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The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual Manual (1)

Uṣṇīṣavijayādhāraṇīkalpasahitā

Translated into Tibetan by
Dharmasena · Bari

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་གཙུག་ཏོར་རྣམ་པར་རྒྱལ་བ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས་རྟོག་པ་དང་བཅས་པ།

*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi gtsug tor rnam par rgyal ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs rtog
pa dang bcas pa*

Crown Victory of All Tathāgatas: The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual
Manual

Sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣavijayānāmadhāraṇīkalpasahitā



Toh 594
Degé Kangyur, vol. 90 (rgyud 'bum, pha), folios 230.a–237.b

Translated by Catherine Dalton
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 *The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual Manual* is a short work in which the Buddha Amitāyus teaches the *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* along with its benefits and a number of short rites for its recitation.

ac.

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ac.1 This text was translated by Catherine Dalton, who also wrote the introduction.

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i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual Manual opens in Sukhāvati, where the Blessed One Amitāyus is residing. Amitāyus addresses the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, informing him that there are beings who suffer from illnesses and short lifespans, and introducing the *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* as a remedy for such painful circumstances. Avalokiteśvara immediately asks Amitāyus to pronounce the dhāraṇī, which the Tathāgata does from within a state of samādhi.

i.2

After he pronounces the dhāraṇī, Amitāyus addresses Śakra and explains that reciting it purifies all lower rebirths and obscurations and leads beings to higher rebirths. Amitāyus lists a number of lower births that will be avoided by someone who recites this dhāraṇī, as well as the various prominent families within the human realm into which the reciter will be born on their way to attaining the state of awakening. As he continues to elaborate upon the ways in which one can use the dhāraṇī to benefit beings, Amitāyus explains that it can be hung from the top of a flagstaff, a mountain, or a tall building so that those in the surrounding areas will be purified and prevented from taking lower rebirths. He also notes that it may be carved into wood, placed at a caitya, and worshiped. This inspires Yama, the Lord of Death, to pledge to Amitāyus to protect beings who recite the dhāraṇī.

i.3

The Four Great Kings then request instructions on the rites associated with the dhāraṇī, and Amitāyus proceeds to teach a number of rites, including ways the dhāraṇī can be used to benefit the dead, animals, and those who are ill, as well as to prevent lower rebirths and extend life. These rituals involve the preparation of a maṇḍala in which the dhāraṇī is installed, making various offerings, the construction of caityas, and hundreds, thousands, or even a hundred thousand recitations of the dhāraṇī. In some cases the rituals involve fasting or performing the ritual at specific times of the lunar month. Śakra is instructed to teach one of these rites to the god Supraṭiṣṭhita to extend his life, which he does, and the god is delighted with

the results. Finally, Amitāyus teaches his own dhāraṇī along with its related sādhana and fire offering rite, along with a number of additional applications of the dhāraṇī to obtain results such as glory and kingship.

i.4 This work is one among a group of texts in the Kriyātantra section of the Tibetan Kangyurs that contain the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī and its related rituals (*kalpa*). The present text is the longest of four short dhāraṇī texts—three of which have the same title—that present the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī with its ritual manual (*kalpa*).¹ These four works share a similar narrative opening (*nidāna*) up through the presentation of the dhāraṇī proper, and several among them also share additional passages. Beyond its close relationship with the other ritual manuals connected with the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī, this text shares a number of parallel passages with what we will call—simply for the purpose of distinguishing it from the present group of dhāraṇī-kalpas—the “primary” *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī text (Toh 597, which is titled *Sarvadurgati-parisodhana-uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* rather than *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī-kalpasaḥitā*).² Despite these significant textual parallels, that text has an entirely different opening narrative and, unsurprisingly, lacks nearly all of the ritual instructions contained in our text.

i.5 There are many Sanskrit witnesses of the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī proper,³ and the primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī text (Toh 597) survives in at least one, an incomplete early manuscript.⁴ While our text appears to no longer be extant in Sanskrit, there is at least one surviving Sanskrit *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī work that is closely related to it and belongs to the same group of related dhāraṇī texts described above. This work shares the same opening narrative and some of the ritual material with the texts from this group.⁵

i.6 The primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā* text (Toh 597) was first translated into Chinese by Buddhapāli in the late seventh century, and then at least five times subsequently.⁶ Several ritual manuals for the dhāraṇī’s recitation were also translated into Chinese, but our text does not appear to be among them.⁷ One ritual manual (Taishō 978), translated into Chinese by Dharmadeva between 973 and 981, is among the group of *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī texts to which the present work belongs.⁸ The primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā* text was significant in East Asia, and one scholar has even identified it as the most important esoteric Buddhist scripture translated into Chinese in the seventh century.⁹ Practices connected with the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī were important in China, in particular in conjunction with funerary rites, where the dhāraṇī was written on pillars near tombs, especially from the mid-Tang to Ming dynasties (ca. 800–1600 CE).¹⁰ In addition to its ritual uses, in China this dhāraṇī receives mention in poems and tales of miracles and is analyzed in philosophical commentaries.¹¹

- i.7 The *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī also appears to have been popular in Dunhuang. A number of Tibetan manuscripts from Dunhuang include just the dhāraṇī on its own, both in Tibetan transliteration (dhāraṇīs, like mantras, are commonly left untranslated in Tibetan texts) *and* in Tibetan translation. The primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī text also appears in several Dunhuang manuscripts.¹² Interestingly, several drawings from Dunhuang show maṇḍala (altar) arrangements corresponding to *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī texts,¹³ and one in particular, which has labels written in Chinese, depicts a maṇḍala that is nearly identical to a maṇḍala described in one of the rites in our text, even though no known ritual manual surviving in Chinese describes such a maṇḍala.¹⁴ There is also a woodblock print from tenth-century Dunhuang that has an image of Amitābha and a dhāraṇī written in Sanskrit, but with Chinese writing on the side. The Amitābha dhāraṇī from this print is very similar to (but not identical with) the second short dhāraṇī transmitted in the present text.¹⁵ The records of *uṣṇīṣavijayā*-related works at Dunhuang, then, suggest a close relationship between Tibetan- and Chinese-speaking Buddhist practitioners there.
- i.8 In Nepal, *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī rituals continue to be performed as part of modern Newar Buddhist practice, where their practice is sometimes prescribed for Wednesdays in particular.¹⁶ Practices connected to the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī likewise continue in modern Tibetan Buddhism. The so-called Tongchö (*stong mchod*)—the thousandfold offering practice of Uṣṇīṣavijayā, a version of which is mentioned briefly in our text—is currently performed in Tibetan monasteries, sometimes using a ritual manual composed by the nineteenth-century polymath Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo. Other notable Tibetan works on the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī and its associated practices include commentaries by the great Sakya lama Butön (*bu ston rin chen grub*, 1290–1364) and the fourth Panchen Lama, Losang Chökyi Gyaltzen (*blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan*, 1570–1662).
- i.9 The question of what, or *who*, exactly, Uṣṇīṣavijayā is is a complex one that cannot be clearly answered here. In short, like a number of uṣṇīṣa deities, she is sometimes identified as a protective deity, in this case a goddess, emanated from the Buddha's uṣṇīṣa. Indeed, Uṣṇīṣavijayā is clearly depicted as a goddess in a number of short sādhanas included in Indian anthologies such as the *Sādhnamāla*, compiled from the works of many authors probably during the period of the Pāla kings (eighth to twelfth century).¹⁷ Three closely similar sādhanas of a three-faced, eight armed form of the goddess are included in the Tengyur, one in each of the three related anthologies translated from the Indian collections into Tibetan in the eleventh to fourteenth centuries respectively.¹⁸ A variety of other forms are depicted or described in Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Mongolian, and Kashmiri sources.¹⁹

In the later Tibetan tradition Uṣṇīṣavijayā can even appear as one of a group of three long-life deities along with the Buddha Amitāyus and White Tārā. However, in our Kangyur text, and indeed in all but one (Toh 598) of the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* works in this section of the Kangyur, while the dhāraṇī itself uses the feminine vocative form throughout, the name *uṣṇīṣavijayā* is not rendered into Tibetan in the feminine, and the word *uṣṇīṣavijayā* is not used to refer to anything apart from the name of the dhāraṇī—the dhāraṇī of the *crown victory*. The single instance in this text in which we could interpret *uṣṇīṣavijayā* to refer to a goddess is a sentence in one of the rites for an Amitāyus sādhana that also involves reciting the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī. After having properly followed the rite, the text notes that “in the early morning at dawn you will see the face of the Bhagavatī, and she will give you whatever accomplishments you desire.” The name of this Bhagavatī is not mentioned in our text, but we might well presume that she is Uṣṇīṣavijayā herself.

i.10 The range of possible answers to the question of what the name Uṣṇīṣavijayā refers to is enlarged even further by the existence of a group of related texts widely used in Southeast Asia, sharing the Pali title *Uṇhissa-vijaya-sutta* (or in some cases simply *Uṇhissa-vijaya*) but found in a number of different forms, some in Pali but others in Siamese, Lao, Yuon, and Khmer. Some refer at least briefly to the story of the god Supraṭiṣṭhita (Pali Supaṭiṭṭhita) which, though somewhat secondary in the present text, is the central frame story of Toh 597. But instead of the dhāraṇī of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts they contain a set of verses (*gāthā*) to be recited whose content is unrelated to that of the Sanskrit dhāraṇī. The *gāthā* are also found alone in several ritual compilations. Even in the vernacular versions, the verses are written in Pali. In these texts, in their own opening lines, it seems to be the verses themselves that are referred to as the Uṇhissa-vijaya.²⁰

i.11 This text was translated into Tibetan by the Indian paṇḍita Dharmasena and Khampa Lotsāwa Bari Chödrak, and it is therefore an eleventh- or twelfth-century translation. However, the imperial Phangthangma catalog lists one *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī-vidhisahitā*, which, even if not the same as the present text, is certainly a work of a similar type.²¹ Thus, along with the records of Uṣṇīṣavijayā texts at Dunhuang, its presence in the Phangthangma catalog at the very least indicates the early presence of parts of the Uṣṇīṣavijayā corpus, including not just the dhāraṇī but also some of its associated rites, in Tibet.

i.12 The present translation is based on the Tibetan translation of the text found in the Tantra Collection (*rgyud 'bum*) section of the Degé Kangyur,²² in consultation with the Stok Palace Kangyur and the notes in the Comparative Edition of the Kangyur (*dpe bsdur ma*). The text is stable across all the

