

གཙུག་ཏོར་ཇི་མ་མེད་པའི་གཟུངས།

The Dhāraṇī, “The Stainless Uṣṇīṣa”

Vimaloṣṇīṣaprabhāsadhāraṇī

ཀུན་ནས་སྒོར་འཇུག་པའི་འོད་ཟེར་གཙུག་ཏོར་དྲི་མ་མེད་པར་སྒྲང་བ་དེ་

བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་སྤྲིང་པོ་དང་དམ་ཆེག་ལ་རྣམ་པར་ལྟ་

བ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས།

kun nas sgor 'jug pa'i 'od zer gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba de
bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi snying po dang dam tshig la rnam par lta
ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs

The Dhāraṇī “The Stainless Uṣṇīṣa That Shines with Light
That Penetrates All Gates to View the Essence and Samaya
of All Tathāgatas”

Uṣṇīṣaprabhāśasarvatathāgatahṛdayasamayavilokitadhāraṇī

· Toh 599 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 90 (rgyud, pha), folios 250.a–259.b



First published 2026

Current version v 1.0

84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha is a global non-profit initiative to translate all the Buddha's words into modern languages, and to make them available to everyone.

This work is provided under the protection of a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution - Non-commercial - No-derivatives) 4.0 copyright. It may be copied or printed for fair use, but only with full attribution, and not for commercial advantage or personal compensation. For full details, see the Creative Commons license.

This print version was generated at 9.29am on monday, 17 august 2026 from the online version of the text available on that date. If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time. For the latest online version, with bilingual display, interactive glossary entries and notes, and a variety of further download options, please see <https://84000.co/translation/toh599>.

Contents

Summary

Acknowledgments

Introduction

The Translation

Colophon

Abbreviations

Notes

Glossary

Bibliography

Summary

- s.1 In this text the Buddha Śākyamuni teaches two dhāraṇīs that can be used to purify negative karma and obscurations in order to prolong life and escape painful rebirths. The dhāraṇīs are taught for the benefit of a god called Stainless Quintessential Gem, who has discovered that he will soon die and undergo a series of painful and hellish rebirths. After the Buddha recounts the hellish experiences that are otherwise to befall him, Stainless Quintessential Gem follows the rites for the dhāraṇīs taught by the Buddha so that he might avoid such a fate. Through doing so, his past evil deeds are purified, and he is freed from the fears of their painful future ripening. He returns to the Buddha's presence to make offerings of gratitude, and while he is there, the Buddha recounts the story of Stainless Quintessential Gem's past evil deeds that have resulted in his present sufferings. The Buddha also explains additional rites connected to the dhāraṇīs, including rites for making caityas, to the assembled gods. Indeed, the second of the two dhāraṇīs taught in—commonly known as the *vimaloṣṇīṣa* dhāraṇī—remain well known in connection with caitya and stūpa construction and consecration to the present day.

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. Catherine Dalton produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Ryan Damron edited the translation and the introduction, and Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

ac.3 The generosity of the anonymous sponsor who helped make the work on this translation possible is gratefully acknowledged.

Introduction

i.1 *The Dhāraṇī “The Stainless Uṣṇīṣa That Shines with Light That Penetrates All Gates to View the Essence and Samaya of All Tathāgatas”* is a short dhāraṇī-sūtra in which the Buddha Śākyamuni teaches two dhāraṇīs that can be used to purify negative karma and obscurations, in order to prolong life and escape painful rebirths. The sūtra opens in the divine realm of Tuṣita, where the Buddha is teaching a large gathering about the karmic ripening connected with the six perfections. One of the gods who receives that teaching, Stainless Quintessential Gem, soon learns that in seven days he will die and undergo a series of painful and hellish rebirths. Horrified, he requests the help of the lord of the gods, Śakra, who takes him to the Buddha, promising that the compassionate Buddha will be able to help him avoid such a fate. The Buddha first recounts the hellish experiences that are to befall Stainless Quintessential Gem in the future, and then teaches two dhāraṇīs and the rites connected with them that will purify evil karma, extend lifespan, and protect from the horrors of lower rebirths that otherwise result from previously accumulated evil deeds.¹ The rites connected with the two dhāraṇīs involve the construction of caityas and the insertion of the dhāraṇīs inside of them.²

Stainless Quintessential Gem accordingly follows these rites for the dhāraṇīs and purifies his past evil deeds, freeing him from the fears of their painful future ripening. He then returns to the Buddha's presence to make offerings of gratitude. While he is there, the Buddha recounts, at the request of the assembled gods, the story of Stainless Quintessential Gem's evil deeds from previous lifetimes that have resulted in his present sufferings, emphasizing the karmic continuity between the individual who performed those past deeds and the one who experiences their ripening in the present. Also at the gods' request, the Buddha explains a series of additional purificatory rites—again for constructing and worshiping caityas—connected to the two dhāraṇīs, which are said to cleanse evil karma and to both liberate beings from and prevent lower rebirths. One of the rites calls for incanting sand with the dhāraṇīs and scattering the sand in a charnel ground to purify the karma of the beings whose bones it touches. The sūtra also mentions, on several occasions, the benefit of reciting the dhāraṇīs to animals to free them from their present lower rebirths.³ The gods who received the teachings on these two powerful dhāraṇīs and their associated rituals are delighted. They promise to keep and propagate the dhāraṇīs in the future and to protect everyone who likewise upholds them. Following their promise, the Buddha entrusts the dhāraṇīs to the gods and the teaching comes to an end.

- i.3 Dhāraṇī texts are generally found in three different sections of the Tibetan canon: Some are included in the General Sūtra section, some are included in the Tantra section as kṛīya tantras, and others are included in a specific Dhāraṇī section (*gzungs 'dus*) of the Kangyurs. The present work is found in the Kṛīya Tantra section as well as the Dhāraṇī^{4 5} section of the Degé Kangyur. A dhāraṇī formula is akin to a long mantra. However, the term *dhāraṇī* is also sometimes used to refer to texts, like this one, which contain a dhāraṇī within a larger narrative framework.⁶ Sometimes such texts also include material that focuses on the ritual practices associated with their dhāraṇīs, as is the case with the present text. This text is also closely associated with *The Dhāraṇī for a Caitya*,⁷ which teaches the shorter of the two dhāraṇīs found in this sūtra (the so-called *vimaloṣṇīṣa* dhāraṇī) along with extensive rites for its use in the preparation and consecration of caityas.⁸
- i.4 The present text appears not to have survived in Sanskrit, though the shorter of the two dhāraṇīs it contains, the *vimaloṣṇīṣa* dhāraṇī, does survive in a number of Sanskrit sources. This sūtra advocates copying the dhāraṇī on birch bark, and indeed the *vimaloṣṇīṣa* dhāraṇī has been found on seventh-century birch-bark fragments from Gilgit, where it was copied in order to prolong the life of King Navasurendra.⁹ The dhāraṇī is also found carved into stone at a monastery in Orissa,¹⁰ and—again in accordance with the instructions for its usage found in this text—is included in caityas and seals found at Bodhgaya,¹¹ Nālandā, Ratnagiri, Pharapur, and Udayagiri.¹² Beyond the subcontinent, the *Vimaloṣṇīṣa* dhāraṇī appears in such far-flung regions as Indonesia,¹³ and Dunhuang in China.¹⁴ The version of the *Vimaloṣṇīṣa* dhāraṇī found in this text varies slightly from than that found in many of these other sources. Gregory Schopen has argued that the version found here is likely the earlier version.¹⁵

