

༄། །སེང་གེ་སྐྱེས་དམ་བཅས་པའི་གཟུངས།

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## The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda's Promise

*seng ge sgras dam bcas pa'i gzungs*

· Toh 912 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 100 (gzungs 'dus, e), folios 242.a–242.b

TRANSLATED INTO TIBETAN BY

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co.

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## SUMMARY

s.

- s.1 *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda*, also known as *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda's Promise*, is a short work that teaches a dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara's form as Siṃhanāda, "Lion's Roar," and gives a short instruction for using it to cure illness.

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. 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 Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda* (Toh 704), also known as *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda's Promise* (Toh 912), is preserved in two separate Kangyur recensions<sup>1</sup> with different titles, which contain essentially identical content.<sup>2</sup> This short dhāraṇī text includes a dhāraṇī for Siṃhanāda and a short instruction for a ritual that employs the dhāraṇī to cure illness. Its contents closely parallel a section from the longer *Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda* (Toh 703),<sup>3</sup> where the dhāraṇī and ritual content of *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda*—along with several other dhāraṇīs, mantras, and rituals—is incorporated into a narrative framework that describes how Siṃhanāda acquired his curative powers. The concise *Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda*, in contrast, opens directly with the dhāraṇī, followed by instructions for making eight maṇḍalas with cow dung that is subsequently incanted and smeared onto a sick person to cure their illness. In the end, Avalokiteśvara states that if a curative result were not achieved from the practice, it would be as if he himself had performed the five deeds of immediate retribution. This is a set of acts that include patricide, matricide, killing an arhat, causing a rift in the saṅgha, and drawing the blood of a tathāgata with malicious intent. This forceful statement implies that it is as impossible for this rite to fail as it is for Avalokiteśvara—the very embodiment of compassion—to perform any of these heinous acts. In the longer *Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda*, this promise is made even more explicit, with Śākyamuni telling Mañjuśrī, “Mañjuśrī, this is the Great Compassionate One’s own promise.”<sup>4</sup> This sentence from the longer dhāraṇī text provides the context for the title of Toh 912: *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda's Promise*.

i.2

Siṃhanāda, “Lion’s Roar,” also sometimes called Lokeśvara Siṃhanāda, is a form of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. There are nine Siṃhanāda sādhanas and several other Siṃhanāda praises and ritual texts preserved in the Tibetan Kangyur, attesting to his importance in India. Images of Siṃhanāda have been found at the Mahābodhi temple in Bodh Gaya prior to



that temple's nineteenth-century renovation,<sup>5</sup> and in Sri Lanka where it seems *Siṃhanāda* was especially popular.<sup>6</sup> The association of *Siṃhanāda* with curative properties that we find in the present text appears to be quite an old one. A tenth-century Nepalese miniature painting kept at Cambridge depicts *Siṃhanāda* and includes a caption reading, "Lokeśvara of the hospital on the island of *Siṃhala*."<sup>7</sup> While *Avalokiteśvara* in general has a close iconographical association with the deity Śiva, this is even more clear in the case of *Siṃhanāda*. In *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda*, *Siṃhanāda*—just like Śiva—holds a brahmin's skull and a snake-wrapped trident, and wears a sacred thread made of a snake.

i.3 Although it is not described in this text, *Siṃhanāda*'s iconography is generally consistent across textual and artistic sources. In the descriptions found in his many *sādhanas* and praises, *Siṃhanāda* is white in color, has two legs and two arms, is dressed as an ascetic (*tapasvin*, *dka' thub ldan pa*) and sits on a lion. In most descriptions, a skull-adorned trident rests at his right side, but in some he holds it in his right hand. This trident is also frequently depicted with a white snake coiled around the shaft. With his left hand, he holds the end of a lotus stalk that rises upwards, with a sword standing on the open lotus blossom. Nearby and to the left, sits what is variously described as a cup (*karotaka*), pot (*bhājana*, *snod*), or skull cup (*kapāla*, *thod pa*) filled with fragrant flowers. This vessel often sits on a lotus or water lily.<sup>8</sup>

i.4 The *Siṃhanāda* form of *Avalokiteśvara* continues to be practiced in contemporary Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Two arrangements of practices centered on *Lokeśvara Siṃhanāda* are found in the Compendium of *Sādhanas* (*sgrub thabs kun btus*) compiled by Jamyang Loter Wangpo,<sup>9</sup> and the nineteenth-century scholar Mipham Gyatso wrote a short summary of the story of *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda*.<sup>10</sup>

i.5 *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda* is extant in Sanskrit, as text number 21 in the *Sādhanamālā*,<sup>11</sup> and as part of the *dhāraṇī* collection published by Gergely Hidas.<sup>12</sup> It does not appear to be extant in Chinese translation. In Tibetan, in addition to the two Kangyur recensions of this short work—one included the Tantra section (Toh 704) and the other in the Compendium of *Dhāraṇīs* section (Toh 912) of the Degé Kangyur—another version is found in the Tengyur with the title *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda* (Toh 3156),<sup>13</sup> which was translated by a different Tibetan translator and lacks attribution to a specific author. Toh 3156 contains several minor variants from Toh 704/912, suggesting that, in addition to being translated by different translators, the latter texts were also based on different Sanskrit recensions. Although the

differences are minor, the Tengyur recension stands closer to the extant Sanskrit text as preserved in the *Sādhanamālā* than the present Kangyur recension.

