

༄༅། །ཚངས་པས་བྱིན་གྱིས་བྱས་པ།

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## The Questions of Brahmadata

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*Brahmadattaparipṛcchā*

Translated into Tibetan by  
Surendrabodhi · Prajñāvarman · Yeshé Dé

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*'phags pa tshangs pas byin gyis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Questions of Brahmadata”

*Āryabrahmadattaparipṛcchānāmamahāyānasūtra*



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co.

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## SUMMARY

s.

s.1 *The Questions of Brahmadata* begins with the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin departing from the Jeta Grove of Śrāvastī, where the Buddha is residing. Together with more than five hundred bodhisattvas, he travels to the region of Pañcāla, where King Brahmadata requests Amoghadarśin to impart teachings to him and his citizens. The bodhisattva discusses the attributes and correct practices of a king who is a protector of the Dharma. The king requests that the bodhisattva remain in his kingdom to observe the summer vows in retreat. Sixty wicked monks already residing there treat Amoghadarśin poorly, and after three months he leaves Pañcāla and returns to the Jeta Grove.

s.2 King Brahmadata later goes to see the Buddha, who explains to the king how the wicked monks behaved and the negative consequences of such actions. The Buddha then goes on to explain what a monk and others who wish to attain awakening should strive for, namely, to rid themselves of pride, anger, and jealousy. Upon hearing these instructions, King Brahmadata expels the sixty wicked monks from his kingdom. Many beings then generate the mind of awakening, and King Brahmadata is irreversibly set on the path of complete awakening. The Buddha smiles and radiates multicolored lights throughout the whole world. Finally, the king apologizes to Amoghadarśin and the bodhisattva forgives him.

ac.

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ac.1 This sūtra was translated by Khenpo Konchok Tamphel of the Ratnaśrī Translation Group. The translation was edited and introduced by Casey Kemp.

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i.

## INTRODUCTION

i.1

*The Questions of Brahmadaṭṭa* begins with the Buddha residing in the Jeta Grove, a park that had been offered to the Buddha and his monks by the wealthy lay disciple Anāthapiṇḍada. This park was located in Śrāvastī, one of the major cities in the ancient northern Indian kingdom of Kośala and a common setting for many Buddhist sūtras. Śrāvastī is said to be where the Buddha spent the majority of his rainy-season retreats, and many of his teachings were expounded there. While the Buddha is there with his disciples, the bodhisattva Amoghadaṛśin departs from the Jeta Grove together with a large retinue. Monks at this time were encouraged not only to stay in retreat but also to travel from town to town in order to educate communities about the Dharma.<sup>1</sup> Amoghadaṛśin and his retinue eventually arrive at the ancient kingdom of Pañcāla. Pañcāla is listed among the sixteen great states of India during the time of the Buddha and is situated in the northwestern region between Kurū and Kośala, two other well-known Indian kingdoms.<sup>2</sup> According to *The Questions of Brahmadaṭṭa*, during the time of the Buddha, Pañcāla was ruled by a king named Brahmadaṭṭa. In early Buddhist canonical sources, Brahmadaṭṭa is a common name for kings and princes of various Indian kingdoms and capitals including Benares (present-day Varanasi) and Northern Pañcāla (Uttara Pañcāla).<sup>3</sup>

i.2

When King Brahmadaṭṭa hears of Amoghadaṛśin's arrival in Pañcāla, he decides to meet him to pay his respects. The bodhisattva imparts teachings on the five attributes of an anointed king of royal descent who is on the path to awakening. These five qualities are (1) possessing faith, (2) longing for the Dharma, (3) believing in the Dharma's profundity, (4) fully upholding the teachings, and (5) making an effort to completely uphold the supreme Dharma. Amoghadaṛśin goes on to clarify in verse a king's essential role as a protector of the Dharma. The king expresses humility by replying that he has all the shortcomings and none of the good qualities mentioned, confessing

that he has harmed and killed others. The king and his subjects then vow to generate the mind of awakening by following the bodhisattva path, and they ask the bodhisattva to remain in Pañcāla during the rainy season retreat.

i.3 Amoghadarśin and his retinue agree to stay, and King Brahmadata acts as their patron by providing all their material needs. However, sixty degenerate monks are already residing there. They possess negative attributes such as jealousy, pride, and resentment and do not follow the rules of the Vinaya, the Buddhist monastic code. Since they do not like the presence of Amoghadarśin and his monks, they make rude remarks and spread rumors about Amoghadarśin. Additionally, a minister of King Brahmadata causes a rift between Amoghadarśin and the wicked monks and between the bodhisattva and King Brahmadata. Although there is only brief mention of the minister, the sūtra repeatedly refers to the negative effect that wicked monks can have on a lay community, stating that the monks “spread such remarks by visiting the homes of brahmins and householders with little faith, who, as a result of listening, would be born and live as denizens of the great hells for eight hundred million eons.”

i.4 After three months, Amoghadarśin leaves Pañcāla and returns to the Jeta Grove, where the Buddha is residing. King Brahmadata, hearing that Amoghadarśin had gone to the Buddha because the sixty degenerate monks had mistreated him, goes to see the Buddha. He tells the Buddha that he feels the bodhisattva had left too soon, whereupon the Buddha explains how the monks there had behaved. The Buddha then describes the causes for lacking effort, the characteristics of jealous people, and how to recognize those who have strayed from the path to awakening. The Buddha explains how to recognize degenerate monks and how other ordained individuals should treat such monks. He warns that the consequences of the increased number of wicked monks—that is, monks who do not follow the Vinaya correctly and do not have faith in the Dharma—could lead to the destruction of the Dharma. Throughout this sūtra, the Buddha encourages monks and those who wish to attain awakening to refrain from such negative behavior; he also alludes to a king’s responsibility to expel degenerate monks for the sake of the Dharma and the future lives of his own subjects. In accord with this advice, King Brahmadata expels the sixty degenerate monks from his kingdom, and by doing so he becomes irreversibly set on the path to awakening. Finally, King Brahmadata apologizes to Amoghadarśin and is forgiven.

i.5 There is to our knowledge no extant Sanskrit version of this sūtra, nor are there any translations into Chinese. According to the colophon to the Tibetan translation it was translated into Tibetan by the Indian preceptors Surendrabodhi and Prajñāvarman, along with the editor and translator

Yeshé Dé. The text is also recorded in the Denkarma inventory of the Tibetan imperial translations, so it would have been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan no later than the early ninth century, as the Denkarma is thought to have been compiled in 812 CE.<sup>4</sup> Previously, this sūtra has received little attention in modern publications, and this is to our knowledge the first English translation of the text.<sup>5</sup> This translation has been prepared based on the Tibetan translation in the Degé Kangyur in consultation with the Comparative Edition (Tib. *dpe bsdur ma*).

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra  
**The Questions of Brahmadaṭṭa**

1.

## The Translation

[F.10.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park in Śrāvastī, together with a great assembly of two hundred fifty thousand monks and a large number of bodhisattva great beings. All of these were bodhisattvas who were versed in extraordinary knowledge, had acquired extraordinary knowledge along with dhāraṇī, samādhi, and unimpeded dhāraṇī, and were skilled in the dhāraṇīs that accomplish the seal of infinite gateways.<sup>6</sup> They dwelled in emptiness, they had the experience of signlessness, and they had aspirations that were not imputed. They all had reached the acceptance that phenomena are unarisen.

1.2 Then, the bodhisattva [F.11.a] Amoghadarśin, together with about five hundred bodhisattvas, prostrated at the feet of the Blessed One, circumambulated him, and departed. After traveling through several towns, they finally arrived in the region of Pañcāla. When King Brahmadata learned of the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin's arrival in his land, he felt pleased and happy, and he rejoiced. Overjoyed and content, he led a large following of people to the place where the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin was staying. When he arrived there, he prostrated by touching his head to the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin's feet, then sat to one side. His many followers also prostrated by touching their heads to the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin's feet, then sat to one side.

