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What Mendicants Hold Most Dear

Bhikṣuprareju

དག་སློང་ལ་རབ་ཏུ་གཅེས་པའི་མདོ།

dge slong la rab tu gces pa'i mdo

The Sūtra on What Mendicants Hold Most Dear

Bhikṣuprarejusūtra



Toh 302
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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 *What Mendicants Hold Most Dear* contains the Buddha's answer to a question by Upāli, the Buddha's foremost disciple in knowledge and mastery of the Vinaya. Upāli asks the Buddha to teach about the nature, types, and obligations of mendicants and about the meaning of this term. For the benefit of the assembled mendicants and mendicants in general, the Buddha explains that their nature is restraint, their obligations consist of disciplined conduct, and their types are the genuine mendicants who abide by disciplined conduct and those who are not genuine and thus do not so abide. When one of the Buddha's answers given in similes seems obscure, he offers further clarification upon Upāli's request. The Buddha explains the advantages of maintaining disciplined conduct, thus urging the mendicants to treasure it, and he warns against disregarding it while wearing the mendicant's robes.

ac.

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ac.1 This sūtra was translated from Tibetan by the Achi Translation Group under the guidance of Khenchen Nyima Gyaltzen from Kagyu College in Dehradun, India, who provided many detailed explanations. Konchog Tenzin (Mark Riege) served as the main translator, and Yeshe Metog (Claudia Jürgens) and Virginia Blum as the main reviewers. Meghan Howard contributed valuable research and additional review.

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i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

What Mendicants Hold Most Dear contains the Buddha's response to a question from Upāli. It is set in a monastery called Blooming Lotus in Śrāvastī, where Upāli supplicates the Buddha in front of a large assembly of mendicants (Skt. *bhikṣu*; Tib. *dge slong*) and asks him about the nature, types, and obligations of mendicants, as well as the meaning of the term itself. To benefit mendicants generally, the Buddha addresses Upāli's questions by praising disciplined conduct, emphasizing its importance, and encouraging the listeners to maintain it. When one of the Buddha's answers given in similes seems obscure, he offers further clarification upon Upāli's request. The Buddha explains the advantages of maintaining disciplined conduct, thus urging the mendicants to treasure it, and he warns against disregarding it while wearing the mendicant's robes.

i.2

The monk Upāli is remembered as one of the "ten close disciples" (Tib. *nyan thos nye 'khor bcu*) of the Buddha and foremost in his mastery of the monastic discipline, or Vinaya. Before becoming a monk, Upāli was a low-caste barber attending the Śākya princes, and he received ordination together with them. Many conversations about the Vinaya between the Buddha and Upāli are recorded in the various Vinaya collections,¹ and, according to early Buddhist texts, Upāli was often consulted by others about matters of monastic discipline, even during the Buddha's lifetime. Following the Buddha's passing, Upāli was chosen to recite the Vinaya at the First Buddhist Council.²

i.3

Very little is known about the sūtra's history. There do not appear to be any translations into Chinese, and no Sanskrit version is extant.³ However, as we discuss below, one verse of the sūtra is cited in a commentary in the Tengyur.⁴ Just as we know very little about the sūtra's Indic origins, we know even less about the origins of the Tibetan translation. The text's colophon is rudimentary and does not offer any information on the translator. Additionally, two Kangyur catalogs list the translator as

unknown.⁵ In terms of the date of its translation, the sūtra is not listed in the Denkarma (*ldan/lhan dkar ma*) or Phangthangma (*'phang thang ma*) catalogs, the earliest available lists of Buddhist texts translated into Tibetan, which were prepared in the ninth century. We do, however, find a reference to the sūtra in Butön's (1290–1364) extensive catalog of scriptures and treatises, but he does not list the translator either.⁶

