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The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence

Vajramaṇḍadhāraṇī

འཕགས་པ་དོན་རྒྱུད་པོའི་གཟུངས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

'phags pa rdo rje snying po'i gzungs zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence”

Āryavajraṃaṇḍanāmadhāraṇīmahāyānasūtra

· Toh 139 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 56 (mdo sde, na), folios 278.a–289.b

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SUMMARY

- s.1 In *The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence*, the bodhisattva of wisdom Mañjuśrī asks the Buddha to propound a teaching on the highest wisdom that questions foundational Buddhist concepts and categories from an ultimate standpoint without denying their conventional efficacy. The Buddha begins by teaching, in a paradoxical tone that defines the entire discourse, that although there is neither awakening nor buddha qualities, bodhisattvas nonetheless aspire for buddhahood. This is followed by a lengthy series of similar paradoxes that examine basic Buddhist distinctions between the worlds of buddhas and sentient beings while pointing to the common ground underlying them. One key doctrinal point is that the qualities of ordinary people are neither distinct from, nor to be conflated with, the qualities of buddhas. When asked why this is so, the Buddha explains that the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* is nonconceptual and immanent in all things, from emotional defilements up to the realization of buddhahood. Since all phenomena are equally empty of intrinsic essence, they are already intrinsically pure and beyond bondage or liberation.

ac.

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i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1

The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence belongs to the Buddhist genre called *dhāraṇī* or “incantation” (Tib. *gzungs*).¹ In the Degé Kangyur most works of this class, usually short Mahāyāna sūtras or tantric texts, are found in the corresponding General Sūtra or Action Tantra sections, but are also duplicated in their own Compendium of Dhāraṇīs section of two hundred and sixty-four texts (Tohoku nos. 846–1108). The present scripture, however, is included only in the General Sūtra section and is one of the few such sūtras that, despite having the term *dhāraṇī* in their titles, are not duplicated in the compendium.² This particular text is not a *dhāraṇī* in the sense in which that term is applied to a large number of scriptures containing a specific mantra-like formula recited in order to bring about a desired result. It contains no such formula at all, but rather presents a series of specific *dhāraṇī* that constitute spiritual qualities or forms of spiritual realization. First and foremost among these is the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence*, which is presented as the ultimate mode of being or state of realization that eludes all conceptual appropriation while at the same time being immanent in all things.

i.2

The basic meaning of the Sanskrit *dhāraṇa* is to “hold,” “uphold,” or “maintain,” and by extension the term is frequently used in reference to memory and learning. In the context of the present work, the terms *dhāraṇī* or *dhāraṇī gates* (*dhāraṇīmukha*) refer at once to teachings that are retained, the avenues for putting them into practice, and the spiritual realizations that are thereby attained in a manner parallel to the way *meditative absorption* (*samādhi*) or *samādhi gates* (*samādhimukha*) are presented in many other Mahāyāna sūtras.

i.3

The sūtra opens in the town of Viśvā near the Himalayan mountains,³ where a large gathering of monks, gods, and celestial bodhisattvas have assembled to receive teachings from the Buddha. The Buddha’s main interlocutor throughout the teaching is the bodhisattva of wisdom, Mañjuśrī.

The central discourse of the text is preceded by several miracles, great and small. First, the Buddha enters a special meditative state that renders him invisible to his audience. He then summons all the followers of the Mahāyāna in the universe and they miraculously assemble in the sky. At this point, the great bodhisattvas Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, Ratnaketu, and Avalokiteśvara each enter special meditative absorptions that evoke miraculous changes in the minds of their audience. Finally, the Buddha emits a vast array of multicolored light rays and proceeds to smile, with brilliant light rays emanating from his mouth. When asked by Mañjuśrī what has pleased him, the Buddha says that he is smiling because ten thousand buddhas in the sky have taught the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence*. Mañjuśrī then requests the Buddha to teach that same *dhāraṇī* to all the assembled bodhisattvas, and the remainder of the text consists of the Buddha's teaching and his intermittent replies to Mañjuśrī's many questions on important doctrinal points.

i.4 From the outset, the teaching is strikingly enigmatic. The Buddha begins by warning his audience, in a paradoxical tone that defines the entire discourse, that although there is neither awakening nor buddha qualities in this *dhāraṇī*—understood here as both a type of discourse and a type of nondual realization—bodhisattvas nonetheless strive for buddhahood. There follows a lengthy series of similar paradoxes, which call into question basic Buddhist distinctions between the “worlds” of buddhas and sentient beings. One key doctrinal point in all this is that the qualities of ordinary people are neither distinct from, nor to be conflated with, the qualities of buddhas. When asked why this is so, the Buddha explains that the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* is nonconceptual and immanent in all things, from emotional defilements up to the realization of buddhahood. Moreover, since all phenomena are equally empty of any intrinsic essence, they are all already intrinsically pure and beyond bondage or liberation.

i.5 Next follows the first of three major sections of the sūtra, a teaching on the three *bases of the dhāraṇī*, which turn out to be the three main defilements of desire, anger, and confusion. Although these emotional defilements are traditionally regarded as pollutants to be avoided, the Buddha explains that they do not actually exist so there is nothing that becomes polluted, and therefore nothing to purify. Since they are intrinsically empty, they are considered bases of the *dhāraṇī* or the ultimate reality that is immanent in all of them.

i.6 The second major section of the sūtra is a teaching on a series of eleven Dharma gates that are also bases of the *dhāraṇī*, with each gate relating to a different class of sentient being. They comprise the Dharma gates for gods,

nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, as well as for a woman, for a man, and for hell beings.

i.7 Each of these modes of being constitutes a Dharma or dhāraṇī gate because they are all nominal imputations having no actual existence, and can thus facilitate the understanding of emptiness. In short, for a bodhisattva who possesses this sort of dhāraṇī, a single syllable not only has multiple possible references but can also open on to multiple forms of reality. In that regard, all phenomena partake of this dhāraṇī and can thus become avenues for both expressing and realizing the ultimate.

i.8 The final main section of the sūtra expounds another set of eleven dhāraṇī gates. After learning about a special gate of nonduality, we learn that one of the main gates of nonduality is the teaching that ignorance is awakening. The teaching then proceeds to elucidate how each of the successive twelve links of dependent origination (apart from the final link, which is omitted) is equated with awakening. Although the idea of nonduality only appears in this final section of the text, it is a key to understanding the overall thrust of the Buddha's discourse. For when it is understood that all phenomena are equally empty and naturally luminous, the various conceptual constructs and oppositional categories we use to evaluate and distinguish the real from unreal, the good from the bad, the high from the low, collapse and their unfabricated source is revealed. The teaching concludes with a remarkable passage in which the Buddha explains to Mañjuśrī the bodhisattva level for which this teaching is intended: it is intended for "the level of those bodhisattvas who have *not* set out toward awakening, who have *not* produced the intention to gain awakening, who do *not* see buddha qualities, who do *not* wish to run away from desire, anger, and confusion, who do *not* wish to go beyond saṃsāra, who do *not* wish to liberate sentient beings, and who do *not* wish to realize the buddha qualities." The work then concludes with a description of the many benefits that derive from bearing this dhāraṇī in mind, holding, reciting, and teaching this text and of the praises of the teaching offered by the assembled audience.

i.9 To our knowledge, there is no extant Sanskrit manuscript of *The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence*. Two major Chinese translations of this text were completed, first by Buddhaśānta either in the year 525 CE or the period between 525–529 CE,⁴ and the second by Jñānagupta in 587 CE.⁵ The Tibetan translators' colophon states that the translation was made by the chief translator Bandé Yeshé Dé with the help of the Indian scholar Śilendrabodhi, both of whom were active in the late eight to early ninth centuries CE. The text is recorded in the Denkarma⁶ and Phangthangma⁷ inventories of Tibetan imperial translations and appears to have been translated into Tibetan no later than the early ninth century CE. A fragmentary version of this text is also

included in the collections of texts recovered from the Dunhuang caves of Central Asia.⁸ Although *The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence* is not cited in Indian Buddhist texts, it is quoted by a few Tibetan scholars.⁹ This English translation was prepared based on the Tibetan translation found in the Degé Kangyur, in consultation with the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and the Stok Palace Kangyurs.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra
The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence**

1.

The Translation

[F.278.a]

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas.

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was in a grass hut in the town of Viśvā near the snow-peaked Himalayan mountains where he dwelled with a great assembly of one thousand monks. At that time, the Blessed One, avoiding eating alms-food after noon, sat upright in that grass hut with his legs crossed and remained there, settled in mindfulness. Then the Blessed One entered the meditative absorption called *dwelling with equality toward all phenomena*, and as soon as the Blessed One had entered that absorption, the whole assembly of monks could not see a body where the Blessed One was seated.

