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The Mahāsūtra “The Crest Insignia” (1)

Dhvajāgramahāsūtra

mdo chen po rgyal mtshan mchog

· Toh 292 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 71 (mdo sde, sha), folios 262.a–265.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

· Jinamitra · Prajñāvarman · Bandé Yeshé Dé ·



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SUMMARY

- s.1 A group of merchants from Vaiśālī, preparing to travel to Takṣaśilā, learn that the Buddha is staying nearby at the Kūṭāgāraśālā and offer the Buddha and his monks a midday meal. The Buddha teaches them how to overcome the fears of the wilderness by recollecting the Buddha, Dharma, or Saṅgha, comparing it to how the military crest insignias of Śakra, Īśāna, and Varuṇa respectively embolden the devas in their battles against the asuras. The sūtra concludes with the Buddha offering the merchants verses of benediction for a safe journey. This is the longer of two Mahāsūtras with the same title and similar themes but addressed to different audiences.

ac.

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ac.1 This publication was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

ac.2 The text was translated, edited, and introduced by the 84000 translation team. Lowell Cook produced the translation and wrote the introduction. George FitzHerbert and John Canti edited the translation and the introduction, and Laura Goetz copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The inclusion of *The Crest Insignia (1)* (hereafter *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1]) among the Mahāsūtras (literally “Great Sūtras”)¹ reflects its status in early Buddhism as a “protective text” (known as a *rakṣā* by the Sarvāstivādins and Mūlasarvāstivādins and a *paritta* by the Theravādins). It shares the same Sanskrit title with a with a closely related Mahāsūtra that immediately follows it in the Degé Kangyur (*The Crest Insignia (2)*, Toh 293,² hereafter *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [2]). In Tibetan the titles of these two Mahāsūtras are differentiated by alternative translations of the word *agra* (as *mchog* in the present text, Toh 292, and *dam pa* in Toh 293), but we have translated the title in the same way in both texts based on the identical Sanskrit title *Dhvajāgra*. The term *dhvajāgra* refers to a symbol or insignia that was mounted at the end of a long pole, which was employed as a martial ensign on the battlefield in ancient India.³

i.2

Although these two Mahāsūtras describe teachings given to different audiences at different locations, they both include recensions of the same core teaching on “recollecting the Buddha” (Skt. *buddhānusmṛti*, Tib. *sangs rgyas rjes su dran pa*) as a method for dispelling fear in times of crisis. In the many iterations of the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* found in Pali, Sanskrit, and Chinese,⁴ the formula by which the Buddha is to be recollected is composed of a set of epithets that describe his qualities, traditionally said to be nine in number but with some differences between versions of the text.⁵ Recollecting the Buddha in this way is presented as the primary means of protecting oneself from fear and insecurity and is likened to how Śakra emboldens his army of devas with the sight of Vaijayanta, his celestial crest insignia, which fills the devas with courage as they wage war against the asuras.⁶ It is from this analogy that the texts take their title.

i.3

The present text, the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1], differs from the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [2] in being located at Vaiśālī (rather than the Jeta Grove in Śrāvastī) and in being addressed to a group of merchants (rather than the community of monks).

The *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1] additionally differs in prescribing the recollection of all Three Jewels (Skt. *triratna*, Tib. *dkon mchog gsum*), rather than just of the Buddha, the other two being compared to the crest insignia of Īśāna and Varuṇa. Like the formula for recollecting the Buddha, the formulae set out here for recollecting the Dharma and the Saṅgha have been a core feature of Buddhist liturgies since the earliest times. Indeed these three formulae are also found in the Kangyur as standalone scriptures called, respectively, *Buddhānusmṛti* (Toh 279), *Dharmānusmṛti* (Toh 280), and *Saṅghānusmṛti* (Toh 281). The three short texts (which are often recited in a form that fuses them into a single *Triratnānusmṛti* text) are of unknown origin and may possibly be derived partly from the present sūtra or its parallels.

i.4 The sūtra begins with the merchants preparing to embark on the journey to Takṣaśilā—the capital of Gandhāra and a historic center for Indian Buddhism and transcontinental trade—when they learn that the Buddha has taken up residence nearby at the Kūṭāgārasālā on the banks of the Monkey Pond. Taking advantage of the opportunity, they invite the Buddha and his saṅgha of monks to come to their lodgings for a midday meal. It is at this occasion that the Buddha delivers his teaching on recollecting the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha as a way of dispelling fear at times of need. Following the prose narrative is a section in verse in which the Buddha offers the merchants some verses of benediction (Skt. *svastigāthā*), celebrating their generosity and blessing them for a safe journey. Several of these verses, which employ a poetic repetition of the word “perfect” (Skt. *saṃpad*, Tib. *phun sum tshogs*),⁷ are also found in various iterations in other canonical works.⁸

i.5 There is no surviving Sanskrit text for the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1], although there are extant Sanskrit fragments and a Pali version corresponding to the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [2] that overlap with sections of the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1] (see the introduction to Toh 293). The *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1] was translated into Chinese by the Indian monk Guṇabhadra (394–468 CE) between 435 and 443 and is found as no. 980 of his translation of the *Samyuktāgama* (Taishō 99, 雜阿含經).