i.4 The sūtra is included in many of the Kangyurs. For example, Resources for Kanjur & Tanjur Studies at the University of Vienna⁷ lists twenty-nine different Kangyurs that contain the sūtra, including representatives from all the important groups, such as the Tshalpa, Thempangma, Ladhaki/Mustang, Independent/Mixed groups, and Bhutan Kangyurs. Except for the Namgyal Kangyur—which lists it as *The Noble Sūtra of Upāli's Questions* (*'phags pa nye bar 'khor gyis zhus pa zhes bya ba'i mdo*)—all the titles and colophons are similar. While the Sanskrit title was originally specified by Tibetans as *Bhikṣuprarejusūtra*, modern scholars have reconstructed it as *Bhikṣupriyasūtra*, possibly due to the obscure meaning of *prareju*.⁸ Our translation is based on the version of the text contained in the Degé Kangyur. When comparing the Tibetan versions in the different Kangyurs (including the Lhasa, Stok Palace, Choné, Narthang, and Lithang Kangyurs), we found only minor differences beyond questions of spelling. The text has previously been translated several times: by W. W. Rockhill in 1883, by Bhikkhu Thubten Kalsang and Bhikkhu Pāsādika in 1970, and in two recent translations into English and Spanish, respectively, which have been published on the internet.⁹ We are not aware of any modern research dedicated to this text.

i.5 Throughout the centuries, Buddhists have turned to this sūtra for its explanation of the value of disciplined conduct. The example from the Tengyur is a citation of a verse from the sūtra in the *Śīlakathāvr̥tti*, a commentary on Vasubandhu's *Śīlaparikathā* (*Sermons on Disciplined Conduct*), to explain the harmful results of a loss of disciplined conduct:¹⁰

i.6 “It is explained that like branches that grow
For a long time from a strong trunk,
If that person has only the outer attributes for a long time,
Reprehensible talk will increase,
And misdeeds too will increase.”

i.7 Several Tibetan masters quote verses from the sūtra to emphasize the importance of keeping monastic discipline. For example, Jé Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) says in his *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path*:¹¹

- i.8 “There are very grave consequences for you if you undertake an ethical discipline and then fail to keep it. The *Sūtra Beloved of Monks (Bhikṣuprareju-sūtra)* says that, once you undertake a training, it will proceed in either an advantageous or disadvantageous direction:
- i.9 “ ‘The ethical discipline of some leads to pleasure;
The ethical discipline of others leads to pain.
Those who possess ethical discipline are happy,
Whereas those who break ethical discipline suffer.’
- i.10 “Therefore, you should also think about the drawbacks of not keeping to ethical discipline and thereby generate great respect for the training.”
- i.11 Another example is the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Losang Gyatso (1617–82), who quotes a verse in his regulations for Drepung monastery:¹²
- i.12 “If, due to a specific condition, one cannot keep the vows, it is more beneficial to give them up than to keep them hypocritically. For [the *Bhikṣupriyasūtra*] says:
- i.13 “ ‘Rather than not abiding by the training
While bearing the Well-Gone One’s victory banner,
It would be better if that person were to cast off this outer appearance and
remain a householder
The moment they no longer abide by the training.’ ”
- i.14 The verse cited by the Fifth Dalai Lama embodies one of the sūtra’s key points—the importance of disciplined conduct, which the Buddha urges mendicants to treasure, warning them of careless discipline. The Buddha also affirms the value and benefit of monastic vows, urging those who have gone forth to protect their discipline and to hold it dear. For example, he eloquently likens discipline to an unparalleled balm, monastic robes to unparalleled garments, and disciplined conduct to supreme happiness. He says, moreover, that the merit accumulated through it brings forth the result of buddhahood.
- i.15 Lastly, it should be noted that in the title and throughout the translation, we have rendered the term *bhikṣu* (Tib. *dge slong*) as “mendicant.” The Sanskrit term technically refers to a fully ordained monk, but in the plural, it may also implicitly include fully ordained nuns (Skt. *bhikṣuṇī*) and sometimes even practicing lay people.¹³ Moreover, we know that the Buddha’s disciples in Śrāvastī included nuns. He addresses them explicitly in the *Bhikṣuṇīvinaya-vibhaṅga*,¹⁴ and several Pali suttas of the Saṃyutta Nikāya also mention the presence of nuns in Śrāvastī.¹⁵ While of course we cannot know whether the

sūtra's original audience included nuns, its subject matter clearly concerns monks and nuns equally, so we felt it was desirable to render the term *bhikṣu* with the more inclusive "mendicant," rather than just "monk." This choice is also supported by the original meaning of the term *bhikṣu*, which, in its most literal sense, simply means "one who begs (Skt. *bhikṣati*) for a living."

