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The Questions of Pratibhānamati

Pratibhānamatiparipṛcchā

འཕགས་པ་སྤོབས་པའི་སྤོ་གྲོས་ཀྱིས་ལྷུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa spobs pa'i blo gros kyis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

Āryapratibhānamatipariṣcchānāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 151 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 57 (mdo sde, pa), folios 331.b–344.a

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

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Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2020

Current version v 1.1.18 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.23.4

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SUMMARY

- s.1 The subject matter of this sūtra is indicated by the alternative title suggested by the Buddha himself in its conclusion: *The Teaching That Clarifies Karma*. In the opening section, the merchant Pratibhānamati, concerned about the state of society and what will become of the saṅgha in times to come, requests the Buddha Śākyamuni for a teaching that offers moral guidance to future beings. With the Buddha's encouragement, he asks what actions lead to rebirth in ten different human and non-human states. The Buddha answers with descriptions of the actions associated with each of these states and the effects they will bring. Pratibhānamati then invites the Buddha to his home in Śrāvastī. Two beggars arrive there, and on account of their opposing aspirations and conduct in the presence of the Buddha and retinue, one soon becomes a king while the other is killed in an accident. The sūtra concludes as the Buddha, invited to the newly anointed king's land, explains the karmic reasons for his unexpected fortune.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the guidance of Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche. The translation was produced by Timothy Hinkle, who also wrote the introduction. Ryan Damron and Andreas Doctor checked the translation against the Tibetan and edited the text. Tulku Tenzin Rigsang also assisted in resolving several difficult passages.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

In this sūtra the Buddha Śākyamuni gives a teaching on the workings of karma, the relationships between actions and their effects. The setting for the teaching is Jeta's Grove near the city of Śrāvastī, which the benefactor Anāthapiṇḍada donated to the Buddha at great expense. Prompted by questions posed by the merchant Pratibhānamati, who is concerned that monastics may indulge in hypocritical behavior in the future during degenerate times, the Buddha elucidates the actions that cause rebirth in ten possible states of existence: as a god, a human, a hell being, an animal, a hungry spirit, a high-caste human, a slave, a fortunate human, an unfortunate human, or a human on the Buddhist path. Additionally, he describes the physical, verbal, and mental traits associated with each of those rebirths. These illustrate the doctrine, shared by most Indian religions, that beings' good or bad deeds determine their future modes of birth and existence. In this way, the sūtra provides a moral framework geared toward the whole of society established on the basis of karma theory.

i.2

Following the discourse, Pratibhānamati invites the Buddha to his home for the midday meal. As a final illustration of the law of karma, we are introduced to two beggars who seat themselves among the saṅgha when the midday meal is being served. One of them does not observe the proper etiquette of ensuring honored guests are served first and thus is not served anything to eat or drink. Enraged, he leaves, harboring a very negative judgment of the assembly and perversely vowing revenge. As a result, he soon suffers an unfortunate death followed by millions of eons in hell. The other beggar, however, observes proper etiquette and is served abundant food and drink. He entertains a virtuous aspiration to serve the Buddha and his assembly for an entire week. The effect of this noble wish is that he soon becomes the king of a neighboring land whose ruler has perished without an appropriate heir. He is astounded at his sudden reversal of fortune and seeks to understand its source. Through the blessings of the Buddha he

realizes how his past actions determined his current fortune. He therefore invites the Buddha and the saṅgha and serves them just as he had aspired to do. The Buddha delivers a teaching that propels the king to the state of a stream enterer. The sūtra concludes with the audience praising the Buddha and rejoicing in his teaching. Through its descriptions and examples of the workings of karma, the sūtra underscores the importance and benefits of upholding core Buddhist virtues of kindness, gratitude, generosity, honesty, and respect, while warning of the grave consequences awaiting those who do the opposite.

i.3 To our knowledge there is no extant Sanskrit version of this sūtra. It was, however, translated into Chinese (Taishō 544) by Fa Chang 法場 during the early sixth century CE. Although it appears that the sūtra did exercise some influence in China,¹ it does not seem to have had a particularly significant impact in Tibet. The colophon to the Tibetan translation states that it was produced by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé. The text is also recorded in the Denkarma² and Phangthangma³ inventories of Tibetan imperial translations, so we can establish that it was first translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan no later than the early ninth century, as the Denkarma is dated to 812 CE. The primary Tibetan text used for the present translation was the Degé (*sde dge*) edition, but the other editions included in the Comparative Kangyur (*dpe bsdur ma*) were also consulted.

**The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra
The Questions of Pratibhānamati**

1.

The Translation

[F.331.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in Śrāvastī, in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park. He was there together with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks as well as 10,000 bodhisattvas. Surrounded and revered by an immense retinue, the Blessed One taught the Dharma.

1.3 At that time, the merchant Pratibhānamati left the city of Śrāvastī, surrounded and venerated [F.332.a] by a group of five hundred merchant's sons, each of whom was also accompanied by an entourage of five hundred servants. As they arrived in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park, where the Blessed One was residing, Pratibhānamati bowed his head at the Blessed One's feet, circumambulated him three times, and sat down together with his entourage.

1.4 At this point, through the power of the Buddha, the merchant Pratibhānamati stood up, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With palms together he bowed toward the Blessed One and said, "Blessed One, you are the supreme teacher, the most eminent in the three realms, the exalted ground for the merit of awakening, the one who liberates all beings, and the one who brings about the attainment of unbounded skill in all-pervasive methods. Thus, Blessed One, in times to come, during the degenerate age when the five polluting degenerations manifest, the three poisons will burn and blaze forth. Then, among those beings who inflict misery on one another there will be people with evil intentions. At that time, there will be no leader, nor anyone of this kind, and kings and high ministers will be overcome by craving for objects, leading them to quarrel and wage war against each other. When they wage war against each other, their armies of soldiers as well as the remaining civilian population will be ravaged so that not even their names will remain.