1.3 When he saw that King Brahmadata and his assembled retinue and attendants were present, the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin said to him, "Great King, an anointed king of royal descent who possesses five attributes will continuously progress while traversing saṃsāra and will never take birth in unfavorable states.<sup>7</sup> He will also meet and please thus-gone ones. When the blessed buddhas teach the Dharma, he will also master their allegorical

speech. He will maintain uninterrupted mindfulness, look attractive, and not lack any sense faculty. The blessed buddhas will also speak to him with words of absolute truth; that is to say, they will demonstrate the four truths.

1.4 “What are these five attributes?

“Great King, an anointed king of royal descent possesses faith. He possesses a mind that is strong in faith and is without animosity. His faith is also demonstrated to be rooted in certainty. [F.11.b] His faith should furthermore be observed in ten ways. What are these ten? They are as follows: (1) He gives without deceit. (2) He gives away all possessions completely. (3) He has no excessive pride. (4) He has exceptional clarity. (5) He does not apprehend any fault in the teachings of the noble ones. (6) He does not investigate the best, intermediate, or lesser monks for mistakes. (7) He believes in emptiness. (8) His physical actions are pure. (9) His verbal actions are pure. (10) His mental activity is pure.

1.5 “Great King, one of royal descent who possesses this first attribute and is an anointed king accomplishes these qualities just mentioned.

1.6 “Moreover, Great King, an anointed king of royal descent longs for the Dharma. He always yearns to behold the noble ones, and he insatiably seeks to hear the Dharma. Using his mind he carefully investigates the many things he has learned, and then fully realizes them through experience. Great King, a king should be understood to be endowed with the Dharma if he has ten qualities. What are these ten? They are as follows: (1) He is without concern for his body or life in his quest for the Dharma. (2) He possesses a mindset that is weary of saṃsāra. (3) He thinks that a householder’s life entails too many faults. (4) He has a mindset that is not concerned with material things. (5) He is critical toward the negative actions that stem from his previous karma, and he does not create future formations. (6) He possesses a mindset that discriminates between all that is attractive and all that is repulsive. (7) Mastering his intent, he perfects the conduct of a bodhisattva and does not privilege words. (8) He is steadfast in his commitments because he seeks wisdom. (9) He fosters awakening in his servants and retinue and completely matures them [F.12.a] continuously with the gift of the Dharma. (10) He also fulfills their material needs.

1.7 “Great King, one of royal descent who possesses this second attribute and is an anointed king accomplishes these qualities just mentioned.

1.8 “Moreover, Great King, an anointed king of royal descent believes in accepting the profound Dharma and accomplishes the samādhi of emptiness. His interest in the profundity of the Dharma should also be understood in ten ways. What are these ten? They are as follows: (1) His actions accord with his words. (2) He completes all his virtuous Dharma activities with very strong devotion and rids himself of the formations of unpleasant actions. (3)

He creates pleasing formations. (4) He does not unjustly suppress individuals who possess power and riches. (5) He provides others with pleasing gifts and eliminates all that is not pleasant. (6) Thinking that all phenomena are empty, he cultivates renunciation. (7) His view is free of contrivance, thus he neither believes in the singularity of the limit of reality nor holds concepts of its multiplicity. (8) He does not use his own qualities to belittle the qualities of others. (9) He does not form definite judgments. (10) He brings those who do not practice into alignment with the inconceivable realm of phenomena.

1.9       “Great King, one of royal descent who possesses this third attribute and is an anointed king accomplishes these qualities just mentioned.

1.10       “Moreover, Great King, when an anointed king of royal descent clearly perceives the contamination that comes from the harm of living in this world, he upholds the teachings for the sake of accomplishing unsurpassed, complete, and perfect awakening. He perseveres [F.12.b] in generating the power of the six perfections and never tires of fully maturing sentient beings. Furthermore, the ways in which he upholds the teachings should be understood in ten ways. What are these ten? They are as follows: (1) He perseveres in attaining samādhi that is unimpeded by the eight worldly concerns. (2) He perseveres in seeking out the dhāraṇīs. (3) He is skilled in ascertaining so that he completely apprehends the supreme Dharma. (4) He never tires of providing various necessities to those who persevere, including clothes, food, bedding, cushions, and medicines to cure sickness. (5) He strives to encourage awakening. (6) He thinks excellent thoughts, speaks excellent words, and performs excellent deeds. (7) He is inclined towards renunciation. (8) He thinks that it is a mistake to delight in being a king. (9) He possesses a mindset that has no concern for any beautiful or pleasant forms. (10) At the very least he does not think that anything is accomplished by only craving kingship.

1.11       “Great King, one of royal descent who possesses this fourth attribute and is an anointed king accomplishes these qualities just mentioned.

1.12       “Moreover, Great King, an anointed king of royal descent follows the Dharma in guarding, protecting, and shielding those who uphold, read, and teach unsurpassed, complete, and perfect awakening, which one fully accomplishes in a hundred billion trillion incalculable eons. He likewise punishes beings who are harmful to such individuals in order to completely protect the enjoyment of this resource of Dharma. His effort to completely uphold the supreme Dharma [F.13.a] should also be understood in ten ways. What are these ten? They are as follows: (1) He accomplishes it completely. (2) He regards it as absolutely invaluable. (3) He believes in the Dharma. (4) He always acts without confusion. (5) He desires wisdom and has trust in

distinctions of enlightened qualities. (6) He acts as a messenger of the Thus-Gone One. (7) He is a suitable vessel for buddhahood. (8) He holds together the lineage of the Three Jewels. (9) He causes the supreme Dharma to blaze brightly. (10) He completely matures many people.

1.13 “Great King, one of royal descent who possesses this fifth attribute and is an anointed king accomplishes these qualities just mentioned.”

1.14 After this, the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin recited the following verses:

“The king who always has a sincere attitude  
Toward the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha  
Has indestructible faith and confidence  
And never lacks the following qualities.

1.15 “His faith is not contrived but is born from understanding,  
And he does not hang on to anything he owns.  
Rather, he feels no regret when it is given away.  
These qualities are a sign of faith.

1.16 “Those whose thoughts are always unsullied  
Are unshakable like the indestructible Mount Meru.  
Just as a full vase does not move when it is well placed,  
Their faith is absolutely unmoving.

1.17 “Those who see without seeing and hear without hearing  
Are immovable like a mountain.  
Such are the characteristics of faith,  
Which will not change at all in any situation.

1.18 “Wise ones who wish for the Dharma because they wish for peace  
Should abandon everything else for the sake of the Dharma  
And, after abandoning everything, should not think of it.  
These are the characteristics of those who wish for the Dharma.

1.19 “When a lord of humans who wishes for the Dharma  
Does not listen to the eloquent teachings,  
Like a rotten seed sown in a bad field,  
The pure instructions of the Leader of Beings will not grow. [F.13.b]

1.20 “Even if one hears them, but thinks, ‘I am wise in them,’  
Or, ‘I have realized the exact nature of all phenomena,’  
One cannot purify their conduct with a sincere attitude;  
How can one with a dualistic mind become pure?