The Translation

The Sūtra on What Mendicants Hold Most Dear

1. What Mendicants Hold Most Dear

[F.125.a][F.125.b]

1.1 Homage to the Omniscient One.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in the Blooming Lotus Monastery in the great city of Śrāvastī together with a retinue that consisted of a saṅgha of 12,500 mendicants. At that time, among the assembled retinue of the Blessed One, there was a noble one called Upāli, whose senses were disciplined, who was well learned, and who had profound wisdom. He was devoted to the Dharma and Vinaya excellently taught by the Blessed One, and he held them in the highest esteem. Upāli rose from his seat, draped his upper robe over one shoulder, and, kneeling on his right knee with palms joined at his heart, he smiled and supplicated the Blessed One with these words:

1.2 “Arisen like a lotus from the mud of saṃsāra,
Protector, unshakable like a mountain, your sage’s body
Ornamented by the adornments of the minor marks and beautiful with the
blossoms of the major marks,
One never tires of looking at you. To you, utterly supreme, I pay homage!

1.3 “Since there are only mendicants residing here, I supplicate you,
O Sage, to please teach us who are gathered here these four points:
The nature of mendicants, their types,
The usage of the term, and their obligations.”

1.4 The blessed Well-Gone One was very pleased
And, looking at Upāli, responded as follows:¹⁶

1.5 “Listen well, Upāli, my son,
For I will satisfy you
And explain this for the benefit of mendicants.

- 1.6 “Mendicants are the victory banner of the Dharma,
And mendicants are the adamant life pillar.¹⁷
Mendicants are those who have abandoned suffering,
And mendicants are the heirs of the victorious ones.
Mendicants are those who have cut the life force of afflictions,
And mendicants are those who enter the garden of liberation.
- 1.7 “The very nature of mendicants is restraint,¹⁸
And their completely pure obligations are the two hundred and fifty
precepts,¹⁹ [F.126.a]
Such as those on the four root downfalls, which comprise disciplined
conduct.
- 1.8 “As for the types of mendicants, what are they called?
There are those who hold only the outer attributes, and there are genuine
mendicants.
- 1.9 “As for the usage of the term, because their afflictions are completely
exhausted,²⁰
Because they arouse wholesomeness,²¹ beg for food,
Abide in peace, have entered the path,
Lead a proper life, have abandoned attachment,
And are attractive, for these reasons they are called ‘mendicants.’²²
- 1.10 “*Mendicant* means *adorned*.²³
They are well adorned by the adornment of abandoning adornment.
Having abandoned attachment, they practice with great attachment.
They enjoy the unsurpassed balm, ablution, food,
Ornament, garment, and color,²⁴
And when it comes to horses, elephants, palanquins, and the like,
They ride the unsurpassed mount.²⁵
Those who have acquired these are mendicants,
And those who have not acquired these are not mendicants.”
- 1.11 Upāli then supplicated
The Blessed One with the following words:²⁶
- 1.12 “How is that? The Well-Gone One has given a derivation²⁷
That is difficult to understand.
Well-Gone One, please shed light
On those words’ obscurity
With the lamp of your words!”
- 1.13 The Blessed One responded:

- 1.14 “Having completely abandoned worldly ornaments
Such as gold, adorn yourself
With the supreme ornament of compassion!
Wear not worldly garments, but the garment of training—
That is the excellent, supreme garment.
- 1.15 “Anoint yourself not with camphor or the like,
But with the supreme balm of disciplined conduct.
The most beautiful color is not white or red or the like,
But the color of faith.
The swiftest mount is not a worldly mount,
But the unsurpassed mount of diligence.
- 1.16 “The Dharma practice of meditative stability is the supreme nourishment
Whose taste is more refined than rice pudding.
In the celestial palace of the saṅgha gathering,
Apply yourself fully on the seat of calm abiding!
- 1.17 “Those endowed with these do not fall back.
They are genuine mendicants.
- 1.18 “Those who have the three main robes and the five accompanying
implements
Along with the sage’s bowl and staff,
Who are completely restrained in body, speech, and mind,
And who show ascetic discipline²⁸ in their conduct—
They are also genuine mendicants.
- 1.19 “Both types of genuine mendicants will approach the city of liberation
[F.126.b]
And experience the supreme bliss of liberation.
- 1.20 “As for the other type—those who are disingenuous²⁹—
With their alms bowls and other implements ablaze,
They will be boiled like molten iron
In the hells for four thousand eons.
- 1.21 “The disciplined conduct of some brings happiness;
The disciplined conduct of others is the cause of suffering.
Possessing disciplined conduct is supreme happiness;
Disordered disciplined conduct is suffering.
- 1.22 “One who restrains oneself most excellently through disciplined conduct,
Such a person gains a beautiful outer appearance.

