

༄༅། །རྣམ་ཐོས་ཀྱིས་པས་ལུས་པ།

The Seer Vyāsa's Questions

Ṛṣivṛyāsaparipṛcchā

འཕགས་པ་དྲང་སྟོང་རྒྱས་པས་ལྷུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa drang srong rgyas pas zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Seer Vyāsa’s Questions”

Āryaṣivvyāsapariṣchānāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 93 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 44 (dkon brtsegs, cha), folios 278.a–299.a

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

Jinamitra · Dānaśīla · Bandé Yeshé Dé



Translated by David Jackson
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2022

Current version v 1.1.7 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.21.1

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



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

This print version was generated at 10.37pm on Tuesday, 27th February 2024 from the online version of the text available on that date. If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time. For the latest online version, with bilingual display, interactive glossary entries and notes, and a variety of further download options, please see <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh93.html>.

co.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ti. Title
- im. Imprint
- co. Contents
- s. Summary
- ac. Acknowledgements
- i. Introduction
- tr. The Translation
 - 1. The Seer Vyāsa's Questions
- c. Colophon
- ab. Abbreviations
- n. Notes
- b. Bibliography
- g. Glossary

s.

SUMMARY

- s.1 In *The Seer Vyāsa's Questions*, a great seer named Vyāsa, a non-Buddhist mendicant, approaches the Buddha with a large group of followers to inquire about the karmic results of giving. Some of the key points taught in this sūtra are such karmic results and the distinction between pure and impure giving. A final long passage describes the life in the god realms that is experienced as the fruit of particular acts of giving, and it explains the signs received by gods of their own impending death and subsequent human birth.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 The translation was completed by David Jackson under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha and edited by the 84000 translation team.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Seer Vyāsa's Questions is the last of the forty-nine sūtras in the Heap of Jewels (Skt. *Ratnakūṭa*; Tib. *dkon brtsegs*) section of the Degé Kangyur. The interlocutor in this text is the great seer Vyāsa, a non-Buddhist mendicant whose name literally means “compiler.” The name Vyāsa is given to a number of figures in Hindu traditions, the best known of whom bears the epithet Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana and is credited with arranging the Vedas into four collections as well as compiling various texts of the Brahmanical traditions. The *Mahābhārata* depicts him as an authoritative teacher, a model brahmin who has gained omniscience through asceticism.¹ The Vyāsa who acts as interlocutor in this sūtra, however, appears to be another great seer by the same name, and not *the* Vyāsa credited with compiling the Vedas and systematizing a broad swath of Brahmanical literature.²

i.2

In this sūtra, Vyāsa, with a large group of his mendicant followers, approaches the Buddha and poses several questions about the karmic results of giving. The key points taught in this sūtra come in the form of the Buddha's detailed answers regarding the merit and karmic results of giving, and the distinction between pure and impure giving. These are followed by a passage that describes, at considerable length, the life in three different levels of the god realms that is experienced as the fruit of powerful acts of giving, and explains the signs received by the gods in those three different realms of their own impending death and subsequent human rebirth.

i.3

The sūtra is no longer extant in Sanskrit, but in addition to the Tibetan translation, two Chinese translations of this sūtra are preserved in the Taishō Tripiṭaka. Taishō 310(49), translated by Bodhiruci (d. 727), bears the title *Meeting with the Seer Vyāsa* (*Guang bo xianren hui* 廣博仙人會).³ Taishō 354, translated by Prajñāruci in 542, bears the title *Sūtra of the Questions of Vyāsa* (*Piyeshuo wen jing* 毘耶娑問經) and includes a translator's introduction.⁴ The Tibetan translators' colophon to this work notes that it was translated and edited by the Indian masters Jinamitra and Dānaśīla together with the chief

editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé. The Tibetan translation would therefore have been completed during the late eighth or early ninth centuries, a dating that is also confirmed by the text's inclusion in the Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) and Phangthangma (*'phang thang ma*) imperial catalogs.⁵

i.4 Though not a famous scripture, the sūtra is mentioned in a few Indian commentaries: Its title appears in a list of Mahāyāna sūtras in the *Nandimitrāvādāna*.⁶ The *Bhāvanākramasūtrasamuccaya* cites the passage where Vyāsa takes refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha (1.88).⁷ The *Mahāsūtrasamuccaya* of Atiśa cites a long passage explaining topics including the karmic fruition of giving, the five kinds of giving, pure giving, the five supreme gifts, and the merit of others who encourage and delight in pure giving (1.35–1.43).⁸ In addition, this sūtra was occasionally quoted by Tibetan authors. For example, the passage on thirty-two kinds of impure giving was summarized by Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen (1182–1251) in his treatise *Clarifying the Sage's Intent*.⁹

i.5 This translation was prepared from the Degé block print in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace manuscript. Occasional reference was also made to the two Chinese translations.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra
The Seer Vyāsa's Questions**

1.

The Translation

[F.278.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was on a bank of the Ganges River at a point where the river cannot be crossed and where the cuckoos, parrots, bees, regal geese, and many flocks of birds sing their lovely songs. He was sheltered there by the branches of holy fig, banyan, sandalwood, aśoka, and sallakī trees, and the entire place was strewn with fragrant flowers. He sat there with a great assembly of monks, all of whom had accomplished their task, completed their work, exhausted their outflows, and shaken off the last remnants of dust, could never revert from the Dharma, were established in both meditation and recitation, and beautified the area like regal geese wherever they were—whether on walking paths or seated. Some of them lived in seclusion, some of them dwelled at the foot of trees, and all of them discussed the word of the Tathāgata. Their appearance was subdued and steadfast, their deportment was tranquil, and all were free from sexual desire, harmful intentions, indolence, sloth, and laziness.

1.2 The Blessed One said to the monks, “Monks, you must give gifts. You must do whatever is necessary. Exercise restraint using the vow of ethical conduct and dwell in that peaceful mental state where the sense faculties are guarded.” Then the Blessed One gave a teaching to that large number of monks as well as his most important disciples, such as the venerables Ānanda, Mahākāśyapa, Śāriputra, Bakkula,¹⁰ Revata, and the venerable Ājñātakauṇḍinya, that gladdened and delighted them.

1.3 Just then Venerable Ānanda saw a light in the west like the disk of the sun, [F.278.b] and when he saw it, he asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, what is that, blazing in the west and casting a glow like the light of a fire?”¹¹

- 1.4 The Blessed One answered, “Ānanda, that is the seer Vyāsa, known as Kṛṣṇagandhavatīputra,¹² who is the highest among the seers and possesses the five worldly clairvoyances. He is a seer who adheres to severe ascetic practice. He is emaciated because he has performed hundreds of thousands of ritual services. He is followed by a retinue of about five hundred people with unpleasant appearances, including the seers Young Asita, Human-God,¹³ Son of Pleasure Protector, Son of a Doe,¹⁴ Son of the Grammar Author,¹⁵ Nose of Bṛhaspati,¹⁶ Son of Fire, Son of an Engraver, and Durāsada.”¹⁷
- 1.5 Vyāsa saw the Blessed One dwelling among those thick trees surrounded by a retinue of monks and delighting in meditative concentration with his senses and mind pacified. When Vyāsa saw him, he thought, “Oh, how wonderful! The one renowned the world over as *the blessed omniscient one who teaches without error* is sitting over there. Since he has such an exceedingly fine complexion and such an expansive body, and since his actions are so fortuitous, he is most certainly the Tathāgata. This Blessed One who possesses such an expansive form renounced being a sovereign lord of universal emperors as if it were poisonous, renounced precious Gopā and six thousand women, and went to live in a forest grove where austerities are practiced. What a marvel he is in the world!”
- 1.6 Then the seer Agnidattaputra also saw the Blessed One from afar, and it led him to feel so content, happy, and pleased [F.279.a] that he praised the Blessed One with the following verses, which reflected his own pleasant frame of mind:
- 1.7 “He sits amid a green grove
Shining yellow like refined gold.
Glowing brilliantly, his body¹⁸
Delights all living beings.
- 1.8 “He rises like the peak of Sumeru
Among a thicket of pure beryl cliffs.
Who is this one whose majestic glowing body
Shines like the autumn sun?”¹⁹
- 1.9 The great seers were all delighted, and with their eyes open and palms together they went to where the Blessed One was.
- 1.10 Then the Blessed One told his monks, “Monks, look at the seers of Jambudvīpa, blazing like bonfires—they have topknots of matted hair, and they are aged and very thin. They do things such as not eating, performing ritual services, wearing tree bark and whole animal skins, rubbing themselves with ash, dwelling on plains and amid rocky crags, living in

great hunger, consuming only air, and observing ritual fasts for half of the month. Their bodies are emaciated, they are naked or wear bark, their beards, fingernails, and hair are long, they have the complexion of a bee, and they have a wealth of ascetic heat. They practice recitation, fire offerings, protective rites, and auspicious ceremonies. They dwell in the dirt, in the open, and at the feet of trees. They hold their legs aloft, they sit in an upright squatting posture,²⁰ they stand in water,²¹ and they burn their bodies with burning hot coals, blazing fire, and the sun. They surround themselves with practitioners of severe austerities, they live carelessly, they delight in merely being from their clan, and they lack the highest wisdom.

1.11 “Monks, these great seers do not know how to get out of saṃsāra. They are mad with desire and self-satisfaction, they cling to their next rebirth, and the conduct related to their false views is utterly incorrect.”

1.12 The monks took refuge in the Buddha from the core of their hearts and said, “Blessed One, we practice the entire host of vows of pure conduct so that we will not take rebirth within existence.” [F.279.b]

1.13 The great seer Vyāsa privately reflected on the fact that great seers are inferior in terms of their intention and fearlessness and inferior in terms of their view, and respect for the Buddha and his monks arose in him.²² Surrounded by that group of seers who revered him, and adorned with his many locks of matted hair, a sacred thread emblazoned across his dark skin, with two yellow eyes, his hair wild and hanging down, holding a trident in his hand, and having an unattractive appearance, he who coursed in the vault of the heavens and had mastered the logical arguments of various systems went to where the Blessed One was and said, “This group is completely deluded. May the Blessed One please perceive how I came to where I am here?”

The Blessed One replied, “Great Seer, since I perceive all those who take birth in existence, that is a matter I do indeed know about.”

1.14 Venerable Ānanda asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, who is this person with a crown of matted locks who is surrounded by a group of seers and so radiant, brilliant, peaceful, wise,²³ intelligent, knowledgeable, and fearless?”

“Ānanda,” the Blessed One replied, “this is the great seer Vyāsa. He practices the Vedic rites, lives according to the Brahmanical treatises,²⁴ and has compiled numerous texts.”

1.15 When the arhats saw Vyāsa they asked, “Blessed One, of what use are severe ascetic practices that cause such hardship if they cannot liberate one from cyclic existence?” And those arhats thought that Vyāsa should ask the

Blessed One for a teaching about no-self, a teaching about generosity and having moral conduct, or some kind of teaching about causes and conditions.

1.16 Then the seer Vyāsa said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One,²⁵ this present meeting of the great seers is an extremely rare event. [F.280.a] If the Blessed One would be so kind as to give me the opportunity to ask a few questions so that he might give a teaching, I would like to ask the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha about a few matters.”

“Great Seer,” the Blessed One replied to the seer Vyāsa, “ask whatever you like. I shall answer your questions accordingly.”

1.17 Then the seer Vyāsa asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how should one give a gift? What does it mean to not give a gift? What is the meaning of what is called *giving*? How should one seek out a donor? How can one become someone who has given up material things? How can one be a donor but not someone who has given up material things? How is a donor said to have reached the limit of giving? Are those gifts heaped up or piled up? How should we look after them? How can a donor give a gift to someone who does not receive it? How should one view the karmic fruition of a gift? How should we make offerings to stūpas following the Blessed One’s nirvāṇa? How should we view the fruition of that merit? Blessed One, what gifts can you accept after your parinirvāṇa?”²⁶

The Blessed One said to the great seer Vyāsa, “Great Seer, the questions you have asked concern generating the initial thought of awakening and indicate that you are magnanimous.”²⁷

1.18 At that point the elder Śāriputra looked at him with his long eyebrows, wrinkles, and white hair, his left hand placed on his brow to lift his eyelids so that he could see, and said, “This great seer Vyāsa, who is so renowned in the world, is like a wild young child who does not understand the science of reasoning and lacks a well-trained intellect. He has abandoned the teaching on causes and conditions, forsaken the teaching on no-self, and cast aside the teaching on the causes that lead to the god realms, so why is he requesting this teaching on giving?”

1.19 Then the elder Ānanda prostrated at the Blessed One’s feet and said, [F.280.b] “Blessed One, please allow me to explain giving and the result of giving to this great seer.”

“Ānanda,” the Blessed One replied, “it is not the Tathāgata’s custom, nor is it necessary, to allow a śrāvaka to respond to a question posed to the Tathāgata, so do not speak, Ānanda, for it is not fitting.”

1.20 The elder Śāriputra then said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, please allow me to provide the answers that the great seer Vyāsa seeks.”

The Blessed One said, “Śāriputra, you should also not say such unsuitable things. It is not right for a śrāvaka to clarify doubts in my presence, because it will lead beings to become displeased with me, and that displeasure would lead them to wonder why the Tathāgata had a śrāvaka answer Vyāsa’s questions. As a result, they will say that the Tathāgata is certainly not omniscient or that the Buddha possesses attachment to self, and that will lead those beings to be born in the hell realms.”

1.21 All the monks felt a sense of joy toward the Blessed One and said, “Blessed One, please teach so that you might remove the great seer Vyāsa’s doubts.”

1.22 The Blessed One then said to the great seer Vyāsa, “Great Seer, listen as I shall explain the karmic fruition of giving, the act of giving, the types of giving, the meaning of the term *giving*, how to purify the gift when acting as a donor, and how the karmic fruition of merit increases when a gift is given.

