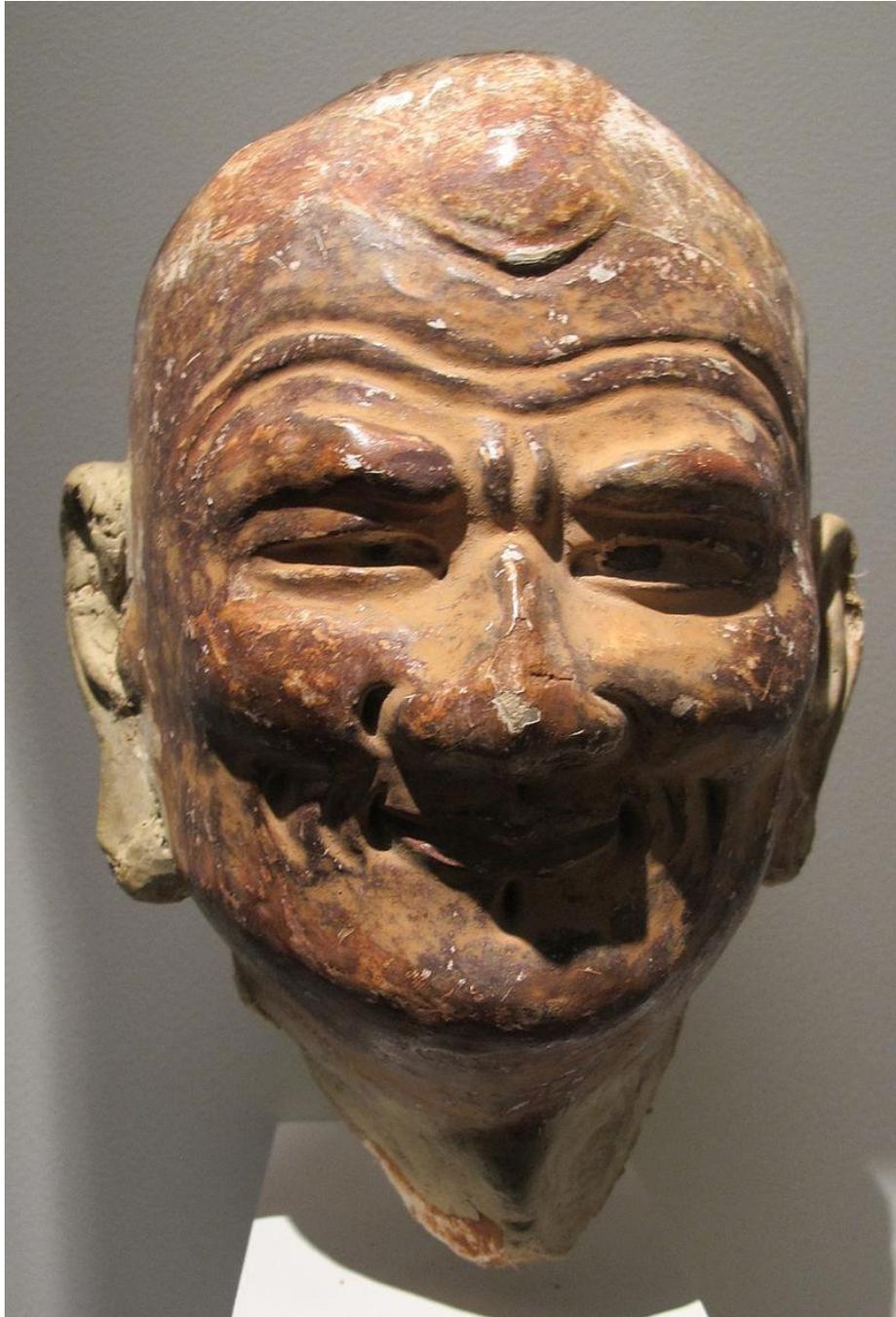


**FROM RICHES TO RAGS:  
MAHAKASHYAPA'S LIBERATION-STORY**

TEACHING BY 17TH KARMAPA



Transcribed and compiled by Adele Tomlin

"When Buddha sat on Mahākāśyapa's robe, he said, "This robe of yours is really soft, it is really nice." Mahākāśyapa immediately said, "As you said Buddha, this robe is soft, please accept this robe." The Buddha's outer robes were made out of rags that had been thrown out along the road and in the filth. Buddha had made his robe out of those. So, the Buddha said: "If you can wear my robes of discarded rags, that had been thrown out as rubbish, then I will give you them to wear". Mahākāśyapa said: " If you, the Buddha can accept my robe out of your loving mind, then I will wear your robe that's made out of discarded rags".

"The direction that Buddha gave the members of the sangha is that the life of the monastic should not fall into either extreme, it should not be too difficult, nor should it be too luxurious. It should be the middle way. This means that one does not have a lifestyle that is too easy and too comfortable. You have to be able to stay alone, you have to be content with meagre food. The middle way does not mean that you are enjoying yourself and getting fat. The Buddha had quite a few students who were very content and had very few desires, and the Buddha praised them very highly."

---17th Karmapa (Day 6, August 2022)

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the second half of Day Five and whole of Day Six (<https://youtu.be/OAoql3A0wOg>), the 17th Karmapa, Ogyen Trinley Dorje began the topic that forms the main subject of the rest of his teachings, the Buddhist First Council. This began with an introduction to the textual sources on the First Council and disagreements about when and if it happened.

### **1. Scriptural Sources for the First Buddhist Council**

The Karmapa explained that his explanation of the First Council would be based on two scriptural sources:

- a) The Chinese Vinaya scriptures of the Dharmaguptaka tradition (translated into Chinese) around the 4th to 5th Centuries; and
- b) The Great Commentary on Prajñāpāramitā by Nagārjuna (Mūlamadhyamakakārikā).

The First Council is described in a lot more detail by the Karmapa in the following days, after he gives detailed biographies of the lives of two of Buddha's main students, Mahākāśyapa and Ānanda, who were also two of the main people of the First Buddhist Council.

### **2. Liberation-Story of Mahākāśyapa - from riches to rags**

The rest of Karmapa's teaching was a liberation story of one of Buddha's main students, Mahākāśyapa. A man born into one of the richest families in India who did not wish to marry and requested his father to find a woman who was as beautiful as golden statue he had made. Despite Mahākāśyapa's best efforts to thwart the marriage, they managed to find a woman who not only matched the statue, but outshone it, his future wife, Bhadra-Kapilānī. However, neither of them wanted to be married and so they agreed to live as a celibate, platonic couple. They subsequently both left the home in search of genuine liberation with the Buddha becoming their teacher.

Despite the extraordinary tale of Mahākāśyapa's meeting his wife, Bhadra-Kapilānī, whose physical beauty outshone the most beautiful golden statue of goddesses, not much was said about her, even though she actually had many difficulties and hardships as a female practitioner (similar to Yeshe Tsogyel), and was bullied by the nun, Sthulananda. She also became one of the Buddha's best students in terms of her ability to recognise previous lives and became one of the eighteen Arhats. The 17th Karmapa mentioned that her liberation-story was long and moving but that he did not have time to speak about it. So, to re-dress this omission (and male-centred imbalance), I hope to compile and write more on Bhadra-Kapilānī's life-story in the future.

The 17th Karmapa explained how the Buddha displayed a miracle to attract Mahākāśyapa to him and later, exchanged his tatty, ragged robes with Mahākāśyapa's expensive ones. After only eight days of wearing them while begging for alms, Mahākāśyapa attained Arhatship. The Karmapa then explained the twelve qualities of training, as recorded by Asanga, of which Mahākāśyapa was said to be very accomplished. More will be said about Mahākāśyapa in the next posts on the Karmapa's teachings on Ananda and the First Council.

This new biographical account by the 17th Karmapa, included detailed information from the Tibetan and Chinese Vinaya texts, which is not publicly available online. Thus, his teaching is not only of great value to the Karma Kagyu and Tibetan Buddhist community, but also to the general public and scholars and worthy of study and preservation. The slides re-produced here were presented by the 17<sup>th</sup> Karmapa during his teaching. Apologies for any errors or typos!

Music? Today's full Autumn golden moon so, [\*Harvest Moon\*](#) and for Buddha's miracle [\*Heart of Gold\*](#) by Neil Young.

May we all be able to walk the Middle Way free from excessive desires and luxury and from austerity and hardships!

Written and compiled by Adele Tomlin, 10th September 2022.

## **ORIGINS OF SECRET MANTRA**

### **TRANSCRIPT 17<sup>th</sup> KARMAPA TEACHING (DAY 5 (2) AND DAY 6)**

#### **THE FIRST BUDDHIST COUNCIL - SCRIPTURAL SOURCES**



"Now I will bring a new topic which is the First Council (Kadu Dangpo). The topics I have spoken about in the previous days, all go under one main topic, the origins of the Sangha, the size of the monasteries and the Vinaya discipline. So, these are considered under one topic. From this point on, I will speak about the topic of the first council. Now the first council will take two weeks. If I say a lot, it will maybe take three weeks. So, before we can talk about the 18 schools, we have to talk about the first council then we can talk about the second council, and about how Buddhism split into two communities. Then we can talk about the 18 schools. I am not sure how far we are going to get this year.

In any case, we will begin by speaking about the first council. Regarding the first council, the Japanese scholar Jyokei says that after the Buddha passed into nirvana, there was a really significant event in Buddhist history. The significant event was in the Rajgir area where they held the first council. When did this happen? During the first summer after the Buddha had passed away. The main reason for holding the council at that time is they had to settle what the content of all the Buddha's teachings was and say the 'Buddha said this, The Buddha taught this'. The entire Sangha had to gather. The appropriate people all had to gather. If everyone was not allowed to gather, then if someone did not accept what another had said, there would be disputes about the words of the Buddha. So, in order for this not to happen, the most important members of the Sangha were all gathered, so that there would be no internal disputes and they had to decide what the Buddha's teachings were.

