

༄༅། །ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྐྱོད་གིས་ལུས་པ།

The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)

Rāṣṭrapālapariṣcchā

Translated into Tibetan by
t. jinamitra · ye shes sde

འཕགས་པ་ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྐྱོད་གིས་ལུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa yul 'khor skyong gis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)”

Āryarāṣṭrapālapariṣcchānāmamahāyānasūtra



Toh 166
Degé Kangyur, vol. 59 (mdo sde, ba), folios 171.b–175.a

Translated by Adam T. Miller
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)*, so called to distinguish it from a longer work with the same title (Toh 62), is a short Great Vehicle sūtra in which the Buddha describes the monks who will bring about the decline of the Dharma.

ac.

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ac.1 This translation was produced by Adam T. Miller under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2), so called to distinguish it from a longer work with the same title,¹ is a short Great Vehicle sūtra in which the Buddha describes the monks who will bring about the decline of the Dharma. The sūtra opens with the Buddha at Vulture Peak in Rājagṛha, surrounded by a group of monks. Among them is Rāṣṭrapāla, who asks the Buddha to describe the people who will bring about the decline of the Buddha's teaching. In his response, the Buddha first draws a sharp contrast between the condition of the monk (Tib. *dge slong gi gnas*), which entails monastic rigor, and the condition of laxity (Tib. *lhod pa'i gnas*), which denotes a lack of monastic discipline. He then describes both as embodied by monks. Rigorous monks—that is, *real* monks worthy of the name—are those who are concerned with possessing and perfecting moral discipline through solitary practice and self-cultivation. Lax monks—that is, imposter monks unworthy of the name—are those who do not live a life of strict discipline but are instead concerned with worldly affairs. These monks, the Buddha tells Rāṣṭrapāla, will bring about the decline of the teaching. This message is expressed first in prose and then again in verse.

i.2

Initially composed in Sanskrit, *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)* survives in Tibetan and Mongolian.² The Sanskrit title, following the transliterations available in the Tibetan editions, can be reconstructed as **Āryarāṣṭrapāla-paripṛcchānāmamahāyānasūtra*. Further details about the Sanskrit—when, where, and by whom it was compiled—are unknown. The Tibetan translation was produced and/or updated in the late eighth or early ninth century by Jinamitra, Yeshé Dé, and other unnamed assistants. *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)* is listed in both the Denkarma Catalog³ and the Phangthangma Catalog (under the title *'phags pa yul 'khor skyong gis zhus pa chung ngu*),⁴ and is witnessed in the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) and Thempangma (*them spangs ma*) recension lineages.⁵ To our knowledge, it has not been identified among the manuscripts found at Dunhuang.

- i.3 *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)* shares thematic content with two works titled similarly (or identically, as the case may be)—one from the Pali canon, the *Raṭṭhapāla Sutta*,⁶ and another from the Great Vehicle tradition, *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla* (Toh 62).⁷ The Pali text is largely concerned with illustrating to audiences both lay and monastic the qualities of proper monasticism and its virtues. The concern of *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)*, by contrast, appears to be more insular in nature. There are two possible conditions, the Buddha tells Rāṣṭrapāla: rigor and laxity. Those who have moral discipline are *real* monks. Those who lack moral discipline, on the other hand, are imposter monks. Though people of the latter sort consider themselves to be monks, they are no monks at all, and such individuals will bring about the decline of the Dharma.⁸ In the longer Great Vehicle work, *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (1)*, the concern is again largely insular. Here, however, it is the rigorous bodhisattva who is valorized, not the rigorous monk. In fact, monks are criticized and denigrated in *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (1)*, while rigorous, forest-dwelling bodhisattvas are valorized as the ideal, authentic practitioners. What exactly to make of these differences—with regard, for example, to the social and institutional locations of the Great Vehicle practitioners and authors behind these two works—is beyond the scope of this introduction. Instead, we refer readers to Reginald Ray and Daniel Boucher, whose work on these two Great Vehicle sūtras has informed the brief comments here.⁹
- i.4 The present translation is based on the Degé version in consultation with the Stok Palace version. These two Tibetan texts are not identical, but they do not often differ in a way that affects the meaning. Therefore, we mostly followed the Degé. We followed the Stok readings when they helped to clarify the sense of the Degé, and we provide both readings in cases where the variance impacts the meaning.
- i.5 In 1952, Jacob Ensink translated *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)* from the Tibetan. Our translation has benefitted from comparison with his work.

