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Aśokadattā's Prophecy

Aśokadattāvyākaraṇa

འཕགས་པ་མུ་ངན་མེད་གྱིས་བྱིན་པ་ལུང་བསྟན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa mya ngan med kyis byin pa lung bstan pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “Aśokadattā’s Prophecy”

Āryāśokadattāvyākaraṇanāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 76 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 43 (dkon brtsegs, ca), folios 225.b–240.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

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SUMMARY

s.1 In this Mahāyāna sūtra, a group of the Buddha's most eminent śrāvaka disciples are collecting alms in the city of Rājagṛha when they arrive at the palace of King Ajātaśatru. There, the king's daughter Aśokadattā, who is seated on an ornate throne, neither rises from her seat to greet them nor pays them any form of respect. Outraged by her rudeness, the king chastises her. The girl is unrepentant, and in a series of elegant verses she explains to her father the superiority of the bodhisattva path, which renders such obeisance to śrāvakas inappropriate. The eminent śrāvaka disciples then engage the girl in debate, but each in turn is silenced by the eloquence and confidence of her replies, by which she deconstructs their questions based on her knowledge of the emptiness of all phenomena. Having thus impressed them, she descends from her throne and serves them humbly with food and drink. They then all go together to Vulture Peak, where the Buddha prophesies her future full awakening.

ac.

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ac.1 This text was translated by Jed Forman and Erdene Baatar Erdene-Ochir of the UCSB Buddhist Studies Translation Group.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. George FitzHerbert edited the translation and the introduction, and Laura Goetz copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 This Mahāyāna sūtra in the Heap of Jewels (Tib. *dkon brtsegs*, Skt. *ratnakūṭa*) collection recounts the story of its titular character, Aśokadattā,¹ who was a daughter of King Ajātaśatru, the famed lord of Rājagṛha and a major patron of the Buddhist community during the latter part of the Buddha's life.

i.2 One day, while the Buddha was staying at nearby Vulture Peak, a large group of śrāvaka disciples including such eminent figures as Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Subhūti, Rāhula, and others go into the city of Rājagṛha to collect alms, eventually arriving at the palace of King Ajātaśatru. When the king's daughter Aśokadattā sees the disciples arriving, she neither rises from her seat nor makes any sign of greeting or respect. Her father is dismayed by her rudeness and chastises her for her impudence, but Aśokadattā is unrepentant. She defends her behavior with a series of eloquent analogies, illustrating for her father that those who follow the śrāvaka path are not worthy of respect or veneration, since they have failed to accept the full wealth offered by the Buddha's Dharma. This, she says, is in contrast to bodhisattvas, who are motivated to help others on the path to liberation, and who have embraced the more profound teachings on the emptiness of all phenomena. Śrāvakas, she says, are like physicians concerned only with treating themselves, or travelers who depend on the hospitality of others. Bodhisattvas, on the other hand, are like physicians who care for others just as they care for themselves, or like those who generously share their provisions with others while on the road. Śrāvakas, she says, are like passengers on a boat, while bodhisattvas are like the captains of ships. While the light of a bodhisattva shines like the sun, the light of a śrāvaka is as dim as a firefly, and "who," Aśokadattā asks, "would relinquish the sun and the moon to pay homage to fireflies?"

i.3 In turn, each of the eminent śrāvakas engages the girl in debate, but each is left speechless by her responses and expresses awe at the eloquence and confidence with which she is able expound the Dharma and her acumen in

deconstructing conventional distinctions from the perspective of the emptiness of all phenomena. On hearing her insightful and eloquent teachings, the mind set on complete awakening (Skt. *bodhicitta*) is stirred in twenty of the ladies of the royal household, including Aśokadattā's own mother, the queen consort Moonlit. Aśokadattā then descends from her throne and humbly serves the śrāvakas with food and drink, and they all go together to Vulture Peak for an audience with the Buddha himself.

i.4 When the Buddha is informed of the girl's extraordinary eloquence and confidence, he explains that she has already cultivated roots of virtue with countless buddhas in former lives. Śāriputra then inquires why, if she has already accumulated such roots of virtue, does she still have a female form? The Buddha rebuffs Śāriputra's question, saying that bodhisattvas may manifest in whatever form they wish. Aśokadattā adds the rejoinder that in truth "all phenomena are neither male nor female," and to illustrate the point she transforms in front of them into a male form and in a state of ecstasy rises into the sky to the height of seven palm trees. The Buddha then prophesies Aśokadattā's future awakening as a truly complete buddha and that her mother, too, will attain awakening in the same future world system. The bodhisattva Aśokadattā then descends from the sky and takes the form of a monk, illustrating for the king that all experienced phenomena are the contrivances of perception. The Buddha then instructs Ānanda to memorize and widely propagate the discourse.

i.5 *Aśokadattā's Prophecy* is among several sūtras that have a female bodhisattva as their main protagonist. Several of these feature the daughters of kings. Another daughter of King Ajātaśatru, Vimalaprabhā, is the main protagonist in *The Questions of Vimalaprabhā* (*Vimalaprabhāparipṛcchā*, Toh 168). Daughters of King Prasenajit are the main protagonists in *The Questions of the Girl Vimalaśraddhā* (*Dārikāvimalaśraddhāparipṛcchā*, Toh 84),² *The Questions of Vimaladattā* (*Vimaladattāparipṛcchā*, Toh 77), and *The Lion's Roar of Śrīmālādevī* (*Śrīmālādevīsīmhanāda*, Toh 92). In *The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī* (*Kṣemavatīvyākaraṇa*, Toh 192),³ King Bimbisāra's queen Kṣemavatī receives a prediction of future awakening, as do the main protagonists in *The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman* (*Śrīmatībrāhmaṇīparipṛcchā*, Toh 170)⁴ and *The Girl Candrottārā's Prophecy* (*Candrottārādārikāvīvyākaraṇa*, Toh 191). Laywomen of lesser social status who are likewise prophesied to achieve awakening are the main interlocutors in *The Questions of the Girl Sumati* (*Sumatidārikāparipṛcchā*, Toh 74), *The Questions of Gaṅgotarā* (*Gaṅgotarāparipṛcchā*, Toh 75),⁵ *The Questions of an Old Lady* (*Mahallikāparipṛcchā*, Toh 171),⁶ and *The City Beggar Woman* (*Nāgarāvalambikā*, Toh 205).⁷ In *The Miraculous Play of Mañjuśrī* (*Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*, Toh 96),⁸ a courtesan also receives such a prophecy. While some of the women in these sūtras aspire to be reborn as males as they

progress toward awakening, the point emphasized in many of these discourses, including this one, is that there is no gender in the awakened state. Nevertheless, the accounts all culminate in the prediction that the female protagonist will ultimately become an apparently male buddha.

i.6 *Aśokadattā's Prophecy* does not appear to have been widely referenced by the Buddhist scholar-monks in ancient India. However, it is cited at some length in *The Compendium of Sūtra Teachings on the Stages of Meditation (Bhāvanākramasūtrasamuccaya)*, one of four compendia included in the Middle Way (*dbu ma*) section of the Tengyur. The section cited there includes the following:

i.7 Dear father, though hundreds of jackals may howl,
The herds of wild animals are unperturbed.
But when a lion roars, elephants, beasts, and birds alike
Flee in all directions.

i.8 Dear father, see that the śrāvakas are like jackals.
Their words scare not the demons,
But demons and their kind are terrified
When a king conducts himself as a bodhisattva.⁹

i.9 Bodhidhara (fl. 1000 CE), a teacher at Nālandā University and a guru of the famed Atiśa,¹⁰ also references this passage in passing in his *Text on the Tools for Concentration (Samādhisambhāraparivarta)*, stating that it contains “methods for averting the activity of demons” (Tib. *bdud kyi las bzlog pa'i thabs*).¹¹ Both *The Compendium of Sūtra Teachings on the Stages of Meditation* and *The Text on the Tools for Concentration* are essentially meditation manuals, so it is interesting to find them quoting *Aśokadattā's Prophecy*, which itself gives no specific instructions on meditation.

i.10 There is no extant Sanskrit witness to this text. It was translated twice into Chinese, first by Dharmarakṣa in 317 CE (Taishō 337) and then again by Buddhaśānta in 539 CE (Taishō 310/32). Though Buddhaśānta's Chinese version, as translated into English in Chang 1983,¹² is close in narrative structure to the Tibetan, there are also some differences in the order of events and many divergences in detail. For example, there is a notable difference between the Tibetan and the Chinese in the treatment of Aśokadattā's gender transformation. While the Tibetan version leaves us with Aśokadattā in the form of a male monk for the final exchange with the king, the Chinese has her transforming back again into her female form, confusing her father: “I do not [know how to] see you as you physically

appear, because I just saw you as a monk, before seeing you now as a maiden again.”¹³ Such discrepancies may reflect different Sanskrit source texts.

i.11 *Aśokadattā's Prophecy* was translated into Tibetan by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi, along with the senior editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé, indicating a translation made from Sanskrit during the height the Tibetan imperial sponsorship of Buddhism in the late eighth or early ninth century CE. This dating is supported by the title's listing in both the Phangthangma¹⁴ and Denkarma¹⁵ imperial catalogs of translated texts.

i.12 This is the first English translation of the Tibetan to be published. It is based on the Tibetan text as found in the Degé Kangyur, in consultation with the Stok Palace Kangyur and the variants listed in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*). Where variant readings have been preferred, this has been recorded in the notes.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra
Aśokadattā's Prophecy**

1.

The Translation

[F.225.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavān was dwelling in Rājagṛha at Vulture Peak together with a great monastic assembly of five hundred monks. Also in attendance were eight thousand bodhisattvas, all of whom had obtained dhāraṇī;¹⁶ whose confidence was unimpeded; who were expert in supernormal powers; who in the tradition of the profound Dharma dwelt in emptiness, signlessness, and wishlessness and in the unperceived Dharma; who taught the Dharma without engaging with the world; and who had reached acceptance of the unborn nature of phenomena. These eight thousand bodhisattvas who had gathered there included the bodhisattva Meru, the bodhisattva Mahāmeru, the bodhisattva Jñānameru, the bodhisattva Ratnasīṃha, [F.226.a] the bodhisattva Siṃhamati, the bodhisattva Nityotkṣiptahasta, the bodhisattva Perpetually Raised Hand, the bodhisattva Nityodyukta, the bodhisattva Always Smiling and Joyful, the bodhisattva Beyond the Senses, the bodhisattva Nityotkaṅṭhita, the bodhisattva Precious Mind, the bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi, the bodhisattva Holding a Jewel in Hand, the bodhisattva Radiant Jewel, the bodhisattva Sārathi, the bodhisattva Mahāsārathi, the bodhisattva Delights in Truth, the bodhisattva Maitreya, and the bodhisattva Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta, as well as the eight holy beings—the bodhisattva Bhadrapāla, the bodhisattva Ratnākara, the bodhisattva Guhyagupta, the bodhisattva Indradeva, the bodhisattva Varuṇadeva, the bodhisattva Viśālamati, the bodhisattva Viśeṣamati, and the bodhisattva Vardhamānamati.

1.2 At that time, while the Bhagavān was staying at the great city of Rājagṛha, he was honored, revered, venerated, and worshiped by King Ajātaśatru along with his counselors, ministers, chancellors, ministerial kinsmen,¹⁷ officials, and courtiers, as well as by brahmins, kṣatriyas, and householders.

Surrounded and venerated by a retinue of hundreds and thousands, the Bhagavān taught the attendees the Dharma. [F.226.b] He taught the Dharma of holy living, wholesome in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end, excellent in meaning, beautiful in expression, unadulterated, complete, pristine, and pure.

1.3 One morning, many great śrāvakas—Venerable Śāradvatīputra, Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Venerable Mahākāśyapa, Venerable Subhūti, Venerable Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra, Venerable Aśvajit, Venerable Upāli, Venerable Rāhula, Venerable Revata, Venerable Ānanda, Venerable Aniruddha, and others—came into the great city of Rājagṛha to collect alms, all wearing their inner and outer Dharma robes and carrying alms bowls. Those great śrāvakas went progressively through the great city of Rājagṛha seeking alms and eventually reached the palace of King Ajātaśatru. Upon arrival, they waited silently to one side.

