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The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa

Kanakavarṇapūrvayoga

gser mdog gi sngon gyi sbyor ba

· Toh 350 ·

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ti. Title
- im. Imprint
- co. Contents
- s. Summary
- ac. Acknowledgements
- i. Introduction
- tr. The Translation
 - 1. The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa
- ab. Abbreviations
- n. Notes
- b. Bibliography
 - Tibetan
 - Chinese
 - Sanskrit
 - 84000 Translations
 - Other Sources
- g. Glossary

s.

SUMMARY

s.1

In *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa* the Buddha Śākyamuni illustrates the power of generosity by narrating a distant past life as a magnanimous king named Kanakavarṇa, who ruled over the entire continent of Jambudvīpa. While faced with a devastating famine, this bodhisattva king decided to offer the last bit of food left in Jambudvīpa—which had been kept especially for him—to a pratyekabuddha who had come to his palace begging for alms. As a result of King Kanakavarṇa's selfless gift, the whole continent was miraculously showered with all possible foods and goods, and the people of Jambudvīpa were saved. In addition to this immediate fruit of the king's meritorious deed, a further fruit of the king's good deed is implied when the Buddha discloses King Kanakavarṇa's identity at the end of the story. The king's generosity would reach full karmic fruition in his perfect awakening in a future life as the Buddha Śākyamuni.

ac.

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ac.1

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ac.2

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i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

As a discourse in which the Buddha narrates one of his past lives, *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa* can be placed in the same class of teachings as *jātakas*, “birth stories,” and *avadānas*, “exemplary tales.” In this type of teaching, the Buddha explains his present awakened state or the present conditions of others, whether fortunate or unfortunate, by narrating the past-life actions that led to these conditions, thus showing the workings of karma and the inevitable results of meritorious or unmeritorious deeds. Usually, texts of this kind begin with an extensive narrative section that is set in the present. This describes the situation or the individual’s circumstance that the text will then explain by means of a past-life story. However, this is not the case for *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa*, which, as will be seen, consists almost entirely of a past-life story of the Buddha, narrated without preamble. Therefore, it was classified as a *pūrvayoga*, an account of a “past endeavor,” at least according to the title as given in the Tibetan translation.¹ There are no other standalone texts designated as *pūrvayoga* in the Kangyur, but the genre is represented in individual chapters of Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Sūtra* and the *Samādhirāja Sūtra*.²

i.2

The setting of this particular discourse is Jetavana, the grove outside Śrāvastī that had been gifted to the Buddha and the monastic saṅgha by a wealthy lay devotee called Anāthapiṇḍada. There, in the presence of an assembly of 1,250 monks, the Buddha begins his teaching by making a twofold statement on the virtue of generosity. First, he states that if beings were to know what he knows of the karmic results of generosity, they would always share whatever they have, even if, as it is tellingly put, it is their last bit of food. However, as the Buddha then points out, beings are often ignorant of the merit that comes from an act of generosity and tend to be guided by selfishness. This twofold proclamation by the Buddha is also found as a separate discourse, preserved in Pali as the *Dānaṣaṃvibhāga Sutta*³ and in Sanskrit as the *Dāna Sūtra*.⁴ In the present text, the Buddha further

illustrates these statements with a story of one of his past lives, thus demonstrating his first-hand knowledge of the immense power of generosity.

i.3 The story is that of a king named Kanakavarṇa, who, we are told, lived in a remote past when people still had life spans of eighty-four thousand years. This king is described as possessing all possible worldly attainments: he had a “golden-colored” (the literal meaning of his name) bodily complexion, abundant riches, and a vast and thriving empire stretching across the whole of Jambudvīpa. More impressive, however, was his righteous and generous nature. The Buddha states that he governed his people unselfishly, engaging in all possible forms of charity. The king’s generosity was such that one day—and it was from this that the events narrated begin to unfold—he decided to abolish all taxes and levies for the people of Jambudvīpa.

i.4 However, King Kanakavarṇa did not foresee that, after many years of prosperity and just governance for his people, the astrological conditions would become unfavorable. When the brahmins at the court noticed this adverse shift in the constellations and celestial bodies, they informed the king that there would be no rain for the next twelve years. Aware of the impending disaster this portended for his people, especially for the poor who were without the means to survive a drought of such length, the king immediately went into action. He issued the order that all available foodstuffs were to be collected and placed in a single storehouse, and from there they were to be distributed equally among the people of Jambudvīpa. For eleven years, this strategy was successful and famine was averted, but then in the twelfth year the food started to run out and people began to die of starvation. The situation became ever more dire in the course of the following eleven months, to the point that there was only a single portion of food left in the storehouse, which had been reserved for King Kanakavarṇa himself.

i.5 The narrative here shifts to the key protagonist in the momentous event that is about to take place. The Buddha describes how in that particular period there was a bodhisattva—left unnamed—who had been on the bodhisattva path for forty eons, but who, after witnessing a particularly heinous act, had abandoned his aim of reaching perfect buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. Applying himself instead to his own liberation from saṃsāra, this person, within a short span of time, had gained complete insight into the impermanent nature of phenomena and thereby attained the awakening of a pratyekabuddha, a “solitary awakened one.” In Buddhist traditions, a pratyekabuddha is someone who has attained complete liberation from saṃsāra without the guidance of a teacher. However, such

liberation is distinguished from that of a perfectly awakened buddha like the Buddha Śākyamuni, since they are not able to verbally teach the path to liberation to others. This typology of buddhas who reach individual awakening arose early on in Buddhist tradition and was particularly associated with an early text known as the *Rhinoceros Sūtra* (Pali: *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta*) in which the practitioner is exhorted to “move alone like a rhinoceros.”⁵ At some point during the early period, the individual verses that make up the *Rhinoceros Sūtra* came to be credited as the utterances of pratyekabuddhas of past times.⁶ The verse proclaimed by the pratyekabuddha upon his awakening in *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa* (at folio 53.a) is an example of such a verse, which has direct parallels with the second verse of both the Pali *Rhinoceros Sūtra* as well as the recently discovered Gāndhārī Sanskrit version. In this extant Sanskrit of the story of King Kanakavarṇa, the verse reads as follows:

i.6 *saṃsevamānasya bhavanti snehāḥ*
snehānvayaṃ saṃbhavatīha duḥkham |
ādīnavam snehagataṃ viditvā
ekas caret khadgaviṣāṇakalpaḥ | |⁷

i.7 “Keeping close company, one comes to have attachment;
It is from attachment that suffering comes about here.
Realizing the danger coming from attachment,
One should move alone like a rhinoceros.”

i.8 In the Pali version of *The Rhinoceros Sutta* it reads:

i.9 *saṃsaggajātassa bhavanti snehā*
snehanvayaṃ dukkham idaṃ pahoti |
ādīnavam snehajaṃ pekkhamāno
eko care khaggavisāṇakappo | |⁸

i.10 “Having close contact, one comes to have attachment;
It is from attachment that this suffering comes about.
Seeing the danger that is born from attachment,
One should move alone like a rhinoceros.”

i.11 And in the Gāndhārī version of *The Rhinoceros Sūtra*, it reads:

i.12 *saṃsevamaṇaṣa siyati sēho*
sēhaṃvayaṃ dukham idaṃ prabhoti |
++++++
eko care khargaviṣāṇagapo | |⁹

- i.13 “Keeping close company, one comes to have attachment;
It is from attachment that suffering comes about.
...
One should move alone like a rhinoceros.”
- i.14 The background story to this verse, however, as transmitted in the later Pali commentary to *The Rhinoceros Sutta*, is entirely different and unrelated to the story of the pratyekabuddha in *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa*.¹⁰ It appears, therefore, that over the centuries these verses from *The Rhinoceros Sutta* became associated with different background stories connected to pratyekabuddhas.¹¹
- i.15 While the verses in *The Rhinoceros Sutta* urge a solitary way of life in view of the dangers of being in close company with others, they also emphasize the need to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion.¹² This quality is also given expression in the freshly awakened pratyekabuddha in *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa*. The Buddha describes how, after attaining “individual awakening,” the pratyekabuddha compassionately thought of benefitting other beings by receiving alms from them, thereby giving them the opportunity to gather merit. Being the only awakened being in the world at that time, albeit lower in rank to a perfectly awakened buddha, the pratyekabuddha would have been the most “worthy of offerings” and the most fruitful “field of merit,” as it is traditionally put, in terms of yielding karmic benefit. As the pratyekabuddha scanned the whole world through his newly acquired supernormal abilities, he discovered that there was only one portion of food left—the one reserved for the king. Therefore, he decided to extend his compassion to King Kanakavarṇa by seeking alms from him.
- i.16 It is this alms round and its miraculous outcome that forms the centerpiece of the story. This crucial moment—when the pratyekabuddha becomes the recipient of King Kanakavarṇa’s ultimate act of generosity—brings to the fore the prime qualities of the two central actors: the bodhisattva king who accompanies his act of self-sacrifice with the deep wish that it bring an end to the destitution and suffering of his people, and the solitary buddha who teaches the Dharma “bodily, not verbally,” as he silently leaves in the same miraculous way as he had come, after having provided the king with the opportunity to generate immense merit. The “root of virtue” that King Kanakavarṇa has planted through this relinquishment of self-interest is such that, right after the pratyekabuddha has received his meal and departed, it immediately ripens into the fulfillment of the king’s wish, as narrated in the wondrous culmination of the story. Moreover, and more importantly still, when the Buddha reveals at the end of the story that he himself was King Kanakavarṇa at that time, it is implied that the merit of this “past endeavor” occasioned by the compassionate pratyekabuddha would eventually come

to full ripening in the attainment of perfect and full awakening by the Buddha Śākyamuni in his present lifetime. Having thus illustrated the karmic potency of such an act of generosity, the Buddha concludes by repeating the twofold statement on the virtue of generosity that he had pronounced at the beginning of the discourse, followed by a verse on the imperishability of good karma.

i.17 This story about King Kanakavarṇa's feat has been preserved in several different versions and retellings. The earliest of these is found in a collection of the Buddha's past life stories that was translated into Chinese in the fourth or early fifth century CE, entitled *Pu sa ben xing jing* (菩薩本行經), "The Sūtra about the Past Conduct of the Bodhisattva."¹³ In this version, the story does not have a prelude containing a twofold statement on generosity. Instead, it is narrated by the Buddha upon the passing away of a miserly wealthy man from Śrāvastī named Mahānāman. When King Prasenajit comes to the Buddha to ask him where Mahānāman has been reborn, the Buddha tells him that the miserly Mahānāman has fallen into hell. Here he will be subject to great suffering for thousands of years, after which he will also have to endure rebirth as a hungry ghost for a long duration. In response to King Prasenajit's distress upon hearing this, the Buddha states that a wise person should abandon miserliness and engage in generosity. It is by virtue of this that one obtains good fortune in the present life and merit for future lives, and the Buddha then narrates his past life as King Kanakavarṇa as an illustration. While in general the story told is the same as that found in *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa*, there are several differences, the most notable being that the person who becomes the pratyekabuddha is not first described as being a bodhisattva, nor is there the verse from *The Rhinoceros Sūtra* that he exclaims upon his awakening.

