

Sanskrit Lesson  
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AMITABHA SUTRA

मैरुध्वजो नाम तथागतो महामैरुनाम तथागतो  
मैरुप्रभासो नाम तथागतो मञ्जुध्वजो नाम तथागतः

MERUDHVAJO NĀMA TATHĀGATO MAHĀMERUR-NĀMA  
TATHĀGATO MERUPRABHĀSO NĀMA TATHĀGATO  
MAÑJUDHVAJO NĀMA TATHĀGATA...

"...the Thus Come One Sumeru Banner, the  
Thus Come One Great Sumeru, the Thus Come  
One Sumeru Light, the Thus Come One  
Auspicious Banner..."

Shakyamuni Buddha began naming the Buddhas of the Eastern direction in the previous lesson with the Thus Come One named Akṣobhya, Host of that division. Other representative Buddhas are named in this lesson, their names and the Sanskrit for "Thus Come One" both appearing in the nominative case since they are subjects in the sentence. The literal translation of the first Buddha, *merudhvajo nāma tathāgato*, is as "(Su)meru Banner by name Thus Come One." *nāma* is the adverbial accusative of the neuter noun *nāman* "name." The masculine noun *meru* is the name of the mountain commonly called Mount Sumeru, "Wonderfully High Mountain," which forms the center of a world-system. The next Buddha is named *mahā* "Great" *meru* "Sumeru," and the Buddha following is named *meru* "Sumeru" *prabhāsa* "Light" or "Splendor"--which appears with final -o when used in the sentence. It is a masculine noun, but would be masculine anyway as the name of the Buddha. The same is true of *dhvaja* in the final Buddha's name as in the first--and *mañju* means "Auspicious" or "lucky."

—to be continued