Kangyurs consulted, with the same title and colophon and only minor variants. We also consulted the Sanskrit from Schopen's transcription of the "Los Angeles Manuscript" of the primary dhāraṇī text and Hidas' edition and translation of the surviving Sanskrit *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* text for the passages that are parallel with the present text.

i.13 The main dhāraṇī is not identical in every detail across the five different versions in the Degé Kangyur (Toh 594–598), and the existence of further variations across different Kangyurs and versions in extra-canonical collections further complicates the picture. Reference to the dhāraṇī as presented in Hidas' edition of the Sanskrit yields useful orthographic confirmation, but may be misleading as a model given that the ten different Nepalese Sanskrit manuscripts on which it is based are of much later date than any of the present Tibetan witnesses. Here and in the other works in the group we have therefore chosen to transcribe the dhāraṇī as it appears in the Degé version of each text, making only minor choices of orthography and adding annotations to point out the most significant discrepancies.

i.14 One noticeable difference across both Tibetan and Sanskrit versions of the dhāraṇī is the presence or absence of the syllable *om̐* at the beginning of certain phrases. In the present work and Toh 595, 596, and 597 there are only three such *om̐* syllables, while in Toh 598 *om̐* appears no less than nine times, as it does in Hidas' edition from Sanskrit sources and in extra-canonical liturgies. The Tibetan translation of Toh 598 was made at a significantly later date than the other works of the group, and may possibly signal a change in usage that is also reflected in the Nepalese Sanskrit texts of even later date. This is corroborated by the absence of extra *om̐*-s in the Dunhuang manuscripts. The colophon of Toh 597 found in the Phukdrak (*phug brag*) Kangyur includes a note claiming that the texts with only three *om̐*-s are to be considered more correct.²³ The note also states that although there may have been Sanskrit sources with as many as nine *om̐*-s, the twelfth-century translator Sumpa Lotsāwa²⁴ reported that all the Sanskrit texts he had seen contained only three, and that the Sanskrit manuscripts of the texts held at Sakya monastery had no more than that. Because Sumpa Lotsāwa is known to have lived and studied in Nepal, his comment on the "correct" number of *om̐*-s in the Sanskrit manuscripts available to him offers a glimpse of the evolution of the text in the Nepalese tradition. As Hidas' edition of the Nepalese manuscripts suggests, the number of *om̐*-s in the dhāraṇī seem to proliferate, eventually reaching a total of nine.

i.15 Over the centuries, the textual transmission of the dhāraṇī has preserved the major portion of it with remarkable fidelity. Nevertheless, the few anomalies to be seen across all these closely related texts are a reminder that

here, as with other dhāraṇī works, some variations over time and place are to be expected.

Crown Victory of All Tathāgatas

The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual Manual

1.

The Translation

[F.230.a]²⁵

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Thus did I hear at one time. The blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfectly awakened Buddha Amitāyus was staying in the excellent secret palace, Dharma Proclamation,²⁶ in Sukhāvātī. He said to the bodhisattva, the great being, Noble Avalokiteśvara, “Child of noble family, there are beings who suffer, are afflicted with diseases, and have short lifespans. To help them, one should uphold and recite this dhāraṇī called *the crown victory of all tathāgatas* and teach it extensively to others for the sake of long life.”²⁷

1.2 Then the bodhisattva, the great being, Avalokiteśvara arose from his seat, joined his palms, and said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, please teach! Well-Gone One, please teach the dhāraṇī called *the crown victory of all tathāgatas*.”

1.3 Then the Blessed One looked upon the circle of his perfect²⁸ retinue, entered the samādhi called *the splendor beheld everywhere*, and pronounced this dhāraṇī called *the crown victory of all tathāgatas*:²⁹

1.4 “*om namo bhagavate sarvatrailokyapratiṣṭhāya buddhāya te namaḥ* |

tadyathā | *om bhrūṃ bhrūṃ bhrūṃ* | *śodhaya śodhaya* | *viśodhaya viśodhaya* |
*asamasamantāvabhāsaṣṭharaṇagatigaganasvabhāvaviśuddhe*³⁰ | [F.230.b]
abhiṣiñcantu māṇi sarvatathāgatāḥ sugatavaravacanāmṛtābhisekair
mahāmudrāmantrapadaiḥ | *āhara āhara mama*³¹ *āyuhśandhāraṇi* | *śodhaya*
śodhaya | *viśodhaya viśodhaya* | *gaganasvabhāvaviśuddhe* |
uṣṇīṣavijāyapariśuddhe | *sahasraśmisañcodite* | *sarvatathāgatāvalokini* |
ṣaṭpāramitāparipūraṇi | *sarvatathāgatamāte*³² | *daśabhūmipraṭiṣṭhite* |
sarvatathāgatahrdayādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite | *mudre mudre mahāmudre* |
vajrakāyaśaṃhatanapariśuddhe | *sarvakarmāvaraṇaviśuddhe* | *pratiniṣvartaya*

mamāyurviśuddhe | sarvatathāgatasamayādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite | om muni muni mahāmuni | vimuni vimuni mahāvimuni | mati mati mahāmati | mamati | sumati | tathatābhūtakoṭipariśuddhe | visphuṭabuddhiśuddhe | he he | jaya jaya | vijaya vijaya | smara smara | sphara sphara | sphāraya sphāraya | sarvabuddhādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite | śuddhe śuddhe | buddhe buddhe | vajre vajre mahāvajre | suvajre | vajragarbhe | jayagarbhe | vijayagarbhe | vajrajvālagarbhe | vajrodbhave | vajrasambhave | vajre | vajrini | vajram bhavatu mama śārtraṃ sarvasatvānāñ ca kāyapariśuddhir bhavatu | sadā me³³ sarvagatipariśuddhiś ca³⁴ | sarvatathāgatās ca mām³⁵ samāśvāsayantū | budhya budhya | siddhya siddhya | bodhaya bodhaya | vibodhaya vibodhaya | mocaya mocaya | vimocaya vimocaya | śodhaya śodhaya | viśodhaya viśodhaya | samantamocaya mocaya | samantaraśmipariśuddhe | sarvatathāgatahṛdayādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite | mudre mudre mahāmudre | mahāmudrāmantrapadaīḥ svāhā.³⁶

- 1.5 “Lord of the Gods,³⁷ this dhāraṇī called *the crown victory* completely purifies all lower rebirths, completely purifies the obscurations resulting from evil deeds, leads to the path of higher rebirths, and utterly destroys all lower rebirths. As many buddhas as there are grains of sand in eighty-eight trillion Gaṅgā Rivers [F.231.a] have taught, blessed, and rejoiced in this dhāraṇī, and it is sealed by the wisdom mudrā of all the buddhas. It was taught in order to place all beings on the path that leads to higher rebirths, to bring back those who have fallen into lower rebirths, and to liberate all those in painful and frightening existences—hell beings, those born into the animal realm, those in the Realm of the Lord of Death, and all others who have plunged into the ocean of suffering.
- 1.6 “Similarly, this dhāraṇī can benefit beings who have a short lifespan and little fortune, who are despised, who have fallen into various unpleasant³⁸ rebirths, whose thoughts are corrupt, and who have strayed from the path. This dhāraṇī,³⁹ along with its mudrās and mantras, has been entrusted to the beings of Jambudvīpa, so you, Śakra, must keep it well!
- 1.7 “Lord of the Gods, hearing this dhāraṇī a single time immediately and completely purifies the karmic obscurations accumulated over a hundred thousand eons. Know that one will no longer take any of the various births in the hell realms, the animal realm, the Realm of the Lord of Death, the realm of the pretas, and the realm of the asuras. Likewise one will not be born into the class of creatures such as yakṣas, rākṣasas, bhūtas, piśācas, pūtanas, kaṭapūtanas, apasmāras, dogs, tortoises, snakes, fierce wild animals, birds, bees, flies, reptiles, and ants.
- 1.8 “Instead, I say⁴⁰ that one will meet with the tathāgatas, be born into the family of the bodhisattvas, or be born into a prominent family such as a brahmin family that is like a great sāl tree, a kṣatriya family that is like a great

sāl tree, a householder family that is like a great sāl tree, or a merchant family [F.231.b] that is like a great sāl tree.

1.9 “Lord of the Gods, the power of this dhāraṇī will allow one to obtain great and completely pure rebirths until one finally reaches the seat of awakening.

“Lord of the Gods, this dhāraṇī is extremely powerful, beneficial, potent, virtuous, and auspicious.

“Lord of the Gods, this dhāraṇī called *the crown victory*, which completely purifies all lower rebirths, has been set forth for the benefit of beings.

1.10 “Lord of the Gods, consider the utterly stainless precious jewel that is the heart of the sun, completely pure like space, luminous, and blazing with light. This dhāraṇī will render beings devoid of stains just like that jewel. Consider also the perfectly stainless gold from the Jambu River that is pure, perfectly resplendent,⁴¹ and utterly lovely. Lord of the Gods, great beings such as those are as utterly and completely pure as that gold, and they will continue to be reborn like that from one lifetime to the next.

1.11 “Lord of the Gods, wherever this dhāraṇī is taught—and particularly wherever it is written down,⁴² read aloud, recited, chanted, worshiped, studied, listened to, and upheld—all rebirths will be thoroughly purified, and all rebirths in the hell realms will cease.

1.12 “Lord of the Gods, this dhāraṇī should be written down and hung from the top of a flagstaff. It should be placed on a high mountain, on top of a tall building, or inside of a caitya. Śakra, should any monk or nun, layman or laywoman, or any other son or daughter of noble family see it, live near it, pass under its shadow, or be touched by a breeze carrying a particle of dust from this dhāraṇī when it is hung from the top of a flagstaff, [F.232.a] all of that being’s evil deeds will be purified,⁴³ Śakra, and they will no longer have any fear of going to the lower realms. Know that they will not be born as a hell being, they will not be born in the animal realm, they will not be born in the Realm of the Lord of Death, they will not be born as a preta, and they will not be born among the asuras. Lord of the Gods, know that such a being has been prophesied by all the tathāgatas and will never turn back from unsurpassed, complete, perfect awakening.

1.13 “Lord of the Gods, there are also great benefits if this dhāraṇī is carved into wood. If someone worships and honors it, adorns it with flowers, incense, perfumes, flower garlands, scented salves, parasols, banners, pendants,⁴⁴ and ornaments—not to mention builds a caitya at a crossroads, places this dhāraṇī there, and joins their palms together or prostrates or circumambulates it—you should know, Śakra, that this being is indeed a great being! Know them to be a child of the tathāgatas. Know them to be an abode of the Dharma. Know them to be a caitya of the tathāgatas.”