1.21 “Those who wish for the Dharma with mindfulness,

- Who are respectful, unwavering, not stupid like sheep,  
And are not like a rushing torrent but like a still ocean—  
Such are vessels for supreme awakening.
- 1.22 “Those who wish for the Dharma  
Never cling to any outer or inner things.  
They are cherished by the knowledgeable and criticized by fools.  
These are the ways to recognize people who wish for the Dharma.
- 1.23 “Therefore, as a king who wishes for the Dharma,  
Practice purely after hearing these words,  
And don't fixate on mere words or studies;  
There is no wisdom in degenerate thoughts.
- 1.24 “Those who believe in the acceptance of the profound  
Do not cling to pleasant or unpleasant forms.  
Just like the wind, they have no attachment,  
Yet they practice for hundreds of infinite eons.
- 1.25 “King, if awakening is what you wish for,  
Purify your thoughts with a sincere attitude.  
Do not remain in this mistaken state  
Because of prideful thoughts of ‘I’ and ‘mine.’
- 1.26 “You should continuously confess faults.  
You should maintain favorable vows.  
Regard power and relationships as impermanent.  
This absence of support is genuine emptiness.
- 1.27 “However many teachings on emptiness you preach,  
This is not abiding in emptiness just as it is.  
Anyone who acts contrary to reality  
Does not accept the profound way.
- 1.28 “Thus, this emptiness is totally wrong.  
One who knows emptiness just as it is  
Will escape the worldly realm and reach supreme awakening  
Like the king of geese leaving a swamp.
- 1.29 “After generating respect for the Thus-Gone One,  
King, you should examine what he has taught.  
King, because the body is going to fall apart completely,  
Do not get discouraged on the vehicle to awakening. [F.14.a]
- 1.30 “You should always protect the wise,

- Who know the texts, experience, and rites of the Teacher.  
Do not fall under the influence of mere words,  
For you will undoubtedly remain sick for a long time.
- 1.31 “One who examines the teachings thoroughly  
Should focus within in order to truly guard them.  
Abandoning the myriad afflictions and karma,  
One will attain in particular the supreme awakening.
- 1.32 “Train well in the six perfections.  
Through training in them, you will attain supreme awakening.  
Put into practice all that has been taught,  
And before long you will achieve the virtues of omniscience.
- 1.33 “The mind that relates to objects  
Like a bee unattached to a flower's nectar  
Or a bird leaving no trace in the sky,  
Is a mind, O King, that reaches buddhahood.
- 1.34 “You should follow the Dharma in protecting  
Those who have found acceptance and courage for the profound  
And hold the treasury of the buddhas.  
Never forsake such wise ones, even at the cost of your life.
- 1.35 “There are many people, devoid of Dharma,  
Who strive to harm such wise ones;  
You should constantly prevent this through punishments,  
Or else the way of the Dharma will quickly degenerate.
- 1.36 “If the Lord of the World does not appear,  
Those wise ones will be the teachers of the world.  
They will light the lamp of the Dharma for the benefit of living beings.  
Therefore, devote yourself always to their benefit.
- 1.37 “There are many tens of billions of bodhisattvas  
Who do not act for the benefit of sentient beings from their hearts.  
They have neither a sincere attitude nor ethical discipline.  
The Conqueror will not make prophecies about them.
- 1.38 “Those who act in accordance with what I have just described  
Are endowed with the experience of nonarising.  
You, King, having listened to these correct practices,  
Should abide by these teachings I have revealed.”

- 1.39      Thereafter, King Brahmadata said the following to the bodhisattva great being Amoghadarśin: “Amoghadarśin, apparently I have all of the shortcomings [F.14.b] but none of the good qualities. Amoghadarśin, I am contaminated with harmful pollutants. Amoghadarśin, I am strongly addicted to unjust actions. I always intensely seek out wealth and gather attendants. Consequently, my thoughts arise due to a malevolent attitude that I am incapable of removing. Besides that, I have also thrashed others with sticks and struck them with weapons. Therefore, Amoghadarśin, I did not generate the mind of awakening. I generated a malevolent attitude toward others, even in my dreams. Amoghadarśin, I shall now generate with a sincere attitude the unsurpassed, complete, and perfect mind of awakening. Amoghadarśin, if I do not train in the precepts of bodhisattvas as they are delineated, it will amount to deceiving all the blessed buddhas who dwell in the world systems of the ten directions. In order to fully accomplish unsurpassed, complete, and perfect awakening, I shall act exactly as you have spoken.”
- 1.40      Thereafter eighty thousand beings, following after King Brahmadata, generated the unsurpassed, complete, and perfect mind of awakening for the first time, and they also prayed to achieve the conduct of a bodhisattva as it was expounded. Twenty thousand beings acquired the pure eye of Dharma that is flawless and without defilements with respect to all phenomena.
- 1.41      Then, King Brahmadata said the following to the bodhisattva great being Amoghadarśin: “Amoghadarśin, out of your love for me and for the benefit of the people gathered here, please consent to remain here at my place to observe the summer retreat.
- 1.42      “Amoghadarśin, we may not meet the conditions of being a vessel, [F.15.a] we may not meet the conditions of having the scope of experience, and we may not be people of equal status to the fortunate ones. Also, since we do not see the Thus-Gone One or listen to the Dharma continuously, our accumulation of the roots of virtue may not be so large, and we may not have matured many sentient beings. Nevertheless, your presence will benefit us.”
- 1.43      Then, the bodhisattva great being Amoghadarśin, along with some five hundred other bodhisattvas, accepted King Brahmadata’s request out of love for him. King Brahmadata prepared a variety of bedding, cushions, mats, clothing, and food for the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin and his retinue of five hundred bodhisattvas. He also made various Dharma offerings to the bodhisattva great being Amoghadarśin.
- 1.44      At that time, there were sixty monks staying in that place. All of them were lazy, limited in their studies, full of hostile intent, and resentful when others received offerings. They claimed to be bodhisattvas themselves, but were

coarse, crude bodhisattvas. They indulged their senses; they were wild, proud, and vain; they talked nonsense and were deceitful like crows. They had no regard for their next lives and no fear of karma; they enjoyed foolish talk, slept excessively, and had desire for what is not the Dharma. Their physical, verbal, and mental actions were without any restraint; they were argumentative, resented those with ethical discipline, and took no interest at all in the knowledge of others.

1.45 They did not even like to see the teacher, let alone fellow practitioners of pure conduct. Thus, they denigrated the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin in a manner that was not in accord with the Dharma. [F.15.b] Moreover, they spread such remarks by visiting the homes of brahmins and householders with little faith, who, as a result of listening, would be born and live as denizens of the great hells for eight hundred million eons. The bodhisattva Amoghadarśin did not tell this to King Brahmadata because of his compassion for those sentient beings.

1.46 At that time, King Brahmadata had a court priest, a brahmin named Thorough Obscurer. He caused a rift between the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin and the monks who were there, and he made rude remarks that were at odds with the Dharma. He also secretly caused a rift between King Brahmadata and the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin. He furthermore discouraged all those who had developed extraordinary joy in the Dharma and used every possible means to plant disdain for the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin in their minds. Even when he participated in Dharma discussions, he spoke in opposition to the Dharma, thereby carrying out by every means the activities of the crude bodhisattvas.

1.47 In this regard, bodhisattvas are crude when they possess four attributes. What are these four? They are as follows: (1) They are deceitful like a crow, talk nonsense, and do not accommodate other perspectives. (2) They praise themselves and criticize others. (3) They are obsessed with this life and have negative thoughts. (4) They aggressively sow discord. Bodhisattvas are crude when they possess these four attributes.

1.48 The bodhisattva Amoghadarśin completed the summer retreat there in both comfort and suffering, and with happiness and sadness. Why was this so? Well, someone who dwells with a lazy person tends to suffer. Thus, the bodhisattva great being Amoghadarśin observed the summer retreat, and after the three months had passed, he [F.16.a] made and completed a Dharma robe. He then left, carrying his alms bowl and Dharma robe. After passing through several kingdoms, he finally arrived at the Jeta Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's park in Śrāvastī, where the Blessed One was residing. Arriving there, he touched the Blessed One's feet with his head to pay homage and sat to one side.