As for who presided over the council, it was Mahākāśyapa (Osung Chenpo). How many people participated in it? There were 500 Arhats. During the gathering, the Sangha, the 500 arhats, all gathered and orally recited the instructions and teachings that the Buddha had previously taught in the past. They recited them because there was no writing at that time and

there was nothing written down. So, they had to remember the things that no one else had heard and memorize them. They had to orally recite them all.

The first time the 500 Arhats gathered and recited the sutras, it was called the first council. The place where this council for reciting the Buddha's words was held was Rajgir (Gyalpo Kab). So, another name that is given to it is the Rajgir First Council. Likewise, at that time, there were 500 Arhats, and it was also called the Council of the 500.

The Japanese scholar, Hirokawa said the Sanskrit word for the Tibetan word *kadu* when translated can be either *council*, or you can translate it as '*recited together*'. It can be translated either way. The meaning of 'reciting together', means they are reciting the sutras, the teachings of the Buddha, all reciting them together. The difference between reciting and reading is that reciting means that you are reciting the texts that you have memorized. Normally, when we talk about reciting something, we think it is looking at the words in a pecha and reciting it, but this is not what is actually meant by *kadu* in Tibetan. *Kadu* means reciting something that had been memorized. As I said before, in India, there was a big emphasis on memorization, they memorized all of the Vedas, for example. So, at that time, they had to recite the Buddha's teaching from memory, there were no written words about it at all.

As for the way the council was held. Now, as you all know, whether or not one is speaking about Indian history, or Indian Buddhist history or Hindu history, or the history of Hinduism or the history of India, the ways that we can learn about Indian history is from archaeology. There are many different fields and the scholars in these different fields have worked very hard and continuously to research it. They compare their research and then revise their opinions. Also, they look for more and more evidence. Then they make hypotheses. In the end, they say that it is probably like this and produce the results of their research.

So, you might wonder why did these scholars have to work so hard to determine the Indian history? To have so many scholars, from so many different fields, examining it over and over. Why did they continue to examine it, to compare things, to engage in so many criticisms and rebuttals? The main reason is that ancient Indian people did not record the history. They did not write it down. If there are no written records, then it is very difficult for us to know the history.

So, if the history was not written down, where did we get it? Did it come from the sky or does it grow from the ground? It is not like that. As I explained in the summer teachings last year, most knowledge of India's history comes from unearthing artifacts that are buried underground, or in caves or inside stupas and so forth. Likewise, there are also countries near India like Sri Lanka, it used to be considered part of India, but now Sri Lanka has become a different country. In any case there is Sri Lanka, and also China. There are many old texts that spread to these countries from India. These are important manuscripts from those times. Then also in the fourth and the fifth centuries, and the seventh and eighth centuries there were many Chinese monastics who went to, to India, such as Tang Xianzang, and recorded their travels. There are also the ancient manuscripts, the ruins and so forth. All of this is taken as the basis for the research to try to take one thing and then try another. They do try one thing after another, to hypothesize and make inferences.

The first council was a very significant event in Buddhist history. So, what was the situation? Why did it happen? What were the causes and conditions for it? Where was it held? How

many people participated in the council? And the end, what were the topics that were discussed at the council? So, you have to look at many different types of evidence from different perspectives. For this reason, the scholars have many different positions and ideas about it and there are many different explanations about the first council.

As I showed before, among the various different opinions that were expressed, the Theravada scriptures have many descriptions of the first council. However, there is a fair number of inconsistencies in the way they describe it. Likewise, there is also archaeological evidence and descriptions from the other schools. However, there is no direct or clear evidence that the First Council was held either in the Theravada manuscripts, or in the manuscripts left from other traditions. So, this does give some difficulties.

However, when we speak about the First Council here, there are two different ways that we can explain it:

- 1) The first is the way it is described in the Buddhist canon.
- 2) The second way is to look at what contemporary researchers considered to be authorities on the topics have to say.

So, in terms of the first way, this is basically taking the description in the Vinaya scriptures. So, there are different areas we can look at, which I will discuss later. Now among the Buddhist first canon there are many different accounts of the events of the first council and many different texts. For example, those the Dharmaguptaka tradition, the Vinaya Scriptures of the Mahashashika school, the Theravada Vinaya Pitaka, the 10 volume Vinaya or the 10 Verses, there is a Vinaya Matrika Sutra. There is the *Great Commentary on Prajñāpāramitā* in 100 000 lines said to be written by Nagarjuna. The Chinese master Faxian's account of his travels. There are the accounts in Xuanzang's records of the *Travels to the West*. Likewise, there is a Mahāsāṃghika Vinaya, the biography of Ashoka, the Mulavastavarda Vinaya Vastu. Other discussions in Vinaya texts. It is also discussed in the modern Mahaparanirvana Sutra and in other texts. If I spoke about all of these, we would not have time for them this year. And if I say too much, then it gets too complicated and you will not understand and think 'what did he say?'

So, today I primarily focus on two sources in the canon to describe the way the first council happened. These two are, first of all the Vinaya scriptures that were translated into Chinese. The second is the *Great Commentary on Prajñāpāramitā* sutra by Nagarjuna. So, these are the two sources I will use.

#### **VINAYA SCRIPTURES TRANSLATED INTO CHINESE**

The first of these Vinaya scriptures that are translated into Chinese, is known as the *Sifen lü* 四分律 (known as the “*Vinaya* in Four Divisions” and was translated into Chinese around the fourth or fifth century. the translator was a master who probably translated his name as Buddhayaśas has, and the great Chinese Acharya Buddha Smriti (Zhu Fonian 竺佛念. ).[\[ii\]](#)

So, this is a Vinaya text, it is primarily the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya tradition. Basically, in ancient India, the first text primarily studied is the *50 Verses of the Vinaya*. Later after the Vinaya scriptures were translated, they became the most widely spread. So, these days most upholders of the Vinaya, base their texts primarily on the Vinaya scriptures themselves.

The particular reasons why I am choosing these two texts to discuss the first council is first that Dharmaguptaka Vinaya Sutras are a reliable source from one perspective. Also, the time that they were translated is actually relatively early, during the fourth or fifth century C.E. They also describe the event of the first council in a fair degree of detail. As I described before, there are many different texts in the canon and describing it. The one that accords mostly is the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya. There are of course, a few differences but probably around 80% is in accordance. Likewise, the other reason for choosing the Vinaya scriptures text is that it appeared during the period of Nikāya Buddhism. It is an old text that appeared during the time of the Nikāya Buddhism, the time of the 18 schools.

The *Great Commentary on the Prajñāpāramitā* was a text that was composed after the appearance of the Mahayana. It was written by a Nagārjuna, so it was written after the Mahayana had begun to spread. So, from the Vinaya scriptures, we can understand the positions held at the period of the time of the Nikāya Buddhism. The account in the Great Commentary shows us the different accounts that appeared at the time of the Mahayana.

The account of the *Great Commentary on Prajñāpāramitā* of the first council is a bit different than the accounts in the other texts, and I think that the texts are actually fairly significant. That is another reason why it is important for us to know the description of the First Council in the *Great Commentary on Prajñāpāramitā*. Likewise, it is also written in a very living style, it feels as the author lived it. For these reasons, I thought I would give the account of the first counsel according to these two texts, the Dharmaguptaka Vinaya scriptures and the *Great Commentary on Prajñāpāramitā* [iii].

#### ONE OF THE MAIN PEOPLE OF THE FIRST COUNCIL - MAHAKASHYAPA

Before I speak about the First Council, I need to introduce the people involved in it. There are two primary people, the first is Mahākāśyapa and the second is Ananda. Here is an image of Mahākāśyapa from the Chinese Dunhuang Caves. During the times of the Tibetan emperor, it was under Tibetan control. This is an ancient statue of Mahākāśyapa that was found in those caves.

མི་སྣ་གཙོ་བོ། — འོད་སྤང་ཆེན་པོ།

- ཀླ་ཕྱ་བའམ་འོད་སྤང་ཞེས་པ་ནི་རུས་མིང་ཡིན།
- མཚན་ལ་ཐུ་གོ་རྒྱལ། ཐུ་གོ་རྒྱ་སྤྱེས་ཟེར།
- མ་ག་རྒྱའི་ཡུལ་གྱི་མི་ཡིན།
- ཡབ་ལ་ཐུ་གོ་རྒྱལ། ཀ་མི་ལའམ་མེར་སྤྱེ་ཟེར།



Kāśyapa slide by 17th Karmapa. -Osung is the name of his clan/caste. -From the place of Magadha -Father called Nyagrodha or Kapila

#### **MEANING OF MAHAKASHYAPA'S NAME**

"As for the name Mahākāśyapa, it is translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan as Osung Chenpo. According to the 'Grammar in Two Volumes', Kāśyapa has two meanings. One is that it 'protects you from harm'. Protecting from harm is the first meaning.

The second is 'protecting light'. Since it is usually translated as Osung or light protector, I will use that. In Chinese, it is translated as like drinking light (Mohejiashe [摩訶迦葉]).

In any case, there is a commentary, or history written during the Song dynasty, which describes that Kāśyapa is the name of an ancient Indian sage.

The reason why he was called Mahākāśyapa was because he radiated light and when this happened, it overwhelmed all the surrounding light so everything became just totally bright light. For that reason, he was called light protector because he took in all of the other lights, his own light absorbed all the other light.

So, later Mahākāśyapa was born into that clan and ancient lineage of that sage. So, Kāśyapa is also like his family name or surname. Generally, among the Buddha there were many students who were called Kāśyapa, like Dasha Bala Kāśyapa, the three Kāśyapa brothers and so forth. There are many different Kāśyapas.

