

༄༅། །ལྷ་འཛོལ་ལྷ་སྐུ་ལྷ།

The Shorter Devatā Sūtra

Alpadevatāsūtra

lha'i mdo nyung ngu

· Toh 330 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 72 (mdo sde, sa), folios 258.b–259.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

· Bandé Yeshé Dé ·



Translated by the Pema Yeshé Dé Translation Team
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2023

Current version v 1.0.9 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.26.1

84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha is a global non-profit initiative to translate all the Buddha's words into modern languages, and to make them available to everyone.



This work is provided under the protection of a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution - Non-commercial - No-derivatives) 3.0 copyright. It may be copied or printed for fair use, but only with full attribution, and not for commercial advantage or personal compensation. For full details, see the Creative Commons license.

This print version was generated at 9.05pm on Thursday, 28th November 2024 from the online version of the text available on that date. If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time. For the latest online version, with bilingual display, interactive glossary entries and notes, and a variety of further download options, please see <https://84000.co/translation/toh330>.

co.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ti. Title
- im. Imprint
- co. Contents
- s. Summary
- ac. Acknowledgements
- i. Introduction
- tr. The Translation
 - 1. The Shorter Devatā Sūtra
- c. Colophon
- ab. Abbreviations
- n. Notes
- b. Bibliography
 - Tibetan
 - Sanskrit
 - Chinese
 - Related Texts
 - Western Languages
- g. Glossary

SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 While staying in Śrāvastī, the Buddha is approached by an unnamed “divine being,” who inquires as to what behavior merits rebirth in the higher realms. In response, the Buddha explains, in a series of concise and powerful verses, that abandoning each of the ten nonvirtues—killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, telling lies, slander, harsh words, idle talk, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views—and embracing their opposites, the ten virtues, will lead to rebirth in the higher realms.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 The sūtra was translated by Giuliano Proença, who also prepared the introduction, the glossary, and the notes. The English translation and ancillary materials were proofread by Daniela Espíndola. Thanks to Karin Kerb for making otherwise unavailable bibliographical material accessible to us.

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

The Shorter Devatā Sūtra (Skt. *Alpadevatāsūtra*, Tib. *lha'i mdo nyung ngu*) is a brief sūtra in which the Buddha, while staying in Śrāvastī, is approached by an unnamed divine being (Skt. *devatā*, Tib. *lha*), who inquires about what behavior merits rebirth in the higher realms. The Buddha replies with a series of simple and powerful verses in which he states that those who relinquish the ten nonvirtues of body, speech, and mind—killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, telling lies, slander, harsh words, idle talk, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views—and embrace their opposites, the ten virtues, here called “the tenfold path of the good Dharma”, will be reborn in the higher realms.

i.2

A Sanskrit manuscript fragment of the *Alpadevatāsūtra*, covering only the initial part of the sūtra, is found among the Gilgit Buddhist manuscripts discovered in 1931.¹ This fragment is written in the proto-Śāradā script that was in use from the seventh century CE and is mostly found in non-Mahāyāna texts. It is believed that the Gilgit manuscripts were written during the Palola Śāhi Dynasty (sixth to eighth century CE). In this manuscript, as in the Tshalpa Kangyurs, *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* appears immediately after *The Devatā Sūtra* (Toh 329),² which is slightly longer and shares the general framing narrative and the theme of rebirth in higher realms but is otherwise distinct. Both texts have been published in a number of modern Sanskrit editions, all based on the Gilgit manuscript.³ As compared to the Tibetan, the Sanskrit fragment of the *Alpadevatāsūtra* has a slightly longer prose introduction, specifying that the *devatā* who came before the Buddha was beautiful and arrived at night. Otherwise, the three extant Sanskrit stanzas that open the dialogue are very close to the first three verses in the Tibetan translation.

