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The Devatā Sūtra

Devatāsūtra

lha'i mdo

· Toh 329 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 72 (mdo sde, sa), folios 257.a–258.b



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co.

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SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 A radiant divine being appears before the Buddha shortly before dawn and asks a series of questions, in the form of riddles, about how best to live a good life. The Buddha's responses constitute a concise and direct teaching on some of the core orientations and values of Buddhism, touching on the three poisons, the virtues of body, speech, and mind, and providing wisdom for daily life.

ac.

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- 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. George FitzHerbert edited the translation and the introduction, and Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

In *The Devatā Sūtra*, a radiant divine being (Skt. *devatā*, Tib. *lha*) appears before the Buddha one night shortly before dawn and, in a series of verses, asks the Buddha questions about how to live, success and failure, the pursuit of happiness, and liberation. The Buddha's simple and direct responses to these enduring questions present an eloquent introduction to the core ethical values of Buddhism and a concise guide to daily life. The sūtra is extant in many manuscripts from the first millennium CE, in Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan.

i.2

There are two Sanskrit witnesses. A full version of the sūtra, which matches the Tibetan translation quite closely, is included among the Gilgit Buddhist manuscripts discovered in 1931 in present-day northern Pakistan.¹ Written in the proto-Śāradā script, the manuscript is dated between the sixth to eighth centuries CE. Sanskrit editions of the sūtra that are based on this manuscript have been published by two contemporary scholars.² The sūtra is also included as one of the twenty sūtras in an undated Sanskrit manuscript written in the Dhārikā script and preserved in the Potala Palace, Lhasa.³ A comparative critical edition based on this manuscript, which also presents the parallel Tibetan and Chinese texts along with an English translation, has been published by Bhikṣuṇī Vinītā.⁴ While the Gilgit manuscript corresponds quite closely in length and content to the Tibetan translation found in the Kangyur, the Potala Palace Sanskrit manuscript contains five additional ślokas at the beginning and two ślokas toward the end that are not found in the Tibetan.

i.3

A Chinese translation of *The Devatā Sūtra* was completed by Xuanzang in 648 CE and is included in the Chinese canon (Taishō 592). It is slightly shorter than both the Tibetan and Sanskrit witnesses. Over twenty manuscripts containing the sūtra in Chinese are among the manuscripts retrieved from the cave library at Dunhuang, and many illustrations of the sūtra have been identified among the murals of the cave complex there.⁵

- i.4 The Tibetan translation of *The Devatā Sūtra* has no colophon, making its translation history uncertain. However, in both the Denkarma (*Idan dkar ma*)⁶ and Phangthangma (*'phang thang ma*)⁷ imperial catalogs, it is listed among translated “Hīnayāna” (Tib. *theg pa chung ngu*) sūtras, so its translation into Tibetan was no later than the early ninth century CE. An attribution to the great translator Yeshé Dé has been suggested, based on the listing in Butön’s *History of Buddhism*. However, that citation may just refer to *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* (Toh 330),⁸ which immediately follows it in Kangyur collections.⁹ Jonathan Silk has listed *The Devatā Sūtra* among “questionable cases” that may have been translated into Tibetan from Chinese.¹⁰ There is a close correspondence between the Tibetan and Chinese in the opening narrative, and in the first seven exchanges (or fourteen verses) in the latter part of the sūtra. However, the Tibetan and Chinese also diverge, and the Tibetan contains two exchanges (exchanges 8 and 10 below) that are not found in the Chinese at all but are found in the extant Sanskrit witnesses. This indicates that a translation from Sanskrit (or perhaps from both languages) is more likely. In Sanskrit, each verse consists of two sixteen-syllable lines. The Tibetan is presented in four-line verses (each consisting of two couplets) of seven-syllable lines.
- i.5 Two short suttas entitled *Devatāsutta* contained in the Aṅguttara Nikāya of the Pali canon (AN 9.19 and AN 6.69) do not correspond in content to this text.¹¹
- i.6 The versions of the sūtra found in Kangyurs of the Tshalpa line are largely in agreement and contain only minor orthographic variation. The versions in Kangyurs of the Thempangma line, however, display more significant variation. The Stok Palace Kangyur version, for example, gives the Sanskrit title as *Devasūtra* and presents the verses and their contents in a different order.
- i.7 The sūtra is found in three Tibetan manuscripts retrieved from the cave library at Dunhuang, Pelliot tibétain 103, 731, and 732. These versions display considerable variation, indicative of their compilation prior to the creation of a Tibetan canon. While the Kangyur versions of the sūtra, like the Gilgit manuscript, have no parallel for the first five verses found in the Sanskrit Potala Palace manuscript, Pelliot tibétain 731 has versions of two of these extra opening verses.¹² Pelliot tibétain 732, in which the sūtra’s title is given as *lhas gsold pa'i mdo*, presents an alternative version with a number of interesting features, some of which, according to Bhikṣuṇī Vinītā, find parallel in the Gondlha manuscript version.¹³
- i.8 One exchange in particular from the sūtra continues to be well known and frequently quoted:

- “The divine being asked:
- i.9 “ ‘What is attractive but not beneficial,
And what is beneficial but not attractive?
What is a harmful disease,
And who, the supreme physician?’
- “The Blessed One replied:
- i.10 “ ‘Lust is attractive but not beneficial,
And liberation is beneficial but not attractive.
Attachment is a harmful disease,
And the Buddha is the supreme physician.’ ”
- i.11 An early English translation of the sūtra from Chinese was published by Carus (1894). This English translation was made from the Tibetan text as found in the Degé Kangyur, with reference to the Tibetan variants recorded in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*), the Stok Palace Kangyur, and the Tibetan Dunhuang manuscripts. The Sanskrit was also consulted. Where significant alternative readings have been identified, this has been recorded in the notes.

The Devatā Sūtra

1.

The Translation

[F.257.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in Śrāvastī, [F.257.b] in the Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park.¹⁴ One night, shortly before the waking hour,¹⁵ a beautiful divine being came before the Blessed One, paid homage by bowing its head to the feet of the Blessed One, and sat down to one side. By the power of that divine being, the whole of Jetavana was suffused with a great light.

At that time, the divine being made an inquiry with the following verses:¹⁶

1.2 "What is the sharpest weapon?¹⁷
What is the deadliest poison?¹⁸
What is the fiercest fire?
What is the blackest darkness?"¹⁹

1.3 The Blessed One replied:

1.4 "A harsh word is the sharpest weapon,
Attachment the deadliest poison.
Hatred is the fiercest fire,
And ignorance the blackest darkness."

1.5 The divine being asked:

1.6 "What does a person possess,
And what is left behind here?
In this life, what is indestructible armor,
And what is the sharpest weapon?"

1.7 The Blessed One replied:

- 1.8 "What you give away is what you possess,
And what you keep at home is what you leave behind.
Patience is the indestructible armor,
And in this life, wisdom is the sharpest weapon."
- 1.9 The divine being asked:
- 1.10 "Who is it that is called 'thief,'
And what is the wealth of the holy?
In this world of gods and humans,
Who are called 'the deceived'?"
- 1.11 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.12 "Conceptual thought is the skillful thief,
And ethical discipline is the wealth of the holy.
Those who fail in ethical discipline²⁰
Are the deceived of this world."
- 1.13 The divine being asked:
- 1.14 "What is it that is called 'happiness,'
And who are the mighty and holy?²¹
Who are forever adorned,
And please tell, who are the scorned?"
- 1.15 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.16 "Those who desire little will know happiness,
And those who are content are the mighty and holy.
Those with discipline are forever adorned,
And those of weak discipline are the scorned."
- 1.17 The divine being asked: [F.258.a]
- 1.18 "Who is the affectionate relative,
And who is the enemy with hateful intent?
What is unbearable suffering,
And what, the supreme happiness?"
- 1.19 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.20 "Merit is the affectionate relative,
And negative deeds are the enemy with hateful intent.
The sufferings of hell are unbearable,²²
And the absence of aggregates, the supreme happiness."

- 1.21 The divine being asked:
- 1.22 “What is attractive but not beneficial,
And what is beneficial but not attractive?
What is a harmful disease,
And who, the supreme physician?”
- 1.23 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.24 “Lust is attractive but not beneficial,
And liberation is beneficial but not attractive.
Attachment is a harmful disease,
And the Buddha is the supreme physician.”
- 1.25 The divine being asked:
- 1.26 “By what is this world obscured,
And by what is it dominated?
By what are friends separated,
And what prevents progress to higher realms?”
- 1.27 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.28 “This world is obscured by lack of understanding,
And is dominated by delusion.
Friends are separated by greed,
And attachment prevents progress to higher realms.”
- 1.29 The divine being asked:
- 1.30 “What increases friends?²³
And what pacifies enemies?
How will higher realms be attained,
And how will liberation occur?”
- 1.31 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.32 “Through generosity,²⁴ friends are increased,
And through love, enemies are pacified.
Through ethical discipline, higher realms are attained,
And with understanding, liberation will occur.”
- 1.33 The divine being asked:
- 1.34 “When kings and thieves
Exert great effort,