- 1.5 “Through the power of the Buddha’s merit, many among the four types of the Buddha’s disciples will enter the teachings and take on the guise of monks. Yet even these people will only outwardly be cloaked in saffron robes, while inwardly they will be angry, disrespectful, disharmonious, and slanderous toward one another. They will advertise the faults of others and downplay their positive qualities. They will be overcome by pride, [F.332.b] conceit, and haughtiness, and will cling to the belief in *me* and *mine*. When they pass on, they will be born into the lower realms, and they will not find even a moment of fortune. In their future lives they will again encounter many eons of the terrible experiences of suffering and of harshness, heat, and displeasure.
- 1.6 “On account of that, Blessed One, what are the teachings that will ripen them, turn them back from the paths leading to the lower realms, and enable them to attain the celestial palace due to their merit?”
- 1.7 The Blessed One answered Pratibhānamati, “Pratibhānamati, with this lion’s roar, you have asked the Thus-Gone One a question. This sort of request for the Dharma of the Thus-Gone One stirs delight in all beings. Excellent, excellent! Pratibhānamati, what attainment would make beings truly splendid, cause them to abandon the dark side, make them join the good side, and accomplish all aims? You should ask about such a teaching. Having done so, you must then listen without doubt and I shall explain.”
- 1.8 Pratibhānamati then inquired of the Blessed One, “Blessed One, through what deeds is one reborn among the class of gods? Through what actions is one reborn among the class of humans? Through what actions is one reborn among hell beings? Through what actions is one reborn among the animals? Through what actions is one reborn among the hungry spirits? Through what actions is one reborn among the high castes? Through what actions is one reborn in servitude? Blessed One, through what actions does one become a fortunate being among humans—someone who has servants, pleasant breath, a nice complexion, [F.333.a] who is a joy to behold, who faces no harm, who is contented in body and mind, and praised by many people? Having already attained the excellent human state among beings, through what actions does one meet with constant slander, face the enmity of many beings, have an ugly appearance and bad breath, face all sorts of adversity, have a joyless mind and an unhealthy body, and indulge in all kinds of negative actions?
- 1.9 “Blessed One, through what actions will those who have taken ordination in this well-spoken *Dharma-Vinaya*, as a mendicant or a noble son or daughter who values peace, never part from the Jewels of Buddha, Dharma,

and Saṅgha throughout their lifetimes and wherever they may be? Through what actions will they behold the blessed buddhas, receive the Dharma from them, delight in it, and accomplish the aims they have set their minds on?

1.10 “Given these ten questions of mine, please, Blessed One, spiritual teacher who acts without being requested, who is endowed with great compassion and power, and who discerns all phenomena with unclouded eyes, answer them extensively as a remedy for the innumerable malignant forces.”

1.11 The Blessed One replied, “Pratibhānamati, I will extensively address and answer your questions, just as you have asked them. Listen well!”

1.12 The merchant Pratibhānamati responded, “Blessed One, I shall do that,” and he listened as the Blessed One had instructed.

1.13 The Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the following five actions attain rebirth as gods. What are these five? (1) First, with loving minds they do no harm to beings but instead protect them and are patient. (2) They give generously since they are not stingy and do not steal the possessions of others. [F.333.b] (3) They guard all the bases of training given that those who enjoy themselves with the wives of others are impure. (4) They naturally maintain diligence in the purification ceremony and speak the truth. (5) In order to give up their own limitless faults, they forsake intoxicating beverages. Beings who engage in these five actions attain divine bodies.”

1.14 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:

1.15 “Turning away from killing living beings, no god, human, or asura
In the world can conquer them; their bodies are long-lived and healthy.
They have pure bodies haloed with light—bodies that are glorious, stainless,
and perfect.
The myriad splendid sense pleasures of the highest gods are always at their
disposal.

1.16 “As soon they discard this body, they will always become the lord of the
gods among gods.
Dispersing, distributing, and renouncing inconceivable wealth, they will find
gems and opulence.
They will always be happy and delighted, dwelling in splendid celestial
mansions.
Their bodies will be like flowers sprinkled in the pleasant and fine realm of
the wish-fulfilling tree.

1.17 “They are knowledgeable, without harmful desires, and have bodies with
the finest fragrance.
Throughout all their lives, their bodies are tremendously beautiful like the
finest gold.

Constantly among the gods, they acquire great fortune and light streams
from their bodies.

They are surrounded by a host of sundry goddesses and frolic in the glories
of passion.

1.18 “They have abandoned the four verbal faults and their mouths have a lovely
fragrance in accordance with previous rites.

These gods utter supreme words that are clear, unimpeded, and fearless.
Their accurate responses are praised and eloquent and others find them
most agreeable.

Their palaces resound with the melodious and thunderous sound of strings
and percussion.

1.19 “With unimpaired minds, they abandoned confused and ignoble utterances
and thus became gods.

Innumerable gods of virtue worship them and they now live in divine
abodes.

Intelligent, with stalwart bodies, excellent minds, and possessing all forms of
conscientiousness,

These beings who are always happy and powerful make beneficial speeches.

1.20 “When their life ends, should these gods plunge from the divine abodes to a
lower state,

They will remain free from misdeeds, and after one hundred twenty years
return to the divine abodes. [F.334.a]

Exhibiting the five merits, their sublime and splendid bodies shine.

They act as beacons of the gods and millions of gods resolutely worship
them.”

1.21 Then the Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the
following five actions are reborn among humans. What are these five? (1)
First, they give with gratitude and provide for the poor, the destitute, and
the miserable. (2) They follow the path of the ten virtues without fail. (3) They
are patient, harboring no hostility toward anyone. (4) They diligently inspire
lazy beings to the virtuous Dharma. (5) With a determined mind, they
maintain harmony. Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in these five actions
attain human lives and grow very wealthy, long lived, beautiful, and
majestic, and become lords of the world.”

1.22 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:

1.23 “Through generosity they will become great kings among humans,
And constantly increase their pleasure and affluence.

They engage in conduct and generosity equal to Kubera himself.

With such status and excellence, they will always be delighted.

- 1.24 “Their discipline unimpaired, they worship the Three Jewels.
Because they abandon all evil action, their resolve is firm.
They will attain the greatness of longevity and thus be free from death’s
passing.
Because they will attain happiness, they become faultless and joyful.
- 1.25 “Being gentle people, they do not upset others’ minds.
Likewise, though nasty words are lobbed at them,
- 1.26 They do not criticize in return,
And so they will attain the way of supreme virtue and become beautiful.
- 1.27 “Because their intention toward excellent discipline is sublime, their minds
are clean.
They are replete with great strength and splendor and possess virtues.
Because they attain the excellence of military leadership,
They shall have dominion over wealth and enjoyment and become like gods.
[F.334.b]
- 1.28 “They do not covet and are intelligent, knowledgeable, and agreeable.
They are grateful and keen to work.
They are courageous in venerating the Jewels, their mothers, and so on,
And so they never have doubt in any situation.
- 1.29 “Whoever performs these extraordinary virtues
Will become the lords of the land.
They shall attain unfailing strength, health, wealth, and other qualities.
Renowned, they will be respected by important people.”
- 1.30 Then the Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the
following five actions are reborn among hell beings, where they remain for
millions of eons. What are these five? (1) They have no faith in the Jewels of
the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha. They disparage them through unflattering
speech and belittle the path of noble beings. (2) They destroy the stūpas of
the thus-gone ones. (3) In the intermediate times as well, they are extremely
disrespectful and disharmonious with monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen,
but love having worldly conversations. (4) They steal donations made to the
Three Jewels. (5) Through their disparaging words that enrage others, they
are disrespectful and create discord between kings, leaders, ministers,
fathers, and sons.