1.3 At this point, through the power of the Buddha, Śakra, lord of the gods; Brahmā, lord of the Sahā world; and thirty-two thousand minor gods of the Śuddhāvāsa realms went to where the Buddha was staying. The lord of the gods, Śakra, and Brahmā, the lord of the Sahā world, wondered, “Where is the Buddha dwelling right now?” When they saw that the Blessed One had entered into meditative concentration in that grass hut, they went to where he was and sat before him in silence with their legs crossed. The many gods of the Śuddhāvāsa realms also sat before him in silence with their legs crossed.

1.4 At that point the Blessed One performed a miracle such that his miraculous power caused all the beings in this trichiliocosm that belong to the Bodhisattva Vehicle—whether they had newly entered that vehicle, [F.278.b] had entered it long ago, had reached the stage of nonregression, or had just one lifetime to go before reaching awakening—to proceeded to that grass hut in the vicinity of the town of Viśvā. And after they had arrived, due to the Buddha’s power, they hovered in midair at the height of a human being with their legs crossed.

- 1.5 It was then that Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta entered the meditative absorption called *pleasing the minds of all sentient beings*. As soon as he had entered it, the minds of the entire assembly became happy, pleased, overjoyed, and deeply satisfied. The bodhisattva Maitreya also entered the meditative absorption called *quelling all phenomena*. Immediately thereafter, the faculties of the entire assembly were in a state of stillness.
- 1.6 Then the bodhisattva Ratnaketu went to that grass hut in the vicinity of the town of Viśvā with a retinue of sixty-two thousand bodhisattvas. As soon as they arrived, they each thought, “I’ll take a seat in space directly above,” and they hovered directly above with their legs crossed. Then Ratnaketu entered the meditative absorption called *great array*, and as soon as he did the sky was so completely filled with the blooms of lotuses and water lilies of different kinds and colors that the rays of the sun and the moon were no longer visible.
- 1.7 At that point, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara came from the sky above to the vicinity of the town of Viśvā where the Blessed One was staying with a retinue of sixty-two thousand bodhisattvas. [F.279.a] Unable to find room on the ground, he and the rest of those bodhisattvas took their a seat in the sky above with their legs crossed. As soon as they were seated, the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara entered the meditative absorption called *overcoming the emotional defilements of all sentient beings*, and the entire assembly gathered there was immediately free of desire, anger, confusion, and all other defilements.
- 1.8 Then the Blessed One rose into the sky above and smiled, and light rays of myriad colors—blue, yellow, red, white, orange, crystal, and silver—shone from his mouth.
- 1.9 In the sky above, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta covered one shoulder with his robe, knelt there in the sky on his right knee, bowed toward the Blessed One with his palms together, and asked, “Blessed One, why did you smile? What caused you to do that?”
- 1.10 “Mañjuśrī,” the Blessed One replied, “the tens of thousands of buddhas here in the sky have explained and correctly taught the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* to the bodhisattvas.”
- 1.11 Mañjuśrī said, “I request the Blessed One to teach the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* to all the bodhisattvas here now as well.”
- 1.12 “I accept your request, Mañjuśrī. In this *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no awakening and there is no buddha, yet these bodhisattvas wish to awaken to the completely perfect awakening of a buddha. [F.279.b] In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no saṃsāra and no nirvāṇa, yet these bodhisattvas wish to attain nirvāṇa. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there

is no virtue and no nonvirtue, yet these bodhisattvas wish to avoid nonvirtue. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no other shore or this shore, yet these bodhisattvas wish to reach the other shore. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no ordinary realm nor perfection of a realm, yet these bodhisattvas wish to perfect a realm.

1.13 “In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no Māra nor even the label ‘Māra,’ yet these bodhisattvas wish to tame Māra. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no hearer nor even the label ‘hearer,’ and yet these bodhisattvas wish to go beyond the teachings of the hearers. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no solitary buddha nor even the label ‘solitary buddha,’ yet these bodhisattvas wish to go beyond the teachings of the solitary buddhas. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no sentient being nor even the label ‘sentient being,’ yet these bodhisattvas wish to help sentient beings attain nirvāṇa. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no benefit nor lack of benefit, yet these bodhisattvas wish to be of benefit.

1.14 “In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no desire nor even the label ‘desire,’ yet these bodhisattvas wish to abandon desire. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no anger nor even the label ‘anger,’ yet these bodhisattvas wish to abandon anger. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no confusion nor even the label ‘confusion,’ yet these bodhisattvas wish to abandon confusion. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no knowing or unknowing, yet these bodhisattvas wish to attain knowledge. In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no pollution nor even the label ‘pollution,’ yet these bodhisattvas wish to abandon pollution. [F.280.a]

1.15 “In the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* there is no purification nor even the label ‘purification.’ There is neither moral training nor nontraining. There is no compassion, no loving kindness, nor feeling desirous or neutral toward anything. There is neither generosity nor stinginess. There is neither intact moral training nor broken training. There is neither patience nor malice. There is neither diligence nor laziness. There is neither concentration nor distraction. There is neither insight nor mental error. There is neither moral downfall nor what is not a downfall. There are no hearers, solitary buddhas, or thus-gone ones. There is neither Dharma nor non-Dharma. There are neither profound points¹⁰ nor simple ones. There is neither knowing nor not knowing. There is no attainment. There is no realization. There is no saṃsāra or nirvāṇa. There are no applications of mindfulness, no right exertions, no bases of miraculous power, no faculties, no powers, no branches of awakening, and no path.

1.16 “Mañjuśrī, bodhisattvas wishing to attain the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* should not dwell in the qualities of ordinary people. They should not uphold the qualities of ordinary people. Nor should they reject them. They should

- not try to accomplish such things, and they should not try to surpass them, transgress them, or consider them neutrally. They should not think about such qualities, spiritually renounce them, become lazy about them, be attached to them, be unattached to them, be completely cut off from them, or try to make contact with them.
- 1.17 “You should not perceive the qualities of ordinary people as polluted. You should not consider them as something one is given. You should also not consider them as something to be given up.
- 1.18 “The qualities of ordinary people [F.280.b] should not be viewed as distinct from the qualities of buddhas. Nor should the qualities of buddhas be conflated with the qualities of ordinary people, or qualities of ordinary people be conflated with the qualities of buddhas. The qualities of ordinary people should not be objectified. They should also not be conflated with the qualities of the hearers or solitary buddhas.
- 1.19 “The qualities of buddhas should not be upheld, and the qualities of ordinary people should not be abandoned or maintained.
- 1.20 “Bodhisattvas should also not dwell in perfectly pure buddha realms, nor aspire to them. Why not? Because, Mañjuśrī, the *dhāraṇī* of the *vajra quintessence* is nonconceptual. It is immanent¹¹ in desire, immanent in anger, immanent in confusion, immanent in women, immanent in men, and immanent in gods, in nāgas, in yakṣas, in gandharvas, in asuras, in garuḍas, and in mahoragas. It is immanent in the Buddha, in the Dharma, in the Saṅgha, and in hearers, solitary buddhas, the hell realms, the animal realm, and in the world of Yama. It is immanent in evil, in good, in earth, water, fire, and air, and in the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind. Mañjuśrī, the *dhāraṇī* of the *vajra quintessence* is immanent in all things.
- 1.21 “Mañjuśrī, just as the element of space in the east, [F.281.a] the element of space in the south, the element of space in the west, the element of space in the north, the element of space below, and the element of space above are all immanent in the element of space, so too, Mañjuśrī, this *dhāraṇī* of the *vajra quintessence* is likewise immanent in all things.”
- 1.22 Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta then asked the Blessed One, “Blessed One, how could desire be a basis of the *dhāraṇī*?”
- 1.23 The Buddha replied, “Mañjuśrī, what we call *desire* is not something that pollutes sentient beings after coming from the east. Nor is it something from the south, from the west, from the north, from below, or from above. It is not something that pollutes sentient beings after arising from within, nor is it something that pollutes sentient beings after arising from without. Mañjuśrī, if desire were something that polluted sentient beings after arising from within, then it would follow that sentient beings have pollution as their very nature, and would not be able to realize reality at some later time. Mañjuśrī,

phenomena do not come, nor do they go, nor do they stay either within or without. They also do not stay in a way that is neither of these two. They are completely beyond reckoning. Therefore, desire is said to be a basis of the dhāraṇī.

