

༄༅། །ཤེས་ལྡན་གྱི་མདོ།

The Sūtra of Jñānaka

Jñānakasūtra

Translated into Tibetan by
Vidyākaraśiṃha · Sarvajñādeva · Paltsek

འཕགས་པ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་རྟོགས་པ་བརྗོད་པ་ཤེས་ལྡན་གྱི་མདོ།

'phags pa sangs rgyas kyi rtogs pa brjod pa shes ldan gyi mdo

The Noble Sūtra of Jñānaka: An Account of the Noble Deeds of the Buddha

Āryajñānakasūtrabuddhāvadāna



Toh 344
Degé Kangyur, vol. 75 (mdo sde, am), folios 287.a–289.b

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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 In the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, a god has reached the end of his life. He foresees his rebirth as a pig and calls out to the Buddha to save him. The Buddha prompts him to seek refuge in the Three Jewels and, as a result, the god finds himself reborn into a wealthy family in Vaiśālī. In this life as a child named Jñānaka, he encounters the Buddha once more and invites him and his monks for a midday meal. The Buddha prophesies to Ānanda that the meritorious offering made by Jñānaka will eventually lead the child to awaken as the buddha known as King of Foremost Knowing.

ac.

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ac.1 Translated by the Subhashita Translation Group. The translation was produced by Lowell Cook who also wrote the introduction. Benjamin Ewing and Ryan Damron checked the translation against the Tibetan and edited the text and introduction.

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

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Noble Sūtra of Jñānaka: An Account of the Noble Deeds of the Buddha is one of a number of *avadānas* (Tib. *rtogs pa brjod pa*), or accounts of noble deeds, preserved in the Kangyur. *Avadāna* is a narrative genre of Buddhist literature that describes how virtuous actions play out across lifetimes. True to the *avadāna* genre, *The Sūtra of Jñānaka* relates the otherwise unimaginable workings of karma across several lifetimes, beginning with a god in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. This god has reached the end of his life and foresees his rebirth in the womb of a pig in Vaiśālī, the Licchavi capital at the time of the Buddha. Another god overhears his cries of agony and encourages him to call upon the Buddha, who is staying in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three to give teachings to his mother, who had passed away not long after his birth. The Buddha prompts the dying god to seek refuge in the Three Jewels, and, instead of being reborn to the sow, the god finds himself born into a merchant family in Vaiśālī. Immediately after his birth, he praises the Three Jewels, leading his astounded parents to name him Jñānaka, “He Who Possesses Knowledge.” At the age of eight, Jñānaka encounters the Buddha on an alms round. Recollecting his past life, he offers alms to the Buddha and invites him and his monks to a midday meal at his parents’ home. Jñānaka’s parents make elaborate preparations to receive the Buddha and his monks, which prompts the Buddha to prophesy that Jñānaka’s offerings will act as the cause for his eventual awakening as the buddha known as King of Foremost Knowing.

i.2

The basic narrative of *The Sūtra of Jñānaka* is similar to that of the text that immediately follows it in the Kangyur, *The Magnificent Account About a Sow* (Toh 345: *Sūkarikāvadāna; phag mo’i rtogs pa brjod pa*),¹ wherein another god similarly laments his imminent rebirth as a pig in Rājagṛha. His tearful laments prompt Śakra, lord of the gods, to instruct him to take refuge in the

Three Jewels as a means to prevent such an unwelcome event. In this sūtra, the god does not take rebirth in the human realm as Jñānaka does, but rather in the Tuṣita heaven.

i.3 *The Sūtra of Jñānaka* survives only in Tibetan translation; there are no extant Sanskrit witnesses, and it does not appear to have been translated into Chinese. *The Sūtra of Jñānaka* is listed in the Denkarma (Tib. *ldan/lhan dkar ma*) and Phanthangma (Tib. *'phang thang ma*) catalogs,² the two extant indexes of translations from the Imperial Period (629–841 CE). The sūtra's colophon states that the sūtra was translated by the Tibetan monk and prolific translator Kawa Paltsek (ca. eighth century) together with the Indian preceptors Vidyākarasiṃha and Sarvajñādeva. This evidence allows us to date the Tibetan translation of *The Sūtra of Jñānaka* to approximately the eighth century.

i.4 This English translation is based on the Tibetan edition found in the Degé Kangyur, which was read alongside the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*) and Stok Palace (Tib. *stog pho brag*) Kangyurs. *The Sūtra of Jñānaka* has not previously been translated into any Western languages nor has it received substantial scholarly treatment.