1.23 “As for why it is called *giving* and what that term *giving* means, Great Seer, someone who gives up material things completely relinquishes the things that are given as gifts. They generate faith and inspire others to give. They travel to other lands and inspire others to give.²⁸ And when they motivate someone to give things of value, the person to whom that valuable thing belonged is a donor. Someone who has given by encouraging others to do so is someone who gives up material things, but they are not a donor. An individual who gives away their own material possessions is someone who has given up material things [F.281.a] and they are also a donor.

1.24 “Great Seer, you should view the following thirty-two ways of giving as being impure:²⁹

1.25 “Great Seer, (1) if someone who has given up material things holds an incorrect view and gives a gift with a great deal of distrust and suspicion, that gift is impure.

“Moreover, Great Seer, (2) if a gift is given out of gratitude for a favor, it is impure.

1.26 “When someone motivated by some inferior reason or desire says, (3) ‘I give this gift to the fire,’ (4) ‘I give this gift to the flames,’ or (5) ‘I give this gift to the waters,’ or (6) gives a gift to a king so that he will take notice of them, that gift is impure.

“(7) If one gives a gift to thieves and the like because one is afraid of them, it is impure.

1.27 “If one gives the following five inappropriate things, the gift is impure: (8) giving something poisonous, (9) giving weapons, (10) giving meat from an animal one has killed, (11) giving alcohol to alcoholics, and (12) offering a communal gift so that beings will gather and receive it while thinking, ‘These things belong to me, so this is my feast and offering.’

- 1.28 “(13) If one gives a gift expecting statements, words, and verses³⁰ and (14) gives a gift to performers so that they will sing and dance, tell jokes, play games, tell a story, and be entertaining, that gift is impure.
- 1.29 “(15) If one gives a gift to an astrologer so that they will interpret the planetary influences, (16) if one gives someone else’s wealth to a friend, and (17) if one feels happy and rejoices about the birds and wild animals feeding on stores of barley or stores of rice and wheat that belong to someone else, whether in their storehouses or their fields, that gift is impure.
- 1.30 “(18) If one gives a gift to have something made, (19) if one gives a gift to a doctor out of fear because one’s body is diseased, and (20) if one gives a gift to beggars while denigrating them and being angry with them, it is impure.
 “(21) If one has doubts about whether or not there are karmic results related to giving a gift, it is impure. [F.281.b]
- 1.31 “(22) If one gives and is then afflicted with pangs of remorse and regret, it is impure.
 “(23) If one gives a gift while thinking such things as ‘whatever has been taken from me will be returned in full in the next life,’ then it is impure.
 “(24) If one thinks, ‘I will perform this action, but may no other being incur the meritorious karmic result,’ then it is impure.
- 1.32 “(25) If a gift is given by a young child, or (26) if an adult who is mentally impaired,³¹ elderly, afflicted by illness, about to die, suffering from a severe illness, seriously injured, or suffering the misery of dying gives a gift to those who are worthy to receive it because they are encouraged to do so by their relatives even though they themselves do not have faith in or an affinity for the Buddha, it is impure.
- 1.33 “(27) If one is living in a foreign land and gives a gift to attain notoriety, thinking, ‘I will become known as a famous donor in such and such a country or place,’ then it is impure.
 “(28) If one gives a gift after noticing that people do not like the fact that one has been hesitant to give away food and thinks, ‘Now people will forgive me for that fault related to my willingness to give a gift,’ it is impure.
- 1.34 “(29) If one falls in love with a woman and tries to win over the close family members, friends, and associates on the woman’s side with gems, gold, silver, diamonds, beryl gems, and fine cloths of silk, coral, *dukūla*, and the like so that one can take her as one’s wife, it is impure.
 “(30) If someone gives a gift while thinking, ‘I have a lot of wealth but do not have a son, so I will give it away to a worthy recipient,’ it is impure.
- 1.35 “(31) If one gives a gift thinking, ‘Because I have given a gift in this life, I will profit from it in the next life,’ it is impure.

- “(32) If one gives a gift of desirable flowers, fruits, or material goods to those who are already very wealthy, while rejecting and ignoring people who are poor, wretched, miserable, and wear clothes that are faded and dirty, it is impure. [F.282.a]
- 1.36 “Great Seer, one should view those thirty-two ways of giving a gift as impure. Great Seer, one should view their karmic results as being like growing a sprout from a bad seed that has been planted in a field with alkaline soil. Those acts of giving are not completely devoid of karmic result, but because the field and seed are contaminated or defective, they will not bear flowers and fruit.
- 1.37 “Consider the following analogy, Great Seer. If a person takes whatever seed they like and plants it in a field that has not been plowed or cleared, it will undoubtedly be able to germinate after it rains and the ground is saturated, but it will not bear flowers or fruit. So too, Great Seer, these types of giving do not bear good karmic results as their fruit, because their motivation is completely contaminated.”
- 1.38 Then the great seer Vyāsa placed his palms together and said to the Blessed One, “The Blessed One taught that the karmic result that accords with being an omniscient one is bringing happiness and being of benefit to all beings. Blessed One, how is it that the karmic result of a gift does not go to waste whether it is given to someone with good or poor moral discipline?”
- 1.39 “Great Seer,” said the Blessed One, “listen to my explanation of the karmic fruition of gifts. Great Seer, the term *gift* refers to any act of generosity, however small, that is motivated by faith. Great Seer, if a gift generates faith in someone—even if they are not considered or accepted as a proper vessel because they are only afraid of the next life, and regardless of whether they have good or poor moral discipline—and if it opens their eyes and is given with equanimity toward all beings, that gift is pure.
- 1.40 “Moreover, Great Seer, one should complete the following five kinds of giving:³² giving gifts (1) to guests, (2) to sick people, (3) to those nursing the sick, (4) to those who recite the Dharma, and (5) to those who are traveling in a foreign land. And one should also give the following five gifts: (1) the gift of Dharma, (2) gifts of material goods, (3) the gift of shelter, (4) gifts of lamps, and (5) gifts of incense and garlands.” [F.282.b]
- 1.41 Then the great seer Vyāsa asked, “Blessed One, what is a pure gift?”
- The Blessed One said, “If someone inspired by faith has all beings in mind and gives with a kind heart that is devoted and restrained, all those gifts will be pure. The act of giving a gift is said to be purified when it is dedicated to liberating all beings.

- 1.42 “The following five should be seen as supreme gifts: (1) giving a gift to the Tathāgata is supreme; (2) giving a gift to the saṅgha is supreme; (3) giving a gift to someone who teaches the Dharma is supreme; (4) giving a gift to a sick person is supreme; and (5) giving a gift to one’s parents is supreme.
- 1.43 “Then there are the following great gifts. If one gives a gift to a king and kingdom whose power has declined, it is a great gift. If one gives a gift to those who are persecuted by a king, vulnerable, or diseased, it is a great gift. If one heals someone who is miserable because they were exiled by a ruler and are on the verge of being killed or about to die, it is a great gift. If one gives medicine to a sick person, it is a great gift. If one gives to the noble saṅgha, which abounds in moral conduct, it is a great gift.³³ If one gives a gift to those who have entered absorption, those who have perfect insight, those who have perfect liberation, and those who have perfect wisdom and vision of liberation, it is a great gift. If one offers protection to beings who have taken rebirth in the animal realm such as crows, owls, and deer, it is a great gift. If it fulfills someone’s wish for something they need and do not possess, it is a great gift. Those are pure gifts and great gifts, Great Seer, and since these gifts are accepted as pure, that is how you should cultivate pure giving. [F.283.a]
- 1.44 “Beings who are encouraged by others, develop faith and trust, and rejoice in these pure gifts will generate merit that is equal to that of the donor. That is how those who rejoice and have been encouraged become just like the one who generates that merit.
- 1.45 “Great Seer, you also asked about how there can be a karmic fruition related to the Blessed One’s parinirvāṇa and how the merit related to a gift is exhausted. Listen well and pay attention, Great Seer, and I will explain. I teach that the karmic consequences of making offerings to a blessed one who has passed into parinirvāṇa and one who is currently alive are the same. Why is that? Because the form bodies of the tathāgatas are issued forth from the truth body, but the truth body is not issued forth from the form body. Since the intention is the same whether someone makes offerings to me when I am present or after my parinirvāṇa, there is not even the slightest difference in the merit these two accrue.
- 1.46 “As an analogy, Great Seer, suppose a universal emperor were to issue the following command to those in his domain: ‘I command that from now on none of my subjects should commit deeds such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, divisive speech, harsh speech, and meaningless speech, and they shall not entertain thoughts that are related to jealousy, harmful intent, and wrong views.’

- 1.47 “Some people would hear the king’s commands and think, ‘If I obey those commands, that will allow me to act in accordance with the king’s command even without making offerings to the king’s person,’ and they would be pleased. The karmic fruition of those who obey what the king teaches and commands and guard against acts such as killing and the like will lead them to be reborn in the heavenly realms. Those who do not obey what the king teaches and commands, who engage in nonvirtuous activities, and who have committed those nonvirtuous deeds will suffer punishment from that king in this lifetime and then fall into the lower realms after they have died. [F.283.b]
- 1.48 “Great Seer, what do those people who see my form body but do not follow the rules of training attain? Just like Devadatta, they conceive of erroneous views and go to the hell realms.
- 1.49 “I consider those who observe the rules of training and make offerings when I have passed into nirvāṇa to be the best of all. Great Seer, now that I have become the best, have surpassed all beings, and have attained omniscient wisdom, even mentioning my name to beings who are not convinced will lead them to adopt the rules of training.
- 1.50 “Great Seer, anyone who makes offerings to me after my parinirvāṇa will be just like someone who makes offerings to me when I am present. The propelling force of their great merit leads all those beings who perform a meritorious service to awakening.
- 1.51 “Consider the following analogy, Great Seer. If you make a fire in a dense thicket of reeds along a riverbank, it will be extinguished when the rains come and the river rises. The great heap of merit associated with a donor’s gift is gathered in the same way. When a great amount of giving lets loose a torrential rain of faith in the donor’s mindstream, although that act of giving a gift accumulates in the mindstream of the giver, it does not remain in a heap, does not remain in a pile, and does not remain in one place. Whatever that act of giving may have been, the performance of that act of giving follows the giver like a shadow. It is thus possible for a giver to see a meritorious karmic result without fully comprehending the merit.
- 1.52 “Consider the following analogy, Great Seer. One does not see the juice of grapes or sugarcane before they are pressed, but after they are pressed, one does see it. The juice of the grape or sugarcane does not appear to remain in a heap, to remain in a pile, or to remain in one place, and the juice is not contained within each individual grape or each piece of sugarcane. [F.284.a] In the same way, Great Seer, the act of giving a gift does not reside within the giver’s fingertips or in their heart or chest. The gift itself does not *not* yield a karmic result, and it also never leaves the donor. Just as one cannot

- see the juice if one discards the grapes or sugarcane, there can be no karmic fruition of a gift if there is no donor, though the karmic fruition of that gift might not appear before their death.
- 1.53 “Consider the following analogy, Great Seer. Just as the seed of a nyagrodha tree does not appear on its branches when its flowers have not opened, so too does increasing the strength of a gift fortify the karmic fruition.
- 1.54 “Now consider this analogy, Great Seer. When traders take a small collection of goods and travel to a different city and their goods transform into something of great value in that particular market, they go from something of lesser to something of greater value. The increase of a donor’s karmic fruition accumulates in the same way that a bee can make honey from seemingly unsuitable flowers.
- 1.55 “As an analogy, just as a cloud holds water that will rain down some time later, so too does a donor generate the impetus for karmic fruition, and in that way, Great Seer, a donor generates the impetus for merit, gives the gift, and then enjoys its fruit. That is how the one who accepts it understands the gift.³⁴
- 1.56 “Great Seer, the term *merit* refers to something that is fulfilled in a future life or is maintained by gaining great power, and that is why it is called ‘merit.’ It is said to be related to the next life because it is what determines the type of body and resources one is born with from one future life to the next.”
- 1.57 Then the great seer Vyāsa asked the Blessed One, “The Blessed One has answered my question about the karmic fruition of giving. Blessed One, how does consciousness enter the body, and how does consciousness generate attachment to the body?”
- 1.58 The Blessed One replied, “Great Seer, consider the following analogy. If a king living in a citadel is afraid of an enemy army, first he digs a trench and gathers materials, medicines, master archers, and brave commanders, [F.284.b] hoists the banners, and informs the young men. Then he gets the great male elephants and the female elephants drunk. He summons those living in the hills or forests and the lesser kings. He gathers soldiers by offering them payment and prepares them for battle by ordering them to take up their weapons, keep their swords drawn, and stay awake day and night. And as soon as the enemy army’s cavalry, together with its soldiers, has arrived, the king rouses his own army to fight and guard the perimeter so that the enemy army cannot find a weak point to attack before it has exhausted its own merit, exhausted its strength, been critically wounded, and been defeated.