“Anger is a basis of the dhāraṇī.”

- 1.24 “Blessed One, how could anger be a basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.

The Blessed One replied, “Mañjuśrī, anger arises from spouting senseless drivel. But this spouting of senseless drivel is not past, nor is it future, nor does it arise in the present. [F.281.b] Mañjuśrī, if such phenomena were deemed to have come from the past, they would be permanent. Anger does not arise from future conditions, and present conditions also neither persist nor cease. Mañjuśrī, any phenomena that are not arisen from the past, or from the future, or from the present—such phenomena are called the basis of the dhāraṇī that is purified in the three times.

“Mañjuśrī, confusion is a basis of the dhāraṇī.”

- 1.25 “Blessed One, how could confusion be a basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.

The Blessed One replied, “Mañjuśrī, confusion arises from ignorance. And ignorance is not mixed with the elements of earth, water, fire, air, space, or consciousness. Mañjuśrī, unmixed phenomena cannot be polluted and cannot be purified. Mañjuśrī, if unmixed phenomena could be polluted or purified, then the element of space, too, could be polluted or purified. Why is that? Mañjuśrī, it is because space is not mixed with any other factor. Mañjuśrī, is it possible to designate as either ‘polluted’ or ‘purified’ something that is not mixed with ignorance, does not migrate, is not restrained, does not exist, does not arise, is a nonentity, is not seen, does not appear, is not grasped, is not bound, is not liberated, is immeasurable, is void, is vain, or has no substance?”

“No, Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī.

- 1.26 “So too, Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “that which the thus-gone ones have taught to be ignorance is without beginning. It always lacks singularity. It is without a beginning point, without an ending point, and also does not exist in the present. Therefore, it is called *ignorance*. [F.282.a]

- 1.27 “Mañjuśrī, can any such phenomenon that is nonexistent, unfindable, unknowable, imperceptible, does not come to be, and is not an object of desire, anger, or confusion be something that could be polluted, purified, or obscured?”

- 1.28 “No, Blessed One. No, Sugata,” said Mañjuśrī. “Blessed One, if it is true that any phenomenon related to ignorance is not something that could be polluted, purified, or obscured, then why did the Blessed One refer to

ignorance as ‘polluted’?”

1.29 The Blessed One replied, “Allow me to provide an example, Mañjuśrī. Smoke arises and fire appears when one uses a rubbing stick, the wooden base for the rubbing stick, and the rubbing action of a person’s hand, but that fire is not present in the rubbing stick, the wooden base, or the rubbing action of a person’s hand. In the same way, Mañjuśrī, the tormenting fires of desire, anger, and confusion arise in a confused person, but that torment does not dwell within, without, or as neither of those possibilities. Nevertheless, we speak of *confusion*, Mañjuśrī. Why is that? Because, Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are already totally free. And phenomena that are totally free we call *the basis of the dhāraṇī*.”

1.30 Mañjuśrī then asked the Blessed One, “Is there some Dharma gate a bodhisattva can possess that leads to attaining the dhāraṇī that is in accord with everything?”

1.31 The Blessed One replied, “Mañjuśrī, there is a Dharma gate a bodhisattva can possess that leads to attaining the dhāraṇī that is in accord with everything. Even if one were to teach it using a single syllable or up to a hundred thousand syllables, one would never know the limit of those syllables. [F.282.b] Their eloquence is limitless, and it is that limitless eloquence which expresses all Dharma gates. All the words of the Dharma gates are included within a single word of the Dharma gates, while a single word of the Dharma gates is included in every word of the Dharma gates.”

1.32 Mañjuśrī asked, “Blessed One, what are these Dharma gates?”

“Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are gates of the gods and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”

1.33 “Blessed One, how is this the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are present as a basis for spiritual discipline,¹² and this is the basis for the dhāraṇī through which the likes of gods enter.¹³”

1.34 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for nāgas, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”

1.35 “Blessed One, how is this the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are nameless, devoid of syllables, without syllables, and yet they are expressed through syllables. That is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of nāgas enter.

1.36 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for yakṣas, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”

1.37 “Blessed One, how is this the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.

- “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “because all phenomena are unborn, they are gates to dwelling in the inexhaustible. That is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of yakṣas enter.
- 1.38 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for gandharvas, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”
- 1.39 “Blessed One, how is this the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.
- “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “because all phenomena are limitless, innumerable, unfathomable, and equal to space, they are beyond counting. That is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of gandharvas enter.
- 1.40 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are a Dharma gate for asuras, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.” [F.283.a]
- 1.41 “Blessed One, how is this the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.
- “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are gates to nonexistence. They cannot be known as name. They cannot be known as form. They cannot be known as sound. They cannot be known as smell. They cannot be known as taste. They cannot be known as sensation. They cannot be known as mind. They cannot be known as the Buddha. They cannot be known as the Dharma. They cannot be known as the Saṅgha. They cannot be known as a hearer. They cannot be known as a solitary buddha. They cannot be known as an ordinary person. Mañjuśrī, by virtue of their utter lack of origination no phenomena are knowable, and that is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of asuras enter.
- 1.42 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for garuḍas, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”
- 1.43 “Blessed One, how is it the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.
- “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are without coming or going. They are without running or running away. They are not fleeing, not going, not coming, not passing away, not being born, not supporting, not remaining, not being attached, not bound, not angered, not confused, not freed, not persisting, and not stationary. Mañjuśrī, since no attachment exists in space, all factors are gates to freedom from dwelling, and that is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of garuḍas enter.
- 1.44 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for kinnaras, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”
- 1.45 Mañjuśrī asked, “Blessed One, how is it the basis of the dhāraṇī?”
- “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are devoid of agent. They are uncreated, unchanging, and no agent will be found upon investigation.¹⁴ That is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of kinnaras enter.

- 1.46 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for mahoragas, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.” [F.283.b]
- 1.47 “Blessed One, how is this the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.
 “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “all phenomena are free of stains and luminous. The fact that sentient beings are unable to make them into something polluted or something to be purified is the basis for the dhāraṇī of purity. Why is that? Mañjuśrī, because all phenomena are by nature unborn, they are always parinirvāṇa. That is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of mahoragas enter.
- 1.48 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for women, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”
- 1.49 “Blessed One, how is it the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.
 “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “because all phenomena lack true existence, they are unreal. They are without female or male genitalia. That is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of women enter.
- 1.50 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are Dharma gates for men, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”
- 1.51 “Blessed One, how is it the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.
 “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “maleness is not apprehended in any way: it is not apprehended at a beginning point, at an ending point, or at present. Mañjuśrī, something that is not apprehended in the three times cannot be male or female. In other words, these are simply nominal expressions. Those names, too, are void and they are ascribed by virtue of the verbal sign of the dhāraṇī. That dhāraṇī, too, is arisen out of the four great elements of earth, water, air, and fire, and the arising of the four elements is not apprehended. Since all phenomena are not born, all phenomena are always parinirvāṇa. That is the basis of the dhāraṇī through which the likes of men enter.
- 1.52 “Mañjuśrī, all phenomena are a Dharma gate for hell beings, and this is the basis of the dhāraṇī.”
- 1.53 “Blessed One, how is this the basis of the dhāraṇī?” asked Mañjuśrī.
 [F.284.a]
 “Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “how are hells arranged?”
- 1.54 “Blessed One, hells are arranged in space,” said Mañjuśrī.
 “Mañjuśrī, how do you think this happens?” asked the Blessed One.
 “Have the hells arisen from one’s own thoughts? Or have they arisen from their own nature?”
- 1.55 “Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī, “it is through their own thoughts that immature ordinary people imagine themselves to be hell beings, animals, or spirits in the world of Yama. And it is on account of projecting something that does not exist that they feel afflictions and experience miseries in the

three lower realms. However, Blessed One, since I do not see hells, I also do not see hell beings, and the sufferings of hells do not exist, either. For instance, Blessed One, suppose that some man who has fallen asleep were to imagine in a dream that he is experiencing falling into the hell realms. He vividly imagines that he has been put into a boiling iron cauldron several fathoms deep with intensely burning flames where he experiences sensations of suffering. Perceiving this with fear and anguish, he may wake up in a state of shock and terror, thinking, 'Aaah! The pain!' When he shouts such words out loud, his friends, kinsmen, or siblings nearby might ask, 'What is paining you?'

1.56 "The man might then say to them, 'I was experiencing the pains of hell.' Then, feeling irritated and angry with those friends, kinsmen, or siblings, he might add, 'I have been experiencing the pains of hell, so what business do you have to ask me afterward, "What is paining you?" ' In response, those friends, kinsmen, or siblings would say to him, [F.284.b] 'Hey! Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid! You fell asleep. You never left this house.'