The Noble Sūtra of Jñānaka

An Account of the Noble Deeds of the Buddha

1.

The Translation

[F.287.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying among the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three for the benefit of his mother. He was seated in front of the Pāriyātra tree upon the Pāṇḍukambala rock. There was a god there experiencing the five ominous signs of death: his garlands had withered, his clothes had started to deteriorate, his body had started to smell, sweat dripped from his armpits, and he felt unhappy on his seat. This god foresaw his rebirth in the womb of a pig in Vaiśālī, causing him to be overcome with misery and cry out in woe. He beat his chest as he wept uncontrollably.

1.2 Another god approached him and asked, “Deva, is it death that you fear?”

“Indeed, fellow deva,” he responded, “it is death that I fear. Why? Well, fellow deva, I have eaten divine foods, imbibed divine drinks, and worn divine garments here among the gods of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. Thus, as I behold my rebirth in the womb of a pig in Vaiśālī, I see that I will eat excrement and be killed by a blade. These are the reasons, fellow deva, that I fear death.”

1.3 “Do not be afraid of death, my fellow deva! Why? Well, fellow deva, the Blessed One—the thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha—is residing here in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three for the benefit of his mother. He is seated in front of the Pāriyātra tree upon the Pāṇḍukambala rock. Deva, you should by all means pay homage to the Blessed One. He will come here to save you from the lower realms. Why? Fellow deva, the blessed Buddha has great compassion and never forsakes beings.” [F.287.b]

1.4 The god then rose from his seat, draped his upper robe over one shoulder, and knelt on his right knee. With his palms joined, he bowed in the direction of the Blessed One and repeated this entreaty three times:

1.5 “Homage to the blessed Thus-Gone One! Homage to the blessed Thus-Gone One! Out of love for me, may the Blessed One please come here and save me from the lower realms!”

1.6 Aware of the sincere intent of that god, the Blessed One went to him and sat upon a seat that had been prepared. After taking his seat, the Blessed One asked that god, “Deva, is it death that you fear?”

1.7 “Indeed, Blessed One,” the god responded, “I am afraid to die. Why? Because I foresaw my rebirth in the wretched womb of a pig in Vaiśālī. Once reborn there, I will eat excrement and be killed by a blade. That is why, Blessed One, I am afraid to die.”

1.8 The Blessed One said, “Deva, do not be afraid of death! Why? Well, deva, it is not the earth and water elements that transmigrate here and there, but rather your own actions. Come here, deva. Take refuge in the Buddha. Take refuge in the Dharma and in the Saṅgha.”

1.9 The god then rose from his seat and addressed the Blessed One: “Yes, Blessed One, I will. I take refuge in the Buddha! I take refuge in the Dharma and in the Saṅgha!”

1.10 The Blessed One responded to the god with the following stanza:

“Those who have taken refuge in the Buddha
Will be spared transmigrating to the lower realms.
As they relinquish their divine existence,
They will take up a human existence instead.” [F.288.a]

1.11 The Blessed One then delivered a discourse on the Dharma to the god and ensured that the god retained it. Having inspired the god and filled him with delight, the Blessed One rose from his seat and departed.

1.12 Not long thereafter, the god passed away. He was immediately reborn in the womb of a noble merchant’s wife in Vaiśālī. After nine months had come to pass, an adorable child with a charming appearance and the most exquisite complexion was born. The moment he was born he exclaimed, “Homage to the Buddha! Homage to the Dharma! Homage to the Saṅgha!”

