

༄༅། །མཚོད་པའི་སྒྲིན་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས།

The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”

Pūjameghadhāraṇī

mchod pa'i sprin zhes bya ba'i gzungs

· Toh 538 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 88 (rgyud, na), folios 83.a–83.b (in *par phud* printings), 100.a–100.b (in later printings)



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SUMMARY

- s.1 *The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”* includes a short dhāraṇī along with its rite. The dhāraṇī is used to make extensive offerings to the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Its recitation purifies evil and brings virtue to the reciter, such that he or she will be protected and, at the time of death, will take rebirth in Sukhāvātī.

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

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”* includes a dhāraṇī for making offerings and its brief rite. Through simply reciting the dhāraṇī one makes vast offerings to countless buddhas. The result of these offerings is that the reciter is freed from their evil deeds and obtains virtues. One will continually encounter the buddhas and bodhisattvas, be protected by all manner of beings, and finally, at the time of death, one will take birth in Sukhāvātī.

i.2 Like many dhāraṇī texts, *The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”* is found in the Degé Kangyur in both the Tantra section, where it is classed as an action tantra (*bya rgyud, kriyātantra*), and in the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs section. We are unaware of either an extant Sanskrit text or a Chinese translation of *The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”*. None of the Kangyur recensions includes a translators’ colophon, but a text bearing the same title appears in both the Denkarma as well as the Phangthangma imperial catalogs, suggesting that some version of *The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”* was translated into Tibetan and circulated in Tibet during the imperial period.¹ We cannot be sure, however, that the texts referenced in these catalogs match the present work.

i.3 Indeed, at Dunhuang we find a number of manuscripts that include texts entitled *The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”*, yet none of them is an exact match for the recension in the Kangyurs. Some of the recensions at Dunhuang include just a dhāraṇī, which is essentially the same as the one found in the Kangyur recensions, with minor variants; others include this same dhāraṇī with an additional prayer, rather than the rite described in *The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”* as it appears in the Kangyurs; still another group include an entirely different dhāraṇī that nonetheless bears the same name.²

i.4 This translation was made on the basis of the two Degé Kangyur recensions of the text (Toh 538³ and Toh 1068⁴), with reference to the Stok Palace edition as well as to the notes to the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*). There are no major discrepancies among the recensions consulted. The dhāraṇī proper has been transcribed exactly as it occurs in Toh 538.

The Dhāraṇī “Cloud of Offerings”

1.

The Translation

[F.83.a] [F.100.a]

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels.

1.2 *namo ratna trayāya | namo bhagavate | vajrasāra pramardani | tathāgatāya | arhate
samyaksaṃbuddhāya | tadyathā | oṃ vajre vajre | mahāvajre | mahātejāvajre | mahā-
vidyāvajre | mahābodhicittāvajre | mahābodhimaṇḍōpasamṅkramaṇāvajre | sarva-
karma āvaraṇaviśodhanāvajre svāhā | |*

1.3 The rite for this dhāraṇī mantra is as follows. In the instant of recollecting it, one makes offerings to as many blessed buddhas who reside in the ten directions as there are coarse and subtle grains of sand in the river Gaṅga, and pays homage at their feet. These offerings are in the form of flowers, incense, perfumes, flower garlands, scented unguents, powders, parasols, banners, pennants, seats, carpets, clothing, enjoyments, food, [F.83.b] [F.100.b] and so forth, as well as ornaments and flowing garments.⁵ One will be freed from all evil deeds and will possess every virtue. One will see all the buddhas and bodhisattvas and thereby be comforted. All the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, as well as the Lords of Secrets, such as Vajrapāṇi, as well as the Four Great Kings, will follow, protect, guard, and remain near to one. When one dies and transmigrates, one will be born in the realm of Sukhāvātī. If one has not accomplished these special qualities, they will be obtained with just a single recitation.

