

༄། །བྲམ་བེ་མོ་དཔལ་ལྡན་མས་ལུས་པ།

**The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin
Woman**

Śrīmatībrāhmaṇīparipṛcchā

འཕགས་པ་བྲམ་བེ་མོ་དཔལ་ལྷན་མས་ཞུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa bram ze mo dpal ldan mas zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman”

Āryaśrīmatībrāhmaṇīparipṛcchānāmamahāyānasūtra

· Toh 170 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 59 (mdo sde, ba), folios 307.b–310.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

· Surendrabodhi · Prajñāvarman · Bandé Yeshé Dé ·



First published 2024

Current version v 1.1.12 (2024)

Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.22.4

84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha is a global non-profit initiative to translate all the Buddha's words into modern languages, and to make them available to everyone.



This work is provided under the protection of a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution - Non-commercial - No-derivatives) 3.0 copyright. It may be copied or printed for fair use, but only with full attribution, and not for commercial advantage or personal compensation. For full details, see the Creative Commons license.

This print version was generated at 10.13am on Monday, 22nd April 2024 from the online version of the text available on that date. If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time. For the latest online version, with bilingual display, interactive glossary entries and notes, and a variety of further download options, please see <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh170.html>.

co.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ti. Title
- im. Imprint
- co. Contents
- s. Summary
- ac. Acknowledgements
- i. Introduction
- tr. The Translation
 - 1. The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman
- c. Colophon
- n. Notes
- b. Bibliography
 - Primary Sources
 - Western Languages
- g. Glossary

s.

SUMMARY

s.1

During an alms round in Vārāṇasī, the Buddha Śākyamuni encounters a brahmin woman by the name of Śrīmatī. Inspired by the Buddha's majestic and graceful presence, Śrīmatī inquires about the teaching he gave at nearby Deer Park. In response, the Buddha reprises the teaching on how the twelve links of dependent origination lead to suffering and how their cessation leads to the end of suffering. Śrīmatī then asks about the nature of ignorance, the first of the twelve links. The Buddha offers a profound response and raises the distinction between ultimate truth and conventional teaching. At this, Śrīmatī makes the aspiration that she too may turn the many wheels of Dharma just as the Buddha has done. The Buddha then smiles and prophesies her eventual awakening. The sūtra concludes with the Buddha describing Śrīmatī's virtuous deeds in past lives, in which she had venerated each of the six previous buddhas.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 Translation by the Subhashita Translation Group, produced by Lowell Cook with assistance from Benjamin Ewing.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. George FitzHerbert edited the translation and the introduction, and Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman presents a dialogue between the Buddha Śākyamuni and a brahmin woman called Śrīmatī whom he encounters while collecting alms in the city of Vārāṇasī. Inspired by the Buddha's graceful presence, Śrīmatī asks him about the teachings he gave at nearby Deer Park. In response, the Buddha relates his teaching on the twelve links of dependent origination and how the cessation of suffering can be brought about by putting an end to ignorance, the first of the twelve links. This teaching is found in very similar wording in many sūtras, but the present sūtra is notable in setting the discourse soon after the first sermon and in nearby Vārāṇasī.¹ Moreover, in this Mahāyāna sūtra, the teaching on the twelve links is combined, in response to Śrīmatī's questions on the nature and ontological status of ignorance, with a discourse on emptiness that touches on the distinction between ultimate and conventional truth. The sūtra further describes the teachings given by the Buddha in terms of the different ways in which the wheel of Dharma can be characterized.

i.2

This is one of several Mahāyāna sūtras in the Kangyur in which the Buddha's main interlocutor is a high-status laywoman. Others include *The Questions of the Girl Vimalaśraddhā* (Toh 84),² *The Questions of Vimaladattā* (Toh 77), *The Lion's Roar of Śrīmālādevī* (Toh 92), *The Sūtra of Aśokadattā's Prophecy* (Toh 76), *The Questions of Vimalaprabhā* (Toh 168), *The Prophecy Concerning Strīvīvarta*, (Toh 190),³ and *The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī* (Toh 192).⁴ Laywomen of low social status are the main interlocutors in *The Questions of the Girl Sumati* (Toh 74), *The Questions of Gaṅgottara* (Toh 75), *The Questions of an Old Lady* (Toh 171),⁵ *The Miraculous Play of Mañjuśrī* (Toh 96),⁶ *The Sūtra of the Girl Candrottārā's Prophecy* (Toh 191), and *The City Beggar Woman* (Toh 205). As is typical in these narratives, in *The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman*, at the end of the discourse, Śrīmatī's sincere aspiration to achieve

