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The Noble Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas”

Āryagrahamātrkānāmadhāraṇī

'phags ma gza' rnam kyī yum zhes bya ba'i gzungs

· Toh 660 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 91 (rgyud 'bum, ba), folios 180.b–183.b



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co.

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SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 *The Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas”* contains instructions for a maṇḍala offering and dhāraṇī recitation practice for appeasing and pacifying the nine celestial grahas as well as a variety of harmful beings. These dhāraṇī instructions are part of the broader popular tradition for performing offerings to appease and gain the favor of the celestial grahas that remain widespread across South Asia and the South Asian diaspora to the present day.

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. Adam C. Krug produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Rory Lindsay 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 “The Mother of the Grahas”*¹ records a teaching by Śākyamuni Buddha on a dhāraṇī recitation practice and maṇḍala instruction for making offerings to the nine celestial grahas. The aim of this practice is to win the grahas’ favor and be protected from harmful influences and beings. The introduction tells us that the Buddha taught this dhāraṇī in the city of the yakṣa lord Aṭavika, where he was surrounded by a host of bodhisattvas and a large gathering of supernatural beings. Seated among them are the nine celestial grahas—Sūrya, Candra, Aṅgāraka, Budha, Bṛhaspati, Śukra, Śani, Rāhu, and Ketu—who have joined this assembly to praise the Buddha and listen to his teaching.

i.2 As the Buddha concludes his teaching, the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi approaches the Buddha to ask him to teach a Dharma discourse that will pacify both the celestial and harmful grahas.² The Buddha then begins teaching on *The Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas”* with a description of the maṇḍala for the rite, followed by the various bali offerings that one should prepare for each of the maṇḍala deities. The Buddha then recites *The Dhāraṇī “The Mother of Grahas”* itself, followed by a set of ritual instructions to accompany the recitation of this dhāraṇī.

i.3 There is no known Sanskrit witness of *The Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas.”* The text appears in both the Denkarma³ and Phangthangma⁴ imperial Tibetan catalogs of translated works. The Tibetan translators’ colophon notes that it was first translated during the lifetimes of “the king, the minister, and the bodhisattva” (*rgyal blon byang chub sems dpa’*), which suggests that it was translated during the period when the Indian preceptor Śāntarakṣita or “the bodhisattva” (*byang chub sems dpa’*) and the “minister” (*blon*) Ba Selnang (*sba gsal snang; dba’ gsal snang*) were both present in the court of “the king” (*rgyal*), Tibetan Emperor Tri Songdetsen (Khri srong lde btsan, r. 755–797/804). The translators’ colophon adds that the Imperial Era

Tibetan translation was later corrected by the Sakya patriarch Drakpa Gyaltsen (1147–1216) based on an Indian manuscript that was housed at Sakya.

i.4 There are two Chinese translations of this text preserved in the Taishō canon. One version, Taishō 1302,⁵ was translated by Facheng, alias Gö Chödrup (ca. 755–849), who was a prolific Sino-Tibetan translator active in the Dunhuang region during the ninth century. This Chinese version is related to the present text (Toh 660/997), though it more closely matches another Tibetan version, *The Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas”* (Toh 661/998). Indeed, many lines in Taishō 1302 and Toh 661/998 match each other word-for-word, and the overall structure of these two texts is identical. It is possible, then, that Toh 661/998 was the source for Taishō 1302, or that Gö Chödrup produced both Toh 661/998 and Taishō 1302 based on a third source. Furthermore, given the parallels between Toh 660/997 and Toh 661/998, and given that the colophon of Toh 660/997 indicates that Drakpa Gyaltsen edited it based on an Indian manuscript, it is possible that the differences and additional material we find in Toh 660/997 are the result of Drakpa Gyaltsen’s editorial interventions. In other words, he may have been working from Toh 661/998 to begin with but later made changes based on a Sanskrit source text. A closer examination of these texts with reference to the Dunhuang manuscripts will shed further light on the connections between these sources. The other canonical Chinese translation, Taishō 1303,⁶ was translated by Fatian in the thirteenth century. This text noticeably differs from Toh 660/997 and Toh 661/998 in its structure and contents.

