དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ་གྱི་བཀའ་ཞིས་ཀྱི་ཚེགས་སུ་བཅད་པ།

Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels [1]

Ratnatrayamaṅgalagāthā

· Toh 4414 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 207 (sna tshogs, nyo), folios 349.b–350.a

For referencing Tibetan sources, please see our Scholar's Edition

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Summary

s.1 *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels* consists of three four-line stanzas that invoke the auspicious blessings of the Three Jewels.

Acknowledgements

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* belongs to the "verses of auspiciousness" (*maṅgalagāthā*) genre and appears in both the Degé Kangyur and Tengyur. It is also one of several texts that share identical Tibetan titles.[1] This particular work consists of three four-line stanzas that invoke the auspicious blessings of the Three Jewels, with each stanza corresponding to one of the jewels. The first stanza invokes the auspiciousness of the Thus-Gone One as the Buddha jewel, praising his path to awakening and his manner of benefiting beings. The second stanza invokes the auspiciousness of bodhisattvas as the Saṅgha jewel, suggesting that these three stanzas may have been excerpted from a Mahāyāna work or otherwise share a Mahāyāna-influenced orientation. Among the two types of Dharma—the Dharma of scripture and the Dharma of realization—the third and final stanza would seem to invoke the auspiciousness of the Dharma of realization as the Dharma jewel, owing to its use of the language of emptiness and nonconceptuality. It is interesting to note that the order of these three stanzas does not reflect the standard sequence of Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, but inverts the final two jewels.

i.2 There is no known extant Sanskrit witness of the *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels*, nor does the text appear to have been translated into Chinese. The Tibetan translation is bereft of a colophon and does not appear in either the Denkarma or Phangthangma catalogs, the two inventories of texts translated during Tibet's imperial period (*btsan po'i skabs*).[2] Thus, there is little that can be said about when, by whom, and under what circumstances *Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels* was translated into Tibetan.

i.3 We are not aware of any prior English translations. The present translation was produced based on the witnesses preserved in the Degé Kangyur and Tengyur, with reference to variant readings in the comparative editions of the Kangyur and Tengyur.

The Translation

1.

Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels.

1.2 He has traversed the swamp of saṃsāra, as difficult to traverse as the ocean,
And perfected the two accumulations of merit and wisdom, so difficult to gather.
He is the Thus-Gone One, the sole companion of all wandering beings.
May his sublime auspiciousness bring happiness and well-being, here and now.

1.3 They forsake personal benefit, always concern themselves with others' benefit,
And cast their gazes far away from the five types of sense pleasures.
Concerned with faith and diligence, the bodhisattvas are the greatest friend.
May their sublime auspiciousness bring happiness and well-being, here and now.

1.4 Beyond arising and ceasing, devoid of all the fetters that are conceptual thoughts,
It is the supreme lamp of emptiness vanquishing the darkness of ignorance.
The Dharma beyond manifold points of reference brings the happiness of the path.
May its sublime auspiciousness bring happiness and well-being, here and now.

1.5 *This completes the "Verses of Auspiciousness of the Three Jewels."*

Notes

1. Others include Toh 827, Toh 3781, Toh 4413, Toh 4415, and Toh 4416.

2. 629–842 CE.

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Glossary

emptiness

stong pa nyid

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད།

śūnyatā

Emptiness denotes the ultimate nature of reality, the total absence of inherent existence and self-identity with respect to all phenomena. According to this view, all things and events are devoid of any independent, intrinsic reality that constitutes their essence. Nothing can be said to exist independent of the complex network of factors that gives rise to its origination, nor are phenomena independent of the cognitive processes and mental constructs that make up the conventional framework within which their identity and existence are posited. When all levels of conceptualization dissolve and when all forms of dichotomizing tendencies are quelled through deliberate meditative deconstruction of conceptual elaborations, the ultimate nature of reality will finally become manifest. It is the first of the three gateways to liberation.

five types of sense pleasures

'dod pa'i yon tan lnga

འདོད་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་ལྔ།

pañcakāmaguṇa

The five sense pleasures are pleasing visual objects, sounds, fragrances, tastes, and tactile sensations.

ignorance

ma rig pa

མ་རིག་པ།

avidyā

The basic misapprehension that propels one to take rebirth in saṃsāra.

merit

bsod nams

བསོད་ནམས།

puṇya

In Buddhism more generally, merit refers to the wholesome karmic potential accumulated by someone as a result of positive and altruistic thoughts, words, and actions, which will ripen in the current or future lifetimes as the experience of happiness and well-being. According to the Mahāyāna, it is important to dedicate the merit of one's wholesome actions to the awakening of oneself and to the ultimate and temporary benefit of all sentient beings. Doing so ensures that others also experience the results of the positive actions generated and that the merit is not wasted by ripening in temporary happiness for oneself alone.

saṃsāra

'khor ba

འཁོར་བ།

saṃsāra

A state of involuntary existence conditioned by afflicted mental states and the imprint of past actions, characterized by suffering in a cycle of life, death, and rebirth. On its reversal, the contrasting state of nirvāṇa is attained, free from suffering and the processes of rebirth.

Three Jewels

dkon mchog gsum

དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ།

ratnatraya, triratna, trīṇi ratnāni

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

thus-gone one

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

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

two accumulations

tshogs gnyis

ཚོགས་གཉིས།

sambhāradvaya

The accumulations of merit and wisdom.

wisdom

ye shes

ཡེ་ཤེས།

jñāna

Although the Sanskrit term *jñāna* can refer to knowledge in a general sense, it is often used in Buddhist texts to refer to the mode of awareness of a realized being. In contrast to ordinary knowledge, which mistakenly perceives phenomena as real entities having real properties, wisdom perceives the emptiness of phenomena, that is, their lack of intrinsic essence.