awakening and teach the Dharma in the future causes the Buddha to smile one of his magnificent smiles. The Buddha's smile is followed by a prophecy concerning Śrīmatī's future awakening.

i.3 *The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman* was clearly extant in early Buddhist Central Asia since a long Sanskrit quotation from it can be found in Gupta Brahmi script on a Bactrian copper scroll inscription that probably dates to the fifth century CE. This scroll, the *Śrīmatībrāhmaṇīparipṛcchā*, as identified by Melzer (2006), is currently held in the Schøyen Collection, Oslo.

i.4 The sūtra was translated into Chinese twice, once by Dharmarakṣa (竺法護 Zhu Fahu) in the late third or early fourth century CE (Taishō 567),⁷ and once by Bodhiruci (菩提流志 Putiliuzhi) in 693 CE (Taishō 568).⁸ The dialogue with Śrīmatī is also cited in the seminal *Treatise on the Great Perfection of Wisdom* (大智度論 *Dazhidu lun*), attributed to Nāgārjuna and translated by Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什 Jiumoluoshi) in 406 CE.

i.5 The sūtra was translated into Tibetan in the late eighth or early ninth century CE by the master translator Yeshé Dé along with Surendrabodhi and Prajñāvarman, during the height of the Tibetan imperial sponsorship of Buddhism. It is listed in both the *Denkarma* (*ldan kar ma*) and *Phangthangma* (*'phang thang ma*) imperial catalogs.⁹

i.6 A Japanese translation, along with a reconstructed Sanskrit text, was produced in two parts by Goshima (2001, 2002).¹⁰ An English translation of the sūtra along with an introduction was recently published by Peter Skilling (2021).¹¹

i.7 This English translation was made from the Tibetan as preserved in the Degé Kangyur, in consultation with the variant readings recorded in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace Kangyur.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra
The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman**

1.

The Translation

[F.307.b]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was staying at R̥ṣipatana Deer Park near Vārāṇasī, with an assembly of some seven hundred monks and many bodhisattva great beings. At dawn, the Blessed One donned his upper and lower robes, picked up his alms bowl, and went on an alms round through Vārāṇasī together with his attendant monk, the venerable Ānanda,¹² and the bodhisattva great being Ajita.

1.3 As the Blessed One went steadily through the city of Vārāṇasī gathering alms, he arrived at the house of a brahmin woman by the name of Śrīmatī. As the Blessed One stayed to one side waiting for alms, Śrīmatī the brahmin woman saw from afar that the Blessed One was beautiful and inspiring, his senses at peace, and his heart at peace. He was gentle. He had arrived at tranquility; he had arrived at supreme tranquility. He was serene, peaceful, and well guarded. His senses were tamed and, without a trace of wickedness, he glowed with a fine complexion. Still and clear like a lake, elevated and unshakable like a golden offering post, he was unmoving, and due to the splendor of his attainment, he blazed, shone, and glowed with brilliance. Seeing this, Śrīmatī the brahmin woman was inspired and went to him. She paid homage at the feet of the Blessed One and the bodhisattva great being Ajita. “Welcome, Blessed One,” she said, bowing toward the Blessed One with joined palms. [F.308.a] “Welcome. Please be seated on the seat we have set out for you.”

