

། །འཕྲུགས་མཚུངས་གནུངས།

The Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [2]

Lohatuṅḍadhāraṇī

འཕགས་པ་ལྷགས་མཚུའི་བུ་བའི་གཟུངས།

'phags pa lcags mchu zhes bya ba'i gzungs

The Noble Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [2]

Āryalohatuṅḍanāmadhāraṇī

· Toh 762 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 96 (rgyud 'bum, wa), folios 53.a–54.a



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co.

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SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 *The Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak* [2] is the fourth of the “five beak dhāraṇīs” (*mchusde lnga*, Toh 759–763) and among the few scriptures in the Degé Kangyur concerned with weather control practices. In Indra’s Rock Cave on Vaidehaka Mountain, Śakra requests the Buddha for a teaching with which to guard against the asuras and protect the Buddhist teachings. The Buddha then recites the dhāraṇī formula in two parts along with a brief nāga subduing, weather control ritual. The benefits of the performance of this text include keeping the Buddhist teachings and practitioners safe from harm and ensuring proper rainfall for bountiful harvests.

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. Lowell Cook produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Torsten Gerloff 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 Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [2] is the fourth of the “five beak dhāraṇīs” (*mchusde lnga*, Toh 759–763), a cycle of texts related to the garuḍas, a race of eagle-like birds in Indian mythology. The word *tuṅḍa* or “beak” in the titles is a reference to the garuḍas’ sharp, owl-like beaks which they use for hunting nāgas, a class of snake-like beings associated with, among other things, weather patterns and rainfall. The dhāraṇī of the iron beak is thus a threatening spell used to coerce the nāgas into providing rainfall for favorable agriculture. The cycle of the five beak dhāraṇīs is, along with the *Great Cloud sūtras* (*Mahāmegha*, Toh 232-235), among the few scriptures in the Degé Kangyur concerned with weather control practices.

i.2

The Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [2] takes place in Indra’s Rock Cave on Vaidehaka Mountain. There, Śakra requests the Buddha for a teaching with which to subdue asuras—the famed adversaries of the devas—and other beings who harm the Buddhist teachings. The Buddha instructs Śakra to employ the dhāraṇī of the iron beak, which has the dual purpose of averting harm to the Buddhist teachings and controlling weather. This dual interest in agrarian concerns and protecting Buddhism might suggest that the dhāraṇī was originally a pan-Indian agricultural ritual spell that was later brought into the Buddhist fold, especially when we consider how rain rituals for good harvests have been a widespread concern of Indian religions since time immemorial.¹ After the Buddha recites the dhāraṇī in two parts, he provides brief ritual instructions on subduing nāgas with a small stake (*kīlaka*) and controlling the weather. The Buddha’s discourse comes to a close with Śakra rejoicing.

i.3

The Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [2] shares an identical title with another translation in the Degé Kangyur, Toh 761,² which immediately precedes it. Furthermore, these two texts share a great deal of intertextuality with *The Dhāraṇī That Fully Confers Freedom From Dangers* (Toh 609/925).³ These three works share an identical narrative structure, are set in Indra’s Rock Cave,

and feature Śakra as their interlocutor. While the dhāraṇī formulas in Toh 761 and Toh 609/925 are, in most places, nearly in agreement, the much shorter formulas found in Toh 762 are altogether different.

i.4 Hidas (2019) dates *The Nāga Vow of the Vajra Beak* (*Vajratuṅdanāgasamaya*, Toh 759/964)—the longest and more central of the five beak dhāraṇīs—to the fifth century CE. Though the relationships between the five beak dhāraṇīs are still unclear, we may assume that *The Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak* [2] also emerged around a similar time and amidst a similar Indian cultural and religious milieu. The text is bereft of a colophon that would provide information as to when and by whom it was translated into Tibetan. It is not listed in either of the two extant catalogs from the imperial period. As such, we are left with little basis on which to determine under what circumstances it was translated in Tibet.

