དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་གྱི་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཀྱི་ཚིགས་སུ་བཅད་པ།

Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels [2]

Ratnatrayasvastigāthā

· Toh 4413 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 207 (mdo ’grel, nyo), folio 349.b
For referencing Tibetan sources, please see our Scholar’s Edition

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

Bandé Yeshé Dé · Jinamitra

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Summary

s.1 *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels* is a *maṅgalagāthā* composed of four stanzas, the first three of which invoke the blessings of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, respectively, whereas the fourth stanza invokes the blessings of worldly deities such as Brahmā and Indra. The text expresses the aspiration that, through these blessings, various forms of harm may come to an end and goodness may flourish.

Acknowledgments

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

ac.2 The text was translated, edited, and introduced by the 84000 translation team. Lowell Cook produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Torsten Gerloff edited the translation and the introduction, and Ibby Caputo copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

Introduction

i.1 *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels* is one of several works in the Degé Kangyur that belongs to the "verses of auspiciousness" (*maṅgalagāthā*) genre. It is also one of several texts that share identical Tibetan titles.[1] This particular work appears twice in the Kangyur, once in the Dedication and Aspiration subsection of the tantras (Toh 827) and once in the Dedication and Aspiration subsection of the dhāraṇī collection (Toh 1108).[2] It also appears in the Miscellaneous Treatises section of the Degé Tengyur (Toh 4413).

i.2 *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels* is composed of four stanzas that, as suggested by its title, primarily invoke the auspiciousness of the Three Jewels. The first three stanzas extol the illustrious qualities of the Three Jewels, invoking their blessings so that negative influences, obstacles, and other forms of harm may subside and, in their place, virtue and goodness may flourish. The fourth and final stanza invokes the blessings of worldly deities, such as Brahmā and Indra, and makes aspirations for health and happiness.

i.3 Like much of the *maṅgalagāthā* genre, *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels* is a text intended to be performed through recitation. The principle understood by Buddhist and other religious traditions of India that allows for the text's efficacy is known as "declarations of truth" (Skt. **satyakriyā*, Pali *saccakiriyā*). A declaration of truth is an act of speech or performative utterance that can have a miraculous effect on relative reality via the truth present in its statement.[3]

i.4 The concluding line to the text provides a glimpse into the origins of these verses, explaining that these four stanzas were delivered by the Buddha to a certain householder named Surata. Who Surata was and under what circumstances he would have received these verses from the Buddha is not clear. Surata is a common personal name found throughout Buddhist literature and may refer to several different figures. The colophon further states that this

work was co-translated by the Indian scholar Jinamitra and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé, who flourished during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. Surprisingly, however, the work is not listed in the Denkarma or Phangthangma catalogs, the two extant imperial inventories of texts translated during the early period of Buddhism's spread in Tibet.

i.5 There is no known extant Sanskrit witness of the *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels*, nor was it translated into Chinese. To the best of our knowledge, it does not appear to have been studied or translated before. The present translation was produced based on the three witnesses preserved in the Degé Kangyur and Tengyur, with reference to variant readings noted in the Comparative Edition of the Kangyur and Tengyur.

The Translation

1. ## Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels.

1.3 Through the blessings of the unsurpassed teacher, the greatest of the great,
The Victorious One who is the sun-like lord of Dharma,
May the harmful enemies, the māras and classes of obstructors, be pacified.
May glory always prevail and there be auspiciousness all day and night.

1.4 Through the blessings of the truth in the unsurpassed teachings,
The truth of the way things are, the ambrosial Dharma most sublime,
May negativities and faults fall away and a host of goodness flourish.
May glory always prevail and there be auspiciousness all day and night.

1.5 Through the blessings of the truth in the Saṅgha who shine with the glory
Of precious qualities and the beneficial activity of the Victor's heirs,
May the enemies—the afflictions that bring suffering—be pacified.
May glory always prevail and there be auspiciousness all day and night.

1.6 Through the blessings of Brahmā, Devendra, and the guardians,
May the auspiciousness of benevolent devas prevail.
May there be goodness and the fulfillment of wishes,
And may there be longevity, health, and happiness.

1.7 *This concludes "Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels," delivered by the Blessed One to the householder Surata.*

Colophon

c.1 Translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptor Jinamitra and the senior editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

Notes

1. Other texts include Toh 824, Toh 3781, and Toh 4415.

2. Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 1108 version of this text within vol. 101 or 102 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 1108, n.2, for details.