1.57 "Once that man has fully regained consciousness, he might think, 'I did fall asleep and then I imagined something that was not real and that did not actually exist. Nothing really existed.' Now, Blessed One, just as that man projected something that didn't exist during the dream he had when he had fallen asleep and imagined that he was in hell, so it is, Blessed One, that all immature ordinary men, entangled in their desire for what is nonexistent, imagine the genitalia of a woman. Having imagined her genitalia, they fancy that they are playing around with the woman and enjoying sex together. They may think, 'I am a man and this is a woman. This is my woman.' Then, with a mind entangled in lustful passion, they set their minds on the pursuit of pleasure. From that starting point, they get into fights, quarrels, and disputes, and with their faculties enraged, they harbor resentment. Due to such erroneous conceptions, as soon as these people die, they will think they are experiencing for many thousands of eons the painful sensations of hell.

1.58 "Blessed One, just as that man was told by his friends, kinsmen, or siblings, 'Hey! Don't be afraid! Don't be afraid! You fell asleep. You never left this house,' so it is, Blessed One, that the blessed buddhas have taught the Dharma to the sentient beings who are intoxicated by the four erroneous conceptions. Here there exists no woman and also no man. Here there is no sentient being, no life force, no wellbeing, and no person. All these phenomena are unreal. All these phenomena are nonexistent. All these phenomena are fabricated. All these phenomena are imagined. [F.285.a]

- 1.59 “All these phenomena are empty. All these phenomena are without origination. All these phenomena are without cessation. All these phenomena are nonentities. All these phenomena are disconnected. All these phenomena are like a dream. All these phenomena are like an illusion. All these phenomena are like the moon’s reflection in water. These beings are taught, ‘No one should be desirous, angry, or confused about these things. So don’t think about what is unreal!’ Upon hearing that teaching of the Thus-Gone One, they see that all phenomena are without desire. They see that all phenomena are without anger, without confusion, without obscuration, and without attachment. Having seen that all entities are already fully liberated and are always parinirvāṇa, they will die with their minds dwelling in space. As soon as they die, they will pass into the realm of final nirvāṇa that is without remainder. That, Blessed One, is how I see the hell realms.”
- 1.60 Then the Blessed One congratulated Mañjuśrī saying, “Very good, very good, Mañjuśrī! One should view hells just as you see them. Just as you did not form thoughts about them, so they should not imagine them. Mañjuśrī, if one sees the hells in the way you have, one will attain acceptance of the nonorigination of phenomena.”
- 1.61 When he had expounded this teaching on the hells, ninety-two thousand bodhisattvas attained acceptance of the nonorigination of phenomena and exclaimed in unison, ‘How marvelous and excellent is the purview of buddhas, wherein it is possible to discover qualities of buddhas among the qualities of the hell realms.’ ” [F.285.b]
- 1.62 Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta said to the Blessed One, “Blessed One, please teach the bodhisattvas¹⁵ a Dharma gate of nonduality, a gate of nonduality through which bodhisattvas can realize all phenomena to be the qualities of a buddha and not create any such duality.”
- 1.63 The Blessed One replied to Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta, “Mañjuśrī, that is why this Dharma gate called *fully teaching* is the Dharma gate that allows bodhisattvas to discuss all of the defilements in terms of buddha qualities.”
- 1.64 “Blessed One, what is this gate of nonduality like?” asked Mañjuśrī.
“Mañjuśrī,” replied the Blessed One, “listen and retain it well, for I shall explain to you the dhāraṇī gate called *clearly discriminating all defilements*.”
- 1.65 Mañjuśrī said, “Blessed One, please do so.” Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta then listened to the Blessed One.
“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “ignorance is awakening. This is a dhāraṇī gate.”¹⁶
- 1.66 “Blessed One, how is ignorance awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “it is called *ignorance* because it does not exist. What is nonexistent is without arising. What has not arisen is without pollution. Mañjuśrī, that which lacks pollution is awakening. Luminous by nature, it is forever unborn. Mañjuśrī, since the thus-gone ones see the import of this, they teach that ignorance and awakening are nondual. I have not found this ignorance, Mañjuśrī, and that is why I can speak of something called ignorance. Mañjuśrī, that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of ignorance. [F.286.a] Through entering it, their eloquence becomes swifter, sharper, more profound, unbroken, and unlimited.

“Mañjuśrī, mental formations are awakening. This is a dhāraṇī gate.”

1.67 “Blessed One, how are mental formations awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “mental formations are innumerable—they cannot be counted. That is why one cannot perceive their full measure. Even though it is said that possessing nonvirtue leads to rebirth in the hell realms, one does not leave this place, and there is also no transference to that place after death. Mañjuśrī, the lack of transference is awakening. There is no coming and no going. Mañjuśrī, that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of mental formations.

“Mañjuśrī, consciousness is awakening.”

1.68 “Blessed One, how is consciousness awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “consciousness is like an illusion. The thus-gone ones proclaim that it has arisen from what is unreal. Mañjuśrī, just as immature ordinary people who are entrenched in what is unreal collectively imagine and construct an illusion-like consciousness, so too, Mañjuśrī, these immature ordinary people collectively imagine and construct an illusion-like awakening of a buddha. They see the qualities of a buddha as something special, thinking, ‘May we be buddhas! May we liberate sentient beings! May we be the best in the world!’ And they go about imagining the awakening of a buddha is like the sky. Mañjuśrī, I sat at the seat of awakening, and I did not perceive any qualities belonging to buddhas, or hearers, or solitary buddhas, or ordinary people. Mañjuśrī, that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of consciousness. [F.286.b]

“Mañjuśrī, name and form¹⁷ are awakening.”

1.69 “Blessed One, how are name and form awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “*name* is a verbal expression that is without existence, and *form* lacks any agent. Mañjuśrī, where there is no agent there is no self. Mañjuśrī, names can be used to teach the absence of self that is the awakening of a buddha, yet one cannot find that name even if they were to search for it throughout the ten directions. Mañjuśrī, that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of name and form.

“Mañjuśrī, the six sense bases are awakening.”

1.70 “Blessed One, how are the six sense bases awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “all of the six sense bases are devoid of their respective objects. The sense faculty of the eye does not think thoughts such as ‘I see a form.’ The sense faculty of the ear does not think thoughts such as ‘I hear a sound.’ The sense faculty of the nose does not think thoughts such as ‘I smell a smell.’ The sense faculty of the tongue does not think thoughts such as ‘I taste a taste.’ The sense faculty of the body does not think thoughts such as ‘I feel a sensation.’ The sense faculty of the mind does not think thoughts such as ‘I am conscious of a mental phenomenon.’ The eye does not know that forms are its object; neither do forms know they are an object of the eye. The ear does not know that sounds are its object; neither do sounds know they are an object of the ear. The nose does not know that smells are its object; neither do smells know they are the object of the nose. The body does not know that tangible things are its object; neither do tangible things know they are an object of the body. The mind does not know that mental phenomena are its object; neither do mental phenomena know they are objects of the mind. Mañjuśrī, the sense bases are mutually incompatible, without motion, without action, without mutual cognizance, and mutually empty of intrinsic nature. [F.287.a] Mañjuśrī, any factor that is empty of intrinsic nature is awakening. Mañjuśrī, that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of six sense bases.

“Mañjuśrī, contact is awakening.”

1.71 “Blessed One, how is contact awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “*contact* refers to contact that is encountered as form, contact that is encountered as sound, contact that is encountered as smell, contact that is encountered as taste, contact that is encountered as touch, and contact that is encountered as mental phenomena. Mañjuśrī, everything from contact that is encountered as form up to contact that is encountered as mental phenomena are supports, and whatever they support arises from many conditions. Mañjuśrī, something that arises from many conditions retains its composite character. Mañjuśrī, something with a composite character has an illusory character. Something that has an illusory character has an unreal character. Something that has an unreal character is nonexistent. Something that is nonexistent does not arise. Something that does not arise does not cease. Mañjuśrī, something that is without arising and without cessation is the awakening of a buddha. That is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of contact.

“Mañjuśrī, feeling is awakening.”