- 1.14 Then, as that evening passed and dawn began to break,⁴⁵ Dharmarāja Yama arose, went before the Blessed One, and worshiped the Blessed One with divine flowers, cloth, ornaments, and other things, and he respectfully circumambulated the Blessed One seven times. Then he touched the Blessed One’s feet and said, “Blessed One, this dhāraṇī is very powerful. It is very beneficial.⁴⁶ Blessed One, I will also continually pursue the benefit of those beings, and I will always remain here to protect and defend them.⁴⁷ I will turn those beings away from all hell realms. Blessed One, I will do what I know is right, and I will not do what I know is not right.”
- 1.15 Then [F.232.b] the Four Great Kings circumambulated the Blessed One three times and said to him, “Blessed One, please give an extensive explanation of the detailed rite for this dhāraṇī and the way to perform the rite.”
- 1.16 The Blessed One then addressed the Four Great Kings, “Listen, and I will explain the way to perform the rite of this dhāraṇī.
“To help a being with a short lifespan, a son or daughter of noble family should bathe on the full moon day, put on clean clothes, and fast⁴⁸ as they recite this dhāraṇī one thousand times. If they do this, the depleted lifespan of that being will be restored, and they will become free from illness. All their obscurations will be purified, and they will be completely freed from all lower rebirths, such as that of a hell being.
- 1.17 “One can even recite this dhāraṇī in the ear of any bird or living being that has taken an animal birth and know that this will be their very last lower rebirth.
“If one does the same thing for someone who is extremely ill, even when the doctors have determined that things have taken a turn for the worse and given up, they will be completely freed from their illness and be cut off from all lower rebirths. When they die, they will be born in the realm of Sukhāvātī. Know that this very life is their last birth from a womb. From one lifetime to the next, they will only take miraculous birth from the center of a lotus, and they will always remember the succession of their past lives.
- 1.18 “For any being who has committed negative deeds and has died, recite the dhāraṇī over white mustard seeds twenty-one times and scatter these over their bones. Even if they have been born as a hell being, in the animal realm, in the Realm of the Lord of Death, as a preta, or in some other lower rebirth, the power of this dhāraṇī will free them from those lower rebirths, [F.233.a] and they will be reborn as a god.
- 1.19 “Whoever recites this dhāraṇī completely twenty-one times each day will become worthy to receive offerings from great worldly beings. Their lifespan will increase, they will be free from illness, they will be happy, they will always be joyful, and they will either attain great parinirvāṇa or, when they

die, be reborn in the realm of Sukhāvati. From there they will travel to many different buddha fields and meet the tathāgatas in each one. Those tathāgatas will reassure them and issue prophecies of their awakening. In each of those buddha fields, they will illuminate the entire world.⁴⁹

1.20 ⁵⁰“Make the mudrā in this way: place the palms and ten fingers together, bend the two index fingers, and interlace them with the two thumbs. Then recall this dhāraṇī.

1.21 “Make a square maṇḍala, scatter it with multicolored flowers, and burn different types of incense around it. Kneel with the right knee on the ground and, by means of samādhi, visualize and pay homage to all the tathāgatas. Then, read the dhāraṇī aloud eight hundred times. Even reading it in this way once is the same as having worshiped, served, and honored tathāgatas equal to the grains of sand of eighty-eight quintillion Gaṅgā Rivers. Having worshiped all those tathāgatas with great cloudbanks of offerings, they will all say “Excellent!” That being should be known as a child born from the very nature of all the tathāgatas. They will have unobscured wisdom and be ornamented with the mind of great awakening.⁵¹ [F.233.b]

1.22 ⁵²“Through this method for the rite for accomplishing this dhāraṇī, Lord of the Gods, all beings will be completely freed from lower rebirths, such as that of a hell being. All their rebirths will be completely pure, and they will have long lives.

1.23 “Lord of the Gods, go and teach and proclaim this dhāraṇī to the god Supraṭiṣṭhita.⁵³ Lord of the Gods, it will purify all of the god Supraṭiṣṭhita’s rebirths in seven days, extend his lifespan, and make him powerful.”

1.24 Śakra, Lord of the Gods, followed the Tathāgata’s instruction, went to the god Supraṭiṣṭhita, and gave him this dhāraṇī. On the seventh day, after he had exerted himself in reciting this dhāraṇī for six days and six nights, all his wishes were fulfilled. He was completely liberated from lower rebirths, he was established on the path to higher rebirths,⁵⁴ and his life was extended. He exclaimed, “How amazing is the Buddha! How amazing is the Dharma! How amazing is it that a dhāraṇī like this has appeared in the world, one that has completely freed me from such great fear!”⁵⁵

1.25 ⁵⁶Śakra, Lord of the Gods, and the god Supraṭiṣṭhita, together with a great retinue, gathered flowers, perfumes, incense, garlands, parasols, banners, pendants, and beautiful silken canopies, used their divine powers to travel to where the Blessed One was, and approached him. They worshiped the Blessed One, offering him hundreds of thousands of essential offerings such as divine silks and jewels, circumambulated him, and sat before the Blessed One. They expressed their joy in this way and then sat before the Blessed One and listened to the Dharma.

- 1.26 The Blessed One extended his golden hand and comforted the god Supratiṣṭhita, taught him the Dharma, and prophesied his awakening.⁵⁷
- 1.27 “Child of noble family, [F.234.a] this dhāraṇī of *the crown victory of all tathāgatas* is the destroyer⁵⁸ of the great cudgel of death, the purifier, the destroyer of evil deeds. If one writes this dhāraṇī on birch bark or some other surface, places it in the center of a caitya, worships it extensively by offering whatever one has, and then circumambulates it one hundred thousand times, one will be granted an excellent lifespan and a sharp intellect. When this is done, a lifespan of seven days will become seven years, and a lifespan of seven years will become seventy years. Thus, one will obtain an excellent lifespan, a good memory, freedom from illness, and the ability to remember previous lives.
- 1.28 “If someone installs this dhāraṇī in a caitya and binds a cloth on which the dhāraṇī is written around its summit they will be freed from grave illness.
- 1.29 “Write the dhāraṇī together with one’s own name on a piece of cloth or bark using yellow pigment derived from cow bile and install it in a sandalwood caitya. Then place it at home and worship it with thousands of vast offerings. If one performs this offering rite each month while reciting the dhāraṇī eight hundred times, one will be free from illness and live for one hundred years. If a sandalwood caitya is not available, follow the same procedure with a clay caitya.
- 1.30 “One can also draw on a clean piece of cloth a caitya that is resting on a crossed vajra and ornamented with an encircling vajra garland. Write one’s own name and the words of the dhāraṇī in the center of it with yellow pigment derived from cow bile. When this is installed inside an enclosed vessel made of two clay cups,⁵⁹ placed in the home, and worshiped with extensive offerings, one will always be protected.
- 1.31 “An additional rite is as follows: make a square maṇḍala with cow dung that has not fallen on the ground and scatter it with white flowers. Place four butter lamps at the four corners. Burn incense made of aloeswood and frankincense. Fill a vessel with perfumed water and adorn it with white flowers. Place in the center a caitya or statue with the dhāraṇī in its inner chamber. Touch it with the left hand while holding a mālā in the right hand, and recite the dhāraṇī twenty-one times at the three times of the day.⁶⁰ [F.234.b] One who drinks three handfuls of that water will be free of illness and have a long life. Their enemies will fall away, and they will gain a sharp intellect and noble speech. They will remember their previous births from one lifetime to the next. If that water is sprinkled around a house, a cattle barn or horse stable, or a royal residence, there will be no fear of thieves, snakes, yakṣas, or rākṣasas, and no one will suffer from illness. If the water is sprinkled over someone’s head, they will be freed from illness.

1.32 “There is also the extremely beneficial *dhāraṇī of limitless life*,⁶¹ which brings great pacification wherever it is applied. If it is recited in full twenty-one times over a toothbrush, one will not have any pain when chewing, and one will have a sharp intellect and a long life. If it is recited over three handfuls of water twenty-one times at the three times of the day,⁶² whoever drinks that water will be completely freed from all illness and will live for a long time.”

1.33 Then the bodhisattva great being Noble Avalokiteśvara circumambulated the Blessed One Amitāyus and said, “Blessed One, how should a son or daughter of noble family perform the caitya ritual? How should they accomplish such tasks as making the statue and so forth, and how should they perform the fire offering?”

1.34 The Blessed One replied:

“You have asked a good question.
Great hero, how excellent!
For the love and sake of all beings,
Listen with one-pointed attention!”

1.35 Then the Blessed One entered the samādhi called *glorious limitless light rays*⁶³ in all directions and spoke this dhāraṇī called *the limitless life of all tathāgatas*:

1.36 “*om amṛte*⁶⁴ *amṛtodbhave amṛtasambhave amṛtavikrānte amṛtagate*⁶⁵ *amṛtagāmini amṛtāyurdade*⁶⁶ *gaganakīrtikare sarvākṣayaṃ kariye svāhā*

1.37 “Recite this dhāraṇī as many times as possible while excavating the clay for building a caitya, [F.235.a] while applying that clay, and all the way up until the canopy is raised.”

1.38 Then he taught the rite:

“Now I will properly explain
The supreme caitya rite.

1.39 “It should be twelve finger-widths in size, adorned with many ornaments made of gold, lapis, silver, and rubies, and placed upon a lotus. Draw the Four World-Protectors holding banners in the four directions, the gods of the pure abodes holding flowers, incense, and perfumes, Śakra, Lord of the Gods, holding the parasol, and, on the right and the left sides, Avalokiteśvara and Vajradhara holding white tail whisks. Following proper procedure, draw these on the petals of the lotus, proceeding clockwise around the caitya. Write down the dhāraṇī called *the crown victory of all tathāgatas* and install it in the caitya’s interior relic chamber.⁶⁷ Then, sprinkle the caitya with scented water and worship it with delightfully scented flowers. Perform a thousandfold offering. Fast on the eighth day of the

waxing moon and, with your mind set on the benefit of all beings, make offerings for the bestowal of long life and intelligence⁶⁸ and recite the dhāraṇī one thousand times. If this is done every month for six months, one will obtain a lifespan of a thousand years. If it is done regularly for a year, one will obtain a lifespan of a hundred thousand years. If it is performed in perpetuity, one will obtain an inexhaustible lifespan, become powerful, be undefeatable by anyone, and obtain a supreme celestial uṣṇīṣa that is unequaled by even the gods and asuras.

