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The Rite of the Musk Shrew

Chucchundarakalpa

BY

Anon

ཏེ་ལོ་པའི་ཇོ་གཤམ་བྱ་བ།

te'u lo pa'i cho ga zhes bya ba

Chucchundarakalpanāma

· Toh 1996 ·

Degé Tengyur, vol. 47 (rgyud 'grel, mi), 192.b–193.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

· *rwa rdo rje grags* ·



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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 This short ritual work belonging to the tantric cycle of the deity Vajrabhairava presents a vidyāmantra and series of rites that use ingredients derived from a musk shrew.

ac.

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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. Bruno Galasek-Hul 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.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Rite of the Musk Shrew is a short ritual text from the tantric cycle of Vajrabhairava that focuses on rites that employ ingredients derived from a musk shrew to accomplish a range of ritual goals. After first presenting the main vidyāmantra used in all the rites, the text lays out a series of ritual frameworks that involve extensive offerings and numerous recitations of the vidyāmantra. There are three variations of this framework in the text, each of which is followed by a set of ritual applications employing different musk shrew ingredients (mostly in powdered form) and actions to achieve a variety of goals. These ritual goals include invisibility, enthralling people, expelling and killing enemies, and inflicting illnesses on one's targets. An image of Mahādeva, a common epithet of Śiva, is employed in one of the ritual frameworks. This indicates that the text demonstrates some association with the Śaiva tradition. The presence of Mahādeva in this text further underscores the observation made elsewhere that the Buddhist Vajrabhairava cycle is closely associated with Śaiva cults.¹

i.2

The Rite of the Musk Shrew seems to have enjoyed some popularity in connection with the Vajrabhairava cycle as it was transmitted in the lineage of Ra Lotsāwa Dorjé Drak.² According to some Tibetan scholars, the text does not “constitute an independent and fully qualified tantra” and may have been extracted from a larger work.³ *The Rite of the Musk Shrew* is only found in those Kangyurs from the Tshalpa (*tshal pa*) branch recensions and is not recorded in any of the Thempangma (*thems spang ma*) branches. *The Musk Shrew Ritual* is preserved in two versions in the Degé canon, once in the Unexcelled Yoga tantra section⁴ (*bla med rgyud*) of the Kangyur (Toh 472) and once among the tantric commentaries section of the Tengyur (Toh 1996). The Lhasa and Narthang Kangyurs uniquely preserve a brief sādhana with the title *te'u lo pa chu bya'i rtog pa bcas rgyud kyi phyogs*, but this constitutes a different work. The colophons recorded in Toh 472 indicate that this text was translated by a master named Dīpaṅkara together with Ra Lotsāwa.

Dīpaṅkara, or Dīpaṅkaraśrī, is another name for one of Ra Lotsāwa's principal teachers, the Newar master Bharo Chakdum ("Bharo Maimed-Hand"). This is indicated clearly in the colophons of the version of *The Rite of the Musk Shrew* preserved in the Degé and Kangxi Tengyurs, which identify Bharo Chakdum by name.

- i.3 This English translation was prepared based on both Degé versions (Toh 472 and 1996), in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) of the Degé Kangyur, the version contained in the Kangxi Tengyur (K 2849), and the version preserved in the Book of Ra (*rwa pod*). Our preliminary comparison of the different versions suggests that Toh 472 and the version in the Book of Ra appear to constitute one recension, while Toh 1996 and K 2849 form another, slightly different recension. The substantive differences between these recensions have been reported in the notes. We have also consulted Bulcsu Siklós's English translation, the first translation of this work into a Western language.

The Rite of the Musk Shrew

1.

The Translation

[F.192.b]

1.1

Homage to Yamāri!

1.2

“Now I will explain in detail the rite of the musk shrew.

1.3

*om tu tra ya ma he śa ra yo ga pratta ma ya | yo ga siddhi | tā hā ni me svāhā | hū
ha | da ha da ha | pa tsa pa tsa | ur dhi ya hūm phaṭṭ⁵*

1.4

“The ritual activity for this vidyāmantra is as follows. After not sleeping for one day and one night, one should make offerings of fragrance, flowers, and incense, perform a bali offering, and then recite the vidyāmantra eight thousand times. One will then be successful.⁶

1.5

“Next are the ritual permutations:

1.6

“One should take a dead musk shrew, grind its skin, bones, meat, and fur into powder, and recite the vidyāmantra two thousand times. [F.193.a] If one then rubs the powder onto one’s forehead, one will become invisible to one’s enemies.