i.6 The seven Mahāsūtras that are found together in the General Sūtra (*mdo sde*) section of most Kangyurs (Toh 288–94), as well as the two found in the Action Tantra (*bya ba'i rgyud*) section (and in the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs (*gzungs 'dus*) section in those Kangyurs that include such a compendium) (Toh 653/1062 and Toh 656/1061), were transmitted to Tibet as a collection and translated together by Jinamitra, Prajñāvarman, and Yeshé Dé,⁹ and the fact that the nine texts are listed together in both the Denkarma and Phangthangma catalogs also dates the translations to the early ninth century.¹⁰ Peter Skilling suggests that Jinamitra, who was an accomplished Vinaya master, may have specifically transmitted the Mahāsūtras for use as *rakṣā* protective texts for the fledging monastic community, only to be

eclipsed by tantra in postimperial Tibetan Buddhism.¹¹ Although it may have enjoyed popularity during the early period, the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1] does not appear to have been quoted or studied widely in Tibet.

i.7 The foremost study of the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1] is Peter Skilling's two-volume *The Mahāsūtras: Great Discourses of the Buddha*, which has greatly informed this introduction and translation. The first mention of the sūtra in Western scholarship came in the early nineteenth century from Alexander Csoma de Kőrös in his "Analysis of the Mdo," in which he briefly surveyed the contents of the Mahāsūtras. The *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [1] was only very recently translated into English, when it appeared alongside the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [2] and the Pali *Dhajaggasutta* in Skilling 2024.

i.8 The present translation was produced based on the Degé Kangyur edition and checked against the variant readings in the Comparative Edition Kangyur and the Stok Palace Manuscript Kangyur.

The Mahāsūtra
The Crest Insignia (1)

1.

The Translation

[F.262.a]

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels.

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was traveling through the land of Vṛji and had arrived in Vaiśālī. He had taken up residence at the Kūṭāgāraśālā, on the banks of the Monkey Pond near Vaiśālī.

1.3 At that time, a large group of merchants from Vaiśālī was preparing for a journey to the land of Takṣaśilā in order to trade. These many merchants of Vaiśālī heard that the Blessed One was traveling through the land of Vṛji, had arrived in Vaiśālī, and had taken up residence at the Kūṭāgāraśālā on the banks of the Monkey Pond near Vaiśālī. When they heard this, they gathered in groups and banded together in bands,¹² left Vaiśālī, and went to the Blessed One.

1.4 On arrival, they bowed their heads at the Blessed One's feet and sat to one side. The Blessed One taught, instructed, encouraged, and delighted the many merchants of Vaiśālī, who were seated to one side, with a Dharma talk. Having taught, instructed, encouraged, and delighted them with a Dharma talk on various topics, the Blessed One sat in silence.

1.5 The many merchants of Vaiśālī then rose from their seats and, draping their robes over their left shoulders, bowed to the Blessed One with joined palms. "Honored One," they addressed the Blessed One, "we are a large group of merchants from Vaiśālī preparing for a journey to the land of Takṣaśilā in order to trade goods. [F.262.b] Would the Blessed One and the saṅgha of monks agree to take their midday meal at our place tomorrow?"

1.6 The Blessed One assented to the many merchants of Vaiśālī by remaining silent. The many merchants of Vaiśālī recognized that the Blessed One had agreed by remaining silent. They praised what the Blessed One had taught and rejoiced. They bowed their heads at the Blessed One's feet and departed from his presence.