- i.5 The Tibetan translation of this text was made by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Śīlendrabodhi, and the Tibetan translator Yeshé Dé, all of whom were active in Tibet in the late eighth and early ninth centuries. The sūtra is also listed in the imperial-era Denkarma catalog under the title *The Dhāraṇī “The Stainless Uṣṇīṣa That Shines with Light That Penetrates All Gates,”* further attesting to its translation into Tibetan prior to the empire’s collapse in 843.¹⁶ It does not appear, however, by its present title in the Phangthangma catalog, although we do find there a text called *The Dhāraṇī-Mantra of the Stainless Uṣṇīṣa That Shines Together with its Rites*,¹⁷ along with a “*Vimaloṣṇīṣa mantra*.”¹⁸ In addition to its eighth- or ninth-century Tibetan translation, this text was also translated into Chinese in 984 by Dānapāla (施护) with the title 佛頂放無垢光明入普門觀察一切如來心陀羅尼經 (*Foding fang wugou guangming ru pu men guancha yiqie rulai xin tuoluoni jing*).¹⁹
- i.6 As previously noted, the ritual applications of the two dhāraṇīs taught in this sūtra are primarily connected to the construction of caityas, and the shorter of the two has enjoyed circulation for this purpose throughout the Buddhist world from at least the seventh century up until modern times.²⁰ As the text itself mentions, when these dhāraṇīs are placed inside a caitya, it becomes “a caitya of hundred thousand reliquaries of the tathāgatas,” indicating that when inserted into caityas these dhāraṇīs perform the ritual function of relics.²¹ Indeed, this text is still used in caitya and stūpa consecration rituals in the Tibetan tradition along with the Raśmivimalādhāraṇī, the pair of texts being known as “the two stainless ones.”²² The *Vimaloṣṇīṣa dhāraṇī* is also counted in the Tibetan tradition as one among the “five great dhāraṇīs” (*gzung chen po lnga*) used in consecration rituals.²³

- i.7 The present translation was completed based on the Tibetan translation found in both the Dhāraṇī and Tantra sections of the Degé Kangyur, in consultation with the single recension found in the Stok Palace (*stog pho brang*) Kangyur and the notes in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) of the Degé Kangyur. The text is stable across all of the Kangyurs consulted, with the same title, colophon, and only minor variants. The dhāraṇīs themselves have been rendered primarily based on the Degé recension, but with occasional corrections made based on readings from other Kangyurs. All instances where the rendering of the dhāraṇī departs from that found in the Degé recension of Toh 599 have been noted.

The Translation

1. **The Dhāraṇī “The Stainless Uṣṇīṣa That Shines with Light That Penetrates All Gates to View the Essence and Samaya of All Tathāgatas”**
- 1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas!
- 1.2 Then the Blessed One was residing in the divine abode of Tuṣita together with a great saṅgha of bodhisattvas, a great gathering of attendant gods, and the gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and others. The Blessed One taught the Dharma of the six perfections to that great gathering in the following way.
- 1.3 “Through the accumulation of great quantities of merit that result from generosity, the result of obtaining the power of a cakravartin ripens,²⁴ the seven precious gems rain down, and great treasures appear spontaneously. These are the results of the perfection of generosity.
- 1.4 “Likewise, the ripened results of the perfection of discipline are to receive the teachings of the tathāgatas, to have the five supernatural abilities, to be disciplined, to maintain brahmacarya, and to be born as a god.

- 1.5 “The ripened results of the perfection of patience are to have the attractive body of a god and to be adorned with the major and minor marks that one never tires of seeing.
- 1.6 “The ripened results of the perfection of diligence are to be diligent,²⁵ to tame the māras, to be free from aging, sickness, and birth, and to be born miraculously into a buddhafiield.
- 1.7 “The ripened result of meditative concentration is to obtain many trillions of samādhis, like the heroic samādhi and others.
- 1.8 “The ripened result of the perfection of insight is the gathering of great insight and wisdom, the amassing of an ocean of learning, and great learning.”
- 1.9 Then those gods contemplated and trained in those Dharma gates of the six perfections day and night and, because they are so difficult, cultivated them further.
- 1.10 In that retinue of gods there was a god from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three called Stainless Quintessential Gem. He had a billion servant gods and was surrounded by a retinue of eighteen thousand goddesses. He possessed a divinely emanated palace that had walls of the seven precious gems, ornamented with a variety of parks and ponds and beautified by divine flowers. The god Stainless Quintessential Gem enjoyed many pleasures together with the goddess²⁶ named Possessed of Exquisite Blooming Flowers, and was attached to the delights of the gods. Inside the four-doored celestial palace made of the seven precious gems, he lay about enjoying the five sense pleasures and became corpulent and inflated with pride.

- 1.11 One night, at around midnight, the god had fallen asleep while the whole of his retinue of goddesses were quietly sleeping. A lord of the divine yakṣas named Ulkā mukha, who was also staying in that excellent place, admonished the god Stainless Quintessential Gem with these words: “Hey, Stainless Quintessential Gem, wake up, wake up! What are you doing, enjoying and attached to sleep! What are you doing, getting so used to enjoyments and so entrenched in attachments? What are you doing, just enjoying endless divine pleasures? Seven days from now you are going to die! You’ll be separated from divine pleasures and experience great suffering! What use will your current home, your sublime celestial palace made up of the seven precious gems, be to you then? You had better think quickly about a method by means of which this will not happen to your life force!” After he said this, the lord of divine yakṣas Ulkā mukha disappeared.
- 1.12 Upon hearing these distressing words, the god Stainless Quintessential Gem fainted and fell face-first from his bed onto the ground. His retinue of goddesses tore at their hair, dropped their ornaments, and rent their clothes. Blood and moisture drained from their faces. Their lips, the roofs of their mouths, their throats, and their tongues all became dry. They cried out many thousands of times, wailing and sobbing, crying, “Alas! Alas!” From divine precious vessels they threw scented water and cold sandalwood water on Stainless Quintessential Gem. Some of them clutched at his neck, some clutched at his hands, some of them kissed his hair, others clutched at his feet, and some grabbed his head. Some fainted and fell down, and some writhed on the ground like a fish out of water. Others writhed on the ground as if their bodies had been set on fire. Still others lamented profusely, crying and screaming, “Alas! Alas!”

- 1.13 At that point, the god Stainless Quintessential Gem woke up and recovered his senses. He vomited blood and groaned with intense pain. His body trembled, shaking like a tree blown in the wind. Silent but determined, he traveled far to where the lord of the gods, Śakra, was staying and touched the feet of the lord of the gods, Śakra. Grasping Śakra's feet, he said, "Blessed One, protect me! Blessed One, Great Being, Great King of the Gods, protect me! According to the proclamation of Ulkāmukha, the lord of the divine yakṣas, seven days from now it will be my time to die. He also told me to consider, when this happens, the experience of a hell being! Lord of the Gods, if this comes about, by what method may I avoid falling under the sway of the Lord of Death? How can I avoid going to lower rebirths? Give me a remedy for this fear? Lord of the Gods, please protect me with a ritual that will certainly free me from the gateway of the Lord of Death!"
- 1.14 Upon hearing these words, the lord of the gods, Śakra, with a pained heart, told the god Stainless Quintessential Gem, "O divine son, do not fear! The Blessed Buddha is the one who has defeated the Lord of Death and been freed from the suffering of the hells; he is the teacher of gods and humans in this world. He is the one who has gone beyond birth, aging, sickness, and death, who has gone beyond torment, who is the unsurpassed physician! He will be your protector—he who is just like a dear friend, like a defender, and like one's own parents. He will destroy all lower rebirths. Let us quickly go to where that guide resides."

