ས་འི་དབང་པོ་ཆེན་པོའི་གཟུངས།

The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra

Mahāmahīndradhāraṇī

འཕགས་པ་སའི་དབང་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས།

’phags pa sa’i dbang po chen po zhes bya ba’i gzungs

The Noble Dhāraṇī “Mahāmahīndra”

Āryamahāmahīndranāmadhāraṇī

· Toh 887 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 100 (gzungs ’dus, e), folios 161.b–163.a

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



First published 2026

Current version v 1.0.2

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Summary

s.1 *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra* is a short dhāraṇī text in which a brahmin named Mahāmahīndra approaches the buddha Samantaprabha and asks for a method to remember past lives, so as not to forget his bodhisattva resolve. Samantaprabha reveals a dhāraṇī that is said to make one remember up to seven incarnations and the bodhisattva resolve and that furthermore provides protection from weapons, poisons, water, and fire. The text ends with a series of obeisances to various buddhas.

Acknowledgements

ac.1 The text was translated from Tibetan by The Buddhapīṭha Translation Group (Gergely Hidas and Péter-Dániel Szántó).

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. Torsten Gerloff edited the translation and the introduction, and Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Sameer Dhingra was in charge of the digital publication process.

Introduction

i.1 *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra* is a short dhāraṇī text that recounts a dialogue between the buddha Samantaprabha and the brahmin Mahāmahīndra, a great householder who aspires to unsurpassed perfect awakening and seeks a method to remember past lives in the future so as not to forget his spiritual resolve. In response, Samantaprabha teaches a vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*, that contains potent phrases capable of ensuring the practitioner's remembrance of seven past incarnations and, in addition, their protection from harm. The text emphasizes the transformative power of reciting, upholding, and sharing the spell, extending its benefits to all beings regardless of their form, including humans, deities, and other supernatural entities. The discourse concludes with a series of homages to enlightened beings, culminating in the brahmin's delight and praise for the buddha's teachings.

i.2 The Sanskrit original does not seem to have survived, and there is no identifiable Chinese translation.

i.3 The Tibetan translation is a product of the imperial period, and the title is listed in both surviving catalogs from that era.[1] According to Butön Rinchen Drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*, 1290–1364), this text was also translated under a different title, *The Noble King of Vidyā-Spells, The Essence "Samantaprabha."*[2] This translation is exceedingly rare and was until recently thought lost.[3] Fortunately, we can now access it in the Hemis Kangyur.

i.4 The English translation was made principally based on the Tibetan translation of the text found in the Tantra Collection (*rgyud 'bum*) and the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs (*gzungs 'dus*) in the Degé Kangyur,[4] in consultation with the Stok Palace manuscript Kangyur. In the notes, we listed the most important differences when compared to the Hemis version.

The Translation

1. ## The Noble Dhāraṇī
Mahāmahīndra

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.[5]

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Samantaprabha was residing in Surāvatī,[6] the abode of the brahmin Mahāmahīndra, a great householder.[7] Then the brahmin Mahāmahīndra, a great householder, went to where the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Samantaprabha was, and when he arrived, he bowed his head to the feet of the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Samantaprabha and sat down to one side.

1.3 After having sat down to one side, the brahmin Mahāmahīndra, a great householder, said this to the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Samantaprabha: "Blessed One, I have made an aspiration toward unsurpassed perfect awakening, but how will I remember past incarnations? So I ask the Blessed One to teach me a method whereby I will not forget the resolve for unsurpassed perfect awakening."

1.4 After he said this, the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Samantaprabha said this to the brahmin Mahāmahīndra, a great householder: "Well, my son,[8] if you have made such an aspiration, you should uphold, keep, recite, and master this vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*.[9] And what is the vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*?

1.5 *tadyathā—āmodani pramodani vimodani saṃmodani priyaṃkaraṇi śrīkaraṇi śrīkaraṇi bodhikaraṇi anuttarasamyaksambodhikaraṇi anuttarāryakaraṇi anuttaraprajñākaraṇi anuttaravaśīkaraṇi anuttarasarvakleśopakleśavidāraṇi avidyāndhakāravidhamani anuttaravidyālokotpādani anut-*