1.40 “Here is another rite. Take some earth from a very holy place, mix it with delightful perfumes, and make a caitya. Start with one thousand, and make up to five thousand caityas.⁶⁹ Every day install the *crown victory* dhāraṇī in all the caityas. Perform the extensive offering as instructed [F.235.b] and read the dhāraṇī aloud starting with one thousand times and for as many as seven thousand recitations. Perform this every day for the dhāraṇī that bestows long life and intelligence, and dedicate one’s own roots of virtue to the shared benefit of all beings. Give up such things as restraining and beating beings. In each subsequent month make twice as many offerings and recite the dhāraṇī eight hundred times. This should be performed by oneself or by someone else in one’s stead.⁷⁰

1.41 “This ritual will allow one to avoid the eight types of untimely death. One will have a sharp intellect, be free from illness, live for one hundred years, be delightful to all beings, and recollect past lives. When the time comes to die, one will leave one’s body behind just like a snake shedding its skin and be reborn into a beautiful body in the world of Sukhāvātī. One will never be reborn into lower rebirths as a hell being, in the animal realm, or in the Realm of the Lord of Death. One will not even hear the word *hell*, so how could one experience the ripening of such a karmic result? One will not go to those places.”

1.42 Then the Blessed One Amitāyus taught the following sādhana:

“A skillful person who wishes beings to have limitless lifespans and to bring about their freedom from the pitiful state of saṃsāra should make a beautiful canvas that is the proper size out of threads that have been spun by a young maiden.⁷¹ Then, using a variety of colors of pigment, one should write the *crown victory* dhāraṇī inside a caitya that has been emanated from the letters of the dhāraṇī.

1.43 “Draw Amitāyus garlanded by thousands of light rays and seated upon a lotus and moon seat. He is luminous like the autumn moon and adorned with every ornament. He has three faces, each with three eyes, and he has eight arms. His right face is peaceful and radiant with golden light. His left face is fierce, with fangs biting down on his lower lip, and radiant with light the color of a blue utpala. His central face is charming [F.236.a] and white.

His right hands hold a crossed vajra at his heart, Amitābha seated on a lotus, an arrow, and the gesture of supreme generosity. His left hands hold a lasso with the threatening gesture, a bow, the gesture granting freedom from fear, and a vase. On his head is the syllable *om* in a caitya, at his throat is the syllable *āḥ*, and at his heart the syllable *hum*. At his forehead is *hrāṃ*, at his navel *hrīḥ*, and at his two feet *am* *aḥ*. Arrange these syllables on his body and include the phrase *rakṣa svāhā* with one's own name inside it.

1.44 “On either side of him are Padmapāṇi and Vajradhara holding white tail whisks. Above, like a flow of nectar raining down, are a pair of gods from the pure abodes. In the four directions are wrathful Acala, Kāmarāja, Nīladaṇḍa, and Mahābala. They hold a sword, a hook, a club, and a vajra, respectively, and their left hands brandish the threatening gesture to⁷² frighten malevolent beings.

1.45 “When one has completed it with careful attention to those details,⁷³ one should fast near a caitya that contains relics and worship it with a thousandfold great offering while reciting the dhāraṇī one hundred thousand times. Recite the dhāraṇī one thousand times each day from the first to the fifteenth day of the waxing moon. Then, in the early morning at dawn you will see the face of the Bhagavatī, and she will give you whatever accomplishments you desire.

1.46 “One can also install the painting in a location that has been anointed with delightfully scented water, perform extensive worship, and recite the dhāraṇī eight hundred times each day. Or, one can make a thousandfold offering and recite the dhāraṇī a thousand times. If one does this, one's lifespan will be limitless and one will be able to suppress others with limitless power,⁷⁴ be able to fly, and be free from great illness. [F.236.b] This will make anyone able to memorize and perfectly recite one thousand verses each day.

1.47 “Or if someone is unable to do that, they should install it in their home in a place that has been anointed with scented water and make whatever offerings they have. In all the coming months they should recite the dhāraṇī eight hundred times on the eighth day of the month, and every day they should recite it twenty-one times at the three times of the day. If they do this, they will have a sharp intellect and a long life. They will be full of insight, free from illness, and happy. They will live for one hundred years and remember their past lives.

“Or if one is unable to do this oneself and someone does it in one's stead, then one will have a long life and a sharp intellect.

1.48 “Now I will explain the fire offering rite for the benefit of all beings. Build a round hearth one cubit in size and adorned with a garland of vajras. Smear it with white sandalwood or white earth and scatter white flowers on it. Place a

butter lamp on each of its four sides, and worship it properly with incense and other offerings. In each of the four directions place a well-decorated and beautiful vase covered with white cloth with its openings adorned with boughs from a tree. Start a fire with wood from a date palm, and summon Agni by asking him to approach as you give three full ladles in the fire and sprinkle it with cleansing water. Visualize Amitāyus clearly in the center of the hearth, recite the *crown victory* dhāraṇī, and offer three full ladles. One can also perform the fire offering while reciting the dhāraṇī together with the life-extending and intelligence-sharpening dhāraṇī *om amṛtāyurdade⁷⁵ svāhā* eight hundred times at the three times of the day.

1.49 “If one recites the *crown victory* dhāraṇī seven times, one will have a long life, a sharp intellect, and happiness and be free from illness.

“Someone who wishes to live for a thousand years can also make an extensive offering on the eighth day of the waxing moon and perform the homa at the three times of the day, and supreme long life and a sharp intellect will be bestowed upon them.

1.50 “One should not disparage beings. With this rite, one’s body will not be afflicted by illness. [F.237.a] One will live for five thousand years, be victorious over enemies, and have a sharp intellect and a sweet voice.

“If one is unable to perform this oneself but someone performs it in one’s stead, one will obtain great peace.

1.51 “If one seeks some other accomplishment, one can recite the *great crown victory* dhāraṇī together with the life-extending and intelligence-sharpening dhāraṇī⁷⁶ while performing the fire offering one hundred thousand times. If one performs the thousandfold worship and recites the dhāraṇī one hundred thousand times at the beginning and end, one will live for a hundred thousand years. If one does this ten million times, one will live for ten million years. Following the practice of this rite will enable one to live for countless years, to fly, to be heroic, and to be victorious over all enemies.

1.52 “If one seeks glory and performs a fire offering of one hundred thousand wood apples,⁷⁷ one will obtain great glory. If one seeks to be king and performs a fire offering of one hundred thousand lotuses, one will become a great king. If one performs that ten million times, one will become a universal monarch.

1.53 “Or, if one wishes to obtain the sword siddhi and so forth, one should display the painting in front of a caitya that contains relics, perform the great thousandfold offering, and recite the dhāraṇī one hundred thousand times. If one recites it one hundred thousand times over a sword made of the five metals and then holds the sword in one’s right hand, one will be able to travel to whatever place one thinks of, take whatever form one desires, be extremely powerful, and subdue others. One will be the singular guide of all

beings and then become the great, supreme physician with a limitless lifespan. One can also perform the same sādhana over a vajra, cakra, trident, and the like.

1.54 “This great dhāraṇī with limitless benefits that is the heart of all the tathāgatas and supremely difficult to encounter will bring about the accomplishment of any ritual action to which it is applied. Whoever recites this dhāraṇī called *the crown victory of all tathāgatas* twenty-one times at the three times of the day every day, makes a great caitya [F.237.b] and hangs the dhāraṇī from it, and explains the dhāraṇī to others at length will be happy, powerful, and free from illness, live for a hundred years, have a sharp intellect, and remember their previous lives. When they die, they will leave their body behind just like a snake shedding its skin and be born into the world of Sukhāvāṇī. The word *hell* will never reach their ears, so how could they experience the ripening of such a karmic result? They will always remember their previous lives from one lifetime to the next.”

1.55 When the Blessed One spoke these words, his entire retinue and the world and its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had said.

1.56 *This concludes “Crown Victory of All Tathāgatas: The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual Manual.”*

c.

Colophon

c.1 It was translated, edited, and finalized by the scholar Dharmasena and by Khampa Lotsāwa, the monk Bari.

n.

NOTES

- n.1 The four texts are Toh 594 (the present text), [595](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh595.html) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh595.html>), [596](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh596.html) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh596.html>), and [598](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh598.html) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh598.html>). The first three share the same title: *Crown Victory of All Tathāgatas: The Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī with Its Ritual Manual* (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi gtsug tor rnam par rgyal ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs rtog pa dang bcas pa*). The fourth has an ever-so-slightly different title: *Crown Victory of All Tathāgatas: A Ritual Manual for the Uṣṇīṣavijayā Dhāraṇī* (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi gtsug tor rnam par rgyal ma'i gzungs zhe bya ba'i rtog pa*).
- n.2 The surviving Sanskrit work seems, more properly, to be titled the *Sarvagati* (rather than *Sarvadurgati*)-*pariśodhana-uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī*, but either way the title provides evidence of the relationship between the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* and *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana* corpuses. For more on this relationship see J. Dalton 2016 and forthcoming. The point here is simply that [Toh 597](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html>) is titled the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* rather than the *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-“dhāraṇī with its ritual manual”* (*kalpasahitā*).
- n.3 Hidas 2020, p. 141. See also Hidas 2021b, which catalogs a number of Indic *dhāraṇīsamgraha* collections, many of which include the *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī*.
- n.4 The Sanskrit of this work is preserved in what Gregory Schopen calls the “Los Angeles Manuscript,” though it appears to be held currently in Japan. This is an early manuscript from Bamiyan-Gilgit that Schopen transcribed and translated into English in an unpublished work, which we are grateful to Jacob Dalton for sharing. In addition to being incomplete, probably due to the loss of a folio, the manuscript lacks several passages that are found in the Tibetan translation of Toh 597 and contains a few passages that are absent in

that translation, including two passages that *are* found in the present work. Nonetheless, the Sanskrit manuscript is by and large the same work that is translated into Tibetan as Toh 597. More recently, the Sanskrit of the very same manuscript was studied by Gudrun Meltzer in a 2007 “limited distribution report” (Silk 2021, p. 108), to which we have not had access, as well as by Unebe Toshiya, who published the Sanskrit along with a Japanese translation in a 2015 article.