- 1.49 King Brahmadata later heard the news that the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin had gone directly to the Blessed One because the resident monks had mistreated him. King Brahmadata, along with ten thousand others, thus left the region of Pañcāla for Kośala where the Blessed One was residing. Arriving there, he touched the Blessed One's feet with his head to pay homage and sat to one side. After he sat down, King Brahmadata said to the Blessed One, "Blessed One, the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin left my country too soon."
- 1.50 The Blessed One replied, "Great King, the Thus-Gone One and the hearers of the Thus-Gone One do not share a dwelling with individuals who are jealous, make no effort whatsoever, are fond of gossip, engage in excessive foolish talk, are very poorly behaved, and do not practice. Great King, know that there are ten causes for a person's lack of effort. What are these ten? They are as follows: (1) sleeping excessively, (2) cultivating the blatant pride of thinking oneself wise, (3) praising oneself, (4) criticizing others, (5) being fond of foolish talk, (6) being fond of gossip, (7) being fond of crowds, (8) clinging strongly to wealth, (9) clinging strongly to respect, and (10) being a hypocrite.
- 1.51 "Great King, an individual who possesses these ten causes [F.16.b] is known as one who lacks effort."
- 1.52 Then the Blessed One spoke the following verses:
- "Those who are unreasonable are always inharmonious;  
They remain as far from the wise ones  
As a corpse in the ocean  
Or a creature riding on a bird.
- 1.53 "Those without faith search for faults in others;  
They speak foolishly and are fond of being in a crowd,  
They do not respect the teachings of the conquerors,  
And they will migrate to the lower realms immediately after death.
- 1.54 "Those who are lacking have neither mindfulness nor wisdom;  
They will not pass into or reach nirvāṇa and do not have ethical discipline,  
And like a blind person on a road,  
They stray farther and farther from the path of the noble ones.
- 1.55 "Persons who are lacking will talk too much;  
They like to laugh and their senses are always distracted;  
Regarding the teachings, they are not fit to drink the dregs of a water pot,  
And the food they receive from villages will go down like lumps of iron.<sup>8</sup>
- 1.56 "When a donor makes an offering out of faith,

- For those not lacking and for the liberated, it is I who give it.  
If one who is lacking consumes even a single morsel,  
My disapproval will be as great as Mount Meru.
- 1.57 “According to the teachings, food provided by royalty is difficult to purify.  
Even those who are not lacking abstain from it.  
If those who are lacking consume it like a vulture,  
They will be reborn as an elephant, horse, cow, or donkey.
- 1.58 “When they eat it they will take contemptible forms,  
Becoming skeletal, weak, and loathsome.  
After eating alms food they will be filthy and exude a foul odor,  
And can only be purified by being struck with a rod.
- 1.59 “Their minds will be distracted, and their mindfulness will erode away;  
They will be forced to beg and will go mad.  
Despite obtaining this meritorious platform of the teachings,  
If they are not heedful, they will fall into the lower realms.
- 1.60 “For an infinite million trillion years,  
They will undergo great suffering in the lower realms,  
After which they will obtain the relief of the human world,  
But due to their misdeeds they will fall again into the lower realms.
- 1.61 “When a lump of iron plummets into the great ocean  
Its location is not fixed. [F.17.a]  
Even after ten billion years  
It will be impossible to recover it again from the ocean.
- 1.62 “It is the same for the childish ones who fall into the lower realms.  
For a hundred billion trillion eons,  
It is doubtful that they will again be born as human beings.  
How can they attain the higher realms and awakening?
- 1.63 “With a pure mind and lasting diligence,  
With perfect restraint and without being deceptive,  
And with a mind of equanimity, one can attain awakening.  
For such a person, the state of omniscience is not difficult.
- 1.64 “Great King, recognize the following sixteen things as characteristics of  
jealous people. What are these sixteen? They are as follows: (1) being  
deceitful like a crow, (2) talking foolishly, (3) lacking self-control, (4) being  
pleased when others are denounced, (5) doubting the qualities of others, (6)  
thinking excessively, (7) being excessively sorrowful, (8) possessing extreme

mental discomfort, (9) being envious, (10) possessing a decrepit figure and complexion, (11) being overwhelmed with pride, (12) disliking monks, (13) being rude toward unexpected visitors, (14) looking for mistakes to start an argument, (15) being stingy regarding one's residence, and (16) not attending teachings, not listening with attention but having a distracted mind, spreading rumors, and saying with contempt for the Dharma, 'I don't understand what was said. It is a foolish, mundane, and conventional Dharma being taught.'

1.65 "These people, who have no respect for the Vinaya and Dharma that was realized by the noble ones, are ignorant fools.

1.66 "Saying, 'I shall attain awakening; only then shall I sit under the Bodhi tree and be respectful toward the Dharma,' they stand outside the door and listen even when the Dharma is being taught to the monks. They think, 'I am not willing to sit down. But, since it provides the monks with their livelihood, I will listen when there is a talk on the eight branches of awakening.<sup>9</sup> If I listen to this, my illness will be dispelled.' [F.17.b] Thus these foolish people who chase after awakening by yearning for what is not the Dharma are like people who pluck out their eyes and then want to see. They are like those wishing to satisfy many guests after getting rid of all their wealth. They are like those wishing to follow a path after cutting off their legs. Great King, this is how these foolish people with such wishes think about awakening.

1.67 "Great King, someone who has fallen away from awakening should be understood as having the following twenty-five attributes. What are the twenty-five? They are as follows: (1) being stingy regarding their residence; (2) being stingy regarding their household; (3) being stingy with their praise; (4) being jealous; (5) having no faith; (6) being shameless; (7) being immodest; (8) being malicious; (9) being deceptive; (10) being harmful toward others; (11) behaving in a way that is self-absorbed; (12) being hypocritical; (13) being vengeful; (14) excessively accumulating wealth; (15) misinterpreting and exaggerating the teachings of the Thus-Gone One out of fear and thus (16) abandoning the Dharma; (17) not asking any questions because of excessive pride; (18) lacking remorse, even after betraying the Dharma; (19) being dislikable and having many enemies; (20) after joining the assembly, exposing someone's faults immediately upon seeing them in an attempt to reverse others' fondness for them; (21) scorning those who have trust in secret topics; (22) disparaging monks whether one has previously seen them or not, thinking that no one should like them; (23) disparaging in order to harm; (24) forsaking others in order to disparage them; and (25) guarding their ethical discipline motivated by the thought that failing to keep the fully ordained monk's vows would not bring as much profit.

- 1.68 “Great King, such individuals will seriously drift from the teachings,  
[F.18.a] or they will become householders.”
- 1.69 Then the Blessed One spoke the following verses:  
  
“Like crows they are deceitful and talk nonsense without restraint.  
They are disrespectful to the teachings of the knowers of the world,  
Proud, shameless, and combative at all times—  
These are the signs of those who are overwhelmed with jealousy.
- 1.70 “How can awakening be achieved  
By those who feel no unhappiness when others are criticized,  
Who like a pauper finding gold, cherish it and forsake all else,  
And who have the intention to cause harm?
- 1.71 “In the past they cultivated<sup>10</sup> a vindictive attitude,  
Which ripened in their experience of the lower realms.  
They are jealous even now, despite having found a human body,  
And in appearance are dull and ugly.
- 1.72 “Time and again, they mock everyone;  
Their minds are always hostile.  
Even upon seeing the expertise of others,  
They become jealous and so abandon the Dharma.
- 1.73 “As they are wild and their hearts know no restraint,  
They speak about many bad things with others;  
And even when others have not spoken negatively,  
They pass their nights intending to fight.
- 1.74 “In town they behave differently,  
While in the temple they act like wild horses.  
They recognize others’ faults but not their own.  
Such are the attributes of those who are jealous.
- 1.75 “They will think, ‘Now, I definitely won't stay around here,  
But will say such-and-such things in that person's house.  
Tomorrow I will speak offensively...’  
This is how they keep plotting with a malicious mindset.
- 1.76 “Their minds are full of sorrow and without joy.  
When they see others venerated because of what they know,  
They lose their conviction in the ripening of karma,  
And, controlled by vice, they speak critically.