- What is it that cannot be plundered
From any man or woman?"
- 1.35 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.36 "Even if kings and thieves
Exert great effort, [F.258.b]
Merit²⁵ cannot be plundered
From any man or woman."
- 1.37 The divine being asked:
- 1.38 "What fetters this world,²⁶
And what releases this world?
What, when abandoned,
Leads to the attainment of that called *nirvāṇa*?"
- 1.39 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.40 "Desire fetters this world,
And the absence of desire releases it.
If craving is completely abandoned,
That which is called *nirvāṇa* is attained."
- 1.41 The divine being asked:
- 1.42 "What is not destroyed even by a strong wind,
Nor burned by fire?
Even if the entire ground is inundated,
What is not spoiled by water?"
- 1.43 The Blessed One replied:
- 1.44 "Merit is not destroyed, even by strong wind,
Nor burned by fire.
Even if the entire ground is inundated,
Merit is not spoiled by water."
- 1.45 The divine being asked:
- 1.46 "Who, greatly deceived,
Goes from this world to the next?
You indeed are the one
To dispel this doubt of mine."
- 1.47 The Blessed One replied:

- 1.48 “Whoever possesses wealth,
But does not accumulate merit,
They, being greatly deceived,
Go from this world to the next.”
- 1.49 The divine being said:²⁷
- 1.50 “Aha! I have finally seen
A powerful brahmin who has transcended the world,
Who is free from all fears,²⁸
Who has passed completely beyond sorrow.”
- 1.51 After the Blessed One had spoken thus, the divine being rejoiced. It paid
homage by bowing its head at the feet of the Blessed One, rejoiced, and
disappeared.
- 1.52 *This completes “The Devatā Sūtra.”*

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- AN* Aṅguttaranikāya (“Numbered Discourses” of the Pali canon)
D Degé edition Kangyur
GBM Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts (see Vira and Chandra eds. 1974)
PP Potala Palace Manuscript (see Bhikṣuṇī Vinītā ed. 2010)
Q Peking (Qianlong) edition Kangyur
S Stok Palace edition Kangyur
Y Peking (Yongle) edition Kangyur

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Published in facsimile by Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra as *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts*. For this text, see Vira and Chandra (eds.), Part 7 (1974), pp. 1542–44.
- n.2 Mette 1981; Matsumura 1982.
- n.3 *The Devatā Sūtra* is the seventh sutra included in this manuscript.
- n.4 Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, vol. I.1, pp. 260–303.
- n.5 Tan Chung (ed.) 1994.
- n.6 Denkarma, folio 301.a; Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 161.
- n.7 Phangthangma 2003, pp. 18, 22 (listed twice). 37 ślokas.
- n.8 *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh330.html>) (translated 2023).
- n.9 *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* carries a colophon attributing the translation to Yeshé Dé, whereas this text does not. The way Butön lists them together in his *History* leaves an element of ambiguity, leading Herrmann-Pfandt to attribute the translation of both to Yeshé Dé. Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 161; Butön, p. 919.
- n.10 Silk 2019, pp. 239–40.
- n.11 For an English translation of the Pali *Devatāsutta*, see Bhikkhu Bodhi 2012. Also SuttaCentral: (AN 9.19 (<https://suttacentral.net/an9.19/en/sujato?layout=plain&reference=none¬es=asterisk&highlight=false&script=latin>) / AN 6.69 (<https://suttacentral.net/an6.69/en/sujato?layout=plain&reference=none¬es=asterisk&highlight=false&script=latin>)).