i.5 This English translation was prepared based on the witnesses for *The Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas”* in the Tantra Collection (*rgyud ’bum*) and the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs (*gzungs ’dus*)⁷ in the Degé Kangyur in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) of the Degé Kangyur. A version of this text preserved in the Stok Palace Kangyur was also consulted, but this witness is only a partial match for the witnesses in the Degé Kangyur. An additional early Tibetan witness is preserved among the collection of Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang presently housed in the Indian Office Library in London, but this witness has not yet been digitized and was unfortunately not available to us at the time that this translation was prepared.

The Noble Dhāraṇī
The Mother of the Grahas

1.

The Translation

[F.180.b]

1.1 Homage to the blessed noble Mother of the Grahas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was dwelling in Aṭavika's great city, where he was being praised by a multitude of devas, nāgas, yakṣas, rākṣasas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas kinnaras, and mahoragas as well as Māra, Yama, Sūrya, Candra, Aṅgāraka, Budha, Bṛhaspati, Śukra, Śani, Rāhu, Ketu, the twenty-eight nakṣatras, and so forth while seated on a lion throne graced with the ornaments of the great vajra samaya.

1.2 He was accompanied by a multitude of bodhisattvas [F.181.a] and surrounded by many hundreds of members of the saṅgha of bodhisattvas, such as the bodhisattva great being Vajrapāṇi, the bodhisattva great being Vajracāṇḍa, the bodhisattva great being Vajrasena, the bodhisattva great being Vajra Bow, the bodhisattva great being Vajra Master, the bodhisattva great being Vajra Ornament, the bodhisattva great being Vajra Light, the bodhisattva great being Noble Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva great being Samantadarśin, the bodhisattva great being Lokaśrī, the bodhisattva great being Lotus Flag, the bodhisattva great being Broad Face, the bodhisattva great being Padmagarbha, the bodhisattva great being Lotus Eyes, the bodhisattva great being Mañjuśrī, the bodhisattva great being Maitreya, and more.

1.3 He sat before them teaching the Dharma. He was delivering a Dharma teaching called "A Wish-Fulfilling Jewel Adorning the Great Array" that was good at the beginning, good in the middle, good at the end, excellent in meaning, beautiful in its expression, unadulterated, perfectly pure, and thoroughly erudite.

1.4 Then, through the power of the Buddha, Vajrapāṇi rose from his seat in the assembly, and, through his own magical power, circled the Blessed One many thousands of times, bowed, and sat before him. With pride, he sat in a

- perfect cross-legged position gazing at the assembly with his vajra palms placed together at his heart, and addressed the Blessed One.
- 1.5 “Blessed One [F.181.b] the grahas are vicious and have a vicious nature. They are fierce and have a fierce nature. They are wrathful, and, because of their wrathful intention, they hurt, harm, and steal the life force of beings. Some take wealth, some take life, and some shorten the length of a being’s lifespan. Will the Blessed One please teach a Dharma discourse that will protect beings from these beings who are harmful and bring misfortune?”
- 1.6 “Well done, Vajrapāṇi,” the Blessed One replied, “it is good that the compassion you have generated for being of benefit to beings has led you to ask the Thus-Gone One about the most secret of secret teachings. Please listen, pay attention, and focus as I explain them. I will explain the most secret of secret excellent offerings and the excellent recitation for incanting offering water for the grahas who have a vicious nature and are so very wrathful and terrifying.
- 1.7 “I will give a systematic explanation
Of worshiping them with the offering rite,
Identifying the perpetrator when harm has occurred,⁸
The colors of the celestial grahas,
- 1.8 “How they can be appeased,
And the offerings and mantras
That will pacify wrathful
Devas, asuras,
- 1.9 “Kinnaras, nāgas,
Yakṣas, rākṣasas,
Pūtanās, and humans
Brimming with fierce, fiery energy.”
- 1.10 A radiant light referred to as “the manifestation of compassion” blazed forth from blessed Śākyamuni’s heart and entered the crowns of the grahas. At that very instant, Sūrya and the rest of the celestial grahas got up and addressed the Blessed One:
- 1.11 “The blessed, thus gone, worthy, perfect Buddha [F.182.a] has shown us hospitality. Please teach the Dharma discourse, Blessed One. Will the Blessed One, who has gathered us here, please teach the dharma reciters who act in your service about guarding and protecting themselves, bringing peace and happiness, healing, dispelling punishment, eliminating weapons, neutralizing poison, nullifying poison, establishing a protective boundary, and binding the ground.”