**The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra
The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla**

1.

The Translation

[F.171.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing at Vulture Peak in Rājagṛha, together with a great saṅgha of 1,250 monks. Then, the venerable Rāṣṭrapāla arose from his seat, draped his upper robe over one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee, bowed before the Blessed One, and with folded hands asked, “Blessed One, what are the qualities of the beings who will bring about the decline of the Thus-Gone One’s teaching?”

1.2 The Blessed One replied, “Rāṣṭrapāla, there are two conditions. What are they? They are the condition of the monk and the condition of laxity. Now, the condition of the monk is that which pertains to having moral discipline. And the condition of laxity [F.172.a] is that which pertains to lacking moral discipline.

1.3 “Rāṣṭrapāla, monks who seek complete nirvāṇa should train in these two conditions. What are the two? Through the component of moral discipline, they should fully guard themselves and they should contemplate themselves and nothing else. Now, what is it to contemplate oneself and nothing else? It is to analyze by thinking, ‘Do I want to want to eliminate my own suffering, or do I want to awaken to unexcelled perfect awakening?’

1.4 “Those who seek complete nirvāṇa through the vehicle of the śrāvakas should train only in the precepts of the śrāvakas. They are to be bound by the prātimokṣa vows. Their conduct and personal associations should be perfect. They should train having genuinely accepted that even the slightest fault is to be viewed with apprehension. They should purify their actions of body, speech, and mind in accordance with the precepts. They should have pure livelihoods and be irreproachable. Without greed and without longing for flavorful foods, they should have suitable robes and suitable begging bowls.

- 1.5 “Also, they should not eat just any mixture of food.¹⁰ They should train by eating a little bit of food until just sated. In this way, they should always and continuously consider food as filth. In other words, they should perceive food as excrement and urine, as pus, as vomit, as rubbish, as like a crusted wound, [F.172.b] as base, as unpleasant, as like the flesh of children, as trash, as refuse, as fetid. In this manner they should think about what and how much they eat.
- 1.6 “Without attachment,¹¹ aversion, and confusion, they should always delight in solitude. They should never delight in idle chatter. They should readily accept solitude like a dying deer. They should be isolated. They should delight in solitude. Delighting in solitude, they should be resolute and patient. If associating with noble people, they should be pleasant. They should not be given to worldly talk. They should abandon commercial activity. Delight in medicinal cures, delight in gossip, and association with household activities should be avoided. They should be discerning while sitting, standing, walking, and sleeping. They should rely on total solitude, delightful retreats, and peaceful places¹² that are quiet and silent, not frightening, without any slithering snakes, without many people, devoid of people, and suitable for inner absorption.
- 1.7 “They should refrain from self-exaltation. They should refrain from belittling others. They should refrain from pretension and flattery. They should always and continuously cultivate an attitude of dissatisfaction. They should not associate with and get to know householders and monastics. They should rely on all empty dharmas, meditate on them, and expand on them. They should avoid congregating with ignorant monks.¹³ They should not associate with nuns. They should have few desires. They should always examine themselves for personal faults. And they should not look for the faults of others. They should not rely on their parents, let alone other families. They should be properly and thoroughly restrained.¹⁴ [F.173.a] They should be givers of the appeasing Dharma. They should be discriminating in their focus. They should dwell in isolated places. They should not speak to others even in an agreeable manner, let alone in an unagreeable manner.
- 1.8 “They should establish their minds firmly in the teachings and analyze the profound dharmas. What is it to analyze the profound dharmas? It is to analyze by thinking, for example, that ‘the eye is impermanent.’ It is to analyze its arising and dissolution. And that with respect to which arising and dissolution should be analyzed is itself analyzed as nonexistent. Why? That which is called ‘eye’ does not exist. Though the eye, form, and eye consciousness are not objects of perception, they are perceived as nonexistent. Why? There are no dharmas that are objects of perception. Therefore, the support of the ear should not be imagined. The supports of