1.4 The Blessed One and the bodhisattva great being Ajita took their respective seats. Seeing that the Blessed One and the bodhisattva great being Ajita were comfortably seated, Śrīmatī the brahmin woman bowed toward the Blessed One with joined palms and said, “Blessed One, I have

- heard that the Blessed One turned the wheel of Dharma at R̥ṣipātana Deer Park near the city of Vārāṇasī. Blessed One, what Dharma did the Blessed One teach?"
- 1.5 The Blessed One answered Śrīmatī the brahmin woman, "Śrīmatī, it is this: Through the condition of ignorance, there are formations. Through the condition of formations, there is consciousness. Through the condition of consciousness, there is name and form. Through the condition of name and form, there are the six sense sources. Through the condition of the six sense sources, there is contact. Through the condition of contact, there is sensation. Through the condition of sensation, there is craving. Through the condition of craving, there is grasping. Through the condition of grasping, there is becoming. Through the condition of becoming, there is rebirth. Through the condition of rebirth, there is old age and death, as well as sorrow, misery, suffering, mental anguish, and agitation. In this way, only great heaps of suffering come about.
- 1.6 "With the cessation of ignorance, formations cease. With the cessation of formations, consciousness ceases. With the cessation of consciousness, name and form cease. With the cessation of name and form, the six sense sources cease. With the cessation of the six sense sources, contact ceases. With the cessation of contact, sensation ceases. With the cessation of sensation, craving ceases. With the cessation of craving, grasping ceases. With the cessation of grasping, becoming ceases. With the cessation of becoming, rebirth ceases. [F.308.b] With the cessation of rebirth, old age and death, as well as sorrow, misery, suffering, mental anguish, and agitation, cease. In only this way will the great heap of suffering cease.
- 1.7 "This, Śrīmatī, is the wheel of Dharma that has never before been rightfully turned in the world by any mendicant, brahmin, god, demon, or brahmā, but was turned by the Thus-Gone One here at R̥ṣipātana Deer Park near the city of Vārāṇasī."
- 1.8 Śrīmatī the brahmin woman asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, is ignorance something internal or something external?"
- The Blessed One responded, "It is neither, Śrīmatī."
- 1.9 "Blessed One, if ignorance is neither internal nor external, then how does something nonexistent act as a condition for formations? Are there any phenomena that are beyond this world, Blessed One?"
- "There are not, Śrīmatī."
- 1.10 "Blessed One, does ignorance have features?"
- "It does not, Śrīmatī," the Blessed One replied. "Ignorance comes about in a false manner, Śrīmatī; it does not come about in a true manner. Ignorance comes about in a mistaken manner, Śrīmatī; it does not come about in an unmistaken manner."

- 1.11 “Blessed One, if ignorance is nonexistent then where do formations come from? And where does suffering come from? Blessed One, let me share an analogy. If a banyan tree has no roots, how do its boughs, leaves, and branches develop? In a similar manner, Blessed One, if ignorance has not come into being and is not existent, how can it act as the condition for formations?”
- 1.12 “Indeed, Śrīmatī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are empty of inherent characteristics. [F.309.a] Nevertheless, childish, ordinary beings who lack learning, knowledge, and realization bring about the formation of karma. Through this karma, cyclic existence manifests, and due to cyclic existence, these beings end up experiencing suffering. But there is no one who forms karma nor is there any act of manifesting cyclic existence. This is the ultimate nature of phenomena. However, Śrīmatī, thus-gone, worthy, and perfect buddhas, being concerned with how beings can realize the ultimate nature, resort to convention to teach beings the Dharma. However, Śrīmatī, convention is not true. Why not? Because there is no one to comprehend it and no act of coming to understand it.
- 1.13 “Take the following analogy, Śrīmatī. The Thus-Gone One projects an emanation of himself which then, in turn, projects an emanation of itself. The emanation projected by the Thus-Gone One is hollow, that is, of a false and deceptive nature. The emanation projected by the emanation is also hollow, that is, of a false and deceptive nature. In a similar manner, Śrīmatī, that which conditions phenomena is hollow, that is, of a false and deceptive nature. The conditioned phenomena are also hollow, that is, of a false and deceptive nature.”
- 1.14 “It is so,” she replied. “The Blessed One has turned the wheel of emptiness, the wheel of emancipation, the wheel of certainty, the wheel of inconceivability, the wheel unturned, the wheel of the incomparable, the wheel just as it is, the wheel of birthlessness, the wheel of the unreal, and the wheel of the absence of characteristics.”
- 1.15 Then Śrīmatī the brahmin woman took a handful of sandalwood powder, sprinkled it on the Blessed One’s feet, and said, [F.309.b] “Blessed One, by this root of virtue, may I too in the future turn the wheel of Dharma in that way—the wheel of emptiness, the wheel of emancipation, the wheel of certainty, the wheel of inconceivability, the wheel unturned, the wheel of the incomparable, the wheel just as it is, the wheel of birthlessness, the wheel of the unreal, and the wheel of the absence of characteristics.”
- 1.16 At this, the Blessed One smiled. As is the nature of the blessed buddhas when they smile, as he smiled, lights of many colors—blue, white, red, crimson, and the colors of crystal and silver—streamed from his mouth,