- 1.12 And so, the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Śākyamuni taught the offering rites and mantras of the celestial grahas:
- 1.13 “One should make a maṇḍala circle in which the directions are illustrated using the particular color that is appropriate for each one. Then, one should draw a lotus on it with petals that are twelve fingers long and a center that is twelve fingers in diameter and decorate the maṇḍala with four gates following the proper procedure—*oṃ maigholkāya svāhā*. One should imagine Sūrya on top of the blooming lotus. His body is like a blazing orange mass of fiery energy and his radiant light is equal to a thousand suns. Candra is white and in the east—*oṃ śītāṃśave svāhā*. Aṅgāraka is red and in the southeast—*oṃ raktāṅgakumārāya svāhā*. The kṣatriya Budha is yellow and in the south—*oṃ buddhāya svāhā*. Aṅgiras is orange and in the southwest—*oṃ bṛhaspataye svāhā*. Śukra is white and in the west—*oṃ asurottamāya svāhā*. Śani is as black as collyrium and in the northwest—*oṃ kṛṣṇavarṇāya svāhā*. Rāhu is dark red and in the north—*oṃ amṛtapriyāya svāhā*. Ketu is the color of a cloud of smoke and in the northeast—*oṃ jyotiketave svāhā*.
- 1.14 “The venerable Buddha is at the eastern gate. Vajrapāṇi is at the southern gate. Lokanātha is at the western gate. Manjuśrī is at the northern gate.
- 1.15 “For the outer maṇḍala, all the celestial grahas should be depicted in the northeast. [F.182.b] The lunar mansions and the nakṣatras are in the southeast. The upadravas are in the southwest. Venerable Mahāvidyā⁹ is in the northwest. Dhṛtarāṣṭra is in the east at the outer maṇḍala gate. Virūḍhaka is in the south. Virūpākṣa is in the west. Kubera is in the north.
- 1.16 “There should be kheer for Sūrya, yogurt for Candra, a meal of chickpeas and maṣa beans for Aṅgāraka, ghee for Budha, milk for Bṛhaspati, cake for Śukra, a mixture of chickpeas, maṣa, and mung beans for Śani, sesame kheer for Rāhu, and a soup of sesame kheer and molasses for Ketu.
- 1.17 “The bali offering for the yakṣas consists of yogurt for Dhṛtarāṣṭra, a dish prepared with yogurt, chickpeas, and maṣa beans for Virūpākṣa, rice pudding for Virūḍhaka, a meal of kheer for Virūpākṣa, and a meal of yogurt, chickpeas, and maṣa beans combined with alcohol and molasses for Kubera.
- 1.18 “They should be given the correct type of flowers, the correct type of incense, and the correct type of banner. Then, one should present a lamp to each one and perform the appropriate offering.
- 1.19 “One should fill a conch shell with butter and honey, set out the five precious substances and present the offering water, and tie a silk cloth around the mouth.¹⁰
- 1.20 “Vajrapāṇi, the following things should be done while reciting the celestial grahas’ heart mantra. One should perform the offering in the middle of a maṇḍala that is twelve fingers in diameter and in which the appropriate

type of incense is burning. Present the water offering in vessels made of silver and gold or of clay, copper, and so forth, and incant each one of them with the mantra one hundred and eight times.¹¹

1.21 “After that, Vajrapāṇi, one should recite the mantra verses of *The Dhāraṇī* “*The Mother of the Grahas*” seven times. All the celestial grahas beginning with Sūrya and so forth will offer their protection and one will be free from the grahas who cause poverty. Those whose lifespan has been shortened will have a long life.