i.6 The version of the text translated into English here was translated into Tibetan by the Indian master Vāgīśvara and the Tibetan translator Lokya Sherab Tsek, who were active in the eleventh century. The Tengyur recension was translated in the eleventh or twelfth century by Patshab Lotsawa Tsultrim Gyaltsen and is part of the collection called “The ‘Hundred’ Sādhanas translated by Patshab” (*pa tshab kyis bsgyur ba’i sgrub thabs rgya rtsa*) in the Tantra section of the Tengyur. It is one of only two dhāraṇīs in that collection of one hundred and sixty-three texts, the majority of which are indeed sādhanas.

i.7 This English translation was made on the basis of both Degé Kangyur recensions of this work, with additional reference to the Stok Palace recension, the notes from the Comparative Edition (*dpe sdur ma*), the Tengyur recension (Toh 3156), the parallel passage in the longer *Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda* (Toh 703), as well the Sanskrit *Siṃhanādadhāraṇī* from the *Sādhanamālā*, and Hidas 2021. *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda* is generally stable across all recensions consulted, including the Sanskrit, with only minor variants. We edited the dhāraṇī itself very slightly based on the Sanskrit text from the *Sādhanamālā* and have noted those emendations.

## **The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda's Promise**

1.

## The Translation

[F.242.a]

1.1 Homage to Mañjuśrī.<sup>14</sup>

*namo ratnatrayāya | nama āryāvalokiteśvarāya bodhisattvāya mahāsattvāya mahā-  
kāruṇikāya | tadyathā | oṃ akṣate vikṣate nikṣate [F.242.b] kaṣaṃkṣate karṣate<sup>14</sup>  
karoṣavṛtye svāhā | |*

1.2 In front of the Blessed One, make eight individual maṇḍalas out of cow dung that has not fallen to the ground. Recite this thirteen times at each maṇḍala, then incant the resulting<sup>15</sup> dung with the mantra. When it is smeared on a sick person, all illnesses will be cured.

1.3 If this is not successful after seven, thirteen, or twenty-one days, even for someone who has carried out the five deeds of immediate retribution, then I<sup>16</sup> myself will have carried out the five deeds of immediate retribution.<sup>17</sup>

1.4 *This completes the “Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda’s Promise.”*

c.

## Colophon

c.1 It was translated by the Indian preceptor Vāgīśvara and the translator Lokya Sherab Tsek.<sup>19</sup>

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 This text, Toh 912, and all those contained in this same volume (*gzungs 'dus, e*), 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 *Vimalaprabhānāmakālacakratantraṭīkā* (*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.
- n.2 For ease of reference, in this introduction, we use the shorter of the two titles to refer to the work, and the Tohoku catalog numbers to refer to the individual versions.
- n.3 *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Simhanāda*  
(<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh703.html>) (translated 2024).
- n.4 See *Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Simhanāda* (Toh 703), 1.20.
- n.5 Losty 2021, p. 17.
- n.6 Holt 1991, p. 41.
- n.7 Holt 1991, p. 79.

- n.8 The iconographic details of *Siṃhanāda* are described with some variation and differing degrees of detail in Toh 2858, 2859, 3155, 3157, 3329, 3414, 3417, 3418, 3419, and 3650. Descriptions in Sanskrit can be found in *sādhana* nounbers 17, 20, 22, and 25 in volume one of the *Sāadhanamālā*. For a survey of Indo-Tibetan artistic depictions of *Siṃhanāda*, see the deity's main page at Himalayan Art Resources: <https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=472&page=1> (<https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=472&page=1>).
- n.9 See *sgrub thabs kun btus* vol. 6, folios 252.a–297.b.
- n.10 See *seng ge sgra'i gzungs kyi lo rgyus*.
- n.11 Bhattacharyya 1925 vol. 1, p. 52.
- n.12 Hidas 2021, p. 138.
- n.13 *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh3156.html>) (translated 2024).
- n.14 This opening homage is found only in Toh 912.
- n.15 Here we follow the Narthang, Lhasa, and Stok Kangyurs, as well as the Degé recension of Toh 703, all of which read *karote*, rather than the Degé, which reads *karota*. This is also supported by the *dhāraṇī* as it is found in the *Siṃhanādadhāraṇī* preserved in Sanskrit in the *Sāadhanamālā* (Bhattacharyya 1925, vol. 1, p. 52).
- n.16 *lhaq ma*. The parallel passage from *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda* (Toh 703) includes an instruction to gather the incanted dung on which the maṇḍalas were previously inscribed and then to incant the “resulting dung” (Toh 703, [1.20](#)). This also seems to be indicated in the version of the *dhāraṇī* published by Hidas (2021, p. 138); there this cow dung is described as *prati-maṇḍalalekhitaśeṣagomaya*, which could be interpreted to mean “the cow dung that remains after inscribing the individual maṇḍalas.” The implication of the Tibetan and Sanskrit seems to be that this “remaining” dung is the same dung that was first inscribed with maṇḍalas and incanted before being collected together, incanted a second time, and applied to the patient. This would make logical sense insofar as this process would infuse the dung with healing potency. This interpretation is nonetheless tentative.
- n.17 In the section of the longer *Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara Siṃhanāda* (Toh 703, [1.20](#)), which closely parallels this text, it is made clear that this is Avalokiteśvara

Siṃhanāda's promise. However, in that text, it is Śākyamuni who articulates Siṃhanāda's promise to Mañjuśrī.

n.18 This sentence appears to have been corrupted to the point of losing sense in this recension of the text, so we have translated the sentence following the Sanskrit text from the *Sādhanamālā* (which has also been transmitted correctly in the Tibetan of this text translation preserved in the Tengyur) and the Tibetan translation that is preserved in the Tengyur (Toh 3156). Toh 704 and Toh 912 read: *gal te nyi ma bdun nam/ bcu gsum mam/ nyi shu rtsa gcig gi grub ste mtsham med pa lnga byas pa ni ma yin no/ de ltar ma grub na bdag gis mtsham med pa lnga byas par 'gyur ro/*. The Sanskrit reads: *yadi saptame divase trayodaśe vā ekavimśatitame va divase pañcānantaryakāriṇo 'pi na sidhyanti tadā aham pañcānantaryakārī syām iti*. Toh 3156 reads: *gal te mtshams med pa lnga byas pas kyang/ nyi ma bdun pa'am bcu gsum pa'am nyi ma nyi shu rtsa gcig pa la yang ma grub na de'i tshe de nyid kyis mtsham med pa lnga byas pa yin....*

n.19 The term "translator" is omitted in Toh 704.



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 Avalokiteśvara

*a ba lo ki te sh+wa ra · spyān ras gzigs*

ཨ་བ་ལོ་ཀི་ཏེ་ཤ་ར། · སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས།

*\*avalokiteśvara*<sup>RP</sup>

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.2 Blessed One

*bcom ldan 'das*

བཙེམ་ལྷན་འདས།

*bhagavān*<sup>AD</sup>

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist literature, 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.3 *dhāraṇī*

*gzungs*

གཟུངས།

*dhāraṇī*<sup>AD</sup>

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.4 five deeds of immediate retribution

*mtshams med pa lnga*

མཚམས་མེད་པ་ལྟེ།

*pañcānantarya* <sup>AD</sup>

Five acts said to lead to immediate and unavoidable birth in the hell realms: killing one's father, killing one's mother, killing an arhat, sowing discord within the saṅgha, and drawing the blood of a tathāgata with ill intent.

g.5 Jamyang Loter Wangpo

*'jam dbyangs blo gter dbang po*

འཇམ་དབྱངས་བློ་གཏེར་དབང་པོ།

—

1847-1914. A master of the Sakya tradition.

g.6 Lokeśvara

*'jig rten dbang phyug*

འཇིག་རྟེན་དབང་ཕྱུག།

*lokeśvara* <sup>AD</sup>

A name of Avalokiteśvara.

g.7 Lokya Sherab Tsek

*klog skya shes rab brtsegs*

ལྷོ་ག་སྐུ་ཤེས་རབ་བརྟེན་པ།

—

An eleventh-century Tibetan master and translator who is specifically known for his Cakrasaṃvara lineage, which he received from teachers in the Kathmandu Valley.

g.8 Mañjuśrī

*'jam dpal pa' dbyangs*

འཇམ་དཔལ་པའ་དབྱངས།

*mañjuśrī* <sup>AD</sup>

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.9 Patshab Lotsawa Tsultrim Gyaltzen

*pa tshab lo tsA wa tshul khrim s rgyal mtshan*

པ་ཚབ་ལོ་ལྷ་མ་ཚུལ་ཁྱིམ་སྐྱེལ་མཚན།

—

A Tibetan translator who lived in the eleventh to twelfth century. He translated the collection of sādhanas referred to as “The ‘Hundred’ Sādhanas translated by Patshab” (*pa tshab kyis bsgyur ba’i sgrub thabs rgya rtsa*), a collection of one hundred and sixty-three sādhanas. He mostly translated these in the presence of the paṇḍita Abhayākaragupta, who was a Bengali scholar and the abbot of Vikramaśīla. Patshab’s collection is included in the Tantra section of the Degé Tengyur.

g.10 Siṃhanāda

*seng ge’i sgra*

སེང་གེ་འི་སྒྲ།

*siṃhanāda*<sup>AD</sup>

“The Lion’s Roar,” the name of a form of Avalokiteśvara.

g.11 Vāgīśvara

*ngag gi dbang phyug*

ངག་གི་དབང་ཕྱུག

*vāgīśvara*<sup>AD</sup>

An Indian master active in the eleventh century. This may be a shortened name of Vāgīśvarakīrti, a renowned master of the Cakrasaṃvara who was formerly a gate keeper at Vikramaśīla and spent the latter part of his life in the Kathmandu Valley.