

༄༅། །གསེར་གྱི་བྱེ་མ་ལྷ་སྲ།

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**Like Gold Dust**

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*Suvarṇavālukopamā*

འཕགས་པ་གསེར་གྱི་བྱ་མ་ལྷ་བུ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

*'phags pa gser gyi bye ma lta bu zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “Like Gold Dust”

*Āryasuvārṇavālukopamānāmamahāyānasūtra*

· Toh 126 ·

Degé Kangyur vol. 54 (mdo sde, tha), folios 293.a–296.a

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

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co.

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## SUMMARY

s.

s.1 This sūtra presents a short dialogue between Ānanda and the Buddha on the theme of limitlessness. In response to Ānanda's persistent inquiries, the Buddha uses analogies to illustrate both the limitlessness of the miraculous abilities acquired by realized beings, and the limitless multiplicity of the world systems in which bodhisattvas and buddhas are to be found.

s.2 The Buddha then concludes his teaching with a further analogy—referenced in the sūtra's title—to illustrate that although buddhas and bodhisattvas are innumerable, it is nevertheless extremely rare and precious to find a buddha within any given world system, or to find bodhisattvas who engage sincerely in bodhisattva conduct. To encounter such beings, he says, is as rare as finding a single grain of gold dust among all the sands of the ocean, or all the sands of the mighty river Gaṅgā.

ac.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 A draft translation by Khenpo Kalsang Gyaltsen and Chodrungma Kunga Chodron of the Sakya Pandita Translation Team was revised, introduced, and edited by George FitzHerbert and finalized by members of the 84000 editorial team.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. Nathaniel Rich edited the translation and the introduction, and Ven. Konchog Norbu copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

## INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 The short Mahāyāna sūtra known as *Like Gold Dust*<sup>1</sup> presents a dialogue in which Ānanda questions the Buddha on the theme of limitlessness.

i.2 In response to Ānanda's persistent inquiries, the Buddha illustrates, by means of analogy, both the limitlessness of the miraculous abilities acquired by realized beings, and the limitless multiplicity of the world systems in which bodhisattvas and buddhas are found. The analogy he uses to illustrate miraculous abilities is the extraordinary speed with which his disciple Mahāmaudgalyāyana can travel across world systems. As a starting point for trying to imagine such speed, the Buddha offers a vivid description of a fine chariot racing through water so fast that the water does not even touch the rims of its wheels. This, he goes on to explain, is but a vanishingly small fraction of the speed with which Mahāmaudgalyāyana can traverse world systems.<sup>2</sup>

i.3 The analogy is then extended to illustrate the limitless number of worlds in which there are buddhas and bodhisattvas. If one were to travel in each of the ten directions at this lightning speed for seven days and seven nights without stopping, and then enclose the enormous area thus delimited within a fence, and create in it a single gargantuan city, then the number of mustard seeds it would take to completely fill such a city from top to bottom would barely begin to approach the number of world systems in which bodhisattvas are striving at various stages of the journey to awakening.

i.4 The Buddha then concludes his teaching with a further analogy—referenced in the sūtra's title—to illustrate that although buddhas and bodhisattvas are innumerable, it is nevertheless extremely rare and precious to find a buddha within any given world system, or to find a world system in which bodhisattvas engage sincerely in bodhisattva conduct. To encounter such things, he says, is as rare as finding a single grain of gold dust among all the sands of the ocean, or all the sands of the mighty river Gaṅgā.



- i.5 According to its colophon, the Tibetan translation of *Like Gold Dust* was made by the Indian masters Surendrabodhi and Prajñāvarman working with the Tibetan master translator and editor Yeshé Dé, indicating a translation made during the height of the Tibetan imperial patronage of Buddhism in the early ninth century CE. This is corroborated by the text's inclusion in the Denkarma imperial catalog.<sup>3</sup>
- i.6 No extant parallel versions of this text have been identified in either Sanskrit or Chinese. An English translation, together with a brief introduction, is included in Peter Skilling's recent anthology, *Questioning the Buddha: A Selection of Twenty-Five Sutras*.<sup>4</sup>
- i.7 The present translation is based on the Tibetan as found in the Degé Kangyur, with reference to the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace Kangyur version.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra  
Like Gold Dust**

1.