1.4 At that time, the daughter named Aśokadattā was at King Ajātaśatru's palace. Her body was excellent like that of a twelve-year-old girl, beautiful, pleasant to behold, and with a clear complexion and full figure. She had done great deeds for victors of the past, developed roots of virtue, revered many hundreds and thousands of buddhas, and reached irreversibility on the path to unsurpassable awakening. She was seated upon a gold-legged throne in her father's palace.

1.5 When the girl Aśokadattā saw the great śrāvakas, she neither stood up from her seat nor went to welcome them. She stayed silently where she was, making no gesture of greeting, not uttering a word, preparing no seats, and offering no alms.

1.6 When King Ajātaśatru was informed that the great śrāvakas had arrived, he came to the forecourt of the palace where they were. Since he held the great śrāvakas in the highest esteem, he was delighted to see them, and he had seats prepared for them. [F.227.a] When he saw his daughter Aśokadattā sitting silently, just looking at them, King Ajātaśatru said to her, "Daughter, these are the great śrāvakas of the bhagavān, the tathāgata, the arhat, the truly awakened Buddha Śākyamuni. They possess the qualities of greatness, they have exhausted their defilements, they have done what needs to be done, they have completed their work, they have laid down their burdens and attained their goal, they have completely exhausted the bonds to existence, they have liberated their minds through correct understanding, they have become fields of merit, and they are compassionate. Do you not understand that they seek alms out of compassion for the world? Why is it that, when you see them, you do not rise immediately from your seat, and

you neither welcome them nor pay homage to them, talk to them, invite them to sit, or offer them alms? Why do you show them disrespect by sitting there silently, bereft of faith and devotion? What is the meaning of your gaze?"

1.7 The girl Aśokadattā responded to her father King Ajātaśatru by asking, "Father, consider this—have you ever heard of or seen a universal monarch standing up for or coming to welcome¹⁸ a vassal king?"

"No, my daughter," answered the king.

1.8 The girl asked, "Does Śakra, the lord of gods, stand up for or come to welcome other gods?"

"No, my daughter," answered the king.

1.9 The girl asked, "Father, does Brahmā, the lord of the Sahā world, stand up for or come to welcome other gods?"

"No, my daughter," answered the king.

1.10 The girl asked, "Father, have you ever heard of or seen the great ocean paying homage to lakes, ponds, springs, small lakes, pools, and wells?"

"No, my daughter," answered the king.

1.11 The girl asked, "Father, have you ever heard of or seen Sumeru, the king of mountains, bowing or paying homage to the other Black Mountains?" [F.227.b]

"No, my daughter," answered the king.

1.12 She asked, "Father, have you ever heard of or seen the sun, the moon, and the stars wishing they had the light of fireflies?"

"No, my daughter," answered the king.

1.13 She asked, "Father, have you ever heard of or seen a lion, the king of beasts, standing up for or coming to welcome a jackal?"

"No, my daughter," answered the king.

1.14 She asked, "Father, in the same way, who, once they have already generated the mind set upon unsurpassable, truly complete awakening and proclaimed the lion's roar of great loving-kindness and great compassion, would have admiration for jackal-like śrāvakas, who are inclined toward the inferior and who lack great loving-kindness and great compassion? Who would stand up for them, come to welcome them, pay homage to them, or honor them? Father, what great Dharma king who has already turned the unsurpassable wheel of Dharma, or who is now turning it, would happily pay homage or bow down to inferior śrāvakas, who are lowly, weak, cowardly, and have limited understanding? Father, what lord of gods, such as Indra, when striving to be a perfect lord of gods, would aspire to the state of, pay homage to, stand up for, or come to welcome śrāvakas, who are like lesser gods? Father, what lord of the Sahā world, such as Brahmā, when striving for Brahmā's supreme reception hall in this world system,¹⁹ would aspire to the state of, stand up for, come to welcome, or pay homage to

śrāvakas, who are like brahmās with lesser roots of virtue? Father, who, when seeking realization in the Dharma that is equal to the unequaled, the immeasurable ocean of gnosis, would aspire to the state of, stand up for, come to welcome, or pay homage to śrāvakas, who follow a moral discipline that is like the water left in a cow's hoofprint? Father, [F.228.a] who, when striving for the form of a tathāgata whose meditative concentration is like Sumeru and who is liberated, would stand up for, come to welcome, pay homage to, bow to, or desire the state of a śrāvaka, whose power of meditative stability is like that of a mustard seed? Father, who, when they have heard of the greatness of the bhagavān buddhas—their wisdom, merit, gnosis, and qualities, which are like the immeasurable light of the sun and the moon—would want the liberation of a śrāvaka, whose luminosity of mind is as feeble as the light of a firefly and who follows the words of others? I do not pay homage to śrāvakas, even after tathāgatas have already passed into parinirvāṇa, not to mention while they are still present. Why? Because who would relinquish the sun and the moon to pay homage to fireflies? Father, if one relies on śrāvakas, one will remain with the mentality of a śrāvaka. But if one relies on completely perfect awakening, one will develop and gain the precious mind of omniscience.”

1.15 Thereupon King Ajātaśatru said to his daughter Aśokadattā, “So this is why, when you see these śrāvakas, you do not stand up, do not come to welcome them, do not pay homage, do not pay your respects, and do not invite them to be seated or receive alms. Daughter, you are exceptionally conceited!”²⁰

1.16 The girl Aśokadattā replied to her father, King Ajātaśatru, “Father, I am not exceptionally conceited. Father, you neither stand up for nor go out to welcome the poor of this city. You do not prepare seats for them. So, you must consider yourself exceptionally conceited too.”

“Daughter, they are not my equals,” replied the king.

1.17 “In the same way, father,” she replied, “a bodhisattva, from the moment their mind is first set on awakening, is without equal among all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas.”

1.18 The king asked, [F.228.b] “Daughter, do bodhisattvas not abandon conceit and arrogance, and bow and pay homage to all sentient beings?”

“Father,” she replied, “bodhisattvas do indeed bow and pay homage to all sentient beings, in order to abandon enmity, rigidity, anger, harmful intent, and faults and to ripen the roots of virtue. But, father, these great śrāvakas have not purified themselves of enmity, rigidity, anger, harmful intent, and faults—they have not abandoned them, nor have they cultivated virtue. Father, though all śrāvakas have been taught the Dharma of the śrāvakas by a hundred thousand buddhas, no matter how many times they are taught

moral discipline, meditative stability, and wisdom, still, father, where is their moral discipline? Where is their meditative stability? Where is their wisdom? Where is their liberation? Where is their knowledge and seeing of liberation?²¹ As an analogy, father, they are like pots already filled with water that cannot accept or retain a single drop more when it rains. In the same way, father, even when a hundred thousand buddhas teach śrāvakas the Dharma they cannot grasp it. They neither retain nor increase their moral discipline, meditative stability, wisdom, liberation, or knowledge and seeing of liberation.

1.19 “On the other hand, father, by the same analogy, the vast ocean catches and retains the water of all rivers and all rain-flow. Why? Because the vast ocean is immeasurable. Father, bodhisattva mahāsattvas are like the ocean. They can likewise hold all the water of Dharma teachings and perfectly retain all Dharma teachings. Why? [F.229.a] Because the vessel that is the mind of omniscience of the bodhisattva mahāsattvas is equal to the unequalled.”

About that, this is said:

1.20 When five hundred śrāvakas approached,²²
Aśokadattā, the daughter of Ajātaśatru,
Radiant with good qualities,
Did not rise to greet them.

1.21 Ajātaśatru said to her,
“Daughter, listen to my words!
When you see five hundred śrāvakas,
Why do you not stand to greet them?”

1.22 The girl Aśokadattā replied,
“When I saw these śrāvakas,
Why had I no thought to pay them homage?
Pray listen, father, to what I have to say.

1.23 “Take, for example, a person who goes to the ocean
And from that source of precious jewels takes only trinkets.
I consider all śrāvakas to be just like that,
Accepting only the śrāvakas’ doctrine from the expanse of gnosis.

1.24 “Take, for example, someone who has pleased a king,
A lord of wealth, a lord of the earth, a universal monarch,
But in return asks for just one kārṣāpaṇa coin—
Their service to that king has been pointless.

1.25 “But when someone has pleased a universal monarch

- And asks for ten billion,
And with it makes the poor wealthy—
Such a person has served that king well.
- 1.26 “I consider all śrāvakas,
Who have heard of the limitless good qualities of buddhahood
Yet still aspire to the lesser vehicle,
As being like the person who asks for just one kārṣāpaṇa coin,
- 1.27 “While learned bodhisattvas
Are like the person who achieves great wealth
By pleasing a victorious Dharma king.
Having touched awakening, they train sentient beings.
- 1.28 “Just as, to give an analogy, a sick person tormented by a hundred ailments
Is released from their condition by a physician,
So, too, are all śrāvakas, who follow others’ instructions and are tormented
by afflictions,
Released by bodhisattvas, who are like physicians.
- 1.29 “Who, when curing many beings by prescribing medicine,
Bows to those beings they treat? [F.229.b]
Similarly, who, when striving to be a perfectly awakened physician,
Bows to the śrāvakas they treat?
- 1.30 “Likewise, just as a physician cannot treat
Every sick person there is to be treated,
So, too, are physician buddhas unable to treat
Every śrāvaka who is to be treated.
- 1.31 “But physicians who think only
Of treating themselves and no other sentient beings—
Such conceited, selfish, and arrogant physicians
Will not generate the necessary intention for awakening,
- 1.32 “While a physician who develops compassion
And treats others’ illnesses as they would their own
Is a physician worthy of honor and praise
And is revered by all the world,
- 1.33 “Those preeminent in the realization of knowledge and awareness²³
Who liberate only themselves and no other sentient beings
Are like physicians who treat only themselves.
They are not esteemed by the learned.

- 1.34 “Those preeminent in the realization of knowledge and awareness
Who liberate countless sentient beings from suffering
Are those who have the aspiration to supreme awakening.
They are praised by all the world.
- 1.35 “The stem of the castor-oil plant is not beautiful,
And the shade it casts is not wide.
All śrāvakas are like the castor-oil plant,
And the liberating shade they offer is not valued.
- 1.36 “Great trunks of the best sandalwood trees
Are valued by those tormented by heat.²⁴
This is how I consider bodhisattvas,
Who benefit all the world, including its gods.
- 1.37 “The water left in a cow’s hoofprint is meager.
It offers no respite from the torments of heat,
While the Ganges River satisfies ten billion beings
And then flows to the great ocean.
- 1.38 “All śrāvakas are like the water in a cow’s hoofprint— [F.230.a]
They cannot relieve the heat that torments beings.
Bodhisattvas are like the Ganges River—
They satisfy limitless beings with Dharma.
- 1.39 “When a rain of precious things falls,
The poor are those who collect only cowrie shells,
While those who collect many gems
Make the poor wealthy.
- 1.40 “Likewise, when the buddhas make fall a rain of precious Dharma,
Śrāvakas are those who take only a little from the precious, holy Dharma,
While bodhisattvas, for the sake of sentient beings,
Take a lot.
- 1.41 “When sentient beings come before Mount Sumeru,
They assume a golden hue.
When they come before other mountains,
They do not assume a golden hue.
- 1.42 “Bodhisattvas are like Mount Sumeru—
By their power, the single hue of liberation
Spreads over living kind, including gods.
The same cannot be claimed for the gnosis of śrāvakas.

- 1.43 “Father, a dewdrop on the tip of a wet blade of grass
Is not enough to make crops grow.
Yet, a blanket of clouds covering the land
Will satisfy the earth and make crops multiply.
- 1.44 “All śrāvakas are like dewdrops,
While bodhisattvas are like the blanket of clouds.
Actualizing compassion, they bring relief to the trichiliocosm
With a rain of holy Dharma for those who rely on them.
- 1.45 “The oleander flower has not the best of scents
And so is not favored by man or woman.
The magnolia flower has a pleasing scent,
As do the blue lotus and jasmine.²⁵
- 1.46 “Śrāvakas are like the scent of oleander.
None are pleased by what they understand,
While both gods and humans are enraptured
By a bodhisattva’s scent of omniscience.
- 1.47 “What awe can there be for those who go it alone?
The truly marvelous are those who guide limitless beings.
Śrāvakas are like those who travel alone,
While bodhisattvas are like captains.
- 1.48 “There are travelers who seek provisions from others
And those who give hospitality to all.
Śrāvakas, who follow the advice of others, are all like the former, [F.230.b]
While bodhisattvas are like those who host everyone.
- 1.49 “With only a small boat,
One cannot rescue others from a great body of water.
But coming in a sturdy ship,
One can rescue many millions of beings.
- 1.50 “Śrāvakas are like those who rely on a small boat,
So how can they save other beings?
Bodhisattvas come in the ship of perfect awakening
And save beings from the ocean of suffering.
- 1.51 “One cannot gain victory over enemies
Riding a donkey into battle.
By riding elephants, horses, and chariots
One can defeat enemies in battle.