the nose, tongue, body, and mind should not be imagined. No support whatsoever should be imagined. What would be imagined when doing so? All dharmas should be apprehended as empty in this way. Apprehending the dharmas in this way purifies the component of moral discipline. It purifies the components of concentration and of wisdom. It gives rise to the result of stream-entry. And it gives rise to the result of the once-returner, the result of the non-returner, and arhathood. Detached in this way, the initial śrāvakas eliminated their defilements.

1.9 “Now, what are imposter monks? Rāṣṭrapāla, such monks cling to the conception that they are themselves monks. Their component of moral discipline is incomplete. They cherish their robes and begging bowls. They cherish material things. Abandoning silence, [F.173.b] they claim for themselves bedding, seats, and great invitations that lead to unfortunate rebirths. They associate with women. They associate with nuns. They associate with those favored by the king. And through associating with them, their eyes are always intent on forms. By cultivating such a mind, they are thoroughly afflicted. If their mind is afflicted, so will be their condition. They will consistently make serious mistakes or small ones. These, Rāṣṭrapāla, are imposter monks.

1.10 “Why are they imposter monks? Imposter monks are those fools who reject the plain bedding and seats approved by the Thus-Gone One, which are the bedding and seats proper to ascetics, who yearn for robes, who yearn for material things, and who associate with women and householders. How could ascetic conduct be found in fools with such associations? Moreover, they criticize and revile the profound dharmas. Although they have heard of karma, they speak ill of others. They speak ill of the wilderness. They praise those who are solely focused on desire for pleasure. They praise those who are solely absorbed in pleasurable idle chatter. They speak ill of those possessing any of the conditions of monks.

1.11 “The Thus-Gone One said in a sūtra, ‘There is no occasion to associate with householders and monastics.’ Those who reject this have no desire for ascetic conduct. They have no desire to be a monk. Sitting apart, they teach the Dharma to women and instruct others still in the foundations of such behavior. Why? [F.174.a] The Thus-Gone One describes them as the robbers of the Dharma. Abandoning the prātimokṣa vows, they sit apart and teach the Dharma to women. These fools are imposter monks. With their shaven heads, they are imposters. With their saffron robes, they are imposters.

1.12 “How can an imposter be known? Those fools approve of that which the blessed buddhas condemn. They ordain people before they reach twenty years of age. They take with their own hands. They enjoy things without thinking. They prepare and cook food for themselves. They handle gold and

silver. They accumulate millet, barley, and other grains. They engage in commercial activity related to houses, fields, and parks. They employ servants. They appropriate objects related to houses, fields, and parks. Not believing in the fruition of karma, not having confidence in the prātimokṣa, toward that lifestyle are they inclined, toward that lifestyle do they fall, toward that lifestyle do they sink—they act as if that is all there is.¹⁵ Regarding themselves as ascetics, where there are many people, they teach in a way that resembles the naked ascetics. They champion the view of personal identity. By teaching personal identity, and like the naked ascetics, they draw many people in and transfix them. Apprehending the domain of buddhas, the condition of thus-gone ones, as empty, they disparage it. They are known to revile it.

1.13 “Rāṣṭrapāla, sentient beings such as these will arise. They are not householders, nor are they ascetics. They will bring about the decline of the Thus-Gone One’s teaching.”

1.14 Then, the Lord at that time spoke the following verses:

1.15 “Monks¹⁶ who are restrained in moral discipline,
Who, at peace, delight in calm places,
Who train in the prātimokṣa—
They are brahmin monks. [F.174.b]

1.16 “Taking up the most important dharmas,
Monks who have nothing,
Who delight in the remote wilderness—
They are brahmin monks.

1.17 “Those who do not delight in idle chatter,
Who train well in the prātimokṣa,
Pay great veneration, day and night,
To the superior person.