## The Translation

[F.293.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas. [F.293.b]

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in Śrāvastī, in Prince Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park, along with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks and many thousands of bodhisattvas.

1.2 Venerable Ānanda rose from his seat, draped his upper robe over one shoulder, placed his right knee on the ground, and bowing toward the Blessed One with palms pressed together, asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, are thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas limitless? Blessed One, do thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas possess limitless good qualities?"

1.3 The Blessed One replied to Venerable Ānanda, "Ānanda, thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas are limitless. Ānanda, thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas possess limitless good qualities."

1.4 Venerable Ānanda then asked the Blessed One a second time, "Blessed One, are thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas limitless? Blessed One, do thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas possess limitless good qualities?"

1.5 The Blessed One replied to Venerable Ānanda a second, and also a third time, "Yes, Ānanda, [F.294.a] thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas are limitless. Yes, Ānanda, thus-gone, worthy, perfectly complete buddhas possess limitless good qualities.

1.6 "Ānanda, do you wish to hear of the limitlessness of thus-gone ones, to know about the range of thus-gone ones,<sup>5</sup> and to know of the good qualities of thus-gone ones?"

1.7 "Yes, Blessed One, please teach the monks," Venerable Ānanda replied. "Please teach us, Well-Gone One. If the monks hear it from you directly, they will retain it well."

- 1.8 The Blessed One then asked Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, do you know the miraculous powers with which Mahāmaudgalyāyana can travel in the cardinal and intermediate directions?”
- 1.9 Ānanda replied, “Please tell us, Blessed One. With what miraculous powers does Mahāmaudgalyāyana travel in the cardinal and intermediate directions? Well-Gone One, please teach us.”
- 1.10 “Ānanda, I will illustrate it for you by means of an analogy,” said the Blessed One. “Why? Because, Ānanda, learned people reach understanding through analogies. Ānanda, take the analogy of a pool measuring eight thousand leagues. It is so filled with water that a crow can drink from it, it is of equal depth on all sides, and it is covered with lotus leaves. Over this pool someone then rides an iron chariot pulled by fine horses that are stronger than the wind. They race with such power, force, and speed that the wooden rims of the wheels do not even touch the water, nor do the horses’ hooves touch the water, and the lotus leaves are not crushed by the horses’ hooves, not even slightly. [F.294.b] Ānanda, if a poisonous snake were to appear from that pool and coil itself around the chariot eight times before the chariot had left the lake, well, Ānanda, in the time it took to coil itself just once around that chariot, you can give eight kinds of Dharma teaching and make them understood. But in the time it takes you, Ānanda, to utter one word, Mahāmaudgalyāyana can give eight kinds of Dharma teaching and make them understood. However, Ānanda, in the time it takes Mahāmaudgalyāyana to utter one word, the elder Śāradvatīputra can give eight kinds of Dharma teaching and make them understood. Similarly, in the time it takes the elder Śāradvatīputra to utter one word, a pratyekabuddha can give innumerable kinds of Dharma teaching. And in the time it takes a pratyekabuddha to utter one word, a bodhisattva can give unutterably and inconceivably innumerable kinds of Dharma teaching and make them understood.<sup>6</sup> Well, Ānanda, in the time it takes a bodhisattva to utter just one word, the elder Mahāmaudgalyāyana can traverse eighty thousand world systems.
- 1.11 “Ānanda, imagine if one who has developed such a miraculous ability traveled in this way in the eastern direction for seven days and nights without rest, through however many world systems there may be; and then, in the same way, traveled to the south, to the west, and to the north; and likewise for seven days and nights without rest to the southeast, to the southwest, to the northwest, the northeast, and likewise in the upward and downward directions. Then, imagine someone enclosed all of those world systems in the ten directions within a fence, and, having leveled the ground and cleared it of rocks, stones, gravel, and debris, [F.295.a] made it into a single city, and filled it right to the top with mustard seeds. Well, Ānanda, I

see beings embarked upon awakening in world systems even more numerous than the number of mustard seeds in that city. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas engaging in bodhisattva conduct. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas taking birth among the gods of the Heaven of Joy. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas seated among the gods of the Heaven of Joy. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas dying among the gods of the Heaven of Joy. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas entering their mothers' wombs. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas emerging from their mothers' wombs. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas engaged in child's play. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas abandoning their kingdoms and going forth as renunciants. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas demonstrating the practice of austerities. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas proceeding towards the seat of awakening. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas gazing upon the seat of awakening. In world systems even more numerous than that, [F.295.b] I see bodhisattvas circumambulating the seat of awakening three times with the utmost devotion and respect. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas seated at the seat of awakening. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas seated before the Bodhi tree. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas who will completely realize unsurpassed and perfectly complete awakening. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see bodhisattvas who have completely realized unsurpassed and perfectly complete awakening. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see blessed buddhas turning the wheel of Dharma. In world systems even more numerous than that, I see blessed buddhas displaying the great parinirvāṇa.

