

༄༅། །རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་མཐའ་

Infinite Jewels

Ratnakoti

འཕགས་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆའི་མཐའ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa rin po che'i mtha' zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra “Infinite Jewels”

Āryaratnakoṭīnāmamahāyānasūtra



Toh 118
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co.

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SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 While residing at Vulture Peak Mountain with a large community of monks, the Buddha is visited by the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. The sūtra unfolds as a series of exchanges between the Buddha, Mañjuśrī, and the monk Śāriputra, elucidating a profound vision of reality as undifferentiated, nondual, and all-pervasive.

ac.

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

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

While the Buddha is residing on Vulture Peak Mountain near Rājagṛha with a large group of monks, the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī comes to see him. The bodhisattva inquires about the meditative absorption from which the Buddha has just arisen, and the Buddha responds that the absorption is known as *infinite jewels*. The sūtra then unfolds as a dialogue between the Buddha and Mañjuśrī on the nature and significance of the absorption, with an additional series of exchanges on this topic with the Buddha's eminent monk-disciple Śāriputra.

i.2

Because the text conveys a profound view of reality, it is fitting that the Buddha's primary interlocutor is the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who epitomizes wisdom in the Great Vehicle tradition. The perspective of profound wisdom is elucidated through the exploration of a pair of key terms: *limit of reality* (Skt. *bhūtakoti*) and *realm of phenomena* (*dharmadhātu*). These terms are meant to indicate the way things are on the level of ultimate reality, and in this sūtra they are treated as synonyms.

i.3

The term "limit of reality" appears in a number of sūtras, and frequently in the Perfection of Wisdom literature. It stands for ultimate truth and, therefore, is synonymous with reality (*dharmatā*) and suchness (*tathatā*).¹ While this appears to be the main significance of the term, it can also refer to the awakened experience of the ultimate, or even to the quiescent state of a worthy one (*arhat*) to be avoided by bodhisattvas who vow to remain in cyclic existence as long as suffering beings remain.² In the present sūtra, the equation between the ultimate and the limit of reality is repeatedly confirmed. In the final exchange concerning this term, we are told that it is not actually a limit, per se. In general, a limit must be localizable, but since the limit of reality transcends location, it is not truly a limit in the ordinary sense of the word.

- i.4 The discussion regarding the realm of phenomena focuses on the fact that distinctions and designations are mere imputations having no ultimate, independent existence. According to this sūtra, in the context of the realm of phenomena, one cannot speak meaningfully of the traits of ordinary beings as distinct from those of buddhas, or of distinct psycho-physical aggregates that make up persons, or of defilements or heinous acts that can be isolated and identified. Instead, the realm of phenomena is described as nondual, and notions of birth, death, transmigration, pollution, and purification are moot. Thus, it is mainly by way of commentary on the terms *limit of reality* and *realm of phenomena* that the sūtra seeks to convey the profound nature of the ultimate. The discourse ends with a praise of these teachings and a description of the benefits that result from engaging with them.
- i.5 A key challenge of translation is that frequently there does not exist a single term in the target language that embodies the range of meaning of a particular term in the source language. Such is the case with the Sanskrit *koṭi*, which appears both in the title, *Ratnakōṭi*, and in *bhūtakoṭi*, the limit of reality. *Koṭi* can mean limit, end, apex, point, highest point, eminence, or excellence. It can also refer to the number ten million. Thus, the title of our sūtra could be translated in a number of ways. We have chosen “Infinite Jewels” for two reasons. The first is to be found in the Buddha’s own explanation of the title of this sūtra, which refers to a particular meditative absorption entered by the Buddha. When Mañjuśrī asks why the absorption is so named, the Buddha likens it to an unblemished jewel. When such a jewel is placed on an even surface, there appear untold millions³ of other “jewels” surrounding it (presumably due to light refracting in the facets of the jewel). Secondly, the *Mahāvōyutpatti*, the seminal list of Sanskrit–Tibetan terminological equivalents, renders *ratnakōṭir nāma samādhiḥ* as *rin chen mtha’ yas zhes bya ba’ i ting nge’ dzin*, “the meditative absorption called *infinite jewels*.”⁴
- i.6 While there is no known Sanskrit manuscript of this sūtra, it does exist in Chinese and Tibetan translations. There are two Chinese translations: 入法界體性經 (*Ru fajie tixing jing*, Taishō 355) and 寶積三昧文殊師利菩薩問法身經 (*Baoji sanmei wenshushili pusa wen fashen jing*, Taishō 356). The former (Taishō 355) was produced by the Gandhāran monk Jñānagupta (523–c. 600 CE) sometime in the late sixth century CE during his stay in the Chinese capital of Chang’an. The latter translation (Taishō 356) is a much earlier work attributed to the translator An Shigao (second century CE). However, Karashima has argued that An Shigao might not be the translator of this sūtra and has instead proposed that the translation may have been done by another early translator, the Gandhāran monk Lokakṣema (147–? CE).⁵ In any

case, it seems certain that the sūtra was already in circulation in China by the second century CE, which makes it a very early sūtra within the literary corpus of the Great Vehicle.

i.7 According to the colophon of the Tibetan translation, *Infinite Jewels* was translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan by the Indian preceptor Prajñāvarman and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé, and thus can be dated to the early ninth century CE, a dating that is also attested by the text's inclusion in the early ninth-century Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) inventory of translations into Tibetan.⁶ The present translation was prepared based on the Tibetan translation in the Degé Kangyur in consultation with the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*).