i.3

The Shorter Devatā Sūtra is extant in two Chinese translations, both of which are found in the Saṃyuktāgama, and are probably based on a Sanskrit text from the (Mūla)sarvāstivāda school. These are sūtra no. 1299 of the

Saṃyuktāgama (*Za a han jing* 雜阿含經, Taishō 99), which was translated by Guṇabhadra during the Song (宋) between 435–443 CE in Jiankang (today’s Nanjing);⁴ and sūtra no. 297 of what is known as the Alternative Saṃyuktāgama (*Bie yi za a han jing* 別譯雜阿含經, Taishō 100), which was translated earlier during the Three Qin (三秦) period, probably between 385–431 CE, by an unknown translator in the Gansu corridor.⁵ While the Sanskrit and Tibetan correspond in their parsing of the opening three verses, the second Sanskrit verse is instead found as a short prose passage in Taishō 99. However, the opening narrative in both Chinese translations aligns more closely with the Sanskrit than the Tibetan translation.

i.4 A colophon in Kangyurs of the Tshalpa lineage as well as the Narthang and Lhasa Kangyurs states that the sūtra was translated into Tibetan by the master translator Bandé Yeshé Dé, suggesting a translation from a Sanskrit source. The sūtra is listed among “Hīnayāna” (Tib. *theg pa chung ngu*) sūtras in the Denkarma imperial catalog,⁶ as well as in the Phangthangma catalog,⁷ confirming that it was translated no later than the early ninth century CE.

i.5 Although no copy of *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* is found among the manuscripts recovered from the cave library at Dunhuang, we know that the teaching on the ten virtues (Tib. *dge ba bcu*) had considerable prominence in the Tibetan imperial period, when it was established as a public code of ethics that would lay the foundation for Tibetan law (*khirims*) for centuries to come.⁸

i.6 *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* has been the object of Western scholarly attention since the end of the nineteenth century, when a full French translation from the Tibetan was published by Léon Feer in his *Extraits du Kandjour*,⁹ together with a short introduction on the subject of the ten virtues. Most modern scholarly attention on the sūtra has been concerned with the Gilgit manuscript. Adelheid Mette published a Sanskrit edition of the fragmentary *Shorter Devatā Sūtra* along with *The Devatā Sūtra* (Toh 329), in which the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts are compared, and a partial German translation from the Tibetan is presented. Soon after that publication, Hisashi Matsumura published further Sanskrit editions of the same texts in two separate articles, also based on the facsimile edition of the Gilgit manuscripts, and improving on Mette’s editions.¹⁰ The second of these articles (Matsumura 1983) presents *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* with the Sanskrit and Chinese (Taishō 99) texts placed side by side, and in those portions of the text where the Sanskrit is not extant, with the Tibetan and Chinese side by side. Differences are highlighted and references are also made to some textual parallels identified by Fumio Enomoto, such as two corresponding verses in the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada*.¹¹

- i.7 *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra* is found in the General Sūtra (*mdo sde*) section in all Kangyurs of the Tshalpa line, the mixed line, Hemis I, and in the independent Kangyurs, such as the Phukdrak, Langdo, and Namgyal. It is also included in some collections from Western Tibet, such as Tholing and Gondhla. However, it is missing from the Kangyurs of the Thempangma lineage.
- i.8 The Tibetan title, in all editions, is *lha'i mdo nyung gu*, but the various Kangyurs offer three variants on its Sanskrit title. In most Kangyurs of the Tshalpa line, the title is *Alpadevatāsūtra*, while the Qianlong and Kangxi have *Albalbadevatasūtra* and *Alpalbadevatasūtra* (*sic* for *Alpālpadevatāsūtra*) respectively, meaning *The Very Short Devatā Sūtra*. The Yongle, Hemis I, and independent Kangyurs have *Svalpadevatāsūtra*, also meaning *The Shorter Devatā Sūtra*.
- i.9 This translation is based on the Tibetan as found in the General Sūtra (*mdo sde*) section of the Degé Kangyur, in consultation with the variants recorded in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*), and other editions such as the Phukdrak, Hemis I, and Gondhla. All significant variations have been recorded in the notes. Matsumura's annotated edition of the Sanskrit fragment among the Gilgit manuscripts as well as the parallel verses of the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada* have also been consulted, and where differences with the Tibetan are apparent this has also been recorded in the notes. Léon Feer's French translation, and Adelheid Mette's partial German translation were also consulted.