The merit amassed by a person
Who, even for a single day, closely abides by the Vinaya
And places their trust in the training of disciplined conduct
Is without measure.
Accumulate it and bring forth the result of buddhahood!

- 1.23 “Deceiving yourself,
Claiming, ‘I am a mendicant,’
Based merely on the outer appearance
Of bearing the Well-Gone One’s victory banner,³⁰
Yet not abiding by the training,
Is like tying a sword to the trunk of a mad elephant,³¹
Or like a pregnant woman drinking overly sour liquids.
- 1.24 “The seeds from misdeeds that such a person amasses
In a single day are without measure,
And they only commit
All sorts of harms against themselves.
- 1.25 “Rather than not abiding by the training
While bearing the Well-Gone One’s victory banner,
It would be better if that person were to cast off this outer appearance and
 remain a householder
The moment they no longer abide by the training.³²
- 1.26 “A holder of the outer attributes who does not abide by the training—
This worldly person
Will fail to appeal to anyone’s heart,
And they will become the object of everyone’s disparagement.
- 1.27 “It is explained that, like branches that grow
For a long time from a strong trunk,
If that person has only the outer attributes for a long time,
Reprehensible talk will increase,
And misdeeds too will increase.
- 1.28 “Disciplined conduct is supreme happiness.
Disciplined conduct is the path to liberation.
Disciplined conduct is the field of good qualities.
Disciplined conduct is the cause of buddhahood.
- 1.29 “Disciplined conduct is most supreme.
Protect it like your own eyes!
It is unwise and foolish to cast aside

Disciplined conduct, even if your life is at stake.

1.30 “If you lose your life, you will be reborn thereafter, [F.127.a]
But disciplined conduct, once lost, will not be like that.³³
Therefore, Upāli and all you others,
Hold on to it firmly!”

1.31 Thus proclaimed the Blessed One, and Upāli and the other mendicants
praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.32 *This completes “The Sūtra on What Mendicants Hold Most Dear.”*

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- C* Choné
- D* Degé
- H* Lhasa (Zhol)
- J* Lithang
- K_Q* Peking Qianlong
- K_Y* Peking Yongle
- L* London (Shelkar)
- N* Narthang
- S* Stok Palace
- Z* Shey Palace

n.

NOTES

n.1

For example, in the Pali Canon there is the *Upālipaṅcaka*, and in the Chinese canon there is a translation of the *Upāliparipṛchā* from the *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya*. See Norman (1983), pp. 28–29. In the Kangyur, the *Upāliparipṛchā* of the *Mūla-sarvāstivāda Vinaya* is found in the *Vinayottaragrantha* (Toh 7 and Toh 7a).

n.2

See Thera 1997, p. 131.

n.3

The meaning of the word *prareju* in the transliterated Sanskrit of the title remains uncertain. There are different renderings of the title in other Kangyur versions as *plareju* (*bla re dzu* in K_Y and K_Q) and *prariju* (*pra ri dzu* in S, L, and Z). The origin of the term *prareju* / *prariju* in the Tibetan transliteration is uncertain. We can speculate that it may capture *prarju*, i.e., *pra + rju*. If so, the sūtra's Sanskrit title would mean "Sūtra on Upright Mendicants." However, although the Sanskrit term *rju* and its Pali equivalent *uju* / *ujju*, meaning "upright," appear in the Vinaya as a quality of monks, the compound term *prarju* is not attested in Indic literature.

