

༄༅། །ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན་གྱི་འཁོར་ལོ།

The Wheel of Meditative Concentration

Samādhicakra

འཕགས་པ་ཉིང་འཛིན་གྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa ting nge 'dzin gyi 'khor lo zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Wheel of Meditative Concentration”

Āryasamādhicakranāmamahāyānasūtra



Toh 241
Degé Kangyur, vol. 65 (mdo sde, zha), folios 302.a–303.a.

Translated by the Sarasvatī Translation Team
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2023
Current version v 1.1.10 (2023)
Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.19.5

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co.

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SUMMARY

s.1

While dwelling on Vulture Peak in Rājagṛha, the Buddha is absorbed in the meditative concentration called *wheel of meditative concentration*. In response to a series of questions posed by the Buddha, Mañjuśrī explains the nature of ultimate reality. Pleased with his replies, the Buddha praises Mañjuśrī for being skilled in expressing the meaning of the profound Dharma.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 This translation was produced by the Sarasvatī Translation Team.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of
84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 Named for the meditative concentration in which the Buddha is absorbed, this short sūtra explores the nature of ultimate reality. Mañjuśrī elucidates its meaning through a series of answers to questions posed by the Buddha, in which ultimate reality is referred to by terms such as *very limit of reality* (Skt. *bhūtakoti*, Tib. *yang dag pa'i mtha'*) and *sphere of phenomena* (Skt. *dharmadhātu*, Tib. *chos kyi dbyings*). He explains that the very limit of reality is without any location and neither comes nor goes, and he declares that he does not see any phenomenon that is not the sphere of phenomena.

i.2 The sūtra was translated from Chinese, most likely in the Tibetan imperial era,¹ but it is not listed either in any of the early catalogs or in the Chinese Tripitaka.² It is one of a handful of sūtras found in the Degé Kangyur whose Chinese sources have not been identified.³ In addition to the Degé Kangyur, *The Wheel of Meditative Concentration* is only found in Kangyurs of the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) group and in the Lhasa and Narthang Kangyurs. Among those, only the Lhasa version has a colophon, which simply identifies the Indian abbot Śīladharma and Nampar Mitokpa (*rnam par mi rtog pa*) as its translators from Chinese.⁴

i.3 Many parts of this sūtra bear substantial resemblance to passages in the larger *Infinite Jewels* (*Ratnakoti*, Toh 118),⁵ which was translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé and corresponds to two Chinese sūtras—*Rufajie tixing jing* 入法界體性經 (*Entering the Nature of the Sphere of Phenomena*, Taishō 355) and *Foshuo baoji sanmei wenshushili pusa wen fashen jing* 佛說寶積三昧文殊師利菩薩問法身經 (*Sūtra in Which the Buddha Speaks of the Meditative Concentration Called "Infinite Jewels" and the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī Asks about the Dharma Body*, Taishō 356).⁶

i.4 A comparison of *The Wheel of Meditative Concentration* with Toh 118, Taishō 355, and Taishō 356 reveals differences in certain details, but these differences do not constitute contradictions in terms of the overall meaning

conveyed.⁷

i.5

Moreover, both *The Wheel of Meditative Concentration* and *Infinite Jewels* (*Ratnakoṭi*, Toh 118) have a thematically close relationship with yet a third text, *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* (*Dharmadhātuprakṛtyasambhedanirdeśa*, Toh 52). That longer and more detailed work opens with a teaching on the realm of phenomena given by Mañjuśrī at the Buddha's request. The short passage recounting that teaching⁸ bears a striking resemblance to the teaching on the limit of reality and the realm of phenomena in these two texts, and in that longer text too the Buddha warns that "if those who are possessed of excessive pride hear that teaching, it will frighten them." Mañjuśrī responds to this warning in essentially the same way as in the present text, though perhaps less cryptically: "Those who become afraid ... are themselves of the nature of the realm of phenomena, and the nature of the realm of phenomena does not become frightened." Unlike the other two shorter texts, however, *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* then goes on to elaborate in some detail on the theme of pride in this context. First, some "proud monks" are immediately liberated by hearing the teaching.⁹ Then, another group of proud monks leaves the scene, confused and disconcerted, and Mañjuśrī has to use his powers and bring them back by means of a further teaching.¹⁰ Further on still in the narrative, Mañjuśrī explains in detail what is meant by unfounded or excessive pride on many levels, culminating in its sense of dualistic, conceptual conceits that prevent one from engaging fully with the emptiness and sameness of all phenomena.¹¹ Although the historical relationship of these texts remains to be determined,¹² *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* does help to throw light on the two shorter texts in which Mañjuśrī's statements are left unexplained.

i.6

The present translation is based on the Degé Kangyur, with reference to variants in other versions noted in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*).