1.7

om ma ma hū pa ti⁷

1.8

“If one smears the powder on one’s hands, one can enthrall anyone one touches. If one smears the powder on one’s feet, one can walk a hundred yojanas and back. If one smears the same powder on the entryway of an enemy’s house and recites the vidyāmantra one hundred thousand times at the door of the house, the enemy will be expelled. If one takes the powder and soil from a charnel ground, makes a small portion, and conceals it at an enemy’s door,⁸ the enemy’s family will be destroyed. Or, if one wishes to expel one’s enemy’s family, one should take the skin of a musk shrew,⁹ recite the vidyāmantra eight thousand times, fill the skin with soil from a place

where someone¹⁰ has urinated, and tie it with a blue thread. When one ties it up in the air, the enemy's urine will be blocked. When it is untied, the urine will be released.

1.9 "One should grind musk shrew skin into powder, recite the vidyāmantra eight thousand times in front of Mahādeva, and make offerings of fragrances, flowers, and incense, as well as a bali offering, and then again recite the vidyāmantra eight thousand times. One will then be successful.

1.10 "If one rubs that powder on the tip of one's nose, one will be beloved to all beings.¹¹ If one applies it to one's head, , one will be able to respond to all enemies and disputes.¹² If one anoints one's heart with that same powder and displays it to an enemy, the enemy will feel burning in their heart.¹³ If one makes an effigy¹⁴ from rice flour and smears it with the powder, the target will be afflicted with leprosy.¹⁵ If one scatters the powder¹⁶ together with ashes from a cremation ground on a group of enemies, anyone who steps on it or sees it will be afflicted with disease. If one incants the powder with the vidyāmantra one thousand times, one will enthrall anyone on whose head it is sprinkled. If one places the powder together with a skull at an enemy's entryway, one will be separated from that enemy.¹⁷ If one rubs the powder on a woman's hand, she will die. If one conceals the powder at someone's door, the person will be expelled. If one mixes the powder with human flesh and gives it to someone to drink, that person will die within seven days. If one gives the powder¹⁸ to an enemy, that enemy will be afflicted by hunger, [F.193.b] hemorrhoids, and diarrhea. Afterward, one will feel joyful. If one takes a musk shrew's bones and hides them in someone's house, that person will die.

1.11 "One should offer musk shrew flesh and fish oil to the deity, sit on a skull in a charnel ground, and recite the vidyāmantra while holding a skull.¹⁹ One should then pour the mixture onto charcoal from a charnel ground²⁰ one thousand times and perform a fire offering. One will then be successful.

1.12 "If one performs the rite by mixing the powder with the three hot substances and then places it in someone's house, a fiery heat²¹ will be produced there. Mixing the powder with black mustard seeds will have the same effect. If one makes an effigy with the powder and soil from a charnel ground and buries it at the foot of someone's door, that person will quickly be killed by illness. If one mixes the powder with salt, one will enthrall anyone one strikes with it. If one mixes the powder with white mustard seeds and scatter it on a king's gate, the king will be enthralled."²²

1.13 *The detailed rite of the musk shrew is complete.*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated by the Indian preceptor Dīpaṅkara and the Tibetan translator Ra Dorjé Drak.²³

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

K 2849 *tstshu tstshunda ra'i rtog pa*, Kangxi Tengyur

Rwa Pod *te'u lo pa'i cho ga zhes bya ba bzhugs so in rwa pod*, vol.1

n.