1.72 “Blessed One, how is feeling awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “*feeling* is of three kinds: pleasant feelings, painful feelings, and neutral feelings. Mañjuśrī, pleasant feelings exist neither within nor without, nor are they apprehended as both of those possibilities. Mañjuśrī, painful feelings exist neither within nor without, nor are they apprehended as both of those possibilities. Mañjuśrī, neutral feelings exist neither within nor without, nor are they apprehended as both of those possibilities.” [F.287.b]

1.73 “Blessed One, in that case, what are these pleasant, painful, and neutral feelings of sentient beings?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “various unreal conditions cause immature ordinary people perverted by false notions¹⁸ to experience the thought of pleasure or the thought of pain or the thought of neutral feeling. Be that as it may, Mañjuśrī, all feelings have the nature of illusion. They are not made, are unborn, and are always unoriginated. Mañjuśrī, in keeping with that line of reasoning, feeling is awakening, and that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of feeling.

“Mañjuśrī, craving is awakening.”

1.74 “Blessed One, how is craving awakening? Did not the Blessed One declare that craving is a factor of pollution?” asked Mañjuśrī.

“Mañjuśrī, what do you think?” asked the Blessed One in return. “Does the craving that a childless person has for a child¹⁹ exist inside, outside, or in the cardinal directions or intermediate directions?

1.75 “Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī, “since the child of this person has not yet been born, where would the craving for a child exist?”

1.76 The Blessed One said, “Mañjuśrī, sometimes people in conjugal union give birth to a child, and that gives rise to craving. If there is such a connection, Mañjuśrī, what do you think? [F.288.a] Did that person’s craving for a son come from the east, or from the south, or from the west, or from the north, or from below, or from above, or from within, or from without, or from neither of those last two?”

1.77 “Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī, “craving is not apprehended in the east, nor in the south, nor the west, nor the north, nor above, nor below, nor within, nor without, nor neither of the last two possibilities.”

1.78 “Mañjuśrī, what do you think?” asked the Blessed One. “Did anyone make that craving or cause it to be made?”

1.79 “Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī, “craving is not made. As it lacks any creator, it is something unreal imputed by immature ordinary people with wrong ideas.”

1.80 “Mañjuśrī, what do you think?” asked the Blessed One. “Do such unreal things exist?”

“No, Blessed One. They do not, Sugata,” replied Mañjuśrī.

- 1.81 The Blessed One asked, “Mañjuśrī, can there be anything polluted or purified in something that does not exist?”
- “No, Blessed One, there cannot,” replied Mañjuśrī.
- 1.82 “Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “phenomena that are not found in the east, in the south, in the west, in the north, and that are not apprehended within, nor without, nor either of those two cannot be something that is polluted or something that is purified. And that, Mañjuśrī, is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of craving.
- “Mañjuśrī, appropriation is awakening. This is a dhāraṇī gate.”
- 1.83 “Blessed One, how is appropriation awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī. “Did not the Blessed One declare that appropriation was bondage?”
- 1.84 “Mañjuśrī, what do you think?” asked the Blessed One in return, “do immature ordinary people produce anything?”
- “Yes, Blessed One,” Mañjuśrī answered, “they do produce things. They produce the five sense objects—form, sound, smell, taste, and touch.” [F.288.b]
- 1.85 “Mañjuśrī, what do you think?” asked the Blessed One. “Do forms produce forms?”
- “No,” replied Mañjuśrī.
- 1.86 “Do feelings produce feelings, do conceptions produce conceptions, do mental formations produce mental formations, or does consciousness produce consciousness?” asked the Blessed One.
- “No, they do not,” replied Mañjuśrī.
- 1.87 “Mañjuśrī, what do you think?” asked the Blessed One. “Does any phenomenon exist that produces any other phenomenon?”
- “No, Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī.
- 1.88 “Mañjuśrī, does any phenomenon cause another phenomenon to be fettered?” asked the Blessed One.
- “No, Blessed One,” replied Mañjuśrī.
- 1.89 “Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “in the same way, all phenomena are without arising, without ceasing, and without obscuration. One does not produce another, and one does not apprehend another. They do not speak, and since they are inanimate, they do not give rise to verbal acts. From this analysis, Mañjuśrī, it follows that appropriation is awakening, and that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of appropriation.
- “Mañjuśrī, becoming is awakening. This is a dhāraṇī gate.”
- 1.90 “Blessed One, how is becoming awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī. “Did not the Blessed One teach the Dharma to the hearers in order to put an end to becoming?”

- 1.91 “Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “what I explained as becoming is a nonentity, and that is why it is called *becoming*. Mañjuśrī, those who see that all phenomena are nonentities do not produce anything, nor do they cause anything to cease. Seeing that all phenomena are of the nature of space, they do not apprehend even the qualities of a buddha, nor do they abandon them. In this way, Mañjuśrī, becoming is awakening, and that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of becoming.
- “Mañjuśrī, birth is awakening. This is a dhāraṇī gate.” [F.289.a]
- 1.92 “Blessed One, how is birth awakening?” asked Mañjuśrī. “Did the Blessed One not teach the Dharma so that beings could completely transcend birth?”
- 1.93 “Mañjuśrī,” said the Blessed One, “if bodhisattvas search for birth, they will see the absence of birth, the absence of transference, and the absence of arising. In this way, Mañjuśrī, birth is awakening, and that is the dhāraṇī gate that one enters through the likes of birth.
- 1.94 “Mañjuśrī, through this gate for entering the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence*, bodhisattvas will quickly attain eloquence and their eloquence will be sharper, more profound, unbroken, and unlimited.”
- 1.95 Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta then asked the Blessed One, “For which level of bodhisattva is this teaching intended?”
- 1.96 “Mañjuśrī,” the Blessed One replied, “it is intended for the level of those bodhisattvas who have not set out toward awakening, who have not produced the intention to gain awakening, who do not see buddha qualities, who do not wish to run away from desire, anger, and confusion, who do not wish to go beyond saṃsāra, who do not wish to liberate sentient beings, and who do not wish to realize the buddha qualities.”
- 1.97 Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta requested of the Blessed One, “Blessed One, please let us know what good qualities a son or daughter of the lineage who bears this dhāraṇī in mind, holds it, recites it, makes it understood, and teaches it widely to others will gain in this life.” [F.289.b]
- 1.98 The Blessed One said, “You should know that such people will be protected by gods, nāgas, yakṣas, and gandharvas. You should know that they will have no doubts regarding all phenomena. You should know that they will possess knowledge that clearly discerns phenomena. Mañjuśrī, the qualities of this dhāraṇī are limitless and cannot be exhausted even in a hundred eons.”
- 1.99 When the Blessed One taught this Dharma discourse, ten thousand bodhisattvas gained this *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence* and thirty-two thousand beginner bodhisattvas gained acceptance of the Dharma.

1.100 After the Blessed One had spoken thus, Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta and the world with its gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, men, and demigod spirits rejoiced and praised what the Blessed One had taught.²⁰

1.101 *This concludes The Mahāyāna Sūtra called The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence.*

c.

Colophon

c.1 Translated, revised, and finalized by a team led by the Indian abbot Śīlendrabodhi and the chief translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.

ab.

ABBREVIATIONS

ACIP Asian Classics Input Project (www.asianclassics.org
(<http://www.asianclassics.org/>))

BDRC Buddhist Digital Resource Center (www.bdrc.io (<https://bdrc.io>))

D Degé Kangyur

Negi J.S. Negi, *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary*

S Stok Palace Kangyur

n.

NOTES

- n.1 On *dhāraṇī* or “incantation,” see also Fischer-Schreiber et al. (1991), p. 54. On the different meanings of *dhāraṇī* and the Western scholarly reception of the term, see Davidson (2009).
- n.2 Others are the *Ratnaketudhāraṇī* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh138.html>) (Toh 138) and *Avikalpapraveśadhāraṇī* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh142.html>) (Toh 142).
- n.3 For the name Viśvā Purī (= *sna tshogs zhes pa'i grong khyer*), see Negi, vol. 7, p. 3212 s.v. *sna tshogs*.
- n.4 *Chin kang shang wei t'o lo ni ching* 金剛上味陀羅尼經 (Taishō no. 1344). For more information on this text, see the *Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, K 336. (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0336.html)
- n.5 *Chin kang ch'ang t'o lo ni ching* 金剛場陀羅尼經 (Taishō no. 1345). For more information on this text, see the *Korean Buddhist Canon: A Descriptive Catalogue*, K 337 (http://www.acmuller.net/descriptive_catalogue/files/k0337.html).
- n.6 Denkarma (*ldan dkar ma*), Degé Tengyur, vol. 206, folio 301.b.7. See also Herrmann-Pfandt (2008), p. 185.
- n.7 Phangthangma (*dkar chag 'phang thang ma*) (2003), p. 24.
- n.8 For details, see Herrmann-Pfandt (2008), p. 185.
- n.9 For example, it is quoted in the *Great Stages of Doctrine* treatise (*bstan rim chen mo*) of Trolungpa Lotrö Jungné (*gro lung pa blo gros 'byung gnas*), who flourished in the late eleventh to early twelfth century. (Trolungpa, p. 370.a). It is also cited in the work *An Ornamental Explanation of the Bodhisattva Dhāraṇī* (*byang chub sems dpa'i gzungs kyi rgyan rnam par bshad pa*) by Do Drupchen Jigmé Tenpai Nyima (1865–1926). Janet Gyatso (1992) studied this work,

translating and analyzing part of the citation from *The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence*. There also exists a Tibetan commentary on Do Drupchen's work called *A Commentary on the Explanation of Dhāraṇī* (*gzungs kyi rnam bshad kyi 'grel pa*), composed by the more recent scholar Döndrup Dorjé (1993) p. 335.