1.22 “Vajrapāṇi, [F.183.a] any monk, nun, male lay practitioner, female lay practitioner, or any other being known to take birth in the realm of beings who hears it will not suffer an unnatural death. Vajrapāṇi, all the celestial grahas will fulfill everything that might be wished for in every way by the Dharma reciter who makes offerings in the center of the celestial grahas’ maṇḍala and recites this dhāraṇī every day. The impoverished state of their family lineage will be brought to an end.”

1.23 Then, the blessed Thus-Gone One Śākyamuni recited *The Dhāraṇī* “*The Mother of the Grahas*”:

1.24 *namo buddhāya namo vajradharāya namo padmadharāya namo kumārāya namo grahānāṃ sarvāśaparipūrakānāṃ namo nakṣatrāṇāṃ namo dvādaśarāśinām |*

1.25 *tadyathā | om buddhe buddhe vajre vajre padme padme sara sara prasara prasara smara smara krīḍaya krīḍaya mārāya mārāya mārdaya mārdaya ghāṭaya ghāṭaya sarvaviḥnān kuru kuru mama kāryāṃ cchindha cchindha sarvaduṣṭān kṣāpaya kṣāpaya śānte śānte dānte dānte dāmāya dāmāya svāhā |*

1.26 *drutam ādarśaya¹² ātmanam rakṣa rakṣa māṃ sarvasattvāṃś ca sarvagrahāna-kṣatravidhvamsam¹³ nivartaya bhagavati mahāmāye prasādāya sarvaduṣṭāṃ śodhaya sarvapāpam caṇḍe caṇḍe turu turu caṇḍeni caṇḍeni muyu muyu mucu mucu vaha vaha ugre ugrata me pūrāya me manoratham paripūrāya sarvatahāgatādhiṣṭhite samāye svāhā |*

1.27 *om svāhā | hūm svāhā | hṛ svāhā | dhruṃ svāhā | dhriṃ svāhā |*

1.28 *padmadharāya svāhā | adityāya svāhā | saumāya svāhā | dhāraṇīsūtāya svāhā | budhāya svāhā | bṛhaspatāya svāhā | śukrāya svāhā | kṛṣṇavarṇāya svāhā | rāhave svāhā | ketave svāhā | buddhāya svāhā | vajradharāya svāhā | padmadharāya svāhā | kumārāya svāhā | sarvagrahebhyaḥ svāhā | sarvanakṣatrebhyaḥ svāhā | sarvadvādaśarāśinibhyaḥ svāhā [F.183.b] sarvopdravebhyaḥ svāhā | om sarvavidye hūm hūm phaṭ phaṭ svāhā |*

- 1.29 “Vajrapāṇi, the recitation of these mantra verses of *The Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas”* should begin on the seventh day during the waxing moon in the autumnal month of Kārtika. One should take temporary vows, perform the offering rite, and recite the dhāraṇī every day until the fourteenth day of the month. If one recites it day and night during the full moon, one will not have to fear death for ninety-nine years. One will not fear distress caused by meteors, grahas, and nakṣatras. One will remember one’s past lives, be worshipped by all the grahas, and the grahas will provide whatever one desires most.”
- 1.30 After that, the celestial grahas voiced their approval in agreement with the Blessed One and disappeared.
- 1.31 *This concludes The Noble Dhāraṇī “The Mother of the Grahas.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 This was translated during the lifetimes of the king, the minister, and the bodhisattva.¹⁴ Then, at a later date, the lay practitioner Drakpa Gyaltsen corrected it based on an Indian manuscript that was housed at the glorious hermitage of Sakya.