- 1.52 “Śrāvakas are like those who ride donkeys,
While bodhisattvas, who ride elephants,
Will be victorious over the demons before the Bodhi tree,
For the benefit and happiness of all beings.
- 1.53 “Though stars fill the sky,
They do not make the night beautiful.
But when the moon’s light fills the heavens,
It beautifies the night like a bindi for the sky.²⁶
- 1.54 “Dear father, these śrāvakas are like the stars,
Whereas, king, a bodhisattva is like the moon,
Shining brilliant gnosis upon living kind
In order to heal all sentient beings.
- 1.55 “Dear father, one can accomplish little
By the light of a swarm of fireflies.
But with the light of the sun in Jambudvīpa,
One can complete hundreds of various deeds.
- 1.56 “Śrāvakas are like fireflies—
The brilliance of their intellect is barely perceptible.
Buddhas are like the sun of liberation—
Their wisdom and gnosis liberate sentient beings.
- 1.57 “Dear father, though hundreds of jackals may howl,
The herds of wild animals are unperturbed.
But when a lion roars, elephants, beasts, and birds alike
Flee in all directions.
- 1.58 “Dear father, see that the śrāvakas are like jackals.
Their words scare not the demons,
But demons and their kind are terrified
When a king conducts himself as a bodhisattva. [F.231.a]
- 1.59 “Dear father, for these reasons,
I could not aspire to those of the lesser vehicle.
Who, after forsaking unsurpassable awakening,
Would aspire to the lesser vehicle?
- 1.60 “Those who have completely forsaken supreme awakening
And yet aspire to the lesser vehicle
Make an evil living and have not profited—
They have wasted their human birth.

- 1.61 “Those who, for the sake of healing the world with its gods,
Aspire to supreme awakening
Make a worthy living and achieve greatness—
They fulfil the purpose of this human birth.
- 1.62 “Those who, with body, speech, and mind,
Are resolved in thought and deed to heal the world,
Who always strive to heal sentient beings,
Are like an uḍumbara flower.”
- 1.63 On hearing these verses taught by his daughter Aśokadattā, King Ajātaśatru was speechless. Venerable Śāriputra thought to himself, “Well! This girl has achieved unimpeded eloquence, but I should ascertain whether or not she has achieved patience.”
- 1.64 So Venerable Śāriputra asked Aśokadattā, “Girl, have you truly practiced the Śrāvaka Vehicle, or do you not claim to have done so? Have you truly engaged in the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, or do you not claim to have done so? Girl, what is your purpose? What do you seek in making such a lion’s roar?”
- 1.65 “Reverend Śāriputra,” she replied, “if I were striving for the sake of some dharma, then I would not make a lion’s roar, but since, Reverend Śāriputra, I am not striving for the sake of any dharma, that is why I have made this lion’s roar.²⁷ Furthermore, Reverend Śāriputra, you asked me, ‘girl, have you truly practiced the śrāvaka’s vehicle?’ Well, is the dharma realized by the reverend Śāriputra classified as the vehicle known as that of the śrāvakas, the pratyekabuddhas, or the truly complete buddhas?”²⁸ [F.231.b]
- 1.66 “Girl,” replied the elder Śāriputra, “in those dharmas there is no classification into vehicles. Dharma has only one characteristic: that it lacks any such characteristics.”
- 1.67 The girl asked, “Reverend Śāriputra, what is the purpose sought in this dharma without characteristics?”
- “Girl,” replied Śāriputra, “no purpose whatsoever is sought in Dharma.”
- 1.68 The elder Śāriputra then further questioned Aśokadattā: “Girl, what distinguishes the dharmas²⁹ of a buddha and the dharmas of an ordinary person? What are the differences between the two?”
- 1.69 “Reverend Śāriputra,” replied the girl, “what distinguishes emptiness and voidness? What are the differences between the two?”
- “There is no distinction or difference between them,” answered Śāriputra.
- 1.70 “Reverend Śāriputra,” the girl continued, “just as there is no distinction or difference between emptiness and voidness, so, too, Reverend Śāriputra, is there no distinction or difference whatsoever between the dharmas of a buddha and the dharmas of an ordinary person. Just as, Reverend Śāriputra,

there is no distinction or difference between, for example, the sky and open space, so, too, Reverend Śāriputra, is there no distinction or difference between the dharmas of a buddha and the dharmas of an ordinary person.”

To this the elder Śāriputra made no reply.

1.71 Then Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana asked the girl Aśokadattā, “Girl, from what you have said, you consider the dharmas of the Buddha to be vastly superior, and you consider the dharmas of the śrāvakas to be vastly inferior. Is this why, when you see great śrāvakas, you do not stand up for them, or pay homage to them, or come to welcome them, or speak to them, or invite them to sit and receive alms?”

1.72 The girl Aśokadattā replied to the elder Mahāmaudgalyāyana, “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how many stars there are in this world system of the great trichiliocosm?” [F.232.a]

1.73 “Girl,” replied Mahāmaudgalyāyana, “were I immersed in meditative absorption, I could count them. But when I am not immersed in meditative absorption, I do not know.”

1.74 “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana,” said the girl, “in just an instant of meditative equipoise, a tathāgata knows every thought of every sentient being of the past, present, and future, throughout the great trichiliocosm of world systems as numerous as the grains of sand of the Ganges River—not to mention the mere number of sentient beings included in just a single world system of the trichiliocosm. Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, this is what distinguishes the Tathāgata from the śrāvakas—this is what differentiates them. Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how many buddhafi elds have been destroyed and formed in the worlds of the ten directions?”

“No, girl, I do not know,” replied Maudgalyāyana.

1.75 The girl asked further, “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how many bhagavān buddhas there have been in the past, how many there will be in the future, and how many there are now?”

“No, girl, I do not know,” replied Maudgalyāyana.

1.76 The girl asked further, “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how many beings conduct themselves with attachment, how many with aversion, how many with ignorance, and how many with all three equally?”

“No, girl, I do not know,” replied Maudgalyāyana.

1.77 The girl asked, “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how many beings there are who follow the Śrāvaka Vehicle, how many who follow the Pratyekabuddha Vehicle, and how many who are truly engaged in the Great Vehicle?”

“No, girl, I do not know,” replied Maudgalyāyana.

1.78 The girl asked, “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how many beings there are who have been trained by śrāvakas, how many who have been trained by pratyekabuddhas, [F.232.b] and how many who have been trained by buddhas?”

“No, girl, I do not know,” replied Maudgalyāyana.

1.79 The girl asked, “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how many beings there are who make correct determinations, how many who make false determinations, and how many who make no determinations at all?”

“No, girl, I do not know,” replied Maudgalyāyana.

1.80 “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana,” said the girl, “when the Tathāgata thoroughly knows this and all the other foregoing points that śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas do not, what need is there to mention other sentient beings? Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, this is the distinct superiority of the Tathāgata.

1.81 “Furthermore, Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, since the Tathāgata has taught that you are the greatest among those who possess magical powers, Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, go to the world system called Gandhaprabhāsa, where the tathāgata, the arhat, the truly complete buddha called Incense-Emitting Light dwells and accepts a livelihood teaching the Dharma to bodhisattvas, a buddhafiield in which the scent of uragasāra sandalwood incense comes from every tree, and where fragrant incense pervades the entire buddhafiield.”

1.82 “Girl,” replied the elder Mahāmaudgalyāyana, “I have only just now heard the name of that buddhafiield. How can I go there to see that buddha and listen to his dharma?”

Without rising from her throne, the girl Aśokadattā said, “I declare with truth and true words that a bodhisattva mahāsattva, as soon as the mind of awakening is cultivated for the first time, outshines all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas in brilliance. So, by this truth and these true words, may the Tathāgata Incense-Emitting Light reveal himself and his buddhafiield to these great śrāvakas! [F.233.a] May these great śrāvakas experience its scents of sandalwood!”

1.83 The moment the girl Aśokadattā uttered these words, by the power of their truth, at that very instance, there radiated from the body of the bhagavān Tathāgata Incense-Emitting Light such light that the great śrāvakas were able to see the Gandhaprabhāsa world, with the tathāgata, arhat, truly complete Buddha Incense-Emitting Light seated there teaching the Dharma, and by the power of the Buddha, his Dharma teaching could even be heard in this world, while the scent of uragasāra sandalwood pervaded this entire Sahā world system.

- 1.84 With speech endowed with the sixty melodious aspects, the Tathāgata Incense-Emitting Light then said, “Just as the girl Aśokadattā has said, as soon as a bodhisattva mahāsattva cultivates the mind of awakening for the first time, they outshine all śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas in brilliance.”
- 1.85 When the bodhisattva mahāsattva Maitreya, who was staying at Vulture Peak, sensed the perfume of uragasāra sandalwood, he asked the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, where is this scent of uragasāra sandalwood coming from?”
- 1.86 The Bhagavān replied to the bodhisattva Maitreya, “Maitreya, the girl Aśokadattā has proclaimed a lion’s roar in front of the great śrāvakas. By the power of its truth, she has revealed to the great śrāvakas the Tathāgata Incense-Emitting Light, who lives in the world called Gandhaprabhāsa, teaching the Dharma to bodhisattva mahāsattvas. It is the scent of uragasāra sandalwood from the Gandhaprabhāsa world that now pervades this world as well.” [F.233.b]
- 1.87 The girl Aśokadattā then asked Venerable Mahāmaudgalyāyana, “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, who among the wise, when they have seen or heard the marvelous inconceivable magical displays and emanations of bodhisattva mahāsattvas, would still stand up for, come to welcome, or pay homage to inferior śrāvakas, who are weak and timid and whose understanding is limited? Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana, do you know how far away the Gandhaprabhāsa world is?”
- “No, girl, I do not,” replied Maudgalyāyana.
- 1.88 “Reverend Mahāmaudgalyāyana,” continued the girl, “if this world system of the trichiliocosm were, like an endless field, to be filled with sugarcane, or bamboo, or reeds, or rice, then even for a magically-endowed being like you it would take an eon to count the number of plants. However, you would never be able to calculate how many buddhafiels lie between here and the Gandhaprabhāsa world.”
- Then the bhagavān Tathāgata Incense-Emitting Light made the light disappear, and he made the buddhafiels disappear too.
- 1.89 Venerable Mahākāśyapa then asked the girl Aśokadattā, “Girl, have you ever seen the bhagavān, the tathāgata, the arhat, the truly complete Buddha Śākyamuni?”
- “Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” responded the girl, “can one see a tathāgata? Has the Tathāgata not said:
- 1.90 “ ‘Whoever sees me as form,
And whoever knows me as words,
Has turned away from the path and abandoned it.
Such people do not see me. [F.234.a]
- 1.91 “ ‘Consider buddhas as the true nature

And guides as bodies of reality.
Since the true nature is not knowable,
They cannot be cognized.'