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

Infinite Jewels

1.

The Translation

[F.290.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling on Vulture Peak Mountain near Rājagṛha, together with a great saṅgha of five hundred monks. At dusk Youthful Mañjuśrī went to the Blessed One's residence, stood at the door, and praised⁷ the Blessed One. At that time, the Blessed One was resting in equipoise in the absorption known as *infinite jewels*. Mindful and alert, the Blessed One then arose from that absorption. He saw that Youthful Mañjuśrī was at the door and said, "Please come inside, Mañjuśrī."

1.3 "Very well, Blessed One, very well," replied Youthful Mañjuśrī, and, heeding the Blessed One's words, he went before the Blessed One. He prostrated, placing his head at the Blessed One's feet, and stood to one side. The Blessed One gave Youthful Mañjuśrī permission to sit, and, with the Blessed One's permission, Youthful Mañjuśrī bowed with palms joined and then sat to one side of the Blessed One.

1.4 Sitting to one side, Youthful Mañjuśrī asked the Blessed One, "What was the absorption from which you just arose, Blessed One?" [F.291.a]

1.5 "Mañjuśrī, there is an absorption called *infinite jewels*," replied the Blessed One to Youthful Mañjuśrī. "That is the absorption from which I just arose."

1.6 "Blessed One, why is it called *infinite jewels*?"

The Blessed One responded, "Mañjuśrī, take as an analogy an exceedingly pure and well-polished precious jewel. If it is placed on level ground, then wherever it is placed, there will be untold millions of jewels. In the same way, Mañjuśrī, when I remain in this absorption and look to the east, I see thus-gone ones, worthy ones, perfect buddhas abiding and teaching the Dharma in countless, innumerable world systems. It is the same to the south, west, north, below, and above. When I look in the ten

directions, I see thus-gone ones, worthy ones, perfect buddhas abiding and teaching the Dharma in boundless world systems. Remaining in this absorption, Mañjuśrī, I do not actually see any phenomenon whatsoever that is not the limit of reality. Mañjuśrī, I posit this seal of the limit of reality as my seal. Faithful noble sons and daughters who engage in this seal will gain uninterrupted eloquence.”

1.7 “Blessed One, I have something to say. Well-Gone One, I have something to say.”

“Then speak, Mañjuśrī.”

1.8 “Blessed One, take as an analogy that very same precious jewel. Whatever facet it is set down upon, it will rest on precisely that facet of the precious jewel.⁸ [F.291.b] Blessed One, in the same way, all phenomena abide only as the limit of reality.”

1.9 “Mañjuśrī, do you know the limit of reality?”

“I do, Blessed One.”

1.10 “Well then, Mañjuśrī, where is the limit of reality?”

“Blessed One, the limit of reality is wherever my limit is. The limit of reality is wherever the phenomena of ordinary beings are not. The limit of reality is not karma or ripening but only the limit of all phenomena. Blessed One, those who have such conviction are not liberated from anything at all. Those who are not liberated from anything at all are liberated from being mistaken. Those who are liberated from being mistaken are truly liberated. Those who are truly liberated have entered what is not an objective world.⁹ Those who have entered what is not an objective world have entered into reality. And why? Blessed One, when one thinks, ‘It is not an objective world,’ then one has already made it an objective world.¹⁰ It is on account of that that we label it *not an objective world*.”

1.11 “Mañjuśrī, what does *not an objective world* refer to?”

“Blessed One, *not an objective world* refers to the limit of reality.”

1.12 “Mañjuśrī, what does *cultivating the path* refer to?”

“Blessed One, *cultivating the path* refers to not cultivating the path.”

1.13 “Mañjuśrī, [F.292.a] how do you teach the Dharma to noble sons and daughters who are beginners?”

“Blessed One, I teach the Dharma to noble sons and daughters who are beginners by teaching that the composite person should not be discarded. When I teach the Dharma, I teach that attachment, aversion, and delusion are not to be abandoned. Why is this? Because, Blessed One, it is impossible to abandon whatever is the nature of these phenomena. Blessed One, to seek to abandon the composite person or the origin of the composite person would amount to abandoning the limit of reality. Rather, Blessed One, to noble sons and daughters who are beginners I teach that, in a manner free from

clinging, the Buddha's attributes are not to be taken up or actualized, and the attributes of ordinary beings should not be grasped or abandoned. Blessed One, how do you teach the Dharma to those who are beginners?"

1.14 "Mañjuśrī, I teach the Dharma whereby form does not disintegrate and is unborn. I teach that feelings, perceptions, and formations, as well as consciousness, do not disintegrate and are unborn. I teach the Dharma whereby attachment, aversion, and delusion do not disintegrate and are unborn, and I also teach that the inconceivable attributes are unattainable. It is in this way, without destroying or producing any attribute whatsoever, that I awakened to unsurpassed and perfect buddhahood. Mañjuśrī, *buddhahood* is a term for the realm of phenomena. One should understand that the attributes of a buddha, such as the powers, fearlessnesses, [F.292.b] and the unique attributes, are also nothing but the realm of phenomena. With regard to the realm of phenomena, I do not see any distinct attributes of ordinary beings, worthy ones, solitary buddhas, or buddhas. How is this so? Mañjuśrī, in that realm there are no distinctions; such is the realm of phenomena. The realm of phenomena is an unadulterated realm.