n.4

tshul khrims kyi gtam gyi 'grel pa (*Śīlakathāvṛtti*), Toh 4165. See Hahn and Saito 2009, p. 179, who mention that the author of this commentary, the *ācārya* (Tib. *slob dpon*) *Prakāśakīrti (Tib. *gsal grags*), quotes mainly from older Mahāyāna works, the earliest being from the fifth century CE. This might also be an indication of the age of that commentary and, by extension, an indication of the age of the sūtra's first appearance. Nothing is known for certain about *Prakāśakīrti himself. There was, however, a Tibetan translator named Pungsho Selwadrak (*spung zho gsal ba grags*) who studied at Nālandā under Abhayākaragupta (d. ca. 1125 CE). Thus, there is another possibility that this work is an original Tibetan composition by the Tibetan Selwadrak and not a text written by an Indian paṇḍit named Prakāśakīrti. As noted in the following paragraph of the introduction, the text's colophon provides no information about the translator.

- n.5 See Situ Panchen Chökyi Jungné, p. 460, and Eimer 1998, p. 75: *dge slong la rab tu gces pa'i mdo 'gyur byang med pa* (“*The Sūtra on What Mendicants Hold Most Dear* has no translator’s colophon”).
- n.6 See Nishioka 1983, p. 67.
- n.7 Resources for Kanjur & Tanjur Studies (<https://www.istb.univie.ac.at/kanjur/rktsneu/sub/index.php>). Universität Wien. Accessed April 23, 2019.
- n.8 See Tsong-kha-pa 2000, p. 405; Tohoku 1934, p. 58; and Steinkellner 1998, p. 65. Steinkellner, who gives *Bhikṣupriyasūtra*, identifies Baron Schilling de Canstadt’s *Index de Gandjour*, published in 1831, as the source of the Sanskrit sūtra titles (ibid.). The Tohoku catalog, which also uses *priya* in the sūtra’s name, was published in 1934 and states that some Sanskrit titles were corrected by the compiler. Note that *priya* was never used by any Tibetan sources in the title of this sūtra. The Sanskrit term *priya* means “dear” or “beloved.” If we search the Kangyur and Tengyur for other instances of *rab tu gces pas* (“most dear”) where there is a surviving Sanskrit original, we find the *Avadānakalpalatā* by Kṣemendra (eleventh century, translation completed 1267–75), where it corresponds to *priyataraṃ* (“the most beloved”; *-tara* is the superlative suffix in Sanskrit). In his entry on *gces pa* (but not *rab tu gces pa*), Negi cites it as a translation of *priya* in another passage in the same text (Negi 1993, s.v.). On the other hand, the *Mahāvvyutpatti* dictionary gives several translations for *priya*, as well as compounds including *priya*, and none of them are *gces pa*. Another point to note about *priya* is that it has a different number of syllables than *prareju*. If, for example, *prareju* were the result of a scribe miscopying the text at some point, we must ask why we do not find any versions with an incorrect title that has the same number of syllables or letters as the hypothetical “original” *priya*. That said, a final possibility (perhaps an explanation of last resort) is precisely that what we have is a scribal mistake that crept in early in the text’s transmission in Tibet, though a faulty back-translation into Sanskrit is probably more likely.
- n.9 See Rockhill 1885, pp. clxxii–clxxiii; Kalsang 1970, pp. 5–7; Gyatso 2015; Lekden 2013.
- n.10 *tshul khrims kyi gtam gyi 'grel pa* (Toh 4165), folio 171.a. See also Hahn and Saito 2009, p. 195. The quote in the commentary uses the spellings *'khrungs pa* instead of *'khrung ba* (“trunk”), *yun rings* instead of *yun ring* (“for a long time”), and *kha na ma tho rtag* instead of *kha na ma tho'i gtam* (“reprehensible talk”).