- 1.59 “In the same way, Great Seer, the king of consciousness enters the citadel of the body, sees that what dwells in the citadel of the six sense bases is impermanent by nature, and digs the trench of faith. He maintains diligence as he lives there, dons the armor of patience, and begins his great task. He gets the great elephant of the Dharma drunk, and he mounts and gallops on the horse of wisdom. He addresses the city of the sense bases, saying, ‘Be extremely cautious now! The troops of the enemy’s army—the immeasurable army of impermanence so difficult to defeat—are approaching. Quick! Don the armor of giving! Brandish the weapon of wisdom! Ready the catapults of modesty and self-respect! Post the sentinels of moral conduct, meditative absorption, and renunciation!’ And so saying, he urges them on.
- 1.60 “After they engage in conflict with the approaching enemy army, they flee. The conflict between them destroys the citadel of the sense bases, and consciousness, the king, abandons the citadel of the body and leaves that country. After consciousness flees, the entire assemblage of the body and the sense faculties is infested with the snakes of the constituent elements and, the six sense bases destroyed, the citadel of the body, without a ruler, becomes unstable and falls into ruin.
- 1.61 “Great Seer, that is how consciousness, the king, abandons the citadel of the body and comes to possess another body, [F.285.a] and that is how consciousness is viewed as being like a king.”
- 1.62 Then the great seer Vyāsa asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, is consciousness inclined toward merit or is consciousness inclined toward the lack of merit, and is the body something inclined toward not wavering? Does consciousness think to itself, ‘I will either abandon or not abandon this body’?”
- 1.63 The Blessed One replied, “Great Seer, consider the following analogy. A person who boards a large boat because they want to cross the ocean sets out on the water and is constantly rocked by the ocean’s waves, yet they remain at ease as they are safely and effortlessly blown by the wind from the near shore of that body of water—with its ups and downs and its dangerous kumbhīras, grāhas, śīsumāras, and serpents—and arrive at the other shore. Having been rescued from the terrifying body of water, they come to like that boat and think, ‘That boat carried me across the ocean.’ And after they have traveled back and forth on the boat three times, they come to greatly value it.
- 1.64 “Therefore, Great Seer, beings who have accomplished merit should think about consciousness, which leaves this body at the time of death, in the following way: ‘This body that has taken a higher rebirth among the humans and gods has led me to obtain the body of a prosperous person. This body can allow me to cross over the ocean of lower rebirths, and it can allow me to

gain the opportunity to be born as a god. I should treat it properly and make offerings to it.' Later, they will leave that body, just as one would a boat, and proceed to the next life.

1.65 "The consciousness of someone whose own body has not accomplished merit is like a person with a rotten boat that sinks in the ocean, breaks apart, is wrecked, and leaves them in terrible straits. [F.285.b] Even if they use that broken boat to make the terrifying trip to the other shore, they will land at a place terrorized by tigers and lions and say the following about the boat: 'This rotten boat has taken the wrong course atop the afflictions and has been tossed about by the ocean's waves and rocked by serpents.'

1.66 "In the same way, consciousness that has relied on a body without merit and has wound up in the lower realms will say about that body, 'Why did I get such a sinful body? I adopted this body filled with sins and have become weighed down as if bearing a heavy load. Because of this rotten body, I charted a course and then set off for the lower realms, pulled there like a fish caught on an iron hook.'

1.67 "In that way, merit that has been properly accomplished is like a good boat that allows consciousness to cross saṃsāra, and the lack of merit leads to one's downfall. Thus, consciousness knows two types of bodies—those inclined toward merit and those inclined toward the lack of merit.

1.68 "After consciousness leaves this body, it proceeds and is inclined toward another, second body. For the first seven days that it resides in the womb, consciousness will remember, 'I died there and was born here. I did this deed, and I did that deed,' and it will be satisfied with the good deeds it has done.

1.69 "As it remains in the womb, the mother will exhibit the following three signs: she will have a smile on her face, she will not frown,³⁵ and she will have a divine complexion; she will favor the right foot and repeatedly caress her right side; and she will adorn herself with white clothing. One will see such signs in the mother when the consciousness that has entered her womb is inclined toward merit.

1.70 "Great Seer, for seven days after conception a nonmeritorious consciousness will remember, 'I died there and was born here; I committed this evil deed,' and it will be unhappy. [F.286.a] One can observe the many signs of that unhappiness in the mother: her body may have an unpleasant smell; her body may become thin; her body may be filled with worried thoughts; she may frown angrily again and again; many defilements, injuries, and sicknesses may befall that household for the period of time in which that being is gestating in the womb; the mother might die when that being is born; or it might kill her while it is in her womb. Great Seer, that is how one can see that the being is inclined toward nonmeritorious action."

- 1.71 Then the great seer Vyāsa asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, what does consciousness remember in the first moments when it arises in a womb? What is it conscious of?”
- 1.72 The Blessed One said, “Great Seer, consciousness remembers the following during the first moments when it arises: It sees gardens, parks, forests, pools, springs, and golden palaces. It sees the continent of Jambudvīpa here filled with friendly people and sees it full of supremely attractive beings who have committed meritorious deeds. The light of divine knowledge allows it to remember many hundreds of thousands of previous lives, and as it remembers them, it rejoices. It comes to know things such as ‘this was my mother for five hundred lives,’ and it remembers such things without developing attachment to that mother. It gives rise to freedom from desire, thinking, ‘Alas, such a rebirth and existence is suffering. Enough with saṃsāra! Enough with this grasping!’ ”
- 1.73 As soon as the Buddha had said this, the great seer Vyāsa asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, if a being has no attachment, will that being leave saṃsāra?”
- 1.74 “Great Seer,” said the Blessed One, “that is not always the case. Consciousness [F.286.b] is formless, impossible to point out, and not apparent. It is impossible for someone who is not devoid of attachment to the element of consciousness not to be reborn in saṃsāra, and that is so in all cases whether one is inclined toward merit, inclined toward the immovable,³⁶ or inclined toward nirvāṇa. Great Seer, you should view those things in the following way: When one views consciousness in that way, it is thought that is predominant in consciousness; it is not compelled by the predominance of the body. Consciousness is what creates feeling. Consciousness is what creates thought. That is why it is called *consciousness*. Great Seer, that is how you should understand consciousness.”
- 1.75 Then the Blessed One spoke the following verses:
- 1.76 “It guards against all enemies,
It accumulates the afflictions,
It understands knowing and not knowing,
And it possesses insight and delusion.
- 1.77 “All things such as wrong views,
Pride, and ignorance are consciousness.
Nothing comes to pass
Without consciousness.
- 1.78 “Without consciousness,
Those things would not come together.

- They come together in a single instant
But are not one, just like a wheel and a cart.
- 1.79 “A collection is not equivalent to the person
Because it is not the same, different, or both.
It does not depend on one or the other,
Just like a pair of oxen.
- 1.80 “A cart has two wheels
And a pair of oxen³⁷
Bound with two straps.
That is what we call *a cart*.
- 1.81 “In the same way, out of the assembly of elements
The cart of the body arises,
Comes to possess sense faculties,
And is then illuminated by consciousness.
- 1.82 “The vital points, joints,
Veins, arteries,³⁸
Hair, bones, teeth, skull,
Fingernails, complexion,
- 1.83 “Intestines, lungs, kidneys,
Heart, liver, and fatty tissues—
The combination of all these
Is what constitutes the body.
- 1.84 “Those elements are the embodied being,
And since all those things arise from the mind,
They are accepted as belonging to consciousness,
And consciousness is accepted as the driver. [F.287.a]
- 1.85 “Moreover, Great Seer, this consciousness is subtle and formless, cannot be pointed out, and is unmanifest. It is not a color, a shape, or a physical sense faculty, and there is nothing else to be seen as consciousness outside of disregarding the coarse sense faculties. All things such as the beating of a person’s heart, response to fear, conceptual thought, and discrimination are predominantly consciousness, not the body.”
- 1.86 Then the great seer Vyāsa asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how can one recognize the nature of beings’ previous births? How can one recognize the natures of those beings who will be reborn as hell beings, who will be reborn as hungry ghosts, and who will be reborn as animals? How can one

recognize those who will be reborn as gods, those who will be reborn as humans, and the roots of merit and roots of demerit they possess? Blessed One, please teach us which roots of merit lead to rebirth as a god or human and which roots of demerit lead to rebirth in the hells, animal realms, and hungry ghost realms.”

1.87 “Great Seer,” replied the Blessed One, “listen to my explanation of the natures of beings, their roots of virtue, and their deaths and rebirths. This cognitive object of an omniscient one is not a cognitive object of the five clairvoyances. It is not a cognitive object of any of the gods, from the Brahmā gods right up to the Akaniṣṭha gods. It is not even within the purview of śrāvakas, so it goes without saying that the same is true for any other kinds of beings. Great Seer, it is the object of consciousness for one who has removed the three impurities, has attained reality for the first time, and has entered the stream of my teachings.”

1.88 The great seer Vyāsa said to the Blessed One, [F.287.b] “Blessed One, since I have reached old age, I am incapable of seeking such fruits, and I cannot bear such a heavy load, so I take refuge in the Blessed One, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha of noble ones, who are completely devoid of afflictions. Now and henceforth, I, together with my disciples and servants, take refuge in those three. Blessed One, please explain which kind of living being one becomes after dying and leaving the god realms.”³⁹

1.89 The Blessed One said, “Great Seer, that is why you should listen well and pay attention as I explain the natures and signs related to being reborn in the god realms.

1.90 “Great Seer, when a person who has given gifts of flowers, perfume, and garlands, offered their service, meditated, thoroughly studied, and had faith passes away, they will be born among the garland-bearing gods. Great Seer, at the time of death, their body will appear like a flower filled with the scent of an extremely fragrant perfume. Then, Great Seer, many showers of flowers will fall, and that person will pass away. Flowers of various colors will be scattered all over their body. Their relatives and loved ones will hold flowers as they mourn. Their complexion will soften, their eyes will be neither tightly closed nor wide open, and they will die with their feet and hands stretched out. Such signs will appear when they are dying.

1.91 “They will see the following signs as well. They will see a multistoried mansion decorated with various flowers, beautified with different kinds of flowers, and surrounded by hundreds of thousands of women, and they will tell their relatives, ‘In my dream I saw a mansion decorated with various kinds of divine flowers and strings of flowers, strewn with divine flowers,

and surrounded by hundreds of thousands of women.’ After they report this to their relatives, their relatives will know that the person is going to take birth among the garland-bearing gods. [F.288.a]

1.92 “When they have died and are reborn among the garland-bearing gods, they see their parents together and take new life. The garland-bearing gods have sex using the couple’s two sexual organs, just as the humans of Jambudvīpa do. When they do this, their consciousnesses blend together, and they are overwhelmed by even the slightest feeling of joy, yet neither of the two engaged in that action ejaculates.

1.93 “Those gods remain in a goddess’s womb for seven days, and after seven days have passed the child is born from the left side. Great Seer, after the child emerges from the womb, a garland stringing together various supremely appealing and fragrant divine flowers emerges from their chest. Great Seer, the fragrant scent of that garland is carried by the wind and permeates all directions for the distance of about one yojana. In addition to their garlands having seven different colors of flowers—white, red, yellow, blue, beryl, lotus,⁴⁰ and red lotus—the beautiful, variegated garlands they bear do not wilt for as long as they are alive. That is why they are called *the garland-bearing gods*.

1.94 “Great Seer, the trees that grow in the realm of the garland-bearing gods are neither too tall nor too short, and their various fruits are neither too sour nor too sweet. Their many excellent flavors are like ambrosia, and they have eight divine flavors. Great Seer, the fruits of those trees are the size of a bilva fruit.⁴¹ Whatever food the gods wish to eat from those trees is always within their reach. The gods appear to consume the fruit, but they are not beings that consume food by the mouthful. Great Seer, in the realm of those gods one need not be careful of sharp thorns, and the land is covered with grassy meadows beautified with flowers. It is decorated with various strings of gold and silver, which appear like hail as soon as one thinks of them.

1.95 “Great Seer, the garland-bearing gods live in that realm with divine maidens who are clothed in brilliantly glowing robes and ornaments, [F.288.b] who wander past the windows, on the balconies, and along the parapets,⁴² and who are supremely happy and content. They have a lifespan of two thousand years.

1.96 “The signs that their life is coming to an end are that the leaves on the tree in front of which they are seated will wilt; its branches will droop, and it will lose its flowers and scent. The being seated in front of that tree will become unhappy, and his garland, which until then had never wilted, will wilt. The cool and pleasant breeze that previously blew in that divine realm will become hot, and the divine maidens, when they see that happening, will lament and weep. That being will leave behind that citadel of the higher

realms beautified with divine trees, flowers, and fruits as well as the group of divine maidens that accompanied him, and his merit will be exhausted. This is the problem with the higher realms.

1.97 “Great Seer, the divine maidens around him will begin to cry and wail with great sadness, saying, ‘Alas! This impermanence is pitiless. Is he going to fall from the higher realms, powerless and against his will, after he has lived among us and brought us such joy? Alas, young god, may you quickly take rebirth in the human realm!’

1.98 “As they express their sorrow, he will be struck by an acute illness. It will overwhelm him, and his body will at once burst into flame. As his body is burning, he will pass away and leave that realm, and the fire will go out. After he has died and passed on, he will see his new parents together and assume a new rebirth.

1.99 “Great Seer, the signs that the child taking that birth was a god in the realm of the garland-bearing gods are as follows: while he resides in his mother’s womb, she will desire flowers, perfumes, and garlands; she will crave various kinds of fruit; she will long for pleasant thickets and various types of forest groves; and she will have a constant feeling of contentment. She will not experience any discomfort while the child is in her womb. [F.289.a] In her dreams, she will see an auspicious marketplace and a citadel decorated with flower garlands. Those are the signs that will be seen by his mother.

1.100 “Moreover, Great Seer, after that god is reborn, he will be overjoyed to have taken birth as a human after leaving his life as a garland-bearing god. He will have an affinity for white clothing and be good looking and wise. He will delight in sensual desire, and his gait and stride will be gentle and reserved. He will like festivals, performances, and garments of fine cloth. He will be fond of gardens, and when he sees another person’s wealth, he will desire it. Great Seer, these should be viewed as signs that a garland-bearing god has been reborn as a human being. [B2]

1.101 “Great Seer, the following should be seen as signs related to taking birth and passing away in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings. When a faithful person who takes joy in giving excellent food to those who are lowly and vulnerable, giving medicine to the sick, and providing communal drinking sources with cool water, springs, lakes, pools, ponds, and water tanks is dying, their body will become free from the burning of the defilements. Their body will not become emaciated, it will not develop a poor complexion, and it will not sweat or have a foul odor. They will not experience feelings of dread in their bodies. They will not utter vulgar language, and they will not be separated from their loved ones or experience discomfort. They will not suffer from hunger and thirst, their body will not suffer from such things as

shrinking or swelling, and they will not defecate or urinate. They will not be disheartened as the sense objects fade away, and their sense faculties will not deteriorate. Such signs mean that they can take comfort in attaining a higher rebirth as the moment of death approaches.