1.31 “In the future, those monks who enter into the teachings of the thus-gone ones, who follow the teacher—the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha—and go forth from the home into homelessness, will pass themselves off as monks yet not maintain the genuine practice of the virtuous Dharma. They will not maintain harmony but will displease their preceptors and instructors and speak harshly. Even though they have been taught correctly, they will not practice those teachings. They will spurn the awakening of the buddhas, praise themselves, and slander [F.335.a] others. For the most part, they will be proud, conceited, and haughty, and will denigrate spiritual teachers. They will yearn for praise and respect but disparage others.

1.32 “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in those five actions will be reborn among the hell beings where they will remain until the trichiliocosm is destroyed. Even when it is destroyed, they will be propelled into other world-systems in which there are hells. When those world-systems are also destroyed, they will be further propelled into still other world-systems in which there are hells. And so, on and on, they will wander amidst all the countless world-systems of hells, and their experience of suffering will find no end.”

1.33 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:

1.34 “Deluded beings are oblivious to the terrible suffering in the world since beginningless time.
And do not acknowledge the oceanic qualities of the Buddha.
Declaring, ‘He is neither omniscient nor the king of practitioners,’
They waste their own lives and deceive other beings.

1.35 “They say, ‘If you make a reliquary of the well-gone ones, supreme in its materials and beauty,
It will be of little virtue and bring down a rain of destruction.’
This non-virtue, on the face of it, may seem virtuous;
But actually it brings about all manner of evil.

1.36 “In this intermediate period of strife, the four types of beings are weakened by hunger.
Because of their mutual animosity they fight and belittle spiritual masters.
They destroy the enthusiasm of the community of moral discipline,
Thus leading them to the terrifying and unpleasant lower realms.

1.37 “Kings, fathers, daughters, relatives, and young women
Lose their caring minds and become envious of possessions.
They laugh at one another like immature children,
And hasten to the mire of the fathomless lower realms. [F.335.b]

- 1.38 “In future times those who are wantonly evil will not get along.
Faking the appearance of mendicants, they will have repugnant forms.
They will be of vile character and perform millions of evil deeds.
When they die and transmigrate, they will be dragged down by their intense
evil deeds and quarreling.
- 1.39 “The five evil deeds perpetrated by people
Cannot be confessed for hundreds of eons.
Such people are burned in a terrible mountain of fire in the hell of ceaseless
torment—
A place where even millions of buddhas can offer no protection.”
- 1.40 Then the Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the
following five actions are reborn among animals. What are these five? (1) The
first is corrupt discipline. The others are (2) robbery and theft, (3) taking
loans from others and then conspiring against them, (4) murder, and (5)
lacking faith, which makes one delight in studying something other than the
sublime Dharma and relish perverted ways of life because of finding such
studies enjoyable. Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in these five actions
are reborn as animals.”
- 1.41 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:
- 1.42 “People who always delight in stealing from others
Take out loans and then murder the lender.
Beasts, lords of death who love killing,
Catch such beings in traps and then slaughter them.
- 1.43 “Their minds, weak in faith and the rest,
Cannot see the limitless evil deeds they do, thinking it all to be virtuous.
Deluded, they do not enjoy discussions on the sublime Jewel of the Dharma.
Instead they follow worldly teachings.
- 1.44 “Just as snow tumbles down from a mountain,
And water naturally seeps straight underground,
In the same way they amass many evil deeds in the realms of gods and
humans,
And so these fools go swiftly to the animals.
- 1.45 “Born as horses, mules, camels, elephants, [F.336.a]
Oxen, cattle, lions, foxes, snakes, pigs, or dogs,
They eat grass, flesh, and foliage,
And constantly carry the burdens of others until exhaustion.
- 1.46 “Driven by hunger, they eagerly prey on one another.

- Even after millions of eons, they will never be freed from this state.
 Just as a one-eyed turtle living in the ocean
 Could not stick its neck through a floating yoke,
- 1.47 “Because of their hundreds of downfalls
 They will not easily obtain the states of gods, humans, or great lords.
 They will be delivered by a sublime and limitless matrix of the Buddha’s light
 rays
 And the light of the mighty bodhisattvas.”
- 1.48 Then the Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the
 following five actions are reborn as hungry spirits. What are these five? (1)
 The first is being stingy and craving. (2) Next, because they esteem
 extremely ignorant spiritual teachers and their ilk, they block their own
 happiness. (3) Because they are inclined to unwholesome ways, they are
 jealous. (4) Because they are excessively stingy, they are in no way generous
 towards brothers, sisters, children, wives, servants, laborers, wageworkers,
 friends, government officials, kinfolk, relatives, the venerable, mendicants,
 priests, and the poor. They cannot even give anything to their own mothers
 and fathers, nor do they care for those who are in need of care. (5) They are
 also not respectful, nor do they venerate spiritual teachers or regard them as
 precious. Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in these five actions are reborn
 as hungry spirits.”
- 1.49 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:
- 1.50 “Defeated by the adversity of privation, they are unable to give away their
 wealth.
 They only wish to take from others.
 They are keepers of a treasury whose doors are tightly shut.
 Thinking it ought to be guarded, they do not care for even their closest kin.
- 1.51 “These squanderers of others’ wealth always live in anxiety. [F.336.b]
 Even to spiritual teachers they are rude and have no love.
 To their own wives and servants they give nothing precious,
 Nor do they understand how to show love and affection.
- 1.52 “They turn away from what is good, and when they pass on
 They become suffering spirits whose bodies burn over and over.
 Though they dream for hundreds of years,
 They never even dream of clothing, food, and drink.
- 1.53 “Their throats are like needles and their stomachs like huge mountains.
 Desperately they scramble from the eastern to the western ocean.
 With mouths ablaze they run to Kauverī and to the south.

Seeing everything dried up they fall into a blazing fire.

