

སངས་རྒྱལ་སྤྱི་ལོ་འཛུགས་ཀྱི་ཚེས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

**The Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's
Essence**

Buddhahṛdayadhāraṇīdharmaparyāya

འཕགས་པ་སངས་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སྤྲིང་པོ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས་གྱི་ཚོས་གྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

'phags pa sangs rgyas kyi snying po zhes bya ba'i gzungs kyi chos kyi rnam grangs

The Noble Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Essence

Āryabuddhahṛdayanāmadhāraṇīdharmaparyāya



Toh 854
Degé Kangyur, vol. 100 (gzungs 'dus, e), folios 72.b–74.b.

Translated by The Dharmachakra Translation Committee
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2020
Current version v 1.1.4 (2020)
Generated by 84000 Reading Room v1.36.3

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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 *The Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Essence* is a short work in which the Buddha Śākyamuni, addressing an immense gathering of bodhisattvas, teaches two dhāraṇīs to be recited as a complement to the practice of recollecting the Buddha, and then explains the beneficial results of reciting them. The significance of the teaching is marked by miraculous signs, and by the gods offering flowers and ornaments. The text also provides a set of correspondences between the eight ornaments offered by the gods and eight qualities that ornament bodhisattvas.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ac.1 Translated by the Dharmachakra Translation Committee under the supervision of Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche. The translation was produced by Adam Krug and then checked against the Tibetan and edited by Ryan Damron.

The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

i.

INTRODUCTION

- i.1 *The Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Essence*¹ opens with the Buddha and an immense assembly of bodhisattvas gathered in a hermitage in the celestial realm Universal Radiance. The Buddha begins by telling the assembly that *The Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Essence* has been taught by all the buddhas of the past, and then outlines the various benefits that accrue to a person reciting it. He pronounces two dhāraṇīs, causing the whole earth and its oceans to tremble and inciting panic in Māra's realm. The gods then offer flowers and ornaments.
- i.2 Before the narrative concludes, the text lists a set of correspondences between the eight ornaments offered by the gods and eight qualities that are the ornaments of bodhisattvas. The eight ornaments and their related qualities are as follows:
- i.3
1. Short necklace (not forgetting bodhicitta)
 2. Long necklace (investigation of all one has studied)
 3. Perfumes (dependent origination)
 4. Scented powders (knowing those who are of supreme acumen and those who are not)
 5. Ointments (correctly discerning and analyzing the teachings as one has heard them and as one has understood them)
 6. Clothing (non-apprehension of phenomena in order to bring all beings to ultimate fruition)
 7. Jewelry (skill in methods due to the Buddha's blessing)
 8. Armlets (obtaining dhāraṇīs)²
- i.4 The text then concludes with instructions to recite this dhāraṇī while performing the practice of recollecting the Buddha, and mentions further benefits that will be attained by anyone practicing in that way.

- i.5 The translators' colophon notes that this text was translated by the Indian paṇḍitas Jinamitra and Dānaśīla along with the Tibetan translator Bandé Yeshé Dé (c. eighth century). The text appears in the Phangthangma³ royal Tibetan catalogue of translated works among the collection of various dhāraṇī. In the Denkarma inventory's list of dhāraṇī, there are two texts entitled *The Buddha's Essence* ('phags pa sangs rgyas kyi snying po),⁴ and while neither of them matches the full title of the present work, the first mention is the more likely to correspond to it judging by the recorded length of the text (fifty-five śloka); the second record (thirty-eight śloka) probably corresponds to another, slightly shorter text with a similar title, *The Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Essence* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh514.html>) ('phags pa sangs rgyas kyi snying po zhes bya ba'i gzungs, Toh 515, 855). The two texts appear alongside each other in the Degé Kangyur both in The Tantra Collection (rgyud 'bum) and in The Compendium of Incantations (gzungs 'dus). The two dhāraṇī mantras in this text are included in Butön's *Collection of Dhāraṇī of the Four Classes of Secret Mantra* (gsang sngags rgyud sde bzhi'i gzungs 'bum).⁵
- i.6 The text was translated into Chinese in 650 CE by Xuanzang (Taishō 918),⁶ and again in the late tenth century by Fatian (Taishō 919).⁷
- i.7 This translation is primarily based on the Tibetan translations of the text from the Tantra Collection and the Compendium of Incantations⁸ in the Degé Kangyur⁹ in conjunction with the text as it appears in the Stok Palace Kangyur and the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*).

tr.