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

- C Choné (*co ne*)
- D Degé (*sde dge bka' 'gyur*)
- H Lhasa (*lha sa/ zhol*)
- J Lithang (*li thang*)
- K Kangxi (*kang shi*)
- N Narthang (*snar thang*)
- S Stok Palace (*stog pho 'brang*)
- U Urga (*phyi sog khu re*)
- Y Yongle (*g.yung lo*)

n.

NOTES

- n.1 *The Mother of the Grahas* (*gza' rnam s ky i yum, grahamāṭṛkā*) is the name of a dhāraṇī goddess
- n.2 Whenever it is possible to do so, this translation makes a distinction between the term *graha* as it applies to the nine celestial phenomena and planets and the term *graha* when it is more broadly construed to signify a variety of beings who cause physical and mental illness. The translation “celestial *graha*” is used for the Tibetan *gza'* when it is clear that the text is referring to this group, and the term “*graha*” is used for the Tibetan *gdon* to indicate the broader class of beings.
- n.3 Denkarma (*pho brang stod thang ldan dkar gyi chos ky i 'gyur ro cog gi dkar chag*), Toh 4364, Degé Tengyur vol. 206 (sna tshogs, jo), folio 302.b.
- n.4 Phangthangma (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*) (Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), p. 26.
- n.5 For e-texts of this version, see *Zhuxingmu tuoluoni jing* 諸星母陀羅尼經 (*Grahamāṭṛkānāmadhāraṇī*), Taishō 1302 (CBETA (<https://betaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T1302>); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T1302.html>)). Note that this version is absent in the Korean Buddhist canon.
- n.6 See Lewis R. Lancaster, *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue* (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k1180.html), Accessed April 14, 2023. For e-texts of this version, see *Fo shuo sheng yao mu tuoluoni jing* 佛說聖曜母陀羅尼經 (*Grahamāṭṛkānāmadhāraṇī*), Taishō 1303 (CBETA (<https://betaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T1303>); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T1303.html>)).

- n.7 Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 997 version of this text within vol. 101 or 102 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 997, n.7 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh997.html#UT22084-091-057-200>), for details.
- n.8 Following Toh 660, Toh 997, and S: *gnod pa byas na gnod byed pa*. The term “identifying” has been added to the English translation for the sake of clarity.
- n.9 Following Toh 997: *nub byang du rje btsun rig pa chen mo'o*. Toh 660 reads *nub byang du rje btsun rigs pa chen mo*. The name Mahāvidyā can refer to a number of goddesses and it is not entirely clear which goddess it refers to here.
- n.10 This translation is tentative. The phrase can refer to wearing a silk cloth as a mouth covering or possibly to the practice of tying a silk cloth around one’s face as a blindfold. It is also possible that this refers to the “mouth” of the previously mentioned conch.
- n.11 This translation emends the reading in this line to *re re la yang bzlas brjod lan brgya rtsa brgyad bya*. This emended reading is supported by the parallel passage in Toh 661 and Toh 998. The frequency with which the number one hundred and eight is used to incant ritual objects with mantras across the *kriyātantra* and *dhāraṇī* literature supports the conclusion that the second occurrence of *rtsa brgyad* is redundant. Toh 660 and Toh 997 read *re re la yang bzlas brjod lan brgya rtsa brgyad rtsa brgyad bya*.
- n.12 This transliteration emends the Tibetan transliteration of this line to *dru taM A dar+sha ya*. Toh 660 and Toh 997 read *dru tAn dar+sha ya*. This decision is supported by the corresponding section of this *dhāraṇī* as it appears in Toh 661 and Toh 998, where it is translated into Tibetan instead of left in transliterated Sanskrit.
- n.13 This transliteration emends the Tibetan to *bi d+h+waM saM*.
- n.14 This most likely refers to Tri Songdetsen (the king), Ba Selnang (the minister), and Śāntarakṣita (the bodhisattva). It is also possible that the spelling *blon* is a corruption of the shortened *dbu med* character *slon*, a scribal contraction for *slob dpon*. If this is the case, then the middle member of this group of three is an *ācārya* (*slob dpon*), not a minister (*blon po*), and may refer to Padmasambhava. Many thanks to Dylan Esler for his input on this issue.