- 1.77 “When honor and respect grows  
For wise ones who have mastered the remedies,  
Jealous people do not recognize them as holders of the supreme Dharma  
Who practice unsurpassed, supreme generosity.
- 1.78 “If they see monks who are gentle in their pure activity  
Suddenly coming, they feel ashamed.  
With disrespect they say faithless things, [F.18.b]  
Such as ‘What do you want in this miserable place?’
- 1.79 “ ‘There is always a lot of work in this monastery,  
And with nothing to gain, your activities here will be unbearable.’  
If the monks refuse to leave despite their dissuasions,  
They will lose their temper and pick a fight.
- 1.80 “There are no such people in this pure place.  
Remember what happened in the other land?  
After the resident monks expelled you,  
Did you come here to disparage them?
- 1.81 “Naive lay disciples do not understand;  
They do not know who has ethical discipline or who is unethical.  
Monks leave frequently, both willingly and unwillingly,  
And certainly leave when facing spite and viciousness.
- 1.82 “When this is seen by Dharma teachers,  
Students of the Buddha who are gentle, superior, and steadfast,  
They say it is inappropriate to clash with fools,  
And that they will just go back where they came from.
- 1.83 “How sad! These teachings of mine that guide,  
This Dharma of the conquerors, will come to an end;  
These wicked monks will proliferate,  
While those who preach the Dharma decrease.
- 1.84 “When a learned individual suddenly arrives  
And reveals that which brings joy to many people,  
They say, ‘What does one with such little intelligence know?’  
And they pronounce to others their lack of respect.
- 1.85 “They have neither received transmissions nor asked Dharma questions.  
What is their preceptor like and who is their master?  
Like a self-sprouting tree, they don their Dharma robe  
And seek wealth for their own happiness.

- 1.86 “They think, ‘He is not learned in the collection of sūtras,  
And we know as much as he knows.’  
They are foolish and refute the teachings.  
They have not attained samādhi, and they think like a child.
- 1.87 “King, as I recall in past times,  
There was a buddha called Jñānaprabha.  
He taught the Dharma for eighty thousand years,  
After which the conqueror attained nirvāṇa.
- 1.88 “After that conqueror had passed,  
When the sublime Dharma declined and came close to an end,  
A monk named Mindful Intellect appeared—  
He did not attain dhāraṇī, but he had obtained eloquence. [F.19.a]
- 1.89 “He was good looking, gentle, and well-spoken,  
And always satisfied with plain, simple things.  
Like a cloud satisfying all beings with its rain,  
He satisfied all migratory beings, including the gods, with the Dharma.
- 1.90 “At that time, there was upon the earth a town  
Called Vyūharāja;  
It measured eight yojanas in circumference,  
And the people there were intelligent and happy with bountiful harvests.
- 1.91 “When Mindful Intellect, the teacher of the Dharma, arrived,  
He gave Dharma teachings for the benefit of all living beings.  
Two hundred thirty million living beings  
Became established in the state of unsurpassed awakening.
- 1.92 “With flowers, incense, and garments,  
And with delicacies, libations, and wholesome songs,  
And with excellent sounds from musical instruments,  
They worshiped him as they would a buddha.
- 1.93 “Five hundred monks became extremely hostile;  
They spread criticism of him in the town,  
Saying, ‘He has no ethical discipline; he is a miscreant, and I know this to be  
so’  
To each and every person they met.
- 1.94 “During the restoration and purification rites on the day of the full moon,  
Some of these wicked monks stood up and said,  
‘If you do not leave quickly, by tonight,

- We will slash your vital parts and kill you.'
- 1.95 "With compassion for those monks,  
The pure sentient being left undismayed.  
Thousands of gods mourned and cried,  
'Why is this child of the Buddha being harassed?'
- 1.96 "All of the five hundred monks there  
Passed the whole night laughing, elated.  
They thought, 'At last! We are finally free of him,'  
And felt as if a heavy burden had been lifted.
- 1.97 "When the five hundred monks died,  
They remained in hell for eighty eons.  
For a period of seven hundred sixty trillion eons,  
Those monks lived in the world of hungry ghosts.
- 1.98 "Life after life, these sentient beings will become blind.  
They will be born as venomous snakes and eat dust.  
Children will pelt them with clods of dirt when they see them.  
They will have neither protectors nor defenders.
- 1.99 "For one hundred eighty billion lifetimes,  
They will be born into poverty in the human realm. [F.19.b]  
They will go mad and go blind, and their bodies will continuously rot.  
They will look ugly, be contemptible, and have little power.
- 1.100 "They will be afflicted in that way for five billion years.  
They themselves will always do many unpleasant things  
And find fault in the generous acts of others.  
They will throw themselves into a deep abyss.
- 1.101 "In the future, the sixtieth eon  
Will be called the Eon of Great Fame.  
During that time there will appear ten thousand thus-gone ones  
Who will protect and benefit the world.
- 1.102 "During the time of the last of those buddhas,  
Those five hundred monks will obtain their human forms.  
After seeing that buddha, they will attain the state of acceptance  
And will see as many buddhas as there are grains of sand in the Ganges  
River.
- 1.103 "In the past, all of them together  
Had made aspirations for the mind of omniscience,

Yet at that stage they had not generated the mind of awakening.  
Depending on their particular mental states, they fell into the lower realms.

- 1.104 “At that time, I was a Dharma preacher, a conqueror’s son,  
Known as Mindful Intellect.  
Those who refuted me were shown to be refuted.  
Thus, they gave up pride and left it behind.
- 1.105 “They gave up what was unsuitable and practiced wisdom.  
Those who do not wish to destroy themselves,  
After discarding all ignorant speaking,  
Should also get rid of jealousy as if it were a mass of flame.
- 1.106 “Whether they are seen or unseen, heard or unheard,  
True or untrue, do not discuss them with others—  
A monk who wishes to attain supreme awakening  
Will remove his own faults.
- 1.107 “Those who are gentle will give away  
All outer and inner things.  
Why would one aspiring to my supreme awakening  
Take delight in anything else?
- 1.108 “In the future many crude people  
Will deny awakening in connection with my teachings.  
They plunge into gorges and chasms—  
How can one with degenerate thoughts reach awakening?
- 1.109 “One who wishes to attain my supreme awakening  
Gets rid of pride, as does a low-caste boy,  
Generates the mind of love for all sentient beings,  
And is never dissatisfied whether there is attainment or no attainment.
- 1.110 “Also, Great King, the Thus-Gone One and the hearers of the Thus-Gone One will not want to stay for long in places where there are people who lack [F.20.a] respect and faith and who hate others and seek to harm them. They will leave such places immediately.
- 1.111 “Great King, there are sixteen attributes that describe an individual who lacks faith. What are these sixteen? They are (1) instigating discord, (2) considering wicked teachings reasonable, (3) considering Dharma talks unreasonable, (4) having wicked thoughts, (5) having a mind that is proud, (6) seeking to harm, (7) having ulterior motives, (8) possessing a livelihood that is totally impure, (9) desiring respect, (10) having a mental continuum

that is not virtuous, (11) lacking practice, (12) belittling others, (13) being fully intent on finding only faults, (14) not ascertaining the teachings, (15) holding wrong views, and (16) doubting the ripening of karma.

1.112 “Great King, these sixteen attributes describe an individual who lacks faith.”

1.113 Then the Blessed One spoke the following verses:

“Those who do not properly adhere to the teachings  
Abandon them completely like a dried-up well.  
Those who follow another stream that is incompatible with liberation  
Are no different from hostile-minded heretics.

1.114 “They do not believe in the ripening of karma.  
Since they do not believe, they do not provide for others.  
Regarding themselves to be as high as the summit of Mount Meru,  
They act like someone who is intoxicated with pride.

1.115 “When the well-spoken Dharma is explained to them,  
They find it disagreeable due to their wicked perspective.  
Without faith, they generate doubt toward the Dharma  
And lose their minds for many tens of millions of eons.

1.116 “They will become wicked from their thoughts that lack faith.  
They do nothing to guard against a mind filled with anger.  
Abandoning everything that is of substance,  
Those without faith will cling to defilements.