taraśaikṣaśīlavidyācaraṇavimuktiguṇagaṇasamvardhani anuttarasarvakuśalamūlodbodhani anuttararāgadoṣamohonmūlani anuttaraśaikṣamānāvidyāndhakāravidhamani anuttarāsi apratihatabalacakra anuttarasarvamārabalavidrāvaṇi tvaṃ hi bhadre anuttarā balabhadra subhadra śrībhadra anuttarabhadra samantabhadra asamasamabhadra anuttaramahāpuruṣabhadra anuttaramahāpuruṣasevitā anuttaramahāpuruṣānuvartanī anuttaramahāpuruṣadharmadeśikā anuttaramahāpuruṣadharmakoṣasamvardhikā anuttaramahāpuruṣanirvāṇa anuttarapradarśikā[10] *tvaṃ hi bhadre gaṅgāsikatāprakhyaiḥ samyaksambuddhair āsevitā bhāvitā bahulīkṛtā stutā stomitā varṇitā praśastā.* [11]

1.6 "My son,[12] this is the vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*. Therefore, my son, you should keep in mind this vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*, whether you are walking, standing, sitting, or lying. My son, those who keep in mind the name, lineage, and stock[13] of this vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*, be they male or female, a boy or a girl, a god or a goddess, a nāga or a nāginī, a gandharva or a gandharvī, an asura or an asurī, a kinnara or a kinnarī, a mahoraga or a mahoragī, a preta or a pretī, a piśāca or a piśācī, a kumbhāṇḍa or a kumbhāṇḍī, a kaṭapūtana or a kaṭapūtanī,[14] if they uphold, recite, transmit, teach, explain [15] this vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*, they will remember up to seven of their previous incarnations. They will not forget the resolve for unsurpassed perfect awakening until the end of transmigration.[16] Meanwhile, whether they become gods or humans, they will never be killed by weapons, poisons, water, or fire.

1.7 "Homage to the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Samantajaya together with the clan of Kāśyapa![17] Homage to the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Amitābhajaya together with the clan of Kāśyapa! Homage to the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Amaramahāprabhajaya together with the clan of Kāśyapa! Homage to the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Mahāprabhajaya together with the clan of Kāśyapa! Homage to the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Mahābhajaya together with the clan of Kāśyapa! Homage to the

blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Asamaprabhajaya together with the clan of Kāśyapa! Homage to the blessed, perfectly awakened buddha Asamasamaprabhajaya together with the clan of Kāśyapa! Homage to these seven blessed, perfectly awakened buddhas, the great sages together with the clan of Kāśyapa! Homage to those residing in the sphere of peace and their retinue, homage!”

1.8 Thus spoke the Blessed One, and the brahmin Mahāmahīndra, the great householder, was gladdened, and he praised the speech of the Blessed One.

1.9 *Here ends the noble dhāraṇī “Mahāmahīndra.”*

Colophon

c.1 This was translated, edited, and finalized, with updates according to the edict concerning the new language, by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Dānaśīla and the great editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.[18]

Notes

1. For the Denkarma, see Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, pp. 219–20, no. 384; for the Phangthangma, see Kawagoe 2005, p. 21, no. 369.

2. *'di dang 'phags pa rig sngags kyi rgyal po kun nas 'od ces bya ba'i snying po gnyis 'gyur ma gtogs pa gcig go/* (*rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyud sde rin po che'i mdzes rgyan*, in *The Collected Works of Bu-Ston* (Śata-piṭaka Series), vol. 15 (ba), folio 71.b (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1965–71), BDRC W22106.

3. Herrmann-Pfandt (2008, p. 217 under Denkarma no. 379) notes that this text had already been lost by Butön's time.

4. This text, Toh 887, and all those contained in this same volume (gzungs 'dus, e), are listed as being located in volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur by the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC). However, several other Kangyur databases—including the eKangyur that supplies the digital input version displayed by the 84000 Reading Room—list this work as being located in volume 101. This discrepancy is partly due to the fact that the two volumes of the gzungs 'dus section are an added supplement not mentioned in the original catalog, and also hinges on the fact that the compilers of the Tōhoku catalog placed another text—which forms a whole, very large volume—the Vimalaprabhānāmakālacakra-tantraṭīkā (dus 'khor 'grel bshad dri med 'od, Toh 845), before the volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur, numbering it as vol. 100, although it is almost certainly intended to come right at the end of the Degé Kangyur texts as volume 102; indeed its final fifth chapter is often carried over and wrapped in the same volume as the Kangyur dkar chags (catalog). Please note this discrepancy when using the eKangyur viewer in this translation.