1.15

The next morning the lord of the gods, Śakra, and the god Stainless Quintessential Gem, together with many thousands of gods and goddesses, went to Tuṣita, to the place where the Blessed One was residing. They bowed their heads at the Blessed One's feet, circled him three times, and sat before him. Then the lord of the gods, Śakra, addressed the Blessed One with these despondent words: "O Blessed One, the god Stainless Quintessential Gem has been admonished thus by the lord of the divine yakṣas, Ulkā mukha, who said that in the morning, seven days from now, Stainless Quintessential Gem will fall under the power of the gateway of the Lord of Death. When this happens, Blessed One, what can he do?"

When the Blessed Tathāgata Śākyamuni heard what the lord of the gods, Śakra, had said, he smiled. From his smiling mouth rays of multicolored light shone forth and illuminated the trichiliocosm. The light illuminated the abodes of all the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, rākṣasas, and bhūtas, rousing them. The light rays then returned, circled the Blessed One three times, and entered through the gateway of the Blessed One's mouth. As soon as they had entered his mouth, he said to the lord of the gods, Śakra, "O Lord of the Gods, the god Stainless Quintessential Gem who is afraid of facing the gateway of the Lord of Death in seven days' time should listen. When the time comes for him to die, he will experience unbearable and intense great suffering—the sufferings of a hell being. But first, he will be born as a sow-headed piśācī in the mire of a toilet pit belonging to a bamboo craftsman in the city of Vārāṇasī. In that toilet pit he will eat urine and excrement. In that very toilet are trillions of bugs, which, at all times, will eat the flesh of that sow until they leave nothing but a skeleton. Then, once again, due to the power of karma, his body will be fully restored and will live for seven years. Then, when it is time to die, he will be reborn as a tortoise in the wilderness, where even the word *water* is never heard, nor is there a single shadow from a tree. There, his body will be tortured by the heat of the sun and burned, he will eat hot sand, and crows will pick at his flesh, tearing his body to bits. Then, once again, due to the power of karma, his body will be restored and again destroyed—this will continue for five full years. Then, when the time comes to die, he will be born as a big fish in a large river right there in Vārāṇasī. Again, due to the power of karma, he will be flung onto the land where there is no water and his great body will be eaten by poisonous snakes, crows, weasels, dogs, leopards, bears, jackals, and the like—all sorts of other animals will also eat him. Then, once again, due to the power of karma, his body will be restored and again eaten²⁷—this will continue for three years. Then, when the time comes to die, he will be born into seven different households and experience the pains of Jambudvīpa. He will be born into the home of a leper, a pauper, a ḍomba, a butcher, a person of base character, a caṇḍala, and a blind person, where for sixty years he must bear each of those types of suffering. Having suffered in

these ways, he will die and be born in the sixteen great hells, suffering there for eighty-four eons. Lord of the Gods, these are the tremendous sufferings he will experience. And, when he finally obtains a human body, he will again be born into poverty, with missing limbs, with a weak intellect, illiterate, bereft of the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha, despised by all the world, constantly thirsty and hungry, with a short life, and always beset by illness.”

1.17 When the lord of the gods, Śakra, heard this terrible news about Stainless Quintessential Gem, he became terrified in front of the Blessed One. Extremely upset, he cried, “The Blessed One did not fulfill my wish! He has not protected me!”

1.18 The Blessed One replied, “Lord of the Gods, there is a remedy against the great punishment of the Lord of Death, so do not lose hope. By relying upon it, at a later time, in the future, when those beings die, they will do so blissfully. They will be completely freed from all rebirths in the hell realms or as animals. As soon as it is recollected, all their obscurations will be purified, their lives will be extended, and they will obtain perfectly immaculate bodies.”

1.19 Then the lord of the gods, Śakra, the Four Great Kings, and Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara joined their palms, bowed toward the Blessed One, and said, “Blessed One, please strengthen our hopes! Blessed One, please protect all the gods! Blessed One, please liberate all worldly beings! Blessed One, please pacify the fear of death! Blessed One, please remove the unbearable suffering of the hells! Blessed One, please summon the Dharma King, the Lord of Death!²⁸ Blessed One, please reassure the beings of the realm of Jambudvīpa with its four continents! Blessed One, please look upon the god realm of the Heaven of the Thirty-Three! Blessed One, please seal the ten directions of this world with the great seal of the wisdom of the tathāgatas of all ten directions! Please grant the blessings of the tathāgatas! Blessed One, since you are so loving, please explain to us the great teaching about this remedy! Well-Gone One, please explain it!”

- 1.20 Then the Blessed Tathāgata Śākyamuni took their words to heart and entered into equipoise in the *all-seeing* samādhi. As soon as he had entered into equipoise in that samādhi, light rays called *universal* emerged from the center of his uṣṇīṣa, completely illuminated all the directions, and remained in the sky like a jeweled parasol. The Blessed One smiled when he saw this and told the lord of the gods, Śakra, “O Lord of the Gods, retain this dhāraṇī-mantra called *the stainless uṣṇīṣa that shines with light that penetrates all gates to view the essence and samaya of all tathāgatas*. This mudrā is taught and rejoiced in by tathāgatas equal in number to the sixty-two quintillion grains of sand of the River Gaṅgā. Simply by seeing and hearing this dhāraṇī-mantra, one is freed from all evil deeds, obscurations, rebirths in hell, animal realm rebirths, and fears of lower rebirth. Even all obscurations from previous karma will be destroyed and all rebirths as a hell being will likewise vanish.
- 1.21 “As an analogy, just as the ashes of burnt grass Scatter quickly in the wind, Evil deeds gathered in previous lifetimes All burn away.
- 1.22 “Just as, when it rains, A torrent down a mountain Cleanses the surface of the earth Of all its dirt and filth, So is evil is cleansed Simply by seeing or hearing this dhāraṇī-mantra.
- 1.23 “Just as fire refines gold, Making it soft and pliable, So too reciting this dhāraṇī-mantra Purifies the body, there is no doubt.
- 1.24 “Just as, when the sun rises, Light spreads everywhere, Likewise, when someone upholds this dhāraṇī, Even their body becomes extremely beautiful.
- 1.25 “Just as a dry fish out of water Writhes in pain on the cusp of death, But when someone throws it back in water It continues to live there and thrive, So too, merely by recollecting this dhāraṇī, Humans will reverse the depletion of their lifespan.²⁹
- 1.26 “Lord of the Gods, I will teach this dhāraṇī-mantra. Listen!³⁰

1.27 *namaḥ sarvatathāgatānām om mahācintāmaṇijvalanasāgaragambhire ākarṣaya ākarṣaya āyundhara āyundhara sandhara sandhara kṣaṇa kṣaṇa kṣeṇi kṣeṇi kṣuṇu kṣuṇu sarvatathāgatamahāsamaye³¹ tiṣṭha tiṣṭha mahābhuvanasāgare³² saṃśodhaya māṃ sarvasatvāṃś ca bhagavati sarvapāpaṃvimale³³ jaya jaya jayalabdhe sphuṭa sphuṭa sphoṭaya sphoṭaya vigatāvaraṇi bhayaharaṇi hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ mṛtyudaṇḍadhare abhayaprade uṣṇīṣavyavalokite samantamukhe³⁴ samantavyavalokite mahāmāye³⁵ mahāpāśadhare amoghavimale ākarṣaya akarṣaya ākaḍḍhaya ākaḍḍhaya bhara bhara sambhara sambhara indriyaviśodhani bhūṣitabhujе mahāmudrāvilokite jaya jaya siddhe siddhe buddha buddha bodhani bodhani sambodhani sambodhani śodhani śodhani saṃśodhani saṃśodhani viśodhani viśodhani hara hara mama sarvapāpaṃ sarvatathāgatakulabhujе samayatiṣṭhe prasaratu mama puṇyaṃ³⁶ vinaśyantu pāpaṃ sarvakilbiṣahare maṇiviśuddhe śodhaya vimale vikāsitapadme kavacitabhujе śaṭpāramitāparipūraṇi sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣavilokite svāhā | sarvatathāgataguhyādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite svāhā | āyurdade svāhā | puṇyadade svāhā | puṇyavilokite svāhā | puṇyāvalokite svāhā | mṛtyudaṇḍe svāhā | yamadaṇḍe svāhā | yamadūte svāhā | saṃharaṇi svāhā | sambharaṇi svāhā | saṃdharaṇi svāhā | pratisaraṇi svāhā | ojevati svāhā | tejevati svāhā | jayavati svāhā | sarvatathāgatamudrādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite svāhā |*