- n.5 This text has been edited on the basis of ten Nepalese Sanskrit manuscripts and translated into English in Hidas 2020. From among the works belonging to this group that are preserved in the Tibetan canon, the Sanskrit text is most closely parallel, though not identical, with Toh 595.
- n.6 The first translation is Taishō 967, followed by Taishō 968–971 and Taishō 974 (Chou 1945, p. 322).
- n.7 According to Chou, the ritual manuals surviving in Chinese are Taishō 972–973 (Chou 1945, p. 322). Hidas 2020 notes that the full set of *Uṣṇīṣavijayā*-related texts found in the Taishō canon includes Taishō 968–974, 978, and 979.
- n.8 Hidas mentions that Taishō 978 “stands closest to the Nepalese tradition” of the Sanskrit work that he has edited, which is also how he describes the relationship between the Sanskrit work and Toh 595 (Hidas 2020, p. 156n6–7). A comparison of Toh 595 and Taishō 978 shows that while neither exactly matches the Sanskrit text that Hidas edited, the Tibetan and Chinese are indeed translations of the same Sanskrit work and contain identical material apart from the Chinese translation’s inclusion of a single, very short passage about a toothbrush that is absent in the Tibetan translation (Toh 595) but present in some of the other *uṣṇīṣavijayā* texts in the Tibetan canon.
- n.9 Sørensen 2011a, p. 165.
- n.10 Sørensen 2011b, p. 386. See also Silk 2021 for further mention of the uses of the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī, often alongside the *Heart Sūtra*, in China.
- n.11 Copp 2005, p. 4. For further details see Copp 2005, which addresses the topic of dhāraṇīs in medieval China using the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī as a case study.
- n.12 See IOL Tib J 307 (http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%20307;img=1)/PT 54 (http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Pelliot%20tibétain%2054;img=1), PT 6 (http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?

[pm=Pelliot%20tibétain%206;img=1](http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Pelliot%20tibétain%206;img=1)), and [PT 368](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Pelliot%20tibétain%20368;img=1) for Tibetan translations of the work,
[IOL TIB J 322](http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%20322;img=1) (http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%20322;img=1) and [IOL Tib J 349/3](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%20349;img=3) for a Tibetan translation of the dhāraṇī
alone (not the whole text), and [IOL Tib J 466/2](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%20466;img=2), [IOL Tib J 547](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%20547;img=1), [IOL Tib J 1134](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%201134;img=1), [IOL Tib J 1498](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=IOL%20Tib%20J%201498;img=1), [PT72](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Pelliot%20tibétain%2072;img=1), and [PT73](#)
http://idp.bl.uk/database/oo_loader.a4d?pm=Pelliot%20tibétain%2073;img=1) for Tibetan transliterations of the
Sanskrit dhāraṇī alone (J. Dalton and van Schaik 2006; accessed through *The International Dunhuang Project: The Silk Road Online*). The translations of the
primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī text appearing at Dunhuang include at least one
passage parallel with rites described in our text but missing from the primary
text in its Tibetan canonical translation, though present in the surviving
Sanskrit manuscript corresponding to Toh 597 studied by Schopen (see J.
Dalton forthcoming; Schopen unpublished).

n.13 Schmid 2011, pp. 372–73.

n.14 J. Dalton 2016 and forthcoming.

n.15 See Hidas 2014, pp. 110–11.

n.16 Bühnemann 2014; Rospatt 2015, p. 821.

n.17 See Bhattacharyya 1928, vol. 2.

n.18 The three are Toh 3377, 3248, and 3580, translated respectively by Khampa Lotsāwa Bari Chödrak (*kham pa lo tsA ba ba ri chos grags*, eleventh century, who was also the translator of the present text), Patshap Lotsāwa Tsültrim Gyaltzen (*pa tshab lo tsA ba tshul khrims rgyal mtshan*, twelfth century), and

Yarlung Lotsāwa Trakpa Gyaltsen (*yar klungs lo tsA ba grags pa rgyal mtshan*, late thirteenth or early fourteenth century).

- n.19 See Chandra 1980.
- n.20 These Southeast Asian texts are not included in the official Pali Canon of the Theravāda tradition and are unknown in Sri Lanka. In mainland Southeast Asia, however, they are popular in rituals for extending life and in funeral rites. Whether they reflect the diffusion of texts and practices directly from India prior to the relatively recent evolution of Theravāda orthodoxy, or were transmitted via Chinese along with Chinese migrations and cultural influence in the region, remains an open question. For a detailed study of these texts and their possible origins, see Cicuzza (ed.) 2018.
- n.21 Phangthangma (2003), p. 23. While the phrase *cho ga dang bcas pa* (Skt. *vidhisahitā*) is functionally equivalent to the phrase *rtog pa dang bcas pa* (Skt. *kalpasahitā*), we unfortunately have no way of knowing whether this text was or resembled the primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* text (Toh 597) with a ritual manual attached to it, or if it resembled the present text or any of the other works in the modern canons titled *Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī-kalpasahitā* (i.e., Toh 594 or 595); Toh 596 is too short to correspond with the text identified in the Phangthangma as having 120 ślokas, and Toh 598 is an unlikely candidate because, while it shares the opening narrative with the other texts in this set, it seems to represent a separate, and later, ritual system. The Phangthangma also lists what may be a copy of the dhāraṇī alone, outside of the framework of a sūtra (Phangthangma, p. 31). The other imperial catalog, the Denkarma, lists only the primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* text, identified clearly as the text included in the later canons as Toh 597 by its full title in that catalog: the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* (Lalou 1953, p. 327).
- n.22 Unlike many dhāraṇī texts (including Toh 597), which tend to appear both in the Tantra Collection and the Dhāraṇī Collection sections of the Kangyurs, the texts in the genre of dhāraṇī-kalpas seem to appear exclusively in the Tantra Collection section of the Kangyurs.
- n.23 The text is F 631, Phukdrak Kangyur, vol. 117 (rgyud, dza), F.224.a–231.a. It should be noted, however, that the version of the dhāraṇī preserved in F 631 differs from the dhāraṇī in the present text much more substantially than any of the versions in the mainstream Kangyurs.
- n.24 Probably Sumpa Lotsāwa Dharma Yontan (*sum pa lo tsA ba dhar ma yon tan*), a translator and teacher of Sakya Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen, but possibly his uncle, also called Sumpa Lotsāwa, Palchok Dangpö Dorje (*dpal mchog*

dang po'i rdor rje). Both studied in Nepal. See Treasury of Lives (<https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Sumpa-Lotsawa-Darma-Yonten/1726>).

- n.25 The present text, from its title through the dhāraṇī proper, is exactly parallel with the slightly shorter Toh 595, which may have been extracted from it; with the opening of the very short Toh 596, though that text has made a number of emendations, improving on some readings and making others even less smooth and more complicated; and also with Toh 598, which has been significantly edited to improve the difficult readings in the opening narrative.
- n.26 *chos yang dag par sdud pa'i phug khang bzangs mchog*. The Sanskrit in the closely parallel text edited by Hidas reads *dharmasaṃgītimahāguhyaprāsāde* (Hidas 2020, p. 152). The Tibetan phrase is awkward, and it seems that there may have been some textual corruption. What has been rendered in Tibetan as *phug* seems to be *guhya* in the Sanskrit parallel; perhaps the Tibetan translators were reading *guhā*—which does translate to *phug*—rather than *guhya*. Although we cannot be sure that the surviving Sanskrit witnesses represent the older reading, they provide a more coherent reading than the one in our Tibetan witnesses, so we have translated this word following the Sanskrit, rather than the Tibetan witness.
- n.27 The text here is corrupt and appears to have transmitted a line slip, where a line from slightly lower in the text made its way incongruously to a place where it does not belong, rendering this sentence nonsensical. The Sanskrit text and the parallel passage in Toh 598 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh598.html#UT22084-090-042-43>) both lack this error, confirming that it is a textual corruption. We have relied on Hidas' Sanskrit edition to repair the Tibetan text here. The Tibetan reads *de rnams kyi phyir 'khor gyi dkyil 'khor la nye bar gzigs te/ kun du gzigs pa'i dpal gyi mtshan de bzhin gshogs pa thams cad kyi gtsug tor rnam par rgyal ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs 'di bcang ba dang / bklags pa dang / gzhan la rgya cher yang dag par ston pa ni tshe ring ba sgrub par byed pa'i ched du'o*. The passage in bold has been incongruously lifted from its proper place several lines down in the text and added here. The Sanskrit passage lacks this error but also includes several additional words absent in the Tibetan. However, as the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts are not identical in other places in this parallel passage either, and since the Tibetan text makes perfect sense without these additional elements, we have not taken the liberty of adding them in the English translation. The Sanskrit passage, in Hidas' edition (with the elements absent in the Tibetan text indicated in bold), reads *teṣāṃ arthāya hitāya*

sukhāya imāṃ sarvatathāgatoṣṇīṣavijayā-nāma-dhāraṇīm dhārayed vācayed deśayet paryavāpnuyāt parebhyaś ca vistareṇa samprakāśayet | dīrghāyuskāṇām upādāyēti (Hidas 2020, p. 152). The passage in Toh 598 reads *de rnam kyī don du tshe ring bar nye bar bsgrub par bya ba'i phyir/ de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyī gtsug tor rnam par rgyal ma zhes bya ba'i gzungs 'di gzung bar bya/ gzhan la rgya cher yang dag par bstan par bya'o.*

n.28 *thams cad dang ldan pa.*

n.29 Significant parallels with [Toh 597](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html#UT22084-090-041-57) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html#UT22084-090-041-57>) begin here (Toh 597, folio 245.a.1 in the Degé).

n.30 The phrase *uṣṇīṣavijāyāpariśuddhe* follows here in the Yongle and Kangxi versions of this text, in Hidas' Sanskrit edition, and in Toh 595, 596, and 598.

n.31 *mama* is not present in Hidas' edition of the Sanskrit manuscripts.

n.32 Hidas's edition of the Sanskrit reads *sarvatathāgatamātre*, a plausible variant unattested in Tibetan sources.

n.33 There is some variation in this phrase across the Tibetan and Sanskrit sources. This text, Toh 596, and Toh 597 read *sadā me*; Toh 595, 598, and 984 read *me sadā*; and, Hidas' Sanskrit edition has *mama sadā*. The meaning is the same in all cases.

n.34 The Yongle and Kangxi versions of this text include the line *sarvatathāgatasamayādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite* here. The Degé version of Toh 597 includes the phrase *samantān mocaya mocaya ādhiṣṭhāna*, though it is absent in other canonical recensions of the same translation. Hidas's Sanskrit edition includes *sarvatathāgatahṛdayādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhite* at this point.

n.35 *māṃ* is absent in Hidas' Sanskrit edition.