1.102 “After it leaves the body, the consciousness will be joyful and come to dwell among the gardens and thick groves of the divine realm of the Four Great Kings. At the time of death, they will see that divine realm, and their face will look like a lotus flower. [F.289.b] Their mouth will give off a pleasant odor, and there will be a pleasant breeze carrying the sweet fragrance of various flowers. After they are dead, they will see their future parents together in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings, making love in a garden and drunk with lust.⁴³ They will see the father touch the goddess’s navel with his right hand, and those conditions will lead the consciousness to take rebirth in the lap of that goddess. After seven days, they will transform into a young man whose head is ornamented by immaculate earrings, and he will be able to laugh, dance, sing, and indulge his sensual desires.

1.103 “Great Seer, the land in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings is ornamented and beautified by various hues of silver and orange. It is ornamented with hundreds of thousands of goddesses and is a lofty divine realm of natural beauty where gentle breezes blow.

1.104 “Great Seer, the garden in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings is a square measuring eighty-four thousand yojanas across that is illuminated by jewel lamps. On the branches and tops of the trees hang very fine quality cloths of cotton from the wish-granting tree and cords of fine Indian cloth. The forest clearings are soft and pleasant, and the inner chambers of the houses there continually ring with the sounds of lutes, flutes, clay drums, and kettledrums.

1.105 “Great Seer, those who dwell in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings eat solid foods⁴⁴ that are known to possess an extremely appetizing aroma and to have appealing colors, tastes, textures, and other excellent qualities. Each of those gods has two golden basins, and whatever food they wish for is provided perfectly from those basins. They are also provided with a delicious divine flower nectar called *flower wine*. That wine, Great Seer, has a delicious aroma that is supremely pleasing and refreshing. Even to smell it, let alone drink it, is intoxicating, and the young gods become intoxicated on that drink.

1.106 “Great Seer, the palaces of the realm of the Four Great Kings are called Beautifying. [F.290.a] They are always beautified by vines with blooming flowers. They are firmly supported on all sides by hundreds of thousands of pillars that are gold, silver, and radiant diamond. The floorplans are

symmetrical with divine beds and carpets. They are filled and surrounded by mesmerizing goddesses with various types of ornaments who are graceful, charmingly affectionate, and richly adorned with divine robes that glow and enhance their beauty. Their voices are as melodious as a kalaviṅka's song or the humming of bees. Their bodies are large and youthful. They are intoxicated and aroused by singing, dancing, ringing their cymbals, smiling, and playing. The pillars are painted with liquid gold and silver. They are ornamented with silk banners, and the banners and flags are raised.

1.107 “The Four Great Kings who reside in those palaces are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Virūḍhaka, Virūpākṣa, and Kubera. They experience and enjoy divine sensual desire, happiness, and play, and they are happy and delighted. Their sense faculties are pleased by singing, dancing, the ringing of cymbals, and eating divine food, and they live there happy in every way.

1.108 “Great Seer, the young gods in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings all have long, muscular arms. They walk with the gait of an elephant in rut, they have the power and prowess of a thousand men, and their divine bodies have soft features. The smell of wine pervades all around them for the distance of one yojana because of the large quantities of fragrant wine they consume. The lifespan of those gods is four thousand years, they have no untimely death, and all of them live in joy, happiness, and contentment.

1.109 “The fortunate ones in that divine realm have halos of immaculate golden light, and that realm is beautifully adorned with forest groves. They live in excellent gardens, such as Joy Producing, that are pleasant and without foul odor.⁴⁵ [F.290.b] The places where they dwell are sprinkled with flower petals and beautified with gems and gold. They are symmetrical, square, and ornamented with jeweled staircases. They resound with the sweet songs of hundreds of thousands of goddesses, and there are jewel caskets that grant any wish they might utter.

1.110 “As he lives in that realm his merit is exhausted, and the following two signs that his lifespan is exhausted appear. First, he no longer casts a shadow, smells no longer arise from flowers, and he cannot hear the sweet words of the goddesses conversing with one another. The youthful god will also no longer travel to or assemble in the divine abodes of the heavenly realm. Those divine abodes are filled with hundreds of thousands of goddesses, the tree branches in them are bedecked with long necklaces, short necklaces, and flower garlands, and their forest clearings are filled with the intoxicating songs of cuckoos. Within them, a group of goddesses begins to wail as they roll around on the ground, dirtying the clothes they wear, with a pitiful look on their faces.

- 1.111 “As they roll around on the ground, they no longer find joy in those places ornamented with their flower canopies. Their bodies start to sweat, and their eyes, which previously never closed, now close. They flop around one another like fish out of water baking in the sun’s rays. Seeing him seated alone on the ground, those goddesses surround him.
- 1.112 “They have a pitiful look on their faces and wail in unison, saying ‘Alas, how terrible! How horrible! Alas, where has that most youthful one gone? That one with his large body decorated with various ornaments and a prominent and beautiful jawline and broad chest, who used to roam the various garden clearings, has abandoned us and abandoned the pleasing divine abode of the heavenly realm. Where will he go now?’
- 1.113 “Then the goddesses will speak the following verses:
- 1.114 “ ‘The Great Kings created this realm
Superbly arrayed with various colors,
Ornamented with divine forests,
And filled with food and festivals.
- 1.115 “ ‘Its supremely auspicious marketplace
Bounded by four pillars
Is delightful and filled with divine women,
And its flowers and riches are enchanting. [F.291.a]
- 1.116 “ ‘He is leaving and passing away,
And his loved ones are gripped by this impermanence.’
- 1.117 “The goddesses, with tears streaming down and choked voices, surround him, extending their right hands as far as they can and strewing flowers as they say, ‘Alas! How sad! He is departing for the world of humans, the world of good deeds. May he use the plough of faith to plough⁴⁶ a field of merit!’
- 1.118 “He then realizes that his body pervaded by thought⁴⁷ is abandoning him, and he falls ill with a fierce and unbearable disease. After his body has been destroyed by that fierce disease, it is like a drop of butter vaporized in a flash of lightning. After that body has withered away it is blown by a wind called *dragger*. That wind scatters it into thousands of pieces and causes it to fall from the sky as a fine powder.
- 1.119 “After it has fallen, he takes a human rebirth. He sees his parents together and arises in the mother’s womb with a happy disposition.
- 1.120 “At first, the following signs arise as that child dwells in the womb: the mother will delight in eating food; she will develop a preference for flashy red clothes; and she will want to see great multitudes of various people and she will think of them as only her relatives and dear ones.

- 1.121 “After that being has entered her womb, there will be no pain in her womb,⁴⁸ she will not salivate or produce lymph, and her body will not experience illness. The fetus’s hands, feet, and head will develop perfectly in her womb, and when that being is born, he will be radiant, delightful to see, and robust.
- 1.122 “He will be fond of hearing descriptions about the divine realm of the Four Great Kings. He will like to give things away, have an attachment to wine, wear perfumed clothing, and be fond of gardens. His sexual organ will lust after women. He will want to eat again and again. He will become immersed in such things as singing, dancing, and playing cymbals. He will have a supple and dark complexion, [F.291.b] and his eyes will be like beryl gems. Great Seer, if someone tends toward these physical and mental habits, one should see it as a sign that they have come to this life from the divine realm of the Four Great Kings.
- 1.123 “Great Seer, if a person gives up killing; has faith and because of that faith gives a gift; does not take what is not given; gives up specific types of provisions that are eaten, drunk, licked, and sucked; takes recourse to⁴⁹ giving away all manner of material things such as gems, gold, silver, diamonds, and beryl; cultivates and performs those actions many times over; offers flower garlands faithfully and joyously; or prostrates before a stūpa, the karmic fruition of such deeds will result in their body possessing very few defilements at the time of death. The fact that they are free of any putrid excretions or foul smells will prompt them to reflect on their roots of virtue, and they will be serene at the time of death.
- 1.124 “The person’s complexion will take on a golden color, his nose will not become crooked, his heart will not flutter, he will not have to clear his throat, and his body will not produce a wheezing sound. His body will not become overheated, his sense faculties will not change, his limbs and organs will not fail, and his joints will not fail. He will not toss and turn in bed, and he will not utter vulgarities. He will not die from a fever, and he will not be harmed when an enemy poisons him. If he climbs a tree because he wants its flowers or fruits and then falls, he will not die. If he eats unpleasant foods and suffers indigestion, it will not kill him.
- 1.125 “After it casts off that human body, his consciousness will be among the gods and see the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. It will see a divine palace ornamented a thousand times over with jewels, gold, beryl, and silver [F.292.a] and with a perfectly symmetrical layout. It will be decorated with victory banners emblazoned with golden fish and *makara* sea monsters, arched gateways, and flags. Sweet musical melodies and the sounds of various cymbals will resound, and it will be surrounded by various dwellings. The palace will sit within a wood with trees that are ornamented

- by birds. It will be sprinkled with water scented with uragasāra sandalwood, and it will be ornamented and decorated with strings of divine jewel lamps. The palace will be beautified by the play of various radiant women.
- 1.126 “The consciousness will see the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three ornamented and decorated with various things such as armlets, bracelets, rings, short necklaces, and long necklaces.
- 1.127 “Great Seer, the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three go to the best gardens, where they play and indulge their sensual desires, become intoxicated with desire, and then go to wooded glades and give rise to bliss.
- 1.128 “Since the consciousness of that being is disposed toward merit, it sees those gods and goddesses seated on thrones, experiences intense joy, and sets out and is reborn there like a jewel quickly strung onto a necklace. As that being enters that new realm, a flower appears from a goddess’s palms. That being sees the flower and enters it. The goddess gazes at the god with love and joy, caresses the flower with her two hands, and joins her two hands. That provides the condition for him to take rebirth among the gods.
- 1.129 “When he is born, she will look at the god and say, ‘You will be pleased to know that it is a young boy!’ and both parents will rejoice. After seven days, he will have manifested various earrings that dangle and shimmer, and after seven days he will remember, ‘I have come here from such and such a previous birth, and now these two are my parents.’ He will think, ‘I accomplished this virtuous deed,’ [F.292.b] and when he realizes that he will be extremely delighted.
- 1.130 “Intoxicated with joy, his vanity will lead to attachment to desire. He will gaze from afar at the vast expanse of the god realm in which he currently resides, and his mind will delight in it. He will move with a divine gait resembling the gait of an elephant in rut; he will have a large chest and arms that are long and pendulous; his upper torso will be like that of a lion; his navel will be deeply indented; his waist will be narrow like the handle of a bow; his vertebrae will be in their proper order; and his thighs will be firm like the trunk of a plantain tree.
- 1.131 “He will have the voice of a god, his beard and body hair will be short, he will be free of bad odors, and he will have a divine fragrance. His body will be adorned with jewelry, and he will wear radiant divine robes. His mind will be focused, and his body will be beautiful.
- 1.132 “He will live in that divine abode surrounded by several goddesses, some of whom indulge in flirting with him, saying, ‘Lord, are you well? Did your journey to this divine realm go well? You should be our husband! We are in the prime of life, our bodies are fully developed, our breasts protrude like golden vases, our lips are like lotus blossoms, and our bodies are pure, just like a flash of lightning from a raincloud. This place is beautified by a great

palace and the growing shoots and boughs of the wish-fulfilling kovidāra tree. My lord, you should enjoy this excited crowd of sixty thousand women!’

1.133 “The sound of lutes, flutes, drums, hand drums, and singing will fill that divine realm. He will see a lion throne decorated with divine cushions, and as he sees it, he will be like a prince wrapped with many silk scarves receiving the crown consecration, and he will ascend and sit on the throne.

1.134 “Pleasant sounds and divine music will resound at all times while he is seated there, and the following proclamation will ring out in all directions: ‘This being is predisposed to merit. He died in the continent of Jambudvīpa [F.293.a] and was born here in this divine realm because of the merit that he possessed. Let us go to him and amuse him as we play music and dance!’

1.135 “Those sixty thousand women will all hold flowers in their hands as he amuses himself with them. They will be clad in garments scented with extremely fragrant perfumes and wear upper robes of fine dukūlam cotton, superior ornaments, and tinkling foot bangles. Their faces will be like lotuses beautifully illuminated by a crescent moon. They will be drunk on honey, sweet mead, and flower wine and sit there in the grips of intoxication as they say, ‘Let us all serve and honor this lord! You possess the beautiful fragrance of the higher realms that you realized thanks to your merit. Now you should indulge yourself in the glorious enjoyment of blissful divine sensual pleasures.’

1.136 “Great Seer, that god and those goddesses are supremely happy and enjoy the cool of the best parks in which there are gardens, pleasure groves, stone platforms like Indra’s throne, magical emanations,⁵⁰ superb rains, lattices, flowers that open immediately, and wish-fulfilling kovidāra trees. There are no harmful winds, it is beautified by the sweet calls of the divine sky-going birds, and it is filled with divine flowers, fruits, and perfumes. It has lamps made of various kinds of precious substances such as beryl, jewel, coral, and emerald. It resounds with bees, mating cuckoos, and sweet bird songs. The peacocks have gold-tipped wings that bear auspicious marks and are decorated with jewel and gemstone dots, and they have high, long noses and beaks of beryl, from which emerge various lovely and harmonious bird songs. These gods dwell in such perfectly arranged places scattered with flowers, satisfying their desires and continually indulging in pleasure.

1.137 “In the divine Heaven of the Thirty-Three there are deep, square-shaped pools [F.293.b] with clear water that is neither too hot nor too cold. They are pleasant, the water is pure, there are hundred-petaled lotuses blooming in them, and they are decorated with trees growing along their banks. The

gods enjoy playing in the pleasant water of those pools, with flowers sprinkled about, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of goddesses, and they live happily there.

