འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱི་ཞལ་ནས་གསུངས་པ།

Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself

Mañjuśrīsvākhyāta

འཕགས་པ་འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱི་ཞལ་ནས་གསུངས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས།

’phags pa ’jam dpal gyi zhal nas gsungs pa zhes bya ba’i gzungs

The Noble Dhāraṇī “Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself”

Āryamañjuśrīsvākhyātanāmadhāraṇī

· Toh 545 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 89 (rgyud ’bum, pa), folios 13.a–13.b
For referencing Tibetan sources, please see our Scholar’s Edition

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

Devacandra · Jñānagarbha · Lui Wangpo · Viśuddhasiṃha

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Summary

s.1 *Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself* provides an incantatory practice taught by Mañjuśrī. The dhāraṇī has two sections: the first extols Mañjuśrī as a tathāgata, an arhat, and a perfectly awakened buddha, and the second invokes a *bhagavatī* who is praised as an illuminator and supplicated for protection.

Acknowledgments

ac.1 Translated by David Mellins, Kaia Fischer, and Erin Sperry, with Geshé Lobsang Dawa and Phakyab Rinpoche (Geshé Ngawang Sungrab), under the auspices of the Tibetan Classics Translators Guild of New York. Introduction by David Mellins and Kaia Fischer. Special thanks to Paul Hackett for generously sharing his bibliographic expertise and resources. This translation would not have been possible without the kind and dedicated tutelage of Gen Lozang Jamspal, Executive Director, Tibetan Classics Translators Guild of New York.

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Introduction

i.1 *The Noble Dhāraṇī "Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself"* is the first of six dhāraṇī scriptures (Toh 545–550) gathered together within the Tantra section of the Degé Kangyur that provide instruction in incantatory practices that feature the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Five of these scriptures (Toh 547 omitted) also appear in the Dhāraṇī section of the Degé Kangyur as Toh 892–896.

i.2 The dhāraṇī proper has two sections: the first extols Mañjuśrī as a tathāgata, an arhat, and a perfectly awakened buddha, and the second invokes a *bhagavatī* who is praised as an illuminator and supplicated for protection. The scripture then details the extraordinary benefits accrued by even a single recitation of the dhāraṇī—the eradication of karmic obscurations collected over a thousand eons and, at death, the sight of Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara. Although the title indicates that the dhāraṇī was spoken by Mañjuśrī, the text does not include a framing narrative.

i.3 The colophon to the Tibetan translation states that it was translated from Sanskrit by the Indian preceptor Jñānagarbha and the translator Bandé Lui Wangpo and finalized by the Indian preceptor Viśuddhasiṃha and the editor-translator Bandé Devacandra. This allows us to date the text to the late eighth or early ninth century CE, when these scholars and translators flourished. This dating is also supported by the text's inclusion in the Denkarma and Phangthangma imperial catalogs.[1] A Sanskrit version of this work is, to our knowledge, no longer extant, and it appears that the text was never translated into Chinese.

i.4 This English translation is based on the two versions in the Degé Kangyur, one in the Tantra section (Toh 545) and the other in the Dhāraṇī section (Toh 892),[2] in consultation with the variant readings recorded in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and with the Stok Palace Kangyur.

The Translation

1.

The Noble Dhāraṇī

Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels! Homage to noble Mañjuśrī!

namo ratnatrayāya | namo bhagavate dharmadhātunigarjita-rājāya tathāgatāya arhate samyaksambuddhāya | namo mañjuśrīye kumārabhūtāya ||[3]

1.2 *tadyathā | oṁ jñānāloke triratnavaṃśasaṃdhāraṇi*[4] *bhagavati abhayaṃ*[5] *dādi abhayaṃ*[6] *datte me bodhicittavajraparipālaya samantāvabhāsena hana hana sarvasattvasaṃtānapatitaṃ*[7] *kleśān ucchedaya*[8] *vara-lakṣaṇālaṃkṛtaśarīre*[9] *bodhisattvaśiśūn*[10] *paripālaya*[11] *buddhān ādeśaya*[12] *devanāgayakṣagandharvāsuragaruḍakinnaramahoragān*[13] *vaśe sthāpaya*[14] *abhayaṃ*[15] *dadati svāhā ||*[16]

1.3 As for the benefits of this dhāraṇī, even a single recitation will purify the karmic obscurations accrued over a thousand eons, and at the time of death one will behold noble Mañjuśrī.[17] One will also behold the body of noble Avalokiteśvara, his head adorned with a topknot. In short, the benefits of this dhāraṇī are limitless.

1.4 *This concludes the noble dhāraṇī "Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself."*

Colophon

c.1 Translated by the Indian preceptor Jñānagarbha and the translator Bandé Lui Wangpo and finalized by the Indian preceptor Viśuddhasiṃha and chief editor-translator Bandé Devacandra.

Notes

1. Denkarma, folio 303.a; see also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 231–32. Phangthangma 2003, p. 28. The Denkarma catalog is usually dated to ca. 812 CE.

2. Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 892 version of this text within vol. 100 or 101 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 892, n.2, for details.