The Shorter Devatā Sūtra

1.

The Translation

[F.258.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying in Śrāvastī, in the Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park, [F.259.a] when a divine being¹² approached the Blessed One, paid homage by bowing its head to the feet of the Blessed One, and sat down to one side.¹³ Thereupon the divine being asked the Blessed One:¹⁴

1.2 “With what discipline, what conduct,
What qualities, what actions,
What manner of living, and what wisdom
Do beings go to the higher realms?”

1.3 Touched by compassion for the divine being,
The Teacher told him:
“O divine being, listen to me!
These beings go to the higher realms:

1.4 “Those who turn back from killing,
Who uphold the law¹⁵ and delight in restraint,
Who do not harm any beings—
Those beings go to the higher realms.¹⁶

1.5 “Those who abandon taking what is not given
And always delight in giving,
Who abandon stealing and do not steal—
Those beings go to the higher realms.

1.6 “Those who do not approach the spouses of others,¹⁷
Who abandon sexual misconduct,

- Who are satisfied with their spouses—
Those beings go to the higher realms.
- 1.7 “Those who do not tell lies,
Either to steal in the interest of others,¹⁸
Or for their own sake, or out of fear—
Those beings go to the higher realms.
- 1.8 “Those who give up slander,
Which constantly separates¹⁹ friends,
And delight in appreciation²⁰—
Those beings go to the higher realms.
- 1.9 “Those who abandon²¹ hurtful harsh words,
Spoken with contempt,
And who speak with gentle words—
Those beings go to the higher realms.
- 1.10 “Those who abandon
Meaningless and idle talk,
And when appropriate, expound the Dharma—
Those beings go to the higher realms.
- 1.11 “Either in villages or in remote places,²²
Those who do not have any desire
To claim another’s possessions as their own—
Those beings go to the higher realms.
- 1.12 “Those who, with a loving mind,
Do not hurt, and without ill will
Do not harm any being—
Those beings go to the higher realms.
- 1.13 “Those who have confidence and faith
In both karma and the ripening of karma,
And truly hold the correct view—
Those beings go to the higher realms. [F.259.b]
- 1.14 “These virtuous qualities
Are the tenfold path of the good Dharma.
Those beings who truly uphold them
Will go to the higher realms.
- 1.15 “I do not see many brāhmaṇas who have attained nirvāṇa,
Who have overcome all enemies and fears,

Who have crossed over,
Free from attachment to the world."²³

1.16 After the Blessed One had spoken thus, the divine being rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.17 *Thus concludes "The Shorter Devatā Sūtra."*

c.

Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the senior editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- C* Choné Kangyur
D Degé Kangyur
F Phukdrak MS Kangyur
Go Gondhla Proto-Kangyur
H Lhasa Kangyur
He Hemis I MS Kangyur
K Peking (*pe cin*) Kangxi Kangyur
Mat. Matsumura's Sanskrit edition (1983)
N Narthang Kangyur
Y Peking Yongle Kangyur

NOTES

n.