i.5 Like much of dhāraṇī literature, this work's importance lies not in its study but in its ritual performance. As such, the majority of the references to five beak dhāraṇīs we find in later Tibetan literature are not as scriptural citations but rather as a part of larger liturgies, alongside ritual elements such as nāga oblations (*klu gtor*), or as prescribed by astrological divinations.

i.6 *The Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak* [2] no longer survives in Sanskrit. The dhāraṇī was never translated into Chinese and, beyond its translation as a part of the Mongolian canon, it does not appear to have been translated into any other languages as far as we are aware. The text has also not been the subject of any sustained scholarly research. Our translation was based on the textual witness in the Degé Kangyur. We also consulted variant readings as attested in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) Kangyur as well as the Stok Palace Manuscript (*stog pho brang bris ma*) Kangyur.

The Noble Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [2]

1.

The Translation

[F.53.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was traveling through the land of Magadha when he arrived at a mango grove. At that mango grove, he took up residence in the Indra's Rock Cave on Vaidehaka Mountain. [F.53.b] Śakra the lord of the devas then appeared before the Blessed One. He bowed his head at the Blessed One's feet, sat to one side, and then Śakra the lord of the devas spoke to the Blessed One as follows.

1.3 "Blessed One, the asuras are truly the long-time adversaries of the devas. With regard to it, Blessed One, please bestow a teaching on recollection.⁴ Please give a teaching that will serve as a method for the bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, śrāmaṇeras, śrāmaṇerīs, upāsakas, and upāsikās among the gatherings of human beings in the world of Jambudvīpa, the realm of Śākyamuni, to protect the sacred Dharma from destruction."

1.4 The Blessed One told Śakra the lord of the devas, "Lord of the devas, uphold the dhāraṇī of the iron beak. It instills terror in everyone and smites the asuras with five-pointed⁵ thunderbolts. It alleviates the world of infectious diseases and brings peace to the whole world. It neutralizes all poisons and stops all weapons. It paralyzes all legless, two-legged, and four-legged beings and defeats all adversaries. It destroys asuras, garuḍas, daityas, piśācas, apasmāras, unmādas, and malevolent beings. It brings peace from all conflicts, wars, discord, and scandals. This is the noble iron beak. I will recite the vidyāmantra of the iron beak dhāraṇī of freedom from all danger:

1.5 *tadyātha | vagacani śuti śumali gaśaśa śatata virati huyu huyu riti svāhā |*

- 1.6 “Scatter black mustard seeds⁶ on the ocean. It will rain as you wish. If one chants this countless tens of trillions⁷ of times on a small stake at a place where nāgas are found and plants the stake at that nāga site, [F.54.a] hail and thunderbolts will come crashing down as you desire.
- 1.7 *sarvanāgānām apavīrya descend | nāga śara śara descend | nāga rakṣa descend | racī sri vajra hūṃ phaṭ |*
- 1.8 “This wrathful dhāraṇī of the iron beak that averts the adversaries of the country, brings down five-pointed thunderbolts that blaze with fire, and overpowers every lord of the devas will bewilder the asuras, keep the fourfold assembly safe, and protect the teachings of the Great Vehicle against enemies.”
- 1.9 After the Blessed One had spoken, Śakra the lord of the devas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had taught.
- 1.10 *This concludes “The Noble Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [2].”*