1.138 “Great Seer, containers decorated with various colored marks manifest among the gods there, in the vicinity of their gardens and groves, and when the gods wish, the containers produce food with colors like jasmine flowers, red lotus, white snow, and silver. When some of the gods eat from one of the jewel containers, Great Seer, the food is like the color of a jewel, while when some take a morsel of food it is yellow, blue, or white. There is one such color that has the best and most magnificent hue.⁵¹ Those are the particular types of food that come from their jeweled containers, which are seen to be the karmic fruition of giving tainted by minor afflictions.

1.139 “In cases where the karmic result is related to giving a gift but later regretting having done so, the food takes on an inferior color. In cases where the karmic result is related to giving a gift and then later generating compassion with a loving intention and engendering joy, the specific type of food that results shines like a precious jewel. Great Seer, you should know those as fully ripened karmic results.

1.140 “Moreover, Great Seer, there is a garden in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three called Śirīṣaka that is adorned with branches, flowers, and various fruits. It is a thick grove of hundreds of thousands of various trees, and in the central clearing of that thick grove there is an excellent stone slab that is spotless, clear like glass, and kept very clean. There, accomplished sages who are peaceful and whose sense faculties are tranquil sit, free from attachment. [F.294.a] The groups of gods and goddesses who indulge in desire do not live there.

1.141 “Great Seer, in that supreme garden Śirīṣaka, there are many flowering and fruiting trees, and the divine discourses of the gods continually resound from them. An elder from the śrāvaka saṅgha assembly named Gavāṃpati, who was born in the brahmin caste, lives there dwelling in concentration, abiding in compassion, delight, and equanimity, and engaging in the meditative absorption of loving kindness. That great seer can remain for seven days without breathing, and, if he so desires, when that great seer enters the meditative absorption of loving kindness the wind does not blow. That great seer’s body is not harmed even slightly in the final conflagration of the eon, when the entire world becomes a single tongue of flame that destroys even Sumeru, the king of mountains. Even the mighty nāga kings Nanda and Upananda, that pair of fierce and powerfully pernicious nāga kings who possess powerful magic and very harmful powers, and can topple

Sumeru, the king of mountains, or dry up even the four great oceans with a mere breath, are rendered harmless by the power of the monk Gavāṃpati's meditative absorption.

1.142 “Great Seer, when the young gods and goddesses see the elder Gavāṃpati residing in the garden of Śīrīṣaka and dwelling in concentration, with devotion and respect they generate delight and faith in him. They strew upon him divine flowers, such as māṅdarāva, great māṅdarāva, mañjūṣaka, great mañjūṣaka, blue lotuses, red lotuses, water lilies, and white lotuses, and then bow before him with their palms together.

1.143 “After all those gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three have surrounded the elder Gavāṃpati and made a great offering, they sit facing him and satiate and please him with divine food that tastes like ambrosia. [F.294.b] The elder Gavāṃpati teaches those gods the Dharma, in the form of discourses, mingled prose and verse, prophecies, verse, joyful utterances, narratives, moral tales, stories of previous lives, works of great extent, marvels, and didactical works of the Vinaya and Sūtra collections.⁵² As a result, the gods are delighted and give rise to faith, and they remain in meditative concentration in that divine garden, living in complete happiness and frequenting the garden of Śīrīṣaka.

1.144 “Great Seer, there is also a divine meeting place in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three called Sudharma. It has eighty-four thousand pillars made of gold, silver, diamond, coral, and emerald. The uragasāra sandalwood trees and camphor trees and the like are covered with nets of melodiously tinkling bells, and the ground is sprinkled with gold dust. The divine meeting place Sudharma is decorated with divine cloths. Within it, banners, parasols, and flags are raised, and divine music rings out from such instruments as lutes, flutes, clay drums, paṭaha drums, small bells of iron, conch shells, and three-stringed lutes. One can also hear melodious sounds of laughter, small bells tinkling on clothes, and the clamor of voices. There are flowers, fruits, and branches, and one can hear the melodious songs of cuckoos calling back and forth from their separate roosts. Gods and goddesses dwell there, their faces beaming with joy and happiness.

1.145 “Great Seer, the surface of the ground in the divine meeting place Sudharma is decorated with precious jewels. It is glossy, coated with green, and pure like beryl. It is smooth like the surface of a mirror and strewn with perfumed powders and various flowers. It is free of such faults as harsh wind, hot sun, flies, bees, and snakes. It is naturally free of sleepiness, torpor, and laziness, [F.295.a] and gentle breezes blow through the openings of its skylights, windows, and lattices shaped like crescent moons. A pleasant breeze blows across its arched gateways and its domed rooftops large and small. It is always beautified by the sound of strings of jewels spread out like

- lattice-work. It is lovely and strewn with extremely fragrant perfumes and flower petals. The goddesses who dwell there have faces like the disk of the moon, the sun, or a mirror, and they have adorned their bodies with exceptional divine adornments.
- 1.146 “Great Seer, the divine meeting place of Sudharma rings with the melodies of the goddesses’ music. The divine meeting place Sudharma is square, and its layout is perfectly symmetrical. Its surface is vast and adorned with various trees, gardens, glades, and woods. It extends one hundred yojanas on all sides and is strewn with gold and lotuses and sprinkled with flower petals. It rings with the sounds of singing and is beautified with lotuses and wish-fulfilling kovidāra trees.
- 1.147 “All the material items in the divine meeting place of Sudharma are made from gold, silver, beryl, coral, and emerald. It contains heaps of jewels and is permeated by deposits of gold, surrounded by numerous types of mountains, and decorated with various lovely colors. The surface is adorned with hundreds of thousands of gardens. The gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, who are free from all manner of faults related to pain and sickness, joyously congregate in that supreme garden and then gather and amuse themselves in the divine meeting place of Sudharma.
- 1.148 “Great Seer, in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three there is a divine palace called Beautiful to Behold that is immaculate like the surface of the moon, the sun, or a mirror. It is beautified by very fragrant perfumes and flowers and decorated with garlands that are anointed and spread out like lattice-work. It is adorned with hundreds of thousands of women who sit there, casting charming and affectionate sideways glances [F.295.b] and feigning expressions of anger. Its surface is decorated with great heaps of various types of flowers. The plaster on its walls is made from jewels. It is decorated with lattices of tinkling bells. The hooves of horses, elephants, and chariots kick up gold dust when they touch the ground, and the beings there wear crowns and are graced with great wealth.⁵³
- 1.149 “Great Seer, the divine palace called Beautiful to Behold has sixty thousand pillars topped by capitals decorated with various inlays of divine gold, silver, and beryl. Its garlands of tamāla leaf and aloeswood incense have a particularly delicious aroma.
- 1.150 “Indra, the king of the gods, lives in that palace, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of divine women. His body is ornamented by shoots of gold and diamond, and he enjoys the sensuous play of the gods. He possesses the power of ninety thousand elephants, and his arms are like elephant trunks. His complexion is yellow like pure gold, his body is taut, and his upper body is like the upper torso of a lion. His earrings shimmer and illuminate his body. His exceedingly fine robes are long and trail behind him.

- He upholds proper grammar,⁵⁴ and he understands and has mastered its treatises. Many hundreds of thousands of gods follow him and stroll about the grounds of his divine golden palace.
- 1.151 “His chest is beautifully ornamented with a golden thread and with short and long necklaces. He is neither too heavy nor too tall. His feet are firmly planted. The food that he eats tastes like ambrosia. Hundreds of thousands of maidens turn their cheeks to one side and gaze at him askance, and the gusts of wind from the ears of the rutting elephant Airāvaṇa make a thunderous sound.
- 1.152 “Great Seer, the body of the king of the gods lacks deformities. His body is entirely free of disease and has a very fragrant smell, and his voice has a sweet and gentle tone. Even a rampaging elephant in rut that is smeared with musk and in a frenzy is quelled when it makes contact with the scent of the king of the gods’ body. [F.296.a]
- 1.153 “Great Seer, the king of the gods’ body is roughly the same size as the body of the Tathāgata. When they see Indra’s great golden body, even noble śrāvakas will come before him and say, ‘The excellent body of the king of the gods is like that of the Tathāgata.’ ”
- 1.154 The great seer Vyāsa was astounded when he heard about the size of the king of the gods’ body, so the Blessed One said, “Great Seer, why are you astounded by Great Indra’s trifling body, which is subject to impermanence, embellished like a performer’s prop, and constructed in the manner of fashioning a book cover, carving wood, or making a mechanical device, which, like a floral arrangement, is beautiful just for a short while, and which is like an image reflected in a mirror?
- 1.155 “Great Seer, do you see how Great Indra fits⁵⁵ in the spaces between each of the joints of the monk Aniruddha’s body, which was born from human parents? Moreover, Great Seer, look now at the magical illusory display in the monk Aniruddha’s body.”
- 1.156 The monk Aniruddha, understanding that the Blessed One had made a request, entered into meditative absorption. The power of that absorption allowed the monk Aniruddha to appear as a nāga king adorned with a divine golden glow, with a superior complexion like the trunk of a coral tree, with hair hanging down and bound up into a crown with a jeweled diadem, with broad cheeks and a bright and resplendent complexion, with eyes like divine blue lotuses, and with jewels, corals, and emeralds. The great bodily form and the divine appearance and fragrance he manifested appeared before the entire assembly and amazed and pleased them as its exceedingly sweet fragrance filled their ranks.

- 1.157 When the great seer Vyāsa saw that marvel, his heart raced, and he rose from his seat, folded his hands, and, filled with great wonder, shouted, [F.296.b] “Ah! Excellent! Because of the Omniscient One, ever since I met the Tathāgata I have seen marvels in this assembly the likes of which I have never seen before. Today this human life I have obtained has become meaningful!”
- 1.158 “Great Seer, what do you think?” the Blessed One said to the great seer Vyāsa. “Which is better, Great Indra’s body or the monk Aniruddha’s body of glowing gold, made of the finest jewels?”
- 1.159 The great seer Vyāsa replied to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, Indra’s body is not even close to a hundredth of the monk Aniruddha’s body—it cannot even bear comparison to a thousandth, or a hundred thousandth, or any number or fraction of that body.”
- 1.160 “Great Seer, that is how you should see the superiority of dedicating roots of virtue in comparison to a body that has been attained as a result of meritorious karma.
- 1.161 “Great Seer, Indra’s highest consort, Śacī, dwells in a garden grove in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of goddesses with radiant bodies ornamented with perfumes, garlands, and flowers. They are perfumed with the highly fragrant scents of divine red and blue lotuses. Their lips are golden and shaped like bilva fruit. The supremely radiant clothes they wear are extremely fine and sheer. Their bodies bend from the weight of their divine ornaments, anklets, bracelets, twisted bracelets, and long and short necklaces as they stroll about in the gardens and forests.
- 1.162 “Their foreheads and cheeks are large and perfectly symmetrical. They bind their waists with a belt of evenly spaced gold and jewels, and they are charming and affectionate. Their eyes are long and wide-open as they smile, and their hands are covered with elongated patterns. Their navels are deep, and they lack the faults related to anger, jealousy, envy, fighting, and quarreling. Their faces are free from feigning the stages of expressing anger, and they have bodies that are completely devoid of the defects related to having borne a child. [F.297.a]
- 1.163 “The divine maiden Śacī’s affectionate air comes from the longing for intense passion that arose when she experienced passionate desire after leaving the palace on Sumeru and taking shelter under a canopy of vines and branches.⁵⁶ She is like a gentle breeze filled with scattered flowers. She is neither too tall nor too short, her hips are neither too thick nor too thin, and she has a radiant face. She is clean and beautiful, fond of lotuses, driven by strongly scented breezes of exceedingly sweet perfumes, and astonishingly beautiful.

- 1.164 “Great Seer, the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three do not get sick or contract fevers. They live and roam about in gardens and forest groves and within the grounds of divine palaces. Their lifespan is one thousand divine years. When a god’s merit expires due to living in that divine realm, there appear five signs that his lifespan has expired and he will pass away, which were not there previously.
- 1.165 “When he arrives at the pools that were once clear like quartz crystal and touched by a gentle breeze, their banks lined with broad-branched trees draped with canopies of vines, it is as if someone has strewn them with mustard seed oil. When he sees that they have been strewn with mustard seed oil, he is terrified, and he gets out of the pool and runs away, fleeing into the thick forest.
- 1.166 “The goddesses will then see that he has fled and will follow close behind. He will stop and sit at the foot of a tree in that thick forest, and the goddesses, feeling pity, will weep desperately and say, ‘Master, why do you want to leave us and live alone at the foot of this tree?’ They will weep and say this again in a miserable tone. And the god will cry out, ‘Something happened to me that has never happened before. It was like having mustard seed oil sprayed on my body.’
- 1.167 “His armpits will produce sweat, and when they see that sweat the goddesses will distance themselves from him and abandon him.
- 1.168 “When he realizes they have abandoned him, he will experience sorrow. Experiencing sorrow, his breathing will become panicked. [F.297.b] His breathing panicked, his body will suffer torment. That bodily and mental torment will lead his crown of flowers, which before could not possibly have wilted, to wilt. His garland will wilt, and his robes, which had never before become worn out, will wear out.⁵⁷ Finally,⁵⁸ even the divine blankets and soft bedding will bring him no comfort.
- 1.169 “Pained, the goddesses will recognize the signs of his impending death. They will not be able to tolerate the smell, and they will abandon him while pitifully and uncontrollably crying out in pain.
- 1.170 “Pained by the suffering of separation, they will weep uncontrollably and cry, ‘Alas! He whose body had such soft features, who roamed the divine gardens and forests, who was like a sheldrake on this island of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, who was like a majestic swan in the divine meeting place of Sudharma, who was like a kalandaka bird in the pleasure groves, who was like an elephant smeared with musk in the pools, who was like a bee in the wish-fulfilling kovidāra trees and gardens, and who wore a flower on his ear in the pleasure groves—he is leaving us! What will happen now? Where will we live?’