- n.1 Published in facsimile by Raghu Vira and Lokesh Chandra Vira as *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts*. For the *Alpadevatāsūtra*, see Raghu and Lokesh Chandra, eds. (1974), Part 7, folio 1545, lines 3 to 8.
- n.2 *The Devatā Sūtra* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh329.html>) (translated 2023).
- n.3 Mette 1981, pp. 139–51; Matsumura 1982; Matsumura 1983.
- n.4 See Bingenheimer 2011, p. 44.
- n.5 See Bingenheimer 2011, p. 6.
- n.6 Denkarma, folio 301.a; Hermann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 164–65.
- n.7 Phangthangma 2003, p. 22.
- n.8 In Tibetan historiographic tradition, Songtsen Gampo (Tib. *srong btsan sgam po*), known in earlier sources as Tri Songtsen (Tib. *khri srong btsan*), is said to have established the law (Tib. *khri ms*) proscribing the ten nonvirtues in the seventh century CE. In the early ninth century, the emperor Ralpachen (Tib. *ral pa can*) commanded a text on the ten nonvirtues to be copied in every corner of the empire. This may have been the teaching found in a number of extant copies from Dunhuang (such as IOL Tib J 606), a text that has been discussed by Van Schaik that was not included during the later compilation of the Kangyur and Tengyur. See Van Schaik 2016, pp. 13–27.
- n.9 See Feer 1883, pp. 189–91.
- n.10 The first article (Matsumura 1982) presents an edition of the *Devatāsūtra*, along with general remarks on both texts, improving upon Mette’s edition. The second (Matsumura 1983) also includes the *Alpadevatāsūtra*.

- n.11 Enomoto (1982, pp. 79–82) examines verses 343 and 344 of the Gāndhārī *Dharmapada*, comparing them with the setting and the first verse of the Chinese version of *The Short Devatāsūtra*, as found in Taishō 99, which share the same content and have many elements in common, even in their wording. A similar narrative is also observed in the *Mahābhārata* (13.132.3–37), in a dialogue between Maheśvara and the goddess Umā when the goddess asks Maheśvara about the causes of being reborn in heaven. Enomoto also compares this, in content and wording, to the Chinese (sūtra no. 1299) from Taishō 99.
- n.12 Skt. (Mat.) has, in addition, *atīkrāntavarṇā atīkrāntāyāṃ rātryāṃ* (“of beautiful appearance, when the night was through”).
- n.13 Skt. (Mat.) has, in addition, *apīdānīṃ tasyā devatāyā varṇānubhāvena sarvaṃ jetavanam udāreṇāvabhāsenā sphuṭam abhūt* (“At this moment, through the power of the divine being’s appearance, the whole of Jetavana became filled with exalted splendor”). This accords with the framing narrative of *The Devatā Sūtra* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh329.html>) (Toh 329).
- n.14 Skt. (Mat.) reads *sā devatā tasyāṃ velāyāṃ gāthāṃ bhāṣate* (“At this moment, the divine being utters this verse”).
- n.15 Dkhrims *bzung yang dag sdom la dga’*. The Sanskrit fragment (Mat.) here reads *suśīlāḥ saṃnyame ratāḥ*. So *khrims bzung* appears to be a corruption of *khrims bzang*, “good law,” “good custom,” or “good ethics,” as a rendering of *suśīlāḥ*. F (Phukdrak Kangyur, folio 119.b) here reads *khrims bsrung* (“will protect the law”). In translating *khrims* here as “law,” rather than as “discipline” or “ethics,” (as would be merited by the Sanskrit *śīla*), we have opted to retain the Tibetan referentiality of the term *khrims*, since by Tibetan tradition the ten virtues were enshrined as the foundation of law (*khrims*), both secular and monastic (*rgyal khrims* and *chos khrims*), from the Tibetan imperial period onward.
- n.16 The Sanskrit fragment (Mat.) ends with this verse. This verse is quoted in full by Desi Sangyé Gyatso in his biography of the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Losang Gyatso (1617–82). See Ngawang Losang Gyatso, pp. 471–72.
- n.17 Tib. *gzhan gyi chung ma’i thad mi ’gro* (“approach the wives of others”). In the English translation, we have preferred the less gender-specific “spouses.”
- n.18 F and He here read *gzhan gyi nor la rku bya dang* (“to steal the wealth of others”). Go has *gzhan gyi don la mgu bya* (“to satisfy the interest of others”).

