

༄། །ལང་གུ་འི་མཚོ་ག་གིས་ལུས་པ།

The Questions of Gaṅgottarā

Gaṅgottaraparipṛcchā

འཕགས་པ་གང་གའི་མཚོག་གིས་ལུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa gang gA'i mchog gis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Questions of Gaṅgottarā”

Āryagaṅgottaraparipṛcchānāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 75 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 43 (dkon brtsegs, ca), folios 222.a–225.b

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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 In *The Questions of Gaṅgottarā*, a laywoman named Gaṅgottarā leaves her home in the city of Śrāvastī and visits the Buddha Śākyamuni in Prince Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park. The Buddha asks her from where she has come, sparking a dialogue on the true nature of things. Among other things, they discuss the fact that, from the perspective of ultimate truth, all things, including Gaṅgottarā herself, are like magical creations, and thus no one comes or goes or pursues nirvāṇa. After their dialogue, the Buddha smiles. When Ānanda asks him why, he explains that a thousand tathāgatas of the past have already taught this discourse at this same location to a thousand different laywomen, all named Gaṅgottarā; and that through it they have all achieved nirvāṇa. The sūtra concludes with a brief explanation of the reasons why the present laywoman named Gaṅgottarā received this teaching and how it should be remembered in the future.

ac.

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- ac.1 The initial draft was completed by Sophie McGrath and reviewed by Laura Goetz, who offered various suggestions. The translation was then revised and edited by David Fiordalis, who also expanded the introduction and the notes.
- ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Questions of Gaṅgottarā is a short but sophisticated dialogue that opens with a laywoman named Gaṅgottarā leaving her home in the city of Śrāvastī and going to visit the Buddha Śākyamuni, who is dwelling nearby in Prince Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park. When she arrives, the Buddha asks her, “from where have you come?” and this question sparks a dialogue between them on the true nature of things. They discuss the fact that all things, including Gaṅgottarā herself, are like magical creations, and thus, from the perspective of ultimate truth, no one comes or goes or pursues nirvāṇa. They also discuss the implications of this idea for the ontological status of concepts found in basic Buddhist teaching, such as the five aggregates, dependent arising, rebirth in hells and heavens, even nirvāṇa itself. They then discuss some of the related implications for ethical themes, such as good and bad deeds, virtue, purity and impurity, and the correct practice of the path.

i.2

The sūtra is thus noteworthy not only for its teachings, but also for the fact that it features a woman as one of its main characters, and a laywoman at that—a laywoman who has the intellectual aptitude and fortitude to engage in a challenging philosophical discussion with the Buddha.¹ Peter Skilling, who has also published a translation of this sūtra into English, compares it with the scene in *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti* wherein the goddess who lives in Vimalakīrti’s house engages Śāriputra in a sophisticated dialogue that is in some ways comparable to the one in this sūtra.² At one point in that sūtra, however, the goddess magically transforms Śāriputra into a goddess to demonstrate her point that all things are like magical illusions. There is no such marvelous demonstration in this sūtra, unless we count the episode at the end wherein the gods produce divine flowers and sandalwood powders with which to worship the Buddha. However, that action does not seem intended to emphasize the idea that all things are like magical illusions. Additionally, the dialogue in the present sūtra is between the Buddha and a

human woman, and the gender roles are the reverse of those found in *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, with the Buddha Śākyamuni in the teacher role and the laywoman Gaṅgottarā as the student.

i.3 After Gaṅgottarā's discussion with the Buddha has concluded, he smiles. When Ānanda asks him why, the Buddha states that a thousand tathāgatas of the past have already given this same teaching at this same location in the past to a thousand different laywomen, all named Gaṅgottarā, and that all of these women practiced the path and achieved parinirvāṇa. Skilling points out the remarkable nature of this statement, which has the effect of emphasizing not only that many laywomen have received profound teachings from the Buddha but also that they have achieved nirvāṇa, the goal of the path.

i.4 Although the nirvāṇa that these women achieve is not the "unsurpassable and perfect awakening" of a buddha, but rather the "remainderless nirvāṇa" of a "worthy one" (*arhat*), there is no explicit claim made in the sūtra that this is somehow a lesser accomplishment. That it will be Gaṅgottarā's future achievement is also suggested by the description of the light rays that issue from the Buddha's smile, which the canonical version depicts as returning to disappear into the Buddha's mouth. In other common descriptions of the Buddha's smile, this indicates that the Buddha is giving a prediction of someone's future awakening as a disciple (*śrāvaka*).³ In this way, the sūtra also combines two of the circumstances in which the Buddha smiles: he describes something that has happened in the same location in the past, and he gives a prediction of someone's future awakening.

i.5 The strength and achievements of the laywoman Gaṅgottarā are also explicitly emphasized in the sūtra in another way. After the Buddha has smiled and given a brief explanation of how the sūtra should be remembered in the future, the narrator mentions a number of monks and nuns as being present in the audience, along with various gods and divine beings. These gods express wonder at the laywoman Gaṅgottarā of the present narrative and they praise her for her ability to converse with the Buddha without becoming weary. They explain this by saying that she has practiced virtue and the holy life for a long time and served many buddhas in the past, and that this is why she has now received this teaching. The sūtra concludes with the Buddha confirming what the gods have said and everyone rejoicing at the Buddha's words.