- 1.92 “Moreover, Reverend Mahākāśyapa, you asked, ‘Girl, have you ever seen the bhagavān, the tathāgata, the arhat, the perfectly awakened Buddha Śākyamuni?’ Reverend Mahākāśyapa, indeed I have seen the Tathāgata, but not with the flesh eye, not as form; not with the divine eye, not as feeling; not with the wisdom eye, not as perception; not with the Dharma eye, not as mental formation; and not with the buddha eye, not as consciousness. Instead, Reverend Mahākāśyapa, I have seen the Tathāgata in the same way that, for example, an elder sees ignorance and craving for existence. Reverend Mahākāśyapa, I see the Tathāgata in the same way that, for example, an elder sees grasping onto the self as ‘I,’ and onto phenomena as ‘mine.’ ”
- 1.93 “Girl,” responded the elder Mahākāśyapa, “ignorance, craving for existence, and both the phenomena of grasping as ‘I’ and grasping as ‘mine’ do not exist, and it is impossible to see nonexistent phenomena.”
The girl Aśokadattā replied, “Indeed, Reverend Mahākāśyapa, this is the case. Since all dharmas are nonexistent, they cannot be seen.”
- 1.94 “So, girl,” said Mahākāśyapa, “does the dharma³⁰ of the Buddha also not exist?”
The girl replied, “Elder, regardless of whether you are asking about the dharmas of the Buddha or those of ordinary people, would you assert there are any dharmas that are completely real?”
- 1.95 “Girl, I do not assert that any dharmas of ordinary beings are completely real, let alone those of the Buddha,” said Mahākāśyapa.
The girl asked, “Reverend Mahākāśyapa, [F.234.b] do those dharmas that are not completely real exist or not?”
“Girl, those that are not do not exist,” said Mahākāśyapa.
- 1.96 The girl said, “So, Reverend Mahākāśyapa, all dharmas are nonexistence. There is no need to purify the vision of that which does not exist. So, Reverend Mahākāśyapa, any noble son or daughter who wishes to purify their view of the Buddha should purify their view of the self.”
- 1.97 Mahākāśyapa asked, “Girl, how can one purify the view of the self?”
“Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” replied the girl, “when one is convinced that because the self has no inherent existence all phenomena have no inherent existence, then simply with that, the view of the self has been purified.”
- 1.98 Mahākāśyapa asked, “Girl, what is the inherent nature³¹ of the self?”
“Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” said the girl, “the inherent nature of the self is emptiness. Because the self has no inherent nature, the self is also void. By being without inherent nature, the self is void. By being without inherent

nature, all phenomena are void.”

1.99 Mahākāśyapa asked, “Girl, from whom did you learn the Dharma, such that your view is so perfect? Girl, it is said that two causes or two conditions can lead to the arising of a perfect view: it can arise from the words of another, or it can arise from one’s own manner of mental application.”

1.100 “Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” replied the girl, “those wise ones who rely on others³² gain a perfect view from ordinary understanding according to both the teachings of others and their own practice, but, Reverend Mahākāśyapa, those wise ones who do not rely on others do not seek out others’ teachings.

1.101 “Reverend Mahākāśyapa, how does a monk properly engage in his practice?”

“Girl,” replied Mahākāśyapa, “whenever a monk closely attends to the meaning of the teachings he has heard, he properly engages in his practice.”
[F.235.a]

1.102 Then Mahākāśyapa asked, “Girl, how do bodhisattvas properly engage in their practice?”

“Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” the girl answered, “when bodhisattvas, even while living among all sentient beings, do not impute them as sentient beings, they are properly engaging in their practice. Reverend Mahākāśyapa, ‘to engage’ suggests that all phenomena have an essential beginning, that all phenomena have an essential end, and that all phenomena have an essential present. But, Reverend Mahākāśyapa, when bodhisattvas do not make such attributions, merely by that, they properly engage in bodhisattva practice.”

1.103 Mahākāśyapa asked, “Girl, how does one make *any* attribution about phenomena?”

“Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” replied the girl, “one may make attributions about all phenomena while seeing their essence as neither containing attributions nor free of attribution.”

1.104 Mahākāśyapa asked, “Girl, so how does one see all phenomena?”

“Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” replied the girl, “when one sees all phenomena as nondual, uncreated, and undestroyed, then one sees all phenomena. Reverend Mahākāśyapa, ‘seeing’ is a verbal designation for not seeing.”

1.105 Mahākāśyapa asked, “Girl, how should one regard the self?”

“Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” the girl answered, “one should regard it as one sees it.”

Mahākāśyapa said, “Girl, I have not seen the self nor anything belonging to it.”

- 1.106 “Reverend Mahākāśyapa,” said the girl, “one should regard all phenomena in the same way, as being without self and anything belonging to it.”
- 1.107 In the midst of this discourse, the elder Subhūti interjected, saying to the girl Aśokadattā, “Girl, such eloquence [F.235.b] is well found!”
- 1.108 “Reverend Subhūti,” replied the girl Aśokadattā, “the ability to speak with confidence does not come from finding anything. The one who has found nothing has confidence. The one who apprehends nothing, neither internally nor externally, has confidence.”
- 1.109 Subhūti asked, “Girl, if one has found nothing, how can one have confidence?”
- “Reverend Subhūti,” the girl answered, “when one does not find the self, nor the other, nor virtue, nor nonvirtue, nor that which is faulty, nor that which is unfaulty, nor that which is contaminated, nor that which is uncontaminated, nor that which is compounded, nor that which is un-compounded, nor that which is worldly, nor that which is beyond the world, nor affliction, nor purification, nor saṃsāra, nor nirvāṇa, and when one does not apprehend the qualities of ordinary beings, nor those of noble beings, nor even those of the Buddha, then, Reverend Subhūti, such a person, who has found nothing, will have confidence.”
- 1.110 Subhūti further asked, “How will they be confident?”
- “Just as Reverend Subhūti finds no phenomena, so, too, does one become confident,” the girl replied. “Can one speak of, or express, any essential nature of the Dharma, taught as supreme, of the elders who are free of afflictions? Is there anything at all about which to speak with confidence concerning the absence of mental afflictions and the essential nature of the Dharma?”
- “Neither the absence of mental afflictions nor an essential nature can be taught or expressed,” answered Subhūti.
- 1.111 “So, Reverend Subhūti,” said the girl, “if all phenomena are inexpressible, why did you say, ‘Girl, this eloquence you have found is well found!’ ”
- “Girl, the confidence with which you teach is not like this,” answered Subhūti.
- 1.112 The girl asked, “Elder Subhūti, do you believe that all phenomena are like echoes?”
- “Yes, girl, I do,” said Subhūti. [F.236.a]
- 1.113 The girl asked, “Elder Subhūti, is there anything one can say with confidence about echoes?”
- “No, girl, there is not,” said Subhūti. “Echoes are just sounds that arise from a collection of causes and conditions.”

- 1.114 The girl continued: “Reverend Subhūti, any sound that arises dependently has no inherent nature whatsoever. Why? Because whatever arises dependently has no point of origin.”
- 1.115 “Girl, all phenomena arise dependently,” said Subhūti.
“So indeed, Reverend Subhūti,” the girl replied, “are all phenomena inherently unproduced— they do not originate from their own nature.”
- 1.116 Subhūti asked, “Girl, if all phenomena are inherently unproduced, why has the Bhagavān taught that tathāgatas as numerous as the grains of sand along the river Ganges have already gone, that tathāgatas as numerous as the grains of sand along the river Ganges are still to come, and that tathāgatas as numerous as the grains of sand along the river Ganges are currently living?”
- 1.117 “Reverend Subhūti,” she replied, “it cannot be asserted that in the expanse of phenomena there is anything that is produced or that disappears.”
“Girl, that nothing is produced is a teaching on ultimate truth,” said Subhūti.
- 1.118 “Reverend Subhūti, teachings are no teachings.” said the girl. “If one asks why teachings are no teachings, it is because whether they are fit to be taught or not, they are not real, and do not reject the extremes of the unreal and the inexpressible.”³³
- 1.119 “Girl, it is indeed marvelous that as a layperson you are so immersed in the Dharma and can teach it with such purity!” exclaimed Subhūti.
- 1.120 “Reverend Subhūti,” the girl replied, “a bodhisattva mahāsattva should not be regarded as a layperson or a monastic. Why? Because they are distinguished by their intention, [F.236.b] by their wisdom, and by their gnosis. Reverend Subhūti, do you know what it is like to be a bodhisattva?”
Subhūti replied, “Girl, you explain and I will listen.”
- 1.121 The girl continued: “Reverend Subhūti, if a bodhisattva mahāsattva possesses eight qualities, whether they are a householder or a monastic is inconsequential. Whatever code of conduct they observe and live by, there is no fault either way. What are the eight? Reverend Subhūti, they are as follows: (1) Bodhisattva mahāsattvas perfect the highest intention, the intention to achieve unsurpassable, truly complete awakening. (2) Never giving up on sentient beings, they maintain loving kindness. (3) Being without worldly pleasures and activities, they maintain great compassion. (4) Relinquishing concern for their own body and life, they maintain equanimity. (5) Perfecting the skill of inspiring devotion, they are skillful in means. (6) Being free of all views, they have traversed the perfection of wisdom. (7) Not being content with enthusiasm for seeking out roots of virtue, they engage in real diligence. (8) Having achieved real patience, they

understand that which has not been taught before. Reverend Subhūti, if a bodhisattva mahāsattva possesses these eight qualities, whether they are a householder or a monastic is inconsequential. Whatever code of conduct they observe and live by, there is no fault.”

1.122 Thereupon Venerable Rāhula said to the girl Aśokadattā, “Girl, it not appropriate for you to converse with great śrāvakas in this manner while sitting on a high throne with golden legs. Have you not learnt that the Dharma should not be taught while seated on a low seat to a girl who is not sick seated on a high seat?” [F.237.a]

1.123 Hearing this, the girl Aśokadattā replied to Venerable Rāhula, “Reverend Rāhula, do you know what in this world is appropriate and what is not?”

1.124 “Yes, girl, I do!” said Rāhula. “It is said that training in the precepts as they have been taught and not transgressing them is appropriate, while transgressing the precepts is inappropriate.”

1.125 “Reverend Rāhula, let it go! Do not say that!” the girl Aśokadattā exclaimed. “Reverend Rāhula, whatever trainings are undertaken in the precepts are not appropriate. Why? Because they are contrived and conceptual. Reverend Rāhula, that which is neither contrived nor conceptual is that which should be called ‘appropriate.’ Reverend Rāhula, *appropriate*³⁴ is a verbal designation for those monk-arhats who have put an end to their defilements. They do not transgress the precepts. Why? Because the śrāvakas of the Bhagavān have completely transcended the precepts, and since they have no further need for precepts, they are ‘appropriate.’ They will never return to the three realms, they have truly gone beyond training, and they are called ‘those with no more to learn.’ As such, they do not apprehend the precepts, and they understand the phenomena of the three realms to be mere designations. That is why they are called ‘appropriate.’ ”

1.126 Rāhula asked, “Girl, what is the difference between appropriate and inappropriate?”

“Reverend Rāhula,” replied the girl, “what is the difference, for example, between someone who adorns themselves with gold and silver and someone who does not?”

“Girl, there is no difference,” Rāhula replied. [F.237.b]

1.127 The girl continued: “Reverend Rāhula, in the same way, since *appropriate* and *inappropriate* are equally linguistic terms, there is no actual difference. Why? Because all phenomena are without anything at all and are naturally without affliction.

1.128 “Reverend Rāhula, you also asked whether one may listen to teachings on the Dharma while sitting on high. Well, a bodhisattva, though sitting on a straw mat, actually sits on high.”

1.129 Rāhula asked, “On the basis of what discourse do you say that?”

- “Reverend Rāhula, what do you think?” the girl replied. “What was the Bodhisattva sitting upon when he attained awakening?”
- “He attained awakening while sitting on a mat of straw,” answered Rāhula.
- 1.130 “Reverend Rāhula,” the girl continued, “while the Bodhisattva was seated on a mat of straw, did Brahmā, Śakra, the world protectors, and all the other gods right up to those in Akaniṣṭha Heaven in the great trichiliocosm bow down to him with palms pressed together and prostrate at his feet?”
- “Yes indeed, girl, they did as you have described,” said Rāhula.
- 1.131 “Well, Reverend Rāhula,” said the girl, “one should understand therefore that although a bodhisattva mahāsattva may sit on a straw mat, they actually sit on high, while a śrāvaka, even when sitting atop Brahmā’s world, does not.”
- 1.132 Then King Ajātaśatru said to the girl Aśokadattā, “Daughter, do you not know that Reverend Rāhula is the son and heir of the Bhagavān Śākyamuni himself, and foremost among those who aspire to his training?”
- 1.133 “Let it go, let it go, father!” exclaimed the girl Aśokadattā. “Do not say that Reverend Rāhula is the Bhagavān Śākyamuni’s heir! [F.238.a] Have you ever heard of or seen a lion—the king of wild beasts, whose mane is like a crown—who has fathered a jackal?”
- “No, my daughter, I have not,” the king replied.
- 1.134 “Father,” the girl replied, “the Tathāgata moves with the prowess of a lion. A śrāvaka is no more beautiful than a footservant to a universal monarch who spreads the holy Dharma. Father, if one speaks truthfully about who is the Tathāgata’s heir, it can only truly be said that his son and heir is bodhisattvahood. Father, it is in seeking to commit themselves as heirs of the Tathāgata that bodhisattvas cultivate the mind set on unsurpassable, truly complete awakening.”
- 1.135 During this conversation, twenty ladies among King Ajātaśatru’s court of queens were inspired and set their minds on unsurpassable, truly complete awakening. A hundred gods, too, on hearing the girl’s lion’s roar, were inspired, and setting their minds on unsurpassable, truly complete awakening they declared, “We hereby pledge to be heirs of the buddha bhagavāns of the past, the future, and the present.”
- 1.136 As offerings to the girl Aśokadattā, the gods then scattered divine flowers across the entire city of Rājagṛha.
- 1.137 Then the girl Aśokadattā descended from her gold-legged throne, prostrated at the feet of those śrāvakas, and honored them with many kinds of food and drink to be savored, tasted, sipped, and enjoyed. With faith and devotion, she satiated those great śrāvakas, serving them with her own

hands. She then said, “Reverend ones, let us go happily this afternoon to listen to a Dharma teaching from the Bhagavān! Reverend ones, I would like to go too.”