- n.19 F and He here read *grog s po rtag par dbyen byed pa*, with the similar meaning “that constantly creates discord among friends.”
- n.20 Go here reads *gang dag dum par rab dga’ ba* (“those who delight in concord”).
- n.21 Reading with Ky, K, N, C, H *spong*, as in previous verses. D here reads *sbyong* (“purify, refine”), which appears to be a scribal error. See Mahāvyutpatti no. 1692: *pāruṣyāt prativiratīḥ–tshig rtsub po smra ba spong ba*.
- n.22 *dgon pa na*. The term *dgon pa*, here is most likely translating the Sanskrit *araṇya*, meaning “remote place” or “wilderness.” This would later become the standard Tibetan term for “monastery.”
- n.23 In Taishō 99, sūtra no. 1299, and Taishō 100, sūtra no. 297, this final verse is uttered by the *devatā*. It also corresponds loosely with the final verse spoken by the *devatā* in *The Devatā Sūtra* (Toh 329) 1.17: *cirasya bata paśyāmi brāhmaṇaṃ parinirvṛtam sarvavairabhayātitaṃ tīrṇaṃ loke viṣaktikām* (“Oh! After a long time, I see a brāhmaṇa who has attained nirvāṇa, who has left all enmity and fears behind, and who has gone beyond attachment to the world”). Nearly all sūtras of Taishō 99 and Taishō 100 have this verse at the end. Note that Sanskrit and Chinese attestations of this verse, and the Tibetan of Toh 329, do not include “I do not see many,” as found in this text. This indicates the iteration of the verse in the present text may be a corruption. In the Pali canon, a similar verse is found only once, in SN 1.1. See also *Great Upholder of the Secret Mantra* 1.29 (Toh 563). For more on this verse, see Choong 2011, pp. 68–69.

b.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

· Tibetan ·

- lha'i mdo nyung ngu. (Alpadevatāsūtra)*. Toh 330, Degé Kangyur vol. 72 (mdo sde, sa), folios 258.b–259.b.
- lha'i mdo nyung ngu. bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma)* [Comparative Edition of the Kangyur], krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang (The Tibetan Tripitaka Collation Bureau of the China Tibetology Research Center). 108 volumes. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House), 2006-9, vol. 72, pp. 739–42.
- lha'i mdo nyung ngu*. Gondhla Collection vol. 25, folios 83.b–84.a.
- lha'i mdo nyung ngu*. Hemis I MS Kangyur vol. 78 (mdo, ngi), folios 109.b–111.a.
- lha'i mdo nyung ngu*. Phukdrak MS Kangyur vol. 70 (mdo sde, tsa), folios 119.a–120.a.
- lha'i mdo (Devatāsūtra)*. Toh 329, Degé Kangyur vol. 72 (mdo sde, sa), folios 257.a–258.b. English translation *The Devatā Sūtra* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh329.html>) 2023.
- gsang sngags chen po rjes su 'dzin pa'i mdo (Mahāmantrānūdhāriṅśūtra)* [Great Upholder of the Secret Mantra]. Toh 563, Degé Kangyur vol. 90 (rgyud 'bum, pha), folios 150.b–156.a. English translation in Dharmachakra Translation Committee (2016).
- Phangthangma (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*). Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003.
- Ngawang Losang Gyatso (ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho). *gsung 'bum ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho* [Collected Works of Ngawang Losang Gyatso]. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2009, vol. 8, pp. 471–72.