i.6 There are no known extant Sanskrit witnesses to this sūtra, but translations of it, ostensibly made from Sanskrit manuscripts, are preserved in the Tibetan Kangyur and the Chinese Tripiṭaka. In both the Tibetan and Chinese canons, the sūtra is classified as part of the collection of sūtras known as *The Great Heap of Jewels (Mahāratnakūṭa)*.⁴ The Chinese translation

has been attributed to Bodhiruci, who was active in the early eighth century and who may have been responsible for compiling the Ratnakūṭa collection as we know it today.⁵ A translation of the Chinese is also available in English.⁶ The colophon to the canonical Tibetan translation states that the sūtra was translated by Dānaśīla and Jinamitra, along with Yeshé Dé, all of whom flourished in the late eighth or early ninth century. Its relatively early date of translation into Tibetan is also supported by its inclusion in the Denkarma (*lhan kar ma*), the catalog of Tibetan translations compiled in the ninth century.⁷ It is not mentioned in the Phangthangma (*'phang thang ma*).

i.7 No citations or references to this sūtra have as yet been discovered in other canonical works of Buddhist literature, as Skilling has noted. Another complete Tibetan translation of this sūtra can be found among the Dunhuang manuscripts.⁸ A comparison reveals that the Tibetan translation in this Dunhuang manuscript would seem to be quite closely related to the Chinese translation by Bodhiruci. In fact, Jonathan Silk has even argued that it was made directly from the Chinese translation.⁹ The precise relationship between all three translations requires more detailed analysis, but for the purposes of further comparison and the reader's edification, we have included translations and transcriptions of many passages from the Dunhuang manuscript in the notes to our present translation from the Kangyur.

i.8 For the main text of the canonical Tibetan, we have based our translation on the edition in the Degé Kangyur in consultation with the Pedurma Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the edition in the Stok Palace Kangyur (*stog pho brang*).

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra
The Questions of Gaṅgottarā**

1.

The Translation

[F.222.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in Śrāvastī, in Prince Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park. At that time a laywoman named Gaṅgottarā was living in the great city of Śrāvastī.¹⁰

1.2 One day, the laywoman Gaṅgottarā left Śrāvastī and went to Prince Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park.¹¹ When she arrived, she bowed down before the Blessed One with her head at his feet, and then she sat to one side.

1.3 Once she had sat down, the Blessed One asked the laywoman Gaṅgottarā a question, even though he already knew the answer:¹² "From where have you just come, Gaṅgottarā?"

1.4 "Blessed One," Gaṅgottarā replied, "if someone were to ask a magically created being, 'From where have you just come?' what would be the answer?" [F.222.b]

1.5 "Gaṅgottarā," responded the Blessed One, "a magically created being neither stands nor sits. It does not lie down. It does not come or go. It does not die. It is not born. So, how could one declare that it has come from some place?"

1.6 "Blessed One, are all things like magical creations?" asked Gaṅgottarā.
"It is so, Gaṅgottarā."¹³

1.7 "Blessed One," she responded, "if all things are like magical creations, why do you ask, 'Laywoman Gaṅgottarā, from where have you just come?' "

1.8 "Gaṅgottarā," the Blessed One answered, "since magically created beings¹⁴ do not go to the lower realms, and they do not go to the higher realms, and they do not go to parinirvāṇa, do you, too, Gaṅgottarā, not go to the lower realms, or go to the higher realms, or go to parinirvāṇa?"

- 1.9 “Blessed One,” Gaṅgottarā replied, “if I truly saw the laywoman Gaṅgottarā as being different in nature from a magical creation, then it would not be appropriate for me to compare myself to a magically created being by saying, ‘The laywoman Gaṅgottarā does not go to the lower realms, does not go to the higher realms, and does not go to parinirvāṇa.’ Nevertheless, Blessed One, I do not see myself as being different in nature from a magical creation.¹⁵ Since I do not see myself in that way, Blessed One, how can I declare in this way that the laywoman Gaṅgottarā goes to the lower realms, goes to the higher realms, or goes to parinirvāṇa?”
- 1.10 “Even with this being the case, Blessed One, it is in accordance with the presence of mental straying, mental conceit, mental agitation, and vain imagining that one thinks the thoughts, ‘I go to the lower realms,’ ‘I go to the higher realms,’ and [F.223.a] ‘I go to parinirvāṇa.’¹⁶ Blessed One, the state of nirvāṇa¹⁷ is such that it never goes to the lower realms, it never goes to the higher realms, and it never goes to parinirvāṇa. The laywoman Gaṅgottarā has a similar state, Blessed One.”¹⁸
- “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One responded, “have you not set out for parinirvāṇa?”¹⁹
- 1.11 “Blessed One,” Gaṅgottarā replied, “if someone were to ask what is not born, ‘Have you not set out for parinirvāṇa?’ what would be the answer?”
- 1.12 “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One said, “since the phrase ‘what is not born’ is a designation for nirvāṇa, what would be the answer?”²⁰
- 1.13 “Blessed One,” Gaṅgottarā replied, “are all things the same as nirvāṇa?”
- “It is so, Gaṅgottarā,” he said. “All things are the same as nirvāṇa.”
- 1.14 “If all things are the same as nirvāṇa, then why, Blessed One, do you ask, ‘Gaṅgottarā, have you not set out for parinirvāṇa?’ Blessed One, if someone were to ask a magically created being, ‘Have you not set out for parinirvāṇa?’ what would be the answer?”²¹
- “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One responded, “this question does not have an objective basis.”²²
- 1.15 “Do the words that the Blessed One has spoken have some connection to an objective basis?”²³ asked Gaṅgottarā.
- 1.16 “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One answered, “even though this question does not have an objective basis, nevertheless, asking it will be of great benefit to the noble sons and noble daughters who are gathered here in this assembly.²⁴ Why is this? When the Tathāgata had not awakened directly and completely even to what is called the true nature of things, Gaṅgottarā, how much less would there be a thing arising from it that remains in parinirvāṇa?”²⁵ [F.223.b]