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 **Angāraka***mig dmar*

མིག་དམར།

aṅgāraka^{AD}

Mars; the deity of mars.

g.2 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.3 Aṭavika's great city

'brog gnas kyi grong khyer chen po

འབྲོག་གནས་ཀྱི་གྲོང་ཁྱེར་ཆེན་པོ།

—

The location where the Buddha taught *The Dhāraṇī “Mother of the Grahas”*. Aṭavika is the name of a yakṣa lord.

g.4 Avalokiteśvara

spyan ras gzigs

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས།

avalokiteśvara^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the “eight close sons of the Buddha,” he is also known as the bodhisattva who embodies compassion. In certain tantras, he is also the lord of the three families, where he embodies the compassion of the buddhas. In Tibet, he attained great significance as a special protector of Tibet, and in China, in female form, as Guanyin, the most important bodhisattva in all of East Asia.

g.5 Ba Selnang

sba gsal snang · dba' gsal snang

སྤྲ་གསལ་སྣང་། · དབང་གསལ་སྣང་།

—

A minister at the court of Emperor Tri Songdetsen who is perhaps best known for his affiliation with the “Testament of Ba,” one of the early Tibetan chronicles of Tri Songdetsen’s efforts to establish Buddhism in Tibet during the eighth century.

g.6 Bṛhaspati

phur bu

ཕུར་བུ།

bṛhaspati^{AD}

Jupiter; the deity of Jupiter.

g.7 Broad Face

zhal ras rgyas pa

ཞལ་རས་རྒྱས་པ།

—

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.8 Budha

gza' lhag

གཙུག་ལྷན།

budha^{AD}

Mercury; the deity of Mercury.

g.9 Candra

zla ba

ལྷ་བ།

candra^{AD}

The moon; the deity of the moon.

g.10 celestial graha

gza'

གཙུག་ལྷན།

graha^{AD}

The set of nine celestial phenomena and planets as well as the deities associated with them.

g.11 deva

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.12 dharma reciters

chos smra ba

ཚོས་སྒྲ་བ།

dharmabhāṇaka^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Speaker or reciter of scriptures. In early Buddhism a section of the saṅgha would consist of *bhāṇakas*, who, particularly before the teachings were written down and were only transmitted orally, were a key factor in the preservation of the teachings. Various groups of dharmabhāṇakas specialized in memorizing and reciting a certain set of sūtras or vinaya.

g.13 Dhṛtarāṣṭra

yul 'khor srung

ཡུལ་འཁོར་སྐུང་།

dhṛtarāstra^{AD}

One of the Four Great Kings, he presides over the eastern quarter and rules over the gandharvas.

g.14 Drakpa Gyaltsen

grags pa rgyal mtshan

གྲགས་པ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

—

(1147–1216) The third of the five founding patriarchs of the Sakya school.

g.15 five precious substances

rin chen sna lnga

རིན་ཆེན་སྣ་ལྔ།

—

The five precious substances are commonly listed as gold, silver, coral, sapphire, and pearl.

g.16 gandharva

dri za

དྷི་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.17 garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་དྷིང་།

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.18 glorious hermitage of Sakya

dpal ldan sa skya'i dben gnas

དཔལ་ལྷན་ས་སྐྱའི་དབེན་གནས།

—

One of the primary seats of the Sakya lineage in Tibet.

g.19 graha

gdon

གདོན།

graha^{AD}

A term that can be applied to any class of supernatural beings that cause mental and physical illness.

g.20 Kārtika

smin drug

སྐྱིན་བུག

kārtika^{AD}

A month on the lunar calendar.

g.21 Ketu

mjug rings

མཇུག་རིངས།

ketu^{AD}

Comets or meteors; the deity associated with comets or meteors.