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra

The Wheel of Meditative Concentration

1.

The Translation

[F.302.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing on Vulture Peak in Rājagṛha accompanied by a saṅgha of 1,250 bhikṣus and a saṅgha of innumerable, countless bodhisattvas. Surrounded also by various retinues of gods, nāgas, yakṣas, and other beings, he was teaching them the Dharma.

1.2 At that time, the Blessed One was absorbed in the meditative concentration called *wheel of meditative concentration*. Through the power of that meditative concentration, all the buddha lands shook and were illuminated by a great light.

1.3 Then, the bodhisattva Youthful Mañjuśrī, who was present in that retinue, rose from his seat and said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, your absorption in the *wheel of meditative concentration* is amazing. Sugata, it is truly amazing.”

1.4 The Blessed One asked, “Mañjuśrī, do you know the very limit of reality?”¹³

“I know it, Blessed One,” replied the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

1.5 “Mañjuśrī, where is the very limit of reality?” asked the Blessed One.

Mañjuśrī replied, “Blessed One, the very limit of reality is where it is not.”

1.6 “Mañjuśrī, where is it not?” asked the Blessed One,

Mañjuśrī replied, “Blessed One, it is without any location.”¹⁴

1.7 The Blessed One asked, “Mañjuśrī, what is meditation?”

Mañjuśrī replied, “Blessed One, meditation means nonmeditation.”

1.8 Then Mañjuśrī asked, “How does the Tathāgata teach the Dharma?”

“Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “I teach the Dharma to the effect that forms are undestroyed and unborn. I teach the Dharma to the effect that feelings, perceptions, formations, and consciousnesses are undestroyed and unborn. I turn the wheel of Dharma to the effect that attachment, hatred, and

ignorance are undestroyed and unborn. [F.302.b] I have taught that in this way no phenomenon whatsoever has been destroyed or produced in the state of unsurpassed, perfect, and complete awakening."¹⁵

1.9 Then, though he already knew the answer, the Blessed One asked the Youthful Mañjuśrī, "Mañjuśrī, do you know the sphere of phenomena?"

"I know it if I focus on it," replied Mañjuśrī.

1.10 The Blessed One asked, "Mañjuśrī, do you know the world that is experienced?"

"Blessed One, the world is merely that which is experienced by people who are illusory apparitions.¹⁶ Blessed One, that which is called 'the world' is essentially a nonexistent thing."

1.11 The Blessed One said, "The Tathāgata wishes to hear the Dharma. Demonstrate your inspired speech!"

1.12 Mañjuśrī asked, "With what should I begin to demonstrate my inspired speech?"

"Begin with the sphere of phenomena, Mañjuśrī," replied the Blessed One.

"Blessed One, I do not see any phenomenon that is not the sphere of phenomena."¹⁷

"Those who have unfounded pride will be afraid," said the Blessed One.

1.13 "Blessed One," replied Mañjuśrī, "if the very limit of reality is afraid, then those who have unfounded pride will be afraid. Why? Because the very limit of reality and those who have unfounded pride are one and the same, and indistinguishable."

"Mañjuśrī," said the Blessed One, "you are a vajra basis."

1.14 "Blessed One," said Mañjuśrī, "since all phenomena are indivisible and inconceivable, they too are vajra bases. Why are they said to be vajra bases? Because sentient beings do not exist and things do not exist, they too are vajra bases."¹⁸

1.15 "Blessed One, such a very limit of reality does not exist. Whatever is such a limit neither comes nor goes. Blessed One, dwelling on the meaning of having such a limit, one meditates on the meaning of the absence of an intrinsic nature, keeps to remote places, and abandons distractions." [F.303.a]

1.16 Then Venerable Śāriputra said to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, "Mañjuśrī, the Dharma you have taught is amazing."