3. Dickie 2023, pp. xii–xiii.

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Glossary

Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

Yeshé Dé (late eighth to early ninth century) was the most prolific translator of sūtras into Tibetan. Altogether he is credited with the translation of more than one hundred sixty sūtra translations and more than one hundred additional translations, mostly on tantric topics. In spite of Yeshé Dé's great importance for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet during the imperial era, only a few biographical details about this figure are known. Later sources describe him as a student of the Indian teacher Padmasambhava, and he is also credited with teaching both sūtra and tantra widely to students of his own. He was also known as Nanam Yeshé Dé, from the Nanam (*sna nam*) clan.

Blessed One

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

bhagavat

In Buddhist literature, this is an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means "possessing fortune," but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to "subduing" the four māras, *ldan* to "possessing" the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to "going beyond" saṃsāra and nirvāṇa—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as "one who destroys the four māras." This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* ("one who broke"), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root √*bhañj* ("to break").

Brahmā

tshangs

ཚངས།

brahmā

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

Devendra

lha dbang

ལྷ་དབང་།

devendra

Another name for Śakra, or Indra; literally "Lord of Devas."

Dharma

chos

ཆོས།

dharma

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

Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཇི་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

jinamitra

Jinamitra was invited to Tibet during the reign of King Tri Songdetsen (*khri srong lde btsan*, r. 742–98 CE) and was involved with the translation of nearly two hundred texts, continuing into the reign of King Ralpachen (*ral pa can*, r. 815–38 CE). He was one of the small group of paṇḍitas responsible for the *Mahāvyutpatti* Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary.

māra

bdud

བདུད།

māra

Māra, literally "death" or "maker of death," is the name of the deva who tried to prevent the Buddha from achieving awakening, the name given to the class of beings he leads, and also an impersonal term for the destructive forces that keep beings imprisoned in saṃsāra:
(1) As a deva, Māra is said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others' Emanations (*paranirmitavaśavartin*), the highest paradise in the desire realm. He famously attempted to prevent the Buddha's awakening under the Bodhi tree—see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.1—and later sought many times to thwart the Buddha's activity. In the sūtras, he often also creates obstacles to the progress of śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. (2) The devas ruled over by Māra are collectively called *mārakāyika* or *mārakāyikadevatā*, the "deities of Māra's family or class." In general, these māras too do not wish any being to escape from saṃsāra, but can also change their ways and even end up developing faith in the Buddha, as exemplified by Sārthavāha; see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.14 and 21.43. (3) The term māra can also be understood as personifying four defects that prevent awakening, called (i) the divine māra (*devaputramāra*), which is the distraction of pleasures; (ii) the māra of Death (*mṛtyumāra*), which is having one's life interrupted; (iii) the māra of the aggregates (*skandhamāra*), which is identifying with the five aggregates; and

(iv) the māra of the afflictions (*kleśamāra*), which is being under the sway of the negative emotions of desire, hatred, and ignorance.

obstructor

bgegs

བགེགས།

vighna

An obstacle and the class of demonic beings that cause obstacles.

preceptor

mkhan po

མཁན་པོ།

upādhyāya

A person's particular preceptor within the monastic tradition. They must have at least ten years of standing in the saṅgha, and their role is to confer ordination, to tend to the student, and to provide all the necessary requisites, therefore guiding that person for the taking of full vows and the maintenance of conduct and practice. This office was decreed by the Buddha so that aspirants would not have to receive ordination from the Buddha in person, and the Buddha identified two types: those who grant entry into the renunciate order and those who grant full ordination. The Tibetan translation *mkhan po* has also come to mean "a learned scholar," the equivalent of a *paṇḍita*, but that is not the intended meaning in Indic Buddhist literature.

Saṅgha

dge 'dun

དགེ་འདུན།

saṃgha

Though often specifically reserved for the monastic community, this term can be applied to any of the four Buddhist communities—monks, nuns, laymen, and laywomen—as well as to identify the different groups of practitioners, like the community of bodhisattvas or the community of śrāvakas. It is also the

third of the Three Jewels (*triratna*) of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Teaching, and the Community.

Surata

des pa

དེས་བ།

surata

A householder.

the way things are

chos nyid

ཆོས་ཉིད།

dharmatā

The real nature, true quality, or condition of things. Throughout Buddhist discourse this term is used in two distinct ways. In one, it designates the relative nature that is either the essential characteristic of a specific phenomenon, such as the heat of fire and the moisture of water, or the defining feature of a specific term or category. The other very important and widespread way it is used is to designate the ultimate nature of all phenomena, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms and is often synonymous with emptiness or the absence of intrinsic existence.

Three Jewels

dkon mchog gsum

དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ།

ratnatraya, triratna

The Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha—the three objects of Buddhist refuge. In the Tibetan rendering, “the three rare and supreme ones.”

Victorious One

rgyal ba

རྒྱལ་བ།

jina

An epithet of the Buddha.

Victor's heirs

rgyal sras

རྒྱལ་སྲས།

jinaputra

A synonym for bodhisattvas.