- 1.7 That evening, the many merchants of Vaiśālī carefully prepared pure and wholesome food and drink. Rising early the next morning, they prepared the seating and set out the water jugs. They then extended their invitation to the Blessed One: “Honored One, the meal has been prepared, and the time has come. Please, Blessed One, know that the time has now come.”
- 1.8 That morning, the Blessed One donned his lower garment and upper robe and took up his alms bowl. Surrounded by a group of monks at the head of the saṅgha of monks, he proceeded to the dining hall of the many merchants of Vaiśālī. When he arrived, he sat on the seat that had been prepared for him amid the gathering of monks. The many merchants of Vaiśālī then bowed their heads at the Blessed One’s feet and sat to one side. The Blessed One gave the following teaching to the many merchants of Vaiśālī, who were seated to one side.
- 1.9 “Merchants, when you are in the wilderness and you feel fear, trepidation, or terror, at that time, you should recollect me through my aspects:
- 1.10 “The Blessed One is a thus-gone one, a worthy one, [F.263.a] a perfectly and completely awakened one, a learned and virtuous one, a well-gone one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed¹³ leader of those to be trained, a teacher of devas and humans, an awakened one, and a blessed one.
- 1.11 “Merchants, if at that time you recollect me through my aspects, then whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.
- 1.12 “If you cannot recollect me, then recollect the Dharma through its aspects:
- 1.13 “The Dharma of the Blessed One has been well spoken, it is to be seen for oneself, it is free from ailments, it is timeless, it is a guide,¹⁴ it is there in plain sight, and it is to be experienced by the wise for themselves.
- 1.14 “Merchants, if at that time you recollect the Dharma through¹⁵ these aspects, then whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.
- 1.15 “If you cannot recollect the Dharma, then recollect the Saṅgha through its aspects:
- 1.16 “The Saṅgha of śrāvakas of the Blessed One practice well, they practice in the proper way, they practice with integrity, they practice in the right way, they practice the Dharma as befits the Dharma, and they act in accordance with the Dharma. In the Saṅgha there are those who practice to realize the result of stream entry. In the Saṅgha there are stream enterers. In the Saṅgha there are those who practice to realize the result of once-returners. In the Saṅgha there are once-returners. In the Saṅgha there are those who practice to realize the result of non-returners. In the Saṅgha there are non-returners. In the Saṅgha there are those who practice to realize the result of arhathood. In the Saṅgha there are arhats. [F.263.b] These are the four pairs, the eight types of persons. The Blessed One’s Saṅgha of śrāvakas is replete¹⁶ with

discipline, replete with samādhi, replete with wisdom, replete with liberation, and replete with the knowledge and vision of liberation. They are fully worthy of offerings, they are completely worthy of offerings, they are worthy of respect with joined palms, they are worthy of homage. They are the unsurpassed field of merit, the rightful recipients of the offerings of the world.

1.17 “Merchants, if at that time you recollect the Saṅgha through these aspects, then whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.

1.18 “Previously, merchants, when a battle between the devas and the asuras was about to break out, Śakra, the lord of the devas, called out to the devas of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three: ‘Friends, when you go into the battle between the devas and the asuras, if you feel any fear, trepidation, or terror, you should at that time recall my crest insignia Vaijayanta. If at that time you recollect my crest insignia Vaijayanta, then whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.

1.19 “ ‘If you cannot recollect my crest insignia, then recollect the crest insignia of the deva Īśāna. If at that time you recollect the crest insignia of the deva Īśāna, then whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.

1.20 “ ‘If you cannot recollect the crest insignia of the deva Īśāna, then recollect the crest insignia of the deva Varuṇa. [F.264.a] If at that time you recollect the crest insignia of the deva Varuṇa, then whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.

1.21 “In the same way, merchants, when you are in the wilderness and feel fear, trepidation, or terror, at that time, you should recollect me through my aspects:

1.22 “The Blessed One is a thus-gone one, a worthy one, a perfectly and completely awakened one, a learned and virtuous one, a well-gone one, a knower of the world, an unsurpassed leader of those to be trained, a teacher of devas and humans, an awakened one, and a blessed one.

1.23 “Merchants, if at that time you recollect me through my aspects, whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.

1.24 “If you cannot recollect me, then recollect the Dharma through its aspects:

1.25 “The Dharma of the Blessed One has been well spoken, it is to be seen for oneself, it is free from ailments, it is timeless, it is a guide, it is there in plain sight, and it is to be experienced by the wise for themselves.

1.26 “Merchants, if at that time you recollect the Dharma through its aspects, whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.

1.27 “If you cannot recollect the Dharma, then recollect the Saṅgha through its aspects:

- 1.28 “The Saṅgha of śrāvakas of the Blessed One practices well; they practice in the proper way, they practice with integrity, they practice in the right way, they practice the Dharma as befits the Dharma, and they act in accordance with the Dharma. In the Saṅgha there are those who practice to realize the result of stream entry. In the Saṅgha there are stream enterers. [F.264.b] In the Saṅgha there are those who practice to realize the result of once-returners. In the Saṅgha there are once-returners. In the Saṅgha there are those who practice in order to realize the result of non-returners. In the Saṅgha there are non-returners. In the Saṅgha there are those who practice in order to realize the result of arhathood. In the Saṅgha there are arhats. These are the four pairs, the eight types of persons. The Blessed One’s Saṅgha of śrāvakas is replete with discipline, replete with samādhi, replete with wisdom, replete with liberation, and replete with the knowledge and vision of liberation. They are fully worthy of offerings, they are completely worthy of offerings, they are worthy of respect with joined palms, they are worthy of homage. They are the unsurpassed field of merit, the rightful recipients of the offerings of the world.
- 1.29 “Merchants, if at that time you recollect the Saṅgha through its aspects, whatever fear, trepidation, or terror you are experiencing will subside.”
- 1.30 Seeing that the Buddha and the saṅgha of monks were comfortably seated, the many merchants of Vaiśālī then graciously served them from their own hands the pure and wholesome foods and drinks and ensured they were satisfied. In various ways, they graciously served them from their own hands the pure and wholesome foods and drinks and ensured their satisfaction, and the Blessed One partook of the midday meal. When the many merchants of Vaiśālī saw that he had placed his alms bowl down and concealed his hands, they spread out low seats and sat before the Blessed One to listen to the Dharma. [F.265.a]
- 1.31 The Blessed One rejoiced with delight at the generosity of the many merchants of Vaiśālī.
- 1.32 “O merchants, you have sustained
The saṅgha of monks with food and drink
In the manner of wise and noble beings
Who, in their wisdom, practice generosity.¹⁷ [1]
- 1.33 “This is a benediction for your offering.
By making this gift, O merchants,
May the aims you rightfully desire
Always be accomplished. [2]
- 1.34 “May there be goodness for those of you who travel on two feet.¹⁸

- May there be goodness for those of you who travel on four feet.
May there be goodness as you embark upon your journey,
And may there be goodness when you return. [3]
- 1.35 “May there be goodness all night and goodness all day,
And may there be goodness at midday.
May you experience goodness in all situations,
And may negativity never befall you. [4]
- 1.36 “When perfect¹⁹ seeds are sown
In perfect fields
And enjoy perfect rainfall,
A perfect harvest will abound. [5]
- 1.37 “When perfectly free from damage,
When crops grow with perfection
And burst forth with perfection,
A perfect harvest will abound. [6]
- 1.38 “So, too, by giving perfect foods
To those with perfect discipline,
You will accomplish perfection,²⁰
For your act itself was perfect. [7]
- 1.39 “Thus, when people who seek perfection
And strive toward perfection
Attend to those with perfect wisdom,
Perfection is what they accomplish. [8]
- 1.40 “Thus, those with stable faith
In the unsurpassed Buddha
And in the Dharma and the Saṅgha
Will find perfection of mind. [9]
- 1.41 “Those with perfect thoughts
Toward the one with knowledge and conduct
Perform virtuous actions.
This is the perfection of action. [10]
- 1.42 “When one truly knows the world as it is,
One attains the perfection of the view.
When the noble vision is perfectly present,
One’s mind becomes perfect too. [11] [F.265.b]
- 1.43 “Those who overcome all stains

Attain the perfection of nirvāṇa
And extinguish suffering;
Their aim is perfectly complete.” [12]

1.44 The Blessed One taught, instructed, encouraged, and delighted the many merchants of Vaiśālī with this Dharma talk. Having taught, instructed, encouraged, and delighted them with this Dharma talk on various topics, the Blessed One rose from his seat and departed.

1.45 *This concludes the Mahāsūtra “The Crest Insignia.”*

c.

Colophon

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

NOTES

n.

- n.1 See the 84000 Knowledge Base article, “[Mahāsūtras](https://read.84000.co/knowledgebase/mahasutras.html) (<https://read.84000.co/knowledgebase/mahasutras.html>).”
- n.2 *The Crest Insignia (2)* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh293.html>) (translated 2024).
- n.3 Peter Skilling discusses the term *dhvajāgra* / *dhajagga* at length in his introduction to the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* [2] in Skilling 1994–97, vol. 2, pp. 444–52. He observes that in a range of other canonical translations into Tibetan, the term was also translated as *rgyal mtshan gyi rtse mo* (“crest of the insignia”).
- n.4 As discussed by Skilling, there are in total seven versions of the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* in Pali, Sanskrit, Chinese and Tibetan, plus two partial citations (in the Chinese *Dai zhidu lun* 大智度論 [Taishō 1509], and in Sthiramati’s *Pañcaskanda-prakaraṇavaibhāṣā* [*phung po lnga’i rab tu byed pa bye brag tu bshad pa*, Toh 4066], which survives only in Tibetan). The Central Asian Sanskrit witness of the *Dhvajāgrasūtra* corresponds to *Dhvajāgrasūtra* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh293.html>) [2] (Toh 293). For more on the correspondences and overlaps between the versions, see Skilling 1994–97, vol. 2, pp. 404–5.
- n.5 The Pali versions do not include “tathāgata” among the epithets, and some commentators count “unsurpassed” (see n.13) as an epithet on its own. See Skilling 1994–97, vol. 2, p. 413 and 433–4, and also the *Buddhānusmṛtivorṭti* (attributed to Asaṅga, Toh 3982), F.12.a. See also Zhao 2018, and Harrison 1992, pp. 215–38.
- n.6 For more on the trope of wars between the devas and asuras in Buddhist literature in general and in the *Dhvajāgrasūtras* in particular, see Skilling 1994–97, vol. 2, pp. 423–26.