1.18 “Those who neither till the fields nor buy and sell,
Who do not pine for begging bowls and robes,
And who make effort without appropriation
Are the Buddha’s śrāvakas.

1.19 “Those who do not teach women,¹⁷
Who do not associate with women,
Who praise those who sit under trees—
They are the Buddha’s śrāvakas.

1.20 “Do not offer flattery,
For the sake of food and drink;

- Monks who become like that
Do not spend time around women.
- 1.21 “Women are known to be
Like sharp swords polished.
From the prātimokṣa it follows
That the idea of women is abandoned.
- 1.22 “Those gentle ones, for the sake of food,
For drink, and for robes,
Go from house to house
But do not teach the dharmas.
- 1.23 “ ‘Monks should not look at women,’
The Perfectly Awakened One has said.
Rely on those who know that.
Looking at women is the sphere of Māra.
- 1.24 “They teach that women are nonexistent,
That to lie down with a woman is like lying with a corpse.
For that reason, the all-knowing buddhas
Do not commend distractions.
- 1.25 “The dharmas are without life force, without personality,
Hollow, insignificant, and insubstantial.
Those who affirm emptiness¹⁸—
They are true monks.
- 1.26 “Those who always abound in strong effort,
Who dwell in the wilderness alone,
Whose minds do not rely on the world—
They are true monks.
- 1.27 “Fearless like lions,
They dedicate themselves to pure conduct.
For the sake of liberation from all suffering,
Those endowed with wisdom cultivate the path.
- 1.28 “When examining the eye and form,
They find consciousness.
They do not find what they are looking for
When examining objects—[F.175.a]
Those did not arise before, and they will not arise later.
In the middle, too, there is nothing.

- 1.29 “This being the case,
On account of the sameness of all dharmas,
Those gentle ones, for the sake of food,
For drink, and for robes
Go from house to house,
But they do not teach the dharmas.
- 1.30 “Without cause, the gentle are virtuous.
They do not violate or destroy
The precepts of the Buddha.¹⁹
Disciplined and virtuous, they do not fear emptiness.
They enter into fearlessness.
They do not eliminate the frightening view.
- 1.31 “They do not eliminate actual sentient persons.
In all wholesome dharmas,
They remain well established.²⁰
Steadfast, those who in the world
Reach nirvāṇa
Will become worthy of veneration.
- 1.32 “Those who are lacking in wisdom,
Who are lazy, who make little effort,
Who have learned little, who desire wickedness,
Who are arrogant, harsh, and quick to anger,²¹
Who take a razor to their heads,
Who wear wood-dyed Dharma robes,
Who do not understand the meaning of emptiness—
They do not cultivate discernment.
- 1.33 “They disparage the Dharma
And speak ill of the Great Vehicle.
Those who have taught this Dharma
In accordance with what they have been taught
Are attached to the dark faction.
They are bound for unfortunate rebirth.
- 1.34 When the Blessed One had spoken, the venerable Rāṣṭrapāla and the world
with its monks, gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised
what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.35 *The Great Vehicle sūtra “The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)” is complete.*

c.

Colophon

c.1 The Indian scholar Jinamitra and others, along with the chief editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé, translated, edited, and finalized the text.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 See Vienna Buddhist Translation Studies Group, trans., *The Questions of Rāstrapāla (1)* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh62.html>), Toh 62 (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2021).
- n.2 Note that the Mongolian version was translated from the Tibetan.
- n.3 Shūki 1950, p. 137, no. 220.
- n.4 *Phangthangma* 2003, p. 17, line 13.
- n.5 See the University of Vienna's *Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies* (<http://www.rkts.org/cat.php?id=166&typ=1>) for more.
- n.6 Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi 2015, pp. 677–691.
- n.7 Vienna Buddhist Studies Translation Group, trans., *The Questions of Rāstrapāla* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh62.html>) (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2021).
- n.8 For more on this theme, see Nattier 1991.
- n.9 Boucher 2008; Ray 1994, especially pp. 275–80.
- n.10 The Degé and Stok readings are both difficult to make sense of here. Degé: *des kha zas yog drod kyis bza' bar yang mi bya ste*; Stok: *des kha zas yog drid kyis bza' bar yang mi bya ste*. The Phukdrak reading offers some clarity: *des kha zas yog tsam gyi bza' bar yang mi bya ste*. Here, *yog* suggests something like “to twist together.” Thanks to Rory Lindsay for pointing out this reading.
- n.11 Degé: *chags pa med pa*; Stok: *chags pa ched pa* (sic; *chad pa?*). As it stands, the Stok reading suggests something like “spreading over,” which does not make sense given the context. Reading *ched pa* as *chad pa*, however, provides a