- 1.17 “If the Tathāgata had not awakened directly and completely even to what is called the true nature of things, and even less would there be a thing arising from it,” she replied, “how did the Blessed One properly plant roots of virtue in order to achieve awakening?”²⁶
- 1.18 “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One responded, “a root of virtue is not something that has an objective basis. During the time when the Bodhisattva was planting the roots of virtue, he never let go of inconceivability. During the time when he was not planting them, he also did not let go of inconceivability.”²⁷
- 1.19 “With respect to the inconceivable, Blessed One, why is the inconceivable called the inconceivable?”²⁸ asked Gaṅgottarā.
- 1.20 “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One answered, “this teaching is not to be attained by the mind; it cannot be attained by the mind.²⁹ Why is this? According to this teaching, when not even the mind itself has an objective basis, how much less so would the things that arise from the mind?³⁰ The mind’s lack of an objective basis, Gaṅgottarā, is what is called the continuous stream of the inconceivable.³¹ That which is the continuous stream of the inconceivable is not attained. It is not fully realized. It is not known. It is not something to be experienced directly. It is not something to be attained. It is not afflicted. It is not purified. Why is this? It is because, Gaṅgottarā, the Tathāgata knows with certainty that all things are like space. All things, Gaṅgottarā, are unobstructed, just like space.”³²
- 1.21 “Blessed One,” Gaṅgottarā asked, “if all things are unobstructed, just like space, then why does the Blessed One use verbal expressions like ‘form,’ ‘feeling,’ ‘conception,’ ‘formation,’ and ‘consciousness,’ as well as verbal expressions like ‘the aggregates,’ ‘the elements,’ and ‘the sense spheres’; ‘dependent arising’; ‘the intoxicated’ and ‘what is free of intoxication’; ‘the afflicted’ and ‘the purified’; and ‘saṃsāra’ and ‘nirvāṇa’?”³³ [F.224.a]
- 1.22 “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One replied, “just as one uses the expression ‘self’ even though the self has no objective basis at all, in precisely the same way, Gaṅgottarā, I use the expression ‘form,’ even though form has no objective basis at all. In the same way, too, I use the expressions ‘feeling,’ ‘conception,’ ‘formation,’ and ‘consciousness,’ even though consciousness has no objective basis at all. I also use the expressions ‘the aggregates,’ ‘the elements,’ and ‘the sense spheres’; ‘dependent arising’; ‘the intoxicated’ and ‘what is free of intoxication’; ‘the afflicted’ and ‘the purified’; and ‘saṃsāra’ and ‘nirvāṇa,’ even though nirvāṇa has no objective basis at all.³⁴
- 1.23 “Gaṅgottarā, just as a mirage does not produce water and has no objective basis at all, in precisely the same way, Gaṅgottarā, I use the expression ‘form,’ even though form has no objective basis at all. In the same way, too, I use the expressions ‘feeling,’ ‘conception,’ ‘formation,’ and ‘consciousness,’

even though consciousness has no objective basis at all. I also use the expressions ‘the aggregates,’ ‘the elements,’ ‘the sense spheres’; ‘dependent arising’; ‘the intoxicated’ and ‘what is free of intoxication’; ‘the afflicted’ and ‘the purified’; and ‘saṃsāra’ and ‘nirvāṇa,’ even though ultimately not one of these things exists or has any objective basis.³⁵

1.24 “One who practices the holy life without holding on to the Dharma as the final word, Gaṅgottarā, dwells in the practice of the holy life according to the well-stated Dharma and Discipline.³⁶ [F.224.b] There are some who have self-conceit, Gaṅgottarā, who practice the holy life while thinking that their abiding by it has an objective basis, and I say that their practice of the holy life is not completely purified.³⁷ When they hear a profound teaching such as this one on cutting off the continuous stream, those who do not practice the holy life with complete purity become terrified, and they do not become free from birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, distress, and conflict; they receive their share of suffering, I say.³⁸

1.25 “Whether now or after I have passed away,³⁹ Gaṅgottarā, there will be those who teach this kind of profound teaching on cutting off the continuous stream,⁴⁰ and ignorant people will come to conceive the idea that they have the intent to kill them. Due to their misunderstanding, these ignorant people thus come to generate a homicidal hatred and go to the lower realms.”⁴¹

1.26 “ ‘Cutting off the continuous stream, cutting off the continuous stream,’ ” Gaṅgottarā replied. “Blessed One, what is it that you call *cutting off the continuous stream*?”⁴²

1.27 “Gaṅgottarā,” the Blessed One answered, “this teaching does not cut off the continuous stream; it is not the disintegration of it; it is not the destruction of it. For this reason, it should be called *cutting off the continuous stream*. It should also be called *the ultimate endpoint*. It should be called *the continuous stream of the inconceivable*.”⁴³

1.28 Then, at that moment, the Blessed One displayed a smile. Various multicolored rays of light issued from the Blessed One’s mouth in such a way that blue, yellow, red, white, rose madder, crystalline, and silvery rays of light spread throughout endless, limitless world systems, reaching as far as the Brahmā realm, and then they returned and disappeared into the Blessed One’s mouth.⁴⁴

1.29 At that point, the venerable Ānanda draped his upper robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee, and then, joining his palms together in a gesture of respect toward the Blessed One, he paid homage to the Blessed One [F.225.a] and said this: “Blessed One, the tathāgatas do not display their smile without a reason. What is the cause? What is the condition? Why have you displayed your smile?”⁴⁵

