

༄༅། །ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྐྱོད་གིས་ལུས་པ།

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## The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)

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*Rāṣṭrapālaparipṛcchā*

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

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

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

*Āryarāṣṭrapālapariṣcchānāmamahāyānasūtra*



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

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

First published 2023  
Current version v 1.0.1 (2023)  
Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.16.19

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co.

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## SUMMARY

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

ac.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

i.

## INTRODUCTION

i.1

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

i.2

Initially composed in Sanskrit, *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)* survives in Tibetan and Mongolian.<sup>2</sup> The Sanskrit title, following the transliterations available in the Tibetan editions, can be reconstructed as *\*Āryarāṣṭrapāla-paripṛcchānāmamahāyānasūtra*. Further details about the Sanskrit—when, where, and by whom it was compiled—are unknown. The Tibetan translation was produced and/or updated in the late eighth or early ninth century by Jinamitra, Yeshé Dé, and other unnamed assistants. *The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)* is listed in both the Denkarma Catalog<sup>3</sup> and the Phangthangma Catalog (under the title *'phags pa yul 'khor skyong gis zhus pa chung ngu*),<sup>4</sup> and is witnessed in the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) and Thempangma (*them spangs ma*) recension lineages.<sup>5</sup> To our knowledge, it has not been identified among the manuscripts found at Dunhuang.



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

The Translation

The Noble Great Vehicle Sūtra

**The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla**

# 1. The Questions of Rāṣṭrapāla (2)

[F.171.b]

## 1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

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

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

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

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

- 1.5 “Also, they should not eat just any mixture of food.<sup>10</sup> They should train by eating a little bit of food until just sated. In this way, they should always and continuously consider food as filth. In other words, they should perceive food as excrement and urine, as pus, as vomit, as rubbish, as like a crusted wound, [F.172.b] as base, as unpleasant, as like the flesh of children, as trash, as refuse, as fetid. In this manner they should think about what and how much they eat.
- 1.6 “Without attachment,<sup>11</sup> aversion, and confusion, they should always delight in solitude. They should never delight in idle chatter. They should readily accept solitude like a dying deer. They should be isolated. They should delight in solitude. Delighting in solitude, they should be resolute and patient. If associating with noble people, they should be pleasant. They should not be given to worldly talk. They should abandon commercial activity. Delight in medicinal cures, delight in gossip, and association with household activities should be avoided. They should be discerning while sitting, standing, walking, and sleeping. They should rely on total solitude, delightful retreats, and peaceful places<sup>12</sup> that are quiet and silent, not frightening, without any slithering snakes, without many people, devoid of people, and suitable for inner absorption.
- 1.7 “They should refrain from self-exaltation. They should refrain from belittling others. They should refrain from pretension and flattery. They should always and continuously cultivate an attitude of dissatisfaction. They should not associate with and get to know householders and monastics. They should rely on all empty dharmas, meditate on them, and expand on them. They should avoid congregating with ignorant monks.<sup>13</sup> They should not associate with nuns. They should have few desires. They should always examine themselves for personal faults. And they should not look for the faults of others. They should not rely on their parents, let alone other families. They should be properly and thoroughly restrained.<sup>14</sup> [F.173.a] They should be givers of the appeasing Dharma. They should be discriminating in their focus. They should dwell in isolated places. They should not speak to others even in an agreeable manner, let alone in an unagreeable manner.
- 1.8 “They should establish their minds firmly in the teachings and analyze the profound dharmas. What is it to analyze the profound dharmas? It is to analyze by thinking, for example, that ‘the eye is impermanent.’ It is to analyze its arising and dissolution. And that with respect to which arising and dissolution should be analyzed is itself analyzed as nonexistent. Why? That which is called ‘eye’ does not exist. Though the eye, form, and eye consciousness are not objects of perception, they are perceived as nonexistent. Why? There are no dharmas that are objects of perception. Therefore, the support of the ear should not be imagined. The supports of

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.15 “Monks<sup>16</sup> who are restrained in moral discipline,  
Who, at peace, delight in calm places,  
Who train in the prātimokṣa—  
They are brahmin monks. [F.174.b]

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

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

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

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

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

Monks who become like that  
Do not spend time around women.