1.138 Surrounded by an entourage including her father and mother and by a large crowd of people, the girl Aśokadattā went to where the Bhagavān was. [F.238.b] She prostrated at the Bhagavān’s feet and sat to one side. The king and his entourage of queens also prostrated at the Bhagavān’s feet and sat to one side. The great śrāvakas, too, arriving at the side of the Bhagavān, prostrated at his feet and sat to one side.

1.139 Then Venerable Śāriputra spoke these words to the Bhagavān: “Bhagavān, this girl Aśokadattā’s confidence is extraordinary.”

“Śāriputra,” said the Bhagavān, “when this girl first aspired toward awakening, she cultivated roots of virtue in the presence of ninety-two quintillion buddhas.”

1.140 Śāriputra asked, “Why then did her female form not change, Bhagavān?”

“Śāriputra, what are you thinking?” replied the Bhagavān. “If you consider the girl Aśokadattā to be female, you should not see it that way. In order to help sentient beings mature, bodhisattvas may reveal themselves in the form of women as they wish.”

1.141 Then, invoking the power of truth, the girl Aśokadattā said, “By the power of truth, all phenomena are neither male nor female. Seeing this, by the power of that same truth and my true words, may I have a male body! May all those assembled here also witness it!”

1.142 As soon as this was said, her female parts disappeared and male parts appeared. Then, he rose up into to the sky, to the height of some seven palm trees above the ground.

1.143 The Bhagavān then asked Venerable Śāriputra, “Śāriputra, do you see how the bodhisattva mahāsattva Aśokadattā rises up into the sky above?” [F.239.a]

“Yes, Bhagavān, I see it,” said Śāriputra.

1.144 The Bhagavān said, “Śāriputra, seven innumerable eons from now, this bodhisattva mahāsattva Aśokadattā will become the tathāgata, arhat, truly complete Buddha Aśoka in the world called Vimalaprabhā. He will live for one hundred eons, and his holy Dharma will survive for a further ten eons. His monastic assembly will consist of nothing but bodhisattvas, with three hundred twenty million bodhisattva mahāsattvas who will never fall from the path. His world will be made of beryl, arrayed splendidly and checkered with the seven types of precious jewels, covered with lotuses, and free from all forms of lower rebirth. There, there will be no distinction between the

luxuries enjoyed by gods and humans. Śāriputra, the luxuries enjoyed by humans in that world will be the same as those of the gods in Tuṣita Heaven.”

1.145 Then the mother of bodhisattva Aśokadattā, King Ajātaśatru’s main queen called Moonlit, bowed to the Bhagavān with her palms joined and said, “Bhagavān, I carried this holy being in my womb for nine months. Indeed, I am very fortunate. Bhagavān, I, too, have the intention to achieve unsurpassable, truly complete awakening. By this root of virtue, may I, too, achieve unsurpassable, truly complete awakening under her guidance in the world Vimalaprabhā!”

1.146 Then the Bhagavān said to Venerable Śāriputra, “Śāriputra, do you see Queen Moonlit?”

“Yes, Bhagavān,” replied Śāriputra, “I see her.” [F.239.b]

1.147 The Bhagavān said, “Śāriputra, when she dies and passes from here, Queen Moonlit will be reborn as a god known as Supreme Jewel, equal in fortune to the gods of Trayastriṃśa Heaven. He will be reborn as the son of King Śaṅkha, called Prince Joyful to Behold, when the bodhisattva Maitreya attains awakening. After making offerings to the Tathāgata Maitreya, he will go forth as a renunciate. He will grasp the holy Dharma of the Tathāgata Maitreya in its entirety—beginning, middle, and end—and he will delight in making offerings to all the buddha bhagavāns who appear in this fortunate eon. Eventually, he will be reborn again as the universal monarch Nimindhara when the Tathāgata Aśoka attains awakening. After making immeasurable offerings to that tathāgata, he will himself become the Tathāgata Samantaraśmi and will completely awaken to unsurpassable, truly complete awakening in that very same buddha field of Vimalaprabhā.”

1.148 On hearing this prophecy about herself, Queen Moonlit was satisfied and very pleased. Joyfully, she offered her pearl necklace worth hundreds and thousands to the Bhagavān, and being granted permission by the king to practice celibacy, she received the fundamental precepts.

1.149 Then, as an offering to the Bhagavān and all those assembled there, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Aśokadattā scattered the coral tree flowers that had been offered by the gods. He then came down from the sky, sat to one side, and said, “I see by the power of truth and my true words that when I attain awakening all those bodhisattvas mahāsattvas will be spontaneously born wearing saffron robes and sitting cross-legged on precious lotuses. And by the power of truth and my true words, [F.240.a] may I, too, be one who maintains the code of conduct, such as a monk who has maintains the code of conduct for eight years after ordination.”³⁵

- 1.150 As soon as the bodhisattva mahāsattva Aśokadattā made his proclamation, by the power of truth he was transformed into a monk who maintains the code of conduct.
- 1.151 Then the bodhisattva mahāsattva Aśokadattā said to his father, King Ajātaśatru,³⁶ “Father, just so, all phenomena are contrivances. They exist when they are concocted but cease when they are analyzed. Thus, are they like errors. O Great King, behold! Today, within one day, you have seen me in both female and male forms. Now that you see me in a monk’s form, which one is true? Great King, in this way all vacuous phenomena are potentialities wrapped up in one’s point of view. And so one is tormented by the mental afflictions in one’s own mind. And being tormented in this way, one does not seek this Dharma and Vinaya and regrets that which is not to be regretted. Therefore, Great King, be vigilant! When the burdens of kingship mount, always come before the Bhagavān! Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta will clear away your regrets, which arise from your mistaken understanding confusing what does not exist for what does. Great King, you may have much to do and much more to get done, so take your leave!”
- 1.152 Then King Ajātaśatru, Queen Moonlit, and the entire court of queens prostrated to the Bhagavān, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Aśokadattā, and the assembly of monks. They said to the Bhagavān, “Bhagavān, we have much to do and much more to get done. So we will take our leave.” [F.240.b]
- 1.153 “Great King,” said the Bhagavān, “if you believe the time has come, then go.”
- And so King Ajātaśatru and Queen Moonlit, together with the entire court of queens, left Vulture Peak for the great city of Rājagṛha.
- 1.154 Then the Bhagavān said to Venerable Ānanda, “Ānanda, memorize this Dharma discourse! Maintain it, recite it, promulgate it, and teach it widely to others!”
- 1.155 “Bhagavān, I will memorize this Dharma discourse,” Ānanda replied. “But, Bhagavān, what is the name of this Dharma discourse? By what name should I remember it?”
- 1.156 The Bhagavān said, “Ānanda, remember this Dharma discourse as *The Lion Roar of Aśokadattā* and *Aśokadattā’s Prophecy*. Teach it to others too! Ānanda, compared to one who makes offerings of various precious jewels that completely fill the entire trichiliocosm, one who merely hears this Dharma discourse will accrue far more merit, not to mention those who memorize it, promulgate it, maintain it, recite it, explain it, and earnestly put it into practice in accordance with the transmission.”
- 1.157 When the Bhagavān had finished speaking, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Aśokadattā, the great śrāvakas, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas praised and rejoiced in what the Bhagavān had said.

1.158 *This concludes "Aśokadattā's Prophecy," the thirty-second chapter of the noble Dharma discourse The Great Heap of Jewels, which itself has a hundred thousand chapters.*

c.

Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi and the chief editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 The Tibetan of the Degé Kangyur recension of this text gives the Sanskrit title of the sūtra as *Aśokadattavyākaraṇa*. Since the titular character of the discourse is a girl, we have given her Sanskrit name throughout as *Aśokadattā* (ie with a long ā for a feminine ending), and amended the Sanskrit title of the sūtra accordingly to *Aśokadattāvyākaraṇa*.
- n.2 *The Questions of the Girl Vimalaśraddhā* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh84.html>) (*Vimalaśraddhā*, Toh 84).
- n.3 *The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh192.html>) (*Kṣemavatīvyākaraṇa*, Toh 192).
- n.4 *The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh170.html>) (*Śrīmatībrāhmaṇīparipṛcchā*, Toh 170).
- n.5 *The Questions of Gaṅgottarā* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh75.html>) (*Gaṅgottaraparipṛcchā*, Toh 75).
- n.6 *The Questions of an Old Lady* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh171.html>) (*Mahallikāparipṛcchā*, Toh 171).
- n.7 *The City Beggar Woman* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh205.html>) (*Nāgarāvalambikā*, Toh 205).
- n.8 *The Miraculous Play of Mañjuśrī* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh96.html>) (*Mañjuśrīvikrīḍita*, Toh 96).
- n.9 *bsgom pa'i rim pa mdo kun las bdus pa* (*Bhāvanākramasūtrasamuccaya*), Toh 3933, folios 134.b–135.a.
- n.10 Ruegg 1981, 109ff.

- n.11 *ting nge 'dzin gyi tshogs kyi le'u* (*Samādhisambhāraparivarta*), Toh 3924, folio 81.b.
- n.12 Chang 1983, pp. 115–33.
- n.13 Chang 1983, p. 132.
- n.14 Phangthangma 2003, p. 14.
- n.15 Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 32–33.
- n.16 Tib. *gzungs thob pa*. This could also be interpreted as “had achieved the power of retention.”
- n.17 Tib. *zhang blon gyi bu tsha*, literally “sons and nephews of uncle-ministers.” The Tibetan term *zhang blon*, literally “uncle-minister” has no direct Sanskrit correlate. It was the term used of senior ministers during the period of the Tibetan Empire, when this translation into Tibetan was made, who were typically related by marriage to the ruler. Here it is likely used as a translation of the Sanskrit *amātya*.
- n.18 Following, here and passim, Stok, Lhasa, and Choné Kangyurs: *bsur mchi ba*. Degé: *bstsur mchi ba*. Kangxi: *bsur 'chi ba*.
- n.19 Translation tentative. Tib. *'jig rten na tshangs pa'i snga khang bla na med pa don du gnyer ba na*.
- n.20 The term *nga rgyal* is translated here as “conceited.” It might also be translated as “proud.”
- n.21 The five qualities mentioned here—moral discipline, meditative stability, wisdom, liberation, and knowledge and seeing of liberation—are the five undefiled aggregates that characterize noble ones, contrasted with the five defiled aggregates of ordinary sentient beings.
- n.22 The following verses are presented in Tibetan in nine syllable lines.
- n.23 Tib. *ye shes rig pa*.
- n.24 Following the Stok Palace, Kangxi, and Yongle Kangyurs: *tsha ba yis/ /gdungs pa'i skye bo rnams kyis nye bar bsten pa lags*. The Degé reads *skye bo rnams kyis*.
- n.25 The Narthang and Stok Palace editions have *bAr shi ka* instead of *bal shi ka*, which is a more faithful transliteration of *vārṣika*, or better *vārṣikī*, referring to the species *Jasminum sambac*, known in English as Arabian Jasmine.