1.12      “All of these are merely those bodhisattvas with fitting names and fitting family lineages, which is not to mention those great bodhisattvas, in whichever world systems, with different names and different family lineages, who are renouncing, who are proceeding toward the seat of awakening, who are gazing upon the seat of awakening, who are circumambulating the seat of awakening, who are seated at the seat of awakening, who are seated before the Bodhi tree, who are completely awakened and have turned the wheel of Dharma, and who are displaying the great parinirvāṇa.”

- 1.13 Venerable Ānanda then asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, are there any world systems in which blessed buddhas do not appear? [F.296.a] Are there any world systems in which bodhisattvas do not engage in bodhisattva conduct?”
- 1.14 The Blessed One replied, “To draw an analogy Ānanda, in those world systems that I have spoken of, the appearance of blessed buddhas, and bodhisattvas who engage in bodhisattva conduct, is as rare, Ānanda, as gold dust among the sands of the great ocean or the sands of the river Gaṅgā. Ānanda, the appearance of blessed buddhas in any world system, and world systems in which bodhisattvas engage in bodhisattva conduct, are as rare as this. Ānanda, world systems in which blessed buddhas appear, and in which bodhisattvas engage in bodhisattva conduct, are as uncommon as someone finding a single grain of gold among all the sands of the great ocean or the sands of the river Gaṅgā.”
- 1.15 Thus spoke the Blessed One, and Venerable Ānanda, together with the monks and bodhisattvas, as well as the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.16 *This concludes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “Like Gold Dust.”*

c.

## Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Surendrabodhi and Prajñāvarman, and the chief editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé, and others.

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 The Stok Palace Kangyur, the only Kangyur of the Thempangma line consulted for this translation, renders the title of the sūtra with the Tibetan *phye ma* rather than the *bye ma* found in all the Kangyurs of the Tshalpa line. Both spellings, like the Sanskrit *vāluka*, can indicate any kind of powder or dust, including sand. Since in English “gold dust” is the common idiom, while “golden sand” would be ambiguous (between color and substance), we have rendered the title with the English “gold dust.”
- n.2 See [n.6](#).
- n.3 Denkarma, folio 299.b; see also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 114–15. The Denkarma catalog is believed to have been first compiled ca. 812 CE, with further additions for some years afterwards. This text is not listed in the Phangthangma catalog believed to have been compiled only a few years before the Denkarma.
- n.4 Skilling 2021, pp. 439–50.
- n.5 Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i yul*. Lit. the “realm” or “domain” of thus-gone ones. Peter Skilling suggests that here it likely translates the term *tathāgataviśaya*. On this topic, see Skilling 2021, pp. 441–45.
- n.6 This rather striking analogy for speed (using the pool, the chariot, and the snake, followed by the sequence of further fractions of time based on the efficacy of various figures in teaching the Dharma) is not unique to the present sūtra but, as pointed out by Peter Skilling, is also found in *The Seal of Engagement in Awakening the Power of Faith* (*Śraddhābalādhānāvātāramudrā*, Toh 201), [1.444](#), and in a citation in *The Compendium of Sūtras* (*Sutrasamuccaya*, Toh 3934) which identifies it as being from the *Buddhāvataṃsaka*. For a discussion comparing the varying details of these three instances, see Skilling 2021, pp. 441–44.



b.

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## GLOSSARY

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

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

g.1 Ānanda

*kun dga' bo*

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

*ānanda*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

A major śrāvaka disciple and personal attendant of the Buddha Śākyamuni during the last twenty-five years of his life. He was a cousin of the Buddha (according to the *Mahāvastu*, he was a son of Śuklodana, one of the brothers of King Śuddhodana, which means he was a brother of Devadatta; other sources say he was a son of Amṛtodana, another brother of King Śuddhodana, which means he would have been a brother of Aniruddha).

