ལག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེའི་མཚན་བརྒྱད་པ་གསང་སྔགས་དང་བཅས་པ།

The Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra

འཕགས་པ་ལག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེའི་མཚན་བརྒྱད་པ་གསང་སྔགས་དང་བཅས་པ།

’phags pa lag na rdo rje’i mtshan brgyad pa gsang sngags dang bcas pa

The Noble Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra

· Toh 749 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 95 (rgyud ’bum, dza), folios 264.b–265.b

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

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Summary

s.1 In *The Noble Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra,* the Buddha teaches a practice for reciting Vajrapāṇi's eight names, followed by a mantra, that functions as a preliminary practice for performing Vajrapāṇi's extensive vidyā rites; as a means of expelling and gaining protection from supernatural beings for the purpose of performing those rites; as a general means for expelling and gaining protection from supernatural beings; as a means for ensuring that the deceased will avoid rebirth in the hell realms and be reborn in Sukhāvatī; as a way of preventing bad dreams; as a general purification practice; and as a preliminary recitation practice for becoming an ācārya.

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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. Adam C. Krug produced the translation and wrote the introduction. George FitzHerbert 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 Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra* takes place in the palace of Aḍakāvatī, where the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi approaches the Buddha and asks him to teach Vajrapāṇi's supreme vidyā rite. The Buddha replies by noting that, because Vajrapāṇi's vidyā rite is so vast, fierce, and difficult to master, anyone who performs it should first recite a series of Vajrapāṇi's eight "names."[1] By doing this, he says, all their misdeeds will be purified, all vighnas and vināyakas will flee, they will be protected by the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and they will accomplish the rite.

i.2 After reciting Vajrapāṇi's eight names, the Buddha adds that merely hearing them will allow beings to avoid rebirth in the hell realms, to receive teachings from the buddhas and bodhisattvas at the moment of death, and to be reborn in Sukhāvatī. After the Buddha has recited the mantra accompanying Vajrapāṇi's eight names, Vajrapāṇi concludes the teaching by saying that anyone who recites it before going to bed will not have bad dreams, that reciting it one hundred thousand times before a caitya containing relics will purify all misdeeds, and that reciting it another one hundred thousand times will allow one to become an ācārya.

i.3 *The Noble Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra* consists entirely of material that has been extracted from *The Great Tantra of the Supreme Vidyā* (*Vidyottamamahātantra*).[2] Tarthang Tulku's *Catalogue of the Nyingma Edition of the sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur* notes that both of these texts are listed in the Denkarma[3] and Phangthangma[4] Imperial Tibetan catalogs of translated works, and that *The Noble Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra* appears in these catalogs under an alternate title. The work bearing this alternate title that survives in the Phukdrak Kangyur, however, is clearly a different text.[5] This casts some doubt onto whether the present text, *The Noble Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra*, should be identified with the text in the Tibetan imperial catalogs bearing this alternate title.[6] There does not appear to

be a Chinese translation or any known Sanskrit witness, and the Tibetan text does not include a translators' colophon.

i.4 This English translation is based on the witnesses for *The Noble Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra* in the Tantra Collection (*rgyud 'bum*) and the 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 Tibetan translation of *The Great Tantra of the Supreme Vidyā* preserved in the Tantra Collection of the Degé Kangyur.

The Translation

1. The Noble Eight Names of Vajrapāṇi Along with the Mantra

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

1.2 Then, the bodhisattva great being Vajrapāṇi rose from the assembly, bowed with his palms together toward the Blessed One, and addressed the Blessed One:

1.3 “Blessed One, for the benefit of beings, will the Blessed One please tame these beings here in the king’s palace Aḍakāvatī with the great and vast ritual of the *Supreme Vidyā*[8] along with the secret and the great secret that I have taught.”

1.4 After he said that, the Blessed One addressed Vajrapāṇi, Lord of Secrets:

1.5 “Vajrapāṇi, the great and vast ritual of the *Supreme Vidyā* you have taught is as fierce as you. It is difficult to use and extremely difficult to master. There is no higher method. Vajrapāṇi, all of the great and vast ritual instructions of the *Supreme Vidyā* that you have taught cannot be put into action without the secret. Thus, Vajrapāṇi, so that the vajra family and this great and vast ritual of the *Supreme Vidyā* might be easily accomplished, when someone hears your secret eight names along with the retinue of secret mantras, their misdeeds will be purified, even the five actions entailing immediate retribution. You, Vajrapāṇi, will become visible, all vighnas and vināyakas will flee, and the eighty-four hundreds of thousands of billions of vināyakas will flee in the ten directions.