- n.7 Despite the difficulties in capturing the broad semantic range of *saṃpad* or *phun sum tshogs* in a single word, our translation has attempted to reflect the repetition of the source text by translating this term consistently throughout as “perfect” and “perfection” (except for one instance in which we have used “replete,” see n.19).
- n.8 Verses 1–2 have no parallels and appear to be unique to this sūtra. Versions of verses 3–4, on blessing those with two legs and four legs, are also found in the *Mahāsūtra on Entering the City of Vaiśālī* (*Vaiśālīpraveśamahāsūtra*, Toh 312, 1.23–1.24), *The Great Peahen* (*Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī*, Toh 559, 1.79 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/UT22084-090-003.html#UT22084-090-003-235>)), and the extracanonical *Mahāvastu*, where they are found as the first two verses of the blessing pronounced by the Buddha to the merchants Trapusa and Bhallika. The last two lines of verse 3 also appear as the first two lines of a verse in *The Play in Full* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh95.html>) (*Lalitavistara*, 24.168), where they are spoken to the same merchants. The Pali *Khettasutta* contains versions of verses 5–8, 10, and 12. For more details, see Skilling 2024, p. 326. See also Skilling 1994–97, vol. 2, pp. 426–28.
- n.9 For information on these important early translators, see Skilling 1994–97, vol. 2, pp. 111–42, especially pp. 115–30.
- n.10 In the Denkarma catalog, the *Dhvajāgra* [1] is the eighth of the nine Mahāsūtras listed. Denkarma, folio 300.a.4; Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 131, no. 247.
- n.11 Skilling 1994–97, vol. 2, pp. 10–11.
- n.12 This alliterative turn of phrase comes from Skilling 2024, p. 167.
- n.13 While some commentators understand “unsurpassed” (*anuttaraḥ, bla na med pa*) to be an additional epithet independent of “leader of those to be trained” (*puruṣadamyasārathī, skyes bu gdul bya’i kha lo sgyur ba*), it seems more likely from other instances of the phrase that the former is a qualifier of the latter. See Skilling 1994–7, vol. 2, p. 413.
- n.14 Following H, J, K, Y, N, and S: *nye bar gtod pa*. D reads *nye bar gtong ba*.
- n.15 Following C, H, J, K, Y, N, and S: *las* (“through”). D reads *lngas* (“five”).
- n.16 The term translated here as “replete” is *phun sum tshogs pa*, the same term used repeatedly in the verses of benediction that follow, where it has been translated as “perfect” and “perfection.”

- n.17 Provisional translation of *rab tu shes nas gtong ba yi//blo ldan 'phags pa gang byed bzhin*.
- n.18 The term translated here as “goodness” is *bde legs*, which in turn translates the Sanskrit *svasti*. Other possible translations would include “good fortune,” “happiness,” and “wellness.” For iterations of this and the following verse of blessing (3–4), particularly for travelers and merchants, see [n.8](#) above.
- n.19 As mentioned above in [n.7](#), the term repeated throughout the remaining verses that is translated here as “perfect/perfection” is *phun sum tshogs / phun sum tshogs pa*, which in turn translates the Sanskrit *sampad*. Other possible renderings could instead use the idiom of “abundance” or, as Skilling uses in his translation, the idiom of “blessing.” See Skilling 2024, pp. 172–73.
- n.20 Tib. *phun sum tshogs pa*. See [n.7](#). The use of “perfection” in these verses does not relate to the “six perfections.”

b.

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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 arhathood

dgra bcom pa nyid

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ་ཉིད།

arhattva^{AO}

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.

g.2 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura^{AO}

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.3 awakened one

sangs rgyas

སངས་རྒྱས།

buddha^{AO}

A fully realized (“awakened”) being.

g.4 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེམ་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 √*bhañj* (“to break”).

g.5 crest insignia

rgyal mtshan mchog

རྒྱལ་མཚན་མཚོག

dhvajāgra

A military ensign or standard. In ancient Indic culture a *dhvaja* was a long pole surmounted by a top piece or finial (*agra*). The term *dhvaja* was translated into Tibetan as *rgyal mtshan*, literally “royal insignia.”