Ānanda, having always been in the Buddha's presence, is said to have memorized all the teachings he heard and is celebrated for having recited all the Buddha's teachings by memory at the first council of the Buddhist saṅgha, thus preserving the teachings after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The phrase "Thus did I hear at one time," found at the beginning of the sūtras, usually stands for his recitation of the teachings. He became a patriarch after the passing of Mahākāśyapa.

g.2 Bandé Yeshé Dé

*ban de ye shes sde*

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

Yeshé Dé (late eighth to early ninth century) was the most prolific translator of sūtras into Tibetan. Altogether he is credited with the translation of more than one hundred sixty sūtra translations and more than one hundred additional translations, mostly on tantric topics. In spite of Yeshé Dé's great importance for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet during the imperial era, only a few biographical details about this figure are known. Later sources describe him as a student of the Indian teacher Padmasambhava, and he is also credited with teaching both sūtra and tantra widely to students of his own. He was also known as Nanam Yeshé Dé, from the Nanam (*sna nam*) clan.

g.3 Blessed One

*bcom ldan 'das*

བཙེན་ལྷན་འདས།

*bhagavan*<sup>AS</sup>

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means "possessing fortune," but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to "subduing" the four māras, *ldan*

to “possessing” the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to “going beyond” *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as “one who destroys the four *māras*.” This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root  $\sqrt{bhañj}$  (“to break”).

g.4 Bodhi tree

*byang chub kyi shing*

བྱང་ལྷན་གྱི་ཤིང་།

*bodhiṅkṣa*

The name of the tree under which the Buddha Śākyamuni attained awakening. The same term is used to describe the trees under which other tathāgatas, both in this realm and others, attain awakening.

g.5 bodhisattva conduct

*byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa*

བྱང་ལྷན་སེམས་དཔའི་སྤྱོད་པ།

*bodhisattvacaryā*

The proper conduct of a committed bodhisattva is a topic addressed in many Mahāyāna sūtras, as wells as the commentarial literature.

g.6 elder

*gnas brtan*

གནས་བརྟན།

*sthavira*

A monk of seniority within the assembly of the śrāvakas.

g.7 going forth as renunciants

*rab tu byung ba*

རབ་ཏུ་བྱུང་བ།

*pravrajyā*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The Sanskrit *pravrajyā* literally means “going forth,” with the sense of leaving the life of a householder and embracing the life of a renunciant. When the term is applied more technically, it refers to the act of becoming a novice monk (*śrāmaṇera*; *dge tshul*) or nun (*śrāmaṇerikā*; *dge tshul ma*), this being a first stage leading to full ordination.

g.8 great parinirvāṇa

*yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa chen po*

ཡོངས་སྐྱུ་རྩུ་རན་ལས་འདས་པ་ཚེན་པོ།

*mahāparinirvāṇa*

Synonymous with parinirvāṇa, the final or complete nirvāṇa, which occurs when a buddha passes away. It implies the non-residual nirvāṇa where the aggregates have also been consumed within emptiness.

g.9 Heaven of Joy

*dga' ldan*

དགའ་ལྷན།

*tuṣita*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

Tuṣita (or sometimes Saṃtuṣita), literally “Joyous” or “Contented,” is one of the six heavens of the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*). In standard classifications, such as the one in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is ranked as the fourth of the six counting from below. This god realm is where all future buddhas are said to dwell before taking on their final rebirth prior to awakening. There, the Buddha Śākyamuni lived his preceding life as the bodhisattva Śvetaketu. When departing to take birth in this world, he appointed the bodhisattva Maitreya, who will be the next buddha of this eon, as his Dharma regent in Tuṣita. For an account of the Buddha’s previous life in Tuṣita, see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 2.12, and for an account of Maitreya’s birth in Tuṣita and a description of this realm, see *The Sūtra on Maitreya’s Birth in the Heaven of Joy*, (Toh 199).

g.10 league

*dpag tshad*

དཔག་ཚད།

*yojana*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

A measure of distance sometimes translated as “league,” but with varying definitions. The Sanskrit term denotes the distance yoked oxen can travel in a day or before needing to be unyoked. From different canonical sources the distance represented varies between four and ten miles.