n.36 Hidas has translated the *dhāraṇī* based on his edition, and rather than retranslate it, we give his translation here. Substantive variants between the Sanskrit basis for his translation and the Degé have been noted above. "Om veneration to the glorious Buddha distinguished in all the Three Worlds. Namely, om bhrūṃ bhrūṃ bhrūṃ, purge, purge, purify, purify, O Unequaled Enveloping Splendor Sparkle Destiny Sky, O the One of Purified Nature, O the One Purified by the Topknot Victory, let all Tathāgatas consecrate me with consecrations of the nectar of the excellent Sugata's words along with great seals and mantrapadas, om bring, bring, O the One who Nourishes Life, purge, purge, purify, purify, O the One Purified by Sky

Nature, O the One Purified by the Topknot Victory, O the One Impelled by Thousand Rays, O the One Beholding all Tathāgatas, O the One Fulfilling the Six Perfections, O Mother of all Tathāgatas, O the One Established in the Ten Stages, O the One Empowered by the Empowerment of the Heart of all Tathāgatas, om̐ O Seal, O Seal, O Great Seal, O the One Purified by the Firmness of the Vajra Body, O the One Purged of all Obscurations Resulting from Actions, turn back for me O Life-purged One, O the One Empowered by the Empowerment of the Vow of all Tathāgatas, om̐ muni muni, mahāmuni, vimuni vimuni, mahāvimuni, mati mati, mahāmati, mamati, sumati, O the One Purified by Truth and the True Goal, O the One Purged by a Burst Open Mind, om̐ he he, triumph triumph, succeed succeed, recollect recollect, manifest manifest, expand expand, O the One Empowered by the Empowerment of all Buddhas, om̐ O Pure One, O Pure One, O Awakened One, O Awakened One, O Vajra, O Vajra, O Great Vajra, O Vajra-essence, O Victory-essence, O Triumph-essence, O Vajra-flame-essence, O Vajra-born, O Vajra-produced, O Vajra, O the One with a Vajra, let my body become a vajra and that of all beings, let there be body-purification for me and purification of all destinies, O the One Empowered by the Empowerment of the Heart of all Tathāgatas, let all Tathāgatas provide encouragement, om̐ awake awake, succeed succeed, awaken awaken, wake up, wake up, liberate liberate, release release, purge purge, purify purify, liberate completely, O the One Purified by an Enveloping Ray, O the One Empowered by the Empowerment of the Heart of all Tathāgatas, om̐ O Seal O Seal, O Great Seal, O Great Seal and Mantrapada svāhā” (Hidas 2020, p. 154).

- n.37 While the Buddha Amitāyus’ interlocutor in the opening narrative was Avalokiteśvara, here the Buddha Amitāyus, perhaps somewhat incongruously, addresses Śakra, Lord of the Gods. Śakra is, however, the interlocutor for the proclamation of the *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* in the *Sarva-durgatipariśodhana-uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī* (Toh 597), which is the primary *uṣṇīṣavijayā dhāraṇī* text of which several shorter dhāraṇī texts, the present one included, appear to be offshoots. This passage following the dhāraṇī is parallel with that found following the dhāraṇī’s proclamation in Toh 597.
- n.38 The text literally only states “who have fallen into a variety of rebirths” (*rnam pa sna tshogs pa’i skye bar ltung ba*), but presumably they are unpleasant, or else one would not need to be liberated from them.
- n.39 The parallel with [Toh 597](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html#UT22084-090-041-62>) briefly ends here (folio 245.b.5). This at first seems to be because the passage in Toh 597 here mentions the god Supraṭiṣṭhita, an individual who is not part of the

frame story of this version of the dhāraṇī but who figures in the version in Toh 597. However, Supraṭiṣṭhita does appear later in this text in another passage that is parallel with Toh 597. The parallel with Toh 597 resumes again immediately in our text, which is just a few lines later in Toh 597 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html#UT22084-090-041-65>) (folio 245.b.7).

- n.40 *nga smras'o*. This phrase is odd, but all versions of the text, as well as the parallel passage in Toh 597 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html#UT22084-090-041-67>), preserve it.
- n.41 Reading *mnyen pa* as **snigdha*.
- n.42 Degé here adds *'dzin pa* (“upheld”), but this term is repeated later in the list, so we follow the Lithang and Choné Kangyurs, which omit the first instance.
- n.43 Technically the final verb *mi 'byung* (“will not come about”) applies both to the evil deeds of the beings and their fears of lower rebirths, so this line could be translated as “all the evil deeds of that being will not come about,” i.e., they will stop performing evil deeds. However, given the context of the wider passage, we find it more likely that the passage means that their evil deeds will be purified, and so we have translated it accordingly.
- n.44 Our text here adds *spos dang* (“and incense”), but incense already appears above in the list. The parallel passage in Toh 597 does not add incense a second time here, so we have emended the translation of this passage based on that parallel to avoid the repetition.
- n.45 We have followed the Stok, Yongle, Lhasa, and Narthang Kangyurs that read *de'i nub mo de nam nangs nas* (“as that evening passed and dawn began to break”), whereas the Degé reads *de'i nub mo de nam langs nas* (“he rose that very evening”). The former is closer to the Sanskrit manuscript, which reads *rātryām atyayā* (“at the end of that night”) (see Schopen unpublished, p. 21). This reading is also supported by Toh 597.
- n.46 We have translated according to the Stok, Narthang, and Lhasa Kangyurs, which read *phan yon* (“benefit”), rather than Degé, which reads *smam yon* (“a physician’s fee”). This reading is also supported by Toh 597.
- n.47 The implication here is of course that Yama, the Lord of the Realm of the Dead, will defend and protect those beings who are connected with this dhāraṇī and will not send them to lower rebirths.

- n.48 This detail is absent from the parallel passage in Toh 597.
- n.49 The parallel with Toh 597 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html#UT22084-090-041-89>) ends here (Toh 597, folio 247.b.5).
- n.50 Unlike Toh 597, which otherwise represents the same text as the Sanskrit manuscript, the Sanskrit manuscript *does* contain this passage describing the maṇḍala rite (see Schopen unpublished, p. 26).
- n.51 *byang chub chen po'i sems kyi rgyan dang mnyam pa thob par 'gyur ro.*
- n.52 Here the parallel with Toh 597 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh597.html#UT22084-090-041-89>) resumes where it left off above (folio 247.b.5).
- n.53 The frame narrative of Toh 597 is a story about the god Supraṭiṣṭhita, who sees that he will soon die in the god realm and take lower rebirth, and the *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī is taught in order to protect him and other beings from such a fate. Supraṭiṣṭhita thus appears in Toh 597 from the very beginning of the text. In our text, however, this passage, which is parallel with the very end of Toh 597, is the first appearance that Supraṭiṣṭhita makes.
- n.54 Here we follow the Sanskrit, which is clearer than the Tibetan, reading *sugati mārge* (see Schopen unpublished, p. 28).
- n.55 The parallel with Toh 597, and indeed the entire text of Toh 597, ends here (folio 248.a.2). However, the immediately following short section *is* found in the Sanskrit manuscript.
- n.56 The following section of our text, like the first section prior to the dhāraṇī itself, is grammatically awkward. That is, the whole of the text apart from the passages that are parallel with Toh 597 is more problematic and awkward to read than the parts that are parallel with Toh 597.
- n.57 The short passage from the Sanskrit manuscript that is absent in Toh 597 but present in our text ends here, as does the sūtra itself in the Sanskrit manuscript. See Schopen unpublished, pp. 29–30.
- n.58 The Tibetan text reads *'dzin pa* (“holder”), while the parallel Sanskrit text edited by Hidas reads *-nivāraṇī* (“destroyer”) (Hidas 2020, p. 153). Moreover, three of Hidas’ Sanskrit witnesses here read *-hanā*, also meaning “destroyer” (ibid., p. 161n142). Given the lack of sense in the Tibetan passage and the consistency of meaning in the Sanskrit witnesses, this translation follows the Sanskrit reading.

- n.59 *kham phor kha sbyar gyi nang du*. Here we follow the Stok, Narthang, Choné, Urga, and Lhasa Kangyurs, which read *kham phor* (“clay cup”), rather than the Degé, which reads the nonsensical *kham por*.
- n.60 All recensions consulted repeat “twenty-one” twice, reading *nyi shu rtsa gcig rtsa gcig*, but when the same thing happens in a passage below (see n.62), the extraneous *rtsa gcig* is not present in the Yongle and Kangxi Kangyurs, so we have emended the text and omitted it here, too.
- n.61 Here the text first brings up the name of the second dhāraṇī that is taught in this text: the *dhāraṇī of limitless life* (*tshe dpag tu med pa*), which is also the name of the Buddha Amitāyus. Presumably the benefits mentioned from here on refer to that dhāraṇī, which is itself taught by the Buddha Amitāyus below.
- n.62 Here we follow the Yongle and Kangxi Kangyurs, which read *lan nyi shu rtsa gcig*, rather than the Degé, which reads *lan nyi shu rtsa gcig rtsa gcig*.
- n.63 The term *'od dpag tu med pa*, which is translated here as “light rays” because it is part of a larger phrase, is also the name of the Buddha Amitābha, of whom Amitāyus is generally understood to be simply a different form.
- n.64 There appears to have been considerable confusion—especially, but not exclusively, in Tibetan—in the transmission of this dhāraṇī, which also appears in the parallel passage in [Toh 595](https://read.84000.co/translation/toh595.html#UT22084-090-039-69) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh595.html#UT22084-090-039-69>) (folio 239.b) There, the Degé recension transmits the dhāraṇī with the words *amṛte*, *amṛtodbhave*, and so forth, whereas the Degé recension of the present work consistently reads *amite*, *amitodbhave*, etc. The dhāraṇī as preserved in these two works in other Kangyurs varies between the two readings, sometimes even giving both readings at various places in the dhāraṇī, e.g., *amṛte amitodbhave*. A Sanskrit recension of a very similar (but not identical) Amitābha dhāraṇī preserved in a tenth-century manuscript from Dunhuang consistently reads *amṛte amṛtodbhave*, etc. (see Hidas 2014, pp. 110–11). In his edition of that dhāraṇī, Hidas also cites other Sanskrit sources (the *Mahāpratisarā*, *Sādhanamālā*, and *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana*, which include portions of the dhāraṇī with the forms *amṛte*, etc. Hidas 2014, p. 111n42 and n43 and p. 112n47). He also, however, cites the *Uṣṇīṣavijayāsādhana* in the *Sādhanamālā*, which preserves the readings *amite amitodbhave*, etc. (See Hidas 2014, p. 112n47). The version preserved in most cases in the modern Tibetan tradition of a short part of this dhāraṇī (also found below in the present text) that is associated with Uṣṇīṣavijayā reads *om amṛta āyurdade svāhā*, likewise using the form *amṛta*. On the preponderance of the evidence, we have thus adopted the reading *amṛte* here.