g.6 deva

lha

ལྷ།

deva^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In the most general sense the devas—the term is cognate with the English *divine*—are a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend and celebrate the teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni and other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In Buddhist cosmology the devas occupy the highest of the five or six “destinies” (*gati*) of saṃsāra among which beings take rebirth. The devas reside in the *devalokas*, “heavens” that traditionally number between twenty-six and twenty-eight and are divided between the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), form realm (*rūpadhātu*), and formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). A being attains rebirth among the devas either through meritorious deeds (in the desire realm) or the attainment of subtle meditative states (in the form and formless realms). While rebirth among the devas is considered favorable, it is ultimately a transitory state from which beings will fall when the conditions that lead to rebirth there are exhausted. Thus, rebirth in the god realms is regarded as a diversion from the spiritual path.

g.7 dharma

chos

ཚོས།

dharma^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *dharma* conveys ten different meanings, according to Vasubandhu's *Vyākhyāyukti*. The primary meanings are as follows: the doctrine taught by the Buddha (Dharma); the ultimate reality underlying and expressed through the Buddha's teaching (Dharma); the trainings that the Buddha's teaching stipulates (dharmas); the various awakened qualities or attainments acquired through practicing and realizing the Buddha's teaching (dharmas); qualities or aspects more generally, i.e., phenomena or phenomenal attributes (dharmas); and mental objects (dharmas).

g.8 discipline

tshul khrims

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

śīla^{AO}

In general, the first of the three trainings (*trīśikṣā*), and in this text and others the first of five qualities of the Saṅgha that are also described in other texts as the five undefiled (or beyond-worldly) aggregates (*skandha*) characteristic of noble ones.

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Morally virtuous or disciplined conduct and the abandonment of morally undisciplined conduct of body, speech, and mind. In a general sense, moral discipline is the cause for rebirth in higher, more favorable states, but it is also foundational to Buddhist practice as one of the three trainings (*trīśikṣā*) and one of the six perfections of a bodhisattva. Often rendered as “ethics,” “discipline,” and “morality.”

g.9 eight types of persons

skyes bu gang zag brgyad

སྐྱེས་བུ་གང་ཟག་བརྒྱད།

aṣṭapuruṣapudgala

See “four pairs.”

g.10 field of merit

bsod nams kyi zhing

བསོད་ནམས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་།

punyaṣetra^{AD}

Entities (such as the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Saṅgha, one's parents, the sick, and the poor) that when treated with due care serve to engender merit.

g.11 four pairs

skyes bu zung bzhi

སྐྱེས་སུ་རླུང་བཞི།

catuḥpuruṣayuga

This refers stream enterers, once-returners, non-returners, and arhats, along with those practicing to attain the realizations of those states.

g.12 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum pa

སུམ་རུ་ཚ་གསུམ་པ།

trāyastriṃśa ^{AO}

According to Buddhist cosmology, the Heaven of the Thirty-Three is the second lowest of the six heavens of the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), just above the Heaven of the Four Great Kings (*Caturmahārājakāyika*) and below the Yāma Heaven. It is situated on the flat summit of Mount Sumeru and has thirty-three regions each presided over by one of thirty-three chief gods, the overall chief being Śakra. The presiding gods are divided into four groups named in the *Abhidharmakośaṭīkā* (Toh 4092): the eight gods of wealth, two Aśvin youths, eleven fierce ones, and twelve suns. The thirty-three regions themselves are enumerated and described in *The Application of Mindfulness of the Sacred Dharma*, Toh 287, 4.B.2 et seq.).

g.13 Īśāna

dbang ldan

དབང་ལྷན།

īśāna ^{AO}

A Vedic deity whose name means literally “Ruler.” Often an epithet of Rudra/Śiva.

g.14 Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇོ་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

jinamitra ^{AO}

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

g.15 knower of the world

'jig rten mkhyen pa

འཇིག་རྟེན་མཁྱེན་པ།

lokavid^{AO}

An epithet of a buddha. Here it is the sixth epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected.

g.16 knowledge and vision of liberation

rnam par grol ba'i ye shes mthong ba

རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ་བའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཐོང་བ།

vimuktijñānadarśana^{AO}

Both fully knowing and directly accessing the knowledge of liberation; the fifth of five qualities of the Saṅgha (the others being discipline, samādhi, wisdom, and liberation) that are also described in other texts as the five undefiled (or beyond-worldly) aggregates (*skandha*) characteristic of noble ones.

g.17 Kūṭāgāraśālā

khang pa brtsegs pa'i gnas

ཁང་པ་བརྗེན་པའི་གནས།

kūṭāgāraśālā^{AD}

An important early monastery outside Vaiśālī. Many texts specify, as in this sūtra, that it was located on the banks of the Monkey Pond (q.v.), while others (several Mahāyāna sūtras and the Theravādin literature) place it in the Mahāvana (“Great Forest”), also on the outskirts of Vaiśālī. The name Kūṭāgāraśālā means “hall with an upper chamber” or “gabled hall.” It refers to a temple with one ground-floor room and at least one additional upper room within the structure.