NOTES

- n.1 See Sparham 2009, pp. 36–43. The link between the *Vajrabhairavatantra* and Kashmir Śaivism is investigated in Wenta 2020.
- n.2 For information on this lineage (*rwa lugs*) and the collections of Ra Lotsāwa’s personal writings on the Yamāri and Vajrabhairava tantras, see Cuevas 2021, pp. 55–87. See pp. 22–3 for a general discussion and summary of *The Rite of the Musk Shrew*.
- n.3 Cuevas 2021, pp. 22–23.
- n.4 See the knowledge base article on Unexcelled Yoga Tantras (<https://84000.co/kb-articles/unexcelled-yoga-tantras-kangyur-section>).
- n.5 The transliteration given here follows Toh 472 without emendation. Siklós (1990, p. 179) attempts a Sanskrit reconstruction, which with minor emendations reads: *om rudrāya maheśvara yogaprasālyā yogasiddham dadāhu me svāha | hūṃ hūṃ haḥ daha daha paca paca urdhveya hūṃ phaḥ*. The mantra in the version preserved in the *rwa pod* reads: *om ru tra la ma he sha ra yo ga pra rta ma ya; yo ga siddhi / da ha hi mi swā ha / huṃ ha / da ha da ha / pa tsa pa tsa / uddhi ya huṃ phaḥ*.
- n.6 The structure of the text suggests that there are a variety of ritual permutations to be used within the general framework just described. These permutations follow below. Two additional frameworks will be introduced below, followed by other sets of permutations.
- n.7 Siklós’s (1990, p. 179) reconstruction of the Sanskrit reads, with minor emendation, *om mama huyanti*.
- n.8 This translation is tentative and follows Toh 1996, K 2849, and *rwa pod* in reading “soil from a charnel ground” (*dur khrod kyi sa*). Toh 472 reads “a

charnel ground shroud" (*dur khrod kyi ras*).

- n.9 This translation follows Toh 1996, K 2849, and Rwa pod. Toh 472 reads, "grind musk shrew skin into powder" (*ts+tshu ts+tshun d+ha ra'i spags pa phye mar btags*), but this makes little sense given the rest of the instructions for this rite.
- n.10 This has been inserted, tentatively and for clarity, as none of the sources identify who has urinated. One could also plausibly interpret this to refer to a place where the target has urinated.
- n.11 This translation follows Toh 472 and K2849. Toh 1996 reads "one will gather all beings" (*skye 'gro thams cad sdud par 'gyur*), while Rwa pod reads "one will become hostile towards all beings" (*skye 'gro thams cad la gdug par 'gyur*).
- n.12 Translation tentative for *len thebs pa* (Toh 1996, K 2849) / *lan thebs pa* (Toh 472, Rwa pod).
- n.13 This translation follows Toh 472 and Rwa pod. Toh 1996 and K 2849 read "will have a bad heart" (*snying na ngan par 'gyur; snying na ngan par 'gyur*).
- n.14 Presumably an effigy of the target.
- n.15 This translation follows Toh 472. Toh 1996, K 2849, and Rwa pod read "will be paralyzed" (*rengs par 'gyur*).
- n.16 "Powder" is tentatively inserted for clarity. None of the sources specify what is being scattered.
- n.17 Translation tentative for *dgra bo dang dbye bar 'gyur/dgra bo dbye bar 'gyur*.
- n.18 Toh 1996 reads "If one mixes that powder with feces..." (*phye ma de dag bshang dang bsres nas*). K 2849 reads the same once *bshad pa* is emended to *bshang pa*.
- n.19 Rwa pod reads "and incant three skulls" (*thos pa gsum la bzlas pa bya*).
- n.20 Toh 1996 and K 2849 read "ashes from a charnel ground" (*dur khrod kyi thal ba*).
- n.21 Toh 472 reads "three kinds of fiery heat" (*me'i tsha ba gsum*).
- n.22 Toh 1996 and K 2849 add, "Anyone who tramples on it will be enthralled. If one smears an unbaked clay bowl with bat feces and then uses it to cover the enemy's feces and urine while it is still warm, [the enemy's] stool and urine will be blocked. Once uncovered, they will recover" (*kham por so ma btang ba la*

*pha wang brun gyis byugs pa la / dgra'i dri chen dri chu drod ma yal ba la bkab na /
dri chen dri chu 'gag go / phyung nas slar 'tsho'o).*

- n.23 This is the colophon reported in Toh 472 and Rwa pod. The colophons from Toh 1996 and K 2849 read, "This was translated by Ra Dorjé Drak from a manuscript of Bharo Chakdum" (*b+ha ro phyag rdum gyi phyag dpe las | ra rdo rje grags kyis phyis bsgyur ro*).