Among them, the reason why he was called Mahākāśyapa, great Kāśyapa (maha means great, or large or many), was that according to the Chinese history written down during the Song Dynasty, among all of the different Kāśyapas, he was the eldest and so for that reason he was called Mahākāśyapa.

His name when he was born was Pippali, which can be translated as an Nyagrodha but it is also translated more commonly as Pippali. Actually, in Chinese history he is given the name Pippali or Nyagrodha. In our Tibetan sources, in the Bhikshuni Vinaya there is a life of Kāśyapa who was born with the name Pippali, or Pippali's son.

In any case, the word Pippali is the name for the Nyagrodha/Pippali tree. That was the actual name of the tree. In addition, it has many other names. One of those names is Nyagrodha or Pippali. So, he was named after the tree. [The 17th Karmapa corrected this information later and I have added it here].

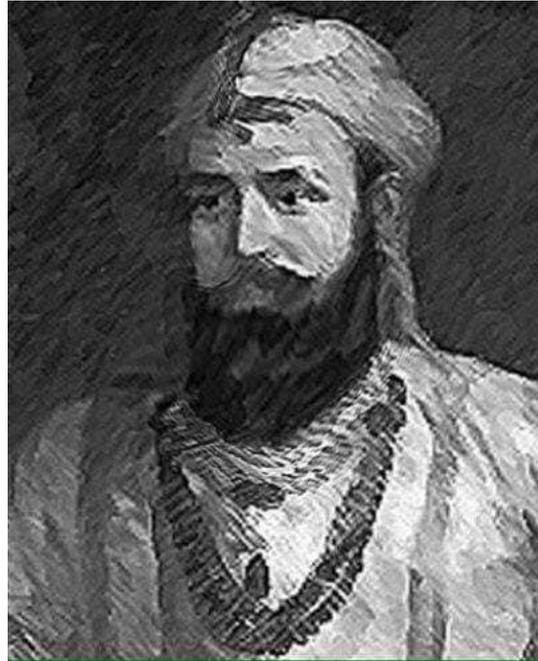
The reason why he was named after the tree was because his parents had prayed to that tree for a child and because of doing that he was born. Thus, when he was born, he was given the name of the tree, Pippali.

What is his birthplace and homeland? According to the Buddhist history written in the Song Dynasty, his birthplace was in the capital of the kingdom of Magadha, Rajgir. Likewise, it also says in this that his father's name was Kapila. Now in Tibetan this was translated as Serka, his name was Kapila. This is what it says in the Chinese history.

The Bhikshuni Vibhanga, which is in the Tibetan translation and Chinese both say that his birthplace was a town in the kingdom of Magadha, called Pippali and that his father's name was Kapila.

According to the Tibetan and Chinese translation of the Bhikshuni Vibhanga, Kapila is the name of his wife, Bhadra's father. So, his father-in-law's name was Kapila. There is a bit of a difference there."

#### **MAHAKASHYAPA'S RICH FATHER AND HIS PREVIOUS LIFE AS A BRAHMA GOD**



King Bimbisara

"It is too complicated to speak about all the Tibetan and Chinese differences. From now, I will talk about how it is described in the Tibetan Bhikshuni Vibhanga.

His father was extremely rich, and had unlimited wealth. So how wealthy was he? At that time, he was probably like Elon Musk these days. He was like the Elon Musk of ancient India. At that time, there were 16 Kingdoms in ancient India, and his father was the richest person in all of these. There was no one else who rivalled him in wealth. So how rich was he? At that time there was the King Bimbisara, he was not the King at the same time, maybe little bit later. Yet, Kapila was actually many times richer than even the King.

At that time, King Bimbisara had 1000 gold ploughs for tilling fields. Kapila, Mahākāśyapa's father, in order to pay respect to the King, he only made 990 ploughs. He could have made many more, but this is the King and if the king has 1000 and he had more that would not be good, so he only made 990. Otherwise, he was far wealthier than King Bimbisara. This is how it is described in the ancient Chinese account. Mahākāśyapa's father was incredibly rich.

#### **Mahākāśyapa's previous life as a Brahma in the god realms**

"However, Mahākāśyapa's father had been married for a long time and hadn't had any sons or daughters. He prayed to all the different gods, such as Vishnu, Brahma or Rama, whoever,

whatever God he prayed to all of them that he could have a son or a daughter. Of course, he wanted a son. Yet, they did not have a child and he got really depressed about it. He was sitting there feeling discouraged: "I've got a lot of wealth, but I can't have a child, my family line will be broken". He got very depressed about this. His mother saw that her son was really depressed and so she gave him some advice and said:

"In our Pleasant Grove there is a Banyan/Pippali tree, which is really wide and has a lot of leaves and flowers. It is a huge and beautiful tree. It is because of our tree that that our town is called the Pippali town. Your father also was unable to have any children just like you, we had that problem. He would pray to hundreds of thousands of gods but he still did not have a child. By the end, he went to that Pippali tree and prayed, and then you were born. So that is the reason why you are called Pippali because of praying to that Pippali tree. So, you should also go and make prayers to that same tree."

This is what his mother said. Mahākāśyapa's father did exactly that, and went to the Banyan tree to offer incense and flowers and made all sorts of different offerings and aspirations saying: "Oh, please allow me to have a son. If I have a son, every year, I am going to make offerings like this, such huge offerings, I will make them every year. Yet, if I do not have a son, I am going to cut you down from there, chop you into pieces, dry you out in the wind and sun. In the end, burn you in a fire and throw the ashes from that fire into a river."

This is what it says in the Tibetan Bhikshuni Vibhanga, it is a little bit different in the Chinese translation but I do not need to say that.

Anyway, there was a tree God who lived in that particular Banyan tree. It was kind of a weak God, without a lot of power. He was very happy to get all the offerings but also found it threatening, being told he had to do exactly what they said. He got really afraid of that and thought this will destroy my home and leave me with nothing. Yet, he could not do anything, he had no power. He did not have any ability to give them a child.

So, the tree god's boss and leader were the four great kings. He went to see the four great kings and he told them he had these difficulties: "I have a problem. I do not have any power to give them a child but if I do not, that is going to cause them to destroy where I live". He went to each of the four kings and each of the four, no matter which, all said the same thing, that "whether or not the father has a child, a son or daughter depends on his own karma. We can't do anything about it."

The Tree God was so insistent that he asked the four great kings: "please go ask your superior, the Lord of Gods, Shakra." So, they asked Shakra who said the same thing. "Whether he has children or not depends upon his own karma. I cannot do anything about it".

At that time, in the God Shakra's assembly, a great light appeared when this happened then Shakra immediately knew this and said to the Four Kings: "Do not go yet, look at that great light. It looks like Brahma is coming from the form realms. Definitely the great Brahma is coming. So do not go yet. I am going to ask great Brahma".

Great Brahma came down to visit Shakra in the form of a beautiful youth. Shakra told him, "So this tree God is having all these problems and you're great Brahma, so you have to be able to do something." Great Brahma thought to himself: "I also do not have any power to give someone a child. Yet, if I say that I do not have any power, because I am great Brahma,

it will put a stain on my name.” So, Brahma was really disgusted and so said to fool them a little:” I was not created by the world, I did not create the world. The world did not make me, I did not make the world”. He gave this kind of incoherent answer.

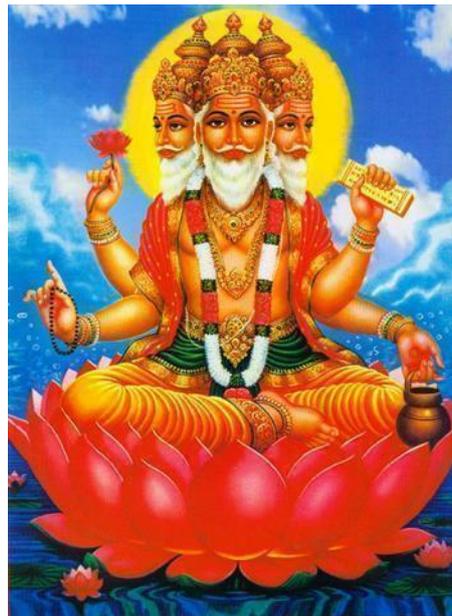
When he gave this answer, then Shakra once again said: “You go back to your abode, please return to your abode. If you see any God there is who about to die and go to another realm. If you see anyone like that, please tell them to go take birth in that Brahmin’s home”.

At that point, Brahma said: “Why are you looking for one, you’ve got lots of gods, why don’t you go look for your gods?” Shakra said “I could send a god, but the Brahmin father of Mahākāśyapa has a lot of merit and is very powerful. Also, the gods here are too weak they could not possibly go. So, you are a great Brahma. Please send us a God from the form realm.

So Great Brahma agreed and returned to his own abode. Then, he saw another Brahma in his realm who was had exhibited the five signs of impending death. This brought great Brahma to him and he said that “There’s this Brahma in Jambudvipa, and it’d be good for you to take birth in his household.” When he said this, that Brahma at first was kind of displeased. “I’m not going to do it.” He would not accept. However, Great Brahma said: “Oh, you have to go another world. If you go to the world, then not so long from now the Buddha will appear in the world. At that time, you can go forth and become a monk and you will achieve a great result. You have to go”. Then that god Brahma said:” If I am born in a rich Brahmin’s family, and not only that, I am the only son, how are they going to let me go forth? They will never let me become a monastic. “

So great Brahma said: “Oh, do not worry about that. Just do what I say. When it is the right time, then I will encourage the parents.” Only then did the Brahma God accept and took birth in Jambudvipa.

