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## The Dhāraṇī Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas

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*Sarvabuddhāṅgavatīdhāraṇī*

*'phags pa sangs rgyas thams cad kyi yan lag dang ldan pa zhes bya ba'i gzungs*

## The Noble Dhāraṇī “Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas”

Āryasarvabuddhāṅgavatīnāmadhāraṇī



Toh 856

Degé Kangyur, vol. 100 (gzungs 'dus, e), folios 76.a–77.b.

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co.

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## SUMMARY

s.1 *The Dhāraṇī Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas* details a brief exchange between the Buddha and the four *guardian kings* of the world, that is, the four divine beings who rule over the cardinal directions in the Indian Buddhist tradition. Pursuant to a description of the fears that plague mankind, the Buddha declares that he will provide remedies for them. Invoking the presence of numberless buddhas in the limitless world systems described in Buddhist cosmology, the Buddha and the four kings provide several mantras of varying lengths meant for daily recitation, with the stated benefits not only of averting all manner of calamities—untimely death, illness, and injury chief among them—but of attracting the attention and blessings of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and ensuring good health and benefit for the practitioner and all beings.

ac.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 The translation was produced by David Gitlen, who also wrote the introduction. The translator would like to express his gratitude to Khensur Geshe Wangdak Rinpoche, Phil Stanley, Sarah Harding, and Acharya Lama Tenpa Gyaltsen for their help and guidance.

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i.

## INTRODUCTION

i.1 *The Dhāraṇī Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas* records an encounter between the Buddha and the four guardians of the world at an unspecified site on the banks of the Ganges River. The Buddha himself initiates the dialogue, describing four great fears—aging, sickness, decrepitude, and death—declaring death to be the chief among them, and promising to provide remedies for them. With a snap of his fingers, the Buddha summons the attention and presence of buddhas throughout the reaches of space in the ten directions, and they recite, in unison, the longest of the *dhāraṇī* incantations found in the text. Each of the four guardians, in turn, goes on to pledge his assistance and provides a shorter *dhāraṇī* mantra as a supplement to the main one. The Buddha succinctly describes the various applications and benefits of the recitation, reading, writing, and wearing of these mantras, accruing not only to the individual, but to the very place in which they are recited and to those with whom they are connected. Finally, he explains how such practices fit in with commonly accepted ideas of accumulating merit through acts of devotion.

i.2 The original Sanskrit text for *The Dhāraṇī Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas* has not been located, but a Chinese translation does exist (Taishō 1346). The Chinese text lists the translator as Devendraprajñā, whose exact dates are uncertain, but who was active in China as a translator under Tang dynasty patronage by the last decade of the seventh century. The Chinese version is quite close to the Tibetan (although it has a different title),<sup>1</sup> but it does contain a number of differences and additional lines or fragments, as well as a short section at the end, not found in the Tibetan versions, describing a ritual procedure for constructing altars and making offerings.<sup>2</sup> In the Degé Kangyur *The Dhāraṇī Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas* is included among the tantras belonging to the Action (*kriyā*) class (Toh 513) and it is also reproduced in the Dhāraṇī (*gzungs 'dus*) section (Toh 856).<sup>3</sup> The attribution in the colophon of the Tibetan version to the translators Jinamitra,

Dānaśīla, and Yeshé Dé puts its translation somewhere around the end of, or shortly after, the reign of King Trisong Detsen, at the turn of the ninth century. Its inclusion in the Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*) catalog of the canon, compiled in 812 CE, supports this.<sup>4</sup> Lastly, it should be mentioned that an English translation of this text by Joan Nicell was published online in 2007.

i.3 This English translation was produced based on both Toh 513 and Toh 856 in the Dégé Kangyur in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*), the Stok Palace Kangyur, and the Chinese translation (Taishō 1346).

## **The Noble Dhāraṇī “Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas”**

1.

## The Translation

[F.76.a]<sup>5</sup>

1.1 Homage to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas!

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling on the bank of the great river Gaṅgā together with the four guardians of the world.

1.2 At that time, the Blessed One said to those four great kings including Vaiśravaṇa, [F.76.b] “All men, women, young boys, and girls have four great fears. Which four? These four: aging, sickness, decrepitude, and death.<sup>6</sup> Among them, the single greatest fear is of the Lord of Death, in that death is cruel,<sup>7</sup> cannot be remedied, and is always in close pursuit.<sup>8</sup> Great kings, I will now pronounce the remedy for this single great fear.”