1.15 "As an analogy, Mañjuśrī, consider rivers that have distinct names, colors, and waters. When they flow into the ocean it becomes impossible to differentiate them or identify them, saying, 'This is the Ganges,' 'This is the Sītā,' or 'This is the Yamunā.' Similarly, Mañjuśrī, within the realm of phenomena, all those phenomena that have different names cannot be distinctly labeled, saying, 'These are the attributes of ordinary beings, and here are those of the hearers, solitary buddhas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas.'

1.16 "Mañjuśrī, consider this analogy. If you have different heaps of grain, you can label them, saying, 'This is a heap of such-and-such a grain, and this is such-and-such.' However, within the realm of phenomena you cannot make such distinctions and point out the individual attributes of ordinary beings, hearers, solitary buddhas, bodhisattvas, and buddhas.

1.17 "Mañjuśrī, consider this analogy. If you have different heaps of grain, you can label them, saying, 'This is a heap of such-and-such a grain, and this is such-and-such.' However, within the realm of phenomena you cannot make such distinctions, saying, 'These are the attributes of ordinary beings, these are the attributes of worthy ones, these are the attributes of solitary buddhas, these are the attributes of bodhisattvas, [F.293.a] and these are the attributes of buddhas.' It cannot be pointed out or labeled, as by saying, 'This is the realm of phenomena; this is where it is' or 'It is in such-and-such a location.' And why not? Because the realm of phenomena cannot be seen and cannot be shown. It is not something that can be labeled; it is beyond being labeled.

- 1.18 “I have taught that beings *are* this realm. If one commits an act of immediate retribution yet has conviction in this teaching and understands that acts of immediate retribution are also this realm, then one will not become defiled. And why not? Because, Mañjuśrī, the acts of immediate retribution are equivalent to the realm of phenomena. In this way, the realm of the acts of immediate retribution and the realm of phenomena are nondual and inseparable. Here, coming, going, or appearing are not apprehended.”
- 1.19 Then Youthful Mañjuśrī said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, I also do not see the realm of phenomena going to the lower realms, the higher realms, or nirvāṇa.”
- 1.20 “Mañjuśrī, suppose someone were to ask how your teacher designates saṃsāra with its six classes of beings. What would you answer?”
- 1.21 “Blessed One, if I were asked such a question this would be my reply: Consider the analogy of a sleeping person who in dreams sees hell beings, animal realms, lands of hungry ghosts, classes of asuras, gods, or people. Blessed One, although the dreaming person sees myriad things, all the myriad things dreamed are not there. [F.293.b] In the same way, although I teach distinct types of beings, it is impossible to designate distinct essences within the realm of phenomena. That being so, Blessed One, that is how I would answer such a question.
- 1.22 “Similarly, Blessed One, the parinirvāṇa of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, solitary buddhas, and hearers cannot be distinctly labeled. Blessed One, their ways of abiding also cannot be distinctly labeled. And why not? Because they are not distinct from the realm of phenomena. To give an analogy, Blessed One, there are various precious substances in the sea—conch shells, crystal, coral, and the like—of lesser, middling, or superior quality. These can all be distinctly labeled, saying, ‘This is such-and-such precious substance; this is such-and-such precious substance.’ However, such distinct labeling cannot be applied to the realm of phenomena, where such labeled distinctions cannot be differentiated. Therein, death, transmigration, and birth cannot be distinctly labeled. Why is that? Because the realm of phenomena is without death, transmigration, birth, pollution, and purification. The realm of phenomena is not polluted. The realm of phenomena is not adulterated. Within the realm of phenomena there are no attributes to be relinquished or generated.”
- 1.23 Then the Blessed One, though he already knew, asked Youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, do you know the realm of phenomena?”
- “If I were to apprehend it, I would know it.”
- 1.24 “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. Blessed One, what is called *world* is no more than a mere name. [F.294.a] Apart from that I do not see any world that can be pointed out, or a world to experience. I do not see anything distinct from the world’s realm of phenomena. And why not? Because there isn’t any. Regarding the Blessed One’s statement about ‘the world that is experienced,’ the essence of form is without death, transmigration, or birth; it does not disintegrate or perish. This being the case, what is there to experience? Likewise, since the essence of feeling, perception, formation, and consciousness does not exist, there is no arising or ceasing. These things do not go beyond the single characteristic; indeed, their characteristic is identical.”

1.25 “Mañjuśrī, tell me, do you think that I, the Thus-Gone One, the Worthy One, the Perfect Buddha, will pass into parinirvāṇa or disappear?”

1.26 “No, Blessed One, I do not. And why not? Because the realm of phenomena is not truly established. Blessed One, if the realm of phenomena were truly established, then it would not be something to pass beyond. However, it is not apprehended as something truly established. Thus, how can one speak of not passing beyond¹¹ or passing into parinirvāṇa? The Thus-Gone One is the realm of phenomena. For that reason, the Blessed One is not born and does not pass into parinirvāṇa.”