Alternatively, the term refers to the eclipse of the southern lunar node.

g.22 kinnara

mi'am ci

མི་འམ་ཅི།

kinnara^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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.

g.23 Kubera

lus ngan

ལུས་རན།

kubera^{AD}

Another name for Vaiśravaṇa, one of the Four Great Kings. He is the guardian of the north and lord of the yakṣas and is traditionally regarded as a yakṣa himself.

g.24 Lokanātha

'jig rten mgon po

འཇིག་རྟེན་མགོན་པོ།

lokanātha^{AD}

An alternate name for the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara.

g.25 Lokaśrī

'jig rten dpal

འཇིག་རྟེན་དཔལ།

**lokaśrī*^{RS}

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.26 Lotus Eyes

pad+ma'i spyan

པདྨའི་སྐྱེན།

—

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.27 Lotus Flag

pad+ma'i tog

པདྨའི་རྟོག།

—

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.28 Mahāvidyā

rigs pa chen mo

རིགས་པ་ཆེན་མོ།

mahāvidyā^{AD}

The name of a goddess.

g.29 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྲེ་ཆེན་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.30 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The bodhisattva Maitreya is an important figure in many Buddhist traditions, where he is unanimously regarded as the buddha of the future era. He is said to currently reside in the heaven of Tuṣita, as Śākyamuni’s regent, where he awaits the proper time to take his final rebirth and become the fifth buddha in the Fortunate Eon, reestablishing the Dharma in this world after the teachings of the current buddha have disappeared. Within the Mahāyāna sūtras, Maitreya is elevated to the same status as other central bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, and his name appears frequently in sūtras, either as the Buddha’s interlocutor or as a teacher of the Dharma. *Maitreya* literally means “Loving One.” He is also known as Ajita, meaning “Invincible.”

For more information on Maitreya, see, for example, the introduction to *Maitreya’s Setting Out* (Toh 198).

g.31 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Mañjuśrī is one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha” and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. To his name, Mañjuśrī, meaning “Gentle and Glorious One,” is often added the epithet Kumārabhūta, “having a youthful form.” He is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.32 Māra

bdud

མྱལ

māra^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Māra, literally “death” or “maker of death,” is the name of the deva who tried to prevent the Buddha from achieving awakening, the name given to the class of beings he leads, and also an impersonal term for the destructive forces that keep beings imprisoned in saṃsāra:

(1) As a deva, Māra is said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations (*paranirmitavaśavartin*), the highest paradise in the desire realm. He famously attempted to prevent the Buddha’s awakening under the Bodhi tree—see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.1—and later sought many times to thwart the Buddha’s activity. In the sūtras, he often also creates obstacles to the progress of śrāvakas and bodhisattvas. (2) The devas ruled over by Māra are collectively called *mārakāyika* or *mārakāyikadevatā*, the “deities of Māra’s family or class.” In general, these māras too do not wish any being to escape from saṃsāra, but can also change their ways and even end up developing faith in the Buddha, as exemplified by Sārthavāha; see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 21.14 and 21.43. (3) The term māra can also be understood as personifying four defects that prevent awakening, called (i) the divine māra (*devaputramāra*), which is the distraction of pleasures; (ii) the māra of Death (*mṛtyumāra*), which is having one’s life interrupted; (iii) the māra of the aggregates (*skandhamāra*), which is identifying with the five aggregates; and (iv) the māra of the afflictions (*kleśamāra*), which is being under the sway of the negative emotions of desire, hatred, and ignorance.

g.33 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.34 nakṣatra

rgyu skar

ཀུ་སྐ་རྩེ།

nakṣatra^{AD}

The term for the lunar asterisms through which the moon passes as it moves across the sky and the celestial beings associated with them. *The Dhāraṇī* “*The Mother of Grahas*” notes that there are twenty-eight.

g.35 Padmagarbha

pad+ma'i snying po

པདྨའི་སྙིང་པོ།

padmagarbha^{AD}

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.36 pūtana

srul po

སྤྱལ་པོ།

pūtana^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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 is variously described in the texts as resembling that of a billy goat or a crow. The morbid condition caused by the spirit shares its name and 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.