The four great kings replied,<sup>9</sup> “Blessed One, it is our great fortune that the Blessed One will care for all beings by bestowing life for their sake!”

1.3 The Blessed One was seated facing<sup>10</sup> east, and with the sound of a finger snap he invoked all the tathāgatas, saying, “May all the tathāgatas, the worthy ones, the perfect buddhas, who have fully awakened to unsurpassable and perfect awakening out of love for sentient beings, assist me! Having been blessed here by all the buddhas, I will avert the untimely deaths of all beings! I will turn a second wheel of Dharma that has not been turned before!”

1.4 Likewise, he invoked all the tathāgatas of the south, west, north, above, and below, saying, “May all the tathāgatas, the worthy ones, the perfect buddhas, who have fully awakened to unsurpassable and perfect awakening out of love for sentient beings, assist me!”

1.5 Likewise, in every intermediate direction he spoke these words, so that beings’ [F.77.a] life spans, physical strengths, and complexions would be perfect, and so that fear of an untimely death would not arise, saying, “May all the buddhas assist me!”

1.6

Then there appeared before the Buddha's eyes as many world systems as there are elements of earth throughout the ten directions, filled with blessed buddhas like a sesame pod. These tathāgatas pledged their assistance, and all spoke the following:<sup>11</sup>

1.7      *tadyathā calā calā cale vinati svastike cakrāṅgati praśamantu sarvarogānatre kunaṭe mahākunaṭe care carere hemagiri hemagauri hemaniśunti hemasisi kaurave kauravave hekurare kurare kumati piśasamaṇe śiṣuvi cale cale vicale mā vilamba humu humu svāhā!*

1.8      The lords of the guhyakas, as many as there were, from their places beside all those tathāgatas, also spoke, saying “*hūm hūm si si svāhā!*” and the tathāgatas vanished from sight.

1.9      Then the great king Vaiśravaṇa said, “Blessed One, I, too, with the blessing of the tathāgatas, will act as a guardian, and will avert untimely death! *tadyathā śvete śvete lelili!*”

1.10     Virūḍhaka also spoke, saying “*mātaṅge mātaṅge mātaṅgini śūmā śūmū!*” Dhṛtarāṣṭra also spoke, saying “*care carere svāhā!*” Virūpākṣa also spoke, saying “*balampipa!*”

1.11     The Blessed One responded, “Great Kings, when a son or daughter of noble family recites at least once a day, every day, these *vidyāmantras* seen<sup>12</sup> by all the buddhas, that son or daughter of noble family should be regarded as a teacher. [F.77.b] That son or daughter of noble family will never again be reborn in the three lower realms and will be of benefit to the lives of all beings. Anyone who recites these words once a day for the benefit of all beings, or even reads them, will have no fear of untimely death. Their bodies will be free of disease. At no time will they drown, or be killed by fire, by weapons, by poison, or by lightning. It should be known that wherever a child of the victors recites these *vidyāmantras*, he or she will secure the attention of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Anyone who writes this down, or has it written down, will be serving the blessed buddhas with every respect and honor. If one wonders why this is, it is because the tathāgatas have declared that serving sentient beings is serving the buddhas. If someone, having written this, affixes it to a limb,<sup>13</sup> all their limbs will be protected.”<sup>14</sup>

1.12     When the Blessed One spoken this, the four great kings, the entire retinue, and the world with all its gods, humans, *asuras*, and *gandharvas* rejoiced and praised the words of the Blessed One.

1.13     *This concludes the Noble Dhāraṇī Endowed with the Attributes of All the Buddhas.*

c.

## Colophon

c.1 This was translated and edited by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Dānaśīla and the translator-editor Bandé Yeshé Dé. It was then revised according to the new lexicon and finalized.

n.

## NOTES

n.1 The Chinese title is simply *The Gathering of All Buddhas Dhāraṇī Scripture* 諸佛集會陀羅尼經.

n.2 The translations of this section and the other variations are included as notes inserted in the relevant places.

n.3 This text, Toh 856, and all those contained in this same volume (*gzungs 'dus, e*), are listed as being located in volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur by the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC). However, several other Kangyur databases—including the eKangyur that supplies the digital input version displayed by the 84000 Reading Room—list this work as being located in volume 101. This discrepancy is partly due to the fact that the two volumes of the *gzungs 'dus* section are an added supplement not mentioned in the original catalog, and also hinges on the fact that the compilers of the Tōhoku catalog placed another text—which forms a whole, very large volume—the *Vimalaprabhānāmakālacakratantrāṭikā* (*dus 'khor 'grel bshad dri med 'od*, Toh 845), before the volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur, numbering it as vol. 100, although it is almost certainly intended to come right at the end of the Degé Kangyur texts as volume 102; indeed its final fifth chapter is often carried over and wrapped in the same volume as the Kangyur *dkar chags* (catalog). Please note this discrepancy when using the eKangyur viewer in this translation.