- n.12 See Pelliot tibétain 731: verses 1–2. Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, p. 271.
- n.13 Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, p. 261.
- n.14 The Sanskrit of the Potala Palace manuscript adds “together with a great assembly of one thousand two hundred and fifty monks.” Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, pp. 262–4. This is not found in the Gilgit Sanskrit manuscript.
- n.15 D: *mi nyal tsam*. Pelliot tibétain 732: *nam nangs pa dang*, Skt. *atīkrāntāyāṃ rātrau*. Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, p. 267: “when the night was far gone”; also notes “in the 2nd or 3rd watch.”
- n.16 In the Stok Palace version, each verse of questions from the divine being (*lha*) is prefaced with the vocative phrase *kye bcom ldan 'das* (“O Blessed One”).
- n.17 The first verse in the Tibetan corresponds to the first verse in the Gilgit manuscript, and to the first verse in the Chinese (Taishō 592 (https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T0592_001)), but to the sixth verse in the Sanskrit Potala Palace manuscript. Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, pp. 267–73.
- n.18 Lit. “What is the *hālāhala* poison?” *Hālāhala* poison refers to a potent snake venom that connotes the most lethal of poisons.
- n.19 While the comparative construction is only implicit in the Degé Kangyur version, it is explicit in the alternative translation found in the Dunhuang manuscript Pelliot tibétain 732: *mtshon kyi nang na rno ba gang/ dug gi [...] pa gang/ mye'i nang na tsha ba gang/ mun pa'i nang na gnag pa gang*.
- n.20 *gang dag tshul khriṃs log lhung byas*. Alternatively, “those who fall into perverse morality.”
- n.21 Here the Stok Palace ordering of verses and lines diverges from that of the Degé and Tshalpa-line Kangyurs. The Stok Palace version presents lines here which in the Degé recension come later: “What is a harmful disease?”; “Who is the enemy with hateful intent?”; and “What are the sufferings of hell?” All of these form part of later exchanges in the Degé recension. The Buddha’s responses in the next verse likewise diverge (with the Stok Palace version reading “Attachment is a harmful disease”; “Negative deeds are the enemy with hateful intent”; “The sufferings of hell are unbearable”). The Stok Palace version then continues with a series of exchanges, which are found later in the Degé version, as follows: exchange 8 (1.29), followed by exchange 7, exchange 9, and exchange 11 (1.25, 1.33, and 1.41, respectively), and finally an exchange without parallel in the Degé. S folios 292.a–293.a.

- n.22 Following D: *mi bzod* (“unbearable”); Y, Q: *mi zad* (“inexhaustible”).
- n.23 This set of questions and answers is not found in the Chinese (Taishō 592) but is found in Tibetan and in both Sanskrit witnesses (GBM and PP). See Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, pp. 288–89.
- n.24 Here “generosity” translates *gtong ba* (Skt. *tyāga*), which generally denotes “giving up,” “sacrifice” or “renunciation,” but can also mean “giving away,” or liberality and generosity in general. This however is to be distinguished from the bodhisattva perfection denoted by the term *sbyin pa* (Skt. *dāna*).
- n.25 Here following the Sanskrit (GBM and PP) *punya*, and Dunhuang manuscript Pelliot tibétain 732 (line 22 *bsod nams*), rather than the Degé Kangyur (and other Kangyurs of the Tshalpa line), which here read “ethical discipline” (*tshul khrims*). The Stok Palace Kangyur version has the alternative answer, “dharma” (*chos nyid*), S folio 293.a.
- n.26 This set of questions and answers is not found in the Chinese (Taishō 592) but is found in Tibetan and in both Sanskrit witnesses (GBM and PP). See Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, pp. 290–91.
- n.27 The Sanskrit Potala Palace manuscript (PP) here has two additional Sanskrit verses that are not included in the Gilgit manuscript (GBM), nor in the Tibetan or Chinese translations. Bhikṣuṇī Vinīta 2010, p. 298–99.
- n.28 Tib. *'jigs pa kun las 'das gyur cing*, Skt. *sarvavairabhayātītaṃ tīrṇam*. The Tibetan of *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* (Toh 330) ends with a similar refrain but is translated *dgra dang 'jigs pa kun 'das shing* (“free from all enemies and fears”).

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 aggregate

phung po

ཕུང་པོ།

skandha^{AS}

Lit. a “heap” or “pile.” The five aggregates of form, feeling, perception, volitional factors, and consciousness. On the individual level the five aggregates refer to the basis upon which the mistaken idea of a self is projected.

g.2 attachment

'dod chags

འདོད་ཆགས།

rāga ^{AS}

Passion; desire. One of three root poisons (Tib. *dug gsum*, Skt. *triviṣa*) that bind beings to cyclic existence.

g.3 Blessed One

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān ^{AS}

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 conceptual thought

rnam rtog

རྣམ་རྟོག།

vitarka ^{AS}

Discursive or conceptual thought which obscures awareness of the ultimate nature.