filling and illuminating worlds without end all the way up to the Brahmā realms, before returning, circling the Blessed One three times, and dissolving into the crown of his head.

1.17 Then, the bodhisattva great being Ajita said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One! Thus-gone, worthy, and perfect buddhas do not smile without cause and condition. What, then, are the causes and conditions for your smile?”

1.18 “Ajita,” he replied, “did you see Śrīmatī the brahmin woman take a handful of sandalwood powder and sprinkle it on the Blessed One’s feet?”

“I did, Blessed One. I saw it, Well-Gone One.”

1.19 “Ajita,” the Blessed One continued, “through her roots of virtue, this brahmin woman will not fall back into the lower realms for eight hundred and forty million eons. She will honor, venerate, respect, and worship sixty-four thousand buddhas. She will listen to the Dharma from them, she will retain what she hears, and she will fully master the true Dharma. [F.310.a] She will greatly worship the thus-gone ones who are present and those who have passed into parinirvāṇa. She will place countless, innumerable beings in the state of awakening. In a future life, during the eon known as Self-Luminous, she will appear in this great trichiliocosm as a thus-gone, worthy, and perfect buddha known as Luminous Dharma, whose lifespan will be equal to a thousand eons, and, after working for the benefit of countless, innumerable beings, she will pass into parinirvāṇa—the expanse of nirvāṇa without any remainder of the aggregates.”

1.20 Then the bodhisattva great being Ajita asked the Blessed One, “Did Śrīmatī the brahmin woman previously possess other roots of virtue?”

1.21 “She did, Ajita,” he replied. “In her desire for unsurpassed and perfect awakening, Śrīmatī the brahmin woman, in a previous life as a woman, offered a garland of flowers to the Thus-Gone One Vipāśyin. She also offered robes to the Thus-Gone One Śikhin and went forth as a renunciant in his teaching, practiced the holy life for a thousand years, and questioned that blessed one on profound topics. She offered food to the Thus-Gone One Viśvabhū and his assembly of hearers, serving them to their satisfaction. She scattered atimuktaka flowers before the Thus-Gone One Krakucchanda and from that blessed one received the five basic precepts. To the Thus-Gone One Kanakamuni, she offered garments, meals, bedding, curative medicines, and supplies throughout his life. That blessed one partook of her meals for two months and she also offered him a pair of sandals. [F.310.b] In her desire for unsurpassed and perfect awakening, she threw a golden rosary before the Thus-Gone One Kāśyapa and made the aspiration, ‘Until I am prophesied to reach unsurpassed and perfect awakening, I will not inhabit any other form than that of a woman.’ These, Ajita, are the past roots of virtue of Śrīmatī the brahmin woman.”

