Wechat ID : sakyatradition

Weibo : sakyatradition

IG: the\_sakya\_tradition

Facebook: TheSakya

Soundcloud: the-sakya-tradition

<https://www.youtube.com/@TheSakyaTradition>

Twitter: Sakya\_Tradition

Strictly Not for Sale, Free Distribution Only



2026 © All Rights Reserved

This work is provided under the protection of a Creative Commons  
CC—BYNC—ND (Attribution—Non—commercial—No—derivatives)

4.0 copyright. It may be copied or printed for fair  
use, but only with full attributions, and not for commercial  
advantage or personal compensation.

For full details, see the Creative Commons license.

# Acknowledgement

His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, delivered this teaching online on February 24, 2024, in commemoration of Chotrul Düchen, as part of the *Teachings on Sutra* series requested by 84000, a nonprofit organization dedicated to translating the complete collections of the Buddha's words into modern languages. In 2026, the English text of this teaching was prepared, edited, and published by The Sakya Tradition, Inc., a nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and making widely available the precious Dharma teachings of the glorious Sakya lineage. The Sakya Tradition team also translated the text into Chinese.

This publication was made possible by the generous donations of Katherin Gaston, Manuela Lutz, and Maria Julia Silva. We also want to thank all volunteers for their dedication and effort in putting this teaching together.

By the merit of this work, may Their Holiness the Sakya Trichen and Sakya Trizin enjoy perfect health and very long lives, and continue to turn the wheel of Dharma.



## EDITORIAL PREFACE

The *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* touches the mind quietly, yet its presence lingers. What begins as a simple encounter can, over time, take root more deeply. Its benefits do not arise from hurried or careless reading, but from sincere study, right intention, and steady, mindful engagement.

Returned to again and again, this sūtra allows understanding to deepen and the mind to grow closer to the path the Buddha revealed. Its guidance is gentle yet enduring—like a river shaping stone, slowly uncovering what lies beneath the surface.

# Studying the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* on Chotrul Düchen

*The English translation of the Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra quoted by His Holiness is available in the 84000 collection at <https://84000.co/translation/toh674#UT22084-091-072-translation>.*

I would like to wish everyone a very happy lunar new year. Today I am here in Bodhgaya where Prince Siddhartha attained buddhahood under the bodhi tree for the eyes of common people. This is the fifteenth day of the first lunar month, called the miraculous month. Today is a very special day called Chotrul Düchen. It's almost like Vesak; it's one of the most holy days of the Buddhist calendar.

The Buddha spent most of his time after gaining enlightenment in Śrāvastī where he did summer retreats. There, he performed many miracles from the first day up to the fifteenth of the first lunar month. Therefore, this month is called the miraculous month, or in Tibetan Bumjur Dawa. For example, on the first

day he planted a toothpick and from it grew a large tree and with many branches and a fine fragrance able to make people happy. On the second day, he manifested two precious jewel mountains. On the mountains, crops and grasses grew for the enjoyment of humans and animals. On the second and the third days, he manifested a lake with a multi-colored lotus, very brightly colored and with a beautiful fragrance. On each of the following days, he performed different miracles. On the fifteenth day, he manifests many containers filled with delicious foods. When he placed the palm of his hand on the ground, or beat the ground with his hand, he liberated many beings from the hell realms.

On such auspicious holy days as this, whatever actions we do will be multiplied many times—hundreds of thousands of times. For example, if we study the sūtras, the merit of this action will be multiplied. There is a big difference between studying sūtras on an ordinary day and on a holy day, and this is why today we are going to study the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra*. In order to have great merit and make this activity meaningful, however, it is important that we have the right intention or the right motivation. Without that, then our study is no different from a worldly activity. If we want our activities to be purposeful and powerful, if we want to make this a dynamic activity, then we

need the right intention or motivation. To generate the right motivation for studying this sūtra, we should think that we are not studying just for mundane results. We are not studying only to gain results in this life, or for a higher rebirth in the next life. These things are samsaric results. The great Lord Buddha has given enormous amount of teachings in order to suit the different mentalities. The purpose of all these teachings, these precious and profound teachings, is not for the sake of samsaric results. The Buddha never gave a single word of teaching for our samsaric results; all these teachings are meant to lead sentient beings from suffering and dissatisfaction to temporary and ultimate happiness, which means to attain liberation and enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings without any discrimination or exception.