sense of “cutting off” or “elimination,” which harmonizes well with the *med pa* attested in the Degé.

- n.12 Degé: *zhi ba'i gnas mal*; Stok: *zhi ba'i gnas la*. According to the Comparative Edition, the Yongle, Lithang, Kangxi, Narthang, and Choné read *zhi ba'i gnas lam*. Though there are differences here, the sense is clear.
- n.13 Degé: *rig pa dang mi ldan pa'i dge slong*; Stok: *rigs pa dang mi ldan pa'i dge slong*. The Stok reading suggests something like “unsuitable,” “improper,” or “unreasonable,” any of which would work just as well as “ignorant.”
- n.14 Degé: *shin tu yang dag par bsdam pa can du bya'o*; Stok: *shin tu yang dag par bsnyen pa can du bya'o*. The Stok reading suggests that “service” is at issue here rather than “restraint.”
- n.15 Degé: *de la 'bab de la bab de la bden par 'dzin de'i spyod lam byed*; Stok: *de la gzhol/ de la 'bab/ de la bab de dben par 'dzin/ der spyod lam byed*. Admittedly, the translation of the final clause is loose. We think, however, that such a rendering captures the meaning well.
- n.16 Degé: *dge slong*; Stok: *dge sbyong*. The Stok reading provides “ascetics” rather than “monks.”
- n.17 Degé: *de dag bud med ston mi byed*; Stok: *de dag bud med sten mi byed*. The Stok reading suggests that “being near” or “relying on” women is the problem (rather than “teaching” women).
- n.18 Degé: *stong pa nyid la mos byed pa*; Stok: *stong pa nyid la chos byed pa*. The Degé reading suggests “believing in emptiness,” while the Stok reading suggests “enacting” or “practicing” in emptiness, perhaps construing dharmas as empty. With the language of “affirm” in the translation, we hope to strike something of a balance between the two.
- n.19 Degé: *'da' zhing 'jig par mi byed de*; Stok: *'da' zhing 'jigs par mi byed de*. Rather than “not destroying,” the Stok reading suggests that they do not “fear” the precepts of the Buddha. Either reading seems appropriate in the context.
- n.20 Degé: *shin tu brtan par gnas pa yin*; Stok: *shin tu bstan par gnas pa yin*. The Stok suggests, perhaps, “they abide well in the teachings.”
- n.21 Degé: *nga rgyal tha ba khro 'gyur gnas*; Stok: *nga rgyal tha ba khro 'byung gnas*. Rather than “quick to anger,” the Stok suggests “a source of anger,” or perhaps “a wellspring of anger,” both of which have the same basic sense as the Degé reading but with different imagery.

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for Sanskrit names and terms ·

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in the Sanskrit manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other Sanskrit manuscripts of the Kangyur or Tengyur.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionaries.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where Tibetan-Sanskrit relationship 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 arhathood

dgra bcom pa nyid

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ་ཉིད།

—

The fourth of the four levels of attainment of the vehicle of the śrāvakas, it is the attainment of a nirvāṇa distinct from unexcelled perfect awakening, the type of nirvāṇa proper to buddhas.

g.2 ascetic

dge sbyong

དགེ་སྦྱོང་།

śramaṇa

A mendicant. Here in reference to a particular norm of monasticism as dedicated to cultivation of moral discipline.