1.22 After the Blessed One had spoken thus, the bodhisattva great being Ajita, Śrīmatī the brahmin woman, and the world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas all rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.23 *This concludes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra “The Questions of Śrīmatī the Brahmin Woman.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Surendrabodhi and Prajñāvarman, the editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé, and others.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 A peculiar feature of the setting is the inclusion of Ānanda in the opening narrative. Ānanda is generally believed to have only joined the Buddha's community of followers in the second year after the Buddha's awakening, yet the sermon at Deer Park took place only two months after this awakening. Therefore, the inclusion of Ānanda here seems to be an anomaly. This is confirmed by the fact that Ānanda is only included in the recensions of the sūtra found in Kangyurs of the Tshalpa line and is absent from those of the Themphangma line. In the latter, only the bodhisattva Ajita is described as accompanying the Buddha on the alms round.
- n.2 *The Questions of the Girl Vimalaśraddhā* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh84.html>), Toh 84, translated by the Karma Gyaltsen Ling Translation Group (2021).
- n.3 *The Prophecy Concerning Strīvīvarta* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh190.html>), Toh 190, translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee (2021).
- n.4 *The Prophecy of Kṣemavatī* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh192.html>), Toh 192, translated by the Subhashita Translation Group (2022).
- n.5 *The Questions of an Old Lady* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh171.html>), Toh 171, translated by the Sakya Pandita Translation Group (2011).
- n.6 *The Miraculous Play of Mañjuśrī* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh96.html>), Toh 96, translated by Jens Erland Braarvig (2020).
- n.7 佛說梵志女首意經 (*Śrīmatībrāhmaṇīparipṛcchā*), Taishō 567 ([CBETA \(https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T0567_001\)](https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T0567_001); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T0567.html>)).
- n.8 有德女所問大乘經 (*Śrīmatībrāhmaṇīparipṛcchā*), Taishō 568 ([CBETA \(https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T0568_001\)](https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T0568_001); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T0568.html>)).

- n.9 Denkarma, folio 299.b; Herrmann-Pfandt, pp. 112–13; Phangthangma, p. 17.
- n.10 For references to Goshima’s work, see Skilling 2021, p. 334.
- n.11 Skilling 2021, pp. 331–40.
- n.12 *kun dga’ bo dang*. These words are only found in Kangyurs of the Tshalpa line, while the Stok Palace Kangyur (the only Themphangma-line Kangyur consulted for this translation) omits mention of Ānanda (*kun dga’ bo*). Ānanda does not reappear in the narrative, even in the recensions of the Tshalpa-line Kangyurs. This suggests his inclusion in the opening narrative may have occurred as the result of a copying error.

b.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

· Primary Sources ·

'phags pa bram ze mo dpal ldan mas zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo (*ārya-śrīmatī brāhmaṇīpariṛchānāmamahāyānasūtra*). Toh 170, Degé Kangyur vol. 59 (mdo sde, ba), folios 307.b–310.b.

'phags pa bram ze mo dpal ldan mas zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo (dpe bsdur ma) [Comparative Edition of the Kangyur], krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang (The Tibetan Tripitaka Collation Bureau of the China Tibetology Research Center). 108 volumes. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House), 2006–9, vol. 59, pp. 852–60.

'phags pa bram ze mo dpal ldan mas zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Stok Palace Kangyur vol. 57 (mdo sde, cha), folios 131.a–136.b.

Denkarma (*pho brang stod thang ldan dkar gyi chos kyi 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag*). Toh 4364, Degé Tengyur vol. 206 (sna tshogs, jo), folios 294.b–310.a.

Phangthangma (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*). Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003.

· Western Languages ·

Herrmann-Pfandt, Adelheid. *Die lHan kar ma: ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008.

Melzer, Gudrun. "A Copper Scroll Inscription from the Time of the Alchon Huns. In collaboration with Lore Sander." In *Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection: Buddhist Manuscripts*, vol. 3, edited by J. Braarvig, 251–314. Oslo: Hermes, 2006.

Skilling, Peter. *Questioning the Buddha: A Collection of Twenty-Five Sutras*.
Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2021.

GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language 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 Ajita
ma pham pa

མ་ཕམ་པ།

ajita

“Unconquered.” An alternate name for the bodhisattva Maitreya.

g.2 Ānanda

kun dga' bo

ཀུན་དགའ་བོ།

ānanda

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A major śrāvaka disciple and personal attendant of the Buddha Śākyamuni during the last twenty-five years of his life. He was a cousin of the Buddha (according to the *Mahāvastu*, he was a son of Śuklodana, one of the brothers of King Śuddhodana, which means he was a brother of Devadatta; other sources say he was a son of Amṛtodana, another brother of King Śuddhodana, which means he would have been a brother of Aniruddha).