1.27 “Well then, Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “how can you have conviction in the statement that the thus-gone ones of the past, equal in number to the grains of sand in the River Ganges, have passed into parinirvāṇa?”

“If I had beheld their birth, I would have conviction.”

1.28 “Do you maintain that ordinary beings are reborn after they die?” [F.294.b]

“Blessed One, since I do not see or apprehend ordinary beings, how could I possibly apprehend their rebirth?”

“Mañjuśrī, please expound on the Thus-Gone One’s assertion that phenomena abide.”

1.29 “Where should I begin my discourse?”

“Start with the realm of phenomena.”

1.30 “Blessed One, I do not actually see any phenomena that are not the realm of phenomena.”

“Mañjuśrī, those who are presumptuously arrogant will be frightened.”

1.31 “Blessed One, if the limit of reality were to be frightened, then, based on that, those who are presumptuously arrogant would also be frightened. Why is this? Blessed One, those who are presumptuously arrogant are not something other than the limit of reality. Whatever is the limit of those who are presumptuously arrogant, that very limit is the limit of reality. Moreover,

that which is the limit of reality is also the limit of all phenomena. For that reason, they are not frightened. The statement ‘no phenomenon is truly established’ is a vajra basis.”

1.32 “Mañjuśrī,” asked the Blessed One, “Why is this called a *vajra basis*?”

“Blessed One, all phenomena are indestructible. It is for this reason that it is called a *vajra basis*. Since the thus-gone ones are inconceivable, all phenomena are inconceivable. This is a vajra basis. Why is this referred to as a *vajra basis*? It is because all phenomena are not mind. To say that all phenomena are awakening is a vajra basis. Why is this? Because all phenomena are inexpressible. Phenomena expressed by means of various names are not actually present in those very phenomena. Whatever is not present is empty. That which is empty does not exist. What does not exist [F.295.a] cannot be expressed. The inexpressible is awakening. It is for that reason that this is a vajra basis. All phenomena are the object of the thus-gone ones. This is a vajra basis.”

1.33 “Why is it called a *vajra basis*?”

“Blessed One, all phenomena are devoid of their own objects. For that reason, this is a vajra basis.”

1.34 “Mañjuśrī, the monk Ānanda will also comprehend this Dharma exposition. Shall I motion him to come here?”

“Blessed One, is there any Dharma that has been taught or expressed here? I myself have not actually witnessed even a single syllable that has been taught. That being so, how could I possibly have perceived many of them?”

1.35 “Excellent, Mañjuśrī, excellent. These words of yours, which you present in this way, are well spoken. Well done, Mañjuśrī. In the countless, innumerable world systems of the ten directions, I see thus-gone ones, worthy ones, perfect buddhas abiding and teaching this reality.”

1.36 At this point Venerable Śāriputra left his dwelling and went to the dwelling of Youthful Mañjuśrī. He did not see Mañjuśrī there, and so he went to the Blessed One’s dwelling. He stood outside the door and heard the teachings being given.

1.37 The Blessed One said to Youthful Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, the monk Śāriputra is standing outside the door of this dwelling. As he wishes to listen to the Dharma, Mañjuśrī, bring Śāriputra inside so he can listen.”

1.38 “If this limit is the limit of reality, is it present outside, inside, or neither?”

“Mañjuśrī, it is none of these.”

1.39 “Therefore, Blessed One, the limit of reality is not a limit. [F.295.b] Regarding a limit such as this, one does not come here or go there. Thus, Blessed One, it is not appropriate for the honorable Śāriputra, who is limited in this way, to come here or come inside.”¹²

- 1.40 “Mañjuśrī, if I were in this dwelling speaking with the hearers while you were outside, powerless to enter, would you not suffer?”
- 1.41 “Blessed One, it is not so. And why not? Because all phenomena are included within the realm of phenomena. In this regard, the expression *thus-gone one* means the realm of phenomena. Since they are of a single characteristic, the Thus-Gone One and the realm of phenomena are not any different. Phenomena such as ‘Dharma,’ ‘Dharma teachings,’ or ‘listening to the Dharma’ are nondual and thus are not distinct. And it is for that reason, too, that they are not distinct from the realm of phenomena. The syllables that make up the name Mañjuśrī also belong to the realm of phenomena. Thus, Blessed One, for this reason I would not be distressed in the slightest. Even if the Blessed One were to teach the Dharma for eons equal in number to the grains of sand in the River Ganges, whether I were there or not, I would experience neither joy at being there nor anguish otherwise. And why not? Blessed One, if duality existed then I would experience joy or anguish. However, the realm of phenomena is nondual, and it is for that reason that I would not become joyful or anguished. Blessed One, the teachings by which you share the Dharma do not cause any phenomena to accumulate, diminish, increase, or decrease. Such a teaching is not founded on apprehending any phenomenon whatsoever. It is for that reason as well, Blessed One, that I would not become joyous or anguished.”
- 1.42 At this point, the Blessed One asked Venerable Śāriputra, “Did you hear Youthful Mañjuśrī’s eloquence, Śāriputra?” [F.296.a]
- 1.43 “Blessed One, I heard. I came here, Blessed One, thinking how wonderful it would be to hear the eloquent words of the Blessed One and of Youthful Mañjuśrī.”
- 1.44 Youthful Mañjuśrī then said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, please invite Venerable Śāriputra to come inside.”
- “Enter, Śāriputra,” said the Blessed One to Venerable Śāriputra.
- 1.45 Venerable Śāriputra entered, prostrated at the Blessed One’s feet, and sat to one side. “Honorable Śāriputra,” said Youthful Mañjuśrī to Venerable Śāriputra, who was seated to the side, “what purpose did you envision for coming here?”
- 1.46 “I came here, Mañjuśrī, with a longing to hear the Dharma. Where the Blessed One and sublime beings such as yourself are dwelling, there are profound and exquisite teachings. It is because of this that I came.”
- “So it is, Honorable Śāriputra. This teaching is profound.”
- 1.47 “How profound is this Dharma exposition that you commenced together with the Blessed One?”