- n.26 Tib. *mkha' la thig le bzhin du mdzes*. To this day, Indian women wear bindis (Tib. *thig le*), a mark or dot applied on the forehead between the eyebrows.
- n.27 There is a play on the polysemic term *dharma* (Tib. *chos*) that continues through these exchanges with the eminent śrāvakas.
- n.28 Here the term *dharma* (Tib. *chos*) is used to connote “teaching” or “doctrine.”
- n.29 Here the term *dharmas* (Tib. *chos rnams*) is used to connote “qualities.”
- n.30 Here the term *dharma* (Tib. *chos*) is taken by Aśokadattā as connoting “qualities,” though the phrase used by Mahākāśyapa, *sangs rgyas kyi chos*, normally denotes the Buddha’s Dharma (teaching).
- n.31 Here “inherent existence” and “inherent nature” are used as alternative translations for the term *svabhāva* (Tib. *rang bzhin*).
- n.32 Following the Narthang, Yongle, and Stok Palace reading, *dring 'jog pa'i shes rab can dag ni*. Degé: *dring mi 'jog pa'i shes rab can*, “those wise ones who do not rely...”
- n.33 Translation tentative. Tib. *ci'i phyir bstan pa thams cad bstan du med ce na/de ni bstan kyang rung/ma bstan kyang rung dngos po ma yin te/dngos po med pa dang brjod du med pa'i mtha' mi spong ba'i phyir ro*.
- n.34 The term translated throughout this passage as “appropriate,” Tib. *rung ba*, could also be translated as “right,” “suitable,” or “fitting.”
- n.35 Following the Degé, Choné, and Urga recensions and the Chinese (Chang 1983, p. 131), which all have “eight years.” The Narthang, Lhasa, and Stok Palace editions read “a hundred years.”
- n.36 In the Chinese, the bodhisattva Aśokadattā, to address the king, again takes the form of the king’s daughter. Chang 1983, p. 132.

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 acceptance of the unborn nature of phenomena

mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa

མི་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་བཟོད་པ།

anutpattikadharmakṣāntilābha^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The bodhisattvas' realization that all phenomena are unproduced and empty. It sustains them on the difficult path of benefiting all beings so that they do not succumb to the goal of personal liberation. Different sources link this realization to the first or eighth bodhisattva level (*bhūmi*).

g.2 Ajātaśatru

ma skyes dgra

མ་སྐྱེས་དགའ།

ajātaśatru ^{AO}

King of Magadha, son of the king Bimbisāra. As a prince, he befriended Devadatta, who convinced him to kill his father and take the throne for himself. After his father's death he was tormented with guilt and became a follower of the Buddha. He supported the compilation of the Buddha's teachings during the First Council in Rājagṛha.

g.3 Akaniṣṭha Heaven

'og min

འོག་མིན།

akaniṣṭha ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The eighth and highest level of the Realm of Form (*rūpadhātu*), the last of the five pure abodes (*śuddhāvāsa*); it is only accessible as the result of specific states of *dhyāna*. According to some texts this is where non-returners (*anāgāmin*) dwell in their last lives. In other texts it is the realm of the enjoyment body (*saṃbhogakāya*) and is a buddhafield associated with the Buddha Vairocana; it is accessible only to bodhisattvas on the tenth level.

g.4 Always Smiling and Joyful

rtag tu 'dzum zhing rab tu dga' ba

རྟམ་ཏུ་འཇུག་ཞིང་རབ་ཏུ་དགའ་བ།

—

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.5 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

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.6 Aniruddha

ma 'gags pa

མ་འགགས་པ།

aniruddha^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Lit. "Unobstructed." One of the ten great śrāvaka disciples, famed for his meditative prowess and superknowledges. He was the Buddha's cousin—a son of Amṛtodana, one of the brothers of King Śuddhodana—and is often mentioned along with his two brothers Bhadrīka and Mahānāma. Some sources also include Ānanda among his brothers.

g.7 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.8 Aśoka

mya ngan med pa

མྱ་ངན་མེད་པ།

aśoka^{AO}

The name of the girl Aśokadattā as a future tathāgata in the world called Vimalaprabhā, as prophesied by the Buddha.

g.9 Aśokadattā

mya ngan med kyis byin pa

མུ་ངན་མེད་ཀྱིས་བྱིན་པ།

***aśokadattā*^{RP}

A daughter of King Ajātaśatru and his queen Moonlit. The main protagonist of *Aśokadattā's Prophecy*.

g.10 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura^{AO}

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.11 Aśvajit

rta thul

རྟ་སྤུལ།

aśvajit^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The son of one of the seven brahmins who predicted that Śākyamuni would become a great king. He was one of the five companions with Śākyamuni in the beginning of his spiritual path, abandoning him when he gave up asceticism, but then becoming one of his first five pupils after his buddhahood. He was the last of the five to attain the realization of a “stream entrant” and became an arhat on hearing the *Sūtra on the Characteristics of Selflessness (Anātmalakṣaṇasūtra)*, which was not translated into Tibetan. Aśvajit was the one who went to meet Śāriputra and Maudgalyāyana so they would become followers of the Buddha.

g.12 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.13 beryl

bai dUr+ya

བེ་རུ་ལྷ།

vaidūrya^{AO}

Although it has often been translated as “lapis lazuli,” the descriptions and references in the literature, both Sanskrit and Tibetan, match the characteristics of beryl. The Pali form is *veḷuriya*. The Prākṛit form *verulia* is the source for the English *beryl*. This normally refers to the blue or aquamarine beryl, but there are also white, yellow, and green beryls, though green beryl is called “emerald.”

g.14 Beyond the Senses

dbang po las 'das pa

དབང་པོ་ལས་འདས་པ།

—

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.15 Bhadrapāla

bzang skyong

བཟང་སྐྱོང་།

bhadrapāla^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Head of the “sixteen excellent men” (*ṣoḍaśasatpuruṣa*), a group of householder bodhisattvas present in the audience of many sūtras. He appears prominently in certain sūtras, such as *The Samādhi of the Presence of the Buddhas* (*Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*, Toh 133) and is perhaps also the merchant of the same name who is the principal interlocutor in *The Questions of Bhadrāpāla the Merchant* (Toh 83).

g.16 bhagavān

bcom ldan 'das

བཙོམ་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.17 Black Mountains

ri nag po

རི་ནག་པོ།

kālaparvata ^{AO}

Often numbered as nine, the Black Mountains are said to lie at the northern edge of the continent of Jambudvīpa. There are three sets of three of these peaks, behind which lies the great snow mountain or Mount Sumeru.

g.18 blue lotus

ud pal

ལྷུང་པལ།

utpala ^{AO}

Nymphaea caerulea. The “blue lotus” is actually a lily, so it is also known as the blue water lily.

g.19 bodhisattva mahāsattva

byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཚེན་པོ།

bodhisattvamahāsattva^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term can be understood to mean “great courageous one” or “great hero,” or (from the Sanskrit) simply “great being,” and is almost always found as an epithet of “bodhisattva.” The qualification “great” in this term, according to the majority of canonical definitions, focuses on the generic greatness common to all bodhisattvas, i.e., the greatness implicit in the bodhisattva vow itself in terms of outlook, aspiration, number of beings to be benefited, potential or eventual accomplishments, and so forth. In this sense the *mahā-* is closer in its connotations to the *mahā-* in “Mahāyāna” than to the *mahā-* in “mahāsiddha.” While individual bodhisattvas described as *mahāsattva* may in many cases also be “great” in terms of their level of realization, this is largely coincidental, and in the canonical texts the epithet is not restricted to bodhisattvas at any particular point in their career. Indeed, in a few cases even bodhisattvas whose path has taken a wrong direction are still described as *bodhisattva mahāsattva*.

Later commentarial writings do nevertheless define the term—variably—in terms of bodhisattvas having attained a particular level (*bhūmi*) or realization. The most common qualifying criteria mentioned are attaining the path of seeing, attaining irreversibility (according to its various definitions), or attaining the seventh *bhūmi*.

g.20 body of reality

chos kyi sku

ཚོས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ།

dharmakāya^{AO}

In distinction to the *rūpakāya*, or form body of a buddha, this is the eternal, imperceivable realization of a buddha. In origin it was a term for the presence of the Dharma, and it has since become synonymous with the true nature.

g.21 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚེངས་པ།

brahmā^{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 (*Mahābrahmā*).

g.22 **brahmās**

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā^{AO}

A class of gods who have transcended the desire realm and dwell in the heavens of the form realm. As distinguished from Brahmā or Great Brahmā, who is lord of the brahmās and sovereign of our universe, the Sahā world. Every universe has its own brahmā realms.

g.23 **Brahmā’s world**

tshangs pa’i ’jig rten

ཚངས་པའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

brahmaloka^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A collective name for the first three heavens of the form realm, which correspond to the first concentration (*dhyāna*): Brahmakāyika, Brahmapurohita, and Mahābrahmā (also called Brahmapārṣadya). These are ruled over by the god Brahmā. According to some sources, it can also be a general reference to all the heavens in the form realm and formless realm. (*Provisional 84000 definition. New definition forthcoming.*)

g.24 **brahmin**

bram ze

བླ་མ།

brāhmaṇa^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A member of the highest of the four castes in Indian society, which is closely associated with religious vocations.

g.25 buddha eye

sangs rgyas kyi mig

སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་མིག

buddhacakṣus ^{AO}

The fifth of the five eyes, the five superior levels of vision experienced by realized beings, the other four being the physical eye (*māṃsacakṣus*), the divine eye (*divyacakṣus*), the wisdom eye (*prajñācakṣus*), and the Dharma eye (*dharmacakṣus*).

g.26 castor-oil plant

e ran da yi shing

ཨི་རན་དལི་ཤིང་།

eraṇḍa ^{AO}

Ricinus communis.

g.27 celibacy

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚངས་པར་སྦྱོད་པ།

brahmacarya ^{AO}

Also translated as “holy living.”

g.28 concentration

bsam gtan

བསམ་གཏན།

dhyāna ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Dhyāna is defined as one-pointed abiding in an undistracted state of mind, free from afflicted mental states. Four states of *dhyāna* are identified as being conducive to birth within the form realm. In the context of the Mahāyāna, it is the fifth of the six perfections. It is commonly translated as “concentration,” “meditative concentration,” and so on.

g.29 confidence

spobs pa

སྦོབ་པ།

pratibhāna^{AO}

See also “eloquence and confidence.”

g.30 coral tree flower

me tog man dA ra ba

མེ་ཏོག་མན་རྒྱ་ར་བ།

mandārapuṣpa^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the five trees of Indra’s paradise, its heavenly flowers often rain down in salutation of the buddhas and bodhisattvas and are said to be very bright and aromatic, gladdening the hearts of those who see them. In our world, it is a tree native to India, *Erythrina indica* or *Erythrina variegata*, commonly known as the Indian coral tree, mandarava tree, flame tree, and tiger’s claw. In the early spring, before its leaves grow, the tree is fully covered in large flowers, which are rich in nectar and attract many birds. Although the most widespread coral tree has red crimson flowers, the color of the blossoms is not usually mentioned in the sūtras themselves, and it may refer to some other kinds, like the rarer *Erythrina indica alba*, which boasts white flowers.

g.31 Delights in Truth

bden pa la dga’ ba

བདེན་པ་ལ་དགའ་བ།

—

A bodhisattva in the Buddha’s retinue.

g.32 demon

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 Sārthavāha; 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.33 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *dhāraṇī* has the sense of something that “holds” or “retains,” and so it can refer to the special capacity of practitioners to memorize and recall detailed teachings. It can also refer to a verbal expression of the teachings—an incantation, spell, or mnemonic formula that distills and “holds” essential points of the Dharma and is used by practitioners to attain mundane and supramundane goals. The same term is also used to denote texts that contain such formulas.

g.34 Dharma

chos

ཚོས།

dharma^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *dharma* conveys ten different meanings, according to Vasubandhu’s *Vyākhyāyukti*. The primary meanings are as follows: the doctrine taught by the Buddha (Dharma); the ultimate reality underlying and expressed through the Buddha’s teaching (Dharma); the trainings that the Buddha’s teaching stipulates (dharmas); the various awakened qualities or attainments acquired through practicing and realizing the Buddha’s teaching (dharmas); qualities or aspects more generally, i.e., phenomena or phenomenal attributes (dharmas); and mental objects (dharmas).