1.6 “When they hear them, even those who do not practice the brahmacārya vow will become practitioners of the brahmacārya vow; even those who do not maintain the vow of silence will become those who maintain the vow of silence; even those who do not practice fasting will become those who practice

fasting; and even those who are not renunciants will experience the result of being a renunciant. All the buddhas and bodhisattvas will protect them and proclaim that the accomplishment of that ritual action has been granted."

1.7 Then, blessed Vajrapāṇi bowed down at the Blessed One's feet and addressed the Blessed One:

1.8 "Blessed One, what are my secret eight names along with the retinue of the secret mantras?"

1.9 "I will explain, Vajrapāṇi," the Blessed One replied, "please listen."

1.10 "They are as follows.[9] You are the Elephant-Eared. You are the Well-Adorned. You are the Obstructor. You are the Font of Riches. You are Truth Itself.[10] You are Finely Ornamented in Form. You are Blazing-Tongued. You are the Attractive One.

1.11 "When wise ones hear these eight names of yours, they will not be born in the hell realms for seven hundred-thousand-billion eons. At their moment of death, all the buddhas and bodhisattvas will be present before them and will teach them the Dharma, and, because of those dharma teachings, they will be reborn among the gods of Sukhāvatī, where they will dwell together with the bodhisattva great beings."

1.12 *namo buddhāya namo dharmāya namaḥ saṅghāya namo vajrapāṇiye |*[11]

1.13 *tadyathā | aṭṭe maṭṭe kharaṭṭe some somāsukhi hiri hiri miri kiri bhiri*[12] *visani siddhyantu sarvakāryāṇi sādhaya mantrapadāḥ svāhā |*

1.14 Then, the bodhisattva great being Vajrapāṇi addressed the Blessed One:

1.15 "Excellent, Blessed One, excellent. This great secret you have pronounced is excellent indeed. That is it, Blessed One, that is it. Blessed One, when one is accomplishing the supreme vidyā,[13] performing the recitation practice, and

performing the offering when it is accomplished, one should recite these eight names out loud. When they are read aloud I will be praised, I will be pleased, and I will bestow siddhi. Vighnas will no longer arise, and the gods will be pleased and quickly bestow siddhi.

1.16 "If one reads it aloud when one goes to bed, they will not have any bad dreams. If one recites it one hundred thousand times before a caitya that contains relics, they will be free from all manner of misdeeds. I will appear and pronounce them as a bodhisattva in the fortunate age, even if they have committed the five actions entailing immediate retribution. If they recite it another one hundred thousand times, they will become an ācārya."

1.17 *This concludes "Vajrapāṇi's Eight Names along with the Mantra".*

Abbreviations

D Degé (*sde dge*) Kangyur

F Phukdrak (*phug brag*) Kangyur

H Lhasa (*zhol*) Kangyur

N Narthang (*snar thang*) Kangyur

S Stok Palace (*stog pho brang bris ma*) Kangyur

Notes

1. As is often the case, these “names” are in fact descriptive qualities of Vajrapāṇi.

2. *’phags pa rig pa mchog gi rgyud chen po* (*Āryavidyottamamahātantra*). Toh 746, Degé Kangyur vol. 95 (*rgyud ’bum, dza*), folios 174.b–175.a.

3. *pho brang stong thang ldan dkar gyi chos ’gyur ro cog gi dkar chag*, Toh 4364, Degé Tengyur vol. 206 (mdo ’grel, jo), folio 303.a.

4. Phangthangma (*dkar chag ’phang thang ma*), (Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 28.

5. *’phags pa lag na rdo rje’i gsang ba’i ming brgyad po gsang sngags kyis yongs su bskor ba dang bcas pa zhes bya ba’i gzungs*. Phukdrak Kangyur (F) vol. 118 (rgyud, a), folios 90.a–91.b.

6. See also Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, 231, no. 404.

7. [note 84089f24…]

8. The Tibetan phrase *rig pa mchog* translates the Sanskrit phrase *vidyottama*. Since this text is an extract from a longer text also known as the *Vidyottama* (Toh 746), the phrase when used here could refer either to that text in general, or to its primary subject matter “the supreme vidyā.” For the sake of highlighting that this text is an extract, we have chosen to read it here as the former.

9. Tib. *’di lta ste*. This phrase translates the Sanskrit *tadyathā*, which is traditionally understood in Tibetan translations to mark the beginning of a recitation practice and is thus very often rendered without translation as *tadyathā*. Here it has been translated into Tibetan but it does in fact mark the beginning of a practice for reciting the names of Vajrapāṇi.