5. This is the translators' obeisance (*'gyur phyag*) and is not part of the main text. The Hemis version has "Homage to all bodhisattvas."

6. Instead of *lha dang ldan pa*, the Hemis version has *'chi med ldan*, which may be restored as Amarāvatī.

7. The Tibetan has the slightly misleading (but not uncommon) translation "who was like the great *sāla* tree" (*shing sA la chen po lta bu*), but the Sanskrit behind this was most likely *mahāśāla* (cf. Pali *mahāsāla*), which rather means "having a great hall" or simply "great [i.e., wealthy] householder." The Hemis version translates the name as if it had *Mahāmahendra (*chen po'i dbang po chen po*) or simply *Mahendra (*dbang po chen po*) in the original. The alternation between *i*/*ī* and *e* is not at all unusual; consider, for example, *yogīndra* and *yogendra*.

8. Instead, the Hemis version reads, "Therefore, first of all you [...]."

9. Alternatively, "*the essence vidyā-spell of Samantaprabha*" or "*the essence of the vidyā-spell of Samantaprabha*." The Hemis version reads, "the vidyā-spell, *the essence of Samantaprabha*" (also below).

10. From this point, the Hemis version translates everything into Tibetan.

11. None of the versions we have consulted are free of corruptions, so we have restored the most likely Sanskrit readings. A tentative translation is as follows: "Namely, O one who causes gladness, O one who causes joy, O one who causes delight, O one who causes rejoicing, O one who shows kindness, O

one who produces auspiciousness, O one who produces auspiciousness, O one who produces awakening, O one who produces unsurpassed, perfect awakening, O one who produces the best noble ones, O one who produces the highest wisdom, O one who subdues best, O one who crushes all defilements and secondary defilements best, O one who extinguishes the darkness of ignorance, O one who produces the highest light of knowledge, O one who increases the disciples' multitude of virtues in morality, perfect knowledge, conduct, and liberation, O one who awakens best to the roots of all virtues, O one who uproots best passion, aversion, and delusion, O one who extinguishes best the disciples' pride and darkness of ignorance, O the best sword (Or: you are the best), O indestructible army (Or: O discus of irresistible power), O one who defeats best all the troops of Māra, for you are the best O Dear One, O Excellent One with an Army, O Extremely Excellent One, O Auspiciously Excellent One, O Highest Excellent One, O Completely Excellent One, O Unequalled Excellent One, O Excellent One like a best great person, the One followed by the best great persons, the One respected by the best great persons, the One who teaches the Dharma to the best great persons, the One who increases the Dharma treasury of the best great persons, O the nirvāṇa of the best great persons, for you show the highest, O Dear One, followed, cherished, cared for, praised, eulogized, extolled, celebrated by perfectly awakened buddhas equalling the sand particles of the Gaṅgā river." The oscillation between feminine and masculine vocatives is somewhat unusual (the string beginning with *apratihatabalacakra...subhadra*, etc.).

12. This vocative and those in the next sentences are not mirrored in the Hemis version (see n.8).

13. The Hemis version has "activity/conduct/behavior" (*spyod pa'i*, a corruption for *spyod pa*, Skt. *caryā*) as the third element, but this, too, is obscure.

14. The list of beings is slightly garbled in the Hemis version.

15. Here we applied a small emendation, *'chad*, for *'chang* ("to uphold," which heads the list). This is supported by the Hemis version, which has "correctly convey" (*yang dag par brjod*).

16. "Until the end of transmigration" is not mirrored here in the Hemis version. Instead, it appears in the next sentence construed with "they will never be killed."

17. This formulation is unusual. Perhaps the Hemis version is closer to the original meaning: "[...] who is of the same clan as Kāśyapa." The names of the buddhas are also different in this translation: (1) Jaya, (2) Amitaprabha, (3) Amaraprabha, (4) Vimala, (5) Asamaprabha, and (6–7) [missing, unless Saptama is to be treated as a proper name].