- 1.21 “Women are known to be  
Like sharp swords polished.  
From the prātimokṣa it follows  
That the idea of women is abandoned.
- 1.22 “Those gentle ones, for the sake of food,  
For drink, and for robes,  
Go from house to house  
But do not teach the dharmas.
- 1.23 “ ‘Monks should not look at women,’  
The Perfectly Awakened One has said.  
Rely on those who know that.  
Looking at women is the sphere of Māra.
- 1.24 “They teach that women are nonexistent,  
That to lie down with a woman is like lying with a corpse.  
For that reason, the all-knowing buddhas  
Do not commend distractions.
- 1.25 “The dharmas are without life force, without personality,  
Hollow, insignificant, and insubstantial.  
Those who affirm emptiness<sup>18</sup>—  
They are true monks.
- 1.26 “Those who always abound in strong effort,  
Who dwell in the wilderness alone,  
Whose minds do not rely on the world—  
They are true monks.
- 1.27 “Fearless like lions,  
They dedicate themselves to pure conduct.  
For the sake of liberation from all suffering,  
Those endowed with wisdom cultivate the path.
- 1.28 “When examining the eye and form,  
They find consciousness.  
They do not find what they are looking for  
When examining objects—[F.175.a]  
Those did not arise before, and they will not arise later.  
In the middle, too, there is nothing.

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



c.

## Colophon

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

## NOTES

n.

- n.1 See Vienna Buddhist Translation Studies Group, trans., *The Questions of Rāstrapāla (1)* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh62.html>), Toh 62 (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2021).
- n.2 Note that the Mongolian version was translated from the Tibetan.
- n.3 Shūki 1950, p. 137, no. 220.
- n.4 *Phangthangma* 2003, p. 17, line 13.
- n.5 See the University of Vienna's *Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies* (<https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/rktsneu/verif/verif2.php?id=166>) for more.
- n.6 Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi 2015, pp. 677–691.
- n.7 Vienna Buddhist Studies Translation Group, trans., *The Questions of Rāstrapāla* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh62.html>) (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2021).
- n.8 For more on this theme, see Nattier 1991.
- n.9 Boucher 2008; Ray 1994, especially pp. 275–80.
- n.10 The Degé and Stok readings are both difficult to make sense of here. Degé: *des kha zas yog drod kyis bza' bar yang mi bya ste*; Stok: *des kha zas yog drid kyis bza' bar yang mi bya ste*. The Phukdrak reading offers some clarity: *des kha zas yog tsam gyi bza' bar yang mi bya ste*. Here, *yog* suggests something like “to twist together.” Thanks to Rory Lindsay for pointing out this reading.
- n.11 Degé: *chags pa med pa*; Stok: *chags pa ched pa* (sic; *chad pa?*). As it stands, the Stok reading suggests something like “spreading over,” which does not make sense given the context. Reading *ched pa* as *chad pa*, however, provides a

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

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

b.

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g.

## GLOSSARY

g.1 Arhathood

*dgra bcom pa nyid*

དག་བཅོམ་པ་ཉིད།

—

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

*Links to further resources:*

[2 related glossary entries](#)

g.2 Ascetic

*dge sbyong*

དགེ་སྦྱོང་།

*śramaṇa*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[23 related glossary entries](#)

g.3 Asura

*lha ma yin*

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

*asura*

One of the six classes of living beings, sometimes included among the gods and sometimes among the animals, they are engendered and dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility and are metaphorically described as being

incessantly embroiled in disputes with the gods (*devas*). They are frequently portrayed in brahmanical mythology as having a disruptive effect on cosmological and social harmony.

*Links to further resources:*

[104 related glossary entries](#)

g.4 Attachment

*chags pa*

ཚགས་པ།

—

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

*Links to further resources:*

[15 related glossary entries](#)

g.5 Aversion

*sdang ba*

སྤང་བ།

—

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

g.6 Awakened one

*sangs rgyas*

སངས་རྒྱས།

*buddha*

*Links to further resources:*

[10 related glossary entries](#)

g.7 Bandé Yeshé Dé

*ban+de ye shes sde*

བནྲེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

A prolific Tibetan translator active during the late eighth and early ninth centuries.

*Links to further resources:*

[66 related glossary entries](#) · [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article](#)

g.8 Begging bowl

*lhung bzed*

ལུང་བཟེད།

—

The bowls used by monastics to collect alms.

*Links to further resources:*

[3 related glossary entries](#)

g.9 Blessed one

*bcom ldan 'das*

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

*bhagavat*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

In Buddhist literature, an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to “subduing” the four *māras*, *ldan* to “possessing” the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to “going beyond” *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as “one who destroys the four *māras*.” This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root  $\sqrt{bhañj}$  (“to break”).