In this text:

See also “phenomena.”

g.35 Dharma eye

chos kyi mig

ཚོས་ཀྱི་མིག

dharmacakṣus ^{AO}

The fourth of the five eyes, the five superior levels of vision experienced by realized beings, the other four being the physical eye (*māṃsacakṣus*), the divine eye (*divyacakṣus*), the wisdom eye (*prajñācakṣus*), and the buddha eye (*buddhacakṣus*).

g.36 diligence

brtson 'grus

བརྩོན་འགྲུས།

vīrya ^{AO}

The fourth of the six perfections. Can also be translated as perseverance, effort, or vigor. A state of mind characterized by joyful persistence when engaging in any virtuous behavior of body, speech, or mind

g.37 divine eye

lha'i mig

ལྷ་འི་མིག

divyacakṣus ^{AO}

One of the six superknowledges and the second of the five eyes. This is the supernormal ability to see to an unlimited distance, observe events on other worlds, see through mountains, and so forth. The five eyes are five superior levels of vision experienced by realized beings, the other four being the physical eye (*māṃsacakṣus*), the wisdom eye (*prajñācakṣus*), the Dharma eye (*dharmacakṣus*), and the buddha eye (*buddhacakṣus*).

g.38 eloquence and confidence

spobs pa

སྤོབས་པ།

pratibhāna ^{AO}

The inspiration and courage to be able to teach the Dharma. Sometimes translated as “inspired speech.”

g.39 emptiness

stong pa nyid

སྤོང་པ་ཉིད།

śūnyatā ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Emptiness denotes the ultimate nature of reality, the total absence of inherent existence and self-identity with respect to all phenomena. According to this view, all things and events are devoid of any independent, intrinsic reality that constitutes their essence. Nothing can be said to exist independent of the complex network of factors that gives rise to its origination, nor are phenomena independent of the cognitive processes and mental constructs that make up the conventional framework within which their identity and existence are posited. When all levels of conceptualization dissolve and when all forms of dichotomizing tendencies are quelled through deliberate meditative deconstruction of conceptual elaborations, the ultimate nature of reality will finally become manifest. It is the first of the three gateways to liberation.

g.40 essential nature

de bzhin nyid

དེ་བཞིན་ཉིད།

tathatā

The ineffable, essenceless nature.

g.41 expanse of phenomena

chos kyi dbyings

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

dharmadhātu ^{AO}

The ultimate dimension of all.

g.42 five undefiled aggregates

zag med kyi phung po lnga

ཟག་མེད་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་ལྔ།

pañca anāsravaskandha ^{AO}

The five aggregates characteristic of noble ones, also known as the five aggregates beyond the world (*lokottaraskandha*, 'jig rten las 'das pa'i phung po lnga). They consist of the aggregate of moral discipline, the aggregate of meditative stability, the aggregate of wisdom, the aggregate of liberation, and the aggregate of the knowledge and seeing of liberation.

g.43 flesh eye

sha'i mig

ཤེའི་མིག

māṃsacakṣus ^{AO}

The first of the five eyes, the five superior levels of vision experienced by realized beings, the other four being the divine eye (*divyacakṣus*), the wisdom eye (*prajñācakṣus*), the Dharma eye (*dharmacakṣus*), and the buddha eye (*buddhacakṣus*).

g.44 Gandhaprabhāsa

spos kyi 'od

སྣུས་ཀྱི་འོད།

gandhaprabhāsa ^{AO}

Lit. "Incense-Light." The world system of the Buddha Incense-Emitting Light during the time of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.45 gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva ^{AO}

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.46 Ganges

gang gA

གང་གླ།

gaṅgā ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Gaṅgā, or Ganges in English, is considered to be the most sacred river of India, particularly within the Hindu tradition. It starts in the Himalayas, flows through the northern plains of India, bathing the holy city of Vārāṇasī, and meets the sea at the Bay of Bengal, in Bangladesh. In the sūtras, however, this river is mostly mentioned not for its sacredness but for its abundant sands—noticeable still today on its many sandy banks and at its delta—which serve as a common metaphor for infinitely large numbers.

According to Buddhist cosmology, as explained in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is one of the four rivers that flow from Lake Anavatapta and cross the southern continent of Jambudvīpa—the known human world or more specifically the Indian subcontinent.

g.47 gnosis

ye shes

ཡེ་ཤེས།

jñāna^{AO}

Although the Sanskrit term *jñāna* can refer to knowledge in a general sense, it is also used in a Buddhist context to refer to the nonconceptual state of awareness of a realized being.

g.48 go forth

rab tu 'byung ba

རབ་ཏུ་འགྱུར་བ།

pravrajita

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Sanskrit *pravrajyā* literally means “going forth,” with the sense of leaving the life of a householder and embracing the life of a renunciant. When the term is applied more technically, it refers to the act of becoming a male novice (*śrāmaṇera*; *dge tshul*) or female novice (*śrāmaṇerikā*; *dge tshul ma*), this being a first stage leading to full ordination.

g.49 god

lha

ལྷ།

deva^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In the most general sense the devas—the term is cognate with the English *divine*—are a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend

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

g.50 Guhyagupta

phug sbas

ཐུག་སྤྲུལ།

guhyagupta ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha’s retinue.

g.51 Holding a Jewel in Hand

lag na rin chen thogs

ལག་ན་རིན་ཆེན་ཐོག་ས།

—

A bodhisattva in the Buddha’s retinue.

g.52 holy living

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚངས་པར་སྦྱོང་པ།

brahmacarya ^{AO}

Lit. “brahma conduct.” In a Buddhist context this term refers to those who have committed themselves to celibacy and the pursuit of a spiritual life.

g.53 householder

khyim bdag

ཁྱིམ་བདག།

gṛhapati ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term is usually used for wealthy lay patrons of the Buddhist community. It also refers to a subdivision of the vaiśya (mercantile) class of traditional Indian society, comprising businessmen, merchants, landowners, and so on.

g.54 Incense-Emitting Light

spos rab tu 'gyed pa'i 'od zer

སྒྲོལ་རབ་ཏུ་འགྲེད་པའི་འོད་ཟེར།

—

The buddha of the world system called Gandhaprabhāsa during the time of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.55 Indradeva

dbang po'i lha

དབང་པོའི་ལྷ།

indradeva^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.56 irreversibility

phyir mi ldog pa

ཕྱིར་མི་ལྡོག་པ།

avinivarta^{AO} · *avaivartika*^{AO} · *aavinivartanīya*^{AO}

The stage on the bodhisattva path at which one will never turn back, or be turned back, from inevitable progress toward the full awakening of a buddha.

g.57 Jambudvīpa

'dzam gling

འཛམ་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.58 jasmine

bal shi ka

བལ་ཤི་ཀ

vārṣikī ^{AO}

Jasminum sambac.

g.59 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇི་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Indian paṇḍita of the ninth century.

g.60 Jñānameru

ye shes lhun po

ཡེ་ཤེས་ལུན་པོ།

jñānameru ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.61 Joyful to Behold

mthong na dga' ba

མཐོང་ན་དགའ་བ།

**priyadarśana*

The name of a prince, son of King Śaṅkha, a future rebirth of Aśokadattā's mother, Moonlit, as prophesied by the Buddha.

g.62 kārṣāpaṇa coin

kAr Sha pA Na

ཀར་ཤ་པ་ན།

kārṣāpaṇa ^{AO}

A coin of a particular weight used in ancient India that varied in value according to whether it was made of gold, silver, or copper.

g.63 knowledge and seeing of liberation

rnam par grol ba'i ye shes mthong ba

རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ་བའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཐོང་བ།

vimuktijñānadarśana ^{AO}

Both knowing and directly accessing liberated knowing; the fifth of the five undefiled aggregates that are characteristic of noble ones.

g.64 kṣatriya

rgyal rigs

རྒྱལ་རིགས།

kṣatriya ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ruling caste in the traditional four-caste hierarchy of India, associated with warriors, the aristocracy, and kings.

g.65 lesser vehicle

theg pa dman

ཐེག་པ་དམན།

hīnayāna ^{AO}

A collective term used in Great Vehicle (*mahāyāna*) texts to refer to the Śrāvaka Vehicle (*śrāvakayāna*) and Pratyekabuddha Vehicle (*pratyekabuddhayāna*). The name stems from its goal—nirvāṇa and personal liberation—being seen as lesser than the goal of the Great Vehicle—buddhahood and the liberation of all sentient beings.

g.66 magnolia

tsam pa ka

ཙམ་པ་ཀ།

campaka ^{AO}

g.67 Mahākāśyapa

'od srung chen po

འོད་སྲུང་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākāśyapa ^{AO}

One of the Buddha's principal śrāvaka disciples, he became a leader of the saṅgha after the Buddha's passing.

g.68 Mahāmaudgalyāyana

maud gal gyi bu chen po

མོད་གལ་གྱི་བུ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāmaudgalyāyana ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, paired with Śāriputra. He was renowned for his miraculous powers. His family clan was descended from Mudgala, hence his name Maudgalyāyana, “the son of Mudgala’s descendants.” Respectfully referred to as Mahāmaudgalyāyana, “Great Maudgalyāyana.”

g.69 Mahāmeru

lhun po chen po

ལུན་པོ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāmeru ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha’s retinue.

g.70 Mahāsārathi

kha lo sgyur chen po

ཁ་ལོ་སྐུར་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāsārathi ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha’s retinue.

g.71 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

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

g.72 Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta

'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa

འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུ་རྒྱུར་པ།

mañjuśrīkumārabhūta ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Mañjuśrī is one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha” and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. To his name, Mañjuśrī, meaning “Gentle and Glorious One,” is often added the epithet Kumārabhūta, “having a youthful form.” He is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.73 meditative stability

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

samādhi ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In a general sense, *samādhi* can describe a number of different meditative states. In the Mahāyāna literature, in particular in the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, we find extensive lists of different samādhis, numbering over one hundred.

In a more restricted sense, and when understood as a mental state, *samādhi* is defined as the one-pointedness of the mind (*cittaikāgratā*), the ability to remain on the same object over long periods of time. The *Draḥor Bamponyipa* (*sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*) commentary on the *Mahāvīyūtpatti* explains the term *samādhi* as referring to the instrument through which mind and mental states “get collected,” i.e., it is by the force of samādhi that the continuum of mind and mental states becomes collected on a single point of reference without getting distracted.

g.74 Meru

lhun po

ལུན་པོ།

meru ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.75 mind of awakening

sems

སེམས།

citta^{AO}

g.76 Moonlit

zla ba can

ཟླ་བ་ཅན།

—

The name of one of King Ajātaśatru's queens, the mother of Aśokadattā.

g.77 never fall from the path

phyir mi ldog pa

ཕིར་མི་ལྷོག་པ།

avinivarta^{AO} · *avaiivartika*^{AO} · *aavinivartanīya*^{AO}

See also "irreversibility."

g.78 Nimindhara

mu khyud 'dzin

མུ་ཁྱུད་འཛིན།

nimindhara^{AO}

The name of a universal monarch, a future life of the queen Moonlit, as prophesied by the Buddha.

g.79 Nityodyukta

rtag tu brtson

རྟག་ཏུ་བརྩོན།

nityodyukta^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.80 Nityotkanṭhita

rtag tu gdung

རྟག་ཏུ་གདུང།

nityotkanṭhita^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.81 Nityotkṣiptahasta

rtaḡ tu laḡ brkyang

རྟམ་ཏུ་ལག་བརྒྱད།

nityotkṣiptahasta^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.82 oleander flower

ka ra bi ra

ཀ་ར་བི་ར།

karavīra^{AO}

g.83 patience

bzod pa

བཟོད་པ།

kṣānti^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A term meaning acceptance, forbearance, or patience. As the third of the six perfections, patience is classified into three kinds: the capacity to tolerate abuse from sentient beings, to tolerate the hardships of the path to buddhahood, and to tolerate the profound nature of reality. As a term referring to a bodhisattva's realization, *dharmakṣānti* (*chos la bzod pa*) can refer to the ways one becomes "receptive" to the nature of Dharma, and it can be an abbreviation of *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, "forbearance for the unborn nature, or nonproduction, of dharmas."

g.84 Perpetually Raised Hand

rtaḡ tu laḡ bsgreng

རྟམ་ཏུ་ལག་བརྒྱལ།

—

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.85 phenomena

chos

ཚོས།

dharma^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the meanings of the Skt. term *dharma*. This applies to "phenomena" or "things" in general, and, more specifically, "mental phenomena" which are the object of the mental faculty (*manas, yid*).

g.86 pratyekabuddha

rang sangs rgyas

རང་སངས་རྒྱལ།

pratyekabuddha ^{AO}

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

g.87 pratyekabuddha vehicle

rang sangs rgyas kyi theg pa

རང་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཐེག་པ།

pratyekabuddhayāna ^{AO}

The vehicle composed of the teachings accepted by pratyekabuddhas.