- 1.30 “Ānanda,” the Blessed One replied, “I have direct knowledge of the fact⁴⁶ that, in this very place, one thousand tathāgatas have taught this formulation of the Dharma, always starting with a single laywoman whose name was always Gaṅgottarā. All those laywomen went forth and achieved parinirvāṇa—that is, the state of parinirvāṇa without any remaining aggregates.”⁴⁷
- 1.31 The venerable Ānanda then asked the Blessed One, “What is the name of this formulation of the Dharma, Blessed One? How should it be remembered?”
- 1.32 “Ānanda,” the Blessed One replied, “you may call this formulation of the Dharma *Stainless*. Remember it as the one you may call *Stainless*.”⁴⁸
- 1.33 When this Dharma discourse was taught, the minds of seven hundred monks and four hundred nuns were freed from the intoxicants and did not grasp any more. Then the gods of the desire realm and the gods of the form realm magically created divine flowers and sandalwood powder and strewed them over the Blessed One while saying, “It is marvelous that such a laywoman lives in the city of Śrāvastī! Not only does she converse with the Tathāgata but also her body does not become weary from it. In the very same way, this laywoman Gaṅgottarā has served victors of the past, generated roots of virtue, practiced virtue for a long time, practiced the holy life for a long time, and venerated many buddhas!”⁴⁹
- 1.34 “So it is, divine ones,” the Blessed One said. “For a long time, she has served victors of the past, generated roots of virtue, [F.225.b] and practiced the holy life.”⁵⁰
- 1.35 After the Blessed One had spoken these words, the laywoman Gaṅgottarā was delighted, and so was the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas, and they rejoiced at what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.36 Thus concludes “The Chapter of the Questions of Gaṅgottarā,” the thirty-first of the one hundred thousand chapters of the formulation of the Dharma known as “The Noble Great Heap of Jewels.”⁵¹

c.

Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, corrected according to revised terminology, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Dānaśīla, along with the chief editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé and others.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Schuster 1981, p. 39, makes a similar point, and also provides a brief synopsis of the Chinese translation of this sūtra.
- n.2 Skilling 2021, pp. 345–46. This episode can be found at milestone [6.12-6.43](#) of the 84000 translation of *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*.
- n.3 For more on the Buddha’s smile, see Fiordalis 2021.
- n.4 See [here](https://read.84000.co/knowledgebase/heap-jewels.html) (<https://read.84000.co/knowledgebase/heap-jewels.html>) for more information on *The Great Heap of Jewels*.
- n.5 For more information, see the entry on [Taishō 310](#) (<https://dazangthings.nz/cbc/text/1364/>) in the Chinese Buddhist Canonical Attributions database, and the entry on [K 22\(31\)](#) (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0022-31.html) in Lewis R. Lancaster’s *Descriptive Catalogue of the Korean Buddhist Canon*. See also Schuster 1981, p. 26, and Silk 2019, p. 230.
- n.6 Chang 1991, pp. 37–40.
- n.7 Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 32.
- n.8 This manuscript is classified as Pelliot Tibétain 89 and is available [here](https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8302856k?rk=21459;2) (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8302856k?rk=21459;2>) on Gallica, the digital library of the Bibliothèque National de France. Pelliot Tibétain 89 consists of two sūtras, the first of which is a version of the *Maitreyapariṣcchā* (cf. Toh 86), and the second of which is a version of *The Questions of Gaṅgottarā*. The latter begins on folio *ta-2*, line 2.
- n.9 See Silk 2014, pp. 31–33. which contains several examples to support his argument; also see Silk 2019, p. 233.

- n.10 The Dunhuang manuscript says it a bit more simply: “At that time, there was a laywoman named Gaṅgottarā in the city of Śrāvastī...” (*de’i tshe grong khyer mnyan yod na | dge bsnyen ma gang ga’i mchog ces bya ba zhig yod de | ...*).
- n.11 Degé: *de nas dge bsnyen ma gang gA’i mchog mnyan yod nas byung nas rgyal bu rgyal byed kyī tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga’ ra ba ga la ba der song ste...* Again, the Dunhuang manuscript reads a bit more simply, “She came out from her dwelling and went to see the Blessed One” (*de gnas nas phyir byung ste | bcom ldang ’das ga la ba der song ste | ...*). Similarly, the English translation of the Chinese in Chang 1991, 37, has, “Gaṅgottarā came from her dwelling in Śrāvastī to see the Buddha.”
- n.12 Degé has *bcom ldan ’das kyis mkhyen bzhin du...* (literally “the Blessed One, though he already knew...”). The Dunhuang manuscript also has the phrase *mkhyen bzhin du*, “though he already knew,” but this part of the line is absent in the Chinese version.
- n.13 Degé: *bka’ stsal pa | gang gA’i mchog de bzhin no*. By contrast, the Dunhuang manuscript reads, “The Blessed One said, ‘It is so, it is so. It is just as you have said...’” (*bcom ldan ’das kyis bka’ stsal pa’ | de de bzhin no | de de bzhin de | khyod kyis ci skyad smras pa bzhin no | ...*). Chang 1991 has “The Blessed One said, ‘Yes, indeed. What you say is true.’ ” (37).
- n.14 Degé: *sprul pa ni*; Dunhuang: *sprul pa’i skyes bu gang yin ba de ni*, “a being that is magically created.”
- n.15 The Dunhuang manuscript reads differently: “If I saw my body as different from a magical illusion or a magically created being, then I would go to a good place of rebirth or a bad place of rebirth or realize complete nirvāṇa, but since I see no difference between my body and a magical illusion or a magically created being...” (*bdag gi lus sgyu ma dang | sprul pa dang tha dad par mthong na ni | dge ’gro dang | ngan ’gror mchi zhing mya ngan las ’das pa yang mngon du bgyid pa zhig na | bdag gi lus sgyu ma dang | sprul pa dang | tha myi dad par mthong bas...*).
- n.16 This sentence is not in the Dunhuang manuscript or in the Chinese as reflected in Chang 1991.
- n.17 Degé: *mya ngan las ’das pa’i dbyings*; the Dunhuang manuscript has *mya ngan las ’das pa’i ngo bo nyid*, “the true nature of nirvāṇa.” On this passage, see also Silk 2014.
- n.18 The Dunhuang manuscript reads, “I see that my own body also has the same nature” (*bdag gi lus kyang de bzhin du mthong lags so*).