1.28 “Lord of the Gods, teach this dhāraṇī-mantra to the god Stainless Quintessential Gem. With it you will bring long-lasting benefit and happiness to that divine son.

1.29 “Write down this dhāraṇī-mantra called *the stainless uṣṇīṣa that shines with light that penetrates all gates to view the essence and samaya of all tathāgatas* and place it inside a caitya. Whether it is a new caitya or one needing repair, place the dhāraṇī inside it. Make offerings with incense and unguents, recall the dhāraṇī vidyāmantra one hundred and eight times, and meditate on it one hundred and eight times. Bring it to mind every day, three times during the day and three times at night.

- 1.30 “Then, facing the eastern direction and the rising sun, make a scented maṇḍala and scatter it with flowers in the direction of the sun. Burn incense of aloeswood and styrax gum, prostrate to all the tathāgatas, and recite the dhāraṇī one hundred and eight times. Make one hundred and eight caityas, write this essence vidyāmantra, and place it inside the caityas, then place these on top of the maṇḍala. Doing so is the same as placing the bodily remains and relics of tathāgatas equal in number to the ninety-nine quintillion grains of sand of the River Gaṅgā inside each of the caityas. They thus also become essential relics. Write this essence down and put it inside them:³⁷
- 1.31 *oṃ namas traiyadhvikānāṃ sarvatathāgatahṛdayagarbhe jvala jvala dharma-dhātugarbhe sambhara mamāyuhḥ saṃśodhaya saṃśodhaya mama sarvapāpaṃ sarvatathāgatasamantoṣṇīṣavimalaviśuddhe hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ aṃ vaṃ saṃ jah svāhā* |³⁸
- 1.32 “Those who perform the ritual related to caityas after venerating the essence of the tathāgatas of the three times called *the stainless uṣṇīṣa that shines with light that penetrates all gates* will experience the replenishment of their lifespan that has been exhausted and will be purified, extending their life. When they die, then, just like a snake shedding its skin, they will leave their body behind and, because they have the corresponding fortune, will travel to the realm of Sukhāvātī. They will not experience the pain of death; never again will they experience the sensation of death. Never again will they take lower rebirths and be reborn as a hell being, an animal, or in the realm of the Lord of Death. Never again will the words ‘hell being,’ cross their ears, let alone experience the fully ripened fruit of such karma—that would be impossible.”

1.33 Then the lord of the gods, Śakra, after he had received this vidyāmantra from the Blessed One, went back to his abode at dawn with the god Stainless Quintessential Gem. Stainless Quintessential Gem followed the instructions given by the Tathāgata and correctly performed the rite of the caitya, followed by the rite for reciting the dhāraṇī as well. As soon as it was performed, all of the god Stainless Quintessential Gem's pain was immediately quelled and he was freed from his evil deeds. His body was purified, his skin turned golden, and his hair and eyes became like sapphires. All the tathāgatas saw this, and called out from the expanse of space, "Excellent! Excellent!" When that divine son saw that his body had become free from obscurations, he was astounded and, with great joy, exclaimed, "Amazing, the Buddha! Amazing, this vidyāmantra! Amazing, the Dharma! To the Blessed Tathāgata Śākyamuni who so immediately bestows such results, to that wish-fulfilling jewel who has supreme compassion, I pay homage! I pay homage!"

1.34 The god then returned home and gathered all kinds of divine flowers, incense, perfumes, garlands, and unguents, as well as divine clothes, adornments, and ornaments. Then, along with his full retinue of servants, goddesses, and gods, along with the lord of the gods, Śakra, and the rest, he went to Tuṣita and the place where the Blessed One was staying. When he arrived, they worshiped the Blessed One extensively, circled him a hundred thousand times, and sat down right in front of the Blessed One to listen to the Dharma. Then the Four Great Kings, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and the great chief of the yakṣas, Vajrapāṇi, joined their palms together and bowed toward the Blessed One. They asked the Blessed One, "Blessed One, due to what actions did the god Stainless Quintessential Gem experience such unbearable and painful ripened results?"

The Blessed One replied, “Excellent, excellent, sublime beings! You sublime beings have asked an excellent question, so listen carefully, and I will explain. Vajrapāṇi, long ago in the past, in the mountains of the southern region, there was a town called Vast Whirlpool.³⁹ In that town lived a brahmin named Stainless, who was learned, clever, bright, and smart, had a handsome and attractive appearance, was delightful to look at, had a beautiful complexion, was faithful, had a virtuous mind, and adhered to logic. He memorized this queen of vidyāmantras and meditated upon it extensively with a wish to benefit all beings. In that very same town there was a prominent householder named Luminous, who was prosperous, and had many riches, luxurious possessions, and an extensive retinue. That householder lacked proper faith and instead had faith in non-Buddhists. The brahmin repeatedly proclaimed this queen of vidyāmantras, together with its essence, to the householder, but the householder never developed faith in it. Instead, he thought, ‘I will chop this brahmin into tiny pieces and toss him aside like burnt fish and turtles. I will fill his mouth with vomit!’ The very moment he had this thought the householder was struck with vitiligo and leprosy. When the time came for him to die, he experienced agony at the moment of death and was reborn in the great hell of Ultimate Torment where he suffered for an eon. When he died there, he suffered for an eon as a fish, a pig, and a turtle. Then, following that death, he was reborn in the Black Line hell where he suffered greatly for an eon. When he died there, he was born in the house of a blind man back in that very same village where he had lived before. He went blind as well, and would go here and there begging. One time, he went to a temple where there was a compassionate monk. When that monk saw him, he was filled with great love and gave him food and also proclaimed this queen of vidyāmantras. The blind man, upon hearing this dhāraṇī-mantra, remembered his previous lives, and also remembered that brahmin. Recalling this, he thought, ‘Alas! I have done something horrific!’ and felt embarrassed and ashamed.