Ānanda, having always been in the Buddha's presence, is said to have memorized all the teachings he heard and is celebrated for having recited all the Buddha's teachings by memory at the first council of the Buddhist saṅgha, thus preserving the teachings after the Buddha's parinirvāṇa. The phrase "Thus did I hear at one time," found at the beginning of the sūtras, usually stands for his recitation of the teachings. He became a patriarch after the passing of Mahākāśyapa.

g.3 Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban+de ye shes sde

བན་ཏེ་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.4 banyan tree

n+ya gro dha

ཏུ་ཤོ་ན།

—

Ficus indica; banyan or Indian fig.

g.5 becoming

srid pa

སྲིད་པ།

bhava

The tenth link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.6 bodhisattva great beings

byang chub sems dpa' sems pa chen po

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་སེམས་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

bodhisattvo mahāsattvaḥ

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term can be understood to mean “great courageous one” or “great hero,” or (from the Sanskrit) simply “great being,” and is almost always found as an epithet of “bodhisattva.” The qualification “great” in this term, according to the majority of canonical definitions, focuses on the generic greatness common to all bodhisattvas, i.e., the greatness implicit in the bodhisattva vow itself in terms of outlook, aspiration, number of beings to be benefited, potential or eventual accomplishments, and so forth. In this sense the *mahā-* is closer in its connotations to the *mahā-* in “Mahāyāna” than to the *mahā-* in “mahāsiddha.” While individual bodhisattvas described as *mahāsattva* may in many cases also be “great” in terms of their level of realization, this is largely coincidental, and in the canonical texts the epithet is not restricted to bodhisattvas at any particular point in their career. Indeed, in a few cases even bodhisattvas whose path has taken a wrong direction are still described as *bodhisattva mahāsattva*.

Later commentarial writings do nevertheless define the term—variably—in terms of bodhisattvas having attained a particular level (*bhūmi*) or realization. The most common qualifying criteria mentioned are attaining the path of seeing, attaining irreversibility (according to its various definitions), or attaining the seventh *bhūmi*.

g.7 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A high-ranking deity presiding over a divine world; he is also considered to be the lord of the Sahā world (our universe). Though not considered a creator god in Buddhism, Brahmā occupies an important place as one of two gods (the other being Indra/Śakra) said to have first exhorted the Buddha Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma. The particular heavens found in the form realm over which Brahmā rules are often some of the most sought-after realms of higher rebirth in Buddhist literature. Since there are many universes or world systems, there are also multiple Brahmās presiding over them. His most frequent epithets are “Lord of the Sahā World” (*Sahāṃpati*) and Great Brahmā (*Mahābrahmā*).

g.8 brahmā

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

brahmā^{AD}

The brahmā deities inhabit the brahmā heavens of the form realm, led by their supreme deity, Brahmā Sahāṃpati.

g.9 consciousness

rnam par shes pa

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

vijñāna

The third link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.10 contact

reg pa

རེག་པ།

sparśa

The sixth link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.11 convention

tha snyad

ཐ་སྟེན།

vyavahāra

Here used in reference to conventional or provisional meaning or truth.

g.12 craving

sred pa

སྲིད་པ།

trṣṇā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Eighth of the twelve links of dependent origination. Craving is often listed as threefold: craving for the desirable, craving for existence, and craving for nonexistence.

g.13 Deer Park

ri dags kyi nags

རི་དགས་ཀྱི་ནགས།

mṛgadāvā

The location northeast of Vārāṇasī where the Buddha delivered his first sermon.

g.14 formations

'du byed

འདུ་བྱེད།

saṃskāra

The second link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.15 grasping

len pa

ལེན་པ།

upādāna

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

This term, although commonly translated as “appropriation,” also means “grasping” or “clinging,” but it has a particular meaning as the ninth of the twelve links of dependent origination, situated between craving (*trṣṇā*, *sred pa*) and becoming or existence (*bhava*, *srid pa*). In some texts, four types of appropriation (*upādāna*) are listed: that of desire (*rāga*), view (*dṛṣṭi*), rules and observances as paramount (*śīlavrataparāmarśa*), and belief in a self (*ātmavāda*).