- n.19 Degé: *gang gA'i mchog khyod ci yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa la yang dag par ma zhugs sam*. The Dunhuang manuscript here reads: "Are you not inclined toward the state of nirvāṇa?" (*ci khyod mya ngan las 'das pa'i dbyings la gzhol bar myi byed dam*).
- n.20 The Dunhuang manuscript reads differently: "The true nature of that which is not born is nirvāṇa" (*kya ba myed pa gang yin ba de nyid ni mya ngan las 'das pa yin no*). Once again, the Dunhuang manuscript is similar to the Chinese as reflected in Chang 1991, 38.
- n.21 The Dunhuang manuscript reads differently here: "Furthermore, Blessed One, it would be as if one magically created being were to ask another magically created being, 'Are you not inclined toward the state of nirvāṇa?' In that case, what would be the answer?" (*gzhan yang bcom ldan 'das 'di lta ste | dper na sprul ba'i skyes bu zhig gis sprul pa'i skyes bu la ci khyod mya ngan las 'das pa'i dbyings la gzhol bar myi byed dam zhes de skad rmas par gyur na | des ci skad lan 'debs par gyur lags |*).
- n.22 The Dunhuang manuscript agrees here with the canonical Tibetan translation. Chang 1991 reads "A magically produced being has no mental attachments" (38), but the Chinese 此所問者無有攀緣 ("this question does not have an objective basis") clearly matches the Tibetan, so we would disagree with Chang's reading. For the Chinese version of this text, see *Henghe shang youpoyi hui* 恒河上優婆夷會 (*Gaṅgottaraparipṛcchā*), Taishō 310(31) (CBETA (https://ntireader.org/taisho/t0310_098.html); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T0310.html>)).
- n.23 The Dunhuang manuscript reads differently here: "Has this question been asked because there is some objective basis on the part of the Tathāgata?" (*ci de bzhin gshegs pa la dmyigs pa mnga' ba'i slad du bka's rmas pa' 'di rmas lags sam*). Chang 1991 has, "Does the Tathāgata's very question stem from some mental attachment" (38).
- n.24 The Dunhuang manuscript appears to read both similarly and differently from both the canonical Tibetan and the Chinese translation here: "Even though there is no objective basis to what I have said, nevertheless this question has been asked in order to bring to maturity those noble sons and noble daughters who are gathered in this assembly" (*ngas smras pa la dmyigs pa yod pa ma yin mod kyi | 'on kyang 'khor 'di na yod pa'i rigs kyi bu dang | rigs kyi bu mo dag yongs su smyin par bya ba'i phyir | 'dri ba 'di dris pa yin no*). Chang 1991 reads, "I raised the question because there are in this assembly good men and good women who can be brought to maturity. I am free of mental attachment" (38).

- n.25 Degé: *gang gA'i mchog de bzhin gshegs pas ni chos nyid ces bya ba yang mngon par rdzogs par sangs ma rgyas na gang* (Degé, Stok, etc.; *yang Phugdrag*) *de las byung ba'i chos yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa la gnas pa lta ga la yod*. The translation above assumes *de las byung ba'i chos* and *yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa* are not in apposition. However, it is also possible to interpret them as being in apposition, with *gang* thereby modifying the latter, in which case the translation could run as follows: “If the Tathāgata had not completely awakened even to what is called the true nature of things, Gaṅgottarā, how could he remain in the parinirvāṇa that is the thing (*dharma*) that arises from it?” Skilling 2021, pp. 348–49, translates this sentence somewhat differently: “If the Tathāgata had not fully awakened to the true nature, Gaṅgottarā, then in his final nirvāṇa there would be a remainder of the dharmas arising from it.” The passage could perhaps be rendered in other ways, too. The Dunhuang manuscript also reads quite differently here, even while some of the component terms and phrases seem to be present, such as *lta yod par ga la 'gyur*: “For the Tathāgata even the names of such things do not have an objective basis, much less the existence of the things and of those who are inclined toward nirvāṇa” (*de bzhin gshegs pa ni chos de dag gi mying yang dmyigs par myi 'gyur na | chos rnam dang | mya ngan las 'da's pa la gzhol ba de dag lta yod par ga la 'gyur*). Chang 1991 translates the Chinese here as follows: “Because the Tathāgata knows that even the names of things are inapprehensible, let alone the things themselves or those who seek nirvāṇa” (38).
- n.26 The first part of this sentence, in which Gaṅgottarā simply restates the preceding sentence (see [n.25](#)), is not found in the Dunhuang manuscript or in the Chinese as reflected in Chang 1991. In the Dunhuang manuscript, Gaṅgottarā says only, “If that is so, why then does one produce an accumulation of the roots of virtue for the sake of awakening?” (*gal te de ltar na | ci ltar byang chub kyi ched du dge ba'i rta ba'i stsogs par bgyid lags*).
- n.27 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “Bodhisattvas do not have any objective basis and neither do the roots of virtue, because they have no thought at the time even that something is accumulated and similarly also at the time that something is not accumulated” (*byang cub sems dpa' rnam dang | dge ba'i rtsa ba de dag kyang dmyigs su myed de | bstasgs pa nyid kyi tshe sems myed pa'i phyir | bstasgs pa ma yin ba'i tshe yang de bzhin no*).
- n.28 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “What meaning is indicated by saying that there is no thought?” (*sems ma mchis pa zhes bka' stsal pa des don gang zhig ston par mdzad lags*).