Our motivation is the key to whether or not we can accumulate great merit by studying this sūtra. It doesn't only depend on our physical and verbal actions in studying, but on our motivation. With the right motivation, it will have a profound impact on our minds and will become the cause of gaining liberation and enlightenment. We must study this sūtra, and any Dharma teachings, with the same purpose with which the buddhas gave the teachings. This is how we can become true followers of the Buddha. If our purpose in learning the Dharma is only for

this life, or only to gain worldly results, then it goes against the Buddha's purpose in giving the teachings, which is to liberate us from saṃsāra and place us in the state of liberation and enlightenment.

Samsara and beyond saṃsāra are opposites, just like the outside of a house and the inside. If a person is inside the house, the person cannot at the same time be outside the house. Similarly, the Buddha's intention in giving teachings is to liberate us from saṃsāra. If our intention is to stay in saṃsāra, then these two purposes are opposite to each other. If our purpose is the opposite of the Buddha's purpose in giving teachings, then it is not possible to truly follow the Buddha or receive the blessings of the Buddha's teachings. This is why having the right purpose is very important.

To gain liberation from the whole of saṃsāra doesn't mean physical liberation. It doesn't mean that our bodies should go beyond saṃsāra. It means that our minds need to go beyond the obscuration of the mental afflictions. For example, when Lord Buddha was alive, he was in saṃsāra—his body was in Bodhgaya, Varanasi, Rajgir, etc. But this doesn't mean that he was in saṃsāra. His body may have been in saṃsāra, but he had already attained the enlightened state. Liberation and

enlightenment are mental results that should be attained by all followers of the Buddha. We should gain liberation from saṃsāra, or liberation from the obscuration of mental afflictions. Then, when we eventually gain liberation from the obscuration of knowledge, that is when we achieve real buddhahood. We ourselves can become complete and perfect buddhas, or fully enlightened beings. But to do this, we need total renunciation, infinite loving-kindness, infinite compassion, and bodhicitta. With these things in mind, we should engage in Dharmic activities such as what we are doing today, which is studying the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra*.

The sūtra begins with paying homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas; the actual sūtra follows the homage. The Buddha gave this sūtra when he was in Śrāvastī accompanied by hundreds of fully ordained monks and many great bodhisattvas.

At that time, he said to Mañjuśrī that there is a universe above named Aparimitāyurjñāna, and the Buddha Amitāyus dwells there. Buddha Amitāyus is a long-life deity, and he resides and remains there, according to the text, “sustaining and extending life to its very limit, teaching the Dharma to beings.” He possesses the perfection of life, which means that he has attained immortal life. Furthermore, he gives the sacred and secret teachings to fortunate disciples.

Then the Buddha said, “Listen, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta, the lives of humans in this Jambudvīpa are short.” It is said in the teachings—for example, in the *Abhidharmakośa*: “From ten years to an infinite lifespan, beings in Jambudvīpa do not have a fixed lifespan.” Sometimes their lifespans are only ten years; sometimes they are infinite. Most of the time, it's somewhere in between. Generally speaking, for human beings, we say that their lifespan is no more than one hundred years.

This human life is very precious because it gives the opportunity to practice the holy Dharma. Such a precious human birth is very rare to obtain from four points of view: the cause point of view, the example point of view, the number point of view, and the nature point of view. A precious human life is very beneficial if we use it in a meaningful way by practicing the holy Dharma. We can gain liberation and enlightenment for all sentient beings by using this precious human life. Thus, it is very beneficial—more beneficial than a wish-fulfilling jewel. If you find a wish-fulfilling jewel, it can give you all good facilities of this life, but it cannot give ultimate happiness or anything that is beyond this life.

Through the proper practice of Dharma, however, we can gain happiness that is not only for this life or the next life. We can

gain the ultimate happiness of buddhahood. Such ultimate happiness will last forever. It will never decay. This is why we say that this precious human life is very beneficial and meritorious, if we use it in the right way.

At the same time, this life is impermanent. It will not remain forever. Those who are born are certain to die. Once we are born, we do not have the power to remain forever in this life. Furthermore, our lives are fragile. It's very easy to lose one's life through many external and internal factors.

From the time we are born, we grow nearer and nearer to death with each passing year, month, week, and day. Because there is no fixed lifespan, it is uncertain when we will die. As we know, some die when they are still in the mother's womb. Others die right after birth. People die at all different ages, and it is not certain that we will live until we become old.

There are many factors that can affect one's lifespan, and there are very few favorable conditions that can help us to live for a longer period of time. In this world, there are very few who live beyond one hundred years of age; most human beings will die before they reach one hundred years. As the sūtra says, "their lifespan is no more than a hundred years, and most of them are seen to have premature deaths."