g.16 great trichiliocosm

stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi khams

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The largest universe described in Buddhist cosmology. This term, in Abhidharma cosmology, refers to 1,000³ world systems, i.e., 1,000 “dichiliocosms” or “two thousand great thousand world realms” (*dvisāhasra-mahāsāhasralokadhātu*), which are in turn made up of 1,000 first-order world systems, each with its own Mount Sumeru, continents, sun and moon, etc.

g.17 hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Sanskrit term *śrāvaka*, and the Tibetan *nyan thos*, both derived from the verb “to hear,” are usually defined as “those who *hear* the teaching from the Buddha and *make it heard* to others.” Primarily this refers to those disciples of the Buddha who aspire to attain the state of an arhat seeking their own liberation and nirvāṇa. They are the practitioners of the first turning of the wheel of the Dharma on the four noble truths, who realize the suffering inherent in saṃsāra and focus on understanding that there is no independent self. By conquering afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), they liberate themselves, attaining first the stage of stream enterers at the path of seeing, followed by the stage of once-returners who will be reborn only one more time, and then the stage of non-returners who will no longer be reborn into the desire realm. The final goal is to become an arhat. These four stages are also known as the “four results of spiritual practice.”

g.18 holy life

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚངས་པར་སྦྱོང་པ།

brahmacarya

g.19 ignorance

ma rig pa

མ་རིག་པ།

avidyā

The first link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.20 Kanakamuni

gser thub

གསེར་གུབ།

kanakamuni

The fifth of the six buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni.

g.21 Kāśyapa

'od srung

འོད་སྤྱང་།

kāśyapa

The sixth of the six buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni, not to be confused with the disciple of the same name.

g.22 Krakucchanda

'khor ba 'jig

འཁོར་བ་འཇིག་།

krakucchanda

The fourth of the six buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni.

g.23 Luminous Dharma

chos snang ba

ཚོས་སྤྱང་བ།

**dharmāloka*

The name of the buddha that Śrīmatī the brahmin woman is prophesied to become.

g.24 mendicant

dge sbyong

དགེ་སྦྱོང་།

śramaṇa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A general term applied to spiritual practitioners who live as ascetic mendicants. In Buddhist texts, the term usually refers to Buddhist monastics, but it can also designate a practitioner from other ascetic/monastic spiritual traditions. In this context *śramaṇa* is often contrasted with the term *brāhmaṇa* (*bram ze*), which refers broadly to followers of the Vedic tradition. Any renunciate, not just a Buddhist, could be referred to as a *śramaṇa* if they were not within the Vedic fold. The epithet Great Śramaṇa is often applied to the Buddha.

g.25 name and form

ming dang gzugs

མིང་དང་གཟུགས།

nāmarūpa

The fourth link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.26 **nirvāṇa**

mya ngan las 'das pa

མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ།

nirvāṇa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Sanskrit, the term *nirvāṇa* literally means “extinguishment” and the Tibetan *mya ngan las 'das pa* literally means “gone beyond sorrow.” As a general term, it refers to the cessation of all suffering, afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), and causal processes (*karman*) that lead to rebirth and suffering in cyclic existence, as well as to the state in which all such rebirth and suffering has permanently ceased.

More specifically, three main types of *nirvāṇa* are identified. The first type of *nirvāṇa*, called *nirvāṇa* with remainder (*sopadhīśeṣanirvāṇa*), is when an arhat or buddha has attained awakening but is still dependent on the conditioned aggregates until their lifespan is exhausted. At the end of life, given that there are no more causes for rebirth, these aggregates cease and no new aggregates arise. What occurs then is called *nirvāṇa* without remainder (*anupadhīśeṣanirvāṇa*), which refers to the unconditioned element (*dhātu*) of *nirvāṇa* in which there is no remainder of the aggregates. The Mahāyāna teachings distinguish the final *nirvāṇa* of buddhas from that of arhats, the latter of which is not considered ultimate. The buddhas attain what is called nonabiding *nirvāṇa* (*apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇa*), which transcends the extremes of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, i.e., existence and peace. This is the *nirvāṇa* that is the goal of the Mahāyāna path.