1.13 At that moment, his parents thought, “This child knows of the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha. He possesses knowledge.”³

1.14 Once, when this child Jñānaka was around eight years old, he and a group of Licchavi youths, who were in his company, arrived at a crossroads in a park. At that time the Blessed One was staying at a mansion in the great grove of Vaiśālī. At dawn, the Blessed One donned his lower garment, dressed in his robes, picked up his alms bowl, and went to Vaiśālī on an alms round. The child Jñānaka caught sight of the Blessed One, who was handsome, *and so forth, up until* shining.⁴ Filled with joy at seeing the Blessed

One, he happily went before the Blessed One and bowed his head to his feet, circled him three times, and sat to one side. Seated to one side, the child Jñānaka spoke to the Blessed One in verse:

- 1.15 “I have recollected a past life
In which the Lord of the World
Saved me from suffering
And delivered me from falling to the lower realms.
- 1.16 “Foremost of humans, would you be so kind [F.288.b]
As to accept this gift of alms?
Please accept this midday meal today
For having saved me so.
- 1.17 “Please think kindly as I invite you
To my parents’ home tomorrow.
Together with all of your monks
Please come to partake of a midday meal.”
- 1.18 The Blessed One remained silent, signaling his acceptance of the child Jñānaka’s request. Aware that the Blessed One had accepted by not speaking, the child Jñānaka went before his parents and announced, “Dear father and mother, I offered alms to the Blessed One and have invited him tomorrow for a midday meal.”
- 1.19 The parents of the child Jñānaka were pleased and rejoiced, full of happiness and delight. Filled with joy and elation, they arranged a spread of delicious foods and tasty delicacies that very night. They had the entire city of Vaiśālī swept clean and strung with silk tassels. They lit incense in incense burners, sprinkled fragrant water, and elegantly scattered flowers. When the night had passed and the appropriate time had come, they went to the Blessed One and said, “Honorable One, Blessed One, it is time for the midday meal. The food is ready.”
- 1.20 At dawn, the Blessed One donned his lower garment, dressed in his robes, and picked up his alms bowl. Escorted and encircled by an assembly of monks, he went to the home of Jñānaka’s parents where they sat upon seats that had been prepared for them. Noticing that the Blessed One and the saṅgha of monks were seated, the child Jñānaka brought forth many delicious foods and tasty delicacies, offering them carefully with his own hands. Seeing that the Blessed One had finished his midday meal, he presented a set of cotton robes and a pair of sandals to each member of the saṅgha, and three new robes and a pair of new shoes to the Blessed One. [F.289.a] He scattered gold and silver flowers that, through the power of the Buddha, immediately transformed above the Blessed One’s head into a

glistening, elegant mansion with four corners and four rooms. Within this mansion, the child Jñānaka beheld the figure of the Thus-Gone One sitting cross-legged and teaching the Dharma.

1.21 As he observed the Blessed One's inconceivable form, miracles, and supernatural powers, the child Jñānaka was joyful, elated, and filled with happiness. He said to the Blessed One, "Blessed One, I dedicate my roots of virtue to unsurpassed and completely perfect awakening. May these roots of virtue lead me to awaken, teach the Dharma, and sustain the saṅgha just like the present Blessed One."

1.22 Aware of the intent of the child Jñānaka, the Blessed One smiled, *and so forth, up until* the light dissolved into the crown of his head.⁵ The venerable Ānanda saw this and thought to himself, "There is nothing that the Blessed One does without purpose," *and so forth, up until* "What is the reason?"⁶

The Blessed One then addressed the venerable Ānanda with these verses:

1.23 "Ānanda, by making offerings to the Thus-Gone One like this,
Jñānaka will not fall to lower states for nine hundred million eons.
He will, at that point, take rebirth and appear in the world as a guide,
As a buddha by the name of King of Foremost Knowing.

1.24 "This account of the noble deeds of the Buddha delights the learned
And engenders great virtue in the wise people who hear it.
Not so trivial are the results of gifts offered with lucid faith
To the thus-gone Buddha, who is limitless like the extent of the ocean."

1.25 After the Blessed One had spoken these words, the child Jñānaka, the monks, [F.289.b] and the world with its gods rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had taught.