· Sanskrit ·

- Braarvig, Jens, ed. “Mahāvvyutpatti with sGrasbyor bam po gñis pa (<https://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/index.php?page=volume&vid=263>).” Bibliotheca Polyglotta, University of Oslo.
- Matsumura, Hisashi (1982). “Devatāsūtra と Alpadevatāsūtra.” *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū)* vol. 30, no. 2 (1982): 54–60.
- (1983). “ギルギット 写本備忘録.” (“Notes on the Gilgit Manuscripts”). *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (=Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū)* vol. 31, no. 2 (1983): 856–852.
- Mette, Adelheid. “Zwei kleine Fragmente aus Gilgit.” *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 7 (1981): 133–51.
- Vira, Raghu and Lokesh Chandra, eds. *Gilgit Buddhist Manuscripts* (Facsimile Edition), 10 parts. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture. Śata-Piṭaka Series 10, 1959–74. Part 7 (1974).

· Chinese ·

- Za a han jing* 雜阿含經 (Saṃyuktāgama), Taishō 99.
- Bie yi za a han jing* 別譯雜阿含經 (Alternative Saṃyuktāgama), Taishō 100.

· Related Texts ·

· Western Languages ·

84000. *The Devatā Sūtra* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh329.html>) (*Devatāsūtra, lha'i mdo*, Toh 329). Translated by Sakya Pandita Translation Team. Online publication, 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2023.
- Bingenheimer, Marcus. *Studies in Āgama Literature with Special Reference to the Shorter Chinese Saṃyuktāgama*. Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 2011.
- Choong, Mun-keat. “A comparison of the Pāli and Chinese versions of the Devatā Saṃyutta and Devaputta Saṃyutta, collections of early Buddhist discourses on devatās ‘gods’ and devaputras ‘sons of gods.’ ” *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies* 1 (2011): 60–88.
- Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans. *Great Upholder of the Secret Mantra (HYPERLINK)* (*Mahāmantrānudhāriṇīsūtra*, Toh 563). 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2016.

- Enomoto, Fumio. “雑阿含 1299 経と 1329 経をめぐって.” *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies* (=Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū) 30, no. 2 (1982): 79–85.
- Feer, Léon. (1881): “Analyse du Kandjour: recueil des livres sacrés du Tibet par Alexandre Csoma de Körös.” In *Annales du Musée Guimet* 2: 131–577.
- (1883). *Fragments extraits du Kandjour*. *Annales du Musée Guimet* 5. Paris.
- Van Schaik, Sam. *The Spirit of Tibetan Buddhism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.
- Yoshimura, Shyuki. *The denkar-ma: an oldest catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons with introductory notes*. Kyoto: Ryukoku University, 1950.

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 Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.2 Blessed One

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavat ^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist literature, this is 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.3 bodhisattva

byang chub sems dpa'

བྱང་ལྷན་སེམས་དཔལ།

bodhisattva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A being who is dedicated to the cultivation and fulfilment of the altruistic intention to attain perfect buddhahood, traversing the ten bodhisattva levels (*daśabhūmi*, *sa bcu*). Bodhisattvas purposely opt to remain within cyclic existence in order to liberate all sentient beings, instead of simply seeking personal freedom from suffering. In terms of the view, they realize both the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena.

g.4 brāhmaṇa

bram ze

བླ་མ་ཟླེ།

brāhmaṇa

Often translated as “brahmin,” a member of the priestly caste.

g.5 buddha

sangs rgyas

སངས་རྒྱལ།

buddha

Epithet of Buddha Śākyamuni and general way of addressing the enlightened ones.

g.6 correct view

yang dag lta ba

ཡང་དག་ལྟ་བུ།

samyagdr̥ṣṭi

Here, belief in karmic cause and effect.

g.7 discipline

tshul khrims

ཚུལ་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.8 divine being

lha

ལྷ།

devatā ^{AS}

In Sanskrit and Pali, *devatā* is an abstract noun referring to divine beings, “the state of being a deity.” Any being who is worshiped or to whom offerings are made may be called a *devatā*. Therefore, the term 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 faith

dad pa

དད་པ།

śraddhā

g.10 good Dharma

dkar po'i chos

དཀར་པོའི་ཚོས།

śukladharma

Literally “white dharma,” epithet of the teachings of the Buddha.

