

སྐྱེ་ལྷ་པོ་གཞི་ཅན་གྱིས་ལྷ་པོ་གཞུངས།

The Dhāraṇī “The Nāga King Manasvin’s Question”

Tapasvīnāgarājaparipṛcchadhāraṇī

འཕགས་པ་སྐྱའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གཟི་ཅན་གྱིས་ཞུས་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས།

'phags pa klu'i rgyal po gzi can gyis zhus pa zhes bya ba'i gzungs

The Noble Dhāraṇī “The Nāga King Manasvin’s Question”

Āryatapasvīnāgarājaparipṛcchānāmadhāraṇī

· Toh 659 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 91 (rgyud 'bum, ba), folios 180.a–180.b

For referencing Tibetan sources, please see our [Scholar's Edition](#)



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Summary

- s.1 *The Noble Dhāraṇī “The Nāga King Manasvin’s Question”* contains a short dhāraṇī pronounced by the Buddha for warding off any harm from poisons, weapons, malevolent beings, and illnesses.

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- ac.2 The text was translated, edited, and introduced by the 84000 translation team. Adam C. Krug 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.

Introduction

- i.1 *The Noble Dhāraṇī “The Nāga King Manasvin’s Question”* is a short work in which the nāga king Manasvin approaches the Buddha as he is residing at Vaidehaka Mountain in Magadha and pledges to protect monks when they are far away from that place.¹ The Buddha then addresses the monks, encouraging them to memorize and recite a list of eighteen poisons and great medicines. He assures them that any monk who bears these eighteen names in mind will be protected from poisons, weapons, malevolent beings, and various types of fevers.
- i.2 The Sanskrit title of the text as transliterated in Toh 659 and 1065 suggests that the Tibetan name of the nāga king, *gzi can*, is understood to translate the Sanskrit *tapasvin* (*ta pa svI*). Most commonly, however, *gzi can* is used as the translation equivalent for the name of another nāga king, Manasvin.² Indeed, we find a corrupted rendering of the name Manasvin (*ma ni svI*) in the Sanskrit title given for the present text in the versions from the Drakmar (*brag dmar*), Phukdrak (*phug brag*), and Namgyal (*rnam rgyal*) collections.³ To complicate matters further, the Sanskrit title provided in a number of canonical collections give Vīra (*bI ra*) as the equivalent of the Tibetan *gzi can*.⁴ Conscious of this ambiguity, we have elected to follow the more well attested name of this nāga king as Manasvin.
- i.3 This short dhāraṇī does not appear to have been translated into Chinese and there is no known Sanskrit witness. The text is listed in the Denkarma⁵ and Phangthangma⁶ imperial Tibetan catalogs of translated works, indicating that some version of the text had been translated into Tibetan by the mid-ninth century. Unfortunately, however, the received text does not include a colophon, so it is impossible to know with certainty who translated the version that is currently preserved in the Degé Kangyur.

- i.4 This translation was prepared from the Tibetan translation preserved in the Tantra Collection (*rgyud 'bum*) and Compendium of Dhāraṇīs (*gzungs 'dus*)⁷ in the Degé Kangyur, in consultation with the Comparative Edition of the Kangyur (*dpe bsdur ma*), the Stok Palace Kangyur, and the Phukdrak Kangyur.

The Translation

1.

The Noble Dhāraṇī

The Nāga King Manasvin's Question

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in the land of Magadha in Indra's Cave on Vaidehaka Mountain. At that time the nāga king Manasvin, who had a noble complexion, went at night to where the Blessed One was staying. Once he arrived, he bowed at the Blessed One's feet and addressed him as follows:

1.3 "Blessed One, when monks who are far away from this Vaidehaka Mountain are in danger,⁸ I will ensure that no harm of any kind will befall them."⁹

1.4 After he said that, the Blessed One addressed the nāga king Manasvin:

1.5 "Well done, nāga king, well done. You should do just that." Then the Blessed One addressed the monks:

1.6 "Monks, this is why you must retain the names of these eighteen poisons and great medicines.

1.7 *tadyathā | paṇḍare karaṇe keyūre bodhyaṅgamate bindumahe araḍa taraḍa taruḍa daha dahana etadaha jela jela phale śata śata kulenakuli ekarṣit-araṅgaprṣṭi¹⁰*

1.8 "Monks, the body of anyone who bears the names of these eighteen poisons and great medicines in mind will not be affected by fevers, poisons, weapons, kākhordas, vetālas, and one-day, two-day, three-day, and four-day fevers. Those

who are far away will not be harmed. Anyone who bears these in mind will be protected for as long as they live.”