Next, the Buddha said, “Mañjuśrī, those beings who will write out or cause to be written out this Dharma discourse called ‘Uttering the Praise of the Qualities of the Tathāgata Aparimitāyus,’ and even those who hear or recite its title only, up to those who write a copy, keep it at home, and offer flowers, perfume, incense, and garlands to it, will, when their lifespan is ending, still be able to live to a hundred years.”

In other words, just by writing this sūtra, or asking others to write it, or even by merely hearing the name of this sūtra or reading it, or keeping the text in the house and making many offerings to it, one can live up to one hundred years. There is a great benefit; it can really prolong our lives.

But, if we wish to receive this benefit, we must have the right motivation, as I said in the beginning. If we have a worldly intention when we recite or write the sūtra, or ask others to write it, or hear the name of it, etc., then we won't be able to receive this benefit. This isn't because the sūtra doesn't have benefit, but because we don't have the right motivation to receive the blessing.

To do any Dharma activity, we need to have the right motivation. If we think, “I want to live long so that I can enjoy life, do more

business, and other worldly activities,” then reading or writing this sūtra won’t bring the benefit of a long life, because the intention is not right.

Some might think, “I want to live long so that I can defeat my enemies,” or things like that. In this case, the intention is impure and polluted by negative thoughts. In Dharma practice, there is no room for anger or any of the other mental afflictions. There is no way for us to practice Dharma based on negative thoughts. Dharma practice is based on non-violence and total renunciation. In particular, Mahāyāna practice is based on infinite loving-kindness, compassion, and bodhicitta. With these things in mind, we should practice Dharma. We should write and read, or hear the name of the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* with such thoughts. If we do this with the right intention, then it will be possible to live up to one hundred years.

Next, the Buddha said, “Mañjuśrī, the lifespan of beings who hear the one hundred and eight names of the tathāgata *Aparimitāyurjñānasuviniścitatejorāja* will be lengthened. Those beings whose lifespan is coming to an end, who keep those names, will also have their lifespan lengthened.” If beings whose life is going to be exhausted hear the one hundred and eight names, it can lengthen or prolong their lives.

Normally, we say that there are three exhaustions: the exhaustion of life itself, the exhaustion of merit, and the exhaustion of karma. If one of these is exhausted, then there are methods to divert death. So, if life itself is exhausted, then you can read the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra*, or you can practice the long life deities such as Amitābha. This can revive your life so that you can live longer. If your karma is exhausted, then you can do many good actions to prolong your life. And if your merit is exhausted, then you can accumulate more merit. You can do this also by practicing long life deities and reciting sūtras, like this one. You can do life releases, give food and drink to those who are suffering from hunger and thirst, etc.

These actions can revive the exhaustions so that we can prolong life. Here in this sūtra, it says in particular that when our life is about to be exhausted, we can recite or hear the one hundred and eight names. This will prolong and increase life.

Next it says, “Therefore, Mañjuśrī, the noble sons or noble daughters who wish to have long lives, and who hear, write, or cause to be written the one hundred and eight names of the tathāgata Aparimitāyus, will obtain these qualities and benefits.” The one hundred and eight names refers to the long dhāraṇī given in the sūtra.

Next, the sūtra says, “Mañjuśrī, those who write or cause to be written these one hundred and eight names of the tathāgata, who make a text of them, keep it at home, and recite it, when their lifespan is coming to an end they will still be able to live to a hundred years. When they pass away from this world, they will be reborn in the buddha realm of the tathāgata Aparimitāyus named Aparimitaḡaṇasaṃcaya.”

I won't go through all the text word by word. Generally speaking, life is very important because it gives the opportunity for spiritual practice, or to practice the Dharma. A precious human life is rare, very beneficial and meritorious to obtain. So when we have this life, we should use it for a meaningful purpose.

If we use our lives just to live and nothing more than that, then it is pity. We are wasting this great opportunity to practice Dharma. We are wasting our precious human lives which are rare to obtain from many points of view, as I said before: from the cause, nature, time, and example points of view. Therefore, it is very important to use this life in a meaningful way.

Even animals do actions merely to live without any higher purpose. Cows and horses make efforts to live, to have food

and continue living. Like humans, they can also do job for their own living. But we as human beings, with precious human lives, are much smarter than animals. We have the opportunity to practice the Dharma. We can do years and years of study, contemplation, and meditation, which animals cannot do. So if we use this time just for living, there's not much difference between us and animals. It becomes like a sin, something wrong, when we have this precious human life that we should use in a purposeful way.