g.5 craving

sred pa

སྲེད་པ།

tṛṣṇā ^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Eighth of the twelve links of dependent origination. Craving is often listed as threefold: craving for the desirable, craving for existence, and craving for nonexistence.

g.6 **deadliest poison**

ha la ha la'i dug

ཧ་ལ་ཧ་ལ་འི་དུག

hālāhalaṃ viṣam ^{AS}

The term *hālāhala* refers to a kind of snake venom, renowned as the most lethal of poisons.

g.7 **desire**

'dod pa

འདོད་པ།

icchā ^{AS}

g.8 **divine being**

lha

ལྷ།

devatā ^{AS}

In Sanskrit and Pali, *devatā* is an abstract noun referring to divine beings, or “the state of being a deity.” Any being who is worshiped or to whom offerings are made may be called a *devatā*. Therefore, it can encompass not only the gods (*deva*) of the higher heavenly realms (*devaloka*), but also any earthly forces, spirits, animals, or any beings, including religious mendicants, who are the objects of worship. Often it refers simply to the gods (Skt. *deva*, Tib. *lha*) of the higher realms.

g.9 **ethical discipline**

khirms · tshul khirms

ཁྲིམས། · རྒྱུ་ཁྲིམས།

śīla ^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Morally virtuous or disciplined conduct and the abandonment of morally undisciplined conduct of body, speech, and mind. In a general sense, moral discipline is the cause for rebirth in higher, more favorable states, but it is

also foundational to Buddhist practice as one of the three trainings (*triśikṣā*) and one of the six perfections of a bodhisattva. Often rendered as “ethics,” “discipline,” and “morality.”

g.10 harsh words

tshig rtsub

ཚིག་རུབ།

duṣṭā vāc ^{AS}

Harsh words are the sixth of the ten nonvirtues (*mi dge ba bcu*).

g.11 hatred

zhe sdang

ཞེ་སྤང།

dveṣa ^{AS}

One of three root poisons (Tib. *dug gsum*, Skt. *triviṣa*) that bind beings to cyclic existence.

g.12 hell

dmyal ba

དམྱལ་བ།

nāraka ^{AS}

One of the five or six realms of sentient beings. Birth in hell is 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 and eight cold hells, as well as neighboring and ephemeral hells, all of them tormented by increasing levels of unimaginable suffering.

g.13 Jetavana

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་གྱི་ཚལ།

jetavana

See “Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park.”

g.14 Jetavana, 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་སྦྱོན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

jetavanam anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ ^{AO}

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.

g.15 liberation

thar pa

ཐར་པ།

mokṣa^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In its most general sense, this term refers to the state of freedom from suffering and cyclic existence, or saṃsāra, that is the goal of the Buddhist path. More specifically, the term may refer to a category of advanced meditative attainment such as those of the “eight liberations.”

g.16 love

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitrī^{AS}

First of the four immeasurable attitudes.

g.17 merit

bsod nams

བསོད་ནམས།

punya^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhism more generally, merit refers to the wholesome karmic potential accumulated by someone as a result of positive and altruistic thoughts, words, and actions, which will ripen in the current or future lifetimes as the experience of happiness and well-being. According to the Mahāyāna, it is important to dedicate the merit of one's wholesome actions to the awakening of oneself and to the ultimate and temporary benefit of all sentient beings. Doing so ensures that others also experience the results of the positive actions generated and that the merit is not wasted by ripening in temporary happiness for oneself alone.

g.18 negative deed

sdig pa

སྡིག་པ།

pāpa^{AS}

Deeds of body, speech, or mind, that have a negative impact on oneself and others, and lead to lower states of rebirth.

g.19 patience

bzod pa

བཟོད་པ།

kṣānti^{AS}

Patience or forbearance is the third of the Six Perfections.

g.20 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

སཱཱལ་ཡོད།

śrāvastī^{AS}

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.21 wisdom

shes rab

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā^{AS}

Wisdom, or insight into emptiness, is the sixth of the Six Perfections.

g.22 Xuanzang

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A great seventh-century Chinese scholar of Buddhism, Xuanzang journeyed overland from China to India on a pilgrimage to the holy places of the Buddha's life. He returned to China in 645 CE, bringing with him 657 Sanskrit manuscripts, of which this was one. With the support of the Tang Emperor Taizong, he established a large translation bureau in Chang'an (modern Xi'an) and spent the next nineteen years until his death translating them into Chinese.