- n.11 See Tsong-kha-pa 2000, p. 343. The translation given here is by the Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee.
- n.12 Quoted from Jansen 2013, pp. 121–22, except for the sūtra quote, where we use our own translation, since Jansen offers a different interpretation. The Great Fifth also uses two lines of the sūtra in his biography of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso (1502–66). See Mohr 2010, p. 304.
- n.13 See Alice Collett and Bhikkhu Anālayo 2014.
- n.14 See *dge slong ma'i 'dul ba rnam par 'byed pa* (Toh 5), which shows instances of the Buddha addressing nuns in Śrāvastī's Jeta Grove (see, for example, folio 118.b).
- n.15 See Bodhi 2000, pp. 221–30, who shows that the discourses with bhikkhunīs all take place in Śrāvastī, although the exact location mentioned there is Jeta's Grove and not the Blooming Lotus Monastery.
- n.16 Note that these two lines are in verse even though they are spoken neither by the Buddha nor by Upāli, but by the narrator.
- n.17 This refers to the central inner pillar or tree trunk that is said to give life to a stūpa or sacred statue.
- n.18 This is likely playing on the word for “vows” (Skt. *samvara*, Tib. *sdom pa*), which in both Sanskrit and Tibetan shares a root with “restraint” (Skt. *samvṛta*, Tib. *bsdams pa*).
- n.19 This is the approximate number of precepts for fully ordained monks. Nuns have roughly one hundred additional precepts, the exact count depending on the lineage.
- n.20 Though the Tibetan does not actually make this explicit, we have read “exhausted” here as referring to the afflictions, which are the basis of saṃsāra, becoming depleted. It may reflect a common Pali definition of *bhikkhu* as being so called due to *bhinnakilesattā*, “the state of having broken (*bhinna*) the afflictions (*kilesa*, Skt. *kleśa*).” See the respective *aṭṭhakathās* to the Abhidamma Vibhaṅga (PTS 328) and to the Vimānavatthu (PTS 29, 114, 310) and Petavatthu (PTS 51, 146) in the Khuddakanikāya. This definition is based on a traditional etymological analysis of the word *bhikkhu*.
- n.21 “Arouse wholesomeness” (Tib. *dge slong*) is a literal translation of the Tibetan term for *bhikṣu*, rendered throughout as “mendicant.” Note that the Tibetan uses the same verb for “arouse” wholesomeness and “beg for” food, creating a wordplay that is lost in the English translation.

n.22 This passage presents a list of traditional definitions of the term *bhikṣu*. The first three definitions are traditional etymologies of the word *bhikṣu*. These are not actual linguistic etymologies but more akin to folk etymologies. They work by using homophones to elucidate a word's meaning, and they are tied to ancient Indian beliefs about the power of language to both shape and embody reality. Rather than being etymologies, the last five definitions cited in this verse are synonyms that encapsulate the defining characteristics of a *bhikṣu*. Like the folk etymologies, these lists of synonyms have ancient roots in Buddhist literature.

n.23 This may be a play on the Sanskrit words *bhikṣu* and *vibhūṣaṇa* ("adornment"), which sound similar. The Buddha seems to be defining *bhikṣu* by pointing to an etymology based in wordplay, suggesting that *bhikṣu* and "adornment" come from the same root (Skt. *dhātu*) and therefore *bhikṣu* means "adornment." Without the original Sanskrit text, we cannot confirm that the word for "adornment" is a semi-homophone to *bhikṣu*. Thus, while our interpretation remains speculative, it is in accord with the frequent wordplay in the rest of the sūtra. If this interpretation is correct, the Buddha here is adding a new etymology of the word "mendicant" (not found in other discourses) to the list of classic etymological definitions of the term just rehearsed in the preceding paragraph.

n.24 "Color" here probably refers to colored powders applied to the body, such as those used by Hindus for the "bindi" on the forehead.

n.25 While the preceding verse contains wordplay on the meaning of the term *bhikṣu*, in this list of a mendicant's adornments, the Buddha instead employs a symbolic mode, playing further on the meaning of "adornment." Taken literally, the list appears counterintuitive and surprising, since it contains luxurious items that are restricted by a mendicant's vows. However, the meaning of these items is symbolically inverted from examples of unwholesome indulgence to supremely wholesome characteristics, as the Buddha continues to explain later.

n.26 Note that, as in the case above, these two lines are kept in verse even though they are spoken neither by the Buddha nor by Upāli, but by the narrator.

n.27 The Tibetan *skad kyi byings*, which we translate as "derivation," is a grammatical term for the "root" (Skt. *dhātu*) of a word. If our interpretation is correct, "derivation" (Tib. *skad byings*, lit. "verbal root") refers to the Buddha's deriving the term for "mendicant" (Skt. *bhikṣu*) from the word for "ornament" (perhaps Skt. *vibhūṣaṇa*), which is not found among the standard etymologies given for the term in Buddhist literature (see note 24). Since this derivation is

both unique and counterintuitive, Upāli here asks the Buddha for further explanation. Another possible interpretation of *skad byings* in this context would be “concealed speech,” by which Upāli might refer to the preceding coded series of surprising adornments listed by the Buddha (see note 25).