- n.65 We have emended *gādre* to *gate* based on the parallel passage in Toh 595, folio 239.b.
- n.66 The Yongle, Lithang, Choné, and Kanxi Kangyurs here read °*āyurdhāte*. A more “correct” rendering of the Sanskrit could be °*āyurdatte*, which is attested in one parallel instance in Toh 595 (see [1.26](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh595.html#UT22084-090-039-92>)), though not in another ([1.14](#) (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh595.html#UT22084-090-039-69>)). Nevertheless, °*āyurdade* as here in the Degé, Lhasa, and Stok Palace Kangyurs is hallowed by usage in the mantras associated with Uṣṇīṣavijayā in a wide range of sādhanas and other texts in Tibetan. See also [n.75](#).
- n.67 *de'i ring bsrel gyi snying po can du byas te*. This translation is tentative.
- n.68 *tshe dang blo ster ba'i yon byin te*. This translation is tentative.
- n.69 *stong phrag gcig nas brtsams te ji srid lnga'am gcig gi bar du'o*. This line is perplexing, and we remain unclear about the number of caityas that the text is instructing the practitioner to make.
- n.70 *rang dang 'dra ba*.
- n.71 Toh 595 (folio 240.b) has a parallel passage with a better reading: *gzhon nu mas bkal ba'i skud pa la tshad dang ldan pa'i mdzas pa'i ras*. Our text, confusingly, reads *gzhon nu mas bkal ba'i skud pa tshad dang ldan pa mdzas pa'i ras*. We have emended the present text to match Toh 595 and translated it accordingly.
- n.72 We adopt the reading of *ched du* from the Stok, Peking, Narthang, Lithang, and Choné Kangyurs and from the parallel passage in Toh 595 (folio 240.b), as the reading of *phyed du* in the Degé does not make sense.
- n.73 We adopt the reading *byas la* from the Stok, Peking, Narthang, Lhasa, and Yongle Kangyurs and from the parallel passage in Toh 595 (folio 240.b), as opposed to *byas* from the Degé.
- n.74 We have here adopted the reading from the parallel passage in Toh 595 (folio 241.a), which reads *stobs dpag tu med pas gzhan gnon pa*, which makes more sense than the reading *stobs dpag tu med pa gnon pa* in our text. Later in this text there is also a similar passage that reads, more clearly, *stobs che zhing gzhan gnon pa*.
- n.75 Although the Degé Kangyur here reads °*āyurdate*, we have adopted the reading °*āyurdade* attested in the Narthang and Stok Palace Kangyurs since

this is also the most common form found, for this widely used mantra, in later Tibetan sādhanas. Other Kangyurs have a variety of different renderings. See [n.66](#).

- n.76 The fact that “life-extending and intelligence-sharpening” here refers to the additional dhāraṇī *om amṛtāyurdade svāhā* is suggested by the passage above, which refers to that dhāraṇī with precisely that phrase in the context of adding it to the main *uṣṇīṣavijayā* dhāraṇī.
- n.77 The Sanskrit word for “glory” is *śrī*, and the Sanskrit word for “wood apple” is *śrīphala* (“the *śrī* fruit”).

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for Sanskrit names and terms ·

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in the Sanskrit manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other Sanskrit manuscripts of the Kangyur or Tengyur.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionaries.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where Tibetan-Sanskrit relationship 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 Acala
 mi g.yo ba
 མི་གཡོ་བ།
 acala

g.2 Agni

me lha

མེ་ལྷ།

agni

The fire god.

g.3 Amitābha

'od dpag tu med pa

འོད་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ།

amitābha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The buddha of the western buddhafiield of Sukhāvātī, where fortunate beings are reborn to make further progress toward spiritual maturity. Amitābha made his great vows to create such a realm when he was a bodhisattva called Dharmākara. In the Pure Land Buddhist tradition, popular in East Asia, aspiring to be reborn in his buddha realm is the main emphasis; in other Mahāyāna traditions, too, it is a widespread practice. For a detailed description of the realm, see *The Display of the Pure Land of Sukhāvātī*, Toh 115. In some tantras that make reference to the five families he is the tathāgata associated with the the lotus family.

Amitābha, “Infinite Light,” is also known in many Indian Buddhist works as Amitāyus, “Infinite Life.” In both East Asian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions he is often conflated with another buddha named “Infinite Life,” Aparimitāyus, or “Infinite Life and Wisdom,” Aparimitāyurjñāna, the shorter version of whose name has also been back-translated from Tibetan into Sanskrit as Amitāyus but who presides over a realm in the zenith. For details on the relation between these buddhas and their names, see *The Aparimitāyurjñāna Sūtra* (1) Toh 674, i.9.

g.4 Amitāyus

tshe dpag tu med pa

ཚེ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ།

amitāyus

The buddha residing in the western buddha realm of Sukhāvātī, he is sometimes identified with Amitābha. More commonly translated into Tibetan as *tshe dpag med*.

g.5 apasmāra

brjed byed

བརྗེད་ལྗེད་།

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.6 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.7 Avalokiteśvara

spyan ras gzigs

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས།

avalokiteśvara

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.8 bhūta

'byung po

འབྱུང་པོ།

bhūta

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.9 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist literature, 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 √*bhañj* (“to break”).

g.10 brahmin

bram ze'i rigs

བྲམ་ཟེའི་རིགས།

brahmaṇavarṇa

The highest caste in traditional Indian society.

g.11 caitya

mchod rten

མཚོད་རྟེན།

caitya

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Tibetan translates both *stūpa* and *caitya* with the same word, *mchod rten*, meaning “basis” or “recipient” of “offerings” or “veneration.” Pali: *cetiya*.

A *caitya*, although often synonymous with *stūpa*, can also refer to any site, sanctuary or shrine that is made for veneration, and may or may not contain relics.

A *stūpa*, literally “heap” or “mound,” is a mounded or circular structure usually containing relics of the Buddha or the masters of the past. It is considered to be a sacred object representing the awakened mind of a buddha, but the symbolism of the *stūpa* is complex, and its design varies throughout the Buddhist world. *Stūpas* continue to be erected today as objects of veneration and merit making.

g.12 *cakra*

'khor lo

འཁོར་ལོ།

cakra

A wheel.

g.13 *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.14 *Dharma Proclamation*

chos yang dag par sdud pa

ཚོས་ཡང་དག་པར་སྐྱད་པ།

dharmasamgīti

A secret palace in Sukhāvātī.

g.15 Dharmarāja Yama

chos kyi rgyal po gshin rje

ཚེས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གཤིན་རྗེ།

dharmarāja yama

The Lord of Death in both Buddhist and Hindu traditions, Yama is said to uphold the Dharma by reviewing the karma of the dead and thereby determining their next rebirth.

g.16 Four Great Kings

rgyal po chen po bzhi

རྒྱལ་པོ་ཚེན་པོ་བཞི།

caturmahārāja

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Four gods who live on the lower slopes (fourth level) of Mount Meru in the eponymous Heaven of the Four Great Kings (*Cāturmahārājika*, *rgyal chen bzhi' i ris*) and guard the four cardinal directions. Each is the leader of a nonhuman class of beings living in his realm. They are Dhṛtarāṣṭra, ruling over the kumbhāṇḍas in the south; Virūḍhaka, ruling the nāgas in the west; Virūpākṣa, ruling the gandharvas in the east; and Vaiśravaṇa (also known as Kubera) ruling the yakṣas in the north. Also referred to as Guardians of the World or World-Protectors (*lokapāla*, *'jig rten skyong ba*).

g.17 Four World-Protectors

'jig rten skyong ba bzhi

འཇིག་རྗེན་སྤོང་བ་བཞི།

caturlokapāla

See “Four Great Kings.”

g.18 Gaṅgā River

gang gA'i klung

གང་གའི་ཀླུང།

gaṅgā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The Gaṅgā, or Ganges in English, is considered to be the most sacred river of India, particularly within the Hindu tradition. It starts in the Himalayas, flows through the northern plains of India, bathing the holy city of Vārāṇasī, and meets the sea at the Bay of Bengal, in Bangladesh. In the sūtras,

however, this river is mostly mentioned not for its sacredness but for its abundant sands—noticeable still today on its many sandy banks and at its delta—which serve as a usual metaphor for infinitely large numbers.

According to Buddhist cosmology, as explained in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is one of the four rivers that flow from Lake Anavatapta, and cross the southern continent of Jambudvīpa—the known human world or more specifically the Indian subcontinent.

g.19 great sāl tree

shing sA la chen po

ཤིང་སུ་ལ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāsāla · mahāsāla

This can refer either to the sal (or sala) tree (*Shorea robusta*) or to a great (*mahā*) household (*sāla*). The Buddha was said to have been born and died beneath a sāla tree.

g.20 homa

sbyin sreg

སྦྱིན་སྲེག།

homa

The casting of a prescribed offering into a ritual fire. The practice of homa is first attested in pre-Buddhist Vedic literature and serves as a core, pervasive ritual paradigm in exoteric and esoteric rites in both Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions into modern times. In Buddhist esoteric rites, the ritual offerings are made repeatedly, with each throw accompanied by a single repetition of the respective mantra.

g.21 householder

khyim bdag gi rigs

ཁྱིམ་བདག་གི་རིགས།

gṛhapativārṇa

Not one of the normal four “castes” of Indian society, but presumably here a term referring to nonmonastics.

g.22 Jambu

'dzam bu

འཛམ་བུ།

jambu

g.23 Jambudvīpa

'dzam bu'i gling

འཛམ་བུ་རི་གླིང་།

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 *Szygium*, particularly *Szygium jambos* and *Szygium 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.24 kalpa

rtog pa

རྟོག་པ།

kalpa

A ritual manual.

g.25 Kāmarāja

'dod pa'i rgyal po

འདོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་པོ།

kāmarāja

g.26 kaṭapūtana

lus srul po

ལུས་སྤུལ་པོ།

kaṭapūtana

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A subgroup of pūtanās, 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 of a pūтана is variously described in the texts as resembling that of a billy goat or a crow,

and the smell of a kaṭapūtana, as its name suggests, could resemble a corpse, *kaṭa* being one of the names for “corpse.” The morbid condition caused by pūtanas 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.27 Khampa Lotsāwa Bari Chödrak

kham pa lo tsA wa ba ri chos grags

ཁམས་པ་ལོ་ལྷོ་ཨ་བ་རི་ཚོས་གྲགས།

—

1040–11; the Tibetan translator and second throne-holding Sakya heirarch, also known as Bari Lotsāwa or Rinchen Drak (*rin chen grags*) who, along with this and many other texts, also translated ninety-three sādhanas that are grouped together under his name in the Tengyur.

g.28 kṣatriya

rgyal rigs

རྒྱལ་རིགས།

kṣatriya

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The ruling caste in the traditional four-caste hierarchy of India, associated with warriors, the aristocracy, and kings.

g.29 layman

dge bsnyen

དགེ་བསྟེན།

upāsaka

Layman who holds householder’s vows.

g.30 laywoman

dge bsnyen ma

དགེ་བསྟེན་མ།

upāsikā

Laywoman who holds householder’s vows.

g.31 Lord of the Gods

lha rnam kyī dbang po

ལྷ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དབང་པོ།

devendra

Epithet of Śakra.

g.32 lower realms

ngan 'gro

ངན་འགྲོ།

durgati

Also translated as “lower rebirths.”

g.33 lower rebirths

ngan 'gro

ངན་འགྲོ།

durgati

Lower rebirths within cyclic existence.

g.34 Mahābala

stobs po che

སྟོབས་པོ་ཅེ།

mahābala

g.35 monk

dge slong

དགེ་སྟོང་།

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 begged from the laity.