- n.29 The Dunhuang manuscript says here, “This teaching can neither be understood by thinking, nor can it be attained by thinking” (*chos 'di ni bsam ba dag gis shes par 'gyur ba yang ma yin la | bsam ba dag gis 'thob par 'gyur ba yang ma yin no*).
- n.30 Though it is rendered a bit differently from the canonical Tibetan translation, the Dunhuang manuscript has a similar sense here: *'di la sems kyang dmyigs par myi 'gyur na | sems las byung ba'i chos lta smos kyang ci dgos te*.
- n.31 The Dunhuang manuscript says here, “In this way, the mind’s very lack of an objective basis is what is taught as the state of the inconceivable” (*'di ltar sems dmyigs su myed pa gang yin pa de nyid la bsams gyis myi khyab pa'i gnas shes bstan ste*).
- n.32 The last few sentences of the canonical Tibetan translation are conveyed in the Dunhuang manuscript with much the same meaning: “The state of the inconceivable is neither attained nor fully realized; it is neither afflicted nor purified. Why is this? It is because, as the Tathāgata always teaches, all things, being the same as space, are unobstructed” (*bsam kyis myi khyab pa'i gnas de dag la ni thob pa yang myed | mgnon par rtogs pa yang myed de | kun nas nyon mongs pa yang ma yin | rnam par byang ba yang ma yin no | de ci'i phyir zhes na | de bzhin gshegs pas rtag du chos thams cad ni nam mkha' dang mtshungs te | togs pa myed pa'i phyir ro zhes gsungs pas so*).
- n.33 The above paragraph is rendered in very much the same way in the Dunhuang manuscript, though it specifies “the twelvefold chain of dependent arising” (*rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba bcu gnyis*), rather than simply “dependent arising,” and it does not include the phrase “the aggregates.”
- n.34 After the sentence, “...I use the expression ‘form,’ but form has no objective basis at all,” the Dunhuang manuscript says simply, “and the same is true with [the other expressions] up to nirvāṇa” (*mya ngan las 'da's pa zhes bya ba'i bar du yang de bzhin no*).
- n.35 In the Dunhuang manuscript, this whole paragraph is rendered more simply: “Furthermore, just as water has no basis in a mirage (*smyug* [sic] *rgyu la chu myi dmyigs pa*), in the same way I use the expressions from ‘forms’ up to ‘nirvāṇa,’ even though it is the same [with them].”
- n.36 The Dunhuang manuscript reads differently here: “Gaṅgotarā, those who are established in the practice of the holy life in accordance with my teachings, and regard all things in the right way as having no objective basis, are the first ones who should be called those who are established in

the practice of the holy life in the right way” (*gang ga’i mchog gang gis nga’i bstan pa las tshangs par spyod pa mngon bar bsgrub pa de dag thams cad dmyigs su myed par yang dag par rjes su mthong na | gdod yang dag par tshangs par spyod pa mngon bar bsgrub pa zhes bya’o*).

- n.37 The Dunhuang manuscript reads a bit differently here: “It should not be said that those with self-conceit, who declare that an objective basis exists, dwell in the practice of the holy life in the right way” (*mngon ba’i nga rgyal can dmyigs pa yod par ston pas na | yang dag par tshangs par spyod pa la gnas pa zhes myi bya ste*). This may help to make more sense of the terse phrase in the canonical translation, *gnas dmigs nas*, rendered in the main translation as “while thinking that their abiding by it has an objective basis.”
- n.38 The Dunhuang manuscript continues, “When they hear such a profound teaching as this one, those with self-conceit feel extremely frightened and become filled with a great doubt (*the tsom* [sic] *chen po*). As a result, I declare, they do not become free from birth, old age, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, suffering, and distress.”
- n.39 The Dunhuang manuscript reads, “After my parinirvāṇa...” (*nga yongs su mya ngan las ‘da’s pa’i ‘ong du*).
- n.40 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “this kind of profound teaching on cutting off the continuous stream of saṃsāra” (*‘khor ba rgyun gcod pa*).
- n.41 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “some fools, due to the force of abiding by their wicked beliefs, will hate these individuals who teach the Dharma, and they will thereby conceive the intent to do them harm. As a result of these causes and conditions, they will fall into the hells” (*blun po kha cig lda ba ngan pa la gnas pa’i dbang gyis chos ‘chad pa’i gang zag dag la zhe sdang gis gnod sems skyed pas na | rgu dang rkyen des sems can dmyal ba rnams su ltung bar ‘gyur ro*).
- n.42 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “When the Blessed One speaks of the teaching on cutting off the continuous stream of saṃsāra, what does it mean to say ‘cutting off the continuous stream of saṃsāra?’” (*bcom ldan ‘das kyis ci skad du ‘khor ba rgyun god pa’i chos shes gang gsungs pa de don gang gi slad du ‘khor ba rgyun gcod pa zhes bgyi lags*).
- n.43 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “In this regard, that which should be spoken of as cutting off the continuous stream of saṃsāra is as follows: since that which is the ultimate endpoint and something (*chos*) of the state of the inconceivable cannot be destroyed or disintegrated, for this reason, I have declared it to be the teaching (*chos*) of cutting off the continuous stream of

samsāra” (*de la 'khor ba rgyun gcod pa zhes bya ba ni 'di lta ste | yang dag pa'i mtha' dang | bsam gyis myi khyap pa'i dbyings kyi chos gang yin ba de ni dbyug cing gzhiig du myed pas | de'i phyir 'khor ba'i rgyun gcod pa'i chos shes bstan to*). In both the Dunhuang manuscript and the canonical Tibetan, the Buddha's explanation here would seem to rely on the dual sense of the meaning of the word *dharma* (*chos*) as both a phenomenon and the teaching.