In brief, the main point is that Mahākāśyapa in a previous lifetime had been a god Brahma in the form realm, after that he was born in that life. This is a story about Gods and myths.



Great Brahma

## **Mahākāśyapa's birth - major marks of a Buddha and why he was named Pippali/Nyagrodha**

Now the human story is that the Brahmin's wife got pregnant, not long afterwards. When she became pregnant, in the old Indian tradition to determine if it is a boy or girl, they would look which side is stronger on the right side, or on the left side. If it was a stronger on the right side that was a sign that it was a boy child. They did not have any technology but the way they would examine whether it was going to be a boy or girl, if it was on the right side, this is probably a boy. So, the wife told her husband Brahmin, who was like delighted.

He had his wife stay on the top floor of the building and put all sorts of beds and cushions there for her. If it was cold, he gave her clothes, if it was hot, she got everything she needed to cool down. She had medicines and doctors ready, she had foods of just the right temperature. Also, so that his wife would be happy and enjoy herself, he gave her silks and ornaments and beautiful things. He had many singers and dancers and musicians all around her because she had to stay on the top floor of the building from the time, she got pregnant until the child was born. He made her be really careful and she was not even allowed to go down to the lower floor of the building. She just left her on the top of the put he gave her all the presidents and had her stay up there.

Eight or nine months later, his son was born. There was a particular thing about that child. We speak about the thirty-two great marks of a Buddha. This child had seven of these, such as like having a torso like a lion and so forth. He had seven of the Buddha's thirty-two great marks. So, the child was born, the Brahmin was delighted and there was a feast for the birth. Like a birthday celebration we have these days.

Then, Mahākāśyapa's father went to that Banyan tree and had all the rocks, gravel and pebbles and so forth removed from it base. Even the tiniest little things, he just removed them all. Then he sprinkled the ground around the Banyan tree with water, but not just any old water, with sandalwood water. He arranged many different flowers of different colors. They had scents wafting from innocent burners. Then to the townspeople who were at the main gates of the town, he spent three, seven and 21 days giving away food, drink and clothing to them.

When they were naming the child, he gathered all his relatives and said: " I received this child because I prayed at the foot of the Banyan/Pippali tree, so I am going to call him Pippali. He was born from a human but they called him Pippali, the one born from the Banyan/Pippali tree.

## **His father's search for a bride for Mahākāśyapa - "Find me a woman that looks like this golden statue"**

When the child Pippali got older, you know, then he got older and then he was taught reading and all of the Brahmanical traditions. He had to learn the four Vedas and the 18 areas of concern. So, he became really bright and smart. As he got older, then one day, what his father thought to himself: "I'm from a great family lineage, and I'm really wealthy but at first, it was extremely hard to have a child. Generally, in our brahmsian conditions. First, you spend the first 48 years of your life until you become 48, practicing celibacy. Only then you got married, but there is that tradition. However, if my child does not get married, it would not be good. They need to keep up the family lineage. So, he said to his son: "This is the nature

of the world. This is the way things are, so I'm going to go find your bride." So, his son said: "why should I want to take a bride? I want to go off into the forest and practice austerities, that is my hope".

As I said last year, there was a tradition in India that people would go off and practice austerity. So, this is the tradition and that is what he said he wanted to do. The father said "it's important that our family line not be broken so you absolutely have to get married". And he said this over and he was so insistent, so his son thought about this and thought: " if I keep on going against my parents' words, that is no good. But I have no wish to live with a woman, with a wife. So, what can I do? I must do something.



Then, he thought of an idea, and he went to his father and said, "Please give me some gold from the river Jambo". Now this gold in the river was like, in China there is type of gold, it is a little bit more reddish gold. So, he found a little bit of this red gold in the river Jampu. Then his father called his steward as told him to give his son as much gold as he wants. So, the son got a lot of gold and without his father knowing, he summoned a goldsmith. He said; "make a really beautiful statue of woman with this gold".

The goldsmith made a woman's statue, which was almost life size. Then, Mahākāśyapa showed his father the statue. He said "if you can find a beautiful woman just like the statue, who has that kind of a golden colour complexion. If you can find a woman like that, then I will take her as my bride. Otherwise, I do not need a wife". This was his idea. He thought that his father would never find anyone like this statue.

Mahākāśyapa's father thought: "He is probably trying to fool us. He is not thinking about his parents, finding a woman beautiful as this gold, with such a beautiful complexion, how will I ever find a woman like this?" So, his father got really depressed, and was sitting there hopeless. So, this great Brahmin had many Brahmin students and when they saw that he was so depressed, they asked him why and he explained the situation to his students. Some of the students said: " You do not need to worry, there is something we could do. The first thing you have to do is you need to make three more statues just like that one. Then we're definitely going to find a woman just like this."

So, the father did exactly as the students suggested, and made three more statues exactly like that. When he had made three more statues, the students divided into groups. They went in the four different directions, east, west, south, north and south, Some to the north, some to the south, all four directions. They went to many different countries, towns and villages.

As they went to all of these towns, there were markets in the middle of the towns and they would put the gold statue there. There is a statue of a beautiful woman there. They would arrange flowers and play various instruments like drums and cymbals, all the different instruments in India, right? Then, the students would make an announcement, make a big hue and cry saying: "you need to come and make offerings to this goddess. If you make offerings to this goddess, you will be reborn in a high caste. You can be a bride in a high caste. You will be able to go to good household. Then no matter who you get married to, your husband will listen to you. "

When they said this, all the older women, the young girls, everyone, all of the women would rush over to this, because they wanted that right, if you are a woman at that time, you want that. Everything depended on it. So, they rushed there and were praying to the statue. Once all the women had gathered, then the Brahmins would try and find a girl who had a golden coloured complexion. They did this for a long time. But they could not find any girl who had the same golden complexion as Mahākāśyapa had requested. In particular, they split it into four directions. Those in the East, South and the North did not find anyone. They thought, "Oh, we couldn't manage it. It did not work". They told the Brahmin father Pippali and once again, he got really depressed and thought, "I'll never find him anyone." So, the last trip was the ones who went west. Now whether they found a girl with that golden complexion or not, I will speak about next time.

## **DAY SEVEN**

"Today is Independence Day in India. So, Buddhism is connected with Indian history. The place where Buddhism originated and developed was in India. Much of our Tibetan culture is connected to Indian culture. Even if we think about our Tibetan or Bhoti language, perhaps the language first existed in Tibet, but the Tibetan alphabet was developed using old Indian sources as models. So, in the snow land of Tibet, as well as the Tibetan language and culture has a strong connection with India and Indian culture. So, for that reason, today on Independence Day in India, I would like to offer an auspicious greeting to all of my friends in India.

As I was speaking the other day, I was giving an explanation but it was a little bit wrong. I said that the Nyagrodha tree was the Bodhi tree. The reason I made that mistake is that it is said in the Chinese sources, and I did not realize that during the time that when you are talking about an Nyagrodha tree, or a tree that is as wide as it is tall. So, the Nyagrodha or Banyan tree is not a Bodhi tree. In order to explain that to you, I will show you a picture of such a tree.



The Banyan tree is a very plentiful and common in India and throughout Southeast Asia. In English it is called a Banyan tree. You can see these trees all over India and in Southeast Asia. So that is a Banyan tree, the shape is like an umbrella. It is not the Bodhi tree. The Bodhi tree is a different type of tree. So, to continue with the with the teaching from before.

As I mentioned the other day, before Mahākāśyapa became a student of the Buddha, he was known by the name Pippali (Nyagdro dang kye) according to some sources or to translate the Tibetan literally, 'the one born from the Nyagrodha tree' or the 'Banyan born'. So, his father wanted Pippali to get married but he had no real desire to get married. Since it was his parent's wish, he was unable to refuse his parents' wishes. So, he made this statue of a woman out of gold from the river Jamba. And he said, "If you can find a woman as beautiful as this with complexion, the colour of gold, then I will get, then I will get married to her."

Since his father wanted him to get married, his father had no other choice but to do this. And he sent his students in all directions, carrying these statues of gold. As the students travelled through all the different directions, they were not able to accomplish what was wished and they returned home. The only ones that there was any hope left for were the ones who had travelled to the west because they had still not yet returned. So, one might wonder, did they find such a beautiful woman or not? I will continue with the story from here.

**Bhadra-Kapilani - the woman who outshone the golden statue and became Mahākāśyapa's wife**



Once they had gone west, they went to many towns and villages and eventually came to the town of Kapila. There was a householder named Kapila who was a Brahmin and he was also extremely rich. He also had a very beautiful daughter. In the tradition in central India, in ancient times, if one has a beautiful daughter, the tradition was to name her Bhadra (Tib. Zangmo), which means beautiful, because her form, complexion and face was beautiful (Zangmo) she was called Bhadra. So, everyone called her Kapila's daughter Bhadra; Bhadra-Kapilani.

Now, the students who had arrived in this town of Kapila had with them the golden statue. They had given a name to the statue, because to make an announcement you have to give it a name and they called it the 'goddess of women'. In the Chinese translation they called her 'the golden goddess'. So, the names are explained differently in the two.

In any case, once they got there, they put the statue in the centre of the market, and lit incense and arranged flowers around it. Then they started playing different sorts of music as offerings, and announced in a very loud voice:

"Ladies, if you come and make offerings to and worship this Goddess of women's statue, if you do that, you're going to fulfil five of your prayers or hopes. What these five hopes are, the first is that you will be born in a high caste. So those of you who are now in a low caste will in the future be able to be reborn in a high caste. The second is that you will be able to be married into a high caste. The third is that once you have got married, your husband will not treat you badly, your husband will not view you with contempt. The fourth is that you will have sons. And the fifth is that the husband will listen to what you say and will accept everything that you say. You have these five prayers you have to accomplish."