In the Tibetan tradition, which follows the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya, a monk follows 253 vows as part of his moral discipline. A nun (*bhikṣuṇī*; *dge slong ma*) follows 263 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.36 mudrā

phyag rgya

ཕྱག་རྒྱ།

mudrā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A seal, in both the literal and metaphoric sense. *Mudrā* is also the name given to an array of symbolic hand gestures, which range from the gesture of touching the earth displayed by the Buddha upon attaining awakening to the numerous gestures used in tantric rituals to symbolize offerings, consecrations, etc. Iconographically, *mudrās* are used as a way of communicating an action performed by the deity or a specific aspect a deity or buddha is displaying, in which case the same figure can be depicted using different hand gestures to signify that they are either meditating, teaching, granting freedom from fear, etc. In Tantric texts, the term is also used to designate the female spiritual consort in her various aspects.

g.37 Nīladaṇḍa

dbyug pa sngon po

དབྱུག་པ་སྔོན་པོ།

nīladaṇḍa

g.38 nun

dge slong ma

དགེ་སློང་མ།

bhikṣuṇī

Fully ordained nun. See also “monk.”

g.39 Padmapāṇi

pad+ma 'chang · pad+ma

པདྨ་འཆང་། · པདྨ།

padmapāṇi

An epithet of Avalokiteśvara.

g.40 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 √*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.41 *preta*

yi dags

ཡི་དགས།

preta

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*.

The pretas live in the realm of Yama, the Lord of Death, where they are particularly known to suffer from great hunger and thirst and the inability to acquire sustenance.

g.42 *pure abodes*

gnas gtsang ma

གནས་གཙང་མ།

śuddhāvāsa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The five Pure Abodes are the highest heavens of the Form Realm (*rūpadhātu*). They are called “pure abodes” because ordinary beings (*prthagjana*; *so so'i skye bo*) cannot be born there; only those who have achieved the fruit of a non-returner (*anāgāmin*; *phyir mi 'ong*) can be born there. A summary presentation of them is found in the third chapter of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa*, although they are repeatedly mentioned as a set in numerous sūtras, tantras, and vinaya texts.

The five Pure Abodes are the last five of the seventeen levels of the Form Realm. Specifically, they are the last five of the eight levels of the upper Form Realm—which corresponds to the fourth meditative concentration (*dhyāna; bsam gtan*)—all of which are described as “immovable” (*akopya; mi g.yo ba*) since they are never destroyed during the cycles of the destruction and reformation of a world system. In particular, the five are Abṛha (*mi che ba*), the inferior heaven; Atapa (*mi gdung ba*), the heaven of no torment; Sudṛśa (*gya nom snang*), the heaven of sublime appearances; Sudarśana (*shin tu mthong*), the heaven of the most beautiful to behold; and Akaniṣṭha (*’og min*), the highest heaven.

Yaśomitra explains their names, stating: (1) because those who abide there can only remain for a fixed amount of time, before they are plucked out ($\sqrt{bṛh}$, *bṛṃhanti*) of that heaven, or because it is not as extensive (*a-√bṛṃh*, *abṛṃhitā*) as the others in the pure realms, that heaven is called the inferior heaven (*abṛha; mi che ba*); (2) since the afflictions can no longer torment (\sqrt{tap} , *tapanti*) those who reside there because of their having attained a particular samādhi, or because their state of mind is virtuous, they no longer torment (\sqrt{tap} , *tāpayanti*) others, this heaven, consequently, is called the heaven of no torment (*atapa; mi gdung ba*); (3) since those who reside there have exceptional (*suṣṭhu*) vision because what they see ($\sqrt{dṛś}$, *darśana*) is utterly pure, that heaven is called the heaven of sublime appearances (*sudṛśa; gya nom snang*); (4) because those who reside there are beautiful gods, that heaven is called the heaven of the most beautiful to behold (*sudarśana; shin tu mthong*); and (5) since it is not lower (*na kaniṣṭhā*) than any other heaven because there is no other place superior to it, this heaven is called the highest heaven (*akaniṣṭha; ’og min*) since it is the uppermost.

g.43 pūtana

srul po

ལྷུ་པོ།

pūtana

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.44 rākṣasa

srin po

སྲིན་པོ།

rākṣasa

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.45 Realm of the Lord of Death

gshin rje'i 'jig rten

གཤིན་རྗེའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

yamaloka

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The land of the dead ruled over by the Lord of Death. In Buddhism it refers to the *preta* realm, where beings generally suffer from hunger and thirst, which in traditional Brahmanism is the fate of those departed without descendants to make ancestral offerings.

g.46 sādhana

sgrub pa'i thabs

སྒྲུབ་པའི་བླབས།

sādhana

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Derived from the Sanskrit verb *√sādh*, “to accomplish,” the term *sādhana* most generically refers to any method that brings about the accomplishment of a desired goal. In Buddhist literature, the term is often specifically applied to tantric practices that involve ritual engagement with deities, mantra recitation, the visualized creation and dissolution of deity maṇḍalas, etc. Sādhana are aimed at both actualizing spiritual attainments (*siddhi*) and reaching liberation. The Tibetan translation *sgrub thabs* means “method of accomplishment.”

g.47 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱ་བྱིན།

śakra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The lord of the gods. Alternatively known as Indra, the deity that is called “lord of the gods” dwells on the summit of Mount Sumeru and wields the thunderbolt. The Tibetan translation *brgya byin* (meaning “one hundred sacrifices”) is based on an etymology that *śakra* is an abbreviation of *śatakratu*, one who has performed a hundred sacrifices. Each world with a central Sumeru has a Śakra. Also known by other names such as Kauśika, Devendra, and Śacipati.

g.48 **samādhi**

ting nge 'dzin

ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན།

samādhi

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In a general sense, *samādhi* can describe a number of different meditative states. In the Mahāyāna literature, in particular in the Prajñāpāramitā sūtras, we find extensive lists of different samādhis, numbering over one hundred.

In a more restricted sense, and when understood as a mental state, *samādhi* is defined as the one-pointedness of the mind (*cittaikāgratā*), the ability to remain on the same object over long periods of time. The *sgra sbyor bam po gnyis pa* commentary on the *Mahāvīyūtpatti* explains the term *samādhi* as referring to the instrument through which mind and mental states “get collected,” i.e., it is by the force of samādhi that the continuum of mind and mental states becomes collected on a single point of reference without getting distracted.

g.49 **Sukhāvātī**

bde ba can

བདེ་བ་ཅན།

sukhāvātī

Amitābha’s pure realm.

g.50 **Supraṭiṣṭhita**

shin tu brtan pa

ཤིན་ཏུ་བརྟན་པ།

supraṭiṣṭhita

A god.

g.51 tathāgata

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A frequently used synonym for *buddha*. According to different explanations, it can be read as *tathā-gata*, literally meaning “one who has thus gone,” or as *tathā-āgata*, “one who has thus come.” *Gata*, though literally meaning “gone,” is a past passive participle used to describe a state or condition of existence. *Tatha(tā)*, often rendered as “suchness” or “thusness,” is the quality or condition of things as they really are, which cannot be conveyed in conceptual, dualistic terms. Therefore, this epithet is interpreted in different ways, but in general it implies one who has departed in the wake of the buddhas of the past, or one who has manifested the supreme awakening dependent on the reality that does not abide in the two extremes of existence and quiescence. It also often used as a specific epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.52 universal monarch

'khor los sgyur ba

འཁོར་ལོས་སྐུར་བ།

cakravartin

Literally a “wheel holder,” a king who rules over vast territories.

g.53 uṣṇīṣa

gtsug tor

གུཊུག་ཏོར།

uṣṇīṣa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the thirty-two signs, or major marks, of a great being. In its simplest form it is a pointed shape of the head like a turban (the Sanskrit term, *uṣṇīṣa*, in fact means “turban”), or more elaborately a dome-shaped extension. The extension is described as having various extraordinary attributes such as emitting and absorbing rays of light or reaching an immense height.

g.54 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.55 Vajradhara

rdo rje 'chang

རྡོ་རྗེ་འཆང་།

vajradhara

In the context of this text, Vajradhara is another name for Vajrapāṇi.

g.56 Vajrapāṇi

lag na rdo rje · phyag na rdo rje

ལག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེ། · ཕྱག་ན་རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajrapāṇi

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.57 well-gone one

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. A recurrent explanation offers three different meanings for *su-* that are meant to show the special qualities of “accomplishment of one’s own purpose” (*svārthasampad*) for a complete buddha. Thus, the Sugata is “well” gone, as in the expression *su-rūpa* (“having a good form”); he is gone “in a way that he shall not come back,” as in the expression *su-naṣṭa-jvara* (“a fever that has utterly gone”); he has gone “without any remainder” as in the expression *su-pūrṇa-ghaṭa* (“a pot that is

completely full”). According to Buddhaghōṣa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*) and where he went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*).

g.58 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གོད་སྤྱིན།

yakṣa

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 jurisdiction 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.59 Yama

gshin rje

གཤིན་རྗེ།

yama

See “Dharmarāja Yama.”