g.11 Mahāmaudgalyāyana

*maud gal gyi bu chen po*

མོ་དགལ་གྱི་སུ་ཚེན་པོ།

*mahāmaudgalyāyana*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, paired with Śāriputra. He was renowned for his miraculous powers. His family clan was descended from Mudgala, hence his name Maudgalyāyana, “the son of Mudgala’s descendants.” Respectfully referred to as Mahāmaudgalyāyana, “Great Maudgalyāyana.”

g.12 monk

*dge slong*

དགེ་སྐྱོད།

*bhikṣu*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The term *bhikṣu*, often translated as “monk,” refers to the highest among the eight types of prātimokṣa vows that make one part of the Buddhist assembly. The Sanskrit term literally means “beggar” or “mendicant,” referring to the fact that Buddhist monks and nuns—like other ascetics of the time—subsisted on alms (*bhikṣā*) begged from the laity.

In the Tibetan tradition, which follows the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, a monk follows 253 rules as part of his moral discipline. A nun (*bhikṣuṇī*; *dge slong ma*) follows 364 rules. A novice monk (*śrāmaṇera*; *dge tshul*) or nun (*śrāmaṇerikā*; *dge tshul ma*) follows thirty-six rules of moral discipline (although in other vinaya traditions novices typically follow only ten).

g.13 park

*kun dga’ ra ba*

ཀུན་དགལ་ར་བ།

*ārāma*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

Generally found within the limits of a town or city, an *ārāma* was a private citizen’s park, a pleasure grove, a pleasant garden—*ārāma*, in its etymology, is somewhat akin to what in English is expressed by the term “pleasance.” The Buddha and his disciples were offered several such *ārāmas* in which to dwell, which evolved into monasteries or vihāras. The term is still found in contemporary usage in names of Thai monasteries.

g.14 perfectly complete buddha

*yang dag par rdzogs pa’i sangs rgyas*

ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱལ།

*samyaksambuddha*

A term used to emphasize the superiority of buddhas as contrasted with the achievement of worthy ones (*arhat*) and solitary buddhas (*pratyekabuddha*).

g.15 Prajñāvarman

*pradz+nyA barma*

པརྫོགས་པ།

*prajñāvarman*

A Bengali paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Arriving in Tibet at the invitation of the Tibetan king, he assisted in the translation of numerous canonical scriptures. He is also the author of a few philosophical commentaries contained in the Tengyur.

g.16 pratyekabuddha

*rang sangs rgyas*

རང་སངས་རྒྱལ།

*pratyekabuddha*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

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

g.17 Prince Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park

*rgyal bu rgyal byed kyī tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga’ ra ba*

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ་མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

*jetavanam anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ*<sup>AO</sup>

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

One of the first Buddhist monasteries, located in a park outside Śrāvastī, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kośala in northern India. This park was originally owned by Prince Jeta, hence the name Jetavana, meaning Jeta’s grove. The wealthy merchant Anāthapiṇḍada, wishing to offer it to the Buddha, sought to buy it from him, but the prince, not wishing to sell, said he would only do so if Anāthapiṇḍada covered the entire property with gold coins. Anāthapiṇḍada agreed, and managed to cover all of the park except the entrance, hence the name Anāthapiṇḍadasyārāma, meaning Anāthapiṇḍada’s park. The place is usually referred to in the sūtras as “Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada’s park,” and according to the *Sanḅhabhedavastu* the Buddha used Prince Jeta’s name in first place because that was Prince Jeta’s own unspoken wish while Anāthapiṇḍada was offering the park. Inspired by the occasion and the Buddha’s use of his name, Prince Jeta then offered the rest of the property and had an entrance gate built. The Buddha specifically instructed those who recite the sūtras to use Prince Jeta’s name in first place to commemorate the mutual effort of both benefactors.

Anāthapiṇḍada built residences for the monks, to house them during the monsoon season, thus creating the first Buddhist monastery. It was one of the Buddha’s main residences, where he spent around nineteen rainy season retreats, and it was therefore the setting for many of the Buddha’s discourses and events. According to the travel accounts of Chinese monks, it was still in use as a Buddhist monastery in the early fifth century CE, but by the sixth century it had been reduced to ruins.