g.18 learned and virtuous one

rig pa dang zhabs su ldan pa

རིག་པ་དང་ཞབས་སུ་ལྷན་པ།

vidyācaraṇasampanna^{AO}

An epithet of a buddha. Sometimes translated as “perfect in wisdom and conduct.” Here it is the fourth epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected.

g.19 liberation

rnam par grol ba

རྣམ་པར་གྲོལ་བ།

vimukti^{AO}

In general, freedom from rebirth and its causes, and in this text and others the fourth of five qualities of the Saṅgha that are also described in other texts as the five undefiled (or beyond-worldly) aggregates (*skandha*) characteristic of noble ones.

g.20 Monkey Pond

spre'u rdzing

སྤྲེའུ་རྩིང་།

markaṭahrada ^{AO}

The name of a pond near Vaiśālī said to have been dug by monkeys.

g.21 nirvāṇa

mya ngan 'das pa

མྱ་ངན་འདས་པ།

nirvāṇa ^{AO}

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. (1) The first type of nirvāṇa, called nirvāṇa with remainder (*sopadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*), is the state in which arhats or buddhas have attained awakening but are still dependent on the conditioned aggregates until their lifespan is exhausted. (2) 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 (*anupadhiśeṣanirvāṇa*), which refers to the unconditioned element (*dhātu*) of nirvāṇa in which there is no remainder of the aggregates. (3) The Mahāyāna teachings distinguish the final nirvāṇa of buddhas from that of arhats, the nirvāṇa of arhats not being 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.22 non-returner

phyir mi 'ong ba

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བ།

anāgāmin ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The third of the four attainments of śrāvakas, this term refers to a person who will no longer take rebirth in the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), but either be reborn in the Pure Abodes (*śuddhāvāsa*) or reach the state of an arhat in their current lifetime. (*Provisional 84000 definition. New definition forthcoming.*)

g.23 once-returner

lan cig phyir 'ong ba

ལན་ཅིག་ཕྱིར་འོང་བ།

sakṛdāgāmin ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One who has achieved the second of the four levels of attainment on the śrāvaka path and who will attain liberation after only one more birth. (*Provisional 84000 definition. New definition forthcoming.*)

g.24 perfectly and completely awakened one

yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas

ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས།

samyaksaṃbuddha ^{AO}

A common epithet of buddhas. A fully awakened buddha who teaches the Dharma and brings it into a world, as opposed to a pratyekabuddha, who does not teach the Dharma or bring it into a world. Here it is the third epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected.

g.25 Prajñāvarman

pradz+nyA warma

པརྫོགས་པའི་ལྷོ་མ།

prajñāvarman ^{AO}

An Indian Bengali *paṇḍita* resident in Tibet during the late eight and early ninth centuries. Arriving in Tibet on an invitation from the Tibetan king, he assisted in the translation of numerous canonical scriptures. He is also the author of a few philosophical commentaries contained in the Tengyur.

g.26 result of non-returners

phyir mi 'ong ba'i 'bras bu

ཕྱིར་མི་འོང་བའི་འབྲས་བུ།

anāgāmiphala ^{AO}

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

g.27 result of once-returners

lan cig phyir 'ong ba'i 'bras bu

ལན་ཅིག་ཕྱིར་འོང་བའི་འབྲས་བུ།

sakṛdāgāmiphala ^{AO}

One who has achieved the second of the four levels of attainment on the śrāvaka path and who will thus only be reborn in saṃsāra once more.

g.28 result of stream entry

rgyun du zhugs pa'i 'bras bu

རྒྱུན་དུ་ལྷུགས་པའི་འབྲས་བུ།

srotaāpattiphala ^{AO}

The first of four levels of attainment on the śrāvaka path, the point from which one is then continuously approaching nirvāṇa.

g.29 rightful recipient of the offerings

yon gnas

ཡོན་གནས།

dakṣiṇīya ^{AO}

In general, a term for a pure monk or ascetic (or the saṅgha as a whole) who may be considered a worthy field of merit (Skt. *punyakṣetra*).

g.30 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

śakra ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The lord of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (*trāyastriṃśa*).

Alternatively known as Indra, the deity that is called “lord of the gods” dwells on the summit of Mount Sumeru and wields the thunderbolt. The

Tibetan translation *brgya byin* (meaning “one hundred sacrifices”) is based

on an etymology that *śakra* is an abbreviation of *śata-kratu*, one who has

performed a hundred sacrifices. Each world with a central Sumeru has a

Śakra. Also known by other names such as Kauśika, Devendra, and Śacipati.

g.31 samādhi

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་འཛིན།

samādhi ^{AO}

In general, the second of the three trainings (*trīśikṣā*), and in this text and others the second of five qualities of the Saṅgha that are also described in other texts as the five undefiled (or beyond-worldly) aggregates (*skandha*) characteristic of noble ones.