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Hidas (2019), pp. 11–18. The fact that the mantras and vidyāmantras contained in these texts comprise, as far as this can be judged on the basis of the transliterations preserved in the Tibetan translations, forms of Middle Indic dialect, further supports the hypothesis that these spells originated in a pan-Indian cultural milieu.
- n.2 *The Dhāraṇī of the Iron Beak [1]* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh761.html>) (*Lohatuṅḍadhāraṇī*, Toh 761).
- n.3 *Sarvābhayaṇī* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh609.html>) (Toh 609/925).
- n.4 It is possible that *dran pa* (“recollection”) should be emended to *drag pa* (“wrathful”), which would accord with the latter half of the text and with Toh 761. Nevertheless, we did not find such a variant attested in any of the consulted editions which would support this reading and, thus, we have translated as it appears in the text. Alternatively to the above translation, one may also translate this passage as “Blessed One, please bestow a teaching to keep in mind.”
- n.5 The translation of *smad lnga* is tentative. This line would appear to be the only place where the term appears in the Kangyur. The term *smad lnga* also appears in the Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa’s *A Feast for Scholars* (*mkhas pa’i dga’ ston*) in a similar context of making thunderbolts shower down upon one’s enemies.
- n.6 The meaning of *’bar li ti* is uncertain. We have rendered it as “black mustard seeds,” given the parallels with Toh 761.
- n.7 Reading the addition of *sa ya* (“million”) from H, N, and S.

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 apasmāra

brjed byed

བརྗེད་བྱེད།

apasmāra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings believed to cause epilepsy, fits, and loss of memory. As their name suggests—the Skt. *apasmāra* literally means “without memory” and the Tib. *brjed byed* means “causing forgetfulness”—they are defined by the condition they cause in affected humans, and the term can refer to any nonhuman being that causes such conditions, whether a bhūta, a piśāca, or other.

g.2 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

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 bhikṣu

dge slong pha

དགེ་སློང་པ།

bhikṣu

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *bhikṣu*, often translated as “monk,” refers to the highest among the eight types of prātimokṣa vows that make one part of the Buddhist assembly. The Sanskrit term literally means “beggar” or “mendicant,” referring to the fact that Buddhist monks and nuns—like other ascetics of the time—subsisted on alms (*bhikṣā*) begged from the laity.

In the Tibetan tradition, which follows the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, a monk follows 253 rules as part of his moral discipline. A nun (*bhikṣuṇī*; *dge slong ma*) follows 364 rules. A novice monk (*śrāmaṇera*; *dge tshul*) or nun (*śrāmaṇerikā*; *dge tshul ma*) follows thirty-six rules of moral discipline (although in other vinaya traditions novices typically follow only ten).

g.4 bhikṣuṇī

dge slong ma

དག་སྐྱོང་མ།

bhikṣuṇī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *bhikṣuṇī*, often translated as “nun,” refers to the highest among the eight types of prātimokṣa vows that make one part of the Buddhist assembly.

The Sanskrit term *bhikṣu* (to which the female grammatical ending *ṇī* is added) literally means “beggar” or “mendicant,” referring to the fact that Buddhist nuns and monks—like other ascetics of the time—subsisted on alms (*bhikṣā*) begged from the laity. In the Tibetan tradition, which follows the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, a *bhikṣuṇī* follows 364 rules and a *bhikṣu* follows 253 rules as part of their moral discipline.

For the first few years of the Buddha’s teachings in India, there was no ordination for women. It started at the persistent request and display of determination of Mahāprajāpatī, the Buddha’s stepmother and aunt, together with five hundred former wives of men of Kapilavastu, who had themselves become monks. Mahāprajāpatī is thus considered to be the founder of the nun’s order.

g.5 Blessed One

bcom ldan ’das

བཙུན་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavat

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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 $\sqrt{bhañj}$ (“to break”).

g.6 daitya

sbyin byed ma’i bu

སྐྱོན་བྱེད་མའི་བུ།

daitya

Sons of the goddess Diti.

g.7 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

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.8 fourfold assembly

'khor rnam bzhi

འཁོར་རྣམ་བཞི།

catuḥparṣad

The fourfold assembly comprises monks, nuns, and female and male lay practitioners.

g.9 garuḍa

nam mkha lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྗིང།

garuḍa

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 Great Vehicle

theg pa chen po

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāyāna

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

When the Buddhist teachings are classified according to their power to lead beings to an awakened state, a distinction is made between the teachings of the Lesser Vehicle (Hīnayāna), which emphasizes the individual's own freedom from cyclic existence as the primary motivation and goal, and those of the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna), which emphasizes altruism and has the liberation of all sentient beings as the principal objective. As the term "Great Vehicle" implies, the path followed by bodhisattvas is analogous to a large carriage that can transport a vast number of people to liberation, as compared to a smaller vehicle for the individual practitioner.