10. Following Toh 749: *bden pa nyid*. Toh 950 reads *bden pa’i sprin nyid* “Cloud of Truth.”

11. Following Toh 746: *na mo bud+d+hA ya/ na mo d+harmA ya//na maHsaMg+hA ya/ na mo badzra pA Ni ye*. D, Toh 749, and Toh 950 read *na mo bud+d+ha s+ya/ na mo d+harma s+ya/ na maH saM g+ha s+ya/ na mo badz+ra pA Ni s+ya*. Toh 749 and Toh 950 preserve a genitive singular ending for the terms *buddha*, *dharma*, and *saṅgha* where it is far more common to see a dative singular ending, as in *namo buddhāya* etc. An incorrect rendering of the genitive singular ending is also adopted for Vajrapāṇi (*vajrapāṇisya*) where the correct genitive ending would be **vajrapāṇeḥ*. We have chosen to correct this reading to the more standardized homage verses that we might expect by adopting the reading for this line found in Toh 746, the larger text from which Toh 749 and Toh 950 have been extracted. See *’phags pa rig pa mchog gi rgyud chen po* (*Āryavidyottamamahātantra*), Toh 746, Degé Kangyur vol. 95 (rgyud ’bum, dza), folio 175.a.

12. Following Toh 749: *b+hi ri bi sa ni*. Toh 950 reads *b+hi b+hi bi sa ni*.

13. Following S, N, and H: *rig pa mchog sgrub pa na*. Toh 749 and Toh 950 read *rig pa mchog sgrub pa ni*. Toh 746 reads *rig pa mchog gi bsgrub pas*.

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Glossary

ācārya

slob dpon

སློབ་དཔོན།

ācārya

A master or teacher who knows the conduct or practice (ācāra) to be performed.

Aḍakāvatī

lcang lo can

ལྕང་ལོ་ཅན།

aḍakāvatī

The abode of Vajrapāṇi in his role as lord of yakṣas. Found as the name of the kingdom, the city, or the palace of the yakṣas located on Mount Sumeru.

Attractive One

gzugs mdzes pa

གཟུགས་མཛེས་པ།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Blazing-Tongued

bar ba'i me lce dang ldan pa

བར་བའི་མེ་ལྕེ་དང་ལྡན་པ།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

brahmacārya vow

tshangs par spyod pa

ཚངས་པར་སྤྱོད་པ།

brahmacārya

A term that derives from the Vaidantika practice of brahmins adopting and maintaining a set of vows to ensure that they remain pure and can thus participate in performing the Vedic rites. In Buddhist texts, this term has a much more general meaning and can refer to maintaining a vow of celibacy.

caitya

mchod rten

མཆོད་རྟེན།

caitya, stūpa

The Tibetan translates both *stūpa* and *caitya* with the same word, *mchod rten*, meaning “basis” or “recipient” of “offerings” or “veneration.” Pali: *cetiya*.
A caitya, although often synonymous with *stūpa*, can also refer to any site, sanctuary or shrine that is made for veneration, and may or may not contain relics.
A stūpa, literally “heap” or “mound,” is a mounded or circular structure usually containing relics of the Buddha or the masters of the past. It is considered to be a sacred object representing the awakened mind of a buddha, but the symbolism of the stūpa is complex, and its design varies throughout the Buddhist world. Stūpas continue to be erected today as objects of veneration and merit making.

Cloud of Truth

bden pa sprin nyid

བདེན་པ་སྤྲིན་ཉིད།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Elephant-Eared

glang po che’i rna ba can

གླང་པོ་ཆེའི་རྣ་བ་ཅན།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Finely Ornamented in Form

gzugs sdug pa'i rgyan dang ldan pa

གཟུགས་སྡུག་པའི་རྒྱན་དང་ལྡན་པ།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Font of Riches

rin po che'i 'byung gnas

རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་འབྱུང་གནས།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Lord of Secrets

gsang ba'i bdag po

གསང་བའི་བདག་པོ།

guhyādhipati

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Obstructor

rnam par gnon pa

རྣམ་པར་གནོན་པ།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Truth Itself

bden nyid

བདེན་ཉིད།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.

Vajrapāṇi

lag na rdo rje

ལག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajrapāṇi

Vajrapāṇi means “Wielder of the Vajra.” In the Pali canon, he appears as a yakṣa guardian in the retinue of the Buddha. In the Mahāyāna scriptures he is a bodhisattva and one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha.” In the tantras, he is also regarded as an important Buddhist deity and instrumental in the transmission of tantric scriptures.

vighna

bgegs

བགེགས།

vighna

A class of supernatural being that cause obstacles.

vināyaka

log ’dren

ལོག་འདྲེན།

vināyaka

A class of supernatural being that cause obstacles.

Well-Adorned

rgyan bzang po dang ldan pa

རྒྱན་བཟང་པོ་དང་ལྡན་པ།

An epithet for Vajrapāṇi.