- 1.171 “He will catch an uncontrollable fever, and his body and mind will be so disturbed by that fever that he will isolate himself from any visitors and act like a recluse, like a shipwrecked traveler, or like a king who has lost his wish-granting jewel. He will be scattered by the winds of impermanence, just like a crumbling mountain, and his body will toss and turn on the ground. He will writhe like a young nāga caught in a garuḍa’s beak and beg those goddesses with his palms hastily joined, saying, ‘Come back! Touch my body with the palms of your hands!’
- 1.172 “He will beg like that as he suffers and writhes in mental torment. When the goddesses see that, they will refuse to leave his side. They will wonder how they could touch the limbs of his body, but as they hold flowering branches and lay them on the heart of the god who is dying they will say, ‘Now that the merit that led you to this high birth is spent, may you quickly take rebirth in Jambudvīpa!’
- 1.173 “When the god realizes that he is leaving his body, he will sob and cry pitifully, [F.298.a] saying, ‘Alas, after having enjoyed this higher realm of the gods with its divine features, ornaments, and excellent gardens and become infatuated with these goddesses, I have now reached the moment of death, and none of those things will remain.’
- 1.174 “This thought will occur to him over and over as he hears them saying, ‘May you be reborn in Jambudvīpa.’ He will look around his home again and again, collapse to the ground, and weep and wail pitifully, saying, ‘Alas, the parks, the pleasure groves, and the smooth slabs of rock! Alas, the divine meeting place Sudharma, the coral trees, the beauty, the groves, the gardens, the pools, the excellent palaces with their many doorways—I must leave behind all these places in the divine realm! Now I will surely fall from the cliff of the higher realms!’
- 1.175 “Filled with fear, he will look at his own abode and say, ‘Alas, dear friends, my time of death approaches. Why are you so silent? Considering that I will soon be in the wilderness of saṃsāra, and am preparing to set off on a long journey, come and hug me! After this I will not see you, and you will not see me. Alas, the fruition of the meritorious acts that led me to this higher realm has been exhausted, and the moment of death now appears before me like darkness. Is this higher realm empty? Why is no one playing music or cymbals? I no longer hear their sound. Now I will meet my end because of the fault of karma!’
- 1.176 “After that he will weep and wail, saying, ‘Alas! May I have such great merit to live among the divine retinue of the Thousand-Eyed One⁵⁹ in this higher realm with its beautiful gods and gandharvas and to see it again in

- the future. Why have the fully blossomed flowers on my head wilted?' As he says this and becomes depressed, all of them, brandishing their immaculate earrings that flicker about, will bring him flowers.
- 1.177 "The ruler of the gods, Indra, surrounded by hundreds of thousands of gods, the goddess Śacī followed by goddesses such as Aditi, Marīci, and Variously Ornamented, [F.298.b] and such gods and gandharvas as Pañcaśikha and Tumburu, will sing divine songs as they move in a procession. When they see those five signs and see him in such a wretched state, they will pity him. All at once they will say, 'How sad! This impermanence is so fierce and unbearable!'
- 1.178 "Even Indra, the king of the gods, will look at that god and say with his voice as eloquent as Brahmā, 'Enough! A god should not pine for this realm of ours! May you not go to the lower realms!' All the gods will then say in a single voice, 'My friend, may you go to a realm, such as that of the humans, where you can practice virtue!'
- 1.179 "The god will then think, 'Even though I am dying, it is okay.' He will place his hands together and supplicate the other gods, saying, 'All of you gods please bear with me, for the moment of death is upon me!'
- 1.180 "Then he will exhale a long breath, and two signs will appear. The petals of his lotus eyes will wilt, and all his ornaments will disappear. The gods will see that his ornaments have disappeared and then scatter mādārava flowers, red lotuses, and the like over him. When he sees them wearing their ornaments and playing their lutes, flutes, and cymbals, he will take comfort in being reborn in Jambudvīpa.
- 1.181 "Tears will stream down his face as he weeps in desperation, and he will apply the teachings of the time of dying. After his divine merit and lifespan are completely exhausted, a great gust of wind will rise up, and when his body is struck by that fragrant wind it will scatter, and the god will have passed on from that divine realm. As he leaves that life he will not know where his body is, and after he has departed, he will take rebirth as a human being.
- 1.182 "When he has been reborn as a human being and is in his mother's womb, she will exhibit such signs as feeling compelled to delight in singing, dancing, playing, and laughing. She will have an affinity for flowers, fruits, and forests. She will wear shimmering, colorful clothing, and she will crave excellent divine foods. [F.299.a]
- 1.183 "While he is in his mother's womb she will not be overwhelmed in any way by passionate desire. She will like fragrant and perfumed clothing. When she falls asleep, she will see divine signs of encouragement in her dreams.

- 1.184 “When he is in the womb, Great Seer, he will not have any bad dreams. He will be born without desire, hatred, and delusion. He will have a handsome figure and be attractive and beautiful. His feet will be firmly planted, and all his limbs will be robust and intact. His hands and feet will be long and thick, his upper body will be like that of a lion, he will have well-spaced teeth, and his body will be very soft.
- 1.185 “The first time he experiences passionate desire, he will find that desire unacceptable. He will be fond of fine robes, he will like gardens, and he will like divine scents and music. He will be born into a family of high standing that is wealthy with gold and every kind of jewel. He will be fond of giving, discipline, and restraint.
- 1.186 “If his strong attachment to desire leads to not having an affinity for giving and moral conduct, he will be reborn in one poor family after another. He will praise greedy and immoral people, and he will not be particularly dedicated or virtuous. He will lust for the wives of others and all manner of people⁶⁰ while ignoring his own wife, and he will be intent on people who are related to him. Great Seer, these are the signs that someone has passed on from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.”
- 1.187 After the Blessed One spoke those words, the great seer Vyāsa, the other seers, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.188 *This concludes The Seer Vyāsa’s Questions, the forty-ninth of the one hundred thousand sections of the Dharma discourse known as The Noble Great Heap of Jewels.*

c.

Colophon

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

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- C* Choné Kangyur as recorded in the Comparative Edition
- D* Degé Kangyur (*sde dge par phud*)
- H* Lhasa Zhol Kangyur as recorded in the Comparative Edition
- J* Lithang Kangyur as recorded in the Comparative Edition
- K* Peking Kangyur (1684–92, Kangxi emperor) as recorded in the Comparative Edition
- N* Narthang Kangyur as recorded in the Comparative Edition
- S* Stok Palace Kangyur
- Taishō* Taishō Tripiṭaka, CBETA edition
- Y* Yongle Kangyur as recorded in the Comparative Edition

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Sullivan 1999, pp. 1–13, 27–56.
- n.2 This issue is discussed in greater detail in [n.12](#).
- n.3 For more bibliographical information on this text, see *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, [K 22\(49\)](#)
(http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0022-49.html).
- n.4 For more information on this text, see *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, [K 55](#)
(http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0055.html).
- n.5 Denkarma, folio 296.b.4. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 40–41, number 72. Phangthangma 2003, p. 12.
- n.6 Toh 4146, folio 242.b. The sūtra’s title does not appear in the corresponding list in the Chinese version (Taishō 2030), which differs in a number of other details. For studies and translations of the *Nandimitrāvādāna* focusing on its Chinese version, see Lévi and Chavannes 1916, and also Shih 2002.
- n.7 Toh 3933, folio 129.a.
- n.8 Toh 3961, folios 187.a–188.a.
- n.9 Tib. *thub pa’i dgongs gsal*. See translation by David Jackson in Roesler, Holmes, and Jackson 2015, p. 419ff.
- n.10 *Dbakku la*; S, Y, K, N *ba ku la*. Both orthographical variants occur in canonical texts.
- n.11 D, S *zhugs kyi ’od zer*. It is also possible that this is a corrupted form of the term *zhugs kyi ’obs* (Skt. *agnikhadā*). If we adopt this amended reading the line translates “casting light like a fire pit.”

- n.12 D, S *dri nag ma'i bu drang srong*. The Sanskrit rendering of the name Kṛṣṇagandhavatīputra (lit. "Son of a Pleasant-Smelling, Dark-Complexioned Woman") is a back-translation from the Tibetan *dri nag ma'i bu*. It is clear that the Vyāsa who acts as interlocutor in this sūtra is not Vedavyāsa, the ancient seer who is famous for compiling and organizing the Vedas and teaching the *Mahābhārata*. However, the name of this Vyāsa's mother does preserve a possible allusion to the story of Vedavyāsa's mother Satyavatī in the *Mahābhārata*, where she is born from the belly of a fish, lives the early years of her life in a fishing village, and is thus referred to as "smelling like a fish," or *matsyagandhā*. Later, through her demonstration of virtue, she is granted a boon of always emitting a pleasant fragrance and given the epithets Gandhavatī (lit. "Having a Pleasant Fragrance") and Yojanāgandhā (lit. "She Whose Sweet Fragrance Reaches One League Away").
- n.13 N, H *me lha*. The alternate reading preserved here by the Narthang and Lhasa Kangyurs translates as "Agni" or "Fire God."
- n.14 *ri dags mo* may refer more generally to a wild female hooved or game animal; alternatively, this could be translated as "Son of a [Woman Named] Doe."
- n.15 Here, *sgra byed* is likely a name or epithet of the ascetic's parent, but it cannot be reconstructed with certainty in Sanskrit; alternatively, it could be translated as "sound maker" (i.e., "musician," *rol mo'i sgra byed pa*). One of the six non-Buddhist (*tīrthika*) teachers who were criticized by the Buddha, and who were bested by him in the performance of miracles at Śrāvastī, was named Sañjaya Vairāṭīputra (*sgra byed kyi bu mo yang dag rgyal ba can*, according to the *Mahāvīyutpatti*). Vairāṭī may be a patronymic from Virāṭa, king of the Matsyas in the *Mahābhārata*.
- n.16 Alternatively, *phur bu rna* could be translated as "Dagger Nose."
- n.17 The names listed here do not correspond with lists of named ascetics associated with Vyāsa in the *Mahābhārata*, where his five chief pupils are Sumantu, Jaimini, Paila, his own son Śuka, and Vaiśampāyana (Sullivan 1999, p. 7). Whereas the Tibetan lists nine names, Taishō 310(49) apparently lists eight names, of which the latter six appear to be transliterations: 不白 ("Not White"), 天人 ("Celestial Person"), *shan bo ye na* 苦波野那, *dan tu ye na* 丹荼野那, *jia mo ye na* 迦摩野那, *mi qia/qu na si* 迷佉那斯, *yi wei* 疑味, *du luo* 度羅. Tentatively reconstructed, Taishō 354 has Asi the Young Seer 阿斯仙童子, *na luo ti* 那羅提 (Nara-?), *suo pei ruo bo ye na* 娑裴若波耶那, *na tu yan na* 那荼延那, *jia mo yan na* 迦摩延那, *shang zhi luo* 商枳囉, *suo bing ke* 娑鞞軻, *na suo* 那娑, *tu luo tuo* 徒囉陀.

- n.18 D *gzugs ni shin tu 'bar bas na*; S, N *gzugs ni shin tu 'bar ba ste*; K *gzugs ni shin tu 'bar ba na*.
- n.19 “Autumn sun” (*ston gyi nyi ma*) is one of the epithets of the Buddha in the *Buddhanāmasahasrapañcaśatacaturtripañcadaśa* (Toh 262), folio 84.a.
- n.20 Cf. the *Mahāvvyutpatti*, *utkuṭukāsana*.
- n.21 This translation follows the reading in the Stok Palace Kangyur (*chu'i nang du 'dug pa*). The reading in the Degé Kangyur (*chu'i nang du 'jug pa*) translates as “who plunge into water.”
- n.22 D *gus pa skyes te*. The phrase “toward the Buddha and his monks” is added to the English translation here for the sake of clarity.
- n.23 S, N *zhi ba/ mkhas pa*; D *zhib pa mkhas pa*.
- n.24 D, S *nus can bu'i bstan bcos*; N *nus pa can bu'i bstan bcos*. Cf. Taishō 354 *po luo men fa* 婆羅門法 (“the Brahmanical way”); Taishō 310(49) *she jie luo jiao* 除羯羅教 (“the *cakra*(?) teachings”). The Tibetan suggests a back-translation into Sanskrit of **samarthikaśāstra*. The correct Sanskrit reading may in fact be **smārtikaśāstra*, which is supported by the Chinese translation in Taishō 354. This term refers to the treatises of those who uphold the traditional Brahmanical codes of conduct recorded in the *smṛti* literature. This tradition is referred to with the Sanskrit term *smārta*, a patronymic of the term *smṛti*.
- n.25 Note that the opening words *'byung ba dang* (“[at] the arising”) seem incorrect, and we have not translated them.
- n.26 D, S *yongs su 'dzin par 'gyur ba gang lags*. The term “gifts” is provided in the English translation for the sake of clarity.
- n.27 D, S *sems dang po bskyed pa'i gtam khyod kyis dris pa 'di ni rtsing ngo*. This translation of the Tibetan term *rtsing ba* remains tentative. It can correspond to the Sanskrit *audārya*, which means “generosity” or “magnanimity,” which fits well in this context. However, *rtsing ba* usually connotes something “coarse,” “clumsy,” or “rude,” so this is an unusual reading of this term. The more common reading of the term would suggest that Vyāsa’s questions are being called “coarse” or “unrefined,” which might also make sense given Śāriputra’s comments about Vyāsa that follow.
- n.28 D, S *yul gzhan du song nas byed du bcug pa*. The term “others” is supplied in the English translation for the sake of clarity.