i.18 The first version in which all the elements found in *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa* appear is a Chinese translation made at least over a century later, in the middle of the sixth century CE. In this separately transmitted text, which bears the title *Jin se wang jing* (金色王經), "The Sūtra about King Kanakavarṇa,"¹⁴ we find all the elements that are also present in the Tibetan and Sanskrit versions of *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa*, with the exception of some phrases and passages that seem to have been abridged or paraphrased during translation by its Indian translator, Gautama Prajñāruci, a monk from Vārāṇasī who was active in China at the time. According to the original colophon at the end of the Chinese text, this translation was made by Gautama Prajñāruci in the year 542 CE.¹⁵

i.19 The Tibetan translation that has been preserved in the Kangyur mostly agrees with this Chinese version, to the extent that one can assume the underlying Sanskrit text must have been very similar. We do not know when

exactly the Tibetan translation was made, since the Kangyur text lacks the usual colophon that records the names of the translators and editors involved in the translation. However, the Tibetan title of the text, *gser mdog gi sngon gyi sbyor ba*, is listed in both the Denkarma and Phangthangma inventories of Tibetan imperial translations, which means that the unattributed Tibetan translation of *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa* must have been made at some point in the eighth or early ninth century CE, during the early spread of the Buddhadharmā to Tibet.¹⁶

i.20 The Sanskrit text that has come down to us is part of the *Divyāvadāna*, a collection of thirty-eight *avadānas* that has proved to be popular in the Kathmandu Valley over the centuries. Under the title *Kanakavarṇāvadāna*, this Sanskrit version is practically the same as the Tibetan and the sixth-century Chinese version, leaving aside a number of additions and omissions that are the result of centuries of scribal transmission.¹⁷ There are a few places, however, in which the Sanskrit and the Chinese are more closely aligned with each other than with the Tibetan, as with the extra last verse included at the end. This suggests that the extant Sanskrit version found in the *Divyāvadāna* represents a somewhat different line of textual transmission than the Tibetan translation and its underlying Sanskrit text.

i.21 Apart from these three closely related versions preserved in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese, King Kanakavarṇa's story is also found in the *Avadānakalpalatā*,¹⁸ an anthology of *avadānas* composed in succinct and poetic Sanskrit verse by the Kashmiri poet Kṣemendra in the middle of the eleventh century. In this concise form, the story also gained popularity in Tibet when the *Avadānakalpalatā* was translated into Tibetan in the thirteenth century and became the subject of a rich tradition of woodcut depictions and thangka paintings.¹⁹ Another later retelling of the story, also in versified Sanskrit, occurs in the *Ratnamālāvadāna* (alternatively titled *Ratnāvadānamālā*),²⁰ one of several collections of versified *avadānas* that were composed and compiled in the Kathmandu Valley from the fourteenth century onwards, for which the *Divyāvadāna* served as one of the main sources.

i.22 The English translation of *The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa* offered here is based primarily on the Tibetan translation contained in the Kangyur. In this, the text in the Degé Kangyur has been taken as the base text, but we have also consulted the Stok Palace Kangyur and the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) for variant readings. In several cases, this has provided readings that are evidently in better alignment with the Sanskrit text, as recorded in the endnotes. Despite these improved readings, there are several places in the Tibetan text where the textual transmission has proved to be faulty due to omissions or erroneous additions. In those instances, we have taken recourse to the extant Sanskrit text, in consultation with the Chinese

translation. However, we have been careful not to uncritically adopt all readings found in the extant Sanskrit, since, as stated above, it appears to belong to a different lineage of textual recension than the Tibetan translation and its underlying Sanskrit text. There are, moreover, several places where the extant Sanskrit has problematic readings that need to be emended in light of the Tibetan translation.²¹ We have recorded all such discrepancies between the Sanskrit and the Tibetan in the endnotes, in which we have also included the most significant divergences found in the Chinese translation.

i.23

In closing, we would like to refer the reader to two very similar past life stories of the Buddha, both of which are likewise narrated to illustrate the twofold statement on generosity as found in the *Dāna Sūtra*, from which they also very graphically draw upon the words *apaścimakāḥ kavaḍaḥ*, “last mouthful.” First, there is the *Kavaḍāvadāna* in the *Avadānaśataka* (Toh 343), in which the Buddha recounts his past life as King Brahmadata in Vārāṇasī, a righteous and compassionate ruler whose generosity was such that during a devastating famine he was able to give up his own daily ration of food, his two “mouthfuls,” to a brahmin left out in the count and to Indra who, disguised as a brahmin, requested the second portion.²² The other related story is found in the *Karmaśataka* (Toh 340),²³ in which the narration is about a bodhisattva king named Candraprabha, who also reigned from the city of Vārāṇasī, and who, faced with a severe drought and famine that would last for twelve years, is tested by Indra, again disguised as a brahmin, in giving away both his “mouthfuls” of food—all of which the bodhisattva happily does in his complete dedication to attaining perfect and full awakening for the benefit of all.

The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa

1.

The Translation

[F.50.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling at Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park, together with a large monastic community of 1,250 monks.

1.3 The Blessed One was respected, honored, revered, and venerated by monks, nuns, devoted laymen, devoted laywomen, kings, ministers, the various tīrthikas, ascetics, brahmins, [F.50.b] practitioners, and wanderers, as well as by gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas. The Blessed One received abundant and exquisite requisites—robes, alms, bedding and seating, and medicine in case of illness—both divine and human. Yet, the Blessed One remained untainted by them, like a lotus untainted by water. The Blessed One's renown, fame, and acclaim,²⁴ was vast, excellent, and exalted.²⁵ In this way, the Blessed One, the tathāgata, arhat, perfectly awakened one, accomplished in knowledge and conduct, the well gone one, the knower of the world, the unsurpassed guide for people to be tamed, the teacher of gods and humans, the Buddha, the Blessed One, having directly understood and clearly perceived ²⁶ this world with its gods, māras, brahmās, ascetics, brahmins, gods, and humans,²⁷ was teaching the Dharma²⁸ that is excellent in the beginning, excellent in the middle, and excellent in the end, fine in meaning and fine in expression, and was expounding the entire and complete spiritual life that is completely pure and completely clean.

1.4 Then the Blessed One addressed the monks, "Monks, if beings were to know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts²⁹ as I know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts, they would not eat even their last mouthful, their last morsel, themselves³⁰ without giving, without sharing it with others,³¹ and the arisen defilement of selfishness

would not remain in possession of their minds.³² [F.51.a] But, monks, because beings do not know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts as I know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts, they eat even their last mouthful, their last morsel, themselves³³ without giving, without sharing it with others, and the arisen defilement of selfishness remains in possession of their minds. Why is this?

1.5 “Previously, monks, in a past time, there was a king named Kanakavarṇa, who was handsome, beautiful, and pleasing to behold, being endowed with a sublime golden complexion. That king Kanakavarṇa was rich, wealthy, and prosperous, having abundant possessions,³⁴ abundant wealth and means; abundant riches, grains, gems, pearls,³⁵ crystal, coral, gold, and silver; abundant elephants, horses, cows, and stud horses;³⁶ and treasuries and storehouses that were completely filled.

1.6 “King Kanakavarṇa had a royal capital called Kanakāvātī that was twelve yojanas in length from east to west and seven yojanas wide from south to north. It was prosperous, thriving, happy, well provisioned, pleasant, and bustling with many people. King Kanakavarṇa had eighty thousand such cities³⁷ that were prosperous, thriving, happy, well provisioned, pleasant, and bustling with many people; five hundred and seventy million villages³⁸ that were prosperous, thriving, happy, well provisioned, pleasant, and bustling with many people; and sixty thousand market towns that were prosperous, thriving, happy, well provisioned, pleasant, and bustling with many people. And, King Kanakavarṇa had eighteen thousand courtiers and a retinue of twenty thousand attendant women. [F.51.b]

1.7 “Monks, King Kanakavarṇa was righteous and he ruled his kingdom according to the Dharma as a Dharma king.³⁹ He engaged in all acts of generosity and there was nothing that he had not given away, including the flesh of his own body. During those times people would attain a lifespan of eighty-four thousand years.

1.8 “Now, at one time, when King Kanakavarṇa was alone, having withdrawn in private, a deliberation arose in his mind: ‘Let me free all merchants from customs duties and transit fees. Let me free all the people of Jambudvīpa from taxes and fees.’

1.9 “King Kanakavarṇa thereupon summoned his accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors, and announced to them, ‘As of today, sirs,⁴⁰ all merchants should be freed from customs duties and transit fees. All the people of Jambudvīpa should be freed from taxes and fees.’

1.10 “While ruling his kingdom by these means⁴¹ for many years, at a certain time, the constellations became adverse such that it would not rain for twelve years. The brahmins who could understand the indications read the signs⁴² and did divinations.⁴³ Having observed this in the movements of the

constellations and the planet Venus, they went to King Kanakavarṇa and said, ‘Your Majesty, please know that the constellations have become adverse such that it will not rain for twelve years.’

1.11 “Upon hearing this news, King Kanakavarṇa broke down in tears, ‘Oh, my people of Jambudvīpa! Oh, my people of Jambudvīpa!⁴⁴ Oh, my Jambudvīpa that is prosperous, thriving, [F.52.a] happy, well provisioned, pleasant, and bustling with many people—before long you will be empty and bereft of people!’

1.12 “After weeping sorrowfully for a moment, King Kanakavarṇa thought, ‘Those who are rich, wealthy, and prosperous will be able to support themselves, but those who are poor, with little wealth, and with little to eat and drink—how will they survive? Let me collect all the foodstuffs in Jambudvīpa, build a storehouse for all the villages, cities, and market towns, as well as for the royal capital,⁴⁵ and distribute an equal share to all the people of Jambudvīpa.’

1.13 “King Kanakavarṇa then summoned his accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors, and ordered, ‘Sirs, go and collect all the foodstuffs in Jambudvīpa, count them and measure them out, and place them in a storehouse for all the villages, cities, and market towns, as well as for the royal capital.’