1.26 *This completes "The Sūtra of Jñānaka: An Account of the Noble Deeds of the Buddha."*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Vidyākarasiṃha and Sarvajñādeva, and the chief editor-translator, the venerable monk Paltsek.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 See Bodhinidhi Translation Group, trans., *The Magnificent Account About a Sow* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh345.html>), Toh 345 (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2022).
- n.2 Herrmann-Pfandt (2008), p. 165.
- n.3 The text here descriptively uses the child's name, *jñānaka* (Tib. *shes dang lda pa*), which means "he who possesses knowledge."
- n.4 This refers to a stock description of the Buddha's appearance that normally reads in full (with some variations across texts): "He was handsome and inspiring, and his senses were stilled. His mind was serene, his sense faculties were restrained, his mind was temperate, and he had attained the perfection of sublime tranquility. His sense faculties were isolated and withdrawn. He was as well trained as an elephant, and as lucid, limpid, and clear as a lake. His body was adorned with the thirty-two characteristics of a great being, and he was ornamented with the eighty fine marks. He had the body of a thus-gone one, bedecked like the king of sal trees. Like the sun, he emitted a profusion of light rays everywhere. He was like a conflagration raging atop a mountain peak in the middle of a dark night, and brilliant and shining like a golden mountain." (See *Destroyer of the Great Trichiliocosm*, Toh 558, 1.240 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-090-002.html#UT22084-090-002-250>)).
- n.5 This refers to a stock phrase that normally reads in full (with some minor variations across texts): "The Blessed One then smiled, and as happens whenever the blessed ones smile, at that moment light of myriad colors—blue, yellow, red, white, crimson, crystalline, and silver—emerged from his mouth. The light illuminated boundless, limitless realms and reached all the way up to the world of Brahmā. It even eclipsed the magnificence of the sun and moon. Then the light rays returned, circled around the Blessed One

three times, and dissolved into the crown of his head.” (See *The Questions of Brahmadatta*, Toh 159, 1.145 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-059-002.html#UT22084-059-002-304>).

- n.6 Again, this refers to a stock phrase in which the venerable Ānanda (or others in the Buddha’s retinue) inquire as to the reason why the Buddha smiles. Usually the question is articulated to the Buddha, rather than here where Ānanda merely wonders in his thoughts. Although there are all sorts of variant versions that differ in length and content, the following example is typical of shorter versions: “At this point, Venerable Ānanda arose from his seat and, placing his robe over one shoulder, knelt on his right knee. With palms pressed together in the direction of the Blessed One, he spoke the following words to the Blessed One: ‘Blessed One, since the thus-gone, worthy, completely awakened buddhas do not smile without a cause, without a reason, what is the cause for your smile? What is the reason?’” (See *The Questions of the Householder Vīradatta*, Toh 72, 1.94 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-043-009.html#UT22084-043-009-139>).

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 Ānanda

kun dga'

ཀུན་དགའ།

*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.2 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་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 mārās, *ldan* to "possessing" the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to "going beyond" saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as "one who destroys the four mārās." This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* ("one who broke"), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root √*bhañj* ("to break").

g.3 deva

lha'i bu · lha

ལྷའི་བུ། · ལྷ།

devaputra · deva

This term, meaning "god," was often used as an honorific term of address for divine beings and royalty. In such contexts, it has been rendered here with the Sanskrit *deva*.

g.4 god

lha'i bu · lha

ལྷའི་བུ། ་ ལྷ།

devaputra · 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.5 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum

སུམ་རུ་རྩ་གསུམ།

trāyastrimśa

The second heaven of the desire realm, located above Mount Meru and reigned over by Śakra (also known as Indra or Kauśika). This heaven receives its name because it encompasses thirty-three distinct divine locations.

g.6 Honorable One

btsun pa

བཙུན་པ།

bhadanta

One of the standard epithets of the Buddha Śākyamuni, and also a term of respect used for Buddhist monks, akin to the modern address, *bhante*.

g.7 Jñānaka

shes ldan

ཤེས་ལྡན།

jñānaka

Name of a child born into a merchant family in Vaiśālī, whose story is told in this sūtra. In his previous life, he was a god who foresaw his own rebirth as a pig. Seeking help from the Buddha, he goes for refuge in the Three Jewels, and succeeds to be reborn as a human. According to the Buddha's prophecy, he will become the buddha known as King of Foremost Knowing.