- n.28 “Ascetic discipline” (Skt. *vrata*, Tib. *brtul zhugs*) refers to the twelve ascetic practices (*dvādaśadhūtaguṇāḥ*, *sbyang pa’i yon tan bcu gnyis*) regarding food, clothing, and residence. These include practices like begging for alms, wearing castoff clothing, and living in seclusion.
- n.29 Degé reads *gnyis* (“two”) for the number of other types, but our translation follows that of several other Kangyurs (H, K_Y, J, K_Q, N, C) that read *gcig* (“one”).
- n.30 “Bearing the Well-Gone One’s victory banner” refers to wearing monastic robes, which are the outer signs of being a follower of the Buddha.
- n.31 Here the reading in Degé is *sda*, which we emend to *sna* based on the other Kangyur versions.
- n.32 While the Tibetan in most Kangyur versions uses the term for “body” (Tib. *gzugs po*, lit. “one with form”) here, it carries the same meaning as the term for “form” (Tib. *gzugs*) or “outer appearance” used in the verses above. We should therefore understand this as referring to the outer appearance of wearing the monastic robes. Even though the Comparative Edition does not list this, some Kangyur versions (S, F, and possibly also D) use *gzugs bor* (lit. “casting off the form”), changing the Tibetan letter *pa* into *ba*, since the letters look very similar. Since this explains the additional *por/bor* syllable, we are following this alternate reading.
- n.33 A possible understanding of these two lines is that if we lose our life, we will regain it in rebirth, but if we lose our discipline, we may not get a chance to regain it, particularly if we are not reborn in a precious human body with the opportunity to be liberated. “Once lost” has been read by implication in the second line of this verse. Literally the Tibetan here might be rendered, “You are reborn after you lose your life, but not so after disciplined conduct.”

b.

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g.

GLOSSARY

g.1 Ascetic discipline

brtul zhugs

བརྟུལ་ལྷན་སྒྲུབ་ལྟེ་སྒྲུབ་།

vrata

Refers to the twelve ascetic virtues (*sbyang pa'i yon tan bcu gnyis*) concerning food, clothing, and residence, such as begging for alms, wearing castoff clothing, and living in seclusion.

Links to further resources:

[6 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-4046.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-4046.html)

g.2 Blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེམ་ལྷན་འདས་།

bhagavat

Epithet of a buddha, who has subdued (Tib. *bcom*) all afflictions, possesses (Tib. *ldan*) all awakened qualities, and transcended (Tib. *'das*) saṃsāra and passed into nirvāṇa. This is how the Skt. *bhagavat* is translated in Tibetan.

Links to further resources:

[112 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-23.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-23.html)

g.3 Blooming Lotus

pad ma rgyas pa

པད་མ་རྒྱས་པ།

—

Name of a monastery (*vihāra*) in Śrāvastī.

g.4 Derivation

skad byings

སྐད་བྱིངས།

dhātvartha · dhātu

Literally, “verbal root,” with “root” (Tib. *byings*) being a grammatical term for the word stem that forms the basis of a word. Here it refers to the Buddha’s derivation of the word *bhikṣu* from the term for “ornament.”

g.5 Disciplined conduct

tshul khrims

ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས།

śīla

Conduct based on abandoning lack of discipline in body, speech, and mind.

Links to further resources:

[30 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-1192.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-1192.html)

g.6 Five accompanying implements

'khor lnga

འཁོར་ལྗེ།

—

These may refer to the traditional possessions of mendicants, which Prebish 2002, p. 4, lists as “begging bowl, razor, needle, girding for the robes, and water strainer” in addition to the three robes.

g.7 Four root downfalls

rtsa ba bzhi

རྩ་བ་བཞི།

—

The four root downfalls (Tib. *rtsa ba'i ltung ba bzhi*, here shortened to Tib. *rtsa ba bzhi*) are killing, taking what is not given, sexual activity, and lying about one’s spiritual attainments.

g.8 Life pillar

srog shing

སྲོག་ཤིང།

yastī

Central inner pillar or tree trunk that is said to give life to a stūpa or sacred statue.