1.9 After the Blessed One said that, the nāga king Manasvin rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.10 *This concludes The Noble Dhāraṇī “The Nāga King Manasvin’s Question”.*

Abbreviations

F *phug brag* Phukdrak

K *kang shi* Kangxi

S *stog pho 'brang* Stok Palace

Y *g.yong lo* Yongle

Notes

1. This is the only statement made by the nāga king. Thus, despite the title of this text calling it the “question” (*paripṛcchā*; *zhus pa*) of Tapasvin, no question is in fact asked.
2. As it is, for example, in *The Queen of Incantations: The Great Peahen* (*Mahāmāyūrīvidyārājñī*, Toh 559), 1.17 and 1.201, and in *The White Lotus of the Good Dharma* (*Saddharmapuṇḍarikā*, Toh 113), 1.6.
3. The same could likely be said for the Sanskrit titles in the equivalent of Toh 659 in C, J, and Y, which seem to indicate a metathesis of *manasvī* as *namasvī*. The title in the Gondlha (*gon d+ho la*) collection reads *ma na swa ra*.
4. This is the case in the Shelkar (*shel dkar*), Stok (*stog*), and Tashiyangtse (*bkra shis g.yang rtse*) collections.
5. *pho brang stong thang ldan dkar gyi chos 'gyur ro cog gi dka' chag*, Toh 4364, Degé Tengyur vol. 206 (mdo 'grel, jo), folio 303.a. See also Hermann-Pfandt 2008, p. 22.
6. Phangthangma (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*), (Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), p. 29. See also Kawagoe 2005, p. 21.
7. Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 1065 version of this text within vol. 101 or 102 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 1065, [n.7](#), for details.
8. F reads, “Blessed One, I will be present as needed where bhūtas threaten monks [on] this Vaidehaka Mountain” (*blcom ldan 'das lus 'phags ri 'di ni / 'byung po dge slong rnams la 'tshe na / de la bdag ji ltar gnas bgyi*).
9. Following Toh 659 and S: *de la bdag gis ji ltar mi 'tshe bar bgyi*. Toh 1065, and the versions of Toh 659 in K and Y read *de la bdag gis ji ltar gnas par bgyi* (“I will be present there as needed”).
10. This dhāraṇī has been transcribed as it appears in Toh 659 and has been arranged so that eighteen distinct items are listed. Few can be plausibly identified as known poisons or medicines and there are other possible ways of breaking the units presented in the Tibetan text to yield eighteen items.

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Glossary

Indra's Cave

dbang po'i brag phug

དབང་པོའི་བླག་ཕུག

indraśailaguhā

A cave on Vaidehika Mountain in Magadha where the Buddha is said to have resided.

kākhorda

byad

བྱད།

kākhorda

A class of spirit beings typically associated with violent sorcery rites.

Magadha

ma ga d+ha

མ་ག་ཏྲ།

magadha

An ancient Indian kingdom that lay to the south of the Ganges River in what today is the state of Bihar. Magadha was the largest of the sixteen “great states” (*mahājanapada*) that flourished between the sixth and third centuries BCE in northern India. During the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, it was ruled by King Bimbisāra and later by Bimbisāra's son, Ajātaśatru. Its capital was initially Rājagṛha (modern-day Rajgir) but was later moved to Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna). Over the centuries, with the expansion of the Magadha's might, it became the capital of the vast Mauryan empire and seat of the great King Aśoka.

This region is home to many of the most important Buddhist sites, including Bodh Gayā, where the Buddha attained awakening; Vulture Peak (*Gṛdhrakūṭa*), where the Buddha bestowed many well-known Mahāyāna sūtras; and the

Buddhist university of Nālandā that flourished between the fifth and twelfth centuries CE, among many others.

Manasvin

gzi can

གཟི་ཅན།

Manasvin

The name of the nāga king who is the primary interlocutor in Toh 659/1065.

Vaidehaka Mountain

lus 'phags ri

ལུས་འཕགས་རི།

vaidehakaparvata

The name of a mountain in Videha.

vetāla

ro langs

རོ་ལངས།

vetāla

A class of powerful beings that typically haunt charnel grounds, entering into and animating corpses. Hence, the Tibetan translation means “risen corpse.”