g.88 Precious Mind

rin chen sems

རིན་ཆེན་སེམས།

—

A bodhisattva in the Buddha’s retinue.

g.89 Pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra

byams ma’i bu gang po

བྱམས་མའི་བུ་གང་པོ།

pūrṇamaitrāyaṇīputra ^{AO}

One of the ten principal pupils of the Buddha. He was the greatest in his ability to teach the Dharma.

g.90 Radiant Jewel

rin chen bkra ldan

རིན་ཆེན་བླ་མ་

—

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.91 Rāhula

sgra gcan zin

སླ་གཙམ་ཟེན།

rāhula^{AO}

Son of Prince Siddhārtha Gautama, who, when the latter attained awakening as the Buddha Śākyamuni, became a monk and eventually one of his foremost śrāvaka disciples.

g.92 Rājagṛha

rgyal po'i khab

རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།

rājagṛha^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ancient capital of Magadha prior to its relocation to Pāṭaliputra during the Mauryan dynasty, Rājagṛha is one of the most important locations in Buddhist history. The literature tells us that the Buddha and his saṅgha spent a considerable amount of time in residence in and around Rājagṛha—in nearby places, such as the Vulture Peak Mountain (Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata), a major site of the Mahāyāna sūtras, and the Bamboo Grove (Veṇuvana)—enjoying the patronage of King Bimbisāra and then of his son King Ajātaśatru. Rājagṛha is also remembered as the location where the first Buddhist monastic council was held after the Buddha Śākyamuni passed into parinirvāṇa. Now known as Rajgir and located in the modern Indian state of Bihar.

g.93 Ratnākara

dkon mchog 'byung gnas

དཀོན་མཆོག་འབྱུང་གནས།

ratnākara^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.94 Ratnapāṇi

lag na rin chen

ལག་ན་རིན་ཆེན།

ratnapāṇi ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.95 Ratnasimha

rin chen seng ge

རིན་ཆེན་སེང་གེ།

ratnasimha ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.96 Revata

nam gru

ནམ་གུ།

revata ^{AO}

A senior śrāvaka disciple of the Buddha and younger brother of Śāriputra.

g.97 Sahā world

mi mjed

མི་མཇེད།

sahā ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The name for our particular world system, the universe of a thousand million worlds, or trichiliocosm, in which our four-continent world is located.

Although it is sometimes said that it can refer only to our own four-continent world around Mount Meru, the sūtras largely seem to equate it with this trichiliocosm, and this is confirmed by scholars like Jamgön Kongtrul (see *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book One*). Each trichiliocosm is ruled by a god

Brahmā; thus, in this context, he bears the title of *Sahāṃpati*, Lord of Sahā. Our world system of Sahā, or Sahālokadhātu, is also described as being the

buddhafiield of the Buddha Śākyamuni. He teaches the Dharma here to

beings who adhere to inferior ways and perceive this universe as an impure buddhafiield contaminated with the five degenerations (*pañcakaṣāya*, *snyigs ma lnga*): the degeneration of time, sentient beings, place, lifespan, and mental

afflictions (see *The Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, Toh 176). It is also mentioned as the

field of activity of all the thousand buddhas of this Fortunate Eon (see *The White Lotus of Compassion*, Toh 112).

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

g.98 **Sahā world system**

'jig rten gyi khams mi mjed

འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་མི་མཛེད།

**sahālokadhātu* ^{RS}

See “Sahā world.”

g.99 **Śakra**

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

śakra ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The lord of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (*trāyastriṃśa*). Alternatively known as Indra, the deity that is called “lord of the gods” dwells on the summit of Mount Sumeru and wields the thunderbolt. The Tibetan translation *brgya byin* (meaning “one hundred sacrifices”) is based on an etymology that *śakra* is an abbreviation of *śata-kratu*, one who has performed a hundred sacrifices. Each world with a central Sumeru has a Śakra. Also known by other names such as Kauśika, Devendra, and Śacipati.

g.100 **Samantaraśmi**

kun tu 'od zer

ཀུན་ཏུ་འོད་ཟེང།

samantaraśmi ^{AO}

The name of a tathāgata, a future life of the queen Moonlit, as prophesied by the Buddha.

g.101 **Śaṅkha**

dung

དུང།

śaṅkha ^{AO}

“Conch.” A king, the father of the prince Joyful to Behold, who is a future rebirth of Aśokadattā’s mother, Moonlit, as prophesied by the Buddha.

g.102 Śāradvatīputra

sha ra dwa ti'i bu

ཤ་ར་དྲ་ཏི་བུ།

śāradvatīputra ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, he was renowned for his discipline and for having been praised by the Buddha as foremost of the wise (often paired with Maudgalyāyana, who was praised as foremost in the capacity for miraculous powers). His father, Tiṣya, to honor Śāriputra's mother, Śārikā, named him Śāradvatīputra, or, in its contracted form, Śāriputra, meaning "Śārikā's Son."

g.103 Sārathi

kha lo sgyur

ཁ་ལོ་སྐུར།

sārathi ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.104 Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ཤ་རི་བུ།

śāriputra ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, he was renowned for his discipline and for having been praised by the Buddha as foremost of the wise (often paired with Maudgalyāyana, who was praised as foremost in the capacity for miraculous powers). His father, Tiṣya, to honor Śāriputra's mother, Śārikā, named him Śāradvatīputra, or, in its contracted form, Śāriputra, meaning "Śārikā's Son."

g.105 signlessness

mtshan ma med pa

མཚན་མ་མེད་པ།

animitta ^{AO}

Second of the three gateways to liberation (*vimokṣamukha, rnam thar sgo*).

g.106 Siṃhamati

seng ge blo gros

subhūti^{AO}

One of the ten great śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha Śākyamuni, known for his profound understanding of emptiness. He plays a major role as an interlocutor of the Buddha in the Prajñāpāramitāsūtras.

g.111 Sumeru

rgyal po ri rab

སྐལ་པོ་རི་རབ།

sumeru^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

According to ancient Buddhist cosmology, this is the great mountain forming the axis of the universe. At its summit is Sudarśana, home of Śakra and his thirty-two gods, and on its flanks live the asuras. The mount has four sides facing the cardinal directions, each of which is made of a different precious stone. Surrounding it are several mountain ranges and the great ocean where the four principal island continents lie: in the south, Jambudvīpa (our world); in the west, Godānīya; in the north, Uttarakuru; and in the east, Pūrvavideha. Above it are the abodes of the desire realm gods. It is variously referred to as Meru, Mount Meru, Sumeru, and Mount Sumeru.

g.112 Supreme Jewel

rin chen mchog

རིན་ཆེན་མཚོག།

**ratnavara*

The name of a god, a future life of Queen Moonlit as prophesied by the Buddha.

g.113 Surendrabodhi

su ren dra bo d+hi

སུ་རེན་བློ་བོ་རྗེ།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

An Indian paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

g.114 Trayastriṃśa Heaven

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་ཅུ་རུ་གསུམ།

trāyastriṃśa^{AO}

g.115 trichiliocosm

stong gsum · stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi khams

སྟོང་གསུམ། · སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasra^{AO} · *trisāhasralokadhātu*^{AO}

The largest universe spoken of in Buddhist cosmology, consisting of one billion smaller world systems.

g.116 true nature

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.117 truly complete buddha

yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas

ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱལ།

samyaksambuddha^{AO}

A fully awakened and perfect buddha who has reached the ultimate and unlimited liberation to which followers of the Mahāyāna aspire.

g.118 Tuṣita Heaven

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྷན།

tuṣita^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Tuṣita (or sometimes Saṃtuṣita), literally “Joyous” or “Contented,” is one of the six heavens of the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*). In standard classifications, such as the one in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is ranked as the fourth of the six counting from below. This god realm is where all future buddhas are said to

dwell before taking on their final rebirth prior to awakening. There, the Buddha Śākyamuni lived his preceding life as the bodhisattva Śvetaketu. When departing to take birth in this world, he appointed the bodhisattva Maitreya, who will be the next buddha of this eon, as his Dharma regent in Tuṣita. For an account of the Buddha's previous life in Tuṣita, see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 2.12, and for an account of Maitreya's birth in Tuṣita and a description of this realm, see *The Sūtra on Maitreya's Birth in the Heaven of Joy*, (Toh 199).

g.119 uḍumbara

u dum ba ra

ལུ་དུམ་བ་ར།

uḍumbara^{AO}

In Buddhist texts, the uḍumbara flower is a symbol for extremely rare occurrences, since it is said to bloom once every three thousand years.

g.120 unimpeded eloquence

spobs pa thogs pa med pa

སྤྱོད་པ་ཐོག་པ་མེད་པ།

—

The ability to speak about and teach the Dharma with complete fluency and without hesitation.

g.121 universal monarch

'khor los sgyur ba

འཁོར་ལོས་སྐུར་བ།

cakravartin^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

horse, the wish-fulfilling gem, the queen, the general, and the minister. An illustrative passage about the cakravartin and his possessions can be found in *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 3.3–3.13.

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

g.122 unsurpassable, truly complete awakening

bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub

ལྷ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ལུག།

anuttarasamyaksambodhi^{AO}

The full, unlimited, and completely perfect awakening to which followers of the Mahāyāna aspire.

g.123 Upāli

nye bar 'khor

ཉེ་བར་འཁོར།

upāli^{AO}

The Buddha's disciple who was preeminent in knowing the monastic rules and recited them and their origins at the first council. He had been a low-caste barber in Kapilavastu, the Buddha's hometown.

g.124 uragasāra sandalwood

tsan dan sbrul gyi snying po

ཅན་དན་སྐྱུལ་གྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

uragasāracandana^{AO}

A variety of sandalwood. The name means “snake essence” since snakes were said to live in the forests of those trees because they were attracted to their scent.

g.125 Vardhamānamati

blo gros 'phel

ལྷོ་གྲོ་ས་འཕེལ།

vardhamānamati ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.126 Varuṇadeva

chu lha'i lha

ལུ་ལྷ་འི་ལྷ།

varuṇadeva ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.127 vigilant

bag yod pa

བག་ཡོད་པ།

apramāda ^{AO}

A major aspect of mindfulness as broadly construed. Remaining attentive to nurturing virtuous activities of body, speech, and mind, and rejecting negative activities of body, speech, and mind. More fundamentally it means retaining awareness of the true nature.

g.128 Vimalaprabhā

dri ma med pa'i 'od

དྲི་མ་མེད་པའི་འོད།

vimalaprabhā ^{AO}

"Stainless Light." The name of a world in the distant future.

g.129 vinaya

'dul ba

འདུལ་བ།

vinaya ^{AO}

The vows and texts pertaining to monastic discipline.

g.130 Viśālamati

blo gros yangs pa

ལྷོ་གྲོ་ས་ཡངས་པ།

viśālamati ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.131 Viśeṣamati

blo gros khyad par can

ལྷོ་གྲོས་ལྷན་པར་ཅན།

viśeṣamati ^{AO}

A bodhisattva in the Buddha's retinue.

g.132 Vulture Peak

bya rgod kyī phung po

བྱ་རྗོད་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ།

gṛdhrakūṭa ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Gṛdhrakūṭa, literally Vulture Peak, was a hill located in the kingdom of Magadha, in the vicinity of the ancient city of Rājagṛha (modern-day Rajgir, in the state of Bihar, India), where the Buddha bestowed many sūtras, especially the Great Vehicle teachings, such as the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras. It continues to be a sacred pilgrimage site for Buddhists to this day.

g.133 wisdom

shes rab

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā ^{AO}

As the sixth of the six perfections, it refers to the profound understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena, the realization of ultimate reality—also sometimes rendered as insight. In other contexts it refers to the ability to correctly discern the qualities of a given object, such as its characteristics or whether it should be taken up or rejected.

g.134 wisdom eye

shes rab kyī mig

ཤེས་རབ་ཀྱི་མིག།

prajñācakṣus ^{AO}

The third of the five eyes, the five superior levels of vision experienced by realized beings, the other four being the physical eye (*māṃsacakṣus*), the divine eye (*divyacakṣus*), the Dharma eye (*dharmacakṣus*), and the buddha eye (*buddhacakṣus*).

g.135 wishlessness

smon pa med pa

སློན་པ་མེད་པ།

apraṇihita^{AO}

Third of the three gateways to liberation (*vimokṣamukha, rnam thar sgo gsum*),
along with emptiness and signlessness.