- “It will not be comprehended by Honorable Śāriputra. A worthy one whose contaminants have been exhausted is not a vessel for this Dharma teaching. Why is this? Because this Dharma teaching is not engaged with the properties of ordinary beings, is not engaged with the properties of worthy ones, is not engaged with the properties of solitary buddhas, and is not engaged with the properties of thus-gone ones. It is not engaged with the apprehending any property. Since all attributes are completely void, it is not engaged with, or disengaged from, anything at all.”
- 1.48 “Mañjuśrī, what is your rationale for saying that worthy ones whose contaminants are exhausted are not vessels for this teaching?”
- 1.49 “Honorable Śāriputra, I thought, ‘If the worthy one’s attachment, [F.296.b] aversion, and delusion are exhausted, what kind of vessel is he? What kind of vessel will he become?’ Having considered these questions, I reply that worthy ones whose contaminants are exhausted are not vessels for this teaching.”
- 1.50 “Mañjuśrī, for the sake of this teaching I went from monastery to monastery, from dwelling to dwelling, and from hermitage to hermitage in search of you. I thought of how wonderful it would be to hear such profound and eloquent expositions from you. Mañjuśrī, I am insatiable when it comes to the Blessed One’s teachings or your own.”
- 1.51 “Honorable Śāriputra, you are not sated by Dharma teachings?”
“I am not.”
- 1.52 “Honorable Śāriputra, does the realm of phenomena seek out the Dharma?”
“It does not, Mañjuśrī.”
- 1.53 “Since it is not the case that the realm of phenomena is one distinct thing while Venerable Śāriputra is something other, why is it that Venerable Śāriputra is insatiable in listening to the Dharma? Why do I say this? Honorable Śāriputra, it is because the realm of phenomena does not seek the Dharma. If it did seek, then it would be something that could be sated. However, since it does not seek, it is not sated.”
- 1.54 “Mañjuśrī, apart from the Thus-Gone One, where else will you find someone like me to listen to the Dharma?”
“Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that you, Śāriputra, will not enter parinirvāṇa?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.55 “Why do you believe this?”
“I believe this thinking that, since no phenomenon is established, I too will not enter parinirvāṇa.”
- 1.56 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that for you there is no death, transmigration, and rebirth?”

- “Yes, I do.”
- 1.57 “Why do you believe this?”
“I believe this because I am included within the realm of phenomena, and in the realm of phenomena death, transmigration, and birth do not exist.”
- 1.58 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that a worthy one whose contaminants have been exhausted is ignorant?” [F.297.a]
“Yes.”
- 1.59 “Why do you believe this?”
“Since knowledge and ignorance are equivalent, a worthy one whose contaminants have been exhausted is ignorant. In this way, ignorance and knowledge are inexhaustible, and therefore they are void. That being the case, it is because of not conceptualizing ignorance and consciousness that I believe that a worthy one whose contaminants have been exhausted is ignorant.”
- 1.60 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that worthy ones whose contaminants have been exhausted are devoid of knowledge?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.61 “Why do you believe this?”
“All phenomena are devoid of any essence. Because of this I believe that worthy ones whose contaminants have been exhausted are devoid of knowledge.”
- 1.62 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that worthy ones whose contaminants are exhausted are not liberated?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.63 “Why do you believe that?”
“I believe this because defilements do not exist. From what is one liberated if defilements do not exist?”
- 1.64 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that the prior thus-gone ones did not appear and did not enter parinirvāṇa?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.65 “Why do you believe this?”
“In the inconceivable realm, Mañjuśrī, there is no birth. Thus, how could what is unborn disappear or pass into parinirvāṇa? That is why I believe it.”
- 1.66 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that all buddhas are one?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.67 “Why do you believe this?”
“Mañjuśrī, it is because there are no distinctions in the realm of phenomena that I believe this.”
- 1.68 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that all buddha fields are a single buddha field?”
“Yes, I do.”