g.11 harsh words

tshig rtsub

ཚིག་རུབ།

pāruṣya

Sixth of the ten nonvirtues.

g.12 higher realms

mtho ris

མཐོ་རིས།

svarga^{AS}

Here the Tibetan term “higher realms” (*mtho ris*) translates the Sanskrit *svarga*, meaning “heaven” or “heavenly realms.”

g.13 idle talk

kyal pa'i tshig

ཀྱལ་པའི་ཚིག།

saṃbhinnapralāpa

Seventh of ten nonvirtues.

g.14 ill will
gnod par sems pa
གནོད་པར་སེམས་པ།
vyāpāda

Ninth of the ten nonvirtues.

g.15 Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park
rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba
རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ་མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་རབ།
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 Anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ, meaning Anāthapiṇḍada's park. The place is usually referred to in the sūtras as "Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada's park," and according to the *Samghabhedavastu* 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 karma
las
ལས།
karman

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Meaning “action” in its most basic sense, karma is an important concept in Buddhist philosophy as the cumulative force of previous physical, verbal, and mental acts, which determines present experience and will determine future existences.

g.17 killing

srog gcod pa

སྲོག་གཅོད་པ།

prāṇātipāta ^{AS}

First of the ten nonvirtues.

g.18 nirvāṇa

mya ngan las 'das pa · mya ngan 'das pa

མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ། · མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ།

nirvāṇa

Sanskrit: “extinguishment”; Tibetan: “transcendence of suffering.” Final liberation from suffering.

g.19 remote place

dgon pa

དགོན་པ།

aranya ^{AD}

In an Indic context, this is often referred to as “the wilderness,” or “forest,” as contrasted with a town or city. In Tibetan, *dgon pa* would later become the standard term for “monastery.”

g.20 ripening of karma

las kyi rnam par smin pa

ལས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པར་སླིན་པ།

karmavipāka

The maturation of past actions (*karman*) and the manifestation of their effects.

g.21 sexual misconduct

log par g.yem pa

ལོག་པར་གཡེས་པ།

kāmamithyācāra

Third of the ten nonvirtues.

g.22 slander

phra ma'i tshig

ཕ་མའི་ཚིག་

paśunya

Fifth of the ten nonvirtues.

g.23 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.24 taking what is not given

ma byin len

མ་བྱིན་ལེན།

adattādāna

Second of the ten nonvirtues.

g.25 Teacher

ston pa

སློབ་པ།

śāstr^{AS}

Epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.26 telling lies

brdzun gyi tshig smra ba

བརྒྱུན་གྱི་ཚིག་སྐྱབ་པ།

mṛṣāvāda

Fourth of the ten nonvirtues.

g.27 ten nonvirtues

mi dge ba bcu

མི་དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

daśākuśala

The ten nonvirtues are as follows. The three nonvirtuous actions of the body are killing, taking what is not given, and sexual misconduct; the four nonvirtuous actions of speech are telling lies, slander, harsh words, and idle talk; and the three nonvirtuous actions of the mind are covetousness, ill will, and wrong views. In this text, the eighth (“covetousness,” *brnab sems*), and tenth (“wrong views,” *log lta*), are not presented with the usual terms.

g.28 ten virtues

dge ba bcu

དགེ་བ་བརྒྱ།

daśakuśala

The ten virtues refer to refraining the ten nonvirtues of killing, taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, telling lies, slander, harsh words, idle talk, covetousness, ill will, and wrong views.

g.29 tenfold path of the good Dharma

dkar po'i chos kyi lam bcu

དཀར་པོའི་ཚོས་གྱི་ལམ་བརྒྱ།

—

The phrase used in this text to describe what are more commonly known as the “ten virtues” (Skt. *daśakuśala*, Tib. *dge ba bcu*). See [g.10](#) for definition of “good Dharma.”