g.37 Rāhu

sgra gcan 'dzin

སྐྱ་གཅན་འཛིན།

rāhu ^{AD}

The eclipse; the deity of the eclipse. The term can refer specifically to the eclipse of northern lunar node.

g.38 rākṣasa

srin po

སྲིན་པོ།

rākṣasa ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings that are often, but certainly not always, considered demonic in the Buddhist tradition. They are often depicted as flesh-eating monsters who haunt frightening places and are ugly and evil-natured with a yearning for human flesh, and who additionally have miraculous powers, such as being able to change their appearance.

g.39 Śākyamuni

shAkya thub pa

ལྷ་ཀྲ་ཐུབ་པ།

śākyamuni ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

An epithet for the historical Buddha, Siddhārtha Gautama: he was a *muni* (“sage”) from the Śākya clan. He is counted as the fourth of the first four buddhas of the present Good Eon, the other three being Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kāśyapa. He will be followed by Maitreya, the next buddha in this eon.

g.40 Samantadarśin

kun du gzigs

ཀུན་དུ་གཟིགས།

samantadarśin ^{AA}

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.41 Śani

spen pa

སྲིན་པ།

śaniścara ^{AD}

Saturn; the deity of Saturn.

g.42 Śāntarakṣita

shi ba 'tsho

ཤི་བ་འཚོ།

śāntarakṣita ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Śāntarakṣita (725-788) was an Indian Buddhist monk, scholar, and author who played a pivotal role in the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. At the invitation of King Tri Songdetsen, he traveled to Tibet and assisted in the foundation of Samyé Monastery, presided over the ordination of the first Tibetan monks, and established a system of scholastic education modelled on the great monastic universities of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla. His philosophical writings were among the most influential in late Indian Buddhism.

g.43 Śukra

pa ba sangs

པ་བ་སངས།

śukra ^{AD}

Venus; the deity of Venus.

g.44 Sūrya

nyi ma

ཉི་མ།

sūrya ^{AD}

The sun; the deity of the sun.

g.45 temporary vows

gso sbyong

གསོ་སྦྱང།

upoṣada ^{AD} · *poṣada* ^{AD}

A prescriptive ritual fast and period of abstinence that precedes the performance of many rites. This typically lasts between one and three days, and is to be performed by any practitioner, lay or monastic.

g.46 upadrava

gnod pa

གནོད་པ།

upadrava ^{AD}

A category of celestial beings who can be responsible for large-scale calamities such as famine, plague, and so forth.

g.47 Vajra Bow

rdo rje gzhu

རྡོ་རྗེ་གཞུ།

—

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.48 Vajra Light

rdo rje 'od

རྡོ་རྗེ་འོད།

—

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.49 Vajra Master

rdo rje' i bdag po

རྡོ་རྗེ་འབདག་པོ།

—

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.50 Vajra Ornament

rdo rje rgyan

རྡོ་རྗེ་རྒྱལ།

—

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.51 Vajracāṇḍa

rdo rje gtum po

རྡོ་རྗེ་གཏུམ་པོ།

**vajracāṇḍa*^{RS}

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.52 Vajrapāṇi

phyag na rdo rje

ཕྱག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེ།

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.53 Vajrasena

rdo rje sde

དོར་རྟེན་སྡེ།

vajrasena ^{AD}

The name of a bodhisattva.

g.54 Virūḍhaka

'phags skyes po

འཕགས་སྡེས་པོ།

virūḍhaka ^{AD}

One of the Four Mahārājas, he is the guardian of the southern direction and the lord of the kumbhāṇḍas.

g.55 Virūpākṣa

mig mi bzang

མིག་མི་བཟང་།

virūpākṣa ^{AD}

One of the Four Mahārājas, he is the guardian of the western direction and traditionally the lord of the nāgas.

g.56 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.

g.57 Yama

gshin rje

གཤིན་རྗེ།

yama^{AD}

Ruler of the hell realms.