- n.10 We have emended *zab mo ma yin* to *zab mo* as attested in S.
- n.11 *yang dag par 'du ba*. Edward Conze (1973), s.v. *samavasaraṇa*, explains *yang dag par 'du ba* as “come together in.” The basic idea in our text seems to be that the nonconceptual ultimate nature (i.e., the *dhāraṇī of the vajra quintessence*) is immanent in all things. The Sanskrit *samavasaraṇi / samavasaraṇa* is explained in F. Edgerton (1993) as having the meanings “comes together,” “unites,” and “associates.”
- n.12 For the Sanskrit linking of the first letters of *deva* and *dama* to work, this passage has to read not *'dul ba'i sa* but *dul ba'i sa*, where *dul ba* = *dama* (“discipline,” “self-restraint”).
- n.13 See Do Drupchen Tenpai Nyima's explanation in *gzungs kyi rnam bshad* (pp. 114.4–117.4 = fol. 57.a–59.a). Cf. Janet Gyatso (1992) pp. 184–85, based on this passage. Here the Sanskrit name of each type of deity (*deva*, *nāga*, etc.) becomes a point of departure for referring to things with a name that begins with the same letter (but often negated), such as *deva* (“god”) and *dama* (“restraint”).
- n.14 S has *btsal*, “search for,” i.e., “investigate,” instead of *bsal* as in D.
- n.15 We have emended the *las* to *la* as attested in S.
- n.16 Here, ignorance is listed as the first link the chain of dependent origination. The text covers all but the final link in this series.
- n.17 We have emended the *kyi* to *ni* as attested in S.
- n.18 With the variant *gis* (Yongle, Kangxi, and S) instead of *gi* (D) this becomes “perverted by false notions.”
- n.19 We have emended the term *pa'i* to *pa* as attested in S.
- n.20 Note that in this sentence “gods” (*lha*) is repeated, but we have omitted the second instance.

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language is attested in dictionaries or other manuscripts.
RP	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan phonetic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the Tibetan phonetic rendering of the term.
RS	<i>Reconstruction from Tibetan semantic rendering</i> This term is a reconstruction based on the semantics of the Tibetan translation.
SU	<i>Source unspecified</i> This term has been supplied from an unspecified source, which most often is a widely trusted dictionary.

g.1 acceptance

bzod pa

བཟོད་པ།

kṣānti

A term meaning acceptance, forbearance, or patience. As the third of the six transcendent perfections, patience is classified into three kinds: the capacity to tolerate abuse from sentient beings, to tolerate the hardships of the path to buddhahood, and to tolerate the profound nature of reality. As a term referring to a bodhisattva's realization, the term *dharmakṣānti* (*chos la bzod pa*) can refer to ways one becomes "receptive" to the nature of Dharma, and can be an abbreviation of *anutpattikadharmakṣānti*, "receptivity to the unborn nature of phenomena."

g.2 acceptance of the Dharma

chos la bzod pa

ཚོས་ལ་བཟོད་པ།

dharmakṣānti

This term refers to becoming receptive to the profound Dharma.

g.3 acceptance of the nonorigination of phenomena

mi skye ba'i chos la bzod pa

མི་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཚོས་ལ་བཟོད་པ།

anutpattikadharmakṣānti

The acceptance of or receptivity to the nonorigination of phenomena. This realization is attained by bodhisattvas on the eighth spiritual level on the Path of Seeing (*darśanamārga*).

g.4 applications of mindfulness

dran pa nye bar gzhaḡ pa

སྒྲུབ་པ་ལྟེན་པ་གཞན་པ།

smṛtyupasthāna

Refers here to the four applications of mindfulness that belong to the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening: mindfulness of the body, feelings, thoughts, and mental objects.

g.5 appropriation

len pa

ལེན་པ།

upādāna

The ninth of the twelve links of dependent origination. See "dependent origination."

g.6 asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

A class of divine beings who are engaged in a mythic war with the gods (Skt. *deva*) for possession of the nectar of immortality. In Buddhist cosmology, they inhabit a realm below those of the gods, from which they observe the gods with intense jealousy.

g.7 Avalokiteśvara

spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱུག

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.

In this text:

One of the bodhisattvas who attends the Buddha’s teachings in this text.

g.8 bases of miraculous power

rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa

རྩུ་འཕྲུལ་གྱི་རྒྱུ་རྩུ།

rddhipāda

Refers here to the four bases of miraculous power that belong to the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening; they are determination, discernment, diligence, and contemplation.

g.9 basis of the dhāraṇī

gzungs kyi gzhi

གཟུངས་ཀྱི་གཞི།

dhāraṇī

A technical term employed in *The Dhāraṇī of the Vajra Quintessence* to signify the fact that all phenomena are inherently liberated, and thus bear the intrinsic quality of liberation as their very basis.

g.10 becoming

srid pa

སྲིད་པ།

bhava

The tenth of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.11 birth

skye ba

སྐྱེ་བ།

jāti

The eleventh of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.12 blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཙུམ་ལྷན་འདས།

bhagavān · bhagavat

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Buddhist literature, this is an epithet applied to buddhas, most often to Śākyamuni. The Sanskrit term generally means “possessing fortune,” but in specifically Buddhist contexts it implies that a buddha is in possession of six auspicious qualities (*bhaga*) associated with complete awakening. The Tibetan term—where *bcom* is said to refer to “subduing” the four *māras*, *ldan* to “possessing” the great qualities of buddhahood, and *'das* to “going beyond” *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*—possibly reflects the commentarial tradition where the Sanskrit *bhagavat* is interpreted, in addition, as “one who destroys the four *māras*.” This is achieved either by reading *bhagavat* as *bhagnavat* (“one who broke”), or by tracing the word *bhaga* to the root *√bhañj* (“to break”).

g.13 Brahmā

tshangs pa

ཆེས་པ།

brahmā

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A high-ranking deity presiding over a divine world; he is also considered to be the lord of the Sahā world (our universe). Though not considered a creator god in Buddhism, Brahmā occupies an important place as one of two gods (the other being Indra/Śakra) said to have first exhorted the Buddha Śākyamuni to teach the Dharma. The particular heavens found in the form realm over which Brahmā rules are often some of the most sought-after realms of higher rebirth in Buddhist literature. Since there are many universes or world systems, there are also multiple Brahmās presiding over them. His most frequent epithets are “Lord of the Sahā World” (*sahāṃpati*) and Great Brahmā (*mahābrahman*).

g.14 branches of awakening

byang chub kyi yan lag

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ཡན་ལག

bodhyāṅga

Refers here to the seven branches of awakening belonging to the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening: mindfulness, analysis of phenomena, diligence, joy, ease, samādhi, and equanimity.

g.15 confusion

gti mug

གཏི་མུག

moha

One of the three poisons (*dug gsum*) along with aversion and attachment which perpetuate the sufferings of cyclic existence. Delusion is the obfuscating mental state which obstructs an individual from generating knowledge or insight, and it is said to be dominant characteristic of the animal world in general.

g.16 consciousness

rnam par shes pa

རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ།

vijñāna

The third of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.17 contact

reg pa

རེག་པ།

sparśa

The sixth of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.18 craving

sred pa

སྤོང་པ།

trṣṇā

The eighth of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.19 dependent origination

rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba

རྟེན་ཅིང་འབྲེལ་བར་འབྱུང་བ།

pratītyasamutpāda

The twelve links of dependent origination describe the process of being bound in cyclic existence, and, when reversed, the process of liberation. The twelve links are ignorance, formation, consciousness, name and form, the six sense bases, contact, feeling, craving, appropriation, becoming, birth, and old age and death. The twelfth is omitted in this text.