- 1.36 “Due to the power of that dhāraṇī-mantra, when the time came for him to die, he was reborn as a god in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three. There, within a great celestial palace, he was surrounded by a retinue of goddesses and experienced the great pleasures of the gods.
- 1.37 “If you have some kind of doubt or hesitation, or wonder whether at that time when he was a blind householder he was someone else, do not think that way. He is none other than the god Stainless Quintessential Gem. Vajrapāṇi, that being the case, he should be guided by the threefold restraint. Vajrapāṇi, the suffering that he now experiences is the ripened result of that karma. This divine son will experience this final karmic result up until he arrives at the seat of awakening. Vajrapāṇi, if you have some kind of doubt or hesitation, or wonder whether the brahmin Stainless at that time was someone else, do think of it that way. Vajrapāṇi, that was you, yourself! The monk who proclaimed the vidyāmantra to the blind man was Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta himself, who was a monk at that time.”
- 1.38 When the large group of gods heard that account of the past, they were astounded and delighted. With exclamation and excitement they declared, “Amazing! The power of this vidyāmantra of the tathāgatas’ samaya is like a precious wish-fulfilling jewel!” Then twelve thousand gods from the retinue attained the state of irreversibility in their spiritual progress. A trillion goddesses lost their female organs, grew male organs, and remained firmly in the state of irreversibility in their spiritual progress.
- 1.39 Then the great chief of the yakṣas, Vajrapāṇi, said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, the words of this dhāraṇī, this queen of vidyāmantras, are powerful and greatly beneficial. Blessed One, please teach a rite that will, at a later time, in the future, bring benefit and happiness to beings and be successful in liberating hell beings and those who have taken birth as animals.”

The Blessed One said, “Vajrapāṇi, listen to the benefits of this dhāraṇī-mantra and the rite for accomplishing it. It is in this way that later, in the future, sons and daughters of noble family, or monks, nuns, and male and female lay practitioners, should, all at once, recall this queen of vidyāmantras. They should circle a reliquary or a caitya enshrining the relics of a tathāgata, and all at once bring to mind these two precious wish-fulfilling jewels.⁴⁰ By doing so, they will generate roots of virtue with respect to tathāgatas equal in number to the hundred billion trillion⁴¹ grains of sand of the River Gaṅgā. They will obtain great merit. They will even completely purify the karmic obscurations from the five acts of immediate retribution. They will be freed from lower rebirths in hell, as animals, or in the realm of the Lord of Death. Their lives will be lengthened. Just like a snake shedding its skin, they will leave their bodies behind and, because they have the corresponding fortune, will travel to the realm of Sukhāvatī. Thenceforth, they will be unstained by a womb and, wherever they are born, they will be born miraculously from a lotus. In all their rebirths, they will remember their previous lives. They will always form the wish to see all the tathāgatas, and all their wishes will be perfectly fulfilled.

“If one wants to perform the rite, one should bathe, put on new clothes, and make a square scented maṇḍala. One should write the vidyāmantra on birch bark, cast five caityas, and place the vidyāmantra inside the caityas. Four of the caityas should be placed in the four corners of the maṇḍala, and one should be placed in its center. A pole should be planted and a red flag hung from it. Flowers should be scattered and five full vases set out. In the four corners, one should place four censers and burn incense of styrax gum, aloeswood, sandalwood, and frankincense, and four vessels of fragrant offering water should be set out. These two precious wish-fulfilling jewels should be recited one hundred and eight times, with the essence mantra recited while circumambulating the caityas one hundred and eight times. Those who are ill, injured, or gravely ill, whose lifespans are running out, who fear untimely death, kings, those who fear opposing armies, and those who want sons should sit facing the maṇḍala. Water should be sprinkled using five peacock feathers, and offerings should be made to the maṇḍala of caityas.

“If someone performs this ritual once, they will be freed from the karmic obscurations accumulated over a hundred thousand eons and will thus become free from obscuration. They will be freed from all illnesses, all afflictive emotions, all rebirths in the lower realms as a hell being, an animal, or in the realm of the Lord of Death, and will be freed from all fears. All worldly and supra-mundane suffering, obscurations, evil deeds, and malevolent influences will, for lifetime after lifetime until they reach the seat of awakening, be totally destroyed. Lifespans that are running out will be replenished and life will be extended. Those who have endured illness for a long time and have become weak will have their bodies fully revitalized. Their bodies will become immaculate and their wishes will be fulfilled. Thenceforth, they will never witness the suffering of the gateway of the Lord of Death. Just like a snake shedding its skin, they will leave their bodies behind and, because they have the corresponding fortune, will travel to the realm of Sukhāvatī. Wherever they are born they will be born from a lotus and will always be fully adorned with ornaments. In all of their rebirths they will remember their former lives.

1.43

“If someone correctly performs this recitation rite at the three times of the day every day, reciting the dhāraṇī twenty-one times each time, they will be freed from the obscurations of their evil deeds and all their afflictive emotions. If someone correctly performs this recitation rite for a whole year, they will obtain the samādhi called *the fearless view*⁴² *whose light rays penetrate everywhere*. They will see all the tathāgatas in all buddhafields in the ten directions and will obtain an immaculate body called *stainless*⁴³ *immaculate blazing splendor*. They will obtain an immaculate lifespan and will generate roots of virtue with respect to tathāgatas equal in number to the eighty-two quintillion grains of sand in the River Gaṅgā. For lifetime after lifetime they will continue to be completely pure. They will travel to whichever buddhafield they wish to visit, and, like a snake shedding its skin, they will leave their body behind and, because they possess the corresponding fortune, will take rebirth in the world of Sukhāvatī. They will not see the gateway of the Lord of Death and will know everything to be like a dream.

1.44

“If, on the eighth day, fourteenth day, or fifteenth day of the lunar month, someone who recites these two precious great wish-fulfilling jewel dhāraṇī-mantras one hundred and eight times and circles a caitya that contains relics, that recitations, a voice will immediately issue from the caitya that says ‘Excellent!’ That person will immediately be freed from the obscuration of evil deeds, all afflictive emotions, and the stains of desire, anger, and delusion, along with stinginess and jealousy. Their body will become stainless and immaculate. Any man, woman, boy, or girl to whom one speaks this dhāraṇī will also be freed from all evil deeds. If it is spoken to those who have taken rebirth as animals, they too will all be liberated from their animal rebirths. If it is spoken to a flock of birds, every bird in the flock will be completely liberated. If it is spoken to a dog or a tortoise, a snake, a cat, a weasel, or any animal, even they will all be liberated.

- 1.45 “If it is recited twenty-one times over sand and that sand is scattered in a charnel ground, any being whose bones that sand touches, no matter what hell realm they may have been born into, will be freed from that realm and will take rebirth in the heavenly realms. For those who have taken rebirth in the heavenly realms, a rain of flowers will fall upon their bodies. Ferocious animals and all kinds of birds who frequent that charnel ground will all also move on to higher rebirths. If that incanted sand is scattered on a mountain, the wild animals and birds who wander there will also go on to higher rebirths.
- 1.46 “If they recite the essence of the tathāgatas of the three times, *the stainless uṣṇīṣa that shines with light that penetrates all gates*, one hundred thousand times, even those who have committed the five deeds of immediate retribution will be immediately freed from falling into the hell of Ultimate Torment and the torment of burning. If they recite it a hundred thousand times, even those who are being led to the realm of the Lord of Death with a rope tied around their neck will find this situation immediately reversed, and they will be relieved of that great fear. All their rebirths as a hell being will likewise be completely pacified and destroyed, of this there is no doubt. Even the Dharma King, the Lord of Death, will be attentive and present like a servant. Their body will travel the path of samādhi or, like a snake shedding its skin, their body will be left behind and they will take delight in and travel to the realm of Sukhāvatī. They will not see the suffering brought by the Lord of Death.
- 1.47 “If someone writes the dhāraṇī one hundred thousand times and places it inside caityas, all the caityas will blaze with fire when the hundred thousand recitations are completed, and the person too will blaze with fire. It is certain that they will immediately achieve irreversibility in their spiritual progress and remain on the ten bhūmis. They will generate roots of virtue with respect to tathāgatas equal in number to the ninety-nine quintillion grains of sand of the River Gaṅgā and obtain prophecy from them.