At that time, all the women from Kapila came to the statue and started making offerings and praying to the statue of the goddess of women.

Now, in Tibetan translation, it says Bhadra's father. In the Chinese translation it says her mother. It does not matter whether it was her father or mother. Her parents also heard that this really important Goddess of Women statue had arrived and that the five prayers could be answered. When they heard this, the mother immediately got excited and said: "Oh, you have to go immediately. You have to go make offerings to the goddess of women." Bhadra said: "how is it going to help me if I go to make offerings to this Goddess of women?" "If you pray to her, then your five prayers will be fulfilled." her mother replied.

Bhadra said "Why would I need that? I was already born in a high caste. I have no need to be born in high caste. I am also really beautiful. So why do I need this? No one's coming saying that they want to get married. Even though I am so beautiful. So why would I bother making these prayers?" Her mother insisted that she had to go because she had a strong hope that her daughter would get married in a high caste and have sons. In order to appease her, Bhadra had no choice but to go. So, she took flowers, incense and silks and so forth and went to that place where the goddess of women was to make offerings.

When Bhadra was going to the statue to make offerings something happened that surprised everyone. When Bhadra was in front of the statue, its colour started to fade more and more. At first, the statue was golden in colour but as Bhadra was extremely beautiful and glowed with golden colour, as she got closer to it then the colour of the statue faded, it got bluer and bluer until at the end, it was as if the goddess of woman that was made of gold had turned

into iron and had no radiance at all. Maybe the way these Indian stories are told are probably exaggerating a little. In any case, basically, because Bhadra was so beautiful people got this feeling like the glow of the statue had disappeared because of her beauty. Her beauty dimmed and outshone the golden glow of the statue until it looked totally dark. It is like a poetic way of saying and showing how beautiful she was.

Some of the people then thought, "What is this? It is so strange, what is this bad omen? Has someone cast a spell on the statue?" So, they went to look where the glowing light was coming from and they saw the girl and realised that the light was coming from the girl. The Brahmin youths asked Bhadra "Whose daughter, are you?" She told them she was Kapila's daughter. The Brahmins thought: " This is a special girl; this is the one we're looking for."

### **Brahmin students ask the father Kapila to give them his daughter Bhadra for marriage**



Then, the Brahmin students went to her father, Kapila's house and pretended they were asking for alms. They stood outside and asked for alms, when Kapila heard that there are people asking for alms outside, he told his family to give them flour, butter, sugar, grapes and so on. Now at that time in India, the tradition was for the women and girls to go and give the alms. So, at that time, Bhadra, herself, had to take the things to give to the beggars. When she went to give them the alms, they would not accept them and she asked them why. Then a few moments later, Brahman Kapila came. He asked them: "What do you need? You came asking for alms, and I gave you some food. But you are not taking that. What is it that you really want?"

They replied: "We've come to ask for the girl, we haven't come for food." They just said it directly. Then Kapila got angry said: "I'm not going to give you my daughter as alms. I am not going to give you, my daughter. You are being too cocky. How can I give you a give you my daughter like that?" The Brahmins then said: "We're not asking for your daughter for ourselves." They then told the Brahmin Kapila the whole story about how Mahākāśyapa was born in Magadha and who his father was and how he was extremely wealthy and so on. They told him that Mahākāśyapa was: "really handsome and very skilled in the six rites of a Brahmin, he was learned in the Vedas and extremely intelligent in all eighteen areas of knowledge." They praised him very highly and said he is the one we are asking for your daughter.

After their explaining this, Kapila told them that: " I've heard about this Brahmin's qualities, and his name before but we're in the city of Kapila." This is the region where the Buddha was born, I think, now in Nepal, "Whereas that rich Brahmin, he lives over in Rajgir, Magadha. So, it is very far away and very difficult for us to make the connection and arrange the marriage."

Now, the Brahmins were very smart and skilled at speaking and said: "Oh, you don't need to worry about it because Brahmin Kapila is extremely wealthy. We have horses and various animals to ride, you can use those and you have a lot of servants, right. In fact, living far apart is even better. Because since you live far away then there will be strong connections between the relatives. If people are too close sometimes there is conflict." The Brahmins said really attractive things in order to convince the Brahmin Kapila they must have some reason for what they are saying.

So Kapila then gave them all the things needed to the Brahmin students. Then they went to a pond outside of the town of Kapila to go bathe. While they are doing so, the Brahmin Kapila then called all his relatives and discussed with his relatives whether he should give them his daughter to get married. The relatives said: "Kapila is a really high caste and a really great person who's extremely rich and wealthy. Even if he did not have any wish for her, we would want her to be his bride. Now we don't have to express any hopes to them because he's coming to us and asking, so you should give the girl as his bride because if we can make a connection with this Brahmin people, then it's going to work out for all of us."

So, they washed and dressed the girl and recited auspicious prayers from their tradition (there are many such prayers in the Brahmin tradition) and decided to send her to be the bride of the Brahmin's son, Pippali/Mahākāśyapa. After they had done the ritual, then her parents got an astrologer to calculate the most auspicious month and day for the marriage. We have this tradition, and they had it in ancient India. So, then they decided she should be married on that day. It is like we say in Tibetan when talking about special coincidences and the white days and so forth. In any case, they established a day for their wedding.

So, the Brahmin's students were excited as they had fulfilled all their wishes and they returned back to Mahākāśyapa's father's town. When people saw them, they seemed really happy as they were coming along. They thought maybe they have been successful in their work. When they arrived there, there was a teacher to whom they said:

"Oh, master teacher you should be really pleased. We have now done just as you wished master, we found this woman who is really wonderful, a really a superior girl. Before we left teacher you gave us a command and we went to look for a girl and normally, one has to look for the caste or clan, and you said that we do not need to look for that. You just need to look over whether she is beautiful or not. That is all you have to look at. You do not need to look at the caste or clan, because if you are thinking about only the caste then you do not find someone who is as beautiful as gold, with a golden coloured complexion. You told us we just have to consider whether she is beautiful or not. We found a girl who is not only beautiful but also from a really good caste. She is from a good clan who are really wealthy. This is just like the best of everything".

They explained all of this and how they had arranged the wedding for a definite month, day and time. When Brahmin Pippali heard this, he was just totally delighted and gave them a lot of gifts, food and snacks and clothing and different types of jewellery.

So, then the Brahmin son, Mahākāśyapa heard a little bit about the situation and he started getting a little bit of a doubt and thought "I better go and see who this girl is." He had no desire to get married but when they said there was such a beautiful woman, he started to worry about what it was going to be like in the future. So, he told his parents that he would "go on a little bit of a trip to some other country". He could not say that he was going to look for the girl directly. They said: " Well, we only have you as one son. We have really strong feelings for you and love you a lot. So, you can go wherever you like but you have to get back before your wedding." They gave him permission.

Mahākāśyapa then went with some Brahmins and servants to the town of Kapila, where Bhadra lived. They found some old alms bowls and took them and wore tatty old clothes. They pretended that they were beggars and went begging from one house to the next. Eventually, they got to the door of the Brahmin Kapila's house. When they got there, as I said before, the tradition in central India was for the women or the girls to go out and give the alms. So, on that day again, Bhadra took the alms and when Mahākāśyapa saw her he thought: " Oh, this must be the girl." He saw how beautiful she was and thought that must be her. This must be the girl that they are talking about as women who are as beautiful as this are really rare. Then Mahākāśyapa asked her: "There are probably no other girls as beautiful as you, as you're so beautiful. It must be really difficult for you to give up on the idea of yourself as being beautiful, is it?"

When Bhadra heard this, she said: "The way you're speaking to me, has your own bride died?" He said, "Oh no, my bride is still alive." She replied: "If that's the case, why would you speak about me being so beautiful, but not being able to give it up?" He replied: "My bride is still alive. But she is someone who is not really interested in worldly things and without desires." When she heard this, she was surprised and said: "Oh, that's really amazing. That is actually really good. Actually, I myself don't have any interest in worldly, householder desires either."

Why did Mahākāśyapa ask this question? He wanted to see whether or not she had worldly desires or not. So, when she replied to him, he felt really happy and said: "I will make a promise to stay with and live with you because our parents command us to get married. But other than that, I have no choice but to get married. Otherwise, I promise not to touch any part of your body with my hands." So, they kind of talked it through and had a discussion that he only wanted to practice the Dharma and had no desire to engage in the household life or worldly things. Bhadra was also exactly the same, so they easily agreed. Their wishes were in accord and they made the promises to each other.

### **Living together but in celibacy with separate beds, like a mother with a child**



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Then Mahākāśyapa once more returned back to his home. On the auspicious day, Bhadra became his wife. His parents prepared a house for them to stay in with two beds and had them sleeping in two separate beds. They talked to each other and promised and encouraged each other and said, instead of our staying together like husband and wife it will be more like a mother and child.

When they lived together like a mother and child, his parents were always talking about them and asking: "How are they doing? Are they getting along? What are they doing?" They would also ask their servants, who then told them that they live together like a mother and child. Pippali's parents said: "Oh that is not okay, that is not working out. That is our own mistake. Why did we make two different beds for them? We should only have made one bed. Right now, all our plans have gone bad." So, they took one out of the beds out, and left only one bed and put a chair on the other side of it.