- 1.69 “Why do you believe this?”
“Mañjuśrī, since all buddha fields are the field of the inexhaustible, I believe in this way.”
- 1.70 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that no phenomenon can be known, abandoned, actualized, [F.297.b] and cultivated?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.71 “Why do you believe this?”
“Essentially, Mañjuśrī, no essence is known. Naturally, no nature is abandoned, actualized, cultivated, produced, ended, adopted, or rejected. That limit is nonabiding. That is what I believe.”
- 1.72 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that the realm of phenomena is a realm without aggregates, that there is no arising or ceasing of any phenomena, and that there are no phenomena whatsoever that are present as aggregates?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.73 “Why do you believe this?”
“Mañjuśrī, I do not apprehend any phenomena arising, ceasing, or present as aggregates, and so I believe in this way.”
- 1.74 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe that insight is the realm of phenomena, and that the realm of phenomena is insight, and that therefore the so-called *realm of phenomena* is also called *a worthy one*?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.75 “Why do you believe this?”
“Mañjuśrī, the state of a worthy one comes about through the insight that leads to realization. Accordingly, as this amounts to knowledge of the realm of phenomena, that knowledge is not epitomized by attachment, aversion, or delusion, and a worthy one is therefore not other than the realm of phenomena. Thus, I believe in this way.”¹³
- 1.76 “Honorable Śāriputra, do you believe all phenomena are equal to the Buddha, the great leader?”
“Yes, I do.”
- 1.77 “Why do you believe this?”
“Mañjuśrī, I believe this because the Blessed One has fully understood that all phenomena are devoid of an inherent nature.”
- 1.78 “Honorable Śāriputra, it is excellent that you have given answers according to the extent of your purview. Well done. That is as far as I will question you. Now, return to your place.”
Śāriputra responded, “Mañjuśrī, this is my place, for as long as I live.”
- 1.79 At this point, the Blessed One said to Venerable Śāriputra, [F.298.a] “Śāriputra, noble sons or daughters who remember, keep, read, or learn this teaching will swiftly become eloquent.”

- 1.80 “So it is, Blessed One. Those who, for the sake of noble sons or daughters, present this Dharma seal exactly as it has been taught will be paying service to the victors of the past; they should be seen in this way.”
- 1.81 Then Venerable Śāriputra asked the Blessed One, “What is the name of this Dharma teaching, Blessed One? How should it be known?”
- 1.82 “To that end, Śāriputra,” said the Blessed One to Venerable Śāriputra, “you may identify this Dharma teaching as *My Response to Youthful Mañjuśrī’s Question*. Identify it also as *The Realm of Phenomena*. You can also identify it as *The Limit of Reality* and *Infinite Jewels*. Śāriputra, noble sons and daughters who exert themselves in remembering, keeping, reading, learning, cultivating, and applying this Dharma teaching are like jewels. They will swiftly attain acceptance that phenomena are unborn and generate roots of virtue in others. Even if they master just a small portion of the Dharma, they will be able to teach the Dharma elaborately. Their eloquence will be uninterrupted.”
- 1.83 When the Blessed One had said this, Youthful Mañjuśrī, Venerable Śāriputra, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.
- 1.84 *This completes the noble Great Vehicle sūtra “Infinite Jewels.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated, proofed, and finalized by the Indian preceptor
Prajñāvarman, the translator-editor Bandé Yeshé Dé, and others.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 This particular equation is made in the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra* attributed to Nāgārjuna (Lamotte 2001, p. 47). Elsewhere in his translation of this text, Lamotte cites a number of other canonical sources that provide lists of synonyms for the ultimate nature, all of which include the term *bhūtaḥkoṭi* (ibid., p. 52, n. 103). Grammatically, *bhūtaḥkoṭi* can be read as both a *tatpuruṣa* and a *karmadhāraya* compound. In support of reading it as a *tatpuruṣa*, Ratnākaraśānti, when explaining the term in his *Muktāvalī* (Toh 1189), glosses *bhūta* by *tattva* (“reality”), and *koṭi* by *agra* (“edge,” “limit”) (Tripathi 2001, p. 96). Both words in this compound are nouns. Lamotte also adopted this reading in his French translation of the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāsāstra*, where, in the English translation of his work, the term is rendered “summit of existence” (2001, p. 47). On the other hand, Edgerton (1953, p. 410) takes *bhūtaḥkoṭi* to be a *karmadhāraya* compound, meaning “true goal” (*bhūta* = “true” and *koṭi* = “goal”). What may underlie these different interpretations is the fact that the word *bhūta* can be used both as an adjective meaning “real/true” and as a noun meaning “reality/truth.” In this translation, we have opted to read the term as a *tatpuruṣa* compound.
- n.2 Buswell and Lopez 2013, p. 117.
- n.3 Here the text alludes to the sense of *koṭi* as “ten million” (rendered as *bye ba* in Tibetan). The term used here is *che bye ba*, which may translate *mahākoṭi*, a term having the sense of vast or untold millions.
- n.4 Interestingly, Saerji (2011) has argued that this sūtra and the shorter *Samādhi-cakrasūtra* (Toh 241) are related, as the *Samādhicakrasūtra* seems to be a summary of *Infinite Jewels*, perhaps meant to facilitate memorization.
- n.5 Karashima 2015, p. 119.

- n.6 The Denkarma catalog is dated to c. 812 CE. Denkarma, folio 299.a.4. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 98–99, no. 183.
- n.7 Reading *bstod* based on the Yongle, Kangxi, and Choné versions. The Degé reads *sdod*.
- n.8 Translation tentative. Degé: *nor bu rin po che de nyid ngos gang dang gang kho nas phab ste gzahag pa'i rin po che'i ngos de dang de kho na 'bab cing gnas par 'gyur lags so*.
- n.9 We have here translated the term *spyod yul* (*gocara*, literally “cattle range”), which refers to the domain or objects (*yul*) over which the senses roam, as “objective world.”
- n.10 Translation tentative. Degé: *spyod yul ma lags pa zhes bgyi ba ni spyod yul des bgyis lags pa ste*.
- n.11 Reading *'da' ba* (instead of *gda' ba*) based on the Narthang and Lhasa versions.
- n.12 Translation tentative. Degé: *tshur mchi ba'am/nang du mchi ba'i mi rigs lags so*.
- n.13 The translation of this paragraph is tentative.