1.117 “Posturing and always arrogant,  
Those who lack faith will not bow to others.  
After their deaths, they will be born into lower castes,  
Become destitute, and resent others. [F.20.b]

1.118 “Those who lack faith do not assess themselves.  
They find faults in others and hold on to their mistakes.  
Like a castor-oil tree in a forest,  
They are neither householders nor monks.<sup>11</sup>

1.119 “They are as deceitful as they are impure.  
They simply do not follow anyone’s teachings.  
They resent others, even when they are trusted.  
They will never be a friend, even if one sustains them for an eon.

1.120 “Their livelihood is impure.  
Without faith, these ordained monks

- Forsake the many teachings that liberate them,  
And thus, before very long, they will fall.
- 1.121 “Since, lacking faith, they desire veneration,  
They make others understand things that are untrue.  
Acting deceitfully and hiding their true nature,  
They attempt to trick and flatter.
- 1.122 “Their mental states are always hateful and discordant.  
Even when they hear others talk,  
They think the conversation is about them.  
Without faith, they become consumed by doubt.
- 1.123 “They make comments about others  
And see others as impure as they are themselves.  
Without faith, they are like frightened deer—  
They find that no one is reliable or agreeable.
- 1.124 “Their practice is degenerate and they disregard the feelings of others.  
They become intimidated at gatherings;  
With trembling hands, they pick fights,  
And they even put an end to those they come across.
- 1.125 “Thus, their assertions and criticisms are unfounded.  
Slandorous by nature, they are abundantly wicked,  
And they are unfriendly, confrontational, and angry.  
These are the natural marks of those who are without faith.
- 1.126 “After those without faith are ordained,  
They refute even the teachings of the Guide.  
Whenever there is harmony among the Saṅgha,  
They contradict with words that are not of the Dharma.
- 1.127 “Since they question the teachings of the conquerors,  
They are like heretics doubting and hesitating,  
Bringing harm to the Dharma and contradicting it.  
Without faith, they reject even the Dharma.
- 1.128 “When they fail to abandon wrong views,  
They are condemned to join with non-Buddhist heretics. [F.21.a]  
They are not rooted in the teachings  
And are called monks merely because they wear Dharma robes.
- 1.129 “By deeply cultivating immutable selflessness,  
A monk free of the view of the transitory collection

Will experience the wisdom of the teachings  
And like the wind will not be attached to compounded things.

- 1.130 “Without faith, they are not convinced of karma.  
Falling under the power of wicked thoughts,  
They will soon reside in the lower realms,  
Tormented just as they tormented others.
- 1.131 “Just as water constitutes the great ocean,  
Faith in this teaching is the basis.  
As for anyone who does not have faith in the teachings,  
I am not for them, and they are not for me.
- 1.132 “Faith is the basis for this wondrous journey.  
It is the path and light that lead to the elixir.  
Just like the king of Jambudvīpa,  
It is the foremost of all qualities.
- 1.133 “Great King, the monks in your monastery lacked qualities such as these.  
Therefore, the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin examined them individually and  
did not stay but quickly departed.
- 1.134 “Great King, after they die and pass on, all of those sixty monks will circle  
in the lower realms for three eons. Thereafter, they will be born into low  
classes of beings for eighty thousand lives; they will be inferior, survive on  
leftover food, and be reviled by the world. They will have emaciated bodies,  
be of hideous complexion, be considered insignificant, be disfigured, and be  
afflicted with chronic ailments in almost all successive lifetimes. They will be  
agitated due to imbalanced health, wail with pitiful voices, and die in a bad  
state.
- 1.135 “Then, after dying in their last lifetime, they will be reborn in the realm of  
Sukhāvātī. For eighty thousand years they will hear but not understand the  
teachings of the thus-gone Amitāyus. They will be able to see that thus-gone  
one’s light but not him; his light will not even shine on their bodies. In order  
to purify their faults completely, [F.21.b] they will confess their faults to the  
gathering of bodhisattvas three times a day and three times a night, with  
their limbs and heads touching the ground. Only then will their actions  
become completely purified. Thereafter, they will be able to see the Thus-  
Gone One, understand the teachings, and receive predictions regarding  
their awakening.”
- 1.136 Then King Brahmadata said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, give me  
your permission to remove these monks. I do not wish for such wicked  
monks to be known among my subjects, let alone be seen.” Then King  
Brahmadatta dispatched his men in order to remove those monks, ensuring

that they did not remain among his subjects. “Blessed One, this is the fruition of their karma in this life. These are people who will harm themselves in future lives as well.”

1.137 As he said this, the Blessed One said to King Brahmadata, “Great King, there are four pitfalls for those who have gone forth into this teaching of mine. What are these four? They are as follows: (1) not respecting the Buddha, (2) forsaking the supreme Dharma, (3) loathing those who teach the Dharma, and (4) taking offerings given with faith when one lacks true effort.

1.138 “Great King, these are the four pitfalls for those who have gone forth into this teaching of mine.”

1.139 Then the Blessed One spoke the following verses:

“Doubting the Buddha is the ultimate pitfall.  
The whole word cannot protect such a person.  
Such a narrow-minded person turns from the teacher,  
And without a protector will migrate to the lower realms.

1.140 “Forsaking the Dharma, they migrate to a lower existence.  
For a period of no less than a thousand years,  
They will be blind, with dull senses and a degenerate mind.  
This great suffering is the second pitfall.

1.141 “To deprecate those who are fearless in upholding the Buddha's teachings,  
And who sustain the wisdom of omniscience,  
Is the third great pitfall; [F.22.a]  
It is experienced for many tens of millions of eons.

1.142 “Those who misuse offerings given by the faithful,  
Which is the fourth great pitfall,  
Will be impossible to protect, even by the entire world.  
Possessing bad karma, they will wander through all lower existences.

1.143 “The purity of thoughts is the purity of the noble ones.  
Not wavering from awakening, that is the basis of the mind.  
One cannot attain awakening through mere words.  
One must also purify the mind—this is taught by the Thus-Gone One.

1.144 When the Blessed One spoke this discourse of the Dharma, five thousand beings generated the aspiration for unsurpassed, perfect, and complete awakening, which they had never done before, and achieved the acceptance of phenomena as unarisen. King Brahmadata also became irreversibly oriented toward unsurpassed, perfect, and complete awakening. One hundred thousand beings possessed the pure eye of the Dharma, which is

devoid of stains and free from defilements with respect to phenomena. One hundred million gods generated the mind of awakening, which they had never done before.

1.145 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.

1.146 Then the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin folded his hands and bowed in the direction of the Blessed One and asked him, “Blessed One, what are the causes of your smile? What are the conditions?”

The Blessed One said, [F.22.b] “Amoghadarśin, King Brahmadata will not fall into any bad state for thirty eons, and after enjoying the bounties of the gods and humans, he will please eight hundred million buddhas. In all his lives, he will be universal emperor. Forsaking the four continents completely, he will respect and revere the blessed buddhas with an intention free of any hostility.

1.147 “Thereafter, he will actually attain buddhahood—unsurpassed, perfect, and complete awakening—in a buddha field that will be equal in display to Sukhāvātī, and he will become a thus-gone, worthy, perfect buddha called King of Limitless Display.”

1.148 Thus, King Brahmadata felt contented, elated, jubilant, and overjoyed. Happy and blissful, he bowed down with the five points of his body at the feet of the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin. He then said, “Blessed One, because Amoghadarśin endured being with that community of monks for my sake, I sincerely appeal to him for forgiveness.” Out of his love for King Brahmadata, the bodhisattva Amoghadarśin then forgave him.

1.149 When the Blessed One spoke thus, King Brahmadata, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas all rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

1.150 *Here ends the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “The Questions of Brahmadata.”*

## Colophon

c.

c.1 It was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Surendrabodhi and Prajñāvarman, as well as the editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé and others.

c.2 It consists of three hundred stanzas.

## NOTES

n.