THE TRANSLATION

The Noble Discourse of the Dhāraṇī

The Buddha's Essence

- 1.1 [F.72.b] Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.
- 1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing and teaching the Dharma within the palace called Universal Radiance—a secluded Dharma hermitage¹⁰ with a courtyard arrayed with jewels that is the home of the thus-gone ones, a place where gnosis is perfectly analyzed, a place blessed by the buddhas of the past and praised by all beings, an abode of the great bodhisattvas, a place endowed with the best of all aspects and in harmony with the sameness of all phenomena. He was surrounded and venerated by billions of bodhisattvas, all of whom had been prophesied to become buddhas, had assembled from their separate world systems,¹¹ were the heirs of the thus-gone ones who are the kings of the Dharma, and had attained the various dhāraṇīs and absorptions.
- 1.3 The Blessed One addressed the great assembly of bodhisattvas, saying, “Sons of the lineage, *The Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Essence* has been taught by as many thus-gone, worthy, perfect complete buddhas as there are sands in the river Ganges in order to benefit many beings, to bring happiness to many beings, to express sincere love for the world, and to benefit, help, and bring happiness to the great multitude of gods and humans. If sons or daughters of the lineage receive this *Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Essence*, bear it in mind, recite it, master it, [F.73.a] teach it correctly and extensively to others, have faith in it, or generate exceptional devotion toward it, their progress toward unsurpassed, perfect, complete awakening will never be reversed. They will never part from holding all the teachings. They will never part company with the blessed buddhas. They will never part from seeing and serving the Thus-Gone One. They will never part from listening to the Dharma. They will never part from honoring the saṅgha. They will demolish the ocean of saṃsāra for a thousand eons. They will remember the successive lives they pass until they become buddhas who have completely manifested unsurpassed, perfect, complete awakening. They will quickly become buddhas who have completely manifested unsurpassed, perfect, complete awakening. All the hordes of spirit beings will protect them. All human and nonhuman beings such as gods, nāgas,

yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas will be fond of them. Their bodies will not be afflicted by illness. They will not die because of harm done by others. They will not die because of renouncing violence, spurning weapons, or neutralizing poisons. They will be impregnable to the evil Māra, invulnerable to the deities of Māra’s horde. They will need only to direct their attention to the deities of Māra’s horde for them all to tremble, panic in fear, and scatter in the ten directions.

- 1.4 “These are the Buddha’s words, the Buddha’s great words, the great words that were given by the Buddha, the words of all buddhas, the words of all the thus-gone ones:

*tadyathā buddhe subuddhe mahābuddhe iha buddhe tatra buddhe buddhe [F.73.b]
buddhe buddhamati buddhe sarvabuddhānumati sarvabuddhānujñāna¹² te buddha
buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha*

“Although the objects that the Buddha perceives and the Dharma that he has taught are infinite, the simplified instruction is that one should focus the mind on a single thing.¹³

- 1.5 “The following dhāraṇī has been taught by all the buddhas out of their sincere love for all beings. It is the seal of all qualities:

*tadyathā śuddhe suśuddhe suśuddhe śodhani samśodhani samśodhani nirmale
malāpagate gate¹⁴ samatikranti¹⁵ krame samasare sarāsaraparyāśoke viśoka
śokaśamani śānte upaśānte praśānte avabhāse sarvapunya parimaṇḍite¹⁶ sarva-
dharmapratimaṇḍite hara hara mala hara cara cara samcara cala cala samcala tala tala
matala samatala riṇe riṇe suriṇe samariṇe riṇamatilokadhare lokadhariṇe dhara
dhara ḍara ḍara rodha rodha mahāvijaya vāhini hana hana sarvabuddhe hriphreṣi
trasi sarvajñāpathe sarvajñāpāramite mahāpratibhānasampanne¹⁷ samantāloke
buddhe viṣaye buddhapratimaṇḍite bhagavate sara sara prasara prasara visara visara
prasara sarvaśokāpagate svāhā.”*

- 1.6 As soon as the Blessed One had spoken this *Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Essence*, the mountains, the surrounding areas, and the forests shook in the following six ways: the whole trichiliocosm shook, shook violently, and shook all over. The great ocean trembled, trembled violently, and trembled all over. The supreme king of mountains trembled and quaked. The entire abode of Māra was terrified, and all of the deities of Māra’s horde and the wicked Māras were extremely distressed and [F.74.a] miserable.