18. This translators' colophon is present only in the Toh 887 version of the text.

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Glossary

Amaramahāprabhajaya

’chi med ’od chen po rgyal ba

འཆི་མེད་འོད་ཆེན་པོ་རྒྱལ་བ།

amaramahāprabhajaya

The name of a buddha evoked in a prayer in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

Amitābhajaya

’od mtha’ yas rgyal ba

འོད་མཐའ་ཡས་རྒྱལ་བ།

amitābhajaya

The name of a buddha evoked in a prayer in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

Asamaprabhajaya

’od mnyam pa med pa rgyal ba

འོད་མཉམ་པ་མེད་པ་རྒྱལ་བ།

asamaprabhajaya

The name of a buddha evoked in a prayer in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

Asamasamaprabhajaya

’od mi mnyam pa dang mnyam pa rgyal ba

འོད་མི་མཉམ་པ་དང་མཉམ་པ་རྒྱལ་བ།

asamasamaprabhajaya

The name of a buddha evoked in a prayer in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

aspiration

smon lam

སྨོན་ལམ།

praṇidhāna

The aspirations and vows made by bodhisattvas especially concerning their future enlightenment.

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).

asurī

lha ma yin mo

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན་མོ།

asurī

A female asura.

Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

Yeshé Dé (late eighth to early ninth century) was the most prolific translator of sūtras into Tibetan. Altogether he is credited with the translation of more than one hundred sixty sūtra translations and more than one hundred additional translations, mostly on tantric topics. In spite of Yeshé Dé's great importance

for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet during the imperial era, only a few biographical details about this figure are known. Later sources describe him as a student of the Indian teacher Padmasambhava, and he is also credited with teaching both sūtra and tantra widely to students of his own. He was also known as Nanam Yeshé Dé, from the Nanam (*sna nam*) clan.

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.

brahmin

bram ze

བྲམ་ཟེ།

brāhmaṇa

A member of the highest of the four castes in Indian society, which is closely associated with religious vocations.

buddha

sangs rgyas

སངས་རྒྱས།

buddha

A fully awakened being. Buddha is the past participle of the Sanskrit root budh, meaning “to awaken,” “to understand,” or “to become aware.”

Dānaśīla

dA na shI la

དཱ་ན་ཤཱི་ལ།

dānaśīla

An Indian preceptor from Kashmir who was resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. He translated many texts in the Kangyur in collaboration with Bandé Yeshé Dé.

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.”

gandharvī

dri za mo

དྲི་ཟ་མོ།

gandharvī

A female gandharva.

god

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.

goddess

lha mo

ལྷ་མོ།

devī

great sage

drang srong chen po

དྲང་སྲོང་ཆེན་པོ།

maharṣi

Here used as an epithet for the buddhas.

Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

རྗི་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

jinamitra

Jinamitra was invited to Tibet during the reign of King Tri Songdetsen (*khri srong lde btsan*, r. 742–98 CE) and was involved with the translation of nearly two hundred texts, continuing into the reign of King Ralpachen (*ral pa can*, r. 815–38 CE). He was one of the small group of paṇḍitas responsible for the *Mahāvyutpatti* Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary.

Kāśyapa

'od srung

འོད་སྲུང་།

kāśyapa

One of the Buddha's principal pupils, who became the Buddha's successor on his passing.

kaṭapūtana

lus srul po

ལུས་སྲུལ་པོ།

kaṭapūtana

A subgroup of pūtanas, a class of disease-causing spirits associated with cemeteries and dead bodies. The name probably derives from the Skt. *pūta*,

“foul-smelling,” as reflected also in the Tib. *srul po*. The smell of a pūtana is variously described in the texts as resembling that of a billy goat or a crow, and the smell of a kaṭapūtana, as its name suggests, could resemble a corpse, *kaṭa* being one of the names for “corpse.” The morbid condition caused by pūtanas comes in various forms, with symptoms such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, skin eruptions, and festering wounds, the latter possibly explaining the association with bad smells.

kaṭapūtanī

lus srul mo

ལུས་སྲུལ་པོ་མོ།

kaṭapūtanī

A female kaṭapūtana.

kinnara

mi’am ci

མིའམ་ཅི།

kinnara

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.

kinnarī

mi’am ci mo

མིའམ་ཅི་མོ།

kinnarī

A female kinnara.

kumbhāṇḍa

grul bum

གྲུལ་བུམ།

kumbhāṇḍa

A class of dwarf beings subordinate to Virūḍhaka, one of the Four Great Kings, associated with the southern direction. The name uses a play on the word *aṇḍa*, which means “egg” but is also a euphemism for a testicle. Thus, they are often depicted as having testicles as big as pots (from *kumbha*, or “pot”).

kumbhāṇḍī

grul bum mo

གྲུལ་བུམ་མོ།

kumbhāṇḍī

A female kumbhāṇḍa.