- 1.48 “If this dhāraṇī is placed within a single large caitya, it becomes a caitya of hundred thousand reliquaries of the tathāgatas, once the center pole has been placed. All those who perform such rituals will achieve the state of irreversibility in their spiritual progress and will awaken to the state of unsurpassed, perfect awakening. Even those born into the animal realm or any other type of creature that goes there will all achieve the state of irreversibility in their spiritual progress. If even those who so much as pass under the shadow of such a caitya will be completely freed, what need is there to speak of those who show it great respect? The qualities and benefits of doing so are inexpressible.”
- 1.49 Then the chief of the yakṣas, Vajrapāṇi, the Four Great Kings, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and all the gods from Tuṣita, along with Śakra and the rest of the gods from the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, and the god Stainless Quintessential Gem, all went to where the Blessed One was. They circled him three times, joined their palms, bowed toward him, and said this to the Blessed One: “Blessed One, this extremely powerful dhāraṇī-mantra is rare to see and rare to hear, just like a wish-fulfilling jewel. Blessed One, we who are gathered together here will, in the future, at a later time, uphold this wish-fulfilling jewel, propagate it, and proclaim it to all beings. We will follow after the great beings of the future who uphold this dhāraṇī; we will continuously protect them, guard them, and hide them. We will care for them like our own child.”
- 1.50 The Blessed One replied, “Friends, this is excellent! Excellent! Do just that! I entrust to you this queen of vidyāmantras that is like a wish-fulfilling jewel.”
- 1.51 This completes “The Noble Dhāraṇī ‘The Stainless Uṣṇīṣa That Shines with Light That Penetrates All Gates to View the Essence and Samaya of All Tathāgatas.’ ”

Colophon

- c.1 It was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Śilendrabodhi and the great editor-translator, the monk Yeshé Dé.

Abbreviations

D *sde dge* (phar phud) Degé

H *lha sa* Lhasa

K *kang shi* Kangxi

N *snar thang* Narthang

S *stog pho 'brang* Stok Palace

Y *g.yong lo* Yongle

Notes

1. The first, and longer, dhāraṇī is called *the stainless uṣṇīṣa that shines with light that penetrates all gates to view the essence and samaya of all tathāgatas*. The shorter dhāraṇī, which later came to be widely known as the *Stainless Uṣṇīṣa (vimaloṣṇīṣa)* dhāraṇī, is simply referred to in this sūtra as the “essence” (*snying po*, *hṛdaya*) of the longer dhāraṇī. Note that this dhāraṇī in Dunhuang manuscript PT 350 is also referred to as “the essence of the noble *Vimaloṣṇīṣa*” (*’phags pa gtsug tor dri ma myed pa’i snying po*). See Scherrer-Schaub 1994, p. 711.
2. A closely matching theme also occurs in . This dhāraṇī and its associated ritual texts (Toh 594, 595, 596, and 598) also share several short parallel passages with the present work, indicating a close relationship between these two textual corpuses. A similar narrative is also found in the . See J. Dalton 2023, pp. 50–97, for an analysis of the relationship between these three works.
3. Schopen has written about this and other sūtras that specifically mention the redemptive qualities of reciting dhāraṇīs to “bugs, birds, and creepy-crawlers” (Schopen 2012, p. 284).
4. [note d2eb4082...]
5. Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 983 version of this text within vol. 101 or 102 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 983, , for details.
6. On the multiple meanings of the term *dhāraṇī*, and especially the ways in which we see these instantiated in manuscript copying practices at Dunhuang, see J. Dalton 2023, pp. 29–38.
7. (*Caityadhāraṇī*, Toh 601).
8. See Schopen 2005, pp. 334–36, for an analysis of the relationship between the two texts. The collection of *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī texts included in the Kangyurs provides a similar case. Toh 597 is the primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī-sūtra that contains the more extensive and well-known narrative associated with the revelation of the dhāraṇī proper, but only a brief rite for its practice. The *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī-kalpas Toh 594, 595, 596, and 598, on the other hand, are ritual texts that share a shorter narrative framework (completely different from the narrative frame in Toh 597), but which contain more extensive rites for the application of the dhāraṇī in ritual practice. Similarly, shares the same dhāraṇī as the present text, but employs a completely different framing narrative.
9. Hinüber 2018, pp. 230–31. Hinüber notes that in this case the dhāraṇī seems to have effectively served its life-extending function, given that “King Navasurendra ruled perhaps for more than 40 years, longer than any other king from the Bhagadatta family” (ibid., p. 231). See also Schopen 2012, p. 283.
10. Hinüber 2018, pp. 229–30.
11. Hidas 2021a, pp. 88–94.
12. Schopen 2012, pp. 283–84.
13. Griffiths 2014, pp. 181–83.
14. Scherrer-Schaub 1994, p. 712.

15. Schopen notes the difference between the dhāraṇī as preserved here in this dhāraṇī-sūtra with the alternative, and slightly shorter, version found in a number of other sources, including the Chinese translation of the present text (Taishō 1025), , and Sanskrit dhāraṇī seals found in many places in South Asia and beyond. He concludes, on the basis of a philological analysis of the available sources, that the longer version found in this dhāraṇī-sūtra is likely the earlier one (Schopen 2005, pp. 334–36).
16. Lalou 1953, p. 327. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, 189, no. 340.
17. *gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba'i gzungs sngags cho ga dang bcas pa*. dkar chag 'phang thang ma, 23.
18. dkar chag 'phang thang ma, 31.
19. Taishō 1025.
20. For an overview of texts related to stūpas and caityas in the Kangyur, see: Knowledge Base Article on Stūpas.
21. See also Scherrer-Schaub 1994, p. 718, and Bendor 2003, p. 24, on the reliquary function of dhāraṇīs in caityas.
22. *The Dhāraṇī for a Caitya* (Toh 610), .
23. Scherrer-Schaub 1994, p. 722 n. 71; Bendor 2003, p. 24 and p. 27, n. 22.
24. This translation follows Toh 983 and H, K, and S in reading 'khor los sgyur ba'i dbang, rather than 'khor los sgyur ba'i dbang phyug in Toh 599.
25. This translation follows S, which reads *brtson 'grus brtsom pa* rather than the reading in D, *brtson 'grus rtsom pa lta ba*.
26. This translation follows H, N, and S in reading *lha'i bu mo mchog*, instead of the Degé which reads (in both Degé recensions) *lha'i bu mo'i mchog*.
27. This translation follows Toh 599 and Stok Palace in reading *za bar 'gyur*. H, K, N, Y, and Toh 983 read *zad par 'gyur*, “will perish.”
28. This translation follows H, K, N, S, Y, and Toh 983 in reading *bcom ldan 'das chos kyi rgyal po*. Toh 599 reads *bcom ldan 'das ci chos kyi rgyal po*.
29. The text just says that humans reverse their lifespan (*mi rnams tshe ni zlog par byed*), which is interpreted to refer to the reversal of the exhaustion of a human lifespan.
30. A Sanskrit witness of this dhāraṇī with some variation is published in Hidas 2021, pp. 91–92. In that dhāraṇī collection this specific dhāraṇī formula is called the *cintāmaṇināmadhāraṇī*, “The Dhāraṇī of the Wish-fulfilling Jewel.”
31. Reading °*samaye* following N and S as well as Hidas 2021. D reads °*samaya*.
32. Reading °*sāgare* following S and Hidas 2021. D reads °*sāgara*.
33. Reading °*vimale* following S and Hidas 2021. D reads °*vimala*.
34. Reading °*mukhe* following H, K, N, Y, S, Toh 983, and Hidas 2021. Toh 599 reads °*muṣe*.