- n.44 The Dunhuang manuscript reads similarly, except that fewer colors of light are mentioned and the names of them are slightly different: blue, golden yellow (*gser po*), red, rose madder, and water crystalline (*chu shal*). Also, significantly, the rays of light are said to disappear “on the top of the Tathāgata's head” (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i dbu'i gtsug du*).
- n.45 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “Then, when he had seen such a thing (*dngos po de lta bu dag mthong nas*), venerable Ānanda had the thought, ‘the tathāgata, the worthy one, the fully awakened buddha does not display a smile without cause or condition,’ and so he placed his robe over one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee, joined his palms together in a gesture of respect toward the Blessed One, and said this: ‘What is the cause, what is the condition, that the Blessed One has displayed a smile?’”
- n.46 Degé: *ngas mngon par shes te*; the Dunhuang manuscript says, “I remember directly...” (*ngas mngon bar dran te*).
- n.47 The Dunhuang manuscript says, “In a time in the past (*sngon 'dass [sic] pa'i dus*), in this place a thousand tathāgatas taught a teaching of this kind. At the head of each of the assemblies [to which it was taught] there was a laywoman named Gaṅgottarā. After hearing this teaching, all those laywomen and those in the assemblies went forth and achieved parinirvāṇa—that is, the nirvāṇa without any remainder (*lhag ma myed pa'i mya ngan las 'da's pa*).”
- n.48 In the Dunhuang manuscript, the Buddha calls it “*Stainless Purity*” (*dri ma myed pa'i rnam par dag pa*).
- n.49 An almost identical paragraph appears in the Dunhuang manuscript.
- n.50 This sentence does not appear in the Dunhuang manuscript.
- n.51 The Dunhuang manuscript also has a colophon that says it is part of the one hundred thousand chapters of *The Noble Great Heap of Jewels*, and gives its title as “*The Meeting with the Laywoman Gaṅgottarā*” (*dge bsnyen ma gang ga'i mchog gi 'dus pa*).

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 afflicted

kun nas nyon mongs pa

ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A term meaning defilement, impurity, and pollution, broadly referring to cognitive and emotional factors that disturb and obscure the mind. As the self-perpetuating process of affliction in the minds of beings, it is a synonym for *saṃsāra*. It is often paired with its opposite, *vyavadāna*, meaning “purification.”

g.2 aggregate

phung po

ཕུང་པོ།

skandha^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The basic components out of which the world and the personal self are formed, usually listed as a set of five.

g.3 Ānanda

kun dga' ba

ཀུན་དགའ་བ།

ānanda^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

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

g.4 Bandé Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.5 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེ་མ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavat^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to “subduing” the four mārās, *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 mārās.” This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root √*bhañj* (“to break”).

g.6 conception

'du shes

འདུ་ཤེས།

sañjñā^{AO}

g.7 consciousness

rnam par shes pa

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

vijñāna^{AO}

g.8 Dānaśīla

dA na shI la

དྲན་ལྗེ་ལ།

**dānaśīla*^{RP}

An Indian preceptor and one of the translators of this sūtra.

g.9 dependent arising

rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བ།

pratītyasamutpāda^{AO}

g.10 designation

tshig bla dags

ཚིག་སྒྲ་དགས།

adhivacana^{AO}

A word that is used to refer to something else, a name, or a term.

g.11 element

*kham*s

ཁམས།

dhātu^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In the context of Buddhist philosophy, one way to describe experience in terms of eighteen elements (eye, form, and eye consciousness; ear, sound, and ear consciousness; nose, smell, and nose consciousness; tongue, taste, and tongue consciousness; body, touch, and body consciousness; and mind, mental phenomena, and mind consciousness).

This also refers to the elements of the world, which can be enumerated as four, five, or six. The four elements are earth, water, fire, and air. A fifth, space, is often added, and the sixth is consciousness.

g.12 feeling

tshor ba

ཚོར་བ།

vedanā^{AO}

g.13 form

gzugs

གཟུགས།

rūpa ^{AO}

g.14 formation

'du byed

འདུ་བྱེད།

saṃskāra ^{AO}

g.15 Gaṅgottarā

gang gA'i mchog

གང་གའི་མཚོག།

**gaṅgottarā* ^{RP}

The laywoman who features prominently in this sūtra, as well as the name of one thousand laywoman of the past who attained nirvāṇa, according to the Buddha in this sūtra.

g.16 higher realms

mtho ris

མཐོ་རིས།

—

g.17 holy life

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚོངས་པར་སྟོན་པ།

brahmacārya ^{AO}

g.18 intoxicated

zag pa dang bcas

ཟག་པ་དང་བཅས།

sāsrava ^{AO}

One who is still under the influence of the “intoxicants” (*āsrava*), of which there are sometimes said to be four: “lust” (*kāma*), “becoming” (*bhava*), “ignorance” (*avidyā*), and “views” (*dr̥ṣṭi*)

g.19 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

རྩོ་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

**jinamitra* ^{RP}

An Indian preceptor and one of the translators of this sūtra.

g.20 lower realms

ngan song

ངན་སྡོང་།

—

g.21 magical creation

sprul pa

སྐྱུ་པ།

nirmita^{AO}

A noun derived from the verb *mā*, (“to create”) and connected to the term *māyā* (“magical illusion”).

g.22 magically created being

sprul pa

སྐྱུ་པ།

nirmita^{AO}

A noun derived from the verb *mā* (“to create”) and connected to the term *māyā* (“magical illusion”).

g.23 monk

dge slong

དགེ་སྤོང་།

bhikṣu^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

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

g.24 nun

dge slong ma

དག་སྐྱོང་མ།

bhikṣunī^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *bhikṣuṇī*, often translated as “nun,” refers to the highest among the eight types of prātimokṣa vows that make one part of the Buddhist assembly. The Sanskrit term *bhikṣu* (to which the female grammatical ending *nī* is added) literally means “beggar” or “mendicant,” referring to the fact that Buddhist nuns and monks—like other ascetics of the time—subsisted on alms (*bhikṣā*) begged from the laity. In the Tibetan tradition, which follows the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, a *bhikṣuṇī* follows 364 rules and a *bhikṣu* follows 253 rules as part of their moral discipline.