There are two things. If we have attachment to this life, then it is not right. But at the same time, we must take care of this life and look after it. We should try to lengthen our lives so that we can have more time and opportunity to practice the holy Dharma. Having attachment to this life can spoil our practice; if we put a lot of effort into Dharma practice but we do it based on attachment to this life, then we cannot accumulate merit or progress on the spiritual path. In fact, if we practice Dharma with worldly attachment, we are not really Dharma practitioners at all. As Mañjuśrī clearly said in the first line of the pith instruction called *Parting from the Four Attachments*, which he gave to Sachen Kunga Nyingpo: “If you have attachment to this life, you are not a spiritual person or a dharmic person.”

Therefore, it is very important to let go of clinging or attachment to this life. During the Kadampa time of the great master Dromtönpa, there was a person doing circumambulations. The master Dromtönpa told him to stop doing this and do Dharma practice instead. According to Dromtönpa's advice, he started reading sūtras. Then, Dromtönpa told him to stop doing this, too, and to do Dharma practice. So he stopped reading the sūtras, and he started meditating. Then, Dromtönpa told him "Good, but now you should do Dharma practice." Finally, this person asked him, what is Dharma practice? Dromtönpa said to him, "You must let go of attachment or clinging to this life, then you can practice real Dharma." In short, whatever Dharma practice we are doing is not really Dharma practice if we have attachment to this life. We are only calling it Dharma practice when, in reality, it is not.

As I said, we shouldn't have attachment to this life; yet, at the same time, we need to look after it. We need to use this special human life in a meaningful way. I like to say that we should use this special human life like we use a paper cup. We keep paper cups, and then after using one, we just throw it away without any attachment or clinging. Similarly, when we have this special human life, we should use it in the right way. But, at the end, we need to throw it away. We need to dispose of this life in the end; no one can keep their life forever.

There is not a single person in this world who can keep their life even for centuries, not even a couple of centuries. And we will need to throw it, or discard it, without attachment. Attachment will only make more suffering for us. It causes us to have mental suffering, and it can cause mental suffering for our relatives, family members, and friends. We need to use this life in a meaningful way. Then, at the end, we should just dispose of it without attachment or clinging.

This sūtra was taught by many buddhas. It is a special and very blessed sūtra. Without having any doubt or hesitation, we should recite this with the right motivation. At the time of recitation, we should recite it properly. At the end, we should do the proper dedication.

Even those who don't understand the meaning of the sūtra, or of the one hundred and eight names, or of the dhāraṇī, can also gain benefits from it simply by hearing it. Eventually, it can lead them to attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. In short, we can say that reading this text or sūtra, or writing it, or hearing it, or keeping it in the home, or making great offerings to it—such activities can have many temporary and ultimate benefits.

Through this sūtra, one can gain limitless merit. We cannot fathom the merit that we can earn through this practice. The sūtra itself says that making offerings to it is like making offerings or paying respect or doing prostrations to all the buddhas of the ten directions.

At the sūtra's end, there are auspicious prayers on the six perfections: the perfection of generosity, the perfection of moral conduct, the perfection of patience, the perfection of enthusiasm, the perfection of concentration, and the perfection of transcendental wisdom.

My English is very limited, so please don't accept that whatever words I use are the right translations. Please accept the authentic translations. The words I'm using are my own, but I hope that I can pass on the message that I wish to send to all of you.

I was asked to give the oral transmission of the text, so now I'll read it in Tibetan.

[Oral transmission is given.]

To conclude, on this holy day of Chotrul Düchen, the miracle day of the Buddha, we have studied the *Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra*.

Whatever merit we have gained through this, we dedicate it, along with all our merit, to attaining buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. In particular, we should dedicate all our merit to our root gurus' long lives and good health, and that they will always turn the wheel of Dharma. Thank you.





■ His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, is the eldest son of His Holiness the Sakya Trichen (the 41st Sakya Trizin). Renowned for his erudition and the clarity of his teachings, His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin is regarded as one of the most highly qualified lineage holders in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. He belongs to the noble Khön family, whose successive generations have provided an unbroken lineage of outstanding Buddhist masters.

Since his youth, His Holiness the 42nd Sakya Trizin has received an ocean of sutra and tantra teachings, empowerments, transmissions, and pith instructions from His Holiness the Sakya Trichen, as well as many other learned and accomplished masters. After years of rigorous philosophy studies at Sakya College in India, he was awarded the kachupa degree. And starting from the age of twelve, he has completed numerous meditation retreats, including the Hevajra retreat. With utmost humility, he travels extensively to bestow teachings and empowerments at the request of students across the globe.



**"The Sakya Tradition"—Delivering the  
Precious Sakya Teachings Accurately  
and Entirely in Your Native Languages**

<https://sakyatradition.org>

2026 ©All Rights Reserved