1.14 “The accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors did as King Kanakavarṇa had ordered, and when they had stored the foodstuffs in the storehouse, they went to King Kanakavarṇa and said, ‘Your Majesty, please know that the foodstuffs from all the villages, cities, and market towns, [F.52.b] as well as from the royal capital, have all been collected, counted, measured out, and stored in a storehouse for all the villages, cities, and market towns, as well as for the royal capital. What does Your Majesty deem fit now?’

1.15 “King Kanakavarṇa then summoned his counters, accountants, and scribes and ordered, ‘Sirs, go and count all the people of Jambudvīpa. Having properly⁴⁶ counted everyone starting with myself,⁴⁷ properly distribute an equal share of food to all the people of Jambudvīpa.’

1.16 “The counters, accountants, and scribes obeyed⁴⁸ and they properly counted all the people of Jambudvīpa. When they had properly counted everyone, starting with King Kanakavarṇa, they assigned an equal share of food to all the people of Jambudvīpa.

1.17 “For eleven years everyone survived, but during the first month of the twelfth year, many men, women, and children began to die from hunger and thirst. As the second, third, fourth, and fifth months passed, many more men,

women, and children died.⁴⁹ This went on until the eleventh month, when all the food in Jambudvīpa had been exhausted,⁵⁰ apart from a single measure of food left for King Kanakavarṇa.

1.18 “Now, at that time, there was a bodhisattva who had been embarked upon the path for forty eons and who had reached this Sahā world. That bodhisattva saw, somewhere in a forest, a son having sexual intercourse with his mother. Seeing this, he thought, ‘Oh, how defiled,⁵¹ how defiled these beings are! [F.53.a] It was in her womb that he stayed for nine months and it was from her breasts that he drank—and now he does this here!⁵² I’ve had enough of such⁵³ beings who are driven by craven desires not in keeping with the Dharma, who have wrong views, who are overcome by unbearable lust, who do not honor their fathers,⁵⁴ their mothers, monks, or brahmins, and who do not respect the elders of their family. Who would bother to practice the conduct of a bodhisattva for the sake of such beings? Surely I should practice for my own sake alone.’

1.19 “Then the bodhisattva went to a tree and sat down at its base. Having crossed his legs and made his body upright, he established mindfulness to the fore.⁵⁵ He then dwelled on observing the arising and passing away of the five aggregates that are subject to clinging: ‘This is form, this is the arising of form, this is the vanishing of form; this is feeling; this is perception; these are conditionings; this is consciousness, this is the arising of consciousness, this is the vanishing of consciousness.’ As he remained like this, observing the arising and passing away of the five aggregates that are subject to clinging, before long, he realized that whatever is of the nature to arise is all of the nature to cease,⁵⁶ and right there he reached individual awakening.

1.20 “Thereupon, after beholding the dharmas attained according to their conditions,⁵⁷ on that occasion the blessed pratyekabuddha spoke this verse:⁵⁸

1.21 Keeping close company, one comes to have attachments;
It is from attachment that this suffering comes about.⁵⁹
Realizing the danger coming from attachment,⁶⁰
One should move alone like a rhinoceros.⁶¹

1.22 “Then the blessed pratyekabuddha thought, ‘I have performed many difficult deeds for the sake of sentient beings, but no one has yet been benefitted. [F.53.b] To whom should I now extend my compassion? Whose alms should I now receive and eat?’

1.23 “The blessed pratyekabuddha surveyed the whole of Jambudvīpa with his superhuman⁶² divine vision, and he saw that all the food in Jambudvīpa had been exhausted apart from a single measure of food left for King

- Kanakavarṇa. He then thought, ‘Let me extend my compassion to King Kanakavarṇa. Let me receive and eat the single measure of food that is left for King Kanakavarṇa.’⁶³
- 1.24 “Then the blessed pratyekabuddha, by such miraculous ability of his,⁶⁴ rose up into the sky, and, like a bird in bodily appearance, through his miraculous ability, proceeded to the royal capital Kanakāvātī.
- 1.25 “At that time King Kanakavarṇa was on the palace terrace, accompanied by five thousand courtiers. One minister saw the blessed pratyekabuddha coming from a distance. Seeing this, he called the other ministers, ‘Look, sirs, look! From the distance, a red-winged bird is coming toward us here!’
- 1.26 “Another minister said, ‘Sirs, this is not a red-winged bird—it’s a life-robbing demon that is coming here! It is now going to devour us!’
- 1.27 “Then King Kanakavarṇa rubbed his face with both hands and said to the ministers, ‘Sirs, this is not a red-winged bird, nor is it a life-robbing demon—it’s a sage who is coming out of compassion for us!’
- 1.28 “Thereupon that blessed pratyekabuddha alighted on top of King Kanakavarṇa’s palace. Rising from his seat, King Kanakavarṇa [F.54.a] welcomed the blessed pratyekabuddha, bowed his head at the feet of the blessed pratyekabuddha, and invited him to sit on a seat that had been prepared. King Kanakavarṇa then asked the blessed pratyekabuddha, ‘Sage, for what purpose have you come here?’
- 1.29 “‘For the purpose of food, great king,’ the sage replied.
- 1.30 “Upon this, King Kanakavarṇa was very distraught, and weeping, he cried, ‘Oh, how poor I am! Even though I have dominion over Jambudvīpa, I am not able to provide alms to even a single sage!’
- 1.31 “Then the deity of the royal capital Kanakāvātī uttered this verse to King Kanakavarṇa:
- What is suffering? It is to be poor.
 What is greater suffering? It is poverty itself.
 To be in poverty is the same as death.⁶⁵
 I would not choose poverty over death!⁶⁶
- 1.32 “King Kanakavarṇa then summoned the person in charge of the storehouse and asked, ‘Sir, is there any food in the house that I could offer to this sage?’
- 1.33 “‘Your Majesty,’ he replied, ‘Please know that all the food in Jambudvīpa has been exhausted apart from a single measure of food that remains for Your Majesty.’
- 1.34 “King Kanakavarṇa thought, ‘If I eat it, I will live. If I do not eat it, I will die.’ But then he thought, ‘Even if I eat it,⁶⁷ I will certainly come to die—enough of this life of mine! How could such a virtuous and excellent sage leave my house today with an alms bowl as pristine as before he entered?’⁶⁸

- 1.35 “King Kanakavaṛṇa then gathered his accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors, and said, ‘Please rejoice, sirs! This is King Kanakavaṛṇa’s final act of charity.⁶⁹ By this root of virtue, [F.54.b] may there be a complete end to poverty for all the people of Jambudvīpa.’
- 1.36 “Thereupon King Kanakavaṛṇa put all there was of the measure of food into the bowl of that blessed pratyekabuddha and gave the bowl into the blessed pratyekabuddha’s right hand.⁷⁰
- 1.37 “Now, it is in the nature of things that blessed pratyekabuddhas teach the Dharma bodily, not verbally.⁷¹ So the blessed pratyekabuddha received the alms⁷² from King Kanakavaṛṇa and, in this way by miraculous ability,⁷³ departed into the sky. With folded hands, King Kanakavaṛṇa⁷⁴ stood looking on, without blinking, until he had passed from sight.
- 1.38 “Then King Kanakavaṛṇa summoned his accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors, and said, ‘Sirs, go to your respective homes. Please do not end your time by dying from hunger and thirst here at the palace.’
- 1.39 “They replied, ‘When Your Majesty possessed wealth and good fortune, we amused and enjoyed ourselves together with Your Majesty. How could we now abandon Your Majesty at the end, at this final hour?’
- 1.40 “Then, King Kanakavaṛṇa broke down in tears and wept. Wiping away his tears, he again said to his accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors, ‘Sirs, go to your respective homes. All of you, please do not end your time by dying from hunger and thirst here at the palace.’
- 1.41 “At this, the accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors also broke down in tears and wept. Wiping away their tears, they approached King Kanakavaṛṇa, bowed their heads at his feet, and with folded hands said to King Kanakavaṛṇa, ‘Today is our last sight of Your Majesty. [F.55.a] Please forgive us for anything we have done contrary to Your Majesty’s instruction.’⁷⁵
- 1.42 “But just as that blessed pratyekabuddha finished eating the alms, at that very moment, four masses of clouds emerged from all four directions, and cool winds began to blow that swept Jambudvīpa clean.⁷⁶ And then, during the second half of that day, it rained various kinds of foods and edible things. There were foods such as boiled rice, sattū, khichri, meat, and fish. There were edible things⁷⁷ such as edible roots, stalks,⁷⁸ leaves, flowers, fruits, sesame, sesame oil,⁷⁹ jaggery,⁸⁰ and cane sugar.⁸¹ And there were many other kinds of foods, edible things, and delicacies that rained down.
- 1.43 “King Kanakavaṛṇa was thrilled, exalted, and elated, and as he rejoiced, full of rapture and gladness, he said to his accountants, ministers, courtiers, gatekeepers, and councilors, ‘Look, sirs! Right now the sprout of giving that

- single portion of alms has appeared! Fruits, leaves, and flowers⁸² will come later!
- 1.44 “On the second day, a week-long rain of goods and grains began. For seven days it rained sesame, rice, mung beans, black gram, barley, wheat, lentils, white rice, and all types of grains.⁸³ For seven days it rained ghee. For seven days it rained sesame oil. For seven days it rained cotton cloth. For seven days it rained various kinds of materials.⁸⁴ And for seven days it rained the seven precious substances, namely, gold, silver, crystal, beryl, ruby, emerald, and sapphire. [F.55.b]
- 1.45 “So, by the power of King Kanakavarṇa, there was a complete end to poverty for all the people of Jambudvīpa.
- 1.46 “Monks, you might be uncertain or in doubt, thinking that it was someone else who was King Kanakavarṇa at that time, at that moment.⁸⁵ But, monks, it should not be seen in this way. I was that king named Kanakavarṇa at that time, at that moment.
- 1.47 “Monks, through this teaching, this should be understood: One⁸⁶ should know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts as I know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts. One should not eat⁸⁷ the last mouthful, the last morsel, oneself—without giving it or sharing it with others—and the arisen defilement of selfishness will not remain in possession of one’s mind. But because beings do not know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts as I know the fruit of giving and the karmic fruition of sharing gifts, they eat even their last mouthful, their last morsel, themselves—without giving, without sharing it with others—and the arisen defilement of selfishness remains in possession of their minds.⁸⁸
- 1.48 Past deeds, virtuous or unvirtuous, do not perish,
 To have attended upon the wise does not perish,
 What is well said by the noble⁸⁹ does not perish,
 What is done for the grateful does not perish.”⁹⁰
- 1.49 This is what the Blessed One said. Elated, the bodhisattvas, monks, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced at what the Blessed One had said.⁹¹
- 1.50 *This concludes “The Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa.”*

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- C* Choné Kangyur
Cn *Cullaniddesa*. The Pali Text Society edition.
D Degé Kangyur
H Lhasa Kangyur
It *Itivuttaka*. The Pali Text Society edition.
J Lithang Kangyur
MW Monier Williams Sanskrit-English dictionary.
Mil *Milindapañha*. The Pali Text Society edition.
Mvu *Mahāvastu*. Edited by Émile Senart, 1882–1897.
N Narthang Kangyur
S Stok Palace Kangyur
Sn *Suttanipāta*. The Pali Text Society edition.
U Urga Kangyur
Y Yongle Kangyur
ŚBh I Shomonji Kenkyukai 1998

n.