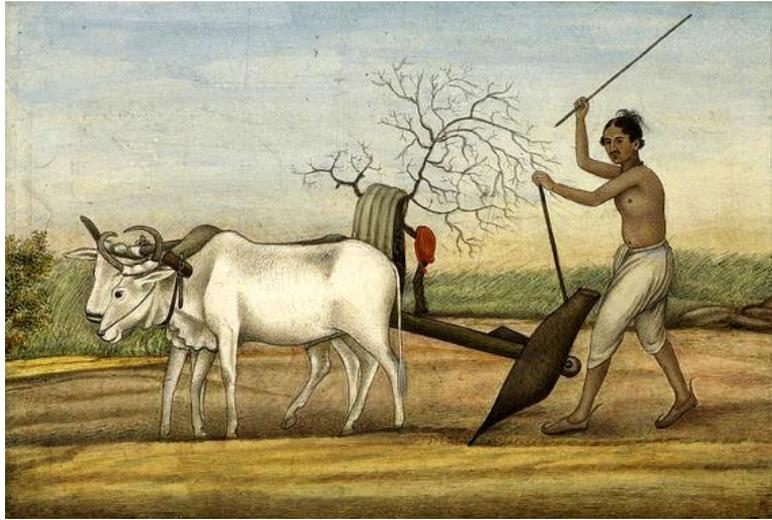
Even with one bed, Mahākāśyapa and Bhadra still did not have any desire for each other and made the promise to each other. He said: "You are a female, so you need a little more sleep. You sleep in the first part of the night, and I will sleep in the middle of the night. You go to bed first, then in the middle of the night, I am going to lie down. Then after that, you can go to bed again." So, they took it in turns to sleep in the bed. That is how they lived together.

Then, one day a big snake got into their bedroom, and it was coiled up underneath their bed. Mahākāśyapa saw it and thought this is a poisonous snake and that is not good. But Bhadra was asleep and he needed to wake her up. If he was going to wake up, the only way to do that was if he touched her. He thought he could not touch her with his hands and was wondering what he should do? As she was sleeping, one of her arms was hanging over the edge of the bed and she was staying like that. Mahākāśyapa thought: "if I don't wake her up, the snake is going to bite her." So, there were fans to waft flies and mosquitoes with and he touched Bhadra on the hand with one of those fans to wake her up.

When she immediately woke up, she thought, he must have touched me with his hands and said "don't forget your promise to me." She did not know what actually happened. Pippali told her that was not the case and that there was a poisonous snake under her bed and that is why he touched her with the fan to wake her up. So Bhadra replied to him that if the snake bites her to let it and that it was not OK to even touch her with the fan. It seems a little bit too extreme, right? However, in the Bhikshuni Vibhanga in the Tibetan translation, it says the poisonous snake was actually an emanation of the god Shakra, who had come to check and see whether or not there was any lust between the two of them.

It is hard to say whose emanation it was. Yet, we might have a little doubt. For ordinary people living together, people slowly start feeling desire. Yet, they did not have any desire at all. Why is it that did not have to desire? They must have had many reasons. The main thing is that Mahākāśyapa in his previous life had been the God of Brahma in the form realm and had spent a long-time doing jnana meditation. So, he had no actual desire or lust anymore. As he had spent many eons dwelling in the state of being detached without desire, he had a habit probably for many eons. In brief, they spent 12 years living in one house with only one bed, and still neither of them ever felt any desire for the other. So that is the story.

## **Developing renunciation and leaving the household life together**



"In any case, Mahākāśyapa's parents both eventually died. After they died, Mahākāśyapa was thinking to himself: "When my two parents were alive, we did not have to do anything, my parents did everything and took all responsibility. Now that both of the parents have died, we need to take care of the household." So, he told Bhadra, "We have to take the responsibility for running a household. You look after the housework inside, and I will look over the farm work outside."

Then Mahākāśyapa went out to oversee the farm workers but he had no idea where they were or what they were doing. So, he went to one of the places where the workers were working. His father had a lot of land for fields, and as I said before, he had 990 ploughs made for the fields. Even though he had enough wealth to make 1000 if he wished. So, there were 990 oxen ploughing the fields, and they were killing a lot of small insects and other small living beings there, all sorts of worms and bugs, and so forth. The oxen's noses were pierced with rings in their noses. They were being beaten with iron rods on their rumps. The oxen were also having a very hard time. Then the workers were also having a difficult time, they were very tired, had long white hair and long beards, and hair on their hands turning white and their beards were long, grey and grizzled. Their hands and feet were all cracked, and they were covered with mud and dust, and so forth. If you looked at them from afar, they looked like burnt out tree trunks or ghosts, they really did not look like humans. Until, you realize what a difficult time they had, when you see it then you have to see it.

In addition, they would have lots of small problems and get into fights about minor things like whose oxen was going to plough the field and who would do what task, and they would hit and fight each other about it. When they saw him, they did not really recognize him and he asked them who they were. They said "we are the Brahmin person's workers." He had never seen them before because he had never taken any interest in them.

So Mahākāśyapa said "I've never sent you to do this kind of difficult and tiring work". They replied: "We have been doing this work from the time of your father and just continued to do it. You never said to us that we have to do it."

So, he started to think about these people and said: "if you have been doing this work from the time of my father, it is fine for you to do the work. But you are fighting with each other

and beating each other up, so what are you doing? You are doing such terrible things. Then in the future, there is a danger that you will experience the ripening of karma and a lot of suffering because of this.”

Before that he had never really seen the difficulty and hardships that poor people experienced, but when he actually saw it with his own eyes, he realised what difficulties there are for families and poor people in society. So, he felt some wish for liberation, some renunciation and thought to himself that he was not actually doing any misdeeds with his own body, speech and mind, but that he was accumulating the seeds of them because they are ploughing the fields for his sake. They are killing the insects, and mistreating the oxen for his sake and getting into fights with each other. So, he thought that indirectly he was also accumulating misdeeds.

Mahākāśyapa returned back to his wife, Bhadra and said “I need to leave the house, I have no desire to stay here. I want to go out and just practice asceticism in the in the forest.” Bhadra was overseeing the housework as he had asked her to do and she had a lot of servants and saw that their hands and feet were infected and cracked and they had really tangled hair and disagreed with each other over really minor things and so on. When she saw this while staying in a house or doing the work, she also thought there was no point to doing this.

In any case, they both had this feeling that it was all pointless. Then, at that point, they took all their wealth and belongings and, as it was before the Buddha had appeared, they made sizable donations to the poor. Also, they gave their servants and workers all gifts, and released them from work. They divided the rest of their wealth among their relatives. Mahākāśyapa went to their store house, where they had really expensive clothes, they did not have any cheap clothes at all and he took the least expensive of the various robes and made them into robes, since if you are going out as a mendicant, one needs to have Dharma robes. He also made one for Bhadra. Then everything else in the house he gave to his relatives and loved ones and gave away his whole household and everything in it.

He then asked Bhadra, "so where do you want to go?" She replied: “well I would like to go with you into the forest and practice austerities. Mahākāśyapa replied: "if I go with my own wife to the forest, if I tell people that, then it doesn't look right.” So Bhadra said: “OK if that's the case, then before you go, let me go first otherwise, if I stay here alone, then it's going to be really difficult for me." So Mahākāśyapa said: “What you are saying is true. So, let us go together.” Then, they left the house together. They walked with each other for a certain distance. Then each went their own separate ways to do the practice.

That is how it was. So, for Bhadra, this was before the Buddha had appeared, so there were many non-Buddhists, and she met one non-Buddhist teacher and went forth with him. But because of her previous karma, she had many difficulties and a lot of hardships. Finally, she met the Buddha and went forth and became an arhat. There is a very long and moving story about this, but I haven't got time to tell the whole story now."

**Mahākāśyapa's Meeting with Buddha - displaying a miracle to summon him**



So, Mahākāśyapa left home to practice, and at that time there were only the non-Buddhists and it is not really recorded who were the non-Buddhist teachers he went to see. Generally, it is said that Mahākāśyapa was 12 years older than the Buddha, that is what is said in one source. Kaśyāpa had already been born before the Buddha. The Buddha went forth from home to homelessness at the age of 29 and spent six years practicing asceticism. Even though he spent six years practicing asceticism, it did not bring him any benefit at all in terms of realizing the fundamental nature. So, he gave up the ascetic practices, and then bathed in the Naranjana river. Then there were two girls, daughters of a farmer who offered him milk porridge. Then there was grass owner, named Brahmana and he gave the Buddha grass that he accepted, and arranged the grass underneath the Bodhi tree, and he sat on them and made the commitment that "until I have reached enlightenment, and I've reached Buddhahood, I'm not going to get up, I'm not going to move from the seat." Then he sat in meditation. He displayed the miracle of taming the Maras and then achieved Buddhahood.

Now I do not need to speak about those in detail. Then, the Buddha went to Varanasi and his first five students there, we call the good group of five. He turned the wheel of Dharma, gave the first teaching for them. Then, there was the next group of five students. Then, there were 15 people from the city of Varanasi who came and became Bhikshus and then after that there is the good group of 60. Following that, probably he tamed the two girls who had given him the milk porridge, Nanda and Ananda Bala. Then he tamed the three Kaśyāpa brothers. After that, the Buddha gathered many disciples and immediately had over 1000 members of the Sangha. Then Buddha met King Bimbisara and his retinue and they all became his students. The King gave him the Bamba Grove, so he did these many deeds.

Mahākāśyapa's meeting with the Buddha was a little bit later, probably after Shariputra and Maudgalyayana. In any case, when the Buddha was staying at Rajgir at a Stupa there, the Buddha realized, via clairvoyance, that it was the appropriate time to tame Mahākāśyapa and for him to be his student. So, he went to the stupa in Rajgir and after he arrived there, while he was residing under a tree, he attracted and summoned Mahākāśyapa. In order to do this, he displayed a miracle, which was shining light from his body. If you give an example of what it

was like, it was like a huge gold mountain shining light in all directions. Mahākāśyapa saw the light shining and he wondered what was going on. He was really amazed by this and began investigating to see what the Buddha was doing and went to where the Buddha was sitting.