*Links to further resources:*

[115 related glossary entries](#)

g.10 Commercial activity

*nyo tshong*

ཉོ་ཚོང།

—

Buying and selling, trade, commerce.

g.11 Complete nirvāṇa

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

ཡོངས་སུ་སྤྱི་ཚུ་འགྲོ་ལས་འདེའ་བ། · ཡོངས་སུ་སྤྱི་ཚུ་འགྲོ་ལས་འདེའ་བ།

*parinirvāṇa*



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

*Links to further resources:*

[25 related glossary entries](#)

g.12 Concentration

*ting nge 'dzin*

ཉིང་འཛིན།

*samādhi*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

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

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

*Links to further resources:*

[75 related glossary entries](#)

g.13 Condition of laxity

*lhod pa'i gnas*

ལྷོད་པའི་གནས།

—

g.14 Condition of the monk

*dge slong gi gnas*

དགེ་སློང་གི་གནས།

—

g.15 Confidence

*dad pa*

དད་པ།

*śraddhā*

*Links to further resources:*

[7 related glossary entries](#)

g.16 Confusion

*rmongs pa*

སྐྱོངས་པ།

—

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

g.17 Decline of the teaching

*bstan pa 'di nub pa*

བསྟན་པ་འདི་རྒྱབ་པ།

—

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

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

*de bzhin gshegs pa'i bstan pa 'di nub*

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པའི་བསྟན་པ་འདི་རྒྱབ།

—

See "[decline of the teaching](#)."

g.19 Dharma

*chos*

ཚོས།

*dharma*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[34 related glossary entries](#)

g.20 Dissatisfaction

*skyo ba*

སྐྱོ་བ།

—

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

g.21 Emptiness

*stong pa nyid*

སྤོང་པ་ཉིད།

*śūnyatā*

Emptiness denotes the ultimate nature of reality, the total absence of inherent existence and self-identity with respect to all phenomena. According to this view, all things and events are devoid of any independent, intrinsic reality that constitutes their essence. Nothing can be said to exist independently from the complex network of factors that gives rise to its origination, nor are phenomena independent of the cognitive processes and mental constructs that make up the conventional framework within which their identity and existence are posited. In this sūtra, monks on the vehicle of the śrāvakas and the Great Vehicle both are to apprehend dharmas as empty. The Abhidharma position that dharmas exist as ontological simples appears by and large to be rejected here.

*Links to further resources:*

[34 related glossary entries](#)

g.22 Empty

*stong pa*

སྤོང་པ།

*śūnya*

See "emptiness."

*Links to further resources:*

[5 related glossary entries](#)

g.23 Gandharva

*dri za*

དྲི་ཟ།

*gandharva*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

A class of generally benevolent nonhuman beings who inhabit the skies, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds, and more specifically to dwell on the eastern slopes of Mount Meru, where they are under the jurisdiction of the Great King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They are most renowned as celestial musicians who serve the gods. In the Abhidharma, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by any sentient being in the realm of desire (*kāmadhātu*) during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

*Links to further resources:*

[113 related glossary entries](#)

g.24 God

*lha*

ལྷ།

*deva*

Gods are beings in the higher planes of existence in the desire realm, as well as in the form and formless realms.

*Links to further resources:*

[60 related glossary entries](#)

g.25 Great Vehicle

*theg pa chen po*

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

*Mahāyāna*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[18 related glossary entries](#)

g.26 Hearer

*nyan thos*

ཉན་ཐོས།

*śrāvaka*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[100 related glossary entries](#) · [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article](#)

g.27 Idle chatter

*bre mo'gtam · bre mo gtam*

བྲེལ་འགྲུག་པ། · བྲེལ་གྲུག་པ།

—

g.28 Imposter monk

*dge slong ltar bcos pa*

དགེ་སློང་ལྷ་ར་བཙུག་པ།

—

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

g.29 Inner absorption

*nang du yang dag 'jog*

ནང་དུ་ཡང་དག་འཛོག་

—

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

*Links to further resources:*

[13 related glossary entries](#)

g.30 Isolated

*dben pa*

དབེན་པ།

—

See “solitude.”

*Links to further resources:*

[14 related glossary entries](#)

g.31 Jinamitra

*dzi na mi tra*

ཇོན་མི་ཏྲ།

*Jinamitra*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[42 related glossary entries](#) · [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article](#)

g.32 Lord

*bcom ldan 'das*

བཙེམ་ལྷན་འདས།

*bhagavat*

See “blessed one.”

*Links to further resources:*

[115 related glossary entries](#)

g.33 Māra

*bdud*

བདུད།

*Māra*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[113 related glossary entries](#)

g.34 Monk

*dge slong*

དགེ་སློང་།

*bhikṣu*

A fully ordained male practitioner.