NOTES

- n.1 The title of the extant Sanskrit text in the *Divyāvadāna* is *Kanakavarṇāvadāna*, which places it in the *avadāna* category. However, this designation is likely to have happened when the *Divyāvadāna*, the collection of texts in which it has been preserved, was compiled. At this time, the different individual texts, whether strictly belonging to the *jātaka*, *avadāna*, or *pūrvayoga* genres or not, were all given the *avadāna* designation. Historically, the *avadāna* and *pūrvayoga* genres, which involve the past lives of other figures apart from the Buddha, appear to be posterior to the *jātakas*, which exclusively narrate the Buddha Śākyamuni's past lives. This development might be suggested by the fact that the *avadāna* genre is among the three added categories in the Sanskrit list of twelve types of teaching (*dvādaśāṅga*) that are not found in the Pali list of nine types of teachings (*navaṅga*), which, however, does include *jātaka* as a category. Both the *avadāna* and the *pūrvayoga* genres seem to have been especially popular in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent, as can be inferred from the relatively large number of texts of this type among the recently discovered Kharoṣṭhī manuscripts in the Gāndhārī language (see Lenz 2003; 2010). In fact, the term *pūrvayoga* might have its provenance there, as has been suggested by von Hinüber (2001, p. 520) on the basis of the occurrence of the term in the *Milindapañha*, a Pali text that has its origin in Gandhāra. At the beginning of the *Milindapañha*, before the narration of the past lives of its two protagonists, Nāgasena and King Milinda, we also find a short definition of the term: “*pubbayoga* means their past actions” (*pubbayogo ti tesāṃ pubbakammaṃ*; Mil 2.23). Interestingly, within the surviving Gāndhārī corpus of *avadānas* and *pūrvayogas*, which has been dated to approximately the first half of the first century CE, a strict distinction is maintained in designating the two kinds of texts: while the *pūrvayoga* is an account of someone's actions in a previous lifetime, the *avadāna* is always an account of actions performed in the present lifetime (Lenz 2003, p. 92). From this it would appear that the *avadāna* form that includes past-life stories, as found in

such collections as the *Avadānaśataka* and the *Divyāvadāna*, arose only in later centuries, during which the *avadāna* genre came to encompass both *jātaka* and *pūrvayoga* stories.

- n.2 See *The White Lotus of the Good Dharma* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra*, Toh 113), chapters 7, 22, and 25; and *The King of Samādhis Sūtra* (*Samādhirājasūtra*, Toh 127) chapters 2, 16, 21, 29, and 37. There are also two *pūrvayoga* chapters in the *Mahāvastu*, one at Mvu III 170–172 and one immediately following it at III 172–175.
- n.3 It 18–19.
- n.4 Tripathi 1995, p. 18. There is no Tibetan translation of the *Dāna Sūtra*, at least as a standalone text, in the Tibetan Kangyur. There is also an extant Sanskrit *Dāna Sūtra* in the Schøyen Collection, BMSC iv (from Bamiyan). Mentioned in Braarvig 2014, p.163.
- n.5 This phrase has given rise to considerable discussion in modern scholarship, since the compound word that is used in Sanskrit and Pali, *khadḡaviṣāṇa* and *khaggavisāṇa*, can be interpreted in more than one way. The word *khadḡa/khagga* itself can mean “rhinoceros,” and since *viṣāṇa/visāṇa* means “horn,” the compound can be taken as “the horn of a rhinoceros,” which is the interpretation followed in the Pali commentarial tradition. In this interpretation, the entire phrase is understood as “move alone like a rhinoceros horn,” in reference to the fact that the Indian rhinoceros has a single horn, distinguishing it from animals that have two horns. On the other hand, *khadḡa/khagga* also has the meaning “sword,” and together with *viṣāṇa/visāṇa*, “horn,” the entire compound *khadḡaviṣāṇa/khaggavisāṇa* can mean “[the animal which has] a sword-horn,” thus referring to the rhinoceros itself. In this understanding, which is mostly seen in Buddhist Sanskrit literature, the phrase “move alone like a rhinoceros” alludes to the solitary behavior of the Indian rhinoceros, which is known not to roam about in groups. It should be kept in mind, however, that both meanings could be intended at the same time in this particular phrase, as has been pointed out by Salomon (2000, p. 13; 2018, p. xx). For a recent discussion of this issue, see Jones 2014, and for a wider survey on the imagery of the wandering ascetic as a rhinoceros in Brahmanical, Jain, and Buddhist literature, see af Edholm 2021.
- n.6 The first texts in which these verses are attributed to pratyekabuddhas are the Pali *Cullaniddesa*, an old commentary on the *Suttanipāta*, and the Pali *Apadāna*, a collection of autobiographical poems ascribed to the Buddha Śākyamuni, the pratyekabuddhas of the past, and the foremost arhat

disciples of the Buddha. Both texts are old enough to have been included in the *Khuddakanikāya* of the *Suttapiṭaka* of the Pali canon; the *Apadāna* was probably compiled around the second century BCE (Walters 1997), which is perhaps also the time period of the *Cullaniddesa* (von Hinüber 1996, p. 58, §118, and p. 61, §121). In both texts, the verses are simply ascribed to pratyekabuddhas collectively, without narrating the specific occasion of each verse. This is also the case for the *Mahāvastu*, the voluminous Mahāsāṃghika-Lokottaravāda compilation on the life of the Buddha (parts of which have also been dated to the second century BCE), in which several adapted verses from the *Rhinoceros Sūtra* are presented as having been uttered by a group of five hundred pratyekabuddhas living in a forest near Vārāṇasī—the site of the future Deer Park—just before the birth of the Buddha Śākyamuni in this world (Mvu I 357–359). Upon hearing of the coming of the Buddha to this buddhfield and the necessity for them to vacate, each of these pratyekabuddhas is said to have proclaimed such a verse before passing into parinirvāṇa by rising into the sky and incinerating themselves, after which their bodily remnants fell to the ground. This is then said to explain the other name for the site of the Buddha’s first teaching, the Sanskrit *ṛṣipātana*, which literally means “the falling of sages.” For a useful discussion of the different versions and a translation of the Gāndhārī verses of the *Rhinoceros Sūtra*, see Salomon 2018.

- n.7 This Sanskrit is from the extant Sanskrit version of the story of King Kanakavarṇa, which is included in the *Divyāvadāna* collection, as discussed further below. Cowell & Neil 1886, p. 294; Vaidya 1959, p. 182.
- n.8 Sn v. 36. This Pali verse occurs in the same form in the *Paccekabuddhāpadāna* (v. 11) and the *Cullaniddesa* (Cn 57). For a translation of the Pali *Paccekabuddhāpadāna*, the pratyekabuddha section in the *Apadāna*, see <http://apadanatranslation.com/text/chapter-2/poem-001.html>.
- n.9 Salomon 2000. The third line of this verse has not been preserved. Note that the second line is the same as in the Pali version, whereas the first word in the first line is in agreement with the Sanskrit verse in the *Kanakavarṇāvadāna*. The Gāndhārī verse is also closely related to the Prakritic Sanskrit verses uttered by the pratyekabuddhas in the *Mahāvastu* (Mvu I 357–359), such as for instance:

saṃsevamānasya siyāti sneho
snehānvoayaṃ duḥkham idaṃ prabhōti |
mitreṣu ādīnavoṃ saṃmṛśanto
eko care khadgaviṣāṅkalpo | |

“Keeping close company, one comes to have attachment;
It is from attachment that this suffering comes about.
Fully reflecting upon the danger in friends,
One should move alone like a rhinoceros.”

- n.10 In this later Pali commentary on the *Suttanipāta*, attributed to the fifth-century Pali scholar Buddhaghosa but based on earlier Sinhala commentaries, each verse of the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* is accompanied by its own background story. In the case of verse 36, this involves a *paccekabodhisatta*, a being striving for individual awakening, who grows up as a prince in Vārāṇasī. Upon hearing of the death of his future bride, the prince reflects upon the conditions of existence and attains individual awakening, after which he shares the verse in question with his ministers. For the full story, see Bodhi 2017, pp. 425–430.
- n.11 Salomon (2000, p. 6, n. 4) makes mention of a Sanskrit manuscript from Turfan that is said to contain another such text with pratyekabuddha stories around these verses. He points out that this part of the manuscript does not appear to have been published yet.
- n.12 This is stated in one of the concluding verses of *The Rhinoceros Sutta* in both the Pali (Sn v. 73) and the Gāndhārī (v. 36), but it is also expressed at the beginning of the Gāndhārī version and the Sanskrit verses in the *Mahāvastu*, in which the second half of the first verse reads: *maitreṇa cittena hitānukaṃpī eko care khaḍgaviṣāṇakalpo*, “With a mind of loving-kindness, being compassionate for the welfare [of others], one should move alone like a rhinoceros.”
- n.13 Taishō 155, 109c1–110b18. While we have taken the Chinese 本行 as a rendering of the Sanskrit *pūrvacaryā*, these characters could also very well be a rendering of *pūrvayoga*.
- n.14 Taishō 162.
- n.15 Bagchi (1927, p. 262) mentions that according to several Chinese scriptural catalogs, this Chinese translation of the *Kanakavarṇapūrvayoga* was the second to be made, after a first translation by Dharmaruci, a monk from southern India who resided at Luoyang at the beginning of the sixth century. This first translation is said to have been made in 507 CE and later corrected by Bodhiruci. However, at some point it was lost. On Dharmaruci, see Bagchi 1927: 246–47.
- n.16 Denkarma, folio 301.a; Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 164; Phangthangma 2003, p. 22. In both the Denkarma and Phangthangma entries, the title is extended

with *bstan pa*, which renders the translation of the entire title as “The Teaching on the Past Endeavor of Kanakavarṇa.”