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 *Draḥor Bamponyipa* (*sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa*) commentary on the *Mahāvīyūtpatti* 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.

g.32 saṅgha

dge 'dun

སངས་འདུན།

saṅgha ^{AO}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Though often specifically reserved for the monastic community, this term can be applied to any of the four Buddhist communities—monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen—as well as to identify the different groups of practitioners, like the community of bodhisattvas or the community of śrāvakas. It is also the third of the Three Jewels (*triratna*) of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community.

g.33 śrāvaka

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka ^{AO}

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.34 stream enterer

rgyun du zhugs

རྒྱུན་དུ་ལྷག་པ།

srotaāpanna^{AO}

A person who has entered the “stream” of practice that leads to nirvāṇa.

g.35 Takṣaśilā

rdo 'jog

རྫོ་འཛོག་

takṣaśilā^{AO}

Identified with modern-day Taxila, an ancient city and capital of Gandhāra.

g.36 teacher of devas and humans

lha dang mi rnams kyi ston pa

ལྷ་དང་མི་རྣམས་ཀྱི་སྟོན་པ།

devamanuṣyaśāstr^{AO}

An epithet of a buddha. Here it is the eighth epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected.

g.37 thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata^{AO}

Here it is the first epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected.

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.38 unsurpassed leader of those to be trained

skyes bu gdul bya'i kha lo sgyur ba bla na med pa

སྐྱེས་བུ་གདུལ་བྱའི་ཁ་ལོ་སྐྱུར་བ་བླ་ན་མེད་པ།

anuttarah puruṣadamyaśārathi ^{AO}

An epithet of a buddha. Here it is the seventh epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected. In some enumerations of the epithets, “unsurpassed” (*anuttarah, bla na med pa*), instead of being a qualifier of “leader ...” is counted as an independent epithet of its own, increasing the number of epithets to nine.

g.39 Vaijayanta

nam par rgyal byed

རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་བྱེད།

vaijayanta

The name of Śakra’s crest insignia. The Tibetan term literally means “Brings Victory.”

g.40 Vaiśālī

yangs pa can

ཡངས་པ་ཅན།

vaiśālī ^{AO}

The ancient capital of the Licchavi republic. The Buddha visited this city several times during his lifetime. It is perhaps most famous as the location where, on different occasions, the Buddha put an end to an epidemic, admitted the first nuns into the Buddhist order, was offered a bowl of honey by monkeys, and announced his parinirvāṇa three months beforehand.

g.41 Varuṇa

chu lha

ལཱ་ལྷ།

varuṇa^{AO}

A major Vedic deity associated with rain and water. The Tibetan translation simply means “water god.”

g.42 Vṛji

spong byed

སྤོང་བྱེད།

vṛji^{AD}

The land and people of Vṛji or Vaji (Pali *Vajji*), a country situated on the northeastern Gangetic plain, and one of the sixteen *mahājanapada* (“great countries”) of ancient India. It was run as a confederacy of eight or nine clans, including the Vṛji, Licchavi, and Videha, who sent representatives to an administrative council led by an elected ruler. Its capital was Vaiśālī. See Edgerton, s.v. Vṛji and Vaji.

g.43 well-gone one

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གསེགས་པ།

sugata

Here it is the fifth epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected.

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. A recurrent explanation offers three different meanings for *su-* that are meant to show the special qualities of “accomplishment of one’s own purpose” (*svārthasampad*) for a complete buddha. Thus, the Sugata is “well” gone, as in the expression *su-rūpa* (“having a good form”); he is gone “in a way that he shall not come back,” as in the expression *su-naṣṭa-jvara* (“a fever that has utterly gone”); and he has gone “without any remainder” as in the expression *su-pūrṇa-ghaṭa* (“a pot

that is completely full”). According to Buddhaghōṣa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*) and where he went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*).

g.44 wisdom

shes rab

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā^{AO}

In general, the third of the three trainings (*triśikṣā*), and in this text and others the third of five qualities of the Saṅgha that are also described in other texts as the five undefiled (or beyond-worldly) aggregates (*skandha*) characteristic of noble ones.

g.45 worthy one

dgra bcom pa

དགའ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat^{AO}

Here it is the second epithet through which the Buddha Śākyamuni is to be recollected.

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

According to Buddhist tradition, one who is worthy of worship (*pūjām arhati*), or one who has conquered the enemies, the mental afflictions (*kleśa-ari-hata-vat*), and reached liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. It is the fourth and highest of the four fruits attainable by śrāvakas. Also used as an epithet of the Buddha.

g.46 Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

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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.