3. English translation: "Homage to the Three Jewels, homage to the Blessed One, to the king who has resounded the dharmadhātu, to the tathāgata, arhat, perfectly and completely awakened one, homage to ever youthful Mañjuśrī."

4. Toh 892 reads *triratnapaṃśasaṃdhāraṇi*.

5. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *abāyaṃ*.

6. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *abāyaṃ*.

7. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *sarvasatva-saṃtanapatitaṃ*.

8. Based on Toh 892. Toh 545 reads *ucchedāya*.

9. Based on Stok: *varalakṣaṇa*. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *vadalakṣaṇa*. Toh 892 also reads *alamkṛtaśarīri*.

10. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *bodhisatvaśiśū*. Stok reads *bodhisatva-śiśūṃ*.

11. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *patipālaya*.

12. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *adeśāya*.

13. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *mahoraga*

14. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *stapāya*.

15. The Degé Kangyur in both versions (Toh 545 and 892) reads *apayaṃ*.

16. "It is: *Tad yathā | oṁ*, light of wisdom sustaining the lineage of the Three Jewels, Blessed Lady, grant freedom from fear! You who grant freedom from fear, protect the vajra of my mind of awakening! Vanquish, vanquish with your all-encompassing light the evil in the continuum of each being and sever the afflictions! You whose body bears the best of marks, protect the disciples of bodhisattvas, advise the buddhas, and bring the devas, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas under control while you remove their fear, *svāhā*!"

17. According to the Comparative Edition, the Lhasa Kangyur edition here reads *'jam dpal gyi zhal mthong* ("behold the face of Mañjuśrī").

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Glossary

affliction

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

The essentially pure nature of mind is obscured and afflicted by various psychological defilements, which destroy the mind's peace and composure and lead to unwholesome deeds of body, speech, and mind, acting as causes for continued existence in saṃsāra. Included among them are the primary afflictions of desire (*rāga*), anger (*dveṣa*), and ignorance (*avidyā*). It is said that there are eighty-four thousand of these negative mental qualities, for which the eighty-four thousand categories of the Buddha's teachings serve as the antidote.
Kleśa is also commonly translated as "negative emotions," "disturbing emotions," and so on. The Pāli *kilesa*, Middle Indic *kileśa*, and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *kleśa* all primarily mean "stain" or "defilement." The translation "affliction" is a secondary development that derives from the more general (non-Buddhist) classical understanding of √*kliś* ("to harm," "to afflict"). Both meanings are noted by Buddhist commentators.

arhat

dgra bcom pa

དགྲ་བཅོམ་པ།

arhat

According to Buddhist tradition, one who is worthy of worship (*pūjām arhati*), or one who has conquered the enemies, the mental afflictions (*kleśa-ari-hata-vat*), and reached liberation from the cycle of rebirth and suffering. It is the fourth and highest of the four fruits attainable by śrāvakas. Also used as an epithet of the Buddha.

asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

A type of nonhuman being whose precise status is subject to different views, but is included as one of the six classes of beings in the sixfold classification of realms of rebirth. In the Buddhist context, asuras are powerful beings said to be dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility. They are also known in the pre-Buddhist and pre-Vedic mythologies of India and Iran, and feature prominently in Vedic and post-Vedic Brahmanical mythology, as well as in the Buddhist tradition. In these traditions, asuras are often described as being engaged in interminable conflict with the devas (gods).

Avalokiteśvara

spyan ras gzigs

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས།

avalokiteśvara

One of the “eight close sons of the Buddha,” he is also known as the bodhisattva who embodies compassion. In certain tantras, he is also the lord of the three families, where he embodies the compassion of the buddhas. In Tibet, he attained great significance as a special protector of Tibet, and in China, in female form, as Guanyin, the most important bodhisattva in all of East Asia.

Blessed Lady

bcom ldan ’das

བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

bhagavatī

See entry for "Blessed One."

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”).

bodhisattva

byang chub sems dpa’

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ།

bodhisattva

A being who is dedicated to the cultivation and fulfilment of the altruistic intention to attain perfect buddhahood, traversing the ten bodhisattva levels (*daśabhūmi*, *sa bcu*). Bodhisattvas purposely opt to remain within cyclic existence in order to liberate all sentient beings, instead of simply seeking personal freedom from suffering. In terms of the view, they realize both the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena.

deva

lha

ལྷ།

deva

In the most general sense the devas—the term is cognate with the English *divine*—are a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend and celebrate the teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni and other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In Buddhist cosmology the devas occupy the highest of the five or six “destinies” (*gati*) of saṃsāra among which beings take rebirth. The devas

reside in the *devalokas*, “heavens” that traditionally number between twenty-six and twenty-eight and are divided between the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), form realm (*rūpadhātu*), and formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). A being attains rebirth among the devas either through meritorious deeds (in the desire realm) or the attainment of subtle meditative states (in the form and formless realms). While rebirth among the devas is considered favorable, it is ultimately a transitory state from which beings will fall when the conditions that lead to rebirth there are exhausted. Thus, rebirth in the god realms is regarded as a diversion from the spiritual path.