- n.29 Note that these thirty-two kinds of impure generosity are summarized from this sūtra in *Clarifying the Sage's Intent* by Sakya Paṇḍita, who cites this sūtra as his source. See Roesler, Holmes, and Jackson 2015, p. 419f.
- n.30 *D gang brjod pa dang / sgra dang / tshigs su bcad pa'i phyir sbyin pa sbyin pa dang; S gang brjod pa dang / sgra dang / tshigs su bcad pa'i phyir sbyin pa byin pa dang.* The text omits the specific recipient of the gift, but given the parallel structure between this section and the line that immediately follows it, we might assume that the intended recipient is someone who recites and/or composes texts.
- n.31 *D, S phyid pa dang.* The translation of this term is tentative.
- n.32 See Aṅguttara Nikāya III 41 for partial overlap; see also Majjhima Nikāya 142 for different breakdowns.
- n.33 *D, S 'bras bu chen po yin no; Y, K sbyin pa chen po yin no.* This translation follows the reading in the Yongle and Kangxi Kangyurs. The alternate reading in the Degé and Stok Palace Kangyurs translates as “there will be a great result.”
- n.34 Tib. *de bas na len pas sbyin pa shes par byed do.* Translation tentative.
- n.35 *D, S rnyi rnyi po ma yin pa.* The translation of this term is tentative.
- n.36 In this context, this is likely a reference to the formless realms. See the entry for *aniñjya* in Edgerton.
- n.37 *D, S sna sgyur gnyis.* The relatively obscure phrase translates literally as “the two led by the nose.”
- n.38 *D, S 'jing chu; Y, K mjing chu.* This translation remains tentative. This obscure Tibetan term translates literally as “the fluid of the neck” but is taken here as a reference to the major arteries of the neck and, by extension, the major arteries in a more general sense.
- n.39 Note that the Buddha actually answers a different question, the seer's original question.
- n.40 *D, S rma; Y, K pad ma.* This translation follows the reading in the Yongle and Kangxi Kangyurs. The reading in the Degé and Stok Palace Kangyurs is obscure but may be interpreted as a shortened form of the term *rma bya*, which would indicate that these flowers resemble the feathers of a peacock.
- n.41 *D, S bil ba.* The fruit of the wood apple tree (*Aegle marmelos*).
- n.42 Tib. *pu shu* (Skt. *harmya/harmikā*).

- n.43 Note that Tib. *rgyags dregs* is *rgyags pas dregs pa* in Negi. In Monier-Williams, *madamatta* or *mada* means “sexual desire/passion,” and *matta*, “excited/drunk.”
- n.44 *D zas kham gyi za ba can*; N, Y, K, H *zas kham gyi zas can*.
- n.45 Here it is better to correct *rnams ni* to *rnams na*.
- n.46 *D rmad par gyur*; S, H *rmod par gyur*.
- n.47 Tib. *sems pas kun du khyab pa'i lus*. Translation tentative. Alternatively, *sems pas* might be read with the verb in this sentence (*rig pa*), rendered “realizes,” in which case *kun du khyab pa'i lus* would be rendered “all-pervading body,” which makes little sense in this context.
- n.48 D, S *'tshor ba skye bar mi 'gyur*. The term “feeling” (Tib. *'tshor ba*, Skt. *vedanā*) likely refers in this case specifically to a “painful feeling.”
- n.49 S, Y, J, K, N, C, H *bsten pa*; D *bstan pa*.
- n.50 D, S *rnam par mnyam 'phrul*. The translation of this term remains tentative.
- n.51 Tib. *kha dog gcig tu 'dra bar kha dog rgyas pa mchog dang ldan pa gcig pa*. Translation tentative.
- n.52 This list of the “twelve classifications of the teachings” (Tib. *gsung rab yan lag bcu gnyis*; Skt. *dvādaśadharmaprayacana*) differs somewhat from the list we find in the *Mahāvīyutpatti*. The standard classification of “stories or narratives” (Tib. *rtogs par brjod pa'i sde*; Skt. *avadāna*) is omitted, and the final category of “discourses” (Tib. *gtan la dbabs pa*; Skt. *upadeśa*) is rendered in Tibetan as *lung gi phyogs* and divided into the two classifications of vinaya and sūtra, for a total of twelve classifications of teachings.
- n.53 D, S *cod pan chags shing 'byor pas mdzes par byas pa yod do*. The translation of this line remains tentative, and the subject “beings” has been provided in the English translation of this line for the sake of clarity.
- n.54 Tib. *dbang po'i brda sprod pa 'dod*. Translation tentative. Most literally, the Tib. *dbang po'i brda sprod pa* refers to the ancient Aindra school of Sanskrit grammar, possibly the oldest and traditionally associated with Indra himself.
- n.55 D, S *'dun par 'gyur ba*. This is an obscure use of this term, and this translation remains tentative.

- n.56 *Dri rab la yod pa'i gzhal med khang dang / shing gel pa dang 'khri shing gi bla res khebs par byas pa las byung ba'i 'dod pa skyes pas byung ba.* It is unclear which particular episode in Śacī's mythology is referred to here, but it may be the story of Nahuṣa, who in the *Udyoga-parvan* of the Hindu epic the *Mahābhārata* is said to have won Indra's throne, ruling from Mānasa Lake at the base of Sumeru, but then lost it due to an offense he committed against Indra's wife Indrāṇī or Śacī.
- n.57 *Drnyis; S brnyings; Y, K, N, H rnyings.* The term in this passage translated as "wilt" or "wear out" is consistently rendered in the Degé Kangyur as *rnyis*, and the other Kangyurs consulted for this passage render this verb in various ways.
- n.58 The word "finally" is added to the English translation to clarify that this is the fifth and final sign in this list of five signs that a god of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three has reached the end of his lifespan.
- n.59 *D, S mig stong pa.* This is a common epithet for the god Indra.
- n.60 *D, S skye bo thams cad dga' dang; N, H skye bo thams cad dang.* This translation follows the reading preserved in the Narthang and Lhasa Kangyurs.

b.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

drang srong rgyas pas zhus pa (Rṣivṃyāsaparipṛcchā). Toh 93, Degé Kangyur vol. 44 (dkon brtsegs, cha), folios 278.a–299.a.

drang srong rgyas pas zhus pa. bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma) [Comparative Edition of the Kangyur], krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang (The Tibetan Tripitaka Collation Bureau of the China Tibetology Research Center). 108 volumes. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House), 2006–9, vol. 44, pp. 776–830.

drang srong rgyas pas zhus pa. Stok Palace Kangyur vol. 40 (dkon brtsegs, cha), folios 436.a–467.a.

sangs rgyas kyi mtshan lnga stong bzhi brgya lnga bcu rtsa gsum pa (Buddhanāmasahasrapañcaśatacatutripañcadaśa). Toh 262, Degé Kangyur vol. 67 (mdo sde, 'a), folios 1.b–89.b.

dga' ba'i bshes gnyen gyi rtogs pa brjod pa (Nandimitrāvadāna). Toh 4146, Degé Tengyur vol. 269 ('dul ba, su), folios 240.a–244.b.

Atīśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna. *mdo kun las btus pa chen po (Mahāsūtrasamuccaya)*. Toh 3961, Degé Tengyur vol. 112 (dbu ma, gi), 187.a–188.a.

Bhaṭṭāraka Karo. *bsgom pa'i rim pa mdo kun las btus pa (Bhāvanākramasūtrasamuccaya)*. Toh 3933, Degé Tengyur vol. 110 (dbu ma, ki), 125.b–148.a.

Denkarma (*pho brang stod thang ldan dkar gyi chos kyi 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag*). Toh 4364, Degé Tengyur vol. 206 (sna tshogs, jo), folios 294.b–310.a.

Bodhiruci, trans. *Guang bo xianren hui 廣博仙人會. Taishō 310* (https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T0310_001) (49).

Phangthangma (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*). Beijing: *mi rigs dpe skrun khang*, 2003.

- Prajñārucci, trans. *Piyesuo wen jing* 毘耶娑問經. Taishō 354
(https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T0354_001).
- Da a luo han nan ti mi duo luo suo shuo fa zhu ji* 大阿羅漢難提密多羅所說法住記.
Taishō 2030
(<file:///Users/adamkrug/Library/Containers/com.apple.mail/Data/Library/Mail%20Downloads/77C5E759-9ABF-43B9-8803-6A5B0DA2F105/Taishō%202030>). English translation in Shih 2002.
- Garma, C. C. Chang, ed. *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983.
- Edgerton, Franklin. *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Grammar and Dictionary*. 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953. Reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977.
- Herrmann-Pfandt, Adelheid. *Die lHan kar ma: ein früherer Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008.
- Hildebeitel, Alf. *The Ritual of Battle: Krishna in the "Mahābhārata."* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- Lancaster, Lewis R. *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/index.html). Accessed November 10, 2021.
- Lévi, Sylvain, and Édouard Chavannes. "Les seize Arhat protecteurs de la loi." Parts 1 and 2. *Journal Asiatique*, 11th ser., vol. 8 (July–August 1916): 5–50; (September–October 1916): 189–304.
- Monier-Williams, Monier. *A Sanskrit–English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899.
- Negi, J. S. *Tibetan–Sanskrit Dictionary*. 16 vols. Sarnath, Varanasi: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, 1993–2005.
- Pedersen, K. Priscilla. "Notes on the Ratnakūṭa Collection." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 3, no. 2 (1980): 60–66.
- Roesler, Ulrike, Ken Holmes, and David P. Jackson, trans. *Stages of the Buddha's Teachings: Three Key Texts*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2015.
- Sakaki, Ryozauro, ed. *Mahāvvyutpatti*. 2 vols. 1916. Reprint, Tokyo: Kokusho Kanakōkai, 1987.

Shih, Jen Lang. "The Perpetuity of the Dharma: A Study and Translation of Da Aluohan Nantimiduoluo Suoshuo Fazhu Ji." PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2002.

Sullivan, Bruce M. *Seer of the Fifth Veda: Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa in the Mahābhārata*. 1990. Reprint, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999.

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

Aditi

mi sbyin gyi bu

མི་སྤྱིན་གྱི་བུ།

aditi

A goddess in the Vedas.

g.2 Agnidattaputra

mes sbyin gyi bu

མེས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་བུ།

agnidattaputra

An Indian seer.

g.3 Airāvāṇa

sa srung gi bu

ས་སྤྱང་གི་བུ།

airāvāṇa

The name of Indra's elephant.

g.4 Ājñātakauṇḍinya

kau di n+ya

ཀོ་དི་ནུ།

ājñātakauṇḍinya

The first monk that the Buddha Śākyamuni recognized as having understood his teachings.

g.5 Akaniṣṭha

'og min

འོག་མིན།

akaniṣṭha

The highest of the five pure abodes (*śuddhāvāsa*) among the form realms.

g.6 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

ānanda

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.7 Aniruddha

ma 'gags pa

མ་འགགས་པ།

aniruddha

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.8 Arhat

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཙུགས་པ།

arhat

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.9 aśoka

mya ngan 'tshang

མྱ་ངན་འཚོང་།

aśoka

A species of flowering tree.

g.10 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

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 Bakkula

bak+ku la

བཀུ་ལ།

bakkula

From a wealthy brahmin family, Bakkula is said to have become a monk at the age of eighty and lived to be a hundred and sixty! He is also said to have had two families, because as a baby he was swallowed by a large fish and the family who discovered him alive in the fish's stomach also claimed him as their child. The Buddha's foremost pupil in terms of health and longevity. It is also said he could remember many previous lifetimes and was a pupil of the previous buddhas Padmottara, Vipāśyin, and Kāśyapa.

g.12 Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.13 banyan

n+ya gro d+ha

ཉལ་གྲོད་མ།

nyagrodha

Ficus indica banyan or Indian fig.

g.14 Beautiful to Behold

blta na sdug

བཟོན་སྤུག་

sudarśana

The name of a divine palace in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

g.15 Beautifying

mdzes byed

མངོས་བྱེད།

—

The name of the palaces in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings.

g.16 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā

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.17 Dānaśīla

dA na shI la

དཱན་ཤི་ལ།

dānaśīla

The name of an Indian preceptor, active in Tibet in the ninth century, who translated many texts in the Kangyur.

g.18 Devadatta

lhas byin

ལྷས་བྱིན།

devadatta

A cousin of the Buddha Śākyamuni who broke with him and established his own community. His tradition was still continuing during the first millennium CE. He is portrayed as engendering evil schemes against the Buddha and even succeeding in wounding him. He is usually identified with wicked beings in accounts of previous lifetimes.

g.19 Dhṛtarāṣṭra

yul 'khor srung

ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྤྱང།

dhṛtarāṣṭra

One of the Four Great Kings.

g.20 divine realm of the Four Great Kings

rgyal chen bzhi'i ris · rgyal chen bzhi'i ris kyi lha'i ris

རྒྱལ་ཚེན་བཞིའི་རིས། · རྒྱལ་ཚེན་བཞིའི་རིས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་འི་རིས།

caturmahārājakāyika

The lowest of the six heavens of the desire realm, it is ruled over by the Four Great Kings, who each guard one of the cardinal directions.

g.21 Durāsada

bsnyen par dka'

བསྟེན་པར་དཀའ།

durāsada

An Indian seer.

g.22 dwelling at the foot of a tree

shing drung na gnas pa

ཤིང་རྩུང་ན་གནས་པ།

vṛkṣamūlagata

One of a number of lifestyles that Buddhist monks might adopt, it is particularly conducive to practicing meditation and is thus associated with monks who valued meditation as an integral part of their lives as ascetics.

g.23 five clairvoyances

mngon par shes pa lnga

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་ལྔ།

pañcābhijñā

See “five worldly clairvoyances.”

g.24 five worldly clairvoyances

'jig rten pa'i mngon par shes pa lnga

འཇིག་རྟེན་པའི་མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་ལྔ།

pañcalokābhijñā

Five supernatural faculties resulting from meditative concentration that can be attained by both Buddhist and non-Buddhist practitioners: divine sight, divine hearing, knowing the minds of others, recollecting past lives, and the ability to perform miracles.

g.25 forest grove where austerities are practiced

dka' thub kyi nags tshal

དཀར་ཐུབ་ཀྱི་ནགས་ཚལ།

tapovana

The name of a forest hermitage.

g.26 Four Great Kings

rgyal po chen po bzhi

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཚེན་པོ་བཞི།

caturmahārāja

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Four gods who live on the lower slopes (fourth level) of Mount Meru in the eponymous Heaven of the Four Great Kings (*Cāturmahārājika*, *rgyal chen bzhi' i ris*) and guard the four cardinal directions. Each is the leader of a nonhuman class of beings living in his realm. They are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, ruling the gandharvas in the east; Virūḍhaka, ruling over the kumbhāṇḍas in the south; Virūpākṣa, ruling the nāgas in the west; and Vaiśravaṇa (also known as Kubera) ruling the yakṣas in the north. Also referred to as Guardians of the World or World-Protectors (*lokapāla*, *'jig rten skyong ba*).

g.27 gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

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 under the jurisdiction of 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.28 garland-bearing god

phreng thogs · phreng thogs kyi lha

ཕྲེང་ཐོགས། · ཕྲེང་ཐོགས་ཀྱི་ལྷ།

—

A class of gods associated with the Four Great Kings.

g.29 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗིང་།

garuḍa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.30 Gavāṃpati

ba lang bdag

བ་ལང་བདག་།

gavāṃpati

A great śrāvaka adept.