- 1.54 “The henchmen of the Lord of Death grab them by the shoulders,
Pile them together, and crush them with boulders.
Then they are given molten copper to drink, which is incredibly difficult to
bear.
Ignorant, they are made to drink disgusting substances as if they were water
with eight qualities.
- 1.55 “After their entrails have been burned from their body cavities by the
evacuating wind,
The powerful ones force these beings to drink again.
When these beings die and are reborn in the human world,
They will be inferior in their caste, wealth, health, and servants.”
- 1.56 Then the Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the
following five actions are reborn among the higher castes. What are these
five? They are (1) giving material goods and Dharma, (2) not having hostility
towards anyone, (3) being respectful of the Three Jewels and one’s parents,
(4) being naturally patient, gentle, and exalted, and (5) studying the diversity
of the Buddha’s teachings and being diligent in their recitation.
Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in those five actions are reborn among
the higher castes.”
- 1.57 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:
- 1.58 “Those who are inspired by the rituals for accumulating merit and fortune,
[F.337.a]
And who ensure that many beings never grow ill,
Will enjoy long life, a fine complexion, great strength, and become foremost
in the world.
Their beauty will be vast and special, like a jewel mine or the lord of
mountains.
- 1.59 “They venerate the incomparable jewel of delighting in discipline and their
parents.
Thus they are born into large and preeminent households and worshipped
by innumerable beings.
They are highly capable, their minds free of agitation and their forms noblest
of all.
They are appealing to the eyes of the entire world, have great fortune, and
are of high caste.
- 1.60 “They are reliable and perfect people, their minds aligned with what is good
and virtuous.

Such wise and supreme people are diligent in reciting the Buddha's words.
Affluent and well born, they are the most beautiful beings.
Formed by virtue, their great bodies are beautified like the ocean."

1.61 Then the Blessed One said, "Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the following five actions become male and female servants. What are these five? They are (1) being disrespectful toward one's parents, (2) having an indecent mind, (3) being incorrigible and engaging in evil deeds as one pleases, (4) stealing the wealth of others, and (5) absconding with the loans one has taken and going into hiding. Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in these five actions become male and female servants."

1.62 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:

1.63 "They take birth in a household whose vast merit and wealth shines like snow.

Yet these fools are full of themselves and conceited, and so they squabble and are disrespectful.

They do not conceive of their parents as being admirable objects of generosity.

Due to these negative actions, later they will have little worldly influence and be roguish.

1.64 "They do not venerate the peerless Three Jewels but are excessively vicious and rude.

They squander all the virtues of love and compassion.

They will be powerless and dominated for innumerable lives and know no shame [F.337.b].

Once free of servitude in the human realm, they will instantly descend.

1.65 "Bereft of beauty, authority, high caste, and intellect, they are fools inclined to negativity.

Not venerating the Three Jewels, they will be insecure, weak, and ugly.

Through deeds lacking dignity and contemplation, they turn evil."

They will have no worldly joy, nothing to celebrate, and live troubled lives."

1.66 Then the Blessed One said, "Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the following five actions become supremely fortunate, have servants and fragrant breath, are unthreatened, pliant in body and mind, beautiful to behold, and praised by many beings. What are these five? They are: (1) perceiving accurately, genuinely, and completely; (2) speaking without exaggeration; (3) not lacking patience towards the nature of the language used in the three vehicles of hearers, solitary buddhas, and bodhisattvas, nor denigrating nor abandoning it but instead retaining, teaching, reading, and

reciting it, abandoning the limitless instances of the four faults of speech, and not belittling the path of noble beings; (4) loving and nurturing those beings who persist in counterproductive actions, turning them away from faults, and establishing them in virtue; and (5) not wishing to expose the faults one sees in others. Pratibhānamati, when beings who engage in these five actions are reborn among humans, they possess great fortune, acquire servants, fragrant breath, and mental vigor, are agreeable, and delight many beings. They are without anguish, and their minds are at ease. They are free of anger and do not encounter harm. They obtain a beautiful appearance and are honored.”

1.67 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:

1.68 “They are deeply respectful of the buddhas and venerate their parents.

[F.338.a]

Thus, ever free from the faults of speech, they are indeed wondrous beings.

The qualities of their speech—pleasant, resonant, and beneficial throughout all lifetimes—

Resound sweetly from their mouths in all directions upon breath as fragrant as a blue lotus.

1.69 “Loving themselves and others equally, they motivate beings in all forms of virtue.

And by distancing themselves from what is evil, immoral, slanderous, and harmful,

Upon attaining the world they will have every joy throughout the fortunate eon.

They will possess extraordinary riches, live well, and turn away from evil deeds.

1.70 “Recollecting the sublime Dharma, they persevere in the teachings and cultivate gentle minds.

In this life, their love considers all beings to be like their own parents.

They think, ‘All beings were once my own family.’

With minds as bright as the moon they benefit them in the present.

1.71 “Forsaking evil deeds, such as competitiveness, haughtiness, and contempt, And with pure minds, these virtuous, well-intentioned beings Speak well of one another while being discrete about the shortcomings of others.

They swiftly become incomparable lords of the gods and go on to be virtuous buddhas.”

- 1.72 Then the Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, beings who engage in the following five actions attain sublime human lives, and yet they also receive constant denigration, are disliked by many beings, have bad breath and unhappy minds, are often threatened, and have very unfit bodies. What are these five? They are (1) lying, (2) being always bent on deceiving others through lying, (3) criticizing the discourses one hears when assembled to hear great Dharma talks, (4) abusing and denigrating those whose practice pure conduct, and (5) cultivating a base mind. Pratibhānamati, beings who are endowed [F.338.b] with those five actions may attain the preeminence of a human life but they receive constant denigration, are disliked by many beings, are ugly, have bad breath and unhappy minds, are often threatened, and have bodies that are unhealthy.”
- 1.73 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:
- 1.74 “Their minds viciously upset the minds of others and they commit evil deeds.
They delight in perverse speech and in harming others.
These inferior beings will experience intense and unrelenting suffering in mind and body.
The tongues of these poor beings will be pierced by sharp iron hooks.
- 1.75 “In the abode of the Lord of Death these people will be force-fed drinks of boiling molten copper.
In hell, these beings given to false speech will experience no joy.
Once there, they will hear no loving words and their breath will stink like a corpse.
All that normally appears pleasant will turn ugly.
- 1.76 “Infamous at the royal court, they have many flaws of being derogatory and quarrelsome.
Many millions of people gossip about them being consistent in these flaws.
Such beings have base minds and will have unhealthy bodies due to their lies.
Thus, as I said before, the result of this flawed trajectory will be manifold suffering.
- 1.77 “Forsaken by humanity, they are powerless and bereft of all happiness.
Such beings first go to the hells, and later, when they die and transmigrate,
They are born as animals among the five types of beings on the harsh wheel of cyclic existence.
The suffering of these wandering beings will be truly inexhaustible.”