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1 Absorption

ting nge 'dzin

ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

samādhi

A general term for states of deep concentration. Among the different types of meditation, this refers in particular to a state of complete concentration or focus.

g.2 Act of immediate retribution

mtshams med pa

མཚམས་མེད་པ།

ānantarya

Five particularly heinous crimes that result in immediate and severe consequences: (1) killing one's father, (2) killing one's mother, (3) killing a worthy one, (4) maliciously drawing blood from a buddha, and (5) causing a schism in the saṅgha.

g.3 Aggregate

phung po

ཕུང་པོ།

skandha

Here referring to the five collections of psycho-physical factors that constitute beings: form, feelings, perceptions, formations, and consciousness.

g.4 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

Ānanda

The Buddha's cousin and principal attendant.

g.5 **Asura**

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

One of the six classes of beings. The asuras are engendered and dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility and are metaphorically described as being incessantly embroiled in disputes with the gods. They are frequently portrayed in brahmanical mythology as having a disruptive effect on cosmological and social harmony.

g.6 **Bandé Yeshé Dé**

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

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.7 **Blessed one**

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts this term 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.8 Buddha field

sangs rgyas kyi zhing

སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་ཞིང་།

buddhakṣetra

A pure realm manifested by a buddha or advanced bodhisattva through the power of their great merit and aspirations.

g.9 Composite person

'jig tshogs

འཇིག་ཚོགས།

satkāya

The transitory collection of the five aggregates, which is the basis for the view of a self or that which belongs to a self. The term *'jig tshogs* (“transitory collection”; Skt. *satkāya*, literally “real assemblage”) here alludes to the belief in a real person (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*) or, more specifically, the view that the aggregates constitute a real person. This is typically denounced as a false view in Buddhism. However, this text makes the radical claim that beginners should be taught not to reject the composite person because, as becomes clear, there is, quite literally, nothing there to reject.

g.10 Contaminant

zag pa

ཟག་པ།

āsrava

Literally, “to flow” or “to ooze.” Mental defilements or contaminations that “flow out” toward the objects of cyclic existence, binding us to them.

Vasubandhu offers two alternative explanations of this term: “They cause beings to remain (*āsayanti*) within *saṃsāra*” and “They flow from the Summit of Existence down to the Unwavering, out of the six wounds that are the entrances” (*āsayanti saṃsāre āsravanti bhavāgrādyāvādaṅgiṃ ṣaḍbhir āyatana-*

varaṇair ityāsravāḥ, *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* on 5.40, Pradhan 1967, p. 308). The “Summit of Existence” is the highest point within saṃsāra, while the hell called “Unwavering” is the lowest; the six entrances here refer to the five sense faculties plus the mind, i.e., the six internal entrances in the scheme of twelve entrances.

g.11 Defilement

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

In Buddhism, *kleśa* refers to any disturbing and destructive mental state that causes suffering and continued existence in saṃsāra. In this regard, the three basic kleśas are delusion, attachment, and aversion (or hatred). In terms of etymology, the primary meaning is “defilement.” This is reflected in the Middle Indic *kileśa* and Pali *kilesa*, which mean “to soil, stain, defile.” The meaning “affliction” is a secondary meaning that derives from a more general (non-Buddhist) classical understanding based on the verbal root *kliś* (“afflict, torment, cause pain”). Both senses are noted by later Buddhist commentators.

g.12 Fearlessnesses

mi 'jigs pa

མི་འཇིགས་པ།

vaiśāradya

The four fearlessnesses are fearlessness in declaring that one has (1) awakened, (2) ceased all illusions, (3) taught the obstacles to awakening, and (4) shown the way to liberation.

g.13 Gandharva

dri za

དྲི་བ།

gandharva

In Indian religious mythology, a class of nonhuman beings who often appear as semidivine celestial musicians. The same term is used in certain Buddhist texts in a quite different sense: to denote a disembodied sentient being or anguished spirit in the intermediate state between two lives, seeking the conditions for a new birth as a human or other kind of embodied being.

g.14 Ganges

gang gA

གང་གླ།

Gaṅgā

Generally considered the most sacred river in India.

g.15 Hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

The term is most simply interpreted as "those who hear" the Buddha's teaching, i.e. his disciples, but the additional element that they then "make it heard" by others is often present in canonical glosses. In a Mahāyāna context it refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat, and not to embark on the path of a bodhisattva (with buddhahood as its ultimate goal).

g.16 Higher realms

mtho ris

མཐོ་རིས།

sugati

The states of gods, asuras, and humans.

g.17 Hungry ghost

yi dags

ཡི་དགས།

preta

One of the six classes of beings. In the Buddhist tradition they are particularly known to suffer from hunger and thirst and the inability to acquire sustenance.

g.18 Insight

shes rab

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā

In general, this is the mental factor of discerning the specific qualities of a given object and whether it should be accepted or rejected. As the sixth of the six perfections, it refers to the profound understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena, the realization of ultimate reality.

