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The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā

Cundādevīdhāraṇī

འཕགས་པ་ལྷ་མོ་སྐལ་བྱེད་མ་ཤེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས།

'phags pa lha mo skul byed ma shes bya ba'i gzungs

The Noble Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā

Āryacundādevīnāmadhāraṇī

· Toh 989 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 101 (gzungs 'dus, waM), folios 143.a–143.b



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s.

SUMMARY

- s.1 *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* consists of an homage, invocation, and description of the Goddess Cundā followed by a request to Cundā for protection and good fortune.

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.

i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā opens with homages to the Three Jewels, the Buddha Vairocana, and the Goddess Cundā, followed by a short homage and dhāraṇī in transliterated Sanskrit that reads *namaḥ saptānām samyaksaṃ-buddhakoṭīnām | tadyathā | omī cale cule cunde svāhā*. This combined homage and dhāraṇī also appears in the second section of *The Basket's Display* (Toh 116)¹ when Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin has returned to join Śākyamuni's assembly at Jetavana Monastery at the conclusion of his search for the great vidyā mantra of Avalokiteśvara.² Unlike *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā*, this passage in *The Basket's Display* does not provide any ritual instructions for reciting her dhāraṇī, any mention of the benefits of this recitation practice, or any description or mention of the goddess to whom this dhāraṇī is addressed.

i.2

This opening homage and dhāraṇī is followed by an extensive section praising the goddess that describes Cundā's qualities, hand implements, and appearance. Here she is described as having the face of the Goddess Anantā, a form of the Goddess Umā or Parvatī, as having been blessed by all the thus-gone ones, and as the recipient of offerings from all the gods. These verses describing the goddess and praising her qualities describe many of Cundā's attributes as either composed of vajras or modified by the term vajra, as the dhāraṇī emphasizes her invulnerability and indestructible power to protect beings.

i.3

The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā then introduces a second Sanskrit liturgy directed at "Blessed Cundā" (*bhagavati cunde*) requesting that Cundā protect the person reciting the dhāraṇī from a variety of hostile, demonic beings. The text concludes with a final benediction requesting Cundā to protect the person reciting the dhāraṇī and bring them good fortune.

i.4

We are not aware of any surviving Sanskrit witness of *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* at present, but there is strong textual and art historical evidence to suggest that Cundā enjoyed widespread popularity across the

Indic Buddhist world from the eighth century onward.³ Cundā is mentioned in a number of tantras in the Kangyur and Nyingma Gyubum. In the Kangyur, she appears as a significant maṇḍala deity in the Guhyasamāja and Māyājāla traditions.⁴ Śāntideva refers to *The Cundā Dhāraṇī* in his *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, where he mentions reciting her dhāraṇī to purify misdeeds.⁵ She is featured in Abhayākaragupta’s *Niṣpannayogāvalī* as a goddess in Vairocana Mañjuvajra’s maṇḍala,⁶ as one of twelve dhāraṇī goddesses in the Dharmadhātu Vagīśvara maṇḍala,⁷ and as Ṭakkirāja’s consort in the Kālacakra maṇḍala.⁸ Three short sādhanas to the Goddess Cundā appear in the *Sāadhanamāla*,⁹ as well as a single Cundā sādhana in *The “Hundred” Sādhana translated by Patshab*¹⁰ and a single sādhana in *The “Hundred” Sādhana translated by Bari*.¹¹ In Tāranātha’s *History of Buddhism in India*, Cundā appears as an important tutelary and protector deity who supports the ascension of Gopāla I (r.750–75 CE), the founder and first ruler of the Pāla Dynasty. Her close ties to the founding of the Pāla Empire undoubtedly played an important role in Cundā’s incorporation into the maṇḍala systems of several tantras, her rise in popularity during this period across the Indian sub-continent, and the promotion of the goddess throughout Asia.¹²