Devacandra

de ba tsan+d+ra

དེ་བ་ཙནྡྲ།

devacandra

A Tibetan translator active in the early ninth century CE who helped to finalize the translation of *The Dhāraṇī “Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself.”*

dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

The term *dhāraṇī* has the sense of something that “holds” or “retains,” and so it can refer to the special capacity of practitioners to memorize and recall detailed teachings. It can also refer to a verbal expression of the teachings—an incantation, spell, or mnemonic formula—that distills and “holds” essential points of the Dharma and is used by practitioners to attain mundane and supramundane goals. The same term is also used to denote texts that contain such formulas.

dharmadhātu

chos kyi dbyings

ཆོས་ཀྱི་དབྱིངས།

dharmadhātu

A synonym for emptiness or the ultimate nature of reality (*dharmatā*). This term is interpreted variously—given the many connotations of *dharma*/*chos*—as the sphere, element, or nature of phenomena, reality, or truth.

eon

bskal pa

བསྐལ་པ།

kalpa

A cosmic period of time, sometimes equivalent to the time when a world system appears, exists, and disappears. According to the traditional Abhidharma understanding of cyclical time, a great eon (*mahākalpa*) is divided into eighty lesser eons. In the course of one great eon, the universe takes form and later disappears. During the first twenty of the lesser eons, the universe is in the process of creation and expansion; during the next twenty it remains; during the third twenty, it is in the process of destruction; and during the last quarter of the cycle, it remains in a state of empty stasis. A fortunate, or good, eon (*bhadrakalpa*) refers to any eon in which more than one buddha appears.

ever youthful

gzhon nur gyur pa

གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ།

kumārabhūta

An epithet of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

A class of generally benevolent nonhuman beings who inhabit the skies, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds, and more specifically to

dwell on the eastern slopes of Mount Meru, where they are ruled by the Great King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They are most renowned as celestial musicians who serve the gods. In the Abhidharma, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by sentient beings during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances (*gandha*) in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning "scent eater."

garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྡིང་།

garuḍa

In Indian mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

Jñānagarbha

dz+nyA na gar+b+ha

རྗྙཱ་ན་གརྦ།

jñānagarbha

A co-translator of *The Dhāraṇī "Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself."*

karmic obscuration

las kyi sgrib

ལས་ཀྱི་སྒྲིབ།

karmāvaraṇa

kinnara

mi 'am ci

མི་འཛས་ཅེ།

kinnara, kiṃnara

A class of nonhuman beings that resemble humans to the degree that their very name—which means “is that human?”—suggests some confusion as to their divine status. Kinnaras are mythological beings found in both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, where they are portrayed as creatures half human, half animal. They are often depicted as highly skilled celestial musicians.

Lui Wangpo

klu’i dbang po

ཀླུའི་དབང་པོ།

A minister of King Trisong Detsen (eighth century CE), Lui Wangpo is typically numbered among the first ordained Tibetan monks. He was the co-translator of *The Dhāraṇī “Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself.”*

mahoraga

lto ’phye chen po

སྟོ་འབྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Literally “great serpents,” mahoragas are supernatural beings depicted as large, subterranean beings with human torsos and heads and the lower bodies of serpents. Their movements are said to cause earthquakes, and they make up a class of subterranean geomantic spirits whose movement through the seasons and months of the year is deemed significant for construction projects.

Mañjuśrī

’jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

Mañjuśrī is one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha” and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing

often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. To his name, Mañjuśrī, meaning "Gentle and Glorious One," is often added the epithet Kumārabhūta, "having a youthful form." He is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

mind of awakening

byang chub sems

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས།

bodhicitta

In the general Mahāyāna teachings the mind of awakening (bodhicitta) is the intention to attain the complete awakening of a perfect buddha for the sake of all beings. On the level of absolute truth, the mind of awakening is the realization of the awakened state itself.

nāga

klu

ཀླུ།

nāga

A class of nonhuman beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments, where they guard wealth and sometimes also teachings. Nāgas are associated with serpents and have a snakelike appearance. In Buddhist art and in written accounts, they are regularly portrayed as half human and half snake, and they are also said to have the ability to change into human form. Some nāgas are Dharma protectors, but they can also bring retribution if they are disturbed. They may likewise fight one another, wage war, and destroy the lands of others by causing lightning, hail, and flooding.

tathāgata

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.

Three Jewels

dkon mchog gsum

དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ།

ratnatraya

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

vajra

rdo rje

རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajra

This term generally indicates indestructibility and stability. In the sūtras, *vajra* most often refers to the hardest possible physical substance, said to have divine origins. In some scriptures, it is also the name of the all-powerful weapon of Indra, which in turn is crafted from vajra material. In the tantras, the vajra is sometimes a scepter-like ritual implement, but the term can also take on other esoteric meanings.

Viśuddhasiṃha

bi shud+d+ha siM ha

བི་ཤུདྡྷ་སིཾ་ཧ།

viśuddhasiṃha

An Indian paṇḍita active in Tibet from the late eighth to ninth century CE, involved in the translation of *The Dhāraṇī “Spoken by Mañjuśrī Himself.”*

yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the rule of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.
Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just-mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.