35. Reading *mahāmāye* following H, K, N, Y, and Toh 983. This term is missing entirely in S. Hidas 2021 reads *mahāmāyāmahāmāyonadhare*.
36. Reading *mahāpunyam* following C, J, and Hidas 2021. D reads *mahāpunye*. S attests to the accusative declension (*°am*), but otherwise reports the corrupted reading *munnyam*.
37. A Sanskrit witness of the following dhāraṇī with some variation is published in Hidas 2021, pp. 91–92, where it is included in the *cintāmaṇināmadhāraṇī*, as mentioned in .
38. The dhāraṇī could be roughly translated as follows: “Om Homage to those of the three times, Essence of the Dharma of All Tathāgatas, shine, shine, Essence of the Dharmadhātu, support my life, purify, purify all of my evil deeds, One who is Stainless and Pure Like the All-Pervading Uṣṇīṣa of all Tathāgatas *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ aṃ vaṃ saṃ jaḥ svāhā*.” See also Scherrer-Schaub for a translation of the version of the dhāraṇī found in the Dunhuang manuscript PT 350 (Scherrer-Schaub 1997, p. 713), Hidas for a translation of the version of the dhāraṇī based on seals found at Bodh Gaya (Hidas 2021a, p. 90), and *The Dhāraṇī for a Caitya*, [n.21](#), for the version of the dhāraṇī found in that work. As mentioned above, Schopen (2005, pp. 334–36) argues that the form of the dhāraṇī found in the present text is likely the earlier version and that the more abbreviated forms found in the Chinese translation of the present text, in Toh 601, and on the seals found in many places in South Asia and beyond are likely a later form.
39. Tentative for *yangs pa ’khyil ba*.
40. Referring to the two dhāraṇīs taught above.
41. This translation follows H, N, and S in reading *bye ba khrag khrig ’bum gyi bye ma snyed kyi de bzhin gshegs pa rnams*. D reads *bye ma snyed khrad khrig phyrag ’bum gyi phye ma snyed kyi de bzhin gshegs pa rnams*.
42. This translation follows H, N, and S in reading *’jigs pa med pa’i lta ba*. D reads *’jigs pa med par lta ba*.
43. This translation follows H, K, N, S, Y, and Toh 983 in reading *dri ma med pa*. Toh 599 reads *dri ma med par*.

Glossary

bhūta

'byung po

འབྱུང་པོ།

bhūta

Black Line

thig nag

ཐིག་ནག་།

kālasūtra

One of the eight hot hell realms.

brahmacarya

tshang ba

ཚང་བ།

brahmacarya

A term for discipline that usually, but not always, implies celibacy.

caitya

mchod rten

མཆོད་རྟེན།

caitya

stūpa

cakravartin

'khor los sgyur ba

འཁོར་ལོས་སྐུར་བ།

cakravartin

caṇḍala

gdol pa

གདོལ་པ།

caṇḍala

One of the lowest castes in India.

dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

dhāraṇī-mantra

gzungs sngags

གཟུངས་སྒྲགས།

dhāraṇīmantra

A term used synonymously with dhāraṇī, often with the connotation of “spell.”

five acts of immediate retribution

mtshams med pa lnga byas pa

མཚམས་མེད་པ་ལྔ་བྱས་པ།

ānantaryakarman

The five extremely negative actions that, once those who have committed them die, result in immediate rebirth in the hells without the experience of the intermediate state. They are killing an arhat, killing one’s mother, killing one’s father, creating a schism in the saṅgha, and maliciously drawing blood from a tathāgata’s body.

five supernatural abilities

mngon par shes pa lnga

མངོན་པར་ཤེས་པ་ལྔ།

pañcābhijñā

Four Great Kings

rgyal po chen po bzhi

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི།

caturmahārāja

god

lha'i bu

ལྷའི་བུ།

devaputra

goddess

lha'i bu mo

ལྷའི་བུ་མོ།

Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum cu rtsa gsum pa

སུམ་ཅུ་རུ་གསུམ་པ།

trāyastriṃśa

heroic

dpa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin

དཔའ་བར་འགྲོ་བའི་ཉིང་རེ་འཛིན།

The name of a samādhi.

Jambudvīpa*'dzam bu'i gling*

འཛམ་བླུ་ལྗོང་།

*jambudvīpa***kinnara***mi 'am ci*

མི་འམ་ཅི།

*kinnara***Lord of Death***'chi bdag*

འཆི་བདག།

*yama***Lord of the Gods***lha'i dbang po*

ལྷའི་དབང་པོ།

Maheśvara*dbang phyug chen po*

དབང་ཕྱུག་ཆེན་པོ།

*maheśvara***mahoraga***lto 'phye chen po*

ལྷོ་འཕྲེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta

'jam dpal gzhon nu gyur pa

འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུ་གྱུར་པ།

mañjuśrīkumārabhūta

null

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

null

bA rA Na sI

བཞ་རཱ་སེ།

null

bcom ldan 'das

བཙེམ་ལྷན་འདས།

null

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

null

bdud

བདུད།

Literally “demon,” but often in a Buddhist context referring to the four “demons”—the demon of the afflictive emotions, the demon of the aggregates, the demon “lord of death,” and the devaputra demon, the last two of which are usually explained as referring, respectively, to death itself, and to distraction and laziness.

null

tshangs pa

ཚངས་པ།

null

dri za

དི་ཟ།

null

dzi na mi tra

དི་ན་མི་ཏ།

null

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗིང་།

null

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

null

klu

ལྷ།

null

shAkya thub pa

ཤཱ་ཀྱ་ཐུབ་པ།

piśācī

sha za mo

ཤ་ཟ་མོ།

piśācī

Possessed of Exquisite Blooming Flowers

mchog me tog rgyas pa dang ldan pa

མཆོག་མེ་ཏོག་རྒྱས་པ་དང་ལྷན་པ།

A goddess.

reliquary

ring bsrel gyi snying po

རིང་བསྐལ་གྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

dhātugarbha

Any receptacle for the relics of a realized being.

River Gaṅgā

gang gA'i klung

གང་གཱའི་ཀླུང་།

gaṅgā

rākṣasa

srin po

སྲིན་པོ།

rākṣasa

samādhi

ting nge 'dzin

ཉིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

samādhi

seat of awakening

byang chub kyi snying po

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

bodhimaṇḍa

six perfections

pha rol tu phyin pa drug

པ་རོལ་ཏུ་ཕྱིན་པ་བྱུག་

ṣaṭparamitā

Stainless Quintessential Gem

nor bu'i snying po dri ma med pa

ནོར་བུའི་སྙིང་པོ་དྲི་མ་མེད་པ།

A god.

state of irreversibility in spiritual progress

phyir mi ldog pa

ཕྱིར་མི་ལྷོག་པ།

avaivartika

The stage on the bodhisattva path at which one will never turn back, or be turned back, from inevitable progress toward the full awakening of a buddha.