- 1.7 The beings who witnessed the great earth quaking prostrated to the thus-gone, arhat, perfect and complete buddha and recited the phrase “I prostrate to the thus-gone, arhat, perfect and complete buddha” three times. The gods that had genuine faith¹⁸ in the Buddha showered the Blessed One with

divine mandāra flowers and great mandāra flowers, and by showering him with flowers brought joy to all who sought refuge in the Buddha. And thus it was said that:

- 1.8 “When the lion of the Śākya clan,
The perfect, complete buddha and our refuge,
Spoke these two dhāraṇīs
Of the Buddha’s essence,
- 1.9 “The earth shook in six ways,
The ocean trembled, all of Māra’s realm
Shook violently, and the deities of Māra’s horde
Panicked and trembled.
- 1.10 “While the māras were overcome with sorrow and misery,
The gods witnessed this miracle
And rained mandāra flowers from the sky
As an offering to the world protector.
- 1.11 “Others who had true faith¹⁹ in the Buddha
Made offerings of short and long necklaces,
Perfumes, scented powders, ointments,
Clothing, jewelry, and armlets.
- 1.12 “These eight offerings became the ornaments of the beneficial advantages of their good qualities. The eight are as follows: (1) the ornament of not forgetting bodhicitta; (2) the ornament of insatiable investigation of all one has studied; (3) the ornament of dependent origination, the definitive understanding of the profound Dharma; (4) the ornament of knowing those who are of supreme acumen and those who are not; (5) the ornament of correctly discerning and analyzing the teachings as one has heard them and as one has understood them; [F.74.b] (6) the ornament of the non-apprehension of phenomena in order to bring all beings to ultimate fruition; (7) the ornament of skill in methods due to the Buddha’s blessing; and (8) the ornament of obtaining dhāraṇīs. Those eight are the ornaments of the beneficial advantages of his good qualities.²⁰
- 1.13 “All beings should continually contemplate this dhāraṇī and meditate while recollecting the Buddha. If they contemplate the words of the dhāraṇī, all their karmic obscurations will be purified, they will attain the meditative concentration called *the lotus array*, and they will be able to wash away all illnesses and diseases with their hands. They should perform innumerable recitations of this dhāraṇī.”

1.14 When the Blessed One had spoken, the bodhisattva great beings, great śrāvakas, and the entire world with its gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas praised the Blessed One's words.

1.15 *This concludes the noble discourse of the dhāraṇī "The Buddha's Essence."*

c.

Colophon

- c.1 Translated and edited by the Indian teachers Jinamitra and Dānaśīla along with the chief editor and translator Bandé Yeshé Dé; later revised according to the new language reform and then finalized.²¹

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

D Degé Kangyur

S Stok Palace Kangyur

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Skt. *Āryabuddhahṛdayanāmadhāraṇīdharmaparyāya*. D (Toh 514): *viparyaya*; D (Toh 854): *viparyāya*; S: *paryāya*. The Sanskrit transliteration *viparyāya* in the Degé for the Tibetan term *rnam grangs* contains the perhaps misleading prefix *vi-*. The usual Sanskrit for the Tibetan *rnam grangs* is simply *paryāya*, which is preserved in the Stok Palace Kangyur.
- n.2 This set of eight aspects that “ornament” the practice and accomplishment of the bodhisattva path is almost identical to a set of eight “ornaments of bodhisattvas” listed in *The Sūtra of the Prophecy Concerning Strīvoivarta* (*Strīvoivartavyākaraṇa*, Toh 190). Two of the items in the two sets are different, but the almost identical phrasing of most of the list leaves little doubt that they share a common origin. See also n.20.
- n.3 *dkar chag 'phang thang ma* (2003), 26.
- n.4 Denkarma, folios 302.a.7 and 302.b.4-5; see also Yoshimura (1950), 151; 152.
- n.5 Butön Rinchen Drup (1965–1971), folio 247.a.
- n.6 玄奘 Xuanzang. For more information on this figure, see Lewis R. Lancaster, “K 444 (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0444.html),” *The Korean Buddhist Canon*.
- n.7 法天 Fatian. For more information on this figure, see Lewis R. Lancaster, “K 1134 (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k1134.html),” *The Korean Buddhist Canon*.
- n.8 This latter text, Toh 854, and all those contained in the same volume (*gzungs 'dus, e*), are listed as being located in volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur by the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC). However, several other Kangyur databases—including the eKangyur that supplies the digital input version displayed by the 84000 Reading Room—list this work as being located in

volume 101. This discrepancy is partly due to the fact that the two volumes of the *gzungs 'dus* section are an added supplement not mentioned in the original catalog, and also hinges on the fact that the compilers of the Tōhoku catalog placed another text—which forms a whole, very large volume—the *Vimalaprabhānāmakālacakratantraṭīkā* (*dus 'khor 'grel bshad dri med 'od*, Toh 845), before the volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur, numbering it as vol. 100, although it is almost certainly intended to come right at the end of the Degé Kangyur texts as volume 102; indeed its final fifth chapter is often carried over and wrapped in the same volume as the Kangyur *dkar chags* (catalog). Please note this discrepancy when using the eKangyur viewer in this translation.