- n.1 Traveling from town to town was a common spiritual practice for ascetics and renunciants in India at the time of the Buddha. The Buddha most likely utilized this practice both to encourage the monks to practice nonattachment and to spread his doctrine. See Wijayaratna 1990, pp. 18–20.
- n.2 See *Muluposathasutta*, AN 3.70 in the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, English translation by Thanissaro Bhikkhu 1997. All sixteen states are listed as follows: Aṅgā, Vajjī, Mallā, Cetī, Vamsā, Kurū, Pañcāla, Macchā, Sūrasenā, Assakā, Avantī, Gandhārā, Kambojā, Magadhā, Kāsī, and Kośala.
- n.3 In early Buddhist accounts, a King Brahmadata of North Pañcāla (Uttara Pañcāla) is mentioned in various Jātaka stories, including the *Gaṇḍatindu Jātaka* and the *Brahmadatta Jātaka*. For a full list of references to the various Brahmadattas found in early Buddhist canonical literature, see Malalasekera 1938, pp. 332–34.
- n.4 Denkarma, folio 298.b.7. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 90, no. 166.
- n.5 The one exception is an English summary entry on the sūtra in Malalasekera 1965, pp. 308–9.
- n.6 There is a text in the Kangyur that goes by this name: *Dhāraṇī That Accomplishes the Seal of Infinite Gateways* (*Anantamukhasādhakanāmadhāraṇī*, 'phags pa sgo mtha' yas pa sgrub pa zhes bya ba'i gzungs), Toh 140, Degé Kangyur vol. 56 (mdo sde na), folios 289.b–299.a.
- n.7 Tib. *mi khom pa*; Skt. *akṣaṇa*. This refers to being born into circumstances in which one is unable to practice the Dharma properly, specifically to eight possible states of existence: as a hell being, hungry ghost, animal, long-lived god, or barbarian, possessing wrong views, living in a time without buddhas, and having impaired faculties.

- n.8 The two analogies here are idiomatic and challenging to capture in translation. The crux of the first analogy is that the water left in a vessel is not fresh, and so would be considered unfit for drinking. The second analogy is based in Buddhist proscriptions against misusing the offerings of the faithful. The consequences of doing so are considered spiritually deadly, and likened to swallowing chunks of iron.
- n.9 Tib. *brgyad sde'i byang chub kyi yan lag*: the eight branches of awakening refers to the eightfold path, which includes (1) right view (Tib. *yang dag pa'i lta ba*; Skt. *samyagdr̥ṣṭi*), (2) right thought (Tib. *yang dag pa'i rtog pa*; Skt. *samyaksaṅkalpa*), (3) right speech (Tib. *yang dag pa'i ngag*; Skt. *samyagvak*), (4) right action (Tib. *yang dag pa'i las kyi mtha'*; Skt. *samyakkarmānta*), (5) right livelihood (Tib. *yang dag pa'i 'tsho ba*; Skt. *samyagājīva*), (6) right effort (Tib. *yang dag pa'i rtsol ba*; Skt. *samyagvyāyāma*), (7) right mindfulness (Tib. *yang dag pa'i dran pa*; Skt. *samyaksmṛti*), and (8) right samādhi (Tib. *yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin*; Skt. *samyaksamādhi*).
- n.10 We follow the Kangxi, Yongle, and Stok versions of the translation in reading *brtas* / *rtas* instead of *ltas* as attested in the Degé version.
- n.11 The analogy being made here is unclear. In Buddhist scripture, the castor-oil tree (Skt. *eraṇḍa*) is sometimes listed along with the plantain tree as something that lacks an essential core. Alternatively, because of its foul smell it is compared negatively to the pleasant-smelling sandalwood tree.

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 allegorical speech

*ldem po'i ngag*

ལྷོམ་པོའི་ངག་

*saṃdhāyavacana*

Speech that is allusive, indirect, or contains undisclosed meaning and therefore requires further interpretation.

- g.2      **Amitāyus**  
*tshe dpag med*  
 ཚེ་དཔག་མེད།  
*amitāyus*  
 Celestial buddha of infinite life, another name for the Buddha Amitābha.
- g.3      **Amoghadarśin**  
*mthong ba don yod*  
 མཐོང་བ་དོན་ཡོད།  
*amoghadarśin*  
 A bodhisattva. The name of one of the thirty-five confessional buddhas.
- g.4      **Anāthapiṇḍada**  
*mgon med zas sbyin*  
 མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྤྱིན།  
*anāthapiṇḍada*  
 Wealthy lay disciple of the Buddha who offered him his park in Śrāvastī, the Jeta Grove.
- g.5      **anointed**  
*spyo bo nas dbang bskur ba*  
 སྤྱི་བོ་ནས་དབང་བསྐྱར་བ།  
*mūrdhābhiṣikta*  
 Inauguration through sprinkling water on the head; a custom used for anointing kings in ancient India.
- g.6      **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.7 **blatant pride**

*mngon pa'i nga rgyal*

མངོན་པའི་ངར་རྒྱལ།

*abhimāna*

The pride of showing off. It is one of seven types of pride, which include (1) pride (Tib. *nga rgyal*; Skt. *māna*), (2) excessive pride (Tib. *lhag pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *adhimāna*), (3) outrageous pride (Tib. *nga rgyal las kyang nga rgyal*; Skt. *mānātīmāna*), (4) egoistic pride (Tib. *nga'o snyam pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *asmimāna*), (5) blatant pride (Tib. *mngon pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *abhimāna*), (6) pride of feeling inferior (Tib. *cung zad snyam pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *ūnamāna*), and (7) unfounded pride (Tib. *log pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *mithyāmāna*).

g.8 **Brahmadatta**

*tshangs pas byin*

ཚངས་པས་བྱིན།

*brahmadatta*

King of Pañcāla. A name for a number of different kings who appear in Buddhist scripture.

g.9 **dhāraṇī**

*gzungs*

གཟུངས།

*dhāraṇī*

An incantation, spell, or mnemonic formula that distills essential points of the Dharma and is used by practitioners to attain mundane and supramundane goals. It also refers to the capacity to grasp or remember the words and meanings of the Dharma without forgetting them. A function of mindfulness and wisdom.

g.10 **eight worldly concerns**

*'jig rten chos brgyad*

འཇིག་རྟེན་ཚོས་བརྒྱད།

*aṣṭalokadharmā*

Gain (Tib. *rnyed pa*; Skt. *lābha*) and loss (Tib. *ma rnyed pa*; Skt. *alābha*), fame (Tib. *snyan pa*; Skt. *yaśas*) and lack of fame (Tib. *ma snyan pa*; Skt. *ayaśas*), praise (Tib. *bstod pa*; Skt. *praśaṃsā*) and blame (Tib. *smad pa*; Skt. *nindā*), pleasure (Tib. *bde ba*; Skt. *sukha*), and sorrow (Tib. *sdug bsngal*; Skt. *duḥkha*).

g.11 excessive pride

*lhag pa'i nga rgyal*

ལྷག་པའི་ངར་རྒྱལ།

*adhimāna*

The pride of overestimating one's accomplishments. It is one of seven types of pride, which include (1) pride (Tib. *nga rgyal*; Skt. *māna*), (2) excessive pride (Tib. *lhag pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *adhimāna*), (3) outrageous pride (Tib. *nga rgyal las kyang nga rgyal*; Skt. *mānātimāna*), (4) egoistic pride (Tib. *nga'o snyam pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *asmimāna*), (5) blatant pride (Tib. *mngon pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *abhimāna*), (6) pride of feeling inferior (Tib. *cung zad snyam pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *ūnamāna*), and (7) unfounded pride (Tib. *log pa'i nga rgyal*; Skt. *mithyāmāna*).

g.12 extraordinary knowledge

*mngon par shes pa*

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ།

*abhijñā*

Supernatural knowledge or powers, including the ability to remember past lives.

g.13 five points of the body

*yan lag lnga pa*

ཡན་ལག་ལྔ་པ།

*pañcāṅga*

The head, arms, and legs.

g.14 formation

*mngon par 'du byed pa*

མངོན་པར་འདུ་བྱེད་པ།

*abhisamkāra*

Volitional construction or mental fabrication that leads to the accumulation of karma.

g.15 four truths

*bden pa bzhi*

བདེན་པ་བཞི།

*catuḥsatya*

The four truths the Buddha realized at his enlightenment: the truth of suffering, the truth of the origin of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path.

g.16 **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.17 **Ganges River**

*gang gA*

གང་གླ།

*gaṅgā*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

The Gaṅgā, or Ganges in English, is considered to be the most sacred river of India, particularly within the Hindu tradition. It starts in the Himalayas, flows through the northern plains of India, bathing the holy city of Vārāṇasī, and meets the sea at the Bay of Bengal, in Bangladesh. In the sūtras, however, this river is mostly mentioned not for its sacredness but for its abundant sands—noticeable still today on its many sandy banks and at its delta—which serve as a usual metaphor for infinitely large numbers.