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 bali offering

gtor ma

གཏོར་མ།

bali^{AD}

An offering, originating in the Vedic tradition, traditionally made out of uncooked food and performed in the home prior to cooking a meal by arranging portions of the ingredients and then casting them outside or into the sacred fire.

g.2 Bharo Chakdum

b+ha ro phyag rdum

ལྷ་རོ་ཕྱག་རྩམ།

—

Bharo “Maimed Hand,” the Newar master and who was one of Ra Lotsāwa’s main teachers. His work with Ra Lotsāwa, locates him in the eleventh to twelfth centuries.

g.3 Dīpaṅkara

dI pa~M ka ra

དྲི་པོ་ཀ་ར།

dīpaṅkara

Also known as Dīpaṅkaraśrī, this is another name of the Newar master Bharo Chakdum, one of Ra. Lotsāwa’s main teachers.

g.4 enthralling

dbang du 'gyur

དབང་དུ་འགྱུར།

vaśīkṛta^{AD}

One of the four primary categories of ritual activities, it involves summoning and controlling a desired target.

g.5 expelling

skrod pa

སྐྱོད་པ།

uccāṭana^{AD}

A type of ritual activity that aims to drive someone out of an area, or to drive away non-human beings.

g.6 fire offering

sbyin sreg

སྦྱིན་སྲེག།

homa^{AD}

An oblation offered into a ritual fire; the repeated act of casting an offering into the fire, where each throw is accompanied by a single repetition of the mantra.

g.7 Mahādeva

lha chen po

ལྷ་ཚེན་པོ།

mahādeva^{AD}

A common epithet of the god Śiva.

g.8 musk shrew

te'u lo · ts+tshu ts+tshun d+ha ra

ཏེ་ལཱོ་ལྷོ་ཚུ་ཚུན་དམ་རཱ།

chucchundara^{AD}

Possibly *Sunucus murinus*, which is also known as the Asian house shrew.

g.9 Ra Lotsāwa Dorjé Drak

rwa lo tsA ba rdo rje grags · rwa rdo rje grags

རཱ་ལཱོ་ཚཱ་བ་རྡོ་རྗེ་གྲགས། · རཱ་ལཱོ་རྡོ་རྗེ་གྲགས།

—

Ra Lotsāwa Dorjé Drakpa (*rwa lo tsā ba rdo rje grags pa*, c. 1016–1128) was an important translator and lineage holder of the Vajrabhairava teachings. He received his main tantric training (Vajrabhairava and Vajravārāhī) in Nepal under the master Bharo Chakdum (*bha ro phyag rdum*).

g.10 Thempangma

thems spangs ma

ཐེམས་སྤངས་མ།

—

A major branch recension of the Kangyur originally based on a compilation of the Kangyur produced in 1431 in Gyantsé.

g.11 three hot substances

tsha ba gsum

ཚ་བ་གསུམ།

trikaṭuka^{AD}

Three spicy substances of traditional South Asian medicine: black pepper, long pepper, and dry ginger.

g.12 Tshalpa

tshal pa

ཚལ་པ།

—

A major branch recension of the Kangyur originally based on a compilation of the Kangyur produced at Gungthang monastery in central Tibet from 1347–51 under the sponsorship of the local ruler, Tshalpa Künga Dorjé (1309–64).

g.13 Vajrabhairava

rdo rje 'jigs byed

དོ་རྗེ་འཇིགས་བྱེད།

vajrabhairava

A wrathful Buddhist tantric deity with the head of a buffalo. He is the main deity of the Vajrabhairava cycle of tantras (Toh 468–472) and is considered an emanation of Mañjuśrī.

g.14 vidyāmantra

rig sngags

རིག་སྒྲགས།

vidyāmantra ^{AD}

A type of incantation or spell used to accomplish a ritual goal. This can be associated with either ordinary attainments or those whose goal is awakening.

g.15 Yamāri

gshin rje'i gshed

གཤིན་རྗེའི་གཤེད།

yamāri

The Sanskrit literally means “enemy of Yama.

g.16 yojanas

dpag tshad

དཔག་ཚད།

yojana ^{AD}

The longest unit of distance in classical India. The lack of a uniform standard for the smaller units means that there is no precise equivalent, especially as its theoretical length tended to increase over time. Therefore it can mean between four and ten miles.