*Links to further resources:*

[42 related glossary entries](#)

g.35 Moral discipline

*tshul khrims*

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

*śīla*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[30 related glossary entries](#)

g.36 Nonexistent

*med pa*

མེད་པ།

—

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

*Links to further resources:*

[1 related glossary entry](#)

g.37 Nun

*dge slong ma*

དགེ་སློང་མ།

*bhikṣuṇī*

A fully ordained female practitioner.

*Links to further resources:*

[18 related glossary entries](#)

g.38 Patient

*bzod pa*

བཟོད་པ།

*kṣānti*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

A term meaning acceptance, forbearance, or patience. As the third of the six perfections, patience is classified into three kinds: the capacity to tolerate abuse from sentient beings, to tolerate the hardships of the path to

buddhahood, and to tolerate the profound nature of reality. As a term referring to a bodhisattva's realization, *dharmakṣānti* (*chos la bzod pa*) can refer to the ways one becomes "receptive" to the nature of Dharma, and it can be an abbreviation of *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, "forbearance to the unborn nature, or nonproduction, of dharmas."

*Links to further resources:*

[36 related glossary entries](#)

### g.39 People

*sems can · gang zag*

སེམས་ཅན། · གང་ཟག

*sattva · pudgala*

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

### g.40 Prātimokṣa

*so sor thar pa*

སོ་སོར་ཐར་པ།

*prātimokṣa*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[12 related glossary entries](#)

### g.41 Precept

*bslab pa · bslobs pa · bslab pa'i gzhi*

བསྐྱབ་པ། · བསྐྱབས་པ། · བསྐྱབ་པའི་གཞི།

*śikṣā · śikṣāpada*

*Links to further resources:*

[4 related glossary entries](#)

### g.42 Profound dharmas

*chos zab mo*

ཚོས་ཟབ་མོ།

*gambhīradharma*



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

g.43 Rājagṛha

*rgyal po'i khab*

རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཁབ།

*Rājagṛha*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[76 related glossary entries](#)

g.44 Rāṣṭrapāla

*yul 'khor skyong*

ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྐྱོང་།

*Rāṣṭrapāla*

A disciple of the Buddha.

g.45 Resolute

*mos pa*

མོས་པ།

—

g.46 Result of stream-entry

*rgyun du zhugs pa'i 'bras bu*

རྒྱུན་དུ་ཚུགས་པའི་འབྲས་བུ།

*srotaāpattiḥphala*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[3 related glossary entries](#)

g.47 Result of the non-returner

*phyir mi 'ong ba'i 'bras bu*

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བའི་འབྲས་བུ།

*anāgāmiṃphala*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[3 related glossary entries](#)

g.48 Result of the once-returner

*lan cig phyir 'ong ba'i 'bras bu*

ལན་ཅིག་ཕྱིར་འོང་བའི་འབྲས་བུ།

*sakṛdāgāmiṃphala*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[3 related glossary entries](#)

g.49 Robe

*chos gos*

ཚོས་གོས།

*cīvara*

The religious robes of monastics.

*Links to further resources:*

[3 related glossary entries](#)

g.50 Saṅgha

*dge slong gi dge 'dun*

དག་སྐོང་གི་དག་འདུན།

*saṅgha*

Here refers to the community of monks.

*Links to further resources:*

[32 related glossary entries](#)

g.51 Sentient being

*sems can*

སེམས་ཅན།

*sattva*

*Links to further resources:*

[5 related glossary entries](#)

g.52 Solitude

*dben pa*

དབེན་པ།

—

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

*Links to further resources:*

[14 related glossary entries](#)

g.53 Support

*rten*

རྟེན།

—

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

g.54 The view of personal identity

*gang zag tu lta ba*

གང་ཟག་ཏུ་ལྟ་བ།

*pudgaladr̥ṣṭi*

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

g.55 Thus-gone one

*de bzhin gshegs pa*

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

*tathāgata*

*Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[100 related glossary entries](#)

g.56 Unexcelled perfect awakening

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

ལྷན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ལྷུབ།

*anuttarasamyaksambodhi*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[10 related glossary entries](#)

g.57 Vehicle of the śrāvakas

*nyan thos kyi theg pa*

ཉན་ཐོས་ཀྱི་ཐེག་པ།

*śrāvākayāna*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[10 related glossary entries](#)

g.58 Vulture Peak

*bya rgod phung po'i ri*

བྱ་རྗོད་ཕུང་པོའི་རི།

*Gṛdhrakūṭa*

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

*Links to further resources:*

[51 related glossary entries](#)

g.59 Wisdom

*shes rab*

ཤེས་རབ།

*prajñā*

*Links to further resources:*

[56 related glossary entries](#)

g.60 Worldly talk

*'jig rten gyi gtam*

འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་གཏམ།

—