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Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin

sangs rgyas rin chen gtsug tor can gyi mtshan rjes su dran pa

· Toh 870 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 100 (gzungs 'dus, e), folio 89.a



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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 *Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin* includes a short dhāraṇī and the brief statement that if it is recited at the time of death, one will avoid lower rebirth and be reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin includes a dhāraṇī invoking the buddha Ratnaśikhin. The text then states that whoever recites it at the time of death will not be reborn in the lower realms but will instead take rebirth in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

i.2

This dhāraṇī text appears to be connected with the account from *The Sūtra of the Sublime Golden Light* (Toh 555), in which it is recounted that, in the past, the Buddha Ratnaśikhin made a commitment that any being who hears his name at the time of death will be reborn in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.¹ The fruits of his commitment are borne out in the narrative of *The Sūtra of the Sublime Golden Light*, in which several beings report having taken higher rebirths through the fortune of hearing the Buddha Ratnaśikhin's name. The specific dhāraṇī found in the present text is, however, not included in *The Sūtra of the Sublime Golden Light*.

i.3

According to a number of canonical works, the Buddha Ratnaśikhin is a buddha from the past in whose presence the Buddha Śākyamuni trained during earlier lifetimes, prior to his awakening. *The Play in Full*, in describing Śākyamuni's service to former buddhas, mentions that Śākyamuni "offered a candle to Ratnaśikhin."² Vasubhandu's *Abhidharmakośa* identifies Ratnaśikhin as the buddha under whom Śākyamuni completed the first of his three "incalculable eons" of training.³

i.4

Like many dhāraṇī texts, *Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin* is found in both the Tantra section as well as the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs section of the Degé Kangyur. It lacks a Sanskrit title as well as a colophon and it is not listed in any of the imperial-period catalogs. However, a text bearing a nearly identical title does appear at Dunhuang, suggesting that *Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin* was translated into Tibetan and circulated in Tibet in a relatively early period.⁴

- i.5 The Sanskrit for the first part of the dhāraṇī proper is included in a series of dhāraṇīs located on two gold foils found in a reliquary from a shrine at Candi Plaosan in Indonesia. A variant of the dhāraṇī is found in the *Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of Knowledge of Former Lives (Sumingzhi tuolouni jing)*, which was translated into Chinese by Faxian in 996.⁵ However, it appears that no Sanskrit recension or Chinese translation of *Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin* is extant.
- i.6 This English translation was made on the basis of the two Degé Kangyur recensions of the text (Toh 537⁶ and Toh 870⁷), with reference to the Stok Palace edition as well as the notes to the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*). The recensions consulted have no significant discrepancies. The dhāraṇī itself has been transcribed exactly as it appears in Toh 537.

Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin

1.

The Translation

[F.89.a]

1.1 Homage to the Buddha Ratnaśikhin.

1.2 *namo ratnaśikhine | tathāgatāya | arhate samyaksambuddhāya | tadyathā | ratne
ratne ratnaśikhine svāhā | |*

1.3 If someone remembers this at the moment of death, they will be freed from the lower realms. When they do die and transmigrate, they will take birth as a god in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three.

1.4 *This completes "Recollecting the Names of the Buddha Ratnaśikhin."*

n.

NOTES

- n.1 *The Sūtra of the Sublime Golden Light* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh555.html>) (*Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, Toh 555), 25.22.
- n.2 *The Play in Full* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh95.html>) (*Lalitavistara*, Toh 95), 13:68.
- n.3 See Poussin (trans. Pruden) 1988–90, p. 543, n. 505 and Roberts 2010, p. 404.
- n.4 A text with a parallel title (*de gshin* [sic? *bzhin?*] *gshegs pa rin cen* [sic? *chen*] *gtsug phud mtshan rjes su dran pa*), which appears to have similar content to the present work, is listed in Dalton and van Schaik’s catalog as IOL Tib-J 312/7. However, the manuscript that contains this text has not yet been digitized and, therefore, does not appear on the International Dunhuang Project’s webpage. Therefore, we were unable to ascertain with full certainty that it is the same as the present text. In their summary, Dalton and van Schaik mention that according to IOL Tib-J 312/7, when the dhāraṇī found there is recollected at the moment of death, it brings rebirth in the heavens. Given that this is precisely the content of the present text, it is likely to be the same dhāraṇī text. Moreover, the immediately preceding text in the same Dunhuang manuscript, IOL Tib-J 312/6, bears the same title and a similar description to Toh 536, increasing the likelihood that these two works in the Degé Kangyur are the same as those that appear in the very same order in IOL Tib-J 312. Notably, the Tibetan translation of Ratnaśikhin’s name in IOL Tib-J 312 (*rin cen* [sic? *chen?*] *gtsug phud*) is different from that in the present text (*rin chen gtsug tor*). However, both variants are found in other works in the Tibetan canon, and it appears that both are accepted Tibetan translations of the name Ratnaśikhin.
- n.5 On the Indonesian foils, see Griffiths 2014, p. 164 and p. 166. On the variant of the dhāraṇī in the *Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of Knowledge of Former Lives*, see Griffiths 2014, p. 164, n. 93, where he cites Rolf Geibel.

- n.6 In the Toh 537 version of the text there is a slight discrepancy in the folio numbering between the 1737 *par phud* printings and the late (post *par phud*) printings of the Degé Kangyur. Although the discrepancy is irrelevant here, further details concerning this may be found in [n.6](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh537.html#UT22084-088-031-80) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh537.html#UT22084-088-031-80>) of the Toh 537 version of this text.
- n.7 This text, Toh 870, and all those contained in this same volume (*gzungs 'dus, waM*), are listed as being located in volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur by the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC). However, several other Kangyur databases—including the eKangyur that supplies the digital input version displayed by the 84000 Reading Room—list this work as being located in volume 101. This discrepancy is partly due to the fact that the two volumes of the *gzungs 'dus* section are an added supplement not mentioned in the original catalog, and also hinges on the fact that the compilers of the Tōhoku catalog placed another text—which forms a whole, very large volume—the *Vimalaprabhānāmākālacakratantṛāṭīkā* (*dus 'khor 'grel bshad dri med 'od*, Toh 845), before the volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur, numbering it as vol. 100, although it is almost certainly intended to come right at the end of the Degé Kangyur texts as volume 102; indeed its final fifth chapter is often carried over and wrapped in the same volume as the Kangyur *dkar chags* (catalog). Please note this discrepancy when using the eKangyur viewer in this translation.

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 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum bcu rtsa gsum

སུམ་བརྒྱུ་གསུམ།

trāyastriṃśa^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist cosmology, the Heaven of the Thirty-Three is the second lowest of the six heavens in the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*). Situated on the flat summit of Mount Sumeru, it lies above the Heaven of the Four Great Kings (*Caturmahārājakāyika*) and below the Yāma Heaven. It consists of thirty-three regions, each presided by one of thirty-three chief gods, and the overall ruler is Śakra. The presiding gods are divided into four groups named in the *Abhidharmakośaṭīkā* (Toh 4092): the eight gods of wealth, two Aśvin youths, eleven fierce ones, and twelve suns. The thirty-three regions themselves are enumerated and described in *The Application of Mindfulness of the Sacred Dharma*, Toh 287, 4.B.2 et seq.).

g.2 Ratnaśikhin

rin chen gtsug tor can

རིན་ཆེན་གཙུག་ཏོར་ཅན།

ratnaśikhin ^{AD}

A buddha. His name is alternatively spelled *rin chen gtsug phud*.