- g.31 **Gopā**
sa 'tsho ma
 ས་འཚོ་མ།
gopā
 The name of a Śākya girl who in certain sources becomes Prince Siddhārtha's wife.
- g.32 **grāha**
'dzin khri
 འཛིན་ཁྲི།
grāha
 "A rapacious animal living in fresh or sea water, any large fish or marine animal (crocodile, shark, serpent, Gangetic alligator, water elephant, or hippopotamus)." (Monier-Williams)
- g.33 **great seer**
drang srong chen po
 དང་སྲོང་ཆེན་པོ།
maharṣi
- g.34 **Heaven of the Thirty-Three**
sum cu rtsa gsum ris
 ལུས་རྩུ་རྩ་གསུམ་རིས།
trāyāstrimśatkāyika
 The second heaven of the desire realm located above Mount Meru and reigned over by Indra and thirty-two other deities.
- g.35 **holy fig**
plag sha
 ལྷ་ག་ཤ།
plakṣa
Ficus religiosa or the waved-leaf fig tree, *Ficus infectoria*.
- g.36 **Human-God**
mi lha
 མི་ལྷ།
naradeva

An Indian seer.

g.37 hungry ghost

yi dags

ཡི་དགས།

preta

A class of beings who in the Buddhist tradition are particularly known to suffer from hunger and thirst and the inability to acquire sustenance.

g.38 Indra

brgya byin · lha'i dbang po

བརྒྱ་བྱིན། · ལྷ་འི་དབང་པོ།

indra

King of the gods.

g.39 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling pa

འཛམ་བུ་འི་གླིང་པ།

jambudvīpa

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.40 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇི་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

jinamitra

The name of an Indian preceptor, active in Tibet in the ninth century, who translated many texts in the Kangyur.

g.41 Joy Producing

dga' ba skyed pa

དགའ་བ་སྐྱེད་པ།

—

The name of a garden grove in the divine realm of the Four Great Kings.

g.42 Kṛṣṇagandhavatīputra

dri nag ma'i bu

དྷི་ནག་མའི་བུ།

—

An alternate name for the Indian seer Vyāsa.

g.43 Kubera

lus ngan po

ལུས་ངན་པོ།

kubera

One of the Four Great Kings.

g.44 kumbhīra

ku ma b+hi ra

ཀུ་མ་རྗེ་ར།

kumbhīra

A sea monster; a crocodile of the Ganges (Monier-Williams).

g.45 lacking deformities

rus pa med

རུས་པ་མེད།

ahalya

g.46 living in seclusion

nang du yang dag 'jog la gnas pa

ནང་དུ་ཡང་དག་འཛོག་ལ་གནས་པ།

—

One of a number of lifestyles that Buddhist monks might adopt, it is particularly conducive to practicing meditation and is thus associated with monks who valued meditation as an integral part of their lives as ascetics. The Tibetan *nang du yang dag 'jog pa* can correspond to the Sanskrit *pratisaṃlāyana* or *pratisaṃlīna*.

g.47 Mahākāśyapa

'od srung chen po

འོད་སྤྱང་ཆེན་པོ།

mahākāśyapa

One of the principal disciples of the Buddha, known for his ascetic practice.

g.48 Marīci

smig rgyu

སྲིག་རྒྱ།

marīci

A goddess.

g.49 most important disciple

nyan thos chen po

ཉན་ཐོས་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāśrāvaka

A term referring to the Buddha Śākyamuni's closest and most important disciples.

g.50 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments, where they guard wealth and sometimes also teachings. Nāgas are associated with serpents and have a snakelike appearance. In Buddhist art and in written accounts, they are regularly portrayed as half human and half snake, and they are also said to have the ability to change into human form. Some nāgas are Dharma protectors, but they can also bring retribution if they are disturbed. They may likewise fight one another, wage war, and destroy the lands of others by causing lightning, hail, and flooding.

g.51 Nanda

dga' bo

དགའ་བོ།

nanda

A powerful nāga king.

g.52 Nose of Bṛhaspati

phur bu rna

ཕུར་བུ་རྣ།

—

An Indian seer.

g.53 one who courses in the vault of the heavens

nam mkha'i ngos las 'gro ba

ནམ་མཁའི་ངོས་ལས་འགྲོ་བ།

—

An epithet, given to the seer Vyāsa, that alludes to the association of the Vedic seers with a range of astronomical phenomena. Like the figure of the *siddha*, the great seers can also be understood as beings who dwell “in the vault of the heavens,” which symbolizes their ascension to a semidivine status through the practice of intense asceticism.

g.54 one who lives according to the Brahmanical treatises

nus can bu'i bstan bcos kyis 'tsho ba

ནུས་ཅན་བུའི་བསྟན་བཅོས་ཀྱིས་འཚོ་བ།

—

An epithet given to the great seer Vyāsa. The Tibetan *nus can bu / nus pa can bu*, which would back-translate to the Sanskrit **samarthika*, is in this case either a mistranslation or the result of a corruption in the original source, which would likely have read **smārtikaśāstra*, a reference to the “treatises” of those who follow the Brahmanical traditions.

g.55 outflow

zag pa

ཟག་པ།

āsrava

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally, “to flow” or “to ooze.” Mental defilements or contaminations that “flow out” toward the objects of cyclic existence, binding us to them. Vasubandhu offers two alternative explanations of this term: “They cause beings to remain (*āsayanti*) within saṃsāra” and “They flow from the Summit of Existence down to the Avīci hell, out of the six wounds that are the sense fields” (*Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* 5.40; Pradhan 1967, p. 308). The Summit of Existence (*bhavāgra, srid pa'i rtse mo*) is the highest point within saṃsāra, while the hell called Avīci (*mnar med*) is the lowest; the six sense fields (*āyatana, skye mched*) here refer to the five sense faculties plus the mind, i.e., the six internal sense fields.

g.56 Pañcaśikha

gtsug phud lnga pa

གཙུག་ཕུད་ལྔ་པ།

pañcaśikha

A gandharva king.

g.57 Reality

chos nyid

ཚོས་ཉིད།

dharmatā

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.58 Revata

nam gru

ནམ་གུ།

revata

A śrāvaka, the youngest brother of Śāriputra. Also known as Khadiravanīya. Elsewhere translated as *nam gru*.

g.59 Śacī

bde sogs

བདེ་སོགས།

śacī

The name of Indra's highest consort.

g.60 sacred thread

mchod phyir thogs

མཚོད་ཕྱིར་ཐོགས།

yajñopavīta

A term for the thread with which members of the twice-born castes are invested upon their entrance into the student stage, during which they master the study of Vedic and other religious rites, and that they wear during the performance of any rites.

g.61 sallakī

sa la ki

ས་ལ་གྱི

śallakī · sallakī

A species of tree.

g.62 sandalwood

tsan dan

ཅན་དན།

candana

The sandalwood tree, *Sirium myrtifolium*.

g.63 Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ཤ་རི་བུ།

śāriputra

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.64 seer
drang srong
 དང་སྲིང་།
r̥ṣi
 Indian sage or wise man (often a wandering ascetic or hermit).
- g.65 sense base
skye mched
 སྐྱེ་མཚེད།
āyatana
 Usually refers to the six sense faculties and their corresponding objects, i.e., the first twelve of the eighteen *dhātus* (“elements”). Along with *skandha* (“aggregates”) and *dhātu*, it is one of the three major categories in the taxonomy of phenomena in the sūtra literature.
- g.66 service
lhag par bya ba
 ལྷག་པར་བྱ་བ།
adhikāra
 A broad term for any kind of service that one might perform to honor, worship, or otherwise support the Three Jewels, even outside the context of performing a formal offering rite.
- g.67 sexual desire
'dod pa la 'dod pa
 འདོད་པ་ལ་འདོད་པ།
 —
 This term more literally translates “desire for passion” or “desire for sex.”
- g.68 Śirīṣaka
shi ri sha ka
 ཤི་རི་ཤ་ཀ།
śirīṣaka
 A divine garden in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three that derives its name from the śirīṣaka trees (*Acacia sirissa*) that grow there.
- g.69 śiśumāra

chu srin byis pa gsod

ཚུ་སྲིན་བྱིས་པ་གསོད།

śiśumāra

A type of sea creature, its name literally means “child killer.”

g.70 Son of a Doe

ri dags mo'i bu

རི་དགས་མོའི་བུ།

—

An Indian seer.

g.71 Son of an Engraver

rnam par rko'i bu

རྣམ་པར་རྟོའི་བུ།

—

An Indian seer.

g.72 Son of Fire

me'i bu

མེའི་བུ།

—

An Indian seer.

g.73 Son of Pleasure Protector

rnam par bde srung gi bu

རྣམ་པར་བདེ་སྤྱད་གི་བུ།

—

An Indian seer.

g.74 Son of the Grammar Author

sgra byed kyi bu

སློ་བྲེད་ཀྱི་བུ།

—

An Indian seer.

g.75 śrāvaka

nyan thos

ལྷ་མོའི་ཐོག་ལ་

śrāvaka

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Sanskrit term *śrāvaka*, and the Tibetan *nyan thos*, both derived from the verb “to hear,” are usually defined as “those who *hear* the teaching from the Buddha and *make it heard* to others.” Primarily this refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat by seeking self-liberation and nirvāṇa. They are the practitioners of the first turning of the wheel of the Dharma on the four noble truths, who realize the suffering inherent in saṃsāra and focus on understanding that there is no independent self. By conquering afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), they liberate themselves, attaining first the stage of stream enterers at the path of seeing, followed by the stage of once-returners who will be reborn only one more time, and then the stage of non-returners who will no longer be reborn into the desire realm. The final goal is to become an arhat. These four stages are also known as the “four results of spiritual practice.”

g.76 stone platforms like Indra’s throne

ar mo nig lta bu’i rdo leb

མངའ་མོ་ནིག་ལྷ་བུའི་རྩོམ་ལེག་

pāṇḍukambalaśilātala

Commonly listed as one of the features of the garden groves of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, this term can be used to describe Indra’s throne itself or any number of divine stone platforms that resemble Indra’s throne.

g.77 Sudharma

chos bzang

ཚོས་བཟང་།

sudharma

Meeting place of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

g.78 Sumeru

ri rab

རི་རབ།

sumeru

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, Godāniya; 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.79 three impurities

dri ma gsum

དྲིམ་གསུམ།

trimala

The three root emotional defilements (*kleśa*): desire, hatred, and delusion. Also known as the three poisons (*dug gsum, triviṣa*).

g.80 Tumburu

tum bu ru

ཏུམ་བུ་རུ།

tumburu

A gandharva.

g.81 Upananda

nye dga'

ཉེདགའ།

upananda

A powerful nāga king.

g.82 Variously Ornamented

sna tshogs rgyan

སྐྱ་ཚོགས་རྒྱན།

—

The name of a goddess.

g.83 Virūdhaka

'phags skyes po

འཕགས་སྤེས་པོ།

virūḍhaka

One of the Four Great Kings.

g.84 Virūpākṣa

mig mi bzang

མིག་མི་བཟང་།

virūpākṣa

One of the Four Great Kings.

g.85 Vyāsa

rgyas pa

རྒྱལ་པ།

vyāsa

An Indian seer.

g.86 wisdom and vision of liberation

rnam par grol ba'i ye shes mthong ba

རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ་བའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཐོང་བ།

vimuktijñānadarśana

g.87 wish-fulfilling kovidāra tree

shing yongs 'du sa brtol

ཤིང་ཡོངས་འདུ་ས་བརྟོན།

pāriyātrakaḥ kovidāraḥ

A flowering tree that grows in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, with flowers that can be seen from fifty leagues away and a fragrance that can be smelled from one hundred leagues away. The blossoms of this tree delight the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, who eagerly watch and rejoice in each stage of their development. The kovidāra tree is glossed as *Bauhinia variegata*, which also bears the common names “orchid tree” or “purple orchid tree.” The Sanskrit name of this tree indicates that it is a “purple orchid tree” (*kovidāra*) for either “one who circumambulates” or “one who goes on pilgrimage” (*pāriyātraka*).

g.88 yojana

dpag tshad

དཔག་ཚད།

yojana

The longest unit of distance in classical India. The lack of a uniform standard for the smaller units means that there is no precise equivalent, especially as its theoretical length tended to increase over time. Therefore it can mean between four and ten miles.

g.89 Young Asita

dkar min gzhon nu

དཀར་མིན་གཞོན་ནུ།

—

An Indian seer.