When he arrived there, he only saw the light shining from the Buddha and not the Buddha himself. Even from a long way away he saw the Buddha's body and that he had all of the different marks and signs. His faculties were very peaceful and subdued and he was like a great mountain of shining golden light, a really amazing looking mountain. When Mahākāśyapa saw this, he immediately thought before he had met the Buddha, he had met and served many different teachers before, but today, he said " I finally met my real teacher here today. I met a real Arhat, the Bhagavan Conqueror today." He had this really strong feeling.

### **Buddha's accepting Mahākāśyapa as his student and his instructions**

When he realized this, he bowed his head to the Buddha's feet. He said to the Buddha: " You are my teacher, please be my teacher, please be the one to guide me. If you accept this, I'll be one of your disciples, I'll become one of your students." The Buddha said: "As you wish, I can be your teacher, just as you would like." Now, what we normally think in our Mulasvastavarda tradition, we say is that Mahākāśyapa went forth merely by the Buddha accepting him, merely by the Buddha saying "You are my student and accepting I am your teacher" and so forth. He gave Mahākāśyapa the vows of going forth. This is how it said. In any case, the Buddha accepted Kāśyapa as his student.

Once he did this, Buddha told him that among people in the world, even if they do not know anything, people such as you have faith in them. They say that they are omniscient, even when they are not. They say they are Tathagatas, but they claim that they are. The people who say this, in the end, the ultimate result is that they are going to break their skulls and break their heads, and have a bad result from that. You do not need to worry about this. I actually know everything that I say that I am omniscient. It is not that I do not know everything, but say that I am, I am not deceiving anyone. Also, it is because I actually am a Tathagata that I say I am one, because I have actually awakened, I can assert I am the Buddha. So, you do not need to worry." The Buddha gave more such advice or instruction to Kāśyapa.

And at that time, the Buddha gave Mahākāśyapa some three sets of instructions. The first of these instructions was that no matter what virtuous or excellent Dharma, you hear, you need to listen to it well. Not only should you listen to it, you should respect it. You should not just respect it; you need to concentrate and contemplate it well. Then you should be able to practice this virtuous Dharma. So that was the first instruction that he gave him.

The second instruction he gave him was: once you have entered the community of the Sangha (when we say the teacher, that means the Buddha) and when you are staying with a teacher and your Dharma friends, you have to keep a sense of a good conscience and propriety.

The third instruction he gave was, at any time, you must always have mindfulness and awareness, no matter what you are doing. At any time, you must know what you are doing and not forget the commitments that you have made. You must have this mindfulness and awareness. You must not let yourself be careless or distracted. So, this is another instruction

that he gave Mahākāśyapa. So, in this way, basically the Buddha inspired Mahākāśyapa and really increased his interest and faith.

**WHEN THE BUDDHA GAVE HIS ROBES TO MAHAKASHYAPA AND HE  
ATTAINED ARHATSHIP AFTER EIGHT DAYS OF WEARING THEM**



Mahākāśyapa in robes

"Another time, Mahākāśyapa was traveling with the Buddha and along the way, the Buddha was about to sit someplace and take some rest. Mahākāśyapa had his own outer robes as I mentioned before, ones that he took from his home. He took the cheapest of his clothes from his wardrobe and made an outer robe of it. These are the robes that the non-Buddhists wear as well. He took the least expensive clothes to make the robes from his household, but if you ask me the actual value of it, it was worth 100,000 pieces of gold. Yet his other clothes were even more expensive than that.

So Mahākāśyapa took this robe he had made, folded it up and spread it out to be the Buddha's seat. Then he asked the Buddha to sit on it. "This will help me gather the accumulation of merit and help me for a long time."

The Buddha accepted and sat on it and when he saw Mahākāśyapa's robe he said, this robe of yours is really soft and nice." Mahākāśyapa immediately said, "As you said Buddha, this robe is soft, please accept this robe." The Buddha's outer robes were made out of rags that had been left along the road and thrown away in the trash and filth. He had made his robes out of those. So, the Buddha said "If you can wear my robes of discarded rags, made out of trash then I will give you them to wear".

Mahākāśyapa replied:" If the Buddha can accept my robes out of your loving mind, then I will wear your robes made out of discarded rags". So, they made a deal and Buddha accepted Mahākāśyapa's fine clothing, and the Buddha with his own hands gave him his own robes of discarded rags. They made this exchange of robes.

Afterwards, Mahākāśyapa would go to beg for alms every day. Eight days after he received the Buddha's outer robe and was wearing them and go begging for alms every day. On the ninth day, he achieved the very high realizations of the state of Arhatship. So, it was only eight or nine days after the Buddha had given him the outer robes that he achieved the state of Arhatship.

If you think about in terms of Mahākāśyapa, this is really very special. The reason for this is there were no other disciples of the Buddha who had such a great fortune. None of the Buddha's other disciples had such a good fortune to be able to exchange their robes with the Buddha. So, when the Buddha gave Mahākāśyapa his robe made out of discarded rags, this was really a great inspiration for Mahākāśyapa to live by the twelve qualities of training."

### THE TWELVE QUALITIES OF TRAINING AS TOLD BY ARYA ASANGA

Press Esc to exit full screen

**སྐྱུངས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་བཟུ་གཉིས། / བཟུ་གསུམ།**

སྐྱུངས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ ( ལྷུ་གུ་ཏྲ་ ལྷུ་ག་  
dhuta) ལ་བཟུ་གཉིས་དང་། བཟུ་གསུམ་  
བཅས་བརྗེ་སྐྱུངས་མི་འདྲ་བ་གཉིས་ཡོད།

སྐྱུངས་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ལས། དགོན་པ་ན་གནས་  
བ་དང་། བསོད་སྦྱོར་ས་ལེན་པ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་  
ཡོན་ཏན་གྱི་འདུ་ལོག་སྐྱུངས་ཏེ་དག་ཅིང་  
གསལ་བར་བྱ་བའི་མིང་ཡིན་པས་ན། སྐྱུངས་  
པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གསུངས་ཡོད།  
འདིར་ཉན་སའི་ལུགས་སྐྱུང་ན།

This is the 17th Karmapa's slide explaining the translation of the word 'dhuta' for trainings, which means staying in remote places, living off alms and training in the qualities which increase more and more.

Now to talk about these qualities of training (Jangpai yonten). Generally, after the Buddha had awakened to Buddhahood, he saw that there is no point to doing as the non- Buddhists did and only dwelling in asceticism. It was too much suffering, and no reason to it. He prohibited remaining as an ascetic and just being too extreme. There were also a set of practices that were not too severe, and he did not prohibit those.

The direction that Buddha gave the members of the sangha is that the life of the monastic should not fall to either extreme, it should not be too difficult, nor should it be too luxurious. It should be the middle way, which means that you are not in a lifestyle that is too easy and too comfortable. You have to be able to stay alone and be content with meagre food. The middle way does not mean that you are enjoying yourself and getting fat. So, the Buddha had

quite a few students who were very content and they had very few desires and the Buddha praised them very highly.

When Buddha praised them, among all the people who abided by these qualities of training, the most well-known of them was Mahākāśyapa. The reason why he was so well-known for abiding in the 12 qualities is that he stayed in remote places. In Tibetan, the word Gonpa (monastery) actually refers to a remote place. To talk about a monastery, or gonpa in Tibetan, means staying in a really remote place and some forest and being happy with that. Mahākāśyapa also only lived off alms and when there were invitations for the Sangha to go to excellent meals, he never went to such places.

I thought it would be good to explain these twelve qualities of trainings, or *dutha* in Sanskrit, we can either count them as 12, or as 13. In the *Grammar in Two Volumes* that was compiled during the time of the Tibetan Emperors, when they explained this word *dutha*, it means trainings which then increase your qualities further and further, these are called qualities of training. Now there are different ways of describing these 12 different ways.



Japanese wood statue of Asaṅga from 1208 CE.

Here I will explain them according to the Yogacharya Levels by Lobpon Arya Thogme (Asanga). Some people say that this is written by Maitreya, some people that is compiled by Asanga, but in any case, this is what we also call the Yogacharya Levels. In any case, there is a text in that called the Sravaka levels, and I will explain it according to this text. There are three different sections, if we divide them up.

### **THREE TRAININGS ON FOOD**

The first of these are the three regarding food, and the first of these is living on alms, which can be divided it into two. If there are two, one can count the qualities of trainings as 13, then you would divide living on arms into two.

**ཟས་གྲི་དབང་དུ་བྱས་པ་གསུམ། (1)**

1. བསོད་སྟོན་པ།

- རྗེད་པས་ཚོག་བའི་བསོད་སྟོན་པ། ལས་དུ་བྱིས་ཚང་སྤྱ་བྱུག་ན་དེ་ལས་ཟས་ཅི་ཚོ་བ་ཟ་བ་དེ་ཡིན།
- མཐར་གྱིས་སྦྱོང་བའི་བསོད་སྟོན་པ། བྱིས་ཚང་དེ་དེའི་སྦྱོང་རིམ་གྱིས་སོང་ནས་བསོད་སྟོན་པ་ཅི་ཚོ་བ་རྗེད་པ་ཟ་བར་བྱེད་པ་ལས། བྱིས་ཚང་འདི་ནས་བཟའ་བ་དང་བཅའ་བ་བཟང་པོ་དང་མང་པོ་ཐོབ་པ་གྲི་དེད་བསམ་ནས་མི་འགོ་བ།



The first is *living on alms that are allowable from being received*. So, this means that whatever household you come to on your way, whatever food you receive from that household, and do not try to get any from others, this is called alms that are allowable for being received.

The second type *alms received gradually* means going to the door of each house and then eating whatever alms you receive. Instead, you do not think I will get better or more food at that place and go there. If you do that, it would not be proper and so doing this properly is called alms received gradually.