g.3 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.4 attachment

chags pa

ཚགས་པ།

—

Here seemingly in connection with *'dod chags*, or desire, one of the three root poisons.

g.5 aversion

sdang ba

སྤང་བ།

—

Seemingly here in connection with *zhe sdang*, or hatred, one of the three root poisons.

g.6 awakened one

sangs rgyas

སངས་རྒྱལ།

buddha

g.7 Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban+de ye shes sde

བན་པེ་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.8 begging bowl

lhung bzed

ལུང་བཟེད།

—

The bowls used by monastics to collect alms.

g.9 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཙོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavat

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to “subduing” the four māras, *ldan* to “possessing” the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to “going

beyond” saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as “one who destroys the four māras.” This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root √*bhañj* (“to break”).

g.10 commercial activity

nyo tshong

ཉོ་ཚང་།

—

Buying and selling, trade, commerce.

g.11 complete nirvāṇa

yongs su mya ngan las 'da' ba · yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa

ཡོངས་སྐྱུ་རྒྱ་རྒྱ་ལས་འདེའ་བ། · ཡོངས་སྐྱུ་རྒྱ་རྒྱ་ལས་འདེའ་བ།

parinirvāṇa

The ultimate soteriological goal of the Buddhist tradition. The transcendence of suffering.

g.12 concentration

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་རིམ་འཛིན།

samādhi

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

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

g.13 condition of laxity

lhod pa'i gnas

སྟོང་པའི་གནས།

—

g.14 condition of the monk

dge slong gi gnas

དགེ་སྟོང་གི་གནས།

—

g.15 confidence

dad pa

དད་པ།

śraddhā

g.16 confusion

rmongs pa

སྐྱོངས་པ།

—

Seemingly here in connection with *gti mug*, or delusion, one of the three root poisons.

g.17 decline of the teaching

bstan pa 'di nub pa

བསྟན་པ་འདི་རྒྱབ་པ།

—

Many sūtras express concern over the decline of the Dharma, among them the sūtra translated here. For a sustained study of this theme, see Jan Nattier's (1991) *Once Upon a Future Time*.

g.18 decline of the Thus-Gone One's teaching

de bzhin gshegs pa'i bstan pa 'di nub

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་བསྟན་པ་འདི་རྒྱབ།

—

See "decline of the teaching."

g.19 dharma

chos

ཚོས།

dharmā

This word has several senses. It can refer to the Buddhist teaching as a whole, as in the truth about reality. It can also refer to the ontological simples posited by the Abhidharma. In other cases, it can simply mean something like “quality.”

g.20 dissatisfaction

skyo ba

སློབ།

—

Likely a translation of *udvega* or a related word, *skyo ba* here refers to a kind of valorized world-weariness that stands somewhere between fear and disgust. For a study of this, though without reference to Tibetan, see Andrea Acri’s (2015) “Between Impetus, Fear and Disgust.”

g.21 emptiness

stong pa nyid

སྟོང་པ་ནིད།

śūnyatā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

In this text:

In this sūtra, monks on the vehicle of the śrāvakas and the Great Vehicle both are to apprehend dharmas as empty. The Abhidharma position that dharmas exist as ontological simples appears by and large to be rejected here.

g.22 empty

stong pa

སྤྲེལ་གྱི་

śūnya

See “emptiness.”

g.23 **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 any sentient being in the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*) during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

g.24 **god**

lha

ལྷ།

deva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Cognate with the English term *divine*, the devas are most generally a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend and celebrate the teachings of Śākyamuni and other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In Buddhist cosmology the devas occupy the highest of the five or six “destinies” (*gati*) of saṃsāra among which beings take rebirth. The devas reside in the *devalokas*, “heavens” that traditionally number between twenty-six and twenty-eight and are divided between the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), material realm (*rūpadhātu*), and immaterial realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). A being attains rebirth among the devas either through meritorious deeds (in the desire realm) or the attainment of subtle meditative states (in the material and immaterial realms). While rebirth among the devas is considered favorable, it is ultimately a transitory state from which beings will fall when the conditions that lead to rebirth there are exhausted. Thus, rebirth in the god realms is regarded as a diversion from the spiritual path.