1.4 *This completes the dhāraṇī called “The Cloud of Offerings.”*

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Denkarma, folio 303.a; Herrmann-Pfandt, p. 237; Phangthangma 2003, p. 30.
- n.2 According to Dalton and van Schaik's catalog, the dhāraṇī texts called *The Dhāraṇī "Cloud of Offerings"* found at Dunhuang include IOL Tib J 140/2; IOL Tib J 141/2; IOL Tib J 366/2; IOL Tib J 369/2; PT 23/2; PT 24/2; PT 27/2; PT 70/2; PT 78; PT 310/1; PT 311; and PT 427. See Dalton and van Schaik 2006. Most of these works include essentially the same dhāraṇī that is found here in Toh 538 (with minor variants), appearing sometimes with and sometimes without an additional prayer that is not found in Toh 538. However, several of the works contain an entirely different dhāraṇī than the one found here, but which is nonetheless concerned with a *pūjāmegha* ("a cloud of offerings").
- n.3 Two sets of folio references have been included in this translation due to a discrepancy in volume 88 (*rgyud 'bum, na*) of the Degé Kangyur between the 1737 *par phud* printings and the late (post *par phud*) printings. In the latter case, an extra work, *Bodhimaṇḍasyālaṅkāralakṣadhāraṇī* (Toh 508, *byang chub snying po'i rgyan 'bum gyi gzungs*), was added as the second text in the volume, thereby displacing the pagination of all the following texts in the same volume by 17 folios. Since the eKangyur follows the later printing, both references have been provided, with the highlighted one linking to the eKangyur viewer.
- n.4 Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 1068 version of this text within vol. 100 or 101 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 1068, n.4 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh1068.html#UT22084-088-032-95>), for details.
- n.5 *lhab lhub*.

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 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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).

g.2 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གནུངས།

dhāraṇī^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *dhāraṇī* has the sense of something that “holds” or “retains,” and so it can refer to the special capacity of practitioners to memorize and recall detailed teachings. It can also refer to a verbal expression of the teachings—an incantation, spell, or mnemonic formula—that distills and “holds” essential points of the Dharma and is used by practitioners to attain mundane and supramundane goals. The same term is also used to denote texts that contain such formulas.

g.3 dhāraṇī mantra

gzungs sngags

གནུངས་སྒྲགས།

dhāraṇīmantra^{AD}

A type of dhāraṇī.

g.4 Four Great Kings

rgyal po chen po bzhi

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཚེན་པོ་བཞི།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Four gods who live on the lower slopes (fourth level) of Mount Meru in the eponymous Heaven of the Four Great Kings (*Cāturmahārājika*, *rgyal chen bzhi'i ris*) and guard the four cardinal directions. Each is the leader of a nonhuman class of beings living in his realm. They are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, ruling the gandharvas in the east; Virūḍhaka, ruling over the kumbhāṇḍas in the south;

Virūpākṣa, ruling the nāgas in the west; and Vaiśravaṇa (also known as Kubera) ruling the yakṣas in the north. Also referred to as Guardians of the World or World Protectors (*lokapāla*, 'jig rten skyong ba).

g.5 gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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.”

g.6 Gaṅga

gang gA

གང་གླ།

gaṅgā^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Gaṅgā, or Ganges in English, is considered to be the most sacred river of India, particularly within the Hindu tradition. It starts in the Himalayas, flows through the northern plains of India, bathing the holy city of Vārāṇasī, and meets the sea at the Bay of Bengal, in Bangladesh. In the sūtras, however, this river is mostly mentioned not for its sacredness but for its abundant sands—noticeable still today on its many sandy banks and at its delta—which serve as a common metaphor for infinitely large numbers.

According to Buddhist cosmology, as explained in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is one of the four rivers that flow from Lake Anavatapta and cross the southern continent of Jambudvīpa—the known human world or more specifically the Indian subcontinent.

g.7 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་དྲིང་།

garuḍa ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the *garuḍa* is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the *nāgas*. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.8 god

lha

ལྷ།

deva ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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.

g.9 kinnara

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྷིང་།

kinnara ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the *garuḍa* is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies

of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.10 Lord of Secrets

gsang ba pa'i bdag po

གསང་བ་པའི་བདག་པོ།

guhyaādhipati ^{AD}

Usually an epithet for Vajrapāṇi, but in this text this seems to refer to a different figure.

g.11 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱོ་ཚེན་པོ།

mahoraga ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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.

g.12 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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.

g.13 Sukhāvātī

bde ba can

བདེ་བ་ཅན།

sukhāvātī ^{AD}

Meaning “the delightful” or “the land of delight,” the name of the buddhafield of Amitābha / Amitāyus, in the western direction from our world.

g.14 Vajrapāṇi

lag na rdo rje

ལག་ན་རྩེ།

vajrapāṇi ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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.

g.15 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

yakṣa ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who inhabit forests, mountainous areas, and other natural spaces, or serve as guardians of villages and towns, and may be propitiated for health, wealth, protection, and other boons, or controlled through magic. According to tradition, their homeland is in the north, where they live under the rule of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.

Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just-mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.