1.17 "Honorable Śāriputra, it is not so amazing," replied Mañjuśrī. "The uncontaminated arhats are not vessels for this Dharma teaching. Why? Because a Dharma teaching like this does not engage with the attributes of ordinary beings, it does not engage with the attributes of arhats, it does not engage with the attributes of pratyekabuddhas, and it does not engage with

the attributes of tathāgatas. It does not engage at all in the observation of phenomena. This is because it neither engages in nor retreats from anything.¹⁹ This is because all phenomena are void.”²⁰

1.18 “Mañjuśrī, will you say what you had in mind?”

“Honorable Śāriputra,” replied Mañjuśrī, “if the state of an arhat is the state in which attachment, hatred, and ignorance have been extinguished, then of what can they be a vessel? Of what kind of Dharma can they be a vessel? It is with this in mind that I say that arhats, whose contaminants have been extinguished, are not vessels for this Dharma teaching.”²¹

1.19 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you esteem this as a Dharma without death and rebirth?”

“Mañjuśrī, I do.”

1.20 Then, the Blessed One said to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, excellent! Excellent! You are to be praised for your mastery of the meaning of the profound Dharma.”

1.21 After the Blessed One had spoken thus, the bodhisattva Youthful Mañjuśrī, the venerable Śāriputra, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.22 *This concludes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “The Wheel of Meditative Concentration.”*

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Li 2021, p. 207, n. 107; Saerji 2011, p. 186. Li places this in the Tibetan imperial or early post-imperial era. Saerji's research indicates that the translator Śīladharma lived during the Tibetan imperial era.
- n.2 Li 2021, p. 189, n. 61; Saerji 2011, p. 189.
- n.3 Silk 2019, p. 239.
- n.4 Saerji 2011, p. 189.
- n.5 For the English translation, see Dharmachakra Translation Committee, trans., *Infinite Jewels* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh118.html>) (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2022).
- n.6 Saerji points to the probability that *The Wheel of Meditative Concentration* is a kind of summary or outline of *Infinite Jewels*. See Saerji 2011, p. 190.
- n.7 For example, in *The Wheel of Meditative Concentration*, after the Buddha declares that Mañjuśrī is a vajra basis, Mañjuśrī proclaims that all phenomena are vajra bases. In *Infinite Jewels* [1.32](#), Taishō 355, and Taishō 356, however, the vajra bases seem to refer to statements such as “all phenomena are inconceivable” and “all phenomena are awakening.”
- n.8 See *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* [1.3–1.6](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh52.html#UT22084-040-003-13>).
- n.9 See *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* [1.9](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh52.html#UT22084-040-003-22>).
- n.10 See *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* [1.19–1.31](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh52.html#UT22084-040-003-41>).

- n.11 See *The Teaching on the Indivisible Nature of the Realm of Phenomena* 1.39–1.47 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh52.html#UT22084-040-003-76>).
- n.12 Toh 118 seems to be the earliest to have been translated into Chinese, probably in the second or third century.
- n.13 Here the “very limit of reality” (*bhūtakoti*, *yang dag pa'i mtha'*) refers to the absence of an intrinsic nature in all phenomena. This compound is typically parsed as the “very limit” (*koṭi*) of “reality” (*bhūta*). This compound might also be parsed as the “true (*bhūta*) goal (*koṭi*).” Later in the sūtra, Mañjuśrī says, “Blessed One, dwelling on the meaning of having such a limit, one meditates on the meaning of the absence of an intrinsic nature.”
- n.14 This idea related to location occurs again later, when Mañjuśrī explains that the very limit of reality neither comes nor goes. In *Infinite Jewels*, Taishō 355, and Taishō 356, in response to the question of where the very limit of reality is, Mañjuśrī says “the very limit of reality is wherever my limit is.” *Infinite Jewels*, 1.10 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-051-006.html#node-33>).
- n.15 Compare *Infinite Jewels*, 1.14 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh118.html#UT22084-051-006-45>).
- n.16 Reading *'jig rten ni* for *'jig rten na* here, following Toh 118, F.293.b.7, and the variant noted in the Comparative Edition. Compare *Infinite Jewels*, 1.24 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh118.html#UT22084-051-006-56>).
- n.17 Omitting the first *bdag gis* as in Toh 118, F.294.b.2. Compare *Infinite Jewels*, 1.30 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh118.html#UT22084-051-006-68>).
- n.18 Reading *bgyi ni* for *bgyi na*. Compare *Infinite Jewels*, 1.32 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh118.html#UT22084-051-006-68>), as well as Taishō 355 and Taishō 356. Following those sources, we might also read the Tibetan corresponding to this passage as follows: “Mañjuśrī said, ‘Blessed One, since all phenomena are indivisible and inconceivable, [the statement ‘all phenomena are indivisible and inconceivable’] is a vajra basis. Why is it said to be a vajra basis? Because sentient beings do not exist and things do not exist, it is a vajra basis.”
- n.19 Compare *Infinite Jewels*, 1.47 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh118.html#UT22084-051-006-93>)–1.49.
- n.20 “All phenomena are void” (Tib: *shin tu dben pa*) here means that all phenomena are devoid of an intrinsic nature. Compare *Infinite Jewels* 1.77