g.20 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

Literally, “retention,” or “that which retains, contains, or encapsulates,” the term dhāraṇī refers to mnemonic formulas, or codes possessed by advanced bodhisattvas that contain a quintessence of their attainments, as well as the Dharma teachings that express them and guide beings toward their realization. They are therefore often described in terms of “gateways” for entering the Dharma and training in its realization, or “seals” that contain condensations of truths and their expression. The term can also refer to a statement, or incantation, meant to protect or bring about a particular result.

g.21 dhāraṇī gate

gzungs kyi sgo

གཟུངས་ཀྱི་སྐོ།

dhāraṇīmukha

As a magical formula, a dhāraṇī constitutes a gate to the infinite qualities of awakening, the awakened state itself, and the various forms of buddha activity. See also UT22084-039-002-4.

g.22 Dharma discourse

chos kyi rnam grangs

ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

dharmaparyāya

In Buddhism, lit. “method” or “means of teaching the doctrine,” denoting both the ways of teaching the dharma as well as the dharma discourse itself.

g.23 Dharma gate

chos kyi sgo

ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྒོ།

dharmamukha

Certain teachings are called “Dharma gates” (or “gates of the Dharma”) because they provide access to the practice of the Dharma and the resulting spiritual realization.

g.24 Do Drupchen Jigmé Tenpai Nyima

rdo grub chen bstan pa'i nyi ma

རྡོ་གྲུབ་ཆེན་བསྟན་པའི་ཉི་མ།

—

A famous Tibetan scholar (1865–1926) of the Ancient (*rnying ma*) tradition who composed an explication of the dhāraṇī genre entitled *An Ornamental Explanation of the Bodhisattva Dhāraṇī: A Garland of Eloquent Explanation that Adorns the Auspicious Body of the Victorious Mother* (*byang chub sems dpa'i gzungs kyi rgyan rnam par bshad pa rgyal yum lus bzang mdzes byed legs bshad phreng ba*).

g.25 Döndrup Dorjé

don grub rdo rje

དོན་གྲུབ་རྡོ་རྗེ།

—

A Tibetan scholar (1892–1960) of the Ancient (*rnying ma*) tradition who composed a subcommentary on Do Drupchen Jigmé Tenpai Nyima’s *An Ornamental Explanation of the Bodhisattva Dhāraṇī*. This subcommentary is entitled *Commentary on the Explanation of Dhāraṇī* (*gzungs kyi rnam bshad kyi 'grel pa*).

g.26 dwelling with equality toward all phenomena

chos thams cad la mnyam pa nyid du gnas pa

ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་མཉམ་པ་ཉིད་དུ་གནས་པ།

—

The name of a meditative absorption (*samādhi*) of the Buddha in this text.

g.27 emotional defilement

nyon mongs

ཉོན་མོངས།

kleśa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The essentially pure nature of mind is obscured and afflicted by various psychological defilements, which destroy the mind’s peace and composure and lead to unwholesome deeds of body, speech, and mind, acting as causes for continued existence in saṃsāra. Included among them are the primary afflictions of desire (*rāga*), anger (*dveṣa*), and ignorance (*avidyā*). It is said that there are eighty-four thousand of these negative mental qualities, for which the eighty-four thousand categories of the Buddha’s teachings serve as the antidote.

Kleśa is also commonly translated as “negative emotions,” “disturbing emotions,” and so on. The Pāli *kilesa*, Middle Indic *kileśa*, and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit *kleśa* all primarily mean “stain” or “defilement.” The translation “affliction” is a secondary development that derives from the more general (non-Buddhist) classical understanding of *√kliś* (“to harm,” “to afflict”). Both meanings are noted by Buddhist commentators.

g.28 faculties

dbang po

དབང་པོ།

indriya

Refers here to the five faculties that belong to the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening: faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and knowledge. In certain contexts, this term can also refer to the sense faculties.

g.29 feeling

tshor ba

ཚོར་བ།

vedanā

The seventh of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.30 five sense objects

'dod pa'i yon tan 'di lnga

འདོད་པའི་ཡོན་ཏན་འདི་ལྔ།

pañcakāmaguṇa

Desirable objects of the five senses: form, sound, smell, taste, and touch.

g.31 gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of generally benevolent nonhuman beings who inhabit the skies, sometimes said to inhabit fantastic cities in the clouds, and more specifically to dwell on the eastern slopes of Mount Meru, where they are ruled by the Great King Dhṛtarāṣṭra. They are most renowned as celestial musicians who serve the gods. In the Abhidharma, the term is also used to refer to the mental body assumed by sentient beings during the intermediate state between death and rebirth. Gandharvas are said to live on fragrances (*gandha*) in the desire realm, hence the Tibetan translation *dri za*, meaning “scent eater.”

g.32 garuḍa

mkha' lding

མཁའ་འཕྲིད།

garuḍa

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In Indian mythology, the garuḍa is an eagle-like bird that is regarded as the king of all birds, normally depicted with a sharp, owl-like beak, often holding a snake, and with large and powerful wings. They are traditionally enemies of the nāgas. In the Vedas, they are said to have brought nectar from the heavens to earth. *Garuḍa* can also be used as a proper name for a king of such creatures.

g.33 god

lha

ལྷ།

deva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

In the most general sense the devas—the term is cognate with the English *divine*—are a class of celestial beings who frequently appear in Buddhist texts, often at the head of the assemblies of nonhuman beings who attend and celebrate the teachings of the Buddha Śākyamuni and other buddhas and bodhisattvas. In Buddhist cosmology the devas occupy the highest of the five or six “destinies” (*gati*) of saṃsāra among which beings take rebirth. The devas reside in the *devalokas*, “heavens” that traditionally number between twenty-six and twenty-eight and are divided between the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*), form realm (*rūpadhātu*), and formless realm (*ārūpyadhātu*). A being attains rebirth among the devas either through meritorious deeds (in the desire realm) or the attainment of subtle meditative states (in the form and formless realms). While rebirth among the devas is considered favorable, it is ultimately a transitory state from which beings will fall when the conditions that lead to rebirth there are exhausted. Thus, rebirth in the god realms is regarded as a diversion from the spiritual path.

g.34 hearer

nyan thos

ཉན་ཐོས།

śrāvaka

A “hearer” or “listener,” someone who first hears the Dharma from another, or, alternatively causes others to hear the Dharma. This refers to the disciples of the Buddha who seek the awakening of a worthy one (*arhat*), rather than the awakening of a buddha.

g.35 ignorance

ma rig pa

མ་རིག་པ།

avidyā

The first of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.36 insight

shes rab

ཤེས་རབ།

prajñā

In general, this is the mental factor of discerning the specific qualities of a given object and whether it should be accepted or rejected. As the sixth of the six perfections, it refers to the profound understanding of the emptiness of all phenomena, the realization of ultimate reality.

g.37 kinnara

mi'am ci

མིའམ་ཅི།

kinnara

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings that resemble humans to the degree that their very name—which means “is that human?”—suggests some confusion as to their divine status. Kinnaras are mythological beings found in both Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, where they are portrayed as creatures half human, half animal. They are often depicted as highly skilled celestial musicians.

g.38 Lord of the Sahā world

mi mjed kyi bdag po

མི་མཛད་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ།

sahāmpati

Frequent epithet of Brahmā. See also “Sahā World.”

g.39 mahoraga

lto 'phye chen po

ལྷོ་འཕྱེ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahoraga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally “great serpents,” mahoragas are supernatural beings depicted as large, subterranean beings with human torsos and heads and the lower bodies of serpents. Their movements are said to cause earthquakes, and they make up a class of subterranean geomantic spirits whose movement through the seasons and months of the year is deemed significant for construction projects.

g.40 Maitreya

byams pa

བྱམས་པ།

maitreya

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The bodhisattva Maitreya is an important figure in many Buddhist traditions, where he is unanimously regarded as the buddha of the future era. He is said to currently reside in the heaven of Tuṣita, as Śākyamuni's regent, where he awaits the proper time to take his final rebirth and become the fifth buddha in the Fortunate Eon, reestablishing the Dharma in this world after the teachings of the current buddha have disappeared. Within the Mahāyāna sūtras, Maitreya is elevated to the same status as other central bodhisattvas such as Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara, and his name appears frequently in sūtras, either as the Buddha's interlocutor or as a teacher of the Dharma. *Maitreya* literally means "Loving One." He is also known as Ajita, meaning "Invincible."

For more information on Maitreya, see, for example, the introduction to *Maitreya's Setting Out* (Toh 198).