1.78 Then the Blessed One said, “Pratibhānamati, mendicants and noble sons and daughters—beings who make peace their primary concern—possess five qualities that ensure that they will always encounter the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha, regardless of where they are born. They will behold the blessed buddhas, hear the Dharma from them, and be delighted. [F.339.a] They will attain awakening just as intended and gain abundance just as desired. What are these five qualities? (1) Having themselves gone for refuge in the Three Jewels, they establish others in the practice of going for refuge. (2) They skillfully create images of the thus-gone ones that are complete and detailed in all respects. (3) They recognize preceptors and teachers and are respectful towards them. (4) They easily follow instructions and practice them accordingly. (5) With pervasive and unimpeded light rays, they behold all beings as being like themselves or like their only child. These are beings who practice, read, recite, transmit, and explain the discourses exactly as they were set forth. Their contemplation is extensive. Being utterly free from obstacles, they are enthusiastic in their practice and gain accomplishment. Pratibhānamati, mendicants and noble sons and daughters—beings who make peace their primary concern—who possess those five qualities, do not encounter obstacles and are never disconnected from the Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, regardless of where they are born. They behold the blessed buddhas, hear their Dharma teachings, and are delighted. They attain awakening just as they intend and gain abundance just as they wish.”

1.79 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:

1.80 “Those who are stable in the supreme Dharma—the quality of the Buddha—
Are able to tame all beings.
They make fine representations of the Buddha’s body.
These learned ones venerate the words of their masters.

1.81 “They consider everyone in every world, in all directions,
To be like themselves or their only child. [F.339.b]
They are unequivocally free from the suffering of cyclic existence.⁴
Their awakened minds are extremely pure and they behold the buddhas.

1.82 “They who bring about the wealth of great jewel-like wisdom
Practice virtue day and night.
These beings who are endowed with miraculous light
Bring the brightest light to the deepest darkness of the world.

1.83 “Perceiving every single phenomenon,
They are certain that there is nothing higher than the path to buddhahood.
They understand that this is the cause for reaching

The ultimate limit of the world, including its gods.”

- 1.84 As he heard this Dharma teaching, the merchant Pratibhānamati was satisfied and content. He rejoiced and was truly delighted. Joyful and happy, he gained the acceptance that phenomena are unborn. The five hundred merchant children and each of their entourage of five hundred attained the unclouded and stainless Dharma eye that perceives all phenomena.
- 1.85 All the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, humans, and non-humans assembled in the retinue of the Blessed One developed a motivation for one of the vehicles in accord with their inclinations. They abundantly gained whatever they wished for and scattered incalculable masses of flowers, incense, garlands, clothing, and jewelry toward the Blessed One.
- 1.86 Then, the merchant Pratibhānamati stood up, draped his shawl over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With palms together he bowed toward the Blessed One and said,
- 1.87 “Blessed One, the masters of the three realms teach these five qualities. Excellent. Excellent. Hearing about these five qualities, this retinue has understood the meaning, just as is intended. [F.340.a] When beings in future times hear of this teaching, they will abandon non-virtue, do what is virtuous, and take up religious practice.
- 1.88 “Blessed One, please come together with your saṅgha of monks to my home. Please accept this invitation out of compassion for us.”
- 1.89 The Blessed One agreed out of compassion for the merchant Pratibhānamati. Knowing that the Blessed One had accepted his invitation, Pratibhānamati was satisfied and content. He rejoiced and was truly delighted. Happy and joyful, he bowed his head to the feet of the Blessed One, circumambulated him three times, and departed together with his retinue.
- 1.90 When he arrived home, he bowed to the feet of his parents and told them with joined palms, “Father, Mother, I have something to tell you. I have invited he who is rare and supreme in the world, the unsurpassed being, the king of Dharma, he who has transcended the three realms, the Blessed One himself, to come and take his midday meal here with his congregation of monks. Out of compassion for us, he has accepted!”
- 1.91 Pratibhānamati’s father and mother were delighted and praised him, “Son, that is excellent! You have done well!” They were excited to venerate the Thus-Gone One.
- 1.92 Pratibhānamati then instructed his wife Padma and her servants, “My dear, please prepare fine food and drink with many hundreds of flavors for the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha and his retinue. Once the food has been prepared, scatter water, sweep the house, set up the canopies,

hang the silken tassels, scatter flower petals, [F.340.b] and perfume the environment with fragrant incense. Lay out seats befitting the Thus-Gone One and his congregation of monks. Once he has been received and the offerings laid before him at his feet, you should invite the sublime Blessed One to take his seat.”

1.93 Pratibhānamati came together with friends, dignitaries, kin, and elders, and they all did exactly as he said. The next morning the Blessed One left Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada’s park, and traveled together with the saṅgha of monks to Śrāvastī out of kindness for beings. They did so accompanied by miraculous displays manifested by the Thus-Gone One’s splendid magical powers. Gradually they made their way to Pratibhānamati’s home.

1.94 Pratibhānamati and his entourage greeted the Blessed One, received him as a guest, made offerings at his feet, and bowed their heads to his feet. He then entered the home along with his entourage. The Blessed One sat on an excellent cushion, which befitted him, and the congregation of monks took their appropriate seats. Pratibhānamati’s parents, close friends, friends, dignitaries, relatives, and elders were delighted and bowed down; they paid respect to the master and with great affection began to serve the Blessed One and the assembly of monks. Pratibhānamati, holding a bowl filled with flowers and scented water, sat in front of the Teacher.

1.95 At that time, two friends in anguish came to Pratibhānamati’s home. One of them sat among the saṅgha. However, as he did not ask all the monks whether he could partake of their food and drink [F.341.a] and, moreover, the Blessed One had not offered the meal prayer, nobody gave him anything. He became enraged and left, thinking, “Ah, nobody has given anything at all to me, the victim. These are terrible mendicants. Their minds are not peaceful, they have no compassion, and neither do they have loving minds. Giving to them is fruitless. Only foolish sponsors would give to that sort. If I were king, I would slice off all their heads with an iron disc.”

1.96 The other fellow, however, inquired whether the monks had abundant food and drink, and he approached after the Buddha had offered the meal prayer. He then received a satisfying abundance of food and drink, and was deeply contented. He went outside and thought, “Ah! These great mendicants who have given me, a sufferer, a satisfying abundance of food and drink are compassionate. They have peaceful minds and loving characters. This will satisfy me for a full week. It is a wise and fine patron who gives to such excellent objects of generosity. Such generosity bears great fruit. Excellent! If I were king, I would honor the saṅgha of monks, including the Buddha, through all means of service for seven days. May it be so!”