g.11 Indra's Rock Cave

dbang po'i brag phug

དབང་པོའི་བྲག་ཕུག

indraśailaguha

A cave on Vaidehaka Mountain.

g.12 iron beak

lcags kyi mchu

ལྷགས་ཀྱི་མཚུ།

lohatuṅḍa

A reference to, or epithet of, the garuḍas, on account of their sharp beaks.

g.13 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling pa

འཛམ་བུའི་གླིང་པ།

jambudvīpa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The name of the southern continent in Buddhist cosmology, which can signify either the known human world, or more specifically the Indian subcontinent, literally "the *jambu* island/continent." Jambu is the name used for a range of plum-like fruits from trees belonging to the genus *Syzygium*, particularly *Syzygium jambos* and *Syzygium cumini*, and it has commonly been rendered "rose apple," although "black plum" may be a less misleading term. Among various explanations given for the continent being so named, one (in the *Abhidharmakośa*) is that a jambu tree grows in its northern mountains beside Lake Anavatapta, mythically considered the source of the four great rivers of India, and that the continent is therefore named from the tree or the fruit. Jambudvīpa has the Vajrāsana at its center and is the only continent upon which buddhas attain awakening.

g.14 Magadha

ma ga d+ha

མ་ག་ན།

magadha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

An ancient Indian kingdom that lay to the south of the Ganges River in what today is the state of Bihar. Magadha was the largest of the sixteen “great states” (*mahājanapada*) that flourished between the sixth and third centuries BCE in northern India. During the life of the Buddha Śākyamuni, it was ruled by King Bimbisāra and later by Bimbisāra's son, Ajātaśatru. Its capital was initially Rājagṛha (modern-day Rajgir) but was later moved to Pāṭaliputra (modern-day Patna). Over the centuries, with the expansion of the Magadha's might, it became the capital of the vast Mauryan empire and seat of the great King Aśoka.

This region is home to many of the most important Buddhist sites, including Bodh Gayā, where the Buddha attained awakening; Vulture Peak (*Gṛdhra-kūṭa*), where the Buddha bestowed many well-known Mahāyāna sūtras; and the Buddhist university of Nālandā that flourished between the fifth and twelfth centuries CE, among many others.

g.15 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

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.16 piśāca

sha za

ཤ་ཟ།

piśāca

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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 $\sqrt{piś}$, 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.

g.17 Śākyamuni

shAkya thub pa

ལྡན་ལྷན་པ།

śākyamuni

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.18 small stake

phur bu

ཕུར་བུ།

kīlaka

A smaller form of the *kīla*.

g.19 śrāmaṇera

dge tshul pha

དགེ་ལྡན་པ།

śrāmaṇera

A renunciant who lives his life as a mendicant. More specifically, within the monastic tradition, it can also mean a novice monk who, in the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda monastic tradition, takes thirty-six vows.

g.20 śrāmaṇerī

dge tshul ma

དགེ་ལྡན་མ།

śrāmaṇerī

Within the Buddhist tradition, it means a novice nun who, in the Tibetan Mūlasarvāstivāda monastic tradition, takes thirty-six vows.

g.21 unmāda

smyo byed

མྱེ་བྱེད།

unmāda

A class of nonhuman beings who are said to cause mental illness.

g.22 upāsaka

dge bsnyen pa

དགེ་བསྟེན་པ།

upāsaka

Lay male devotees who uphold the five precepts.

g.23 upāsikā

dge bsnyen ma

དགེ་བསྟེན་མ།

upāsikā

Lay female devotees who uphold the five precepts.

g.24 Vaidehaka Mountain

lus 'phags ri

ལུས་འཕགས་རི།

vaidehakarparvata

A mountain in Videha.