Links to further resources:

[4 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-5067.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-5067.html)

g.9 Mendicant

dge slong

དགེ་སྐོར་།

bhikṣu

Although the Tib. (*dge slong*) and Skt. (*bhikṣu*) terms usually refer to fully ordained monks, in the plural they may encompass nuns as well. Rendering it as “mendicant” in English remains faithful to the original meaning of *bhikṣu* as “one who begs for alms.”

Links to further resources:

[40 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-9534.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-9534.html)

g.10 Noble one

'phags pa

འཕགས་པ།

ārya

Honorific term for someone who has gained the realization of the path of seeing.

Links to further resources:

[24 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-958.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-958.html)

g.11 Omniscient one

thams cad mkhyen pa

ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ།

sarvajña

An epithet of the buddhas. The homage to the Omniscient One at the beginning of a Buddhist scripture usually indicates that it belongs to the Vinaya Piṭaka.

Links to further resources:

[21 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-32775.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-32775.html)

g.12 Overly sour liquids

skyur rtsi

སྒྲུ་ཕྱི།

nāgarāṅga

Among other things, this term is applied to the sour fermented remainder from beer brewing, certain types of lemons, and the sour part of yogurt. Here it refers to overly sour liquids in general, such as overly fermented vinegar.

g.13 Rice pudding

'bras chan

འབྲས་ཚན།

odana

A dish of rice cooked in milk that the Buddha was offered to break his fast after six years of austerities.

Links to further resources:

[1 related glossary entry \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-15031.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-15031.html)

g.14 Sage

thub pa

ཐུབ་པ།

muni

An epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term connotes “silence” or “quiescence,” which is regarded as a central quality of sages. The Tibetan *thub pa* means “capable one.”

Links to further resources:

[17 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-5207.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-5207.html)

g.15 Saṃsāra

'khor ba

འཁོར་བ།

saṃsāra

“Cyclic existence,” the cycle of birth and death driven by mental afflictions and karmic actions.

Links to further resources:

[29 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-118.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-118.html)

g.16 Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

སུན་ཡོད།

Śrāvastī

Ancient capital of the kingdom of Kosala, where the Buddha gave many teachings, spent most of his summer retreats, and defeated the six heretical teachers by performing fifteen miracles. Located in present-day Uttar Pradesh in northern India.

Links to further resources:

[54 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-40535.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-40535.html)

g.17 Three main robes

gtso bo gsum

གཙོ་བོ་གསུམ།

—

The three robes (Skt. *tricīvara*, Tib. *chos gos gsum*) of the fully ordained are the lower robe (Skt. *antarvāsa*, Tib. *mthang gos*) wrapped around the waist, the outer or upper robe (Skt. *uttarāsaṅga*, Tib. *bla gos*) covering the upper body, and the ceremonial robe (Skt. *saṃghāṭī*, Tib. *snam sbyar*).

g.18 Upāli

nye bar 'khor

ཉེ་བར་འཁོར།

Upāli

One of the ten closest disciples of the Buddha. He is known for having mastered the Buddha's teachings on the Vinaya, the code of discipline. After the Buddha's parinirvāṇa, Upāli was the Vinaya's chief compiler.

g.19 Vinaya

'dul ba

འདུལ་བ།

Vinaya

One of the three *piṭakas*, or “baskets,” of the Buddhist canon. It codifies the disciplined conduct and training of monks and nuns.

Links to further resources:

[14 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-686.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-686.html)

g.20 Well-gone one

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

An epithet of the buddhas. According to Buddhaghosa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*), and where he went (*gata*) is good (*su*).

Links to further resources:

[57 related glossary entries \(https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-655.html\)](https://read.84000.co/glossary/entity-655.html)

· [View the 84000 Knowledge Base article \(https://read.84000.co/knowledgebase/EFT\)](https://read.84000.co/knowledgebase/EFT)

g.21 Well-Gone One's victory banner

bde bar gshegs pa'i rgyal mtshan

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

sugatadhvaja

This refers to the three monastic robes, which are the outer signs of being a monastic follower of the Buddha.