g.25 Great Vehicle

theg pa chen po

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāyāna

The means by which aspirants to nirvāṇa attain the state of buddhahood and thus seek to liberate others. Though the Great Vehicle and the vehicle of the śrāvakas have distinct ends, in this sūtra the distinction between the *means* to the two ends is less than clear. Both paths involve the analysis and apprehension of dharmas as empty.

g.26 hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

Typically, this word refers to followers of those teachings of the Buddha that focus on the monastic lifestyle and liberating oneself from suffering, in contrast to followers of the Bodhisattva Vehicle, who seek buddhahood for the sake of all beings. While this distinction appears to be maintained in this sūtra, the śrāvakas are here said to both cultivate moral discipline and apprehend phenomena and dharmas as empty.

g.27 idle chatter

bre mo'gtam · bre mo gtam

བྲེ་མོ་འགྲམ། · བྲེ་མོ་གྲམ།

—

g.28 imposter monk

dge slong ltar bcos pa

དགེ་སློང་ལྷར་བཅོས་པ།

—

A fully ordained male practitioner who is more concerned with worldly things than with cultivating moral discipline.

g.29 inner absorption

nang du yang dag 'jog

ནང་དུ་ཡང་དག་འཇོག།

—

This term can mean both physical seclusion and a meditative state of withdrawal.

g.30 isolated

dben pa

དབེན་པ།

—

See “solitude.”

g.31 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇི་ན་མི་ཐ།

jinamitra

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

g.32 lord

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavat

See “blessed one.”

g.33 Māra

bdud

བདུད།

māra

The principal deity in Paranirmitavaśavartin, the highest heaven in the desire realm. He is best known for his role in trying to prevent the Buddha’s awakening. *Māra* is also used as a generic name for the deities in his abode and is an impersonal term for the destructive forces that keep beings imprisoned in saṃsāra.

g.34 monk

dge slong

དགེ་སློང།

bhikṣu

A fully ordained male practitioner.

g.35 moral discipline

tshul khrims

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

śīla

Morally virtuous or disciplined conduct and the abandonment of morally undisciplined conduct of body, speech, and mind. The term is often used in reference to following precepts or rules according to one's ordination or vows.

g.36 nonexistent

med pa

མེད་པ།

—

In this sūtra, this term refers to the lack of a particular mode of existence. Insofar as all dharmas are empty, they lack inherent or independent existence. It is in this sense that such things as the eye are said to be nonexistent in this sūtra.

g.37 nun

dge slong ma

དགེ་སློང་མ།

bhikṣuṇī

A fully ordained female practitioner.

g.38 patient

bzod pa

བཟོད་པ།

kṣānti

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.39 people
sems can · gang zag
སེམས་ཅན། ་གང་ཟག།
sattva · pudgala

This term refers to anything with sentience. In this text, the concern is with human persons and, more specifically, male monastics.

g.40 prātimokṣa
so sor thar pa
སོ་སོར་ཐར་པ།
prātimokṣa

The regulations and rules that constitute Buddhist discipline. The number and scope of the vows differs depending on one's status (whether lay, novice monastic, or full monastic) and whether one is a monk or a nun.

g.41 precept
bslab pa · bslabs pa · bslab pa'i gzhi
བསྐྱབ་པ། ་བསྐྱབས་པ། ་བསྐྱབ་པའི་གཞི།
śikṣā · śikṣāpada

g.42 profound dharmas
chos zab mo
ཚོས་ཟབ་མོ།
gambhīradharma

The dharmas conceived as empty, insubstantial, and the like. Possibly also a reference to the Dharma teachings in which dharmas are understood in this way. In this sūtra, analysis of the dharmas as empty is said to give rise to the goals of the vehicle of the śrāvakas.