n.4 Denkarma, 302.b.6. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, 222, no. 389.

n.5 In the Toh 513 version of the text there is a slight discrepancy in the folio numbering between the 1737 *par phud* printings and the late (post *par phud*) printings of the Degé Kangyur. Although the discrepancy is irrelevant here, further details concerning this may be found in [note 5](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh513.html#end-note-UT22084-088-007-75>) of the Toh 513 version of this text.

n.6 The Chinese here lists the more frequently encountered “birth, old age, sickness, and death” 生老病死.

n.7 I am following the *Mahāvyutpatti* in translating *btsam pa med pa*, the reading found in the Narthang, Peking, and Yongle editions, as Skt. *niṣṭhura*, “cruel.” The Degé and others have the variant reading *brtsam pa med pa*.

n.8 Instead of this line, the Chinese only states that the fear of death is “the most difficult to get rid of” 然於其中死怖一種最難除遣.

n.9 In the Chinese text, the four great kings rise from their seats and bow with their palms joined before speaking.

n.10 Translated based on Yongle, Lithang, Peking, and Cone versions, where the word *thugs* is missing. It appears, however, in both the Degé and Stok Palace editions. In the Chinese version the Buddha rises from his seat before turning to the east.

n.11 While there is a fair amount of variation in some of the mantra syllables across the various Kangyur witnesses, these have not been noted here.

n.12 The Chinese has here “born from all Buddhas and known by all Buddhas” 從於一切諸佛所生。一切諸佛共所知見。

n.13 The Chinese version states “Whoever wishes to protect their body should write down this mantra and wear it on their body” 若有專欲擁護其身。當書此呪佩著身上. It additionally inserts “Wherever it is, there will be sons and daughters of noble family, and others, with deep faith in the Dharma” 若所在之處有深信法善男子善女人等.

n.14 The Chinese text includes an entire additional section here: “First find a pure, clean place, cover the ground in sandalwood, and construct a square altar with dimensions of seven cubits. Beginning on the eighth day of the lunar month, you should wash yourself in a bath of fragrant water and put on clean, new clothes. You should take the eight *upāsaka* precepts and abstain from any food except sweet rice porridge. Take black and camphor incense, and place two full measures on the altar. Also take white sandalwood incense or quality aloeswood incense, or camphor incense, or a combination of clove incense and *kakubha* incense, and place that upon the altar. You should recite the *dhāraṇī* over all the incense seven times, seven times a day, for seven days. On the fifteenth day of the lunar month, you should abstain from taking the noontime meal, and make twenty-one small altars with saffron incense. The first should be dedicated to the *tathāgata*, and the remaining twenty should be dedicated to the *vajrarājas*. Around them

you should make four small altars, dedicated to the four great kings, with incense of musk, camphor, white sandalwood, saffron, and red sandalwood. Then you should make offerings to the tathāgata altar by strewing and anointing it, as well as making offerings of incense to it and all the other altars in turn. Also take buttermilk, yogurt, and sugar, and, sequentially, place them in the mouths of four new flasks as offerings, which should be placed separately upon the altars of the four great kings. Fill these flasks with fresh water, and place in them the flowers of the twelve fruit trees. Burn ten lamps filled with fragrant oil on the altar of the tathāgata, with the intention to make offerings to the buddhas of the ten directions, and burn one lamp on each of the other altars. Take the incense over which you recited the dhāraṇī, as well as camphor and quality aloeswood, and burn it to honor the tathāgata. Burn the remaining incense on the other altars. While the incense is burning on the altars, chant the various divine dhāraṇīs. Any being who smells this incense will never die prematurely or accidentally. When the incense has burned out, the various offerings should be scattered in a clean place.” 先當簡擇清淨之處。以栴檀末而塗其地。成一方壇縱廣七肘。其人應從月初八日。香湯洗浴著新淨衣受八戒齋。唯食粳米石蜜牛乳。取黑沈香及龍腦香。共滿一兩置於壇上。又取白檀香或沉水香。或龍腦香或復丁香迦矩羅香。而置於壇。其人誦此陀羅尼呪。呪此諸香。於日日中皆七七遍滿于七日。至十五日一日不食其日中時。以鬱金香於其壇上作二十一小壇。其一處中名如來壇。餘二十壇名金剛王壇。又於壇外作四小壇。名四天王壇復取麝香龍腦白檀鬱金之香及紫檀末。於如來壇若散若塗而為供養。自餘諸壇隨取一香而供養之。又取乳酪酥及沙糖。如其次第以新瓶四口。各別盛之置四天王壇上。又以淨水著於瓶內。採十二種果樹之花而置其中。又以香油然十支燈置如來壇。為欲供養十方佛故。自餘諸壇各然一支。於前所呪諸香之內。取龍腦及沈水。於如來壇而燒供養。其餘壇上然自餘香。將然香時其如來壇及餘壇香。復應各別誦此神呪而以呪之。若有眾生得聞此香。非時天橫靡不除滅。先所呪香並燒盡已。然後收彼四天王食散於淨處。