In this text:

One of the bodhisattvas who attends the Buddha's teachings in this text.

g.41 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

See "Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta."

g.42 Mañjuśrī Kumārabhūta

'jam dpal gzhon nur gyur pa

འཇམ་དཔལ་གཞོན་ནུར་གྱུར་པ།

mañjuśrīkumārabhūta

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Mañjuśrī is one of the "eight close sons of the Buddha" and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. To his name, Mañjuśrī, meaning "Gentle and Glorious One," is often added the epithet Kumārabhūta, "having a youthful form." He is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.43 Māra

bdud

མ་རྩ་

māra

A demonic being often bearing the epithet of the “Evil One” (*pāpīyān*, *sdig can*), sometimes said to be the principal deity in the Heaven of Making Use of Others’ Emanations, the highest paradise in the desire realm; also one of the names of the god of desire, Kāma in the Vedic tradition. He is portrayed as attempting to prevent the Buddha’s awakening.

g.44 meditative absorption

ting nge ’dzin

ཉིང་རྩེ་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 *Draḥor Bamponyipa* (*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.45 mental formations

*’du byed rnam*s

འདུ་བྱེད་རྣམས།

saṃskāra

The second of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.46 nāga

klu

ལྷ།

nāga

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A class of nonhuman beings who live in subterranean aquatic environments, where they guard wealth and sometimes also teachings. Nāgas are associated with serpents and have a snakelike appearance. In Buddhist art and in written accounts, they are regularly portrayed as half human and half snake, and they are also said to have the ability to change into human form. Some nāgas are Dharma protectors, but they can also bring retribution if they are disturbed. They may likewise fight one another, wage war, and destroy the lands of others by causing lightning, hail, and flooding.

g.47 name and form

ming dang gzugs

མིང་དང་གཟུགས།

nāmarūpa

The fourth of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.48 nirvāṇa

mya ngan las 'das pa

མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ།

nirvāṇa

Literally “extinction,” the state beyond sorrow, it refers to the ultimate attainment of buddhahood, the permanent cessation of all suffering and of the afflicted mental states that lead to suffering. Three types of nirvāṇa are identified: (1) the residual nirvāṇa where the person is still dependent on conditioned psycho-physical aggregates, (2) the non-residual nirvāṇa where the aggregates have also been consumed within emptiness, and (3) the non-abiding nirvāṇa transcending the extremes of phenomenal existence and quiescence.

g.49 overcoming the emotional defilements of all sentient beings

sems can thams cad kyi nyon mongs pa 'joms pa

སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་ཉོན་མོངས་པ་འཇོམས་པ།

—

The name of a meditative absorption (*samādhi*) of a bodhisattva in this text.

g.50 parinirvāṇa

yongs su mya ngan las 'das pa

ཡོངས་སུ་མྱ་ངན་ལས་འདས་པ།

parinirvāṇa

The final or complete nirvāṇa, which occurs when an arhat or a buddha passes away. It implies the non-residual nirvāṇa where the aggregates have also been consumed within emptiness. See also “nirvāṇa.”

g.51 path

lam

ལམ།

mārga

Refers here to the eightfold path of the noble ones that belongs to the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening: right view, thought, speech, actions, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and absorption.

g.52 pleasing the minds of all sentient beings

sems can thams cad kyi sems mgu bar byed pa

སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་སེམས་མགྲ་བར་བྱེད་པ།

—

The name of a meditative absorption (samādhi) of a bodhisattva in this text.

g.53 pollution

kun nas nyon mongs pa

ཀུན་ནས་ཉོན་མོངས་པ།

saṃkleśa

The self-perpetuating process of affliction in the minds of beings.

g.54 powers

stobs

སྟོབས།

bala

Refers here to the five strengths that belong to the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening: faith, diligence, mindfulness, absorption, and knowledge. Although the same as the faculties, they are termed “powers” due to their greater capacity.

g.55 qualities of buddhas

sangs rgyas kyi chos

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཆོས།

buddhadharma

g.56 qualities of ordinary people

so so skye bo'i chos

ས་ས་སྐྱེ་བོའི་ཆོས།

prthagjanadharmā

g.57 quelling all phenomena

chos thams cad rab tu zhi ba

ཆོས་ཐམས་ཅད་རབ་དྲུ་ཞི་བ།

—

The name of a meditative absorption (*samādhi*) of a bodhisattva in this text.

g.58 Ratnaketu

rin po che'i tog

རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་རྟག

ratnaketu

The name of a bodhisattva attending the Buddha's teaching in this text.

g.59 right exertion

yang dag par spong ba

ཡང་དག་པར་སྤྲོད་བ།

samyakprahāṇa

Refers here to the four correct exertions that belong to the thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening. The Sanskrit term *samyakprahāṇa* is generally translated as either "right exertion(s)" or "right abandonment(s)," depending on whether one follows the primary connotation "exertion" (*pradhāna*, lit. "priority") or the secondary (*nirukta*) derived connotation "abandonment" (*prahāṇa*). The four are the intention to not do bad actions that have not been done, to give up bad actions that are being done, to do good actions that have not been done, and to increase the good actions that are being done.

g.60 Sahā world

mi mjed kyi 'jig rten

མི་མཇེད་ཀྱི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

sahāloka

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The name for our world system, the universe of a thousand million worlds, or trichiliocosm, in which the four-continent world is located. Each trichiliocosm is ruled by a god Brahmā; thus, in this context, he bears the title of Sahāṃpati, Lord of Sahā. The world system of Sahā, or Sahālokaadhātu, is also described as the buddhafield of the Buddha Śākyamuni where he teaches the Dharma to beings.

The name Sahā possibly derives from the Sanskrit *√sah*, “to bear, endure, or withstand.” It is often interpreted as alluding to the inhabitants of this world being able to endure the suffering they encounter. The Tibetan translation, *mi mjed*, follows along the same lines. It literally means “not painful,” in the sense that beings here are able to bear the suffering they experience.

g.61 Śakra

brgya byin

བརྒྱུ་བྱིན།

śakra

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The lord of the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three (*trāyastriṃśa*).

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 *śata-kratu*, 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.62 seat of awakening

byang chub kyi snying po

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སྙིང་པོ།

bodhimaṇḍa

The seat (or essence, or highest point, *maṇḍa*) of awakening, which can mean both the physical location where buddhas sit to become awakened and the state of awakening itself.

g.63 Śīlendrabodhi

shrI len+dra bo dhi

ཤྲི་ལེན་བོ་དྲཱི།

śīlendrabodhi

An Indian paṇḍita resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries who is credited with assisting in the translation of many canonical Buddhist texts.

g.64 six sense bases

skye mched drug

ཤྱེ་མཆེད་དྲུག་

ṣaḍāyatana

The fifth of the twelve links of dependent origination. See “dependent origination.”

g.65 solitary buddha

rang sangs rgyas

རང་སངས་རྒྱས།

pratyekabuddha

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Literally, “buddha for oneself” or “solitary realizer.” Someone who, in his or her last life, attains awakening entirely through their own contemplation, without relying on a teacher. Unlike the awakening of a fully realized buddha (*samyaksambuddha*), the accomplishment of a pratyekabuddha is not regarded as final or ultimate. They attain realization of the nature of dependent origination, the selflessness of the person, and a partial realization of the selflessness of phenomena, by observing the suchness of all that arises through interdependence. This is the result of progress in previous lives but, unlike a buddha, they do not have the necessary merit, compassion or motivation to teach others. They are named as “rhinoceros-like” (*khaḍgaviṣāṇakalpa*) for their preference for staying in solitude or as “congregators” (*vargacārin*) when their preference is to stay among peers.

g.66 Śuddhāvāsa realms

gnas gtsang ma

གནས་གཙང་མ།

śuddhāvāsa

Literally “the pure abodes,” this term refers to the highest series of five heavenly abodes of the form realm (*rūpadhātu*) and is equated with the fourth level of meditative concentration (*dhyānabhūmi*). A form of this term frequently appears as a member of the compound *gnas gtsang ma’i ris* or *śuddhāvāsakāyika*, which translates as “the gods of the Śuddhāvāsa realms.”

g.67 thirty-seven factors conducive to awakening

byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos sum cu rtsa bdun

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་ཚེས་སྟུམ་རྩ་བ་བདུན།

saptatrimśadbodhipakṣadharmā

Thirty-seven practices that lead the practitioner to the awakened state: the four applications of mindfulness, the four right exertions, the four bases of miraculous power, the five faculties, the five powers, the eightfold