According to Buddhist cosmology, as explained in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is one of the four rivers that flow from Lake Anavatapta, and cross the southern continent of Jambudvīpa—the known human world or more specifically the Indian subcontinent.

- g.18     **hearer**  
*nyan thos*  
 ཉན་ཐོས།  
*śrāvaka*  
 Early disciple of the Buddha.
- g.19     **Jambudvīpa**  
*'dzam bu gling pa*  
 འཛམ་བུ་གླིང་པ།  
*jambudvīpa*  
 The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology, which can mean the known world of humans or more specifically the Indian subcontinent. A gigantic, miraculous rose-apple (*jambu*) tree at the source of the great Indian rivers is said to give the continent its name.
- g.20     **Jeta Grove**  
*rgyal bu rgyal byed kyī tshal*  
 རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ།  
*jetavana*  
 A park in Śrāvastī that was offered to the Buddha and his monks by the wealthy lay disciple Anāthapiṇḍada.
- g.21     **Jñānaprabha**  
*ye shes 'od*  
 ཡེ་ཤེས་འོད།  
*jñānaprabha*  
 A buddha.
- g.22     **King of Limitless Display**  
*bkod pa dpag tu med pa'i rgyal po*  
 བཀོད་པ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།  
 —  
 A future buddha.
- g.23     **Kośala**  
*ko sa la*  
 ཀོ་ས་ལ།

*kośala*

An ancient Indian kingdom, in present day Uttar Pradesh. Śrāvastī was its capital.

g.24 limit of reality

*yang dag pa'i mtha'*

ཡང་དག་པའི་མཐའ།

*bhūtakoṭi*

The absolute limit or extent of reality. The term is most often used as a synonym for the ultimate state.

g.25 Mindful Intellect

*dran pa'i blo can*

བླ་པའི་སྒོ་ཅན།

—

A monk living in the world system in which the Dharma of the Buddha Jñānaprabhā proliferated.

g.26 Mount Meru

*ri'i rgyal po ri rab*

རི་རྒྱལ་པོ་རི་རབ།

*sumeruparvata*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

According to ancient Buddhist cosmology, Meru is the great mountain forming the axis of the universe. At its summit lies Sudarśana, home of Śakra and his thirty-two gods, and on its flanks live the asuras. The mount has four sides facing the cardinal directions, each of which is made of a different precious stone. Surrounding it are several mountain ranges and the great ocean where the four great island continents lie: in the south, Jambudvīpa (our world); in the west, Godānīya; in the north, Uttarakuru; in the east, Pūrvavideha. Above it are the abodes of the gods of the realm of desire. Often also referred to as Mount Sumeru.

g.27 Pañcāla

*lnga 'dzin*

ལྷ་འཛོན།

*pañcāla*

One of the major North Indian kingdoms in the Buddha's time, it was located to the west of the kingdom of Kośala and east of Kuru.

g.28 Prajñāvarman

*pradz+nyA barma*

པརྒྱ་བརྩམ།

*prajñāvarman*

Indian paṇḍita and translator.

g.29 reality

*chos nyid*

ཚོས་ཉིད།

*dharmatā*

The true or real nature of phenomena.

g.30 realm of phenomena

*chos kyi dbyings*

ཚོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

*dharmadhātu*

A synonym for emptiness or the ultimate nature of things. This term is interpreted variously—given the many connotations of *dharmā/chos*—as the sphere, element, or nature of phenomena, reality, or truth.

g.31 restoration and purification rites

*gso sbyong*

གསོ་སྦྱང།

*poṣadha*

The fortnightly ceremony during which ordained monks and nuns gather to recite the prātimokṣa vows and confess faults and breaches. The term is also sometimes used in reference to the taking of eight vows by a layperson for just one day, a full-moon or new-moon day.

g.32 royal descent

*rgyal po'i rigs*

རྒྱལ་པོའི་རིགས།

*kṣatriya*

The royal, noble, or warrior caste; one of the four social classes in Indic culture.

- g.33      samādhi  
*ting nge 'dzin*  
 ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན།  
*samādhi*  
 Meditative stability.
- g.34      sincere attitude  
*lhag pa'i bsam pa*  
 ལྷག་པའི་བསམ་པ།  
*adhyāśaya*  
 As defined in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, this is a bodhisattva's determined, deeply informed enthusiasm for the Buddhist teachings that is grounded in faith and careful study of the Dharma.
- g.35      six perfections  
*pha rol tu phyin pa drug*  
 བ་ཐོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ་རྒྱལ།  
*ṣaṭpāramitā*  
 Practices of the bodhisattva path: generosity (Tib. *sbyin pa*; Skt. *dāna*), discipline (Tib. *tshul khirms*; Skt. *śīla*), patience (Tib. *bzod pa*; Skt. *kṣānti*), diligence (Tib. *brtson 'grus*; Skt. *vīrya*), concentration (Tib. *bsam gtan*; Skt. *dhyāna*), and wisdom (Tib. *shes rab*; Skt. *prajñā*).
- g.36      Śrāvastī  
*mnyan yod*  
 མཉན་ཡོད།  
*śrāvastī*  
 The capital of the ancient Indian kingdom of Kośala, where the Buddha spent many summers and gave numerous teachings. The city was ruled by King Prasenajit, who makes frequent appearances in the sūtras. It is also the site of the Jeta Grove, which was gifted to the Buddha by his patron Anāthapiṇḍada.
- g.37      Sukhāvati  
*bde ba can*  
 བདེ་བ་ཅན།  
*sukhāvati*

The Buddha Amitābha's buddha field known as the Land of Bliss.

g.38 Surendrabodhi

*su ren+d+ra bo d+hi*

ལུ་རེན་བོ་ནི།

*surendrabodhi*

One of the Indian teachers invited to Tibet in the time of Emperor Ralpachan (early ninth century).

g.39 Thorough Obscurer

*rab tu rmugs byed*

རབ་ཏུ་སྲུགས་བྱེད།

—

The court priest of King Brahmadata of Pañcāla.

g.40 Three Jewels

*dkon mchog gsum*

དཀོན་མཚོག་གསུམ།

*triratna*

The Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha.

g.41 unimpeded dhāraṇī

*chags pa med pa'i gzungs*

ཆགས་པ་མེད་པའི་གཟུངས།

*asaṅgadhāraṇī*

Higher kind of dhāraṇī that involves remembering every syllable of teachings heard. This kind of dhāraṇī can only be possessed by advanced bodhisattvas.

g.42 Vyūharāja

*bkod pa'i rgyal po*

བཀོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

*vyūharāja*

A town in time and world system of the Buddha Jñānaprabha.

g.43 world of Brahmā

*tshangs pa'i 'jig rten*

ཚངས་པའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

*brahmāloka*

The heaven of Brahmā, usually located just above the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*) as one of the first levels of the form realm (*rūpadhātu*) and equated with the state that one achieves in the first meditative absorption (*dhyāna*).

g.44 Yeshé Dé

*ye shes sde*

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

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

g.45 yojana

*dpag tshad*

དཔག་ཚད།

*yojana*

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