b.

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g.

## GLOSSARY

g.1 Dānaśīla

*dA na shI la*

दानशीला

*Dānaśīla*

“Charitable,” an Indian paṇḍita who traveled to Tibet during the time of King Trisong Detsen to serve as a translator.

g.2 Dhṛtarāṣṭra

*yul 'khor srung*

धृतराष्ट्र

*Dhṛtarāṣṭra*

“Protector of the Realm” (Tib.) or “Whose Realm is Stable,” (Skt.) guardian of the eastern direction. Also the name of a king in the *Mahābhārata*.

g.3 Four great kings

*rgyal po chen po bzhi*

चतुर्महाराजा

*catur mahārāja*

Four gods who preside over the cardinal directions: Virūḍhaka, Virūpākṣa, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, and Vaiśravaṇa. They are also referred to as the “four guardians of the world.”

g.4 Four guardians of the world

*'jig rten skyong ba bzhi*

चतुरलोकपाला

*catur lokapāla*

See the “four great kings.”

g.5 **Gaṅgā**  
*gang gA*  
**गंगा**  
*gaṅgā*  
The river Ganges

g.6 **Jinamitra**  
*dzi na mi tra*  
**ཇི་ນ་མི་**  
*Jinamitra*  
“Friend of the Victor,” an Indian pāṇḍita who traveled to Tibet during the time of King Trisong Detsen to serve as a translator.

g.7 **Lord of the guhyaka**  
*gsang ba pa'i bdag po*  
**गुह्यकाद्धिपति**  
*Guhyakādhipati*  
Epithet of Vaiśravaṇa.

g.8 **Upāsaka (precepts)**  
—  
*upāsaka*  
The upāsaka precepts for lay practitioners include the five fundamental vows (*pañcaśīla*) not to (1) kill, (2) steal, (3) commit sexual misconduct, (4) lie, or (5) use intoxicants. Additionally, three other precepts are taken on full-moon and new-moon days for a total of eight (*astāṅgaśīla*): not to (6) eat after the noon meal, (7) engage in entertainment or adorn oneself with ornaments or cosmetics, or (8) sleep on high beds.

g.9 **Vaiśravaṇa**  
*rnam thos kyi bu*  
**វិស្វារោនា**  
*Vaiśravaṇa*  
The “Son of Viśrava (Completely Renowned),” guardian of the northern direction. He and his father are both also referred to as Kubera, and he is also known as Jambhala. He rules over spirits called guhyakas (literally “secret/hidden ones”), described in various capacities, giving rise to his epithet Guhyakādhipati, “Lord of the Guhyakas.”

g.10 Vidyāmantra

*rig sngags*

ୟିଦ୍ୟାମନ୍ତ୍ରା

*vidyāmantra*

Knowledge or awareness mantra.

g.11 Virūḍhaka

*'phags skyes po*

ବ୍ୟାନର୍କ୍ଷେତ୍ରୀ

*Virūḍhaka*

“Noble Birth” (Tib.) or “Sprouting/Growing Forth,” (Skt.) guardian of the southern direction. Also the name of a king of Kosala during the lifetime of Śākyamuni Buddha.

g.12 Virūpākṣa

*mig mi bzang*

ବ୍ୟାନପାକ୍ଷୀ

*Virūpākṣa*

“Deformed Eyes,” *nāga* king and guardian of the western direction. Also common epithet of Śiva, where it indicates his odd number of eyes.

g.13 Yeshé Dé

*ye shes sde*

ୟେଶେ ଦେ

—

Disciple of Padmasambhava and translator.