- n.17 For this Sanskrit version of the *Divyāvadāna*, see Cowell & Neil 1886, pp. 290–98; and Vaidya 1959, pp. 180–84. Most of the Nepalese *Divyāvadāna* manuscripts are on Himalayan paper and date from the seventeenth century onwards. Cowell and Neil’s Sanskrit edition—from which Vaidya’s edition is derived—is based on four of these relatively late manuscripts. In recent years, however, two older manuscripts of the *Divyāvadāna* have been brought to light, which are written on palm leaf and dated on paleographical grounds to the eleventh century CE (Formigatti 2016, p. 127). Unfortunately, these palm-leaf manuscripts are only partially preserved and do not contain the text of the *Kanakavarṇāvadāna*. The *Divyāvadāna* was an important source for the nineteenth-century French scholar Eugène Burnouf in his pioneering study on Indian Buddhism, *Introduction à l’histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, in which he also included a translation of the *Kanakavarṇāvadāna* (1844, pp. 79–87; for a recent English translation, see Burnouf 2010, pp. 130–37). A German translation of the *Kanakavarṇāvadāna* was published about a century ago by Heinrich Zimmer (1925, pp. 85–101). Apart from a translation into Japanese by Satoshi Hiraoka (2007, I, pp. 51936), there is now also an English translation of the *Kanakavarṇāvadāna* in Andy Rotman’s second volume of *Divyāvadāna* stories (2017, pp. 218–38).
- n.18 Vaidya 1959, pp. 276–77. For an English summary of this version, see Tucci 1949, p. 485.
- n.19 On the *Avadānakalpalatā* (*byang chub sems dpa’i rtogs pa brjod pa dpag bsam gyi ‘khri shing* or *dpag bsam ‘khri shing* for short, Toh 4155) and its popularity in Tibet, both in textual and visual form, see Tucci 1949, pp. 437–41. For an example of such a woodcut depiction of the story of King Kanakavarṇa, see Rani 2005, p. 49 and woodcut 14.
- n.20 See Feer 1891, pp. 119–20 for a short summary of this versified version of King Kanakavarṇa’s story. One notable difference in this version seems to be that the bodhisattva abandons his bodhisattva path after seeing a child who had died due to insufficient breastmilk. The Sanskrit text, however, has not been published yet; the Sanskrit edition by Kanga Takahata is based on another recension of the *Ratnamālāvadāna* that does not contain the story of King Kanakavarṇa.
- n.21 Several of these emendations have also been proposed in Hiraoka 2009, p. 66.

- n.22 For a French translation from the Tibetan, see Feer 1891, pp. 117–19; for the Sanskrit text, see Speyer 1902–6, pp. 173–76.
- n.23 See *The Hundred Deeds (Karmaśataka, Toh 340)*, 3.417.
- n.24 The Tibetan translators have here rendered the Sanskrit *śloka* as *tshigs su bcad pa*, “verse,” but since it is here used in conjunction with *kīrti*, “renown,” and *śabda*, “fame,” it is more appropriate to interpret *śloka* in its wider sense as “acclaim” or “praise.”
- n.25 The extant Sanskrit of the *Divyāvadāna* version (henceforth “the extant Sanskrit version”) here adds *digvidikṣu*, “in [all] directions and subdirections.”
- n.26 The extant Sanskrit version in the *Divyāvadāna* here adds *dr̥ṣṭa eva dharme*, “in this present life.”
- n.27 The extant Sanskrit version here adds the verbs *upasaṃpadya pravedayate*, “having attained which, he makes it known,” which then concludes the sentence. Both the Tibetan and the Chinese translation lack renderings of these verbs, which indicates that they were absent in the underlying Sanskrit versions from which they were made.
- n.28 The Tibetan translation has *dam pa’i chos ston te* (S, N, H: *to*), which may be translated as a present or an imperfect past tense. The phrase *dam pa’i chos* suggests that the translators had read *saddharmaṃ*, “the good Dharma,” in the underlying Sanskrit text. The standard reading of this set passage, however, is *sa dharmam deśayati*, “he teaches the Dharma,” which is the reading in the extant Sanskrit. The Chinese translation likewise does not contain an equivalent for the Tibetan *dam pa’i*.
- n.29 Following S: *sbyin pa la ’gyed pa*; D, N: *sbyin pa la ’ged pa*; Y, J, C: *sbyin pa la ’god pa*; U: *sbyin pa la dged pa*. The Stok reading seems to be the older rendering for the Sanskrit *dānaṣaṃvibhāgasya*.
- n.30 The extant Sanskrit version here lacks an equivalent for the Tibetan *bdag gis*, “themselves.” The Chinese rendering 自, however, indicates that another Sanskrit version here did read *ātmanas*, “themselves.”
- n.31 The Tibetan translation reads *gzhan dag la*, “to others,” whereas the extant Sanskrit reads *sacel labheran dakṣiṇīyaṃ pratigrāhakam*, “if they were to meet a recipient worthy of offerings,” which is also the reading in the *Dāna Sūtra* (Tripathi 1995, p. 18). The Chinese translation here reads 他, in agreement with the Tibetan, which suggests that another Sanskrit version indeed read

parān, “to others.” Similar to the extant Sanskrit, the parallel passage in the Pali *Dānaṣaṃvibhāga Sutta* (It 26) contains the phrase “if there were to be recipients” (*sace nesam paṭiggāhakaṃ assu*), and in the following verses the recommended recipients are specified as “noble ones” (*ariyesu*) and “those worthy of offerings” (*dakkhiṇeyyesu*).

- n.32 While the extant Sanskrit version here only reads *mātsaryam*, “selfishness,” the Tibetan *ser sna’i sems kyi dri ma*, “mental defilement of selfishness,” indicates that its underlying Sanskrit read *mātsaryamalaṃ*, “the defilement of selfishness.” This is in agreement with the Pali *maccheramalaṃ* in the *Dānaṣaṃvibhāga Sutta* (It 26). In the first part of the Sanskrit *Dāna Sūtra* we also find the expression *mātsaryamala*, but then in the second part and in the verses only *mātsarya* is used (cf. Tripathi 1995, p. 18). It should be noted here that the Tibetan translators seem to have taken the Sanskrit *cittaṃ*, “mind,” with *mātsaryamalaṃ*, “defilement of selfishness,” rather than as the object of the verb *paryādāya*, “having taken possession of,” with *mātsaryamalaṃ* being the subject of this sentence. The Tibetan instead reads “they would not remain possessed by the arisen mental defilement of selfishness” (*ser sna’i sems kyi dri ma skyes pas kun nas dkris te ma ’dug cig*).
- n.33 The extant Sanskrit version lacks an equivalent for the Tibetan *bdag nyid*, “themselves,” but instead adds *āgrhītena cetasā*, “with a stingy mind.” The latter phrase is also present in the parallel passage in the Sanskrit *Dāna Sūtra* (Tripathi 1995, p. 18). The Chinese translation, however, has 自, which indicates that another Sanskrit version indeed read *ātmanas*, “themselves,” as is the case above.
- n.34 The extant Sanskrit version reads *prabhūtasattvoasvāpateyaḥ*, “abundant beings and possessions,” but neither the Tibetan or the Chinese translation contain an equivalent for *sattva*, “being.” The Sanskrit edition, therefore, needs to be emended to *prabhūtasvāpateyaḥ*, as pointed out by Hiraoka (2009, p. 66).
- n.35 The extant Sanskrit version adds *vaiḍūrya*, “beryl,” and *śaṅkha*, “conch.” The Chinese translation has 珂, “white jade shell,” but, like the Tibetan, it lacks a rendering of *vaiḍūrya*.
- n.36 Following S, N: *rta pho rgod*; D: *rta rgod ma*. The Stok and Narthang reading would indicate that the underlying Sanskrit text read *vaḍava/ vaḍaba*, whereas the extant Sanskrit manuscripts read *eḍaka*, “sheep” or “goats.” The Chinese 驢馬群 also appears to be a rendering of *vaḍava*, with no indication of any female gender *vaḍavā*, which the Degé reading *rta rgod ma*, “mare,” would suggest.

- n.37 The extant Sanskrit version adds *aṣṭādaśa kulakoṭī*, but this makes little sense here and has no equivalent in either the Tibetan or the Chinese translation.
- n.38 We have here followed the standard understanding of the Sanskrit *koṭi* as “ten million.” The Tibetan reads *sa ya phrag lnga bdun ’bum*, “5.7 million,” which indicates that the Tibetan translators had understood the Sanskrit *koṭi* as “100,000,” a number which is normally denoted by the Sanskrit *lakṣa*. In the Chinese translation the Sanskrit *koṭi* has been rendered as 億, “hundred million.”
- n.39 The extant Sanskrit version lacks an equivalent phrase for the Tibetan *chos kyi rgyal po’i*, “as a Dharma king.” It also lacks the following two sentences on the king’s generosity and the people’s lifespan at the time. The Chinese translation, however, confirms that the phrase and these sentences were present in another Sanskrit version.
- n.40 The Tibetan translators have taken the Sanskrit *grāmaṇyaḥ*, “sirs,” as the object of the sentence, and have translated it (as *grong mi* “city people”), understanding it as together with *sarvabaṇijo*, “all merchants.” However, in the Sanskrit it is in the vocative case, so it should be understood as the king’s form of address to his courtiers, as is the case throughout the narrative.
- n.41 The reading *anekopāyena* in Cowell and Neil’s Sanskrit edition of the *Divyāvadāna* (p. 292) is erroneous and should be emended to *anenopāyena* in light of the Tibetan *thabs ’dis*, as also pointed out by Hiraoka (2009, p. 66). It seems that Vaidya has silently made this emendation in his Sanskrit edition (p.181).
- n.42 Following S, N: *ltas ngan pa*; D: *ltas pa*. The Stok and Narthang reading appears to bring out a specific connotation of the Sanskrit *naimittika* as “one who can read bad omens.”
- n.43 Following S, N: *mos pa rnam s dang / bar snang gi*; D: *mo ba rnam s dang / bar snang gi*. The extant Sanskrit version reads *bhūmyantarīkṣamantrakusālā*, “skilled in consulting the earth and the sky,” and it seems that *sa*, “earth,” in the Degé reading and the following *bar snang gi*, “sky,” in all three Kangyurs reflect the first half of this compound, albeit misplaced within the sentence.
- n.44 The extant Sanskrit version lacks this second exclamation, but it is there in both the Tibetan and the Chinese translation.
- n.45 The extant Sanskrit version here adds the sentences: “Let me count all the beings of Jambudvīpa. And having counted them, let me make

measurements." (*sarvajāmbudvīpān sattvān gaṇeyam / atha gaṇayitvā māpeyam*). These sentences are also present in the Chinese translation.