g.43 Rājagṛha
rgyal po'i khab
རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།
rājagṛha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ancient capital of Magadha prior to its relocation to Pāṭaliputra during the Mauryan dynasty, Rājagṛha is one of the most important locations in Buddhist history. The literature tells us that the Buddha and his saṅgha spent a considerable amount of time in residence in and around Rājagṛha—

in nearby places, such as the Vulture Peak Mountain (Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata), a major site of the Mahāyāna sūtras, and the Bamboo Grove (Veṇuvana)—enjoying the patronage of King Bimbisāra and then of his son King Ajātaśatru. Rājagṛha is also remembered as the location where the first Buddhist monastic council was held after the Buddha Śākyamuni passed into parinirvāṇa. Now known as Rajgir and located in the modern Indian state of Bihar.

g.44 Rāṣṭrapāla

yul 'khor skyong

ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྐྱོང་།

rāṣṭrapāla

A disciple of the Buddha.

g.45 resolute

mos pa

མོས་པ།

—

g.46 result of stream-entry

rgyun du zhugs pa'i 'bras bu

རྒྱལ་དུ་ཚུགས་པའི་འབྲས་བུ།

srotaāpattiphala

The first of the four levels of attainment of the vehicle of the śrāvakas, it is considered to be when one enters “the stream” of the noble ones that flows inexorably toward awakening.

g.47 result of the non-returner

phyir mi 'ong ba'i 'bras bu

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བའི་འབྲས་བུ།

anāgāmiḥphala

The third of the four levels of attainment of the vehicle of the śrāvakas, it is when one will no longer be reborn in the desire realm.

g.48 result of the once-returner

lan cig phyir 'ong ba'i 'bras bu

ལན་ཅིག་ཕྱིར་འོང་བའི་འབྲས་བུ།

sakṛdāgāmiḥphala

The second of the four levels of attainment of the vehicle of the śrāvakas, it is when one will only be reborn in saṃsāra once more.

g.49 robe

chos gos

ཚོས་གོས།

cīvara

The religious robes of monastics.

g.50 saṅgha

dge slong gi dge 'dun

དགེ་སློང་གི་དགེ་འདུན།

saṅgha

Here refers to the community of monks.

g.51 sentient being

sems can

སེམས་ཅན།

sattva

g.52 solitude

dben pa

དབེན་པ།

—

This term seems here to refer to physical isolation, but it can have a mental sense as well.

g.53 support

rten

རྟེན།

—

Here seems to be a synonym for *skye mched* (Skt. *āyatana*), the bases required for consciousness to arise.

g.54 the view of personal identity

gang zag tu lta ba

གང་ཟག་ཏུ་ལྟ་བ།

pudgaladr̥ṣṭi

The view that there is a discrete and enduring identity or individuality to sentient beings.

g.55 thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གསེགས་པ།

tathāgata

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A frequently used synonym for *buddha*. According to different explanations, it can be read as *tathā-gata*, literally meaning “one who has thus gone,” or as *tathā-āgata*, “one who has thus come.” *Gata*, though literally meaning “gone,” is a past passive participle used to describe a state or condition of existence. *Tatha(tā)*, often rendered as “suchness” or “thusness,” is the quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Therefore, this epithet is interpreted in different ways, but in general it implies one who has departed in the wake of the buddhas of the past, or one who has manifested the supreme awakening dependent on the reality that does not abide in the two extremes of existence and quiescence. It also often used as a specific epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.56 unexcelled perfect awakening

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

བླ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷན།

anuttarasamyaksambodhi

The awakening of the buddhas, contrasted here with the nirvāṇa attained via the vehicle of the śrāvakas.

g.57 vehicle of the śrāvakas

nyan thos kyi theg pa

ཉན་ཐོས་ཀྱི་ཐེག་པ།

śrāvākayāna

The means by which aspirants to nirvāṇa attain the state of a hearer by seeking self-liberation.

g.58 Vulture Peak

bya rgod phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྒོད་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

gṛdhrakūṭa

A peak outside Rājagṛha where the Buddha is said to have delivered many teachings.

g.59 wisdom

shes rab

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā

g.60 worldly talk

'jig rten gyi gtam

འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་གཏམ།

—