(<https://read.84000.co/translation/Toh118.html#UT22084-051-006-151>).

n.21 Compare *Infinite Jewels*, 1.49 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-051-006.html#node-33>).

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 arhat

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཙུན་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 or emotions (*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.2 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.3 bhikṣu

dge slong

དགེ་སློང།

bhikṣu

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

In the Tibetan tradition, which follows the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, a monk follows 253 vows as part of his moral discipline. A nun (*bhikṣuṇī*; *dge slong ma*) follows 263 rules. A novice monk (*śrāmaṇera*; *dge tshul*) or nun (*śrāmaṇerikā*; *dge tshul ma*) follows thirty-six rules of moral discipline (although in other vinaya traditions novices typically follow only ten).

g.4 Blessed One

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེ་མ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān

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 $\sqrt{bhañj}$ (“to break”).

g.5 buddha lands

sangs rgyas kyi zhing

སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་།

—

g.6 consciousness

rnam par shes pa

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

vijñāna

The fifth of the five aggregates that constitute a living being (form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness).

g.7 feeling

tshor ba

ཚོར་བ།

vedanā

The second of the five aggregates that constitute a living being (form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness).

g.8 form

gzugs

ག་རྒྱལ་པ།

rūpa

The first of the five aggregates that constitute a living being (form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness).

g.9 formation

'du byed

འདུའབྲེས།

saṃskāra

The fourth of the five aggregates that constitute a living being (form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness).

g.10 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.11 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.12 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.13 meditative concentration

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་ངེ་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 *Mahāvayutpatti* 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.14 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.15 perception

'du shes

འདུ་ཤེས།

saṃjñā

The third of the five aggregates that constitute a living being (form, feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness).

g.16 pratyekabuddha

rang sangs rgyas

རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

pratyekabuddha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.17 Rājagrha

rgyal po'i khab

རྒྱལ་པོ་འཁོར་བ།

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.18 saṅgha

dge 'dun

དགེ་འདུན།

saṅgha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Though often specifically reserved for the monastic community, this term can be applied to any of the four Buddhist communities—monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen—as well as to identify the different groups of practitioners, like the community of bodhisattvas or the community of śrāvakas. It is also the third of the Three Jewels (*Triratna*) of Buddhism, the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community.

g.19 Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ཤཱ་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.20 sphere of phenomena

chos kyi dbyings

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

dharmadhātu

Synonymous with the very limit of reality, it refers to the ultimate reality that is the absence of an intrinsic nature.

g.21 *sugata*

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.22 *tathāgata*

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་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.23 unfounded pride

mngon pa'i nga rgyal

མངོན་པའི་ངར་རྒྱལ།

abhimāna

A conceited, false sense of attainment. On a more subtle level, it can also refer to dualistic concepts about emptiness or ultimate reality. One of seven types of pride related to the spiritual path.

g.24 vajra basis

rdo rje'i gzhi

རྡོ་རྗེའི་གཞི།

—

g.25 very limit of reality

yang dag pa'i mtha'

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

bhūtakoṭi

Synonymous with the sphere of phenomena, it refers to the ultimate reality that is the absence of an intrinsic nature. More generally, this term has three meanings: (1) the ultimate nature, (2) the experience of the ultimate nature, and (3) the quiescent state of an arhat to be avoided by bodhisattvas.

g.26 Vulture Peak

bya rgod kyi phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྫོང་གྱི་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

grḍhrakūṭa

A hill located in modern-day Bihar, India, and in the vicinity of the ancient city of Rājagṛha. A location where many sūtras were taught and which continues to be a sacred pilgrimage site for Buddhists to this day.

g.27 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the jurisdiction of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.

Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.