*In this text:*

See also “park.”

g.18 river Gaṅgā

*gang gA'i klung*

གང་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་

*gaṅgānadī*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The Gaṅgā, or Ganges in English, is considered to be the most sacred river of India, particularly within the Hindu tradition. It starts in the Himalayas, flows through the northern plains of India, bathing the holy city of Vārāṇasī, and meets the sea at the Bay of Bengal, in Bangladesh. In the sūtras, however, this river is mostly mentioned not for its sacredness but for its abundant sands—noticeable still today on its many sandy banks and at its delta—which serve as a common metaphor for infinitely large numbers.



According to Buddhist cosmology, as explained in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is one of the four rivers that flow from Lake Anavatapta and cross the southern continent of Jambudvīpa—the known human world or more specifically the Indian subcontinent.

g.19 Śāradvatīputra

*sha ra dwa ti'i bu*

ཤ་ར་དྲ་ཌི་བུ།

*śāradvatīputra*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, he was renowned for his discipline and for having been praised by the Buddha as foremost of the wise (often paired with Maudgalyāyana, who was praised as foremost in the capacity for miraculous powers). His father, Tiṣya, to honor Śāriputra's mother, Śārikā, named him Śāradvatīputra, or, in its contracted form, Śāriputra, meaning "Śārikā's Son."

g.20 seat of awakening

*byang chub kyi snying po*

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

*bodhimāṇḍa*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The place where the Buddha Śākyamuni achieved awakening and where every buddha will manifest the attainment of buddhahood. In our world this is understood to be located under the Bodhi tree, the Vajrāsana, in present-day Bodhgaya, India. It can also refer to the state of awakening itself.

g.21 Śrāvastī

*mnyan du yod pa*

མཉམ་དུ་ཡོད་པ།

*śrāvastī*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

During the life of the Buddha, Śrāvastī was the capital city of the powerful kingdom of Kośala, ruled by King Prasenajit, who became a follower and patron of the Buddha. It was also the hometown of Anāthapiṇḍada, the wealthy patron who first invited the Buddha there, and then offered him a park known as Jetavana, Prince Jeta's Grove, which became one of the first Buddhist monasteries. The Buddha is said to have spent about twenty-five

rainy seasons with his disciples in Śrāvastī, thus it is named as the setting of numerous events and teachings. It is located in present-day Uttar Pradesh in northern India.

g.22 Surendrabodhi

*su ren+d+ra bo d+hi*

ལུ་རེ་རྒྱ་བོ་ལྷི།

*surendrabodhi*

Surendrabodhi came to Tibet in the early ninth century CE. He is listed as the translator of forty-three texts and was one of the small group of paṇḍitas responsible for the *Mahāvīyutpatti* Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary.

g.23 thus-gone one

*de bzhin gshegs pa*

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

*tathāgata*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

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

g.24 Well-Gone One

*bde bar gshegs pa*

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

*sugata*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. A recurrent explanation offers three different meanings for *su-* that are meant to show the special qualities of “accomplishment of one’s own purpose” (*svārthasampad*) for a complete buddha. Thus, the Sugata is “well” gone, as in the expression *su-rūpa*

(“having a good form”); he is gone “in a way that he shall not come back,” as in the expression *su-naṣṭa-jvara* (“a fever that has utterly gone”); and he has gone “without any remainder” as in the expression *su-pūrṇa-ghaṭa* (“a pot that is completely full”). According to Buddhaghoṣa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*) and where he went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*).

g.25 world system

*'jig rten gyi khams*

འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

*lokadhātu*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The term *lokadhātu* refers to a single four continent world-system illumined by a sun and moon, with a Mount Meru at its center and an encircling ring of mountains at its periphery, and with the various god realms above, thus including the desire, form, and formless realms.

The term can also refer to groups of such world-systems in multiples of thousands. A universe of one thousand such world-systems is called a chiliocosm (*sāhasralokadhātu*, *stong gi 'jig rten gyi khams*); one thousand such chiliocosms is called a dichiliocosm (*dvisāhasralokadhātu*, *stong gnyis kyi 'jig rten gyi khams*); and one thousand such dichiliocosms is called a trichiliocosm (*trisāhasralokadhātu*, *stong gsum gyi 'jig rten gyi khams*). A trichiliocosm is the largest universe described in Buddhist cosmology.

g.26 worthy

*dgra bcom pa*

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ།

*arhat*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

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