- 1.97 Then the Blessed One was served the midday meal. He cleaned his bowl, washed his hands, and then spoke to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, henceforth speak well of those who do not take food and drink.” Pratibhānamati and his entourage sat in front of the Blessed One, who gave them a delightful, [F.341.b] praiseworthy, applicable, and lucid Dharma talk that produced roots of virtue in a multitude of beings. Then he rose from his seat and went back to Jeta’s Grove.
- 1.98 Then, those two anguished men wandered about and thus ended up taking rest in different parts of the land. As they laid down, a canopy of clouds filled with lightning and wind hovered in the sky above the meritorious one, thus shading him. At that time, the king of that country passed away. Since there was no one else in the region who had sufficient royal qualities to be entrusted with the country, the citizens, including the merchants, townspeople, village folk, high ministers, ministers, guards, and retainers diligently inquired among diviners, soothsayers, and those skilled in the movements of the stars and planets as to who should become their king. The reply was, “There is a poor man who is qualified. He should become king.”
- 1.99 So they set out from the royal capital bearing a marvelous throne of incredible value—extensively ornamented and suitable for a king—along with a golden footstool. They carried white parasols with jeweled handles, fans with golden handles and jeweled tails, and many vases filled with perfumed water, as well as baskets of flowers, garlands of jewels, raiment, crowns, headwear and other such ornamentation, and fragrant powders. Accompanied by cymbals, drums, and singing, they searched everywhere for that impoverished man.
- 1.100 The diviner saw a region shrouded by a bank of clouds and said to them, “Friends, do you see that pleasant and clear region [F.342.a] covered by a dark circle of clouds?” They responded, “Friend, we see it!” The diviner said, “That is where the person with the royal attributes rests. His meritorious karma has caused those clouds to gather to shade him.” So they traveled to that spot, announcing themselves with cymbals and song. They bowed down and requested, “Accept the coronation and become our king!” The poor man objected, “How could it be that someone like me is fit to be king?” But they responded, “Because you are someone with merit. Do not say such things. It is undeniable that you must be king!” At that point he agreed.
- 1.101 They bade him sit down upon the marvelous seat and put his feet on the footrest. With all manner of auspiciousness, they raised him aloft and performed his coronation. They adorned him with a crown attired with a silk sash and other ornaments, hung a giant parasol over the front of the chariot, and cooled him with a golden-handled fan with a jeweled tail.

- 1.102 “Long live the king! May he be victorious!” Praises rang out from all sides as they led him to the royal capital. At the same time, the spinning wheel of the royal chariot cut off the head of the other beggar, who was lying there fast asleep. From then on, the meritorious man lived as the sovereign. His realm, moreover, was without epidemic or calamity. It abounded in wealth, development, well-being, and good harvests, and the land was filled with people and other beings. The king’s name became associated with being richly endowed with all positive qualities.
- 1.103 “*This prosperity,*” the king thought, “*is due to someone’s grace. What is the source of my dominion’s great fortune?*” Through the power of the Buddha, he remembered the entire confluence of his previous actions. Remembering accurately, he then sent a messenger to the Blessed One bearing the message, “*Blessed One, out of compassion for myself and many other beings, please come here!*” [F.342.b] After sending the messenger, he swept and sprinkled water on the entire road from Jeta’s Grove to his palace on which the Blessed One would travel. He also scattered flowers about, lined the way with parasols, victory banners, flags, and porticos, and fumigated it with incense.
- 1.104 Out of compassion, the Blessed One came. He was greeted by the king, townspeople, village folk, high ministers, ministers, guards, and retainers. They offered countless baskets filled with flowers, incense, flower garlands, ointments, and aromatic powders before the Blessed One’s feet. They collectively prostrated to the feet of the Blessed One and the assembly of monks. The king and his retinue honored the Blessed One as a spiritual teacher and, with the greatest possible admiration, requested the Blessed One and the assembly of monks to come to the palace, which was adorned with all kinds of jewels in the midst of a great park. For seven days they were honored with all manner of pleasing objects. The king served the Blessed One the midday meal and knew to clean his plate and wash his hands. Then, for the purpose of hearing the Dharma, he sat down with his entourage in front of the Blessed One.
- 1.105 He inquired, “*Blessed One, given that I was once lowly and poor, how is it that I have now gained this bountiful dominion?*”
- 1.106 The Blessed One responded, “*Great King, in the city of Śrāvastī, there is a sponsor known as Pratibhānamati. Previously, he invited the Buddha and the saṅgha of monks to his home for the midday meal.*” The Blessed One proceeded to relate the story of how the two anguished people [F.343.a] had arrived there and how the chariot’s wheel had sliced off the head of one of them, who then died and was reborn as a hell being. “*In his life there,*” the

Blessed One said, “his head continuously reappears, only to be cut off again by a flaming iron wheel. Only after ten million eons will he be freed from that state.

1.107 “You, however, have attained the splendor of kingship because you made the aspiration, ‘If I were to become a king, I would offer the Buddha and the assembly of monks the midday meal for a full week!’ And thus your intention was fulfilled. Henceforth, in all your limitless lives, because of your great excellence you will become a distinguished being.”

1.108 Then the Blessed One expressed this in verse:

1.109 “Because it is the source of evil in the world,
The mind is the root of all poison.
Because it is the source of negative speech,
The mouth is the very gate of evil.

1.110 “The mind thinks all kinds of things,
And what follows is the utterance of words.
The evil that speech and mind create
Is born in the body, begetting suffering.

1.111 “Without reflecting on benefit or harm,
The unintelligent act negatively.
Thus they become vessels of suffering
And in this way become afflicted.

1.112 “A wheel cuts off the head
Of an ignorant man with poor intellect
Who in his mind desired to sever
The heads of those who are wise.

1.113 “It is by the illustrious mind alone
That the virtue created by the merit of beings
Who are supported by the nectar of the virtuous Dharma
Leads to the heavenly realms.

1.114 “They speak words thoughtful and from the heart,
And thus their speech is good.
It is therefore through their bodies
That the treasury of merit is obtained.

1.115 “People who act with forethought
Decide between virtue and non-virtue.
So, if they engage in great merit,
They perennially become the best of gods.