g.8 King of Foremost Knowing

mkhyen gtso rgyal po

མཐུན་གཙོ་རྒྱལ་པོ།

—

Name that the child Jñānaka will bear when he becomes a buddha in future.

g.9 Licchavi

li tsa+tsha b+I

ལི་ཙ་ཤ།

licchavi

The name of a northern Indian and royal dynasty based in Vaiśālī, the capital of the Vṛji confederacy.

g.10 Lord of the World

'jig rten mgon po

འཇིག་རྟེན་མགོན་པོ།

lokanātha

An epithet of the Buddha.

g.11 Paltsek

dpal brtsegs

དཔལ་བརྟེན།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Paltsek (eighth to early ninth century), from the village of Kawa north of Lhasa, was one of Tibet's preeminent translators. He was one of the first seven Tibetans to be ordained by Śāntarakṣita and is counted as one of Guru Rinpoche's twenty-five close disciples. In a famous verse by Ngok Lotsawa Loden Sherab, Kawa Paltsek is named along with Chokro Lui Gyaltsen and Zhang (or Nanam) Yeshé Dé as part of a group of translators whose skills were surpassed only by Vairotsana.

He translated works from a wide variety of genres, including sūtra, śāstra, vinaya, and tantra, and was an author himself. Paltsek was also one of the most important editors of the early period, one of nine translators installed by Trisong Detsen (r. 755–797/800) to supervise the translation of the Tripiṭaka and help catalog translated works for the first two of three imperial catalogs, the Denkarma (*ldan kar ma*) and the Samye Chimpuma (*bsam yas mchims phu ma*). In the colophons of his works, he is often known as Paltsek Rakṣita (*rak+Shi ta*).

g.12 Pāṇḍukambala rock

la ba dkar po lta bu'i rdo leb

ལ་བ་དཀར་པོ་ལྷ་སུའི་རྫོ་ལེབ།

pāṇḍukambalaśilā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Indra’s colossal throne underneath the Pāriyātraka tree in Heaven of the Thirty-Three (Trāyastriṃśa), which is made of a whitish stone and therefore resembles a “whitish woolen blanket” (*pāṇḍukambala*).

g.13 pāriyātra tree

yongs 'dus brtol · yongs 'du sa brtol

ཡོངས་འདུས་བརྗོད། · ཡོངས་འདུས་བརྗོད།

pāriyātra

A large, majestic tree located in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

g.14 Rājagṛha

rgyal po khab kyi grong mkhyer

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཁབ་ཀྱི་གྲོང་མཁའུར།

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.15 Sarvajñādeva

sarba dz+nyA de ba · kun mkhyen lha

སང་རྣམ་རྒྱུ་དེ་བཤམ་པའི་ཀུན་མཁྱེན་ལྷན་པོ།

sarvajñādeva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

According to traditional accounts, the Kashmiri preceptor Sarvajñādeva was among the “one hundred” paṇḍitas invited by Trisong Detsen (r. 755–797/800) to assist with the translation of the Buddhist scriptures into Tibetan. Sarvajñādeva assisted in the translation of more than twenty-three works, including numerous sūtras and the first translations of Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra* and Nāgārjuna’s *Suhṛllekha*. Much of this work was likely carried out in the first years of the ninth century and may have continued into the reign of Ralpachen (*ral pa can*), who ascended the throne in 815 and died in 838 or 841 CE.

g.16 Thus-Gone One

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.17 Tuṣita

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྷན།

tuṣita

The fourth level of the heavens of the realm of desire, and the last stopping place of a buddha before his descent and reincarnation on Earth. According to Buddhist cosmology, it is presently the abode of the future Buddha Maitreya.

g.18 Vaiśālī

yangs pa

ཡངས་པ།

vaiśālī

The capital of the Licchavīs and part of the Vṛjī republic, this was an important city during the Buddha's time. The Buddha visited it many times and taught a number of sūtras there.

g.19 Vidyākarasiṃha

bid+yA ka ra sing ha

བིདྲཱ་ཀ་ར་སིང་ཧ།

vidyākarasiṃha

An Indian paṇḍita active in Tibet during the early ninth century.