- n.46 The extant Sanskrit version lacks an equivalent for the Tibetan *legs par*, "properly," in this sentence, but in the following passage we find the verb *gaṇ-* prefixed with *saṃ-*. The Sanskrit version that underlies the Tibetan translation might have had the prefix here. In the Chinese translation the prefix appears to have been rendered as 善, "well," but only for the second instance of the verb *gaṇ-* in this sentence.
- n.47 The extant Sanskrit version here lacks the phrase "starting with myself," but it is there in both the Tibetan and the Chinese translation. In the following passage the extant Sanskrit version does contain the phrase *rājanaṃ kanakavarṇam ādau kṛtvā*, "starting with King Kanakavarṇa."
- n.48 The extant Sanskrit version here adds *paraṃ deveti*, "saying, 'Yes, Your Majesty.'" The Chinese translation lacks a rendering of this phrase, as is the case in the Tibetan.
- n.49 The extant Sanskrit version lacks this sentence and any mention of the eleventh month in the following sentence, but it is there in both the Tibetan and the Chinese translation.
- n.50 The Chinese translation adds that the entire storehouse was empty and that the food that was left was only for one person for one day.
- n.51 The extant Sanskrit version here adds *ime sattvāḥ*, "these beings [are]." The Chinese translation contains this exclamatory sentence only once.
- n.52 The extant Sanskrit version reads *atraiva kālaṃ kariṣyatīti*, which does not make sense here and should be emended to *atraiva evaṃ kariṣyatīti* in light of the Tibetan *de nyid du de ltar byed*. This emendation is also suggested by Hiraoka (2009, p. 66).
- n.53 The extant Sanskrit version here adds *adhārmikair*, "unrighteous," which is also reflected in the Chinese translation as 非法.
- n.54 We have followed the order of the Tibetan, which begins with *phar mi 'dzin pa*, "those who do not honor their fathers." The extant Sanskrit begins with *amātrjñair*, "those who do not honor their mothers," and lacks any reference to fathers, but the Chinese 不識父母 confirms that another Sanskrit version did contain the phrase *apityjñair*, "those who do not honor their fathers." This emendation is also suggested by Hiraoka (2009, p. 66).

- n.55 We have followed the extant Sanskrit *pratimukhaṃ smṛtim upasthāpya* in rendering this standard description of establishing mindfulness. The Tibetan translation reads *dga' ba dang bde ba dang dran pa mngon du bzhag nas*, “established joy, ease, and mindfulness.” This might reflect a misreading of the Sanskrit *pratimukhaṃ* as *prītisukhaṃ*. The Chinese translation also makes no mention of establishing joy and ease.
- n.56 The Tibetan reads *gang cung zad skye ba'i chos de thams cad ni / yun mi ring ba nyid du 'gag pa'i chos yin*, “Whatever is of the nature to arise, all that, before long, is of the nature to cease,” but this well known statement, most famously expressed by Ājñātakauṇḍinya after the first teaching of the Buddha in *The Sūtra of Turning the Wheel of Dharma (Dharmacakrapravartanasūtra, Toh 31)*, usually never contains the phrase “before long.” Rather, the Sanskrit *acirād eva*, “before long,” should here be taken with the verb *viditvā*, “having realized,” as has been done in the Chinese translation.
- n.57 The Tibetan *rkyen ji lta ba bzhin gyis chos thob pa mthong nas* seems to be preserving the full and correct reading, whereas the extant Sanskrit only reads *yathāprāptān dharmān avalokya*, “after beholding dharmas according to how they are attained.” The Chinese 以是因緣 likewise indicates that another Sanskrit version contained the word *pratyaya*, “condition,” a term which is traditionally associated with the pratyekabuddha (see Norman 1983), and which is reflected in such Tibetan renderings as *rten 'brel bsgom*, “one who meditates on dependence,” and *rkyen gcig rtogs*, “one who realizes every single condition.” On the basis of the Tibetan and Chinese translations, Hiraoka (2009, p. 66) has proposed to emend the Sanskrit edition to *yathāpratyayaṃ prāptān dharmān avalokya*.
- n.58 Following S, N: *tshigs su bcad pa 'di smras pa*; D reads *tshigs su bcad pa 'di dag smras pa*, with “verses” (plural). The Stok and Narthang reading is in agreement with the Sanskrit *gāthāṃ bhāṣate*. The Degé reading, however, seems to indicate that at some point the following five-lined verse, with its added line (see next note), was considered to consist of two verses. On this verse, and its Sanskrit and Pali equivalents, see the Introduction.
- n.59 The Tibetan *chags las sdug bsngal 'di byung ste* is here followed by a further line that reads *chags la* (S, N, H: *las*) *sdug bsngal 'di 'jug pas*. This extra line, which would make for an odd five-lined verse, seems to be a slightly adjusted second rendering of the same underlying Sanskrit line which somehow got included in the final Tibetan translation. In the extant Sanskrit version, the line reads *snehānvayaṃ saṃbhavatīha duḥkham*, “Suffering here [in saṃsāra] comes about as a consequence of attachments,” for which the parallel verse

in the *Mahāvastu* (Mvu I 358) reads *snehānvayaṃ duḥkham idaṃ prabhōti*, which is in close correspondence with the Pali *snehanvayaṃ dukkhaṃ idaṃ pahoti* in the *Khaggavisāṇa Sutta* (Sn 6). The Tibetan 'di could possibly be a shortened form of 'di na for metrical reasons, but in light of these attestations, it seems more likely that the Sanskrit version from which the Tibetan translation was made did in fact have *idaṃ*, "this," instead of *iha*, "here," which is the reading found in the extant Sanskrit version, as given in the Introduction.

- n.60 The Tibetan reads *de phyir mkhas pas chags sun phyung*, "Therefore the wise one, wary of attachments," but the extant Sanskrit version reads *ādīnavaṃ snehagataṃ viditvā*, so the Tibetan seems to have misread the Sanskrit *viditvā*, "realizing," as *vidvān*, "the wise one" ("Therefore the wise one, wary of attachments, should move alone like a rhinoceros"). Like the extant Sanskrit, the Chinese translation of this verse makes no mention of "the wise one," but then it lacks the first line of the verse and differs significantly in the subsequent lines:

It is from attachments that suffering originates;
One should therefore abandon attachments,
One should delight in a solitary place,
Like the single horn of a rhinoceros.

- n.61 Like the Sanskrit *khadgaviṣāṇa*, the Tibetan *bse ru* allows for two interpretations: (1) either *bse* is interpreted as "tanned leather," which, together with *ru*, "horn," makes for a compound word that means "rhinoceros;" (2) or *bse* is taken as "rhinoceros" for short, which would make for a phrase meaning "the horn of a rhinoceros." We have chosen to translate the term according to the interpretation commonly found in the Buddhist Sanskrit tradition, since this is the tradition that would have been familiar to the Tibetan translators. For more on the ambiguity of the compound word *khadgaviṣāṇa*, see [n.5](#) to the Introduction.
- n.62 The extant Sanskrit version here adds *viśuddhena*, "completely pure," which is also rendered in the Chinese translation as 清淨.
- n.63 The extant Sanskrit version reads "Let me receive and eat alms from the house of King Kanakavarṇa (*kanakavarṇasya niveśanāt*)." The Chinese translation agrees with the Tibetan.
- n.64 The Tibetan *de'i rdzu 'phrul 'di lta bus* indicates that the Tibetan translators read *tasya evaṃ ṛddhyā* where the extant Sanskrit has *tata eva ṛddhyā*, "from there, by miraculous ability." The Chinese rendering 即以神通 seems to be in agreement with the extant Sanskrit reading.

- n.65 Following S, N: *dbul ba dag gi nang na shi dang mtshungs par gyur pa ste*; D: *dbul ba dag ni nang na shi dang mtshungs par gyur pa ste*. The Sanskrit reads: *maraṇasamaṇi dāridryam*.
- n.66 The last line of this verse is not preserved in the extant Sanskrit version. It is, however, present in the Chinese translation, albeit more elaborately rendered for metrical reasons.
- n.67 The extant Sanskrit version lacks an equivalent *api* for the Tibetan *kyang*, “even,” but instead it adds the phrase *yadi vā na paribhokṣye*, “or if I do not eat it.” The Chinese translation agrees with the extant Sanskrit version.
- n.68 The Tibetan translation reads *’di ’dra ba’i drang srong tshul khirms dang ldan pa dge ba’i chos can de* (S, N: *te*), without the second half of the sentence that would have contained the verb. We have supplied this from the extant Sanskrit: *mama niveśane ’dya yathādhautena pātreṇa nirgamiṣyati*, which is also reflected in the Chinese translation. By way of explanation, the Chinese translators have paraphrased the Sanskrit *yathādhautena pātreṇa* as 其不得飯食空鉢, “without having gotten food in his empty alms bowl.”
- n.69 The Tibetan *sbyin pa gtong ba*, lit. “giving away a gift,” indicates that the Tibetan translators read *dānātisargaḥ* in the underlying Sanskrit, whereas the extant Sanskrit version in the *Divyāvadāna* reads *odanātisargaḥ*, “giving away boiled rice.” Rotman translates it “this last bit of rice” (Rotman 2017, 233). The Chinese rendering 最後布施 also suggests an underlying Sanskrit reading with *dāna-*.
- n.70 The extant Sanskrit version is more elaborate in the description of this scene: “Thereupon King Kanakavarṇa took the bowl of that great sage (*tasya maharṣes*), put the single measure of food in the bowl, and holding the bowl in both hands, fell to his knees (*ubhābhyāṃ pāṇibhyāṃ pātraṃ gṛhītvā jānubhyāṃ nipatya*) and placed the bowl in the blessed pratyekabuddha’s right hand.” Like the Tibetan, the Chinese translation does not describe the king as holding the bowl in both hands and falling to his knees, nor does it here refer to the pratyekabuddha as “that great sage.”
- n.71 This statement refers to the tradition whereby a Buddhist monk will usually give a short Dharma teaching or recitation for any donor from whom he receives alms. It is said that a pratyekabuddha, however, simply accepts the alms and silently leaves, but in doing so can display supernormal powers as a highly realized being. As stated by Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharma-kośabhāṣya* (Pradhan 1975, p. 183.21; Toh 4090, F.159.b), pratyekabuddhas “are not without compassion, because they display their miraculous power for

the sake of benefitting beings” (*nāpi niṣkaruṇāḥ / sattvānugrahārtham ṛddher āviṣkaraṇāt*). This statement implied that by manifesting supernatural abilities in bodily form, pratyekabuddhas can instill faith in the Dharma in those who witness their miraculous feats, but without giving any verbal teaching.