- 1.116 “When the mind consistently relinquishes
Non-virtuous actions, [F.343.b]
Then people engage in merit with great delight
And avoid committing evil.
- 1.117 “Through countless millions of lives as gods or humans
They reach the state of the universal monarch
And have all the glories of kingship.
In doing so they are like you.
- 1.118 “Lord of Humans, always bear in mind
That existence is without any essence,
And strive ceaselessly
In the teachings of the Buddha.”
- 1.119 When the king heard this most excellent Dharma teaching from the Buddha, he experienced a supreme state of mind and, together with his retinue, attained the result of a stream enterer. Other beings, thousands in number, beheld the Blessed One and heard the Dharma. In this way they attained the many pleasures of gods and humans and aroused roots of virtue that accord with freedom. When the Blessed One had benefited and nurtured everyone present, he departed for Jeta’s Grove. Once back in the monastery, he sat down on the seat arranged for the Buddha in the assembly of monks.
- 1.120 He then spoke to the venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, bear this presentation of the Dharma in mind; memorize it, recite it, and teach it widely! Ānanda, those noble sons or daughters who uphold this Dharma teaching will receive a prophecy from the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Maitreya regarding the vehicle that accords with their aspirations.”
- 1.121 Venerable Ānanda then asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, what is the name of this Dharma teaching? What should we call it?”
- 1.122 The Blessed One said to Ānanda, “Ānanda, [F.344.a] you should know this Dharma teaching as *The Teaching That Clarifies Karma* and *The Questions of the Merchant Pratibhānamati*.”
- 1.123 Then the entire assembly including Venerable Ānanda, the monks, the bodhisattvas, Pratibhānamati and all his servants, along with the world of the gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, rejoiced and extolled what the Thus-Gone One had said.
- 1.124 *This completes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra entitled The Questions of Pratibhānamati.*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This sūtra was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman, the editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé, and others.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 See Robson 2009: 30–31. The Chinese translation was not referenced for this translation.
- n.2 Denkarma, folio 298.b.6. See also Herrmann-Pfandt (2008), p. 89, no. 164.
- n.3 Phangthangma, p. 14.
- n.4 Lithang, Narthang, Choné, and Lhasa read *sred pa*, meaning “craving,” or “thirst.” So, this line could also read, “They have gained certainty in freedom from the suffering of craving.”

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 acceptance that phenomena are unborn

mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa

མི་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་བཟོད་པ།

anutpattikadharmakṣānti

An attainment of effortless insight into emptiness and the lack of birth of phenomena. This attainment only occurs on the bodhisattva levels, variously said to occur on the first and eighth bodhisattva levels.

g.2 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.3 Anāthapiṇḍada

mgon med zas sbyin

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྤྱིན།

anāthapiṇḍada

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A wealthy merchant in the town of Śrāvastī, famous for his generosity to the poor, who became a patron of the Buddha Śākyamuni. He bought Prince Jeta's Grove (Skt. *Jetavana*), to be the Buddha's first monastery, a place where the monks could stay during the monsoon.

g.4 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A type of nonhuman being whose precise status is subject to different views, but is included as one of the six classes of beings in the sixfold classification of realms of rebirth. In the Buddhist context, asuras are powerful beings said to be dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility. They are also known in the pre-Buddhist and pre-Vedic mythologies of India and Iran, and feature prominently in Vedic and post-Vedic Brahmanical mythology, as well as in the Buddhist tradition. In these traditions, asuras are often described as being engaged in interminable conflict with the devas (gods).

g.5 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān · bhagavat

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 *√bhañj* (“to break”).

g.6 Dharma-Vinaya

chos 'dul ba

ཚོས་འདུལ་བ།

dharma-vinaya

The name for the canon of monastic discipline recorded in the Tripiṭaka, of the vows and commitments enshrined therein, and of the practice of that discipline.

g.7 five polluting degenerations

snyigs ma'i rnyog pa lnga

སྒྲིགས་མའི་རྫོག་པ་ལྔ།

—

Also known as “five contaminations or degenerations” (*sn̄yigs ma lnga, pañcakaṣāya*). They are: (1) degeneration of lifespan, (2) degeneration of view or thoughts, (3) degeneration of the five afflictions, (4) degeneration of sentient beings, (5) degeneration of time.

g.8 gandharva

dri za

དྷི་ཟ།

gandharva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of generally benevolent nonhuman beings who inhabit the skies, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds, and more specifically to dwell on the eastern slopes of Mount Meru, where they are under the jurisdiction of the Great King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They are most renowned as celestial musicians who serve the gods. In the Abhidharma, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by sentient beings during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances (*gandha*) in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

g.9 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྷིང་།

garuḍa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.10 god

lha

ལྷ།

deva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Cognate with the English term *divine*, the devas are most generally a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend and celebrate the teachings of Śākyamuni and other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In Buddhist cosmology the devas occupy the highest of the five or six “destinies” (*gati*) of saṃsāra among which beings take rebirth. The devas reside in the *devalokas*, “heavens” that traditionally number between twenty-six and twenty-eight and are divided between the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), form realm (*rūpadhātu*), and formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). A being attains rebirth among the devas either through meritorious deeds (in the desire realm) or the attainment of subtle meditative states (in the form and formless realms). While rebirth among the devas is considered favorable, it is ultimately a transitory state from which beings will fall when the conditions that lead to rebirth there are exhausted. Thus, rebirth in the god realms is regarded as a diversion from the spiritual path.

g.11 hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Sanskrit term *śrāvaka*, and the Tibetan *nyan thos*, both derived from the verb “to hear,” are usually defined as “those who *hear* the teaching from the Buddha and *make it heard* to others.” Primarily this refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat seeking their own liberation and nirvāṇa. They are the practitioners of the first turning of the wheel of the Dharma on the four noble truths, who realize the suffering inherent in saṃsāra and focus on understanding that there is no independent self. By conquering afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), they liberate themselves, attaining first the stage of stream enterers at the path of seeing, followed by the stage of once-returners who will be reborn only one more time, and then the stage of non-returners who will no longer be reborn into the desire realm. The final goal is to become an arhat. These four stages are also known as the “four results of spiritual practice.”

g.12 hell being

dmyal ba pa

དམྱལ་བ་པ།

nāraka

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, considered to be the karmic fruition of past anger and harmful actions. According to Buddhist tradition there are eighteen different hells, namely eight hot hells, eight cold hells, neighbouring and ephemeral hells, all of them tormented by increasing levels of unimaginable suffering.

g.13 hungry spirit

yi dwags

ཡི་དྲགས།

preta

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, considered to be the karmic fruition of past miserliness. They are particularly known to suffer from great hunger and thirst and the inability to acquire sustenance.

g.14 Jeta's Grove

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་གྱི་ཚལ།

jetavana

See "Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park."

g.15 Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་གྱི་ཚལ་མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་རབ།

jetavanam anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ

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 *Saṅghabhedavastu* 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.

g.16 **Kauverī**

lus ngan phyogs

ལུས་རན་ཕྱོགས།

kauverī

The term is used as a reference to the northern direction, which is governed by the deity Kubera.