- n.9 As there are significant variants mentioned in the notes, it should be noted that the correlating section from the eKangyur (based on the Degé) may be viewed by clicking on the folio references, which will be displayed according to the Toh number selected from the 84000 reading room: D 514 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh514.html>) or D 854 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh854.html>).
- n.10 D (Toh 854): *chos kyi g.ye dgon pa*; D (Toh 514): *chos kyi dbye/ dgon pa*; S: *chos kyi dbye dgon pa*.
- n.11 D (Toh 854): *thams cad kyang lun bstan pa/ thams cad kyang 'jig rten gyi khams tha dad pa nas 'dus pa*; D (Toh 514), S: *'jig rten gyi khams tha dad pa nas lung stan pa/ thams cad kyang 'jig rten gyi khams tha dad pa nas 'dus pa*. D (Toh 514) and S appear to unnecessarily repeat the phrase *'jig rten gyi khams tha dad pa nas*. This translation follows D (Toh 854).
- n.12 D (Toh 854), S: *sarvabuddha/ anujñānate*; D (Toh 514): *sarvabuddhe/ anujñānate*.
- n.13 D (Toh 854): *gcig tu yid la bya ba ni mdor na sgom pa'o*; D (Toh 524): *gcig tu yid la bya ba ni mdor na chos sgom pa'o*; S: *gcig tu yid la bya ba ni mdor na chos bsgom pa'o*.
- n.14 D (Toh 854), S: *gati*; D (Toh 514): *gate*.
- n.15 D (Toh 854): *samatikranti*; D (Toh 514): *samātikranti*; S: *samādhitanti*.
- n.16 D (Toh 854), S: *parimaṇḍite*; D (Toh 514): *parimiṇḍite*.
- n.17 D (Toh 514): *mahāpratibhānasampanne*; D (Toh 854): *mahāpratibhānasamphanne*; S: *mahāpratibhānasampanne*.
- n.18 D (Toh 514), S: *mngon par dad pa*; D (Toh 854): *mngon par dang ba*.
- n.19 D (Toh 854), S: *mngon dad*; D (Toh 514): *mngon dang*.
- n.20 This set of eight ornaments is almost identical and also of very similar phrasing, but with the exception of two items, to a set of eight “ornaments of

bodhisattvas” listed in *The Sūtra of the Prophecy Concerning Strīvīvarta* (*Strīvīvartavyākaraṇa*, Toh 190), F.222.b–223.a.

n.21 The version in the Stok Palace Kangyur does not include a translators’ colophon.

b.

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GLOSSARY

g.

g.1

Asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

A class of celestial beings.

g.2

Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྟེ།

—

Eighth-century Tibetan translator.

g.3

Dānaśīla

dA na shI la

དྲན་ཤི་ལ།

Dānaśīla

Eighth-century Indian teacher and translator.

g.4

Gandharva

dri za

དྷི་བ།

gandharva

A class of celestial beings.

g.5

Garuḍa

nam mkha' lding

ནམ་མཁའ་ལྷིང་།

garuḍa

A class of celestial beings.

- g.6 God
lha
ལྷ།
deva
A class of celestial beings.
- g.7 Jinamitra
dzi na mi tra
ཇོ་ན་མི་ཏྲ།
Jinamitra
Eighth-century Indian teacher and translator.
- g.8 Kinnara
mi 'am ci
མི་འམ་ཅི།
kinnara
A class of terrestrial beings.
- g.9 Mahoraga
lto 'phye chen po
ལྷོ་འཕྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།
mahoraga
A class of terrestrial beings.
- g.10 Māra
bdud
བདུད།
māra
The class of beings known as the māras is led by Māra, who is best known in Buddhist traditions as the demonic force that perpetuates the illusion of saṃsāra.
- g.11 Māra
bdud
བདུད།
Māra
The leader of the class of beings known as the māras, Māra is best known in Buddhist traditions as the demonic force that perpetuates the illusion of saṃsāra.
- g.12 Nāga
klu
ལྷ།
nāga
A class of terrestrial beings.

- g.13 Spirit
byung po
བྱུང་པོ།
bhūta
A class of demonic beings.
- g.14 The lotus array
pad+ma rnam par bkod pa
པདྨ་རྣམ་པར་བཀོད་པ།
padmavyūha
The name of a samādhi.
- g.15 Universal Radiance
kun nas 'od
ཀུན་ནས་འོད།
samantaprabhā
The name of a celestial realm.
- g.16 Yakṣa
gnod sbyin
གནོད་སྦྱིན།
yakṣa
A class of terrestrial beings.