- n.72 The extant Sanskrit version reads *piṇḍapātram*, “alms bowl,” which is likely a scribal error for *piṇḍapātāṇi*, “alms,” as reflected in the Tibetan *bsod snyoms* and the Chinese 所施食. Elsewhere in the extant Sanskrit, an alms bowl is simply referred to as *pātra*, “bowl.”
- n.73 The Tibetan *'di ltar rdzu 'phrul gyis* indicates that the Tibetan translators read *evamṛddhyā* where the extant Sanskrit version has *tata eva ṛddhyā*, “from there, by miraculous ability.” The Chinese translation reads 即以神通, which seems to be in agreement with the extant Sanskrit.
- n.74 The Chinese translation here adds 并諸大眾, “together with the great crowd.”
- n.75 The extant Sanskrit version lacks an equivalent for the Tibetan *lha'i bka'*, “Your Majesty’s instruction,” and it has these two sentences in reverse order. The Chinese translation is in agreement with the extant Sanskrit.
- n.76 The extant Sanskrit version reads *meghāśca pravarsayantaḥ pāṃśūn śamayanti*, “and raining rainclouds settled the dust.” The Chinese translation instead repeats the sentence 涼風吹閣浮提其地淨, “cold winds began to blow in Jambudvīpa that made the ground clean.”
- n.77 Following S, N, H: *bca'i bar bya*; D: *bza'i bar bya*. The Stok, Narthang, and Lhasa reading is in agreement with the Sanskrit *khādanīyaṃ*.
- n.78 The extant Sanskrit version here includes *skandha-*, “stalks,” which is not rendered in the Tibetan. The Chinese translation does contain a rendering of this as 莖.
- n.79 The Tibetan here adds *til mar*, “sesame oil,” and in the Chinese translation we also find oil included in the list, but this item seems out of place. The extant Sanskrit lacks this item. Note that there will be a separate rain of sesame oil further on.
- n.80 Following S, N, H, Y, Q, C: *bu ram*; D: *bur mar*.
- n.81 The extant Sanskrit version here concludes the list with *piṣṭakhādanīyaṃ*, “edible flour,” and it lacks the following sentence, which is found in both the Tibetan and the Chinese translation.

- n.82 We have followed the Tibetan for this last sentence. The extant Sanskrit version is shorter, reading only *phalam anyad bhaviṣyati*, “There will be another fruit.” The Chinese translation likewise makes no mention of leaves and flowers here.
- n.83 The extant Sanskrit version lacks an equivalent for the Tibetan *'bru'i rigs thams cad dang*, “and all types of grains.” The Chinese translation only reads 等, “and so forth.”
- n.84 Following S, N, H: *rdzas rnam pa sna tshogs*; D: *zas rnam pa sna tshogs*, “various kinds of food”. The Stok, Narthang, and Lhasa reading is preferable in light of the extant Sanskrit which reads *nānāvidhadūṣya*, “various kinds of cloths.” The Tibetan translators appear to have read *dravya*, “substance” or “material,” instead of *dūṣya*, “cloth.” The Chinese rendering 種種雜, “various miscellaneous things,” likewise seems to suggest that *dravya* may have been the underlying Sanskrit reading.
- n.85 The Tibetan translation has taken this sentence as an exhortation: “Monks, you should not be uncertain and in doubt about whether that king Kanakavarṇa at that time, at that moment, was someone else. Monks, you should see that at that time, at that moment, it was I who was named Kanakavarṇa.” As a standard passage that comes at the end of an *avadāna*, we have followed the extant Sanskrit version here, with which the Chinese translation is in agreement.
- n.86 The extant Sanskrit version here includes *bhikṣavaḥ*, “Monks,” at the beginning, but this is absent in both the Tibetan and the Chinese translation.
- n.87 Following S: *bza' bar mi bya'o* ; D: *bar mi bya'o*.
- n.88 The Tibetan text is problematic in this passage with repeated use of *mi bya'o*. We have, therefore, translated the passage in accordance with the passage at the beginning of the text.
- n.89 Following the Tibetan *'phags pa'i skyes bos legs par bshad pa*. The extant Sanskrit version reads *āryajaneṣu bhāṣitaṃ*, “What is said among the noble,” but the Tibetan indicates that the Tibetan translators were reading *āryajane subhāṣitaṃ*. The Chinese 聖眾中善語 is also a rendering of such a reading.
- n.90 The extant Sanskrit version and the Chinese translation add another verse that is commonly found at the end of *avadānas*:
- “Whether a beautiful good deed
Or an unbeautiful bad deed,

It has its karmic fruition,
It will certainly bear fruit.”

- n.91 There is no mention of bodhisattvas being present in the extant Sanskrit version or the Chinese translation. These versions instead read: “Elated, the monks, nuns, devoted laymen, devoted laywomen, gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, and so on, and the entire assembly, rejoiced at what the Blessed One had said.”

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 accomplished in knowledge and conduct

rig pa dang zhabs su ldan pa

རིག་པ་དང་ཞབས་སུ་ལྷན་པ།

vidyācaraṇasaṃpanna^{AS}

An epithet of the Buddha.

g.2 aggregates subject to clinging

nye bar len pa'i phung po

ཉེབར་ལེན་པའི་ཕུང་པོ།

upādānaskandha ^{AS}

The five “heaps” that are clung to and thereby constitute individual existence in the desire realm: form (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*), conditionings (*saṃskāra*), and consciousness (*vijñāna*).

g.3 Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park

mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga’ ra ba

མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྤྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

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.4 arhat

dgra bcom pa

དག་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.5 ascetic

dge sbyong

དག་སྦྱང་།

śramaṇa^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A general term applied to spiritual practitioners who live as ascetic mendicants. In Buddhist texts, the term usually refers to Buddhist monastics, but it can also designate a practitioner from other ascetic/monastic spiritual traditions. In this context *śramaṇa* is often contrasted with the term *brāhmaṇa* (*bram ze*), which refers broadly to followers of the Vedic tradition. Any renunciate, not just a Buddhist, could be referred to as a śramaṇa if they were not within the Vedic fold. The epithet Great Śramaṇa is often applied to the Buddha.

g.6 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura^{AS}

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.7 black gram

mon sran dkar ru

མོན་སྒུན་དཀར་ཟུ།

māṣa^{AS}

Also known as *urad*, a type of pulse.

g.8 Blessed One

bcom ldan 'das

བཙོམ་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 $\sqrt{bhañj}$ (“to break”).

g.9 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚོངས་པ།

brahman^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A high-ranking deity presiding over a divine world; he is also considered to be the lord of the *Sahā* world (our universe). Though not considered a creator god in Buddhism, Brahmā occupies an important place as one of two gods (the other being Indra/Śakra) said to have first exhorted the Buddha Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma. The particular heavens found in the form realm over which Brahmā rules are often some of the most sought-after realms of higher rebirth in Buddhist literature. Since there are many universes or world systems, there are also multiple Brahmās presiding over them. His most frequent epithets are “Lord of the *Sahā* World” (*sahāṃpati*) and Great Brahmā (*mahābrahman*).

g.10 cane sugar

kha ra

ལ་ར།

śarkara ^{AS}

The “grit” (*śarkara*) of crystallized brown sugar that is made with the juice of sugar cane.

g.11 conditioning

'du byed

འདུ་བྱེད།

saṃskāra ^{AS}

The meaning of this term varies according to context. As one of the skandhas, it refers to various mental activities. In terms of the twelve phases of dependent origination, it is the second, “formation” or “creation,” referring to activities with karmic results.

g.12 consciousness

rnam par shes pa

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

vijñāna ^{AS}

Consciousness is generally classified into the five sensory consciousnesses and mental consciousness. Fifth of the five aggregates and third of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.13 Dharma king

chos kyi rgyal po

ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

dharmarāja ^{AS}

A king who rules his kingdom righteously and in accordance with the Dharma.

g.14 edible things

bca' bar bya ba

བཅའ་བར་བྱ་བ།

khādanīya ^{AS}

The Sanskrit *khādanīya* is especially used for hard or raw foods.

g.15 exemplary tale

rtogs pa brjod pa

ལྷོགས་པ་བརྗོད་པ།

avadāna^{AD}

One of the twelve genres or types of teaching (*dvādaśāṅga*) given by the Buddha. The Sanskrit *avadāna* means “exceptional feat” or “illustrious deed.” However, in the context of the twelve types of teachings, it came to refer to the narrative accounts of such deeds. In the *Yogācārabhūmi* (Śbh I 230; Toh 4036, F.56.a), Asaṅga defines the term *avadāna* as “that which is illustrated with an example, an example by which the relevant meaning becomes completely clear” (*yat sadṛṣṭāntakam udāhṛtam, yena dṛṣṭāntena yasya prakṛtasyārthasya vyavadānaṃ bhavati*). This definition is echoed in the *Abhidharma-samuccayabhāṣya* (ed. Tatia, p. 96; Toh 4053, F.69.a) and Vasubandhu’s *Gāthāsaṃgrahaśāstrārtha* (Toh 4103, F.228.a).

g.16 field of merit

bsod nams kyi zhing

བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་།

punyaḥṣetra^{AD}

Potential sources for the accumulation of merit.

g.17 foods

bza’ bar bya ba

བཟའ་བར་བྱ་བ།

bhojanīya^{AS}

The Sanskrit *bhojanīya* refers especially to the five soft foods that do not need to be chewed much: boiled rice, sattu, khichri, fish, and meat.

g.18 gandharva

dri za

དྷི་ཟ།

gandharva^{AS}

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 ruled by 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.19 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗིང།

garuḍa ^{AS}

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.20 ghee

mar sar

མར་སར།

sarpis ^{AS}

Clarified butter.

g.21 guide for people to be tamed

skyes bu 'dul ba'i kha lo sgyur ba

སྐྱེས་བུ་འདུལ་བའི་ཁ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་བ།

puruṣadamyasārathi ^{AS}

An epithet of the Buddha.

g.22 individual awakening

rang byang chub

རང་བྱུང་རྒྱུན།

pratyekabodhi ^{AS}

The awakening of pratyekabuddhas, those who realize the conditioned nature of reality on their own, without the instruction of a buddha in their current lifetime.