g.17 **kinnara**

mi'am ci

མི་འམ་ཅི།

kinnara

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings that resemble humans to the degree that their very name—which means “is that human?”—suggests some confusion as to their divine status. Kinnaras are mythological beings found in both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, where they are portrayed as creatures half human, half animal. They are often depicted as highly skilled celestial musicians.

g.18 **Kubera**

lus ngan po

ལུས་རན་པོ།

kubera

An epithet for Vaiśravaṇa, the god of wealth.

g.19 **Lord of Death**

gshin rje

གཤིན་རྗེ།

yama

Ruler of the hell realms.

g.20 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱི་ཚེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally “great serpents,” mahoragas are supernatural beings depicted as large, subterranean beings with human torsos and heads and the lower bodies of serpents. Their movements are said to cause earthquakes, and they make up a class of subterranean geomantic spirits whose movement through the seasons and months of the year is deemed significant for construction projects.

g.21 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The bodhisattva Maitreya is an important figure in many Buddhist traditions, where he is unanimously regarded as the buddha of the future era. He is said to currently reside in the heaven of Tuṣita, as Śākyamuni’s regent, where he awaits the proper time to take his final rebirth and become the fifth buddha in the Fortunate Eon, reestablishing the Dharma in this world after the teachings of the current buddha have disappeared. Within the Mahāyāna sūtras, Maitreya is elevated to the same status as other central bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, and his name appears frequently in sūtras, either as the Buddha’s interlocutor or as a teacher of the Dharma.

Maitreya literally means “Loving One.” He is also known as Ajita, meaning “Invincible.”

For more information on Maitreya, see, for example, the introduction to *Maitreya’s Setting Out* (Toh 198).

g.22 mendicant

dge sbyong

དགེ་སྦྱོང་།

śramaṇa

A term used broadly to denote a spiritual seeker.

g.23 nāga

klu

ལྷ

nāga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments, where they guard wealth and sometimes also teachings. Nāgas are associated with serpents and have a snakelike appearance. In Buddhist art and in written accounts, they are regularly portrayed as half human and half snake, and they are also said to have the ability to change into human form. Some nāgas are Dharma protectors, but they can also bring retribution if they are disturbed. They may likewise fight one another, wage war, and destroy the lands of others by causing lightning, hail, and flooding.

g.24 Prajñāvarman

pra dz+nyA war ma

པའ་ལྷོ་ལྷ་མཚན་མཁའ་མཁའ་

prajñāvarman

An Indian Bengali paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late 8th / early 9th centuries. Arriving in Tibet on an invitation from 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 Tibetan Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*) collection.

g.25 Pratibhānamati

spobs pa'i blo gros

སྤྱོད་པའི་བོ་གློ་བུ་མཚན་མཁའ་མཁའ་

pratibhānamati

A merchant of the city of Śrāvastī who is the primary interlocutor in this sūtra.

g.26 purification ceremony

gso sbyong

གསོ་སྦྱང་།

poṣadha

A twice monthly ceremony performed by monks, nuns, and novices in which the ordained confess and remedy transgressions of their vows, thereby purifying and restoring the vows.

g.27 Śākyamuni

shAkyā thub pa

ལྷན་ལྷན་ལ།

śākyamuni

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

An epithet for the historical Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama: he was a *muni* (“sage”) from the Śākya clan. He is counted as the fourth of the first four buddhas of the present Good Eon, the other three being Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kāśyapa. He will be followed by Maitreya, the next buddha in this eon.

g.28 solitary buddha

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” (*khadgaviṣṇāṅkalpa*) for their preference for staying in solitude or as “congregators” (*vargacārin*) when their preference is to stay among peers.

g.29 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

མཉམ་ཡོད།

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.30 stream enterer

rgyun du zhugs pa

ལྷོན་དུ་ལྷུགས་པ།

srotāpanna

The first level of Noble Ones on the path of the hearers.

g.31 stūpa

mchod rten

མཚོད་རྟེན།

stūpa

Literally in the Tibetan, a support of veneration. Usually a heap or circular archeological structure containing relics of the masters of the past.

g.32 ten virtues

dge ba bcu

དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

daśakuśala

Abstaining from killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, lying, uttering divisive talk, speaking harsh words, gossiping, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

g.33 three poisons

dug gsum

དུག་གསུམ།

triviṣa

A collective term for desire, anger, and delusion

g.34 three realms

khams gsum

ཁམས་གསུམ།

tridhātu

The three realms are the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), form realm (*rūpadhātu*) and the formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*), i.e., the three worlds that make up *saṃsāra*. The first is composed of the six classes of beings (gods, asuras, humans, animals, hungry spirits and hell beings), whereas the latter two are only realms of gods and are thus higher, more ethereal states of *saṃsāra*.

g.35 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.36 trichiliocosm

stong gsum gyi stong chen po

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོ།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The largest universe described in Buddhist cosmology. This term, in Abhidharma cosmology, refers to 1,000³ world systems, i.e., 1,000 “dichiliocosms” or “two thousand great thousand world realms” (*dvisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu*), which are in turn made up of 1,000 first-order world systems, each with its own Mount Sumeru, continents, sun and moon, etc.

g.37 universal monarch

'khor lo sgyur ba'i rgyal po

འཁོར་ལོ་སྐུར་བའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

cakravartināja

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

An ideal monarch or emperor who, as the result of the merit accumulated in previous lifetimes, rules over a vast realm in accordance with the Dharma. Such a monarch is called a *cakravartin* because he bears a wheel (*cakra*) that rolls (*vartana*) across the earth, bringing all lands and kingdoms under his power. The cakravartin conquers his territory without causing harm, and his activity causes beings to enter the path of wholesome actions. According to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, just as with the buddhas, only one cakravartin appears in a world system at any given time. They are likewise endowed with the thirty-two major marks of a great being (*mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa*), but a cakravartin's marks are outshined by those of a buddha. They possess seven precious objects: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the wish-fulfilling gem, the queen, the general, and the minister. An illustrative passage about the cakravartin and his possessions can be found in *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 3.3–3.13.

Vasubandhu lists four types of cakravartins: (1) the cakravartin with a golden wheel (*suvarṇacakravartin*) rules over four continents and is invited by lesser kings to be their ruler; (2) the cakravartin with a silver wheel (*rūpyacakravartin*) rules over three continents and his opponents submit to him as he approaches; (3) the cakravartin with a copper wheel (*tāmracakravartin*) rules over two continents and his opponents submit themselves after preparing for battle; and (4) the cakravartin with an iron wheel (*ayaścakravartin*) rules over one continent and his opponents submit themselves after brandishing weapons.

g.38

yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གཞོན་སྒྱིན།

yakṣa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the jurisdiction of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.

Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just-mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.

g.39 Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

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.