**ཟས་གྲི་དབང་དུ་བྱས་པ་གསུམ། (2)**

2. ལྷན་གཅིག་པ། ལྷན་གཅིག་གི་སྟེང་དུ་འདུག་ནས་ཅི་ཚོ་བ་ཟ་བ་དེ་ཚོ་ལས། གདན་དེ་ལས་ལངས་ནས་མི་ཟ་བ།

3. ཟས་བྱིས་མི་ལེན་པ། ཟས་གྲི་བྱིར་འདུག་ནས་ཇི་ཚོ་བ་གྱིས་བདག་འཚོ་བའི་ཟས་ཐམས་ཅད་མ་གླངས་གྲི་བར་དུ་མི་ཟ་ཞིང་། འདིས་འཚོའི་སྟམ་པ་དང་ཐམས་ཅད་གཅིག་ཅར་དུ་གླངས་ནས་ཟ་བའོ། །



2. The food of *the single meal, or the single sitting*. Basically, it means you have one meal a day. The reason it is called one sitting, you have one sitting and you eat as much as you can on that sitting. Once you have gotten up from that sitting, then you do not eat any food at all. There are many people who used to practice this.

3. *Not accepting more food.* To eat whatever food you received, you take however much you get from your alms and then when more food is offered, you do not eat that, you have a limit to the food, in order that food not be wasted. Those were the three trainings in terms of food.

### THREE TRAININGS ON ROBES

གོས་གྱི་དབང་དུ་བྱས་པ་གསུམ།

4. ཚོས་གོས་གསུམ་ལ། ལྷན་ལྷན། ལྷན་གོས། མཐང་གོས་གསུམ་གྱིས་འཚོ་བར་བྱེད་ཅིང་། དེ་ལས་ལྷག་པའི་གོས་མི་འཚང་བ་དང་།
5. ཕྱིང་བ་ལ། ཚོས་གོས་གསུམ་མམ། གོས་ལྷག་པ་གཅིག་འཚང་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་བལ་ལས་བྱས་པ་ལ། ལྷག་འཚང་གི། དེ་ལས་གཞན་མི་འཚང་བ་དང་།
6. བྱལ་དར་ཁྲོད་ལ། ལས་ཁའི་གཡས་གཡོན་དུ་བོར་བའི་གོས་བཤའ་གཅིན་མོགས་གྱིས་གོས་པ་རྣམས་ལས་ཕྱོན་རུང་བ་རྣམས་སྐྱངས་ཏེ་བྱས་ནས། ལྷག་ཏེ། རུང་བའི་ཁ་དོག་ཏུ་བསྐྱར་ནས་འཚང་བར་བྱེད་ལ།



Then there are the three trainings regarding robes.

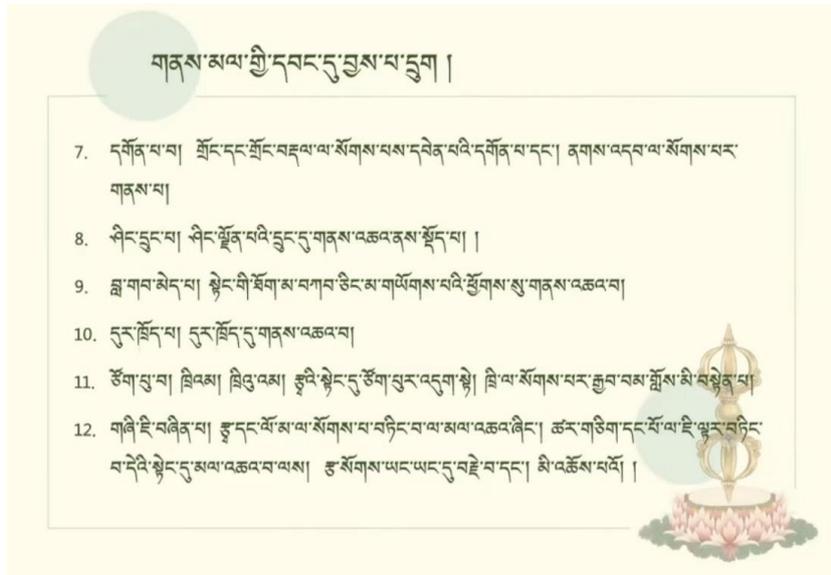
4. The first is *the three Dharma robes*. So, at that time, some Bhikshus had had the outer robe, inner robe and the lower robe and they did not have any other clothing at all. They had no extra clothing at all. And so that is the practice that they lived in. These are called the three robes.

5. Next is *wearing felt*. If you have the three robes, they would all, be made out of wool, it is like a felt actually. In Tibet, if we talk about felt we make blankets out of but it is kind of it is not a very soft, it is like a rough fabric. They would be made out of a very rough wool fabric. They would not accept any other robes than that, and that was called wearing felt.

6. The third is called *wearing rags*. Which means basically trash, they are rags the fabric that people have discarded along the way. Some of them were filthy with excrement and urine and they would gather them all up and wash them, sew them and dye them into an appropriate colour for Bhikshus as they could not wear any colour at all. That is what we call wearing rags.

### SIX TRAININGS ON LODGINGS

There are six with regard to lodging, the place where one stays:



7. *Living in the wilderness.* As I said before, this means staying in the wilderness and forests that are remote from towns and villages. So, wilderness, or gonpa, means a place that is far away from a town or a village. They also live in this place, or they are the Bhikshus who live in the centre of jungles or forests. There were some Bhikshus like this and they were called *living in the wilderness*.

8. *Living under trees.* This meant that instead of staying in a building they stayed under trees. If you are sitting under the tree, it protects you right? So, they stayed permanently under trees.

9. The *roofless dwellers*, this means staying in places where there is no roof, sitting outside, not inside a house without a roof.

10, The *charnel grounds*. this is easy to understand. Charnel grounds are where people would dispose of corpses, and there would be the monks who stayed there to do their practice.

11.The *sitter with a low seat*, or like some sort of a seat, when they would put up their grass underneath a tree but they would not lean back at all. Normally, when we lie down, we lie down with our side on the ground, but they would not lie down they always remains remain sitting up. So, they are called the sitters. In our Karma Kamtsang, when we do the three-year retreat, you are not allowed to lie down, you have to stay seated the whole time, we have that tradition as well. So, this is what we call the practice of the sitters.

12. *Taking the Seat as it is.* People would spread out grass and leaves as your seat, but you would not use any fabric or robe or clothing. And once you have arranged the first time however, in addition to being as it was you just sit on it. You do not ever add any more grass, or exchange the grass, or trying to rearrange it. Just sit on it as it originally was laid out, and just continued sitting in that, because they sat on the same seat. However, the leaves or grass are laid out, they just continued sitting on that. So that is another sort of practice.

So, these are the 12 qualities of training. In the olden times, among Buddhists, the Buddha did not like it when people continually practice asceticism like the non-Buddhists, but he did praise practicing in ways that are that accord with the Dharma. So, during the time of the

Buddha, there are many Bhikshus who engaged in ascetics that accorded with the Dharma. The most well-known representative of these was Mahākāśyapa. Now, when I speak about these 12 qualities of trainings, are they something that one person practices all 12 of them? This is not the case because some of them you cannot do at the same time. So, some people would be living on alms, some would practice two or three of the 12 qualities, some would live by one of the 12. There are various different levels. It does not necessarily mean that someone who abides by all 12 of these qualities of training. For that reason, today in connection with Mahākāśyapa's liberation story. I have explained these 12 qualities of training as they are described in the ancient texts from the time of the original texts of original Buddhism. After that, I will speak about the story of Ananda and then eventually we'll get to the first council."

## ENDNOTES

[i] In the Early Buddhist Texts of several textual traditions, a dozen discourses attributed to Mahākāśyapa have been compiled in a distinct section within several collections of texts. In the Pāli tradition, this is part of the collection called the Saṃyutta Nikāya, and in Chinese Buddhist texts, the collection is called the Saṃyukta Āgama. The latter collection contains two versions of the section on Mahākāśyapa, numbered Taishō 2:99 and 2:100.[5] The Chinese Ekottara Āgama also contains a passage that runs parallel to the Pāli Saṃyutta, T2:99 and T2:100, describing a meeting between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa,[6] and another passage about him and the monk Bakkula.[7] Finally, there are also Vinaya texts from the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition about Mahākāśyapa in the Tibetan language.

[ii] [1] It consists of four parts: (i) the *Bhikṣuvibhaṅga* (the first division), (ii) the *Bhikṣuṇīvibhaṅga* (the first part of the second division), (iii) the *Skandhaka* (the second part of the second division, the whole third division, and part of the fourth division), and (iv) two appendices which contain the *Saṃyuktavarga* and the *Vinayaikottara* (rest of the fourth division). The *Bhikṣu-* and the *Bhikṣuṇī-prātimokṣas* and the respective *Karmavācanās* are found as separate texts in the Chinese canon (Taishō Tripiṭaka 1429-1934). A few Sanskrit fragments of this *Vinaya* are also preserved.

[iii] In the Early Buddhist Texts of several textual traditions, a dozen discourses attributed to Mahākāśyapa have been compiled in a distinct section within several collections of texts. In the Pāli tradition, this is part of the collection called the Saṃyutta Nikāya, and in Chinese Buddhist texts, the collection is called the Saṃyukta Āgama. The latter collection contains two versions of the section on Mahākāśyapa, numbered Taishō 2:99 and 2:100.[5] The Chinese Ekottara Āgama also contains a passage that runs parallel to the Pāli Saṃyutta, T2:99 and T2:100, describing a meeting between the Buddha and Mahākāśyapa,[6] and another passage about him and the monk Bakkula.[7] Finally, there are also Vinaya texts from the Mūlasarvāstivāda tradition about Mahākāśyapa in the Tibetan language.