g.27 **offering post**

mchod sdong

མཚོ་རྩེ་རྩེ།

yūpa

A post or pillar to which offerings (including, in pre-Buddhist tradition, animals to be sacrificed) could be attached.

g.28 **old age and death**

rga shi

ག་ཤི།

jarā maraṇa

The twelfth link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.29 parinirvāṇa

yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa

ཡོངས་སུ་སྐྱུ་རྒྱ་ལས་འདས་པ།

parinirvāṇa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

This refers to what occurs at the end of an arhat's or a buddha's life. When nirvāṇa is attained at awakening, whether as an arhat or buddha, all suffering, afflicted mental states (*kleśa*), and causal processes (*karman*) that lead to rebirth and suffering in cyclic existence have ceased, but due to previously accumulated karma, the aggregates of that life remain and must still exhaust themselves. It is only at the end of life that these cease, and since no new aggregates arise, the arhat or buddha is said to attain *parinirvāṇa*, meaning "complete" or "final" nirvāṇa. This is synonymous with the attainment of nirvāṇa without remainder (*anupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*).

According to the Mahāyāna view of a single vehicle (*ekayāna*), the arhat's parinirvāṇa at death, despite being so called, is not final. The arhat must still enter the bodhisattva path and reach buddhahood (see *Unraveling the Intent*, Toh 106, 7.14.) On the other hand, the parinirvāṇa of a buddha, ultimately speaking, should be understood as a display manifested for the benefit of beings; see *The Teaching on the Extraordinary Transformation That Is the Miracle of Attaining the Buddha's Powers* (Toh 186), 1.32.

The term *parinirvāṇa* is also associated specifically with the passing away of the Buddha Śākyamuni, in Kuśinagara, in northern India.

g.30 Prajñāvarman

pradz+nyA warma

པར་ཇ་ལྷ་མོ།

—

One of the translators of this sūtra.

g.31 rebirth

skye ba

སྐྱེ་བ།

jāti

The eleventh link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.32 R̥ṣipatana

drang srong lhung ba

དང་སྲོང་ལྷུང་བ།

r̥ṣipatana

Literally “landing place of sages,” the name of the deer park near Vārāṇasī where the Buddha first taught the Dharma following his awakening.

g.33 Self-Luminous

bdag snang ba

བདག་སྤང་བ།

**svāloka*

The name of an eon in the future.

g.34 sensation

tshor ba

ཚོར་བ།

vedanā

The seventh link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.35 Śikhin

gtsug tor can

གཅུག་ཏོར་ཅན།

śikhin

The second of the six buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni.

g.36 six sense sources

skye mched drug

སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དུག།

ṣaḍāyatana

The fifth link of the twelve links of dependent origination.

g.37 Śrīmatī

dpal ldan ma

དཔལ་ལྷན་མ།

śrīmatī

A woman of the brahmin caste from Vārāṇasī.

g.38 Surendrabodhi

su ren dra bo d+hi

སུ་རེན་བོ་བོ་ནི།

—

One of the translators of this sūtra.

g.39 ultimate nature

don dam pa

དོན་དམ་པ།

paramārtha

The ultimate reality that is the domain of awakened beings.

g.40 Vārāṇasī

bA rA Na sI

བ་ར་ར་ས་སྐ།

vārāṇasī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Also known as Benares, one of the oldest cities of northeast India on the banks of the Ganges, in modern-day Uttar Pradesh. It was once the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kāśī, and in the Buddha's time it had been absorbed into the kingdom of Kośala. It was an important religious center, as well as a major city, even during the time of the Buddha. The name may derive from being where the Varuna and Assi rivers flow into the Ganges. It was on the outskirts of Vārāṇasī that the Buddha first taught the Dharma, in the location known as Deer Park (*Mṛgadāva*). For numerous episodes set in Vārāṇasī, including its kings, see *The Hundred Deeds*, Toh 340.

g.41 Vipāśyin

rnam par gzigs

རྣམ་པར་གཟིགས།

vipāśyin

The first of the six buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni.

g.42 Viśvabhū

thams cad skyob

ཐམས་ཅད་སྐྱོབ།

viśvabhū

The third of the six buddhas who preceded Śākyamuni.