i.5 *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* does not appear in either of the Imperial Tibetan catalogs of translated works, which suggests that the Tibetan translation was likely produced after the ninth century. The Kangyur witnesses for this text do not contain a translators’ colophon,¹³ so they do not provide any data on the translators who worked on this text or the time when *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* was translated into Tibetan. The text appears twice in the Degé Kangyur—once in the tantra section (*rgyud ’bum*) and once in the compendium of dhāraṇīs (*gzungs ’dus*).¹⁴

i.6 The Taishō contains three Chinese translations of a single work devoted to the Goddess Cundā that differs in both length and content from *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* in the Tibetan Kangyurs. The earliest Chinese translation of a textual tradition for the Goddess Cundā in the Taishō was produced in 685 CE by the translator Divākara (Taishō 1077).¹⁵ A second Chinese translation in the Taishō was then completed in 723 CE by Vajrabodhi (Taishō 1075),¹⁶ and the third Chinese translation in the Taishō was completed in 1246 CE by Amoghavajra (Taishō 1076).¹⁷ These translations supported Cundā’s widespread popularity across East Asian Buddhist traditions, which continues to this day.

i.7 This English translation was prepared using both Tibetan witnesses that are preserved in the Degé Kangyur, the Tibetan translation in the Stok Palace Kangyur, and the Comparative Edition of the Kangyur.

The Noble Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā

1.

The Translation

[F.143.a]

1.1 Homage to the Three Jewels.

Homage to the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfectly awakened buddha Vairocana.

Homage to you, blessed Goddess Cundā, who has immeasurable power and strength, has magical powers and tramples enemies, and is celebrated and praised by all the thus-gone ones. Please bring me good fortune in every way and at all times.

1.2 *namaḥ saptānāṃ samyaksambuddhakoṭīnāṃ | tadyathā |*

1.3 *om caḥ cule cunde svāhā*

1.4 Diligent one with pristine discipline. Great powerful one. Great conqueror of enemies. In your hands you hold a sword, a battle axe, a hook, and a noose. Great wrathful one. Queen of the great wrathful ones. Goddess with a fierce form,¹⁸ Anantā's face, and one-thousand arms. Invincible one whom no enemy can withstand. Unfailing one, who is so difficult to tame. Goddess with a thousand eyes who is blessed by all the thus-gone ones. Goddess whom all gods venerate, and to whom they all make offerings. Goddess whose nails are vajras, who is a vajra filled with vajras,¹⁹ and who is armed with vajras. [F.143.b] Goddess with a vajra body, vajra fists, and wrathful vajra eyes that dart about.²⁰ Fierce one who transforms into and displays a fierce form, and whose body is adorned with vajra and beryl ornaments.

1.5 *om bhagavati cunde hūṃ hūṃ krūṃ krūṃ mrūṃ mrūṃ sruṃ sruṃ rūṃ rūṃ
āveśaya gṛhṇa gṛhṇa gṛhṇāpaya gṛhṇāpaya hara hara bhañja bhañja sara sara mara
mara māraya māraya paca paca daha daha gṛhṇa gṛhṇa*—all manner of hostile
grahas; one, two, three, four, and seven-day fevers; persistent and

momentary fevers;²¹ bhūta, vetāla, preta, piśāca, yakṣa, rākṣasa, and kumbhāṇḍa grahas;²² beings who are born from a womb; beings who are born, transmigrate, and abide in a particular realm due to karma; any hostile beings who might harm me; and all manner of evil beings—*saṃdhaya saṃdhaya mardaya mardaya ṣośaya ṣośaya tāpaya tāpaya utsādhaya utsādhaya hana hana vajreṇa sara sara daṇḍena māraya māraya khadgena²³ hūṃ hūṃ cūṃ cūṃ cūṃ drūṃ drūṃ drūṃ om cale cule cunde sarvārthasādhaya svāhā*

1.6 May the blessing and power of the blessed noble Goddess Cundā protect me from all harm and bring me good fortune *svāhā*.