g.23 jaggery

bur mar

གུ་མ་ར།

guḍa^{AS}

The “lump” (*guḍa*) of solidified molasses that is made with the juice of sugar cane.

g.24 Jambudvīpa

dzam bu'i gling

ཇམ་བུ་འི་གླིང་།

jambudvīpa^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology, which can signify either the known human world, or more specifically the Indian subcontinent, literally “the *jambu* island/continent.” *Jambu* is the name used for a range of plum-like fruits from trees belonging to the genus *Szygium*, particularly *Szygium jambos* and *Szygium cumini*, and it has commonly been rendered “rose apple,” although “black plum” may be a less misleading term. Among various explanations given for the continent being so named, one (in the *Abhidharmakośa*) is that a *jambu* tree grows in its northern mountains beside Lake Anavatapta, mythically considered the source of the four great rivers of India, and that the continent is therefore named from the tree or the fruit. Jambudvīpa has the Vajrāsana at its center and is the only continent upon which buddhas attain awakening.

g.25 Jetavana

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyī tshal

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།

jetavana^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A park in Śrāvastī, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kośala in northern India. It was owned by Prince Jeta, and the wealthy merchant Anāthapiṇḍada, wishing to offer it to the Buddha, bought it from him by covering the entire property with gold coins. It was to become the place where the monks could be housed during the monsoon season, thus creating the first Buddhist monastery. It is therefore the setting for many of the Buddha's discourses.

g.26 Kanakavarṇa

gser mdog

གསེར་མདོག་།

kanakavarṇa ^{AO}

“Golden Hue.” The name of a king in the distant past. This king was a former life of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.27 Kanakāvati

gser can

གསེར་ཅན།

kanakāvati ^{AO}

“Golden One.” The royal capital from which King Kanakavarṇa ruled over the whole of Jambudvīpa in the distant past.

g.28 khichri

zan dron

ཟན་རྩོ།

kulmāṣa ^{AS}

A nourishing porridge that is made by boiling rice and lentils together.

g.29 kinnara

mi 'am ci

མི་འམ་ཅི།

kiṇnara ^{AS}

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.30 knower of the world

jig rten mkhyen pa

ཇིག་རྟེན་མཁྱེན་པ།

lokavid ^{AS}

An epithet of the Buddha.

g.31 lentils

sran chung

སྲན་ཚུང།

masūra^{AS}

g.32 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga^{AS}

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.33 māra

bdud

བདུད།

māra^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Māra, literally “death” or “maker of death,” is the name of the deva who tried to prevent the Buddha from achieving awakening, the name given to the class of beings he leads, and also an impersonal term for the destructive forces that keep beings imprisoned in saṃsāra:

(1) As a deva, Māra is said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations (*paranirmitavaśavartin*), the highest paradise in the desire realm. He famously attempted to prevent the Buddha’s awakening under the Bodhi tree—see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.1—and later sought many times to thwart the Buddha’s activity. In the sūtras, he often also creates obstacles to the progress of śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. (2) The devas ruled over by Māra are collectively called *mārakāyika* or *mārakāyikadevatā*, the “deities of Māra’s family or class.” In general, these māras too do not wish any being to escape from saṃsāra, but can also change their ways and even end up developing faith in the Buddha, as exemplified by Sārvavāha; see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.14 and 21.43. (3) The term māra can also be understood as personifying four defects that prevent awakening, called (i) the divine māra (*devaputramāra*), which is the distraction of pleasures; (ii) the māra of Death (*mṛtyumāra*), which is having one’s life interrupted; (iii) the

māra of the aggregates (*skandhamāra*), which is identifying with the five aggregates; and (iv) the māra of the afflictions (*kleśamāra*), which is being under the sway of the negative emotions of desire, hatred, and ignorance.

g.34 measure

bre'u chung

བེའུ་ཅུང།

mānikā^{AS}

The Sanskrit *mānikā* is also a term used as a measure of weight for grains. It is usually defined as equal to two *kuḍavas* or eight *palas*, which is equivalent to about four hundred grams. In this text, however, it probably just refers to a “small amount,” as reflected in the Tibetan *bre'u chung*.

g.35 mung bean

mon sran gre'u

མོན་སྲན་གྲེའུ།

mudga^{AS}

A type of pulse.

g.36 nāga

klu

ལུ།

nāga^{AS}

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.37 past endeavor

sngon gyi sbyor ba

སྤོན་གྱི་སྦྱོར་བ།

pūrvayoga^{AD}

An action or concerted effort on the spiritual path that was performed by an individual during a past lifetime.

g.38 perfectly awakened one

yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas

ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས།

samyaksambuddha ^{AS}

An epithet of the Buddha.

g.39 pratyekabuddha

rang sangs rgyas

རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

pratyekabuddha ^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.40 root of virtue

dge ba'i rtsa ba

དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ།

kuśalamūla ^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

According to most lists (specifically those of the Pāli and some Abhidharma traditions), the (three) roots of virtue or the roots of the good or wholesome states (of mind) are what makes a mental state good or bad; they are identified as the opposites of the three mental “poisons” of greed, hatred, and delusion. Actions based on the roots of virtue will eventually lead to future happiness. The *Dharmasaṃgraha*, however, lists the three roots of

virtue as (1) the mind of awakening, (2) purity of thought, and (3) freedom from egotism (Skt. *trīṇi kuśalamūlāni | bodhicittotpādaḥ, āśayaviśuddhiḥ, ahaṅkāramamakāraparityāgaśceti |*).

g.41 Sahā world

mi mjed kyi 'jig rten

མི་མཇེད་ཀྱི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

sahāloka ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The name for our world system, the universe of a thousand million worlds, or trichiliocosm, in which the four-continent world is located. Each trichiliocosm is ruled by a god Brahmā; thus, in this context, he bears the title of Sahāṃpati, Lord of Sahā. The world system of Sahā, or Sahālokadhātu, is also described as the buddhafiield of the Buddha Śākyamuni where he teaches the Dharma to beings.

The name Sahā possibly derives from the Sanskrit *√sah*, “to bear, endure, or withstand.” It is often interpreted as alluding to the inhabitants of this world being able to endure the suffering they encounter. The Tibetan translation, *mi mjed*, follows along the same lines. It literally means “not painful,” in the sense that beings here are able to bear the suffering they experience.

g.42 sattu

phye

ཕྱི།

saktu ^{AS}

The flour of roasted grain and pulses, usually barley or chickpeas. It can be made into a porridge or a drink.

g.43 spiritual life

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚུངས་པར་སྦྱོད་པ།

brahmacārya ^{AS}

Lit. “brahma conduct.” A term that in some contexts refers specifically to chastity or complete celibacy. It can also be used to refer in general to a spiritual life as a devout person or a renunciant.

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Brahman is a Sanskrit term referring to what is highest (*parama*) and most important (*pradhāna*); the *Nibandhana* commentary explains *brahman* as meaning here *nirvāṇa*, and thus the brahman conduct is the “conduct toward brahman,” the conduct that leads to the highest liberation, i.e., *nirvāṇa*. This is explained as “the path without outflows,” which is the “truth of the path” among the four truths of the noble ones. Other explanations (found in the Pāli tradition) take “brahman conduct” to mean the “best conduct,” and also the “conduct of the best,” i.e., the buddhas. In some contexts, “brahman conduct” refers more specifically to celibacy, but the specific referents of this expression are many.

g.44 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

སམྱའོ་ཡོད།

śrāvastī^{AO}

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.45 tathāgata

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata^{AS}

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.46 tīrthika

mu stegs

མུ་སྟེགས།

tīrthika ^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Those of other religious or philosophical orders, contemporary with the early Buddhist order, including Jains, Jaṭilas, Ājīvikas, and Cārvākas. Tīrthika (“ford”) literally translates as “one belonging to or associated with (possessive suffix *-ika*) stairs for landing or for descent into a river,” or “a bathing place,” or “a place of pilgrimage on the banks of sacred streams” (Monier-Williams). The term may have originally referred to temple priests at river crossings or fords where travelers propitiated a deity before crossing. The Sanskrit term seems to have undergone metonymic transfer in referring to those able to ford the turbulent river of saṃsāra (as in the Jain tīrthaṅkaras, “ford makers”), and it came to be used in Buddhist sources to refer to teachers of rival religious traditions. The Sanskrit term is closely rendered by the Tibetan *mu stegs pa*: “those on the steps (*stegs pa*) at the edge (*mu*).”

g.47 Venus

pa ba bsangs

པ་བ་བསངས།

śukra ^{AS}

In Indian astrology, the presence of Venus in the night sky is one of the indicators of future rains because it is considered to cancel out the influence of heavenly bodies that obstruct rainfall.

g.48 wanderer

kun du rgyu

ཀུན་དུ་རྒྱ།

parivrājaka ^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A non-Buddhist religious mendicant who literally “roams around.” Historically, they wandered in India from ancient times, including the time of the Buddha, and held a variety of beliefs, engaging with one another in

debate on a range of topics. Some of their metaphysical views are presented in the early Buddhist discourses of the Pali Canon. They included women in their number.

g.49 well gone

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata^{AS}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. A recurrent explanation offers three different meanings for *su-* that are meant to show the special qualities of “accomplishment of one’s own purpose” (*svārthasampad*) for a complete buddha. Thus, the Sugata is “well” gone, as in the expression *su-rūpa* (“having a good form”); he is gone “in a way that he shall not come back,” as in the expression *su-naṣṭa-jvara* (“a fever that has utterly gone”); and he has gone “without any remainder” as in the expression *su-pūrṇa-ghaṭa* (“a pot that is completely full”). According to Buddhaghōṣa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*) and where he went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*).

g.50 worthy of offerings

sbyin gnas

སྤྱིན་གནས།

dakṣiṇīya^{AD}

In general, a term for a fitting object of generosity who can be considered a field of merit (*puṇyakṣetra*). Typically refers to monks or ascetics.

g.51 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྤྱིན།

yakṣa^{AS}

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 rule 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.52 yojana

dpag tshad

དཔག་ཚད།

yojana^{AS}

A common measure of distance in ancient India. It refers to the distance that an ox cart can traverse in one day, that is, in one “harnessing” (*yojana*), i.e., before unyoking the oxen. Each region seems to have had its own estimate of this distance. In the eastern region of Magadha, a *yojana* consisted of four *krośas*, thus equalling about 4.5 miles or 7.4 kilometers. In Vasubandhu’s *Abhidharmakośa* (III 88), on the other hand, a *yojana* is defined as consisting of eight *krośas*, which indicates that in the northwestern region of Gandhāra it referred to a distance twice as long as in Magadha.