g.19 Limit of reality

yang dag pa'i mtha'

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

bhūtakoti

This term has three meanings: (1) the ultimate nature, (2) the experience of the ultimate nature, and (3) the quiescent state of a worthy one to be avoided by bodhisattvas. See also [i.3](#) and [n.1](#).

g.20 Lower realms

ngan song

ངན་སྲིད།

durgati

The states of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals.

g.21 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

Mañjuśrī

Mañjuśrī is one of the eight “close sons” of the Buddha and a bodhisattva who embodies insight. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha, as in the case of this text. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of insight 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 can also take on the epithets Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.22 Parinirvāṇa

yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa

ཡོངས་སུ་སྤྱུ་རྩལ་ལས་འདས་པ།

parinirvāṇa

The final state of liberation attained by awakened beings at the time of death.

g.23 Pollution

kun nas nyon mongs

ཀུན་ནས་ཉེན་མོངས།

saṃkleśa

A term meaning defilement, impurity, and pollution, broadly referring to cognitive and emotional factors that disturb and obscure the mind. It is often paired with its opposite *vyavadāna*, meaning “purification.”

g.24 Powers

stobs

སྟོབས།

bala

Refers to five or ten powers. As five they are faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and insight. The ten powers are the ten knowledges of a buddha: (1) the knowledge of what is possible and not possible, (2) the knowledge of the ripening of karma, (3) the knowledge of the variety of aspirations, (4) the knowledge of the variety of natures, (5) the knowledge of the different degrees of capability, (6) the knowledge of the destinations of all paths, (7) the knowledge of various states of meditation, (8) the knowledge of remembering previous lives, (9) the knowledge of deaths and rebirths, and (10) the knowledge of the cessation of defilements.

g.25 Prajñāvarman

pradz+nyA barma

པར་ཇ་ཡེ་མ།

Prajñāvarman

A Bengali paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Arriving in Tibet at the invitation of the Tibetan king, he assisted in the translation of numerous canonical scriptures. He is also the author of a few philosophical commentaries contained in the Tengyur (*bstan 'gyur*).

g.26 Purification

rnam par byang ba

རྣམ་པར་བྱང་བ།

vyavadāna

A term meaning purity or purification and broadly referring to the process of purifying the mind of what obscures it in order to attain spiritual awakening. It is often paired with its opposite *saṃkleśa*, meaning “pollution.”

- g.27 Rājagṛha
rgyal po'i khab
 རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།
Rājagṛha
 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 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.28 Realm of phenomena
chos kyi dbyings
 ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།
dharmadhātu
 A synonym for the nature of things.
- g.29 Śāriputra
shA ri'i bu
 སྣ་རིའི་བུ།
Śāriputra
 One of the foremost disciples of the Buddha, renowned for his wisdom and regarded by the tradition as a principal compiler of the Abhidharma.
- g.30 Sītā
si ta
 སི་ཏ།
Sītā
 Sacred river in India.
- g.31 Six classes of beings
'gro ba drug
 འགྲོ་བ་དྲུག།
ṣaḍgati

Gods, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings.

g.32 Solitary buddha

rang sangs rgyas

རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

pratyekabuddha

An individual who, in their last life, attains realization by realizing the nature of interdependent origination without relying on a spiritual guide.

g.33 Thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

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.

g.34 Unique attributes

ma 'dres pa

མ་འདྲེས་པ།

āveṇīka

Eighteen special features of a buddha’s behavior, realization, activity, and wisdom that are not shared by other beings. They are as follows: (1) he never makes a mistake, (2) he is never boisterous, (3) he never forgets, (4) his concentration never falters, (5) he has no notion of distinctness, (6) his equanimity is not due to lack of consideration, (7) his motivation never falters, (8) his endeavor never fails, (9) his mindfulness never falters, (10) he never abandons his concentration, (11) his insight never decreases, (12) his liberation never fails, (13) all his physical actions are preceded and followed by wisdom (*jñāna*), (14) all his verbal actions are preceded and followed by

wisdom, (15) all his mental actions are preceded and followed by wisdom, (16) his wisdom and vision perceive the past without any attachment or hindrance, (17) his wisdom and vision perceive the future without any attachment or hindrance, and (18) his wisdom and vision perceive the present without any attachment or hindrance.

g.35 Vajra

rdo rje

རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajra

The term stands for indestructibility and perfect stability. According to Indian mythology, the vajra is the all-powerful god Indra's weapon, likened to a thunderbolt, which made him invincible. It also relates to the diamond which is the hardest physical substance.

g.36 Vulture Peak Mountain

bya rgod kyi phung po'i ri

བྱ་རྗེ་གྲི་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata

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

g.37 Well-gone one

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གསེགས་པ།

sugata

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 the accomplishment of one's own purpose (*svārthasampat*) for a 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 Buddhaghosa, 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.38 Worthy one

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat

According to Buddhist tradition, one who is worthy of worship (*pūjām arhati*), or one who has conquered the enemies, the defilements (*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.39 Yamunā

ya mu na

ཡ་མུ་ན།

Yamunā

Sacred tributary river of the Ganges in Northern India.

g.40 Youthful Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa

འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ།

Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta

See “Mañjuśrī.”