Sukhāvatī

bde ba can

བདེ་བ་ཅན།

sukhāvatī

The western pure realm of Amitābha.

tathāgata

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

ten bhūmis

sa bcu

ས་བརྒྱ།

daśabhūmi

The ten levels or stages traversed by a bodhisattva that culminate in buddhahood: (1) Joyful (pramuditā; rab tu dga' ba), (2) Stainless (vimalā; dri ma med pa), (3) Luminous (prabhākārī; 'od byed pa), (4) Radiant (arciṣmatī; 'od 'phro can), (5) Invincible (sudurjayā; shin tu sbyang dka' ba), (6) Facing Directly (abhimukhī; mngon du gyur), (7) Far-Reaching (dūraṅgamā; ring du song ba), (8) Immovable (acalā; mi g.yo ba), Auspicious Intellect (sādhumatī; legs pa'i blo gros), and (10) Cloud of Dharma (dharmameghā; chos kyi sprin).

threefold restraint

sdom pa gsum

སྒོམ་ས་གསུམ།

trisaṃvara

Maintaining restraint in one's body, speech, and mind.

trichiliocosm

*stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi kham*s

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

Tuṣita

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྷན།

Ulkāmukha

skar mda' gdong

སྐར་མདའ་གདོང་།

ulkāmukha

“Meteor Face,” the name of a yakṣa.

Ultimate Torment

mnar med pa

མནར་མེད་པ།

avīci

The lowest and most severe among the eight hot hell realms. It is characterized as endless not only in terms of the torment undergone there, but also because of the ceaseless chain of actions and effects experienced, the long lifespan of its denizens, and their being so intensely crowded together that there is no physical space between them.

uṣṇīṣa

gtsug tor

གཏུག་རྟོར།

uṣṇīṣa

Use standard definition.

Vajrapāṇi

lag na rdo rje

ལག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajrapāṇi

vidyāmantra

rig sngags

རིག་སྒྲགས།

vidyāmantra

A term used synonymously with dhāraṇī, often with the connotation of “spell.”

Viṣṇu

khyab 'jug

ཁྱེན་འཇུག།

viṣṇu

Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་ཡིན།

śakra

Śīlendrabodhi

shI len+d+ra bo d+hi

ཤེ་ལེན་བོ་དེ།

śīlendrabodhi

An Indian paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries who is credited with assisting in the translation of many canonical Buddhist texts.

ḍomba

g.yung po

གཡུང་པོ།

ḍomba

One of the lowest castes in India.

Bibliography

Tibetan Sources

Tibetan Sources

kun nas sgor 'jug pa'i 'od zer gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi snying po dang dam tshig la rnam par lta ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs (Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣa-prabhāsarvatathāgatahṛdayasamayavilokitanāmadhāraṇī). Toh 599, Degé Kangyur vol. 90 (rgyud, pha), folios 250.a–259.b.

kun nas sgor 'jug pa'i 'od zer gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi snying po dang dam tshig la rnam par lta ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs (Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣa-prabhāsarvatathāgatahṛdayasamayavilokitanāmadhāraṇī). Toh 983, Degé Kangyur vol. 101 (gzungs 'dus, waṃ), folios 110.b–119.b.

kun nas sgor 'jug pa'i 'od zer gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi snying po dang dam tshig la rnam par lta ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs (Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣa-prabhāsarvatathāgatahṛdayasamayavilokitanāmadhāraṇī). ka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma) [Comparative Edition of the Kangyur], krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang (The Tibetan Tripitaka Collation Bureau of the China Tibetology Research Center). 108 volumes. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House), 2006–9, vol. 90, pp. 827–54.

kun nas sgor 'jug pa'i 'od zer gtsug tor dri ma med par snang ba de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi snying po dang dam tshig la rnam par lta ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs (Samantamukhapraveśaraśmivimaloṣṇīṣa-prabhāsarvatathāgatahṛdayasamayavilokitanāmadhāraṇī). Stok Palace Kangyur vol. 104 (rgyud, pa), folios 259.a–272.a.

mchod rten gyi gzungs (Caityadhāraṇī). Toh 601, Degé Kangyur vol. 90 (rgyud, pha), folios 260.a–266.b.

dkar chag 'phang thang ma. Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003.

Other Sources

Other Sources

84000. Dhāraṇī for a Caitya (Caityadhāraṇī, mchod rten gyi gzungs, Toh 601). Translated by Julian Schott. Online publication. 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2023. Version 1.1.5 (2025).

84000. The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī (Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇī, gtsug tor rnam par gyal ba'i gzungs, Toh 597/984). Translated by Patrick Lambelet and Caley Smith. Online Publication. 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2022. Version 1.2.13 (2025).

Aciri, Andrea. Esoteric Buddhism in Medieval Maritime Asia: Networks of Masters, Texts, Icons. Singapore: Mainland Press Pte Ltd., 2016.

Bentor, Yael. "On the Indian Origins of the Tibetan Practice of Depositing Relics and Dhāraṇī in Stūpas and Images." In *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 115, no. 2 (1995): 248–61.

- Bentor, Yael. *Consecration of Images and Stūpas in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*. Leiden: Brill Publications, 1996.
- Bentor, Yael. "The Content of Stūpas and Images and the Indo-Tibetan Concept of Relics." *The Tibet Journal* 28, Contributions to the History of Tibetan Art (2003): 21–48.
- Dalton, Jacob P. *Conjuring the Buddha: Ritual Manuals in Early Tantric Buddhism*. Columbia University Press, 2023.
- Griffiths, Arlo. "Written Traces of the Buddhist Past: Mantras and Dhāraṇīs in Indonesian Inscriptions." *Bulletin of SOAS* 77, no. 1 (2014): 137–94.
- Herrmann-Pfandt, Adelheid. *Die lHan kar ma: ein früher Katalog der ins Tibetische übersetzten buddhistischen Texte*. Wien: Verlag der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008.
- Hidas, Gergely. "Two dhāraṇī prints in the Stein Collection at the British Museum." *Bulletin of SOAS* 77, no. 1 (2014): 105–17.
- Hidas, Gergely. "Uṣṇīṣāvijayā-dhāraṇī: The Complete Sanskrit Text Based on Nepalese Manuscripts." *International Journal of Buddhist Thought and Culture* 30, no. 2 (2020): 147–67.
- Hidas, Gergely. "Dhāraṇī Seals in the Cunningham Collection." In *Precious Treasures from the Diamond Throne: Finds from the Site of the Buddha's Enlightenment*, edited by Sam van Schaik et al.. London: The British Museum, 2021a.
- Hidas, Gergely. *Powers of Protection: The Buddhist Tradition of Spells in the Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha Collections*. Beyond Boundaries 9. De Gruyter, 2021b.
- Hinüber, Oskar von. "Magic Protection in the Palola Ṣāhi Kingdom: History and Context of Rakṣā Texts and Dhāraṇīs in 7th Century Gilgit." In *Katā me rakkhā, katā me parittā: Protecting the protective texts and manuscripts* Proceedings of the Second International Pali Studies Week Paris 2016, edited by Claudio Cicuzza. Bangkok: Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation, Lumbini International Research Institute, 2018.
- Lalou, Marcelle. "Les textes Bouddhiques au temps du roi Khri-sroṅ-lde-bcan." *Journal Asiatique* 241 (1953): 313–53.
- Scherrer-Schaub, Christina Anna. "Some Dhāraṇī Written on Paper Functioning as Dharmakāya Relics: A Tentative Approach to PT 350." In *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Fagernes 1992*, vol. 2, edited by Per Kvaerne. Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994.
- Schopen, Gregory. "The Bodhigarbhālaṅkāralakṣa and Vimaloṣṇīṣa Dhāraṇīs in Indian Inscriptions: Two Sources for the Practice of Buddhism in Medieval India. In *Figments and Fragments of Mahāyāna Buddhism in India: More Collected Papers*, edited by Gregory Schopen. University of Hawai'i Press, 2005.
- Schopen, Gregory. "Redeeming Bugs, Birds, and Really Bad Sinners in some Medieval Mahāyāna Sūtras and Dhāraṇīs." In *Sins and Sinners: Perspectives from Asian Religions*, edited by Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara. Leiden: Brill Publications, 2012.