For the first few years of the Buddha’s teachings in India, there was no ordination for women. It started at the persistent request and display of determination of Mahāprajāpatī, the Buddha’s stepmother and aunt, together with five hundred former wives of men of Kapilavastu, who had themselves become monks. Mahāprajāpatī is thus considered to be the founder of the nun’s order.

g.25 objective basis

dmigs pa

དམིགས་པ།

ālambana^{AO} . *ālambate*^{AO}

The Tibetan can translate both a noun (*ālambana*) and a related verb (in which case the third person singular is *ālambate*, “[one] perceives or conceives [something] as having an objective basis”). This term is tied to the general idea that an act of sense perception or mental conception takes an object of some kind that forms the basis or support for its continuing perception or conception.

g.26 parinirvāṇa

yongs su mya ngan las ’das pa

ཡོངས་སྐྱུ་རྩུ་རྩུ་ལས་འདས་པ།

parinirvāṇa^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

This refers to what occurs at the end of an arhat’s or a buddha’s life. When nirvāṇa is attained at awakening, whether as an arhat or buddha, all suffering, afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), and causal processes (*karman*) that lead to rebirth and suffering in cyclic existence have ceased, but due to previously accumulated karma, the aggregates of that life remain and must

still exhaust themselves. It is only at the end of life that these cease, and since no new aggregates arise, the arhat or buddha is said to attain *parinirvāṇa*, meaning “complete” or “final” nirvāṇa. This is synonymous with the attainment of nirvāṇa without remainder (*anupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*).

According to the Mahāyāna view of a single vehicle (*ekayāna*), the arhat’s parinirvāṇa at death, despite being so called, is not final. The arhat must still enter the bodhisattva path and reach buddhahood (see *Unraveling the Intent*, Toh 106, 7.14.) On the other hand, the parinirvāṇa of a buddha, ultimately speaking, should be understood as a display manifested for the benefit of beings; see *The Teaching on the Extraordinary Transformation That Is the Miracle of Attaining the Buddha’s Powers* (Toh 186), 1.32.

The term *parinirvāṇa* is also associated specifically with the passing away of the Buddha Śākyamuni, in Kuśinagara, in northern India.

g.27 Prince Jeta’s Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada’s Park

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

ཀླུ་པ་སུ་ཀླུ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ་མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

jetavanam anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

Anāthapiṇḍada built residences for the monks, to house them during the monsoon season, thus creating the first Buddhist monastery. It was one of the Buddha’s main residences, where he spent around nineteen rainy season retreats, and it was therefore the setting for many of the Buddha’s discourses

and events. According to the travel accounts of Chinese monks, it was still in use as a Buddhist monastery in the early fifth century CE, but by the sixth century it had been reduced to ruins.

g.28 sense sphere

skye mched

སྐྱེ་མཆེད།

āyatana^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

These can be listed as twelve or as six sense sources (sometimes also called sense fields, bases of cognition, or simply āyatanas).

In the context of epistemology, it is one way of describing experience and the world in terms of twelve sense sources, which can be divided into inner and outer sense sources, namely: (1–2) eye and form, (3–4) ear and sound, (5–6) nose and odor, (7–8) tongue and taste, (9–10) body and touch, (11–12) mind and mental phenomena.

In the context of the twelve links of dependent origination, only six sense sources are mentioned, and they are the inner sense sources (identical to the six faculties) of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. (*Provisional 84000 definition. New definition forthcoming.*)

g.29 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

མཉམ་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.30 state of nirvāṇa

mya ngan las 'das pa'i dbyings

མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པའི་དབྱིངས།

niroāṇadhātu ^{AO}

Seemingly conceived of as either the state or nature of being or that of a being. One of a number of applications of the term *dhātu*, which can have the sense of an element or constituent part of the world and of the person. It can also be used in the sense of “the true state of things” (*dharmadhātu*) and “the sphere of the worlds” (*lokadhātu*).

g.31 true nature of things

chos nyid

ཚོས་ཉིད།

dharmatā ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The real nature, true quality, or condition of things. Throughout Buddhist discourse this term is used in two distinct ways. In one, it designates the relative nature that is either the essential characteristic of a specific phenomenon, such as the heat of fire and the moisture of water, or the defining feature of a specific term or category. The other very important and widespread way it is used is to designate the ultimate nature of all phenomena, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms and is often synonymous with emptiness or the absence of intrinsic existence.

g.32 ultimate endpoint

yang dag pa'i mtha'

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

bhūtakoti ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

This term has three meanings: (1) the ultimate nature, (2) the experience of the ultimate nature, and (3) the quiescent state of a worthy one (*arhat*) to be avoided by bodhisattvas.

g.33 victor

rgyal ba

རྒྱལ་བ།

jina ^{AO}

An epithet for the Buddha.

g.34 what is free of intoxication

zag pa med pa

ཟག་པ་མེད་པ།

anāsrava^{AO}

One who is no longer under the influence of the “intoxicants” (*āsrava*), of which there are sometimes said to be four: “lust” (*kāma*), “becoming” (*bhava*), “ignorance” (*avidyā*), and “views” (*dṛṣṭi*)