Mahābhajaya

’od chen rgyal ba

འོད་ཆེན་རྒྱལ་བ།

mahābhajaya

The name of a buddha evoked in a prayer in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

Mahāmahīndra

sa’i dbang po chen po

སའི་དབང་པོ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāmahīndra

The name of a brahmin householder, a pious Mahāyāna Buddhist, the main interlocutor in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

Mahāprabhajaya

’od chen po rgyal ba

འོད་ཆེན་པོ་རྒྱལ་བ།

mahāprabhajaya

The name of a buddha evoked in a prayer in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

mahoraga

lto ’phye chen po

ལྟོ་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.

mahoragī

lto ’phye chen mo

ལྟོ་འབྱེ་ཆེན་པོ་མོ།

mahoragī

A female mahoraga.

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.

nāginī

klu mo

ཀླུ་མོ།

nāginī

A female nāga.

perfectly awakened buddha

yang dag par rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas

ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས།

samyaksambuddha

One who has achieved perfect and complete awakening or buddhahood. Used of those who achieve buddhahood through the Great Vehicle, in contrast to the levels of realization achieved by śrāvakas or pratyekabuddhas.

piśāca

sha za

ཤ་ཟ།

piśāca

A class of nonhuman beings that, like several other classes of nonhuman beings, take spontaneous birth. Ranking below rākṣasas, they are less powerful and more akin to pretas. They are said to dwell in impure and perilous places, where they feed on impure things, including flesh. This could account for the name *piśāca*, which possibly derives from √*piś*, to carve or chop meat, as reflected also in the Tibetan *sha za*, "meat eater." They are often described as having an unpleasant appearance, and at times they appear with animal bodies. Some possess the ability to enter the dead bodies of humans, thereby becoming so-called *vetāla*, to touch whom is fatal.

piśācī

sha za mo

ཤ་ཟ་མོ།

piśācī

A female piśāca.

preceptor

mkhan po

མཁན་པོ།

upādhyāya

A person's particular preceptor within the monastic tradition. They must have at least ten years of standing in the saṅgha, and their role is to confer ordination, to tend to the student, and to provide all the necessary requisites, therefore guiding that person for the taking of full vows and the maintenance of conduct and practice. This office was decreed by the Buddha so that aspirants would not have to receive ordination from the Buddha in person, and the Buddha identified two types: those who grant entry into the renunciate order and those who grant full ordination. The Tibetan translation *mkhan po* has also come to mean "a learned scholar," the equivalent of a *paṇḍita*, but that is not the intended meaning in Indic Buddhist literature.

preta

yi dags

ཡི་དགས།

preta

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, into which beings are born as the karmic fruition of past miserliness. As the term in Sanskrit means "the departed," they are analogous to the ancestral spirits of Vedic tradition, the *pitṛ*s, who starve without the offerings of descendants. It is also commonly translated as "hungry ghost" or "starving spirit," as in the Chinese 餓鬼 *e gui*. They are sometimes said to reside in the realm of Yama, but are also frequently described as roaming charnel grounds and other inhospitable or frightening places along with piśācas and other such beings. They are particularly known to suffer from great hunger and thirst and the inability to acquire sustenance. Detailed descriptions of their realm and experience, including a list of the thirty-six classes of pretas, can be found in *The Application of Mindfulness of the Sacred Dharma*, Toh 287, 2.1281– 2.1482.

pretī

yi dags mo

ཡི་དགས་མོ།

pretī

A female preta.

resolve for unsurpassed perfect awakening

bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub kyi sems

བླ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས།

anuttarasamyaksambodhibodhicitta

The bodhisattva's resolve to become a buddha for the sake of others, in short, bodhicitta.

Samantajaya

kun tu rgyal ba

ཀུན་ཏུ་རྒྱལ་བ།

samantajaya

The name of a buddha evoked in a prayer in *The Dhāraṇī of Mahāmahīndra*.

Samantaprabha

kun nas 'od, kun tu 'od

ཀུན་ནས་འོད།, ཀུན་ཏུ་འོད།

samantaprabha

The name of a buddha.

Surāvatī

lha dang ldan pa

ལྷ་དང་ལྡན་པ།

surāvatī

Name of a polity, the home of the brahmin Mahāmahīndra.

vidyā-spell

rig sngags

རིག་སྔགས།

vidyā

A sacred utterance or spell made for the purpose of attaining either worldly or transcendent benefits. Although a technical term in its own right, it is also used interchangeably at times with the terms dhāraṇī, mantra, and so forth.