1.7 *This concludes “The Noble Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā.”*

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

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

n.

NOTES

- n.1 *The Basket's Display* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh116.html>), (*Kāraṇḍavyūha*, Toh 116).
- n.2 *The Basket's Display*, Toh 116, translated by Peter Alan Roberts with Tulku Yeshe, 2.79. While the Sanskrit in the dhāraṇī refers to “seventy-million completely perfect buddhas” (*saptānām samyaksambuddhakoṭīnām*), the Tibetan translation of *The Basket's Display* notes that “seventy-seven times ten million” completely perfect buddhas assemble and recite her dhāraṇī. Given that in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit the usage of the genitive case, which functions as the dative in constructions with *namaḥ* (“salutation to...”), is common in mantras and dhāraṇīs, the use of the genitive here (*namaḥ saptānām samyaksambuddhakoṭīnām*) prompts us to understand this as an homage to the seventy-million completely perfect buddhas, here reading the genitive plural as an honorific form for the dative.
- n.3 Shaw 2006, pp. 265–75.
- n.4 Numerous references to Cundā appear in Toh 453, *The Beginning Chapter of the Supremely Great Vajra* and in Toh 466, *The Net of Magical Illusion*. Cundā also appears as a goddess in the Heruka maṇḍala presented in chapter six of *Emergence from Samputa*, See *Emergence from Samputa*, Toh 381, translated by Dharmachakra Translation Committee (2020; 2024), 6.166.
- n.5 Śāntideva, *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, in *Śikṣāsamuccaya of Śāntideva*, edited by P. L. Vaidya, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 11 (Darbhanga: Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1960), p. 96. The Tibetan witnesses of *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* preserved in the various recensions of the Kangyur focus primarily on invoking Cundā for protection against various illnesses that are brought on by demonic beings. There is no true equivalent of an invocation to the goddess for the purification of one's

misdeeds. It is thus possible that the version of *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* that survives in the Tibetan Kangyurs is somewhat different from the text that Śāntideva references in his *Śikṣāsamucchaya*.

- n.6 Chandra and Sharma 2015, p. 169.
- n.7 Ibid., p. 191.
- n.8 Ibid., p. 294.
- n.9 Bhattacharyya 1925;1968, pp. 270–73. This Sanskrit edition of the *Sādhanamālā* corresponds to the *Ocean of Sādhana*s in the Degé Tengyur, which contains a collection of two hundred and forty-five sādhanas. All three of the Cundā sādhanas in Bhattacharyya’s edition of the *Sādhanamāla* also appear in the Tibetan translation of this collection. See Toh 3519 *tsun+da’i sgrub thabs (Cundāsādhana)*, Toh 3519 Degé Tengyur vol. 77 (rgyud, mu), folios 165a–165b; Toh 3520 *tsun+da’i sgrub thabs (Cundāsādhana)* Toh 3520 Degé Tengyur vol. 77 (rgyud, mu) folio 165b; and Toh 3521 *tsun+da’I sgrub thabs (Cundāsādhana)* Toh 3521 Degé Tengyur vol 77 (rgyud, mu), folios 165b–166a.
- n.10 *skul byed ma’i sgrub thabs (Cundāsādhana)* Toh 3246 Degé Tengyur vol. 76 (rgyud, bu), folios 12a–12b.
- n.11 *tsun+da’i sgrub pa’i thabs (Cundāsādhana)*. Toh 3346 Degé Tengyur vol. 77 (rgyud, mu), folios 33a–33b.
- n.12 For an excellent summary of this episode from Tāranātha’s *History of Buddhism in India* as well as additional data on the extent of the Goddess Cundā’s popularity in the Pāla Empire and the broader Indic world, see Shaw 2006, pp. 265–75. For an English translation of this episode in the life of Gopāla I from Tāranātha’s *History of Buddhism in India*, see Chattopadhyaya 1970; 1990, pp. 257–64.
- n.13 This assessment is based on the colophon data for *The Dhāraṇī of the Goddess Cundā* across twenty-five recensions of the Kangyur (see <http://www.rkts.org/cat.php?id=607&typ=1> (<http://www.rkts.org/cat.php?id=607&typ=1>)) and the entry for this text in Tarthang Tulku, *The Nyingma edition of the sDe-dge bKa’-’gyur and bsTan-’gyur Research Catalogue and Bibliography* vol. 2 (Oakland, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1981), p. 231.
- n.14 This text, Toh 989, and all those contained in this same volume (*gzungs ’dus, waM*), are listed as being located in volume 101 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 102. 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 *Vimalaprabhānāmākālacakratantraṭīkā* (*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.15 Lancaster, Lewis R. *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*. (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0314.html) Accessed April 4, 2023. For e-texts of this version, see *Qi juzhi fomu xin da zhunti tuoluoni jing* 七俱胝佛母心大准提陀羅尼經 (*Cundādevīdhāraṇī*), Taishō 1077 (CBETA (<https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T1077>); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T1077.html>)).
- n.16 Lancaster, Lewis R. *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*. (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0315.html) Accessed April 4, 2023. For etexts of this version, see *Qi juzhi fomu zhunti daming tuoluoni jing* 七俱胝佛母准提大明陀羅尼經 (*Cundādevīdhāraṇī*), Taishō 1075 (CBETA (<https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T1075>); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T1075.html>)).
- n.17 Lancaster, Lewis R. *The Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*. (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k1338.html) Accessed April 4, 2023. For e-texts of this version, see *Qi juzhi fomu suo shuo zhunti tuoluoni jing* 七俱胝佛母所說准提陀羅尼經 (*Cundādevīdhāraṇī*), Taishō 1076 (CBETA (<https://cbetaonline.dila.edu.tw/en/T1076>); SAT (<https://21dzk.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/SAT2018/T1076.html>)).
- n.18 All Tibetan witnesses consulted for this translation read: *drag po'i gzugs can ma*. This phrase appears as the name of a goddess in *The Hevajra Tantra*, where it corresponds to the Sanskrit *raudrarūpiṇī*.
- n.19 Stok, Toh 613, and Toh 989 read: *rdo rje rdo rjes 'dren ma*. The Yongle and Kanxi Peking Kangyurs read: *rdo rje rdo rje 'dren ma*. This translation is tentative. The word *'dren ma* is an old Tibetan term meaning “mixture” or “variety” that is related to the more common *'dres pa*, and, following Negi, understood as corresponding to the Sanskrit *saṃkīrṇa* or *kalmāṣa*. The Tibetan *'dren ma* as a

translation of the Sanskrit *nāyikā*, referring to Cundā as the “leader” or “principal deity” is also possible, but this reading leaves the phrase *rdo rje rdo rjes* somewhat difficult to resolve.

- n.20 Following Stok, Toh 613, and Toh 989: *rdo rje'i spyan gdangs pa'i stang stabs can ma*. This translation is tentative.
- n.21 All Tibetan witnesses consulted for this translation read: *rtag pa'i rims dang / yud tsam pa dang*. This translation is tentative. The Tibetan term for “fever” (*rims*) does not actually occur here, but the proximity of the term *yud tsam pa* to the Tibetan for “persistent fever” (*rtag pa'i rims*) suggests that these two should be read in juxtaposition. It is possible, however, that the term *yud tsam pa* (Skt. **muhūrta*) should be included with the list of demonic and disease-causing beings (Skt. *grahas*), as is indicated in the Tibetan translation. However, it is not at all clear that the term *yud tsam pa* (Skt. *muhūrta*) can be read in this case as a noun referring to a specific class of demonic beings.
- n.22 All Tibetan witnesses consulted for this translation read: *'byung po dang / ro langs dang / yi dags dang / sha za dang / gnod sbyin dang / srin po dang / grul bum gyi gdon dang*. The term *graha* has been distributed to all of the members of this list, but it is possible that it only applies to the final member, the *kumbhāṇḍa graha*.
- n.23 All Tibetan witnesses consulted for this translation read: *kha k+ke na*. The reading in this translation amends the transliteration in the Tibetan to the proper form for the Sanskrit term for “sword” (Skt. *khadga*), which the text has already told us is one of the weapons that Cundā holds in her hands.

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 Anantā

mtha' yas ma

མཐའ་ཡས་མ།

anantā^{AD}

A name of the goddess Parvatī or Umā.

g.2 bhūta

'byung po

འབྱུང་པོ།

bhūta^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

This term in its broadest sense can refer to any being, whether human, animal, or nonhuman. However, it is often used to refer to a specific class of nonhuman beings, especially when bhūtas are mentioned alongside rākṣasas, piśācas, or pretas. In common with these other kinds of nonhumans, bhūtas are usually depicted with unattractive and misshapen bodies. Like several other classes of nonhuman beings, bhūtas take spontaneous birth. As their leader is traditionally regarded to be Rudra-Śiva (also known by the name Bhūta), with whom they haunt dangerous and wild places, bhūtas are especially prominent in Śaivism, where large sections of certain tantras concentrate on them.

g.3 Cundā

skul byed ma

སྐུ་བྱེད་མ།

cundā^{AD}

The name of a Buddhist goddess whose dhāraṇī is associated with protection from disease and interference from demonic beings.

g.4 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.5 gods

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.6 graha

gdon

གདོན།

graha^{AD}

A type of spirit that can exert a harmful influence on the human body and mind. Grahas are closely associated with the planets and other astronomical bodies.

g.7 kumbhāṇḍa

grul bum

གུལ་བུམ།

kumbhāṇḍa^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of dwarf beings subordinate to Virūḍhaka, one of the Four Great Kings, associated with the southern direction. The name uses a play on the word *aṇḍa*, which means “egg” but is also a euphemism for a testicle. Thus, they are often depicted as having testicles as big as pots (from *kumbha*, or “pot”).

g.8 piśāca

sha za

ཤ་ཟ།

piśāca ^{AD}

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 √*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.9 **preta**

yi dags

ཡི་དགམ།

preta ^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the five or six classes of sentient beings, into which beings are born as the karmic fruition of past miserliness. As the term in Sanskrit means “the departed,” they are analogous to the ancestral spirits of Vedic tradition, the *pitṛs*, who starve without the offerings of descendants. It is also commonly translated as “hungry ghost” or “starving spirit,” as in the Chinese 餓鬼 *e gui*.

They are sometimes said to reside in the realm of Yama, but are also frequently described as roaming charnel grounds and other inhospitable or frightening places along with *piśācas* and other such beings. They are particularly known to suffer from great hunger and thirst and the inability to acquire sustenance.

g.10 **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.11 Three Jewels

dkon mchog gsum

དཀོན་མཚོག་གསུམ།

triratna^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha—the three objects of Buddhist refuge. In the Tibetan rendering, “the three rare and supreme ones.”

g.12 Vairocana

rnam par snang mdzad

རྣམ་པར་སྣང་མཛད།

vairocana^{AD}

Chief of one of the five families of buddhas.

g.13 vajra

rdo rje

རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

This term generally indicates indestructibility and stability. In the sūtras, *vajra* most often refers to the hardest possible physical substance, said to have divine origins. In some scriptures, it is also the name of the all-powerful weapon of Indra, which in turn is crafted from vajra material. In the tantras, the vajra is sometimes a scepter-like ritual implement, but the term can also take on other esoteric meanings.

g.14 vetāla

ro langs

རོ་ལངས།

vetāla^{AD}

A class of beings that typically haunt charnel grounds and are most often depicted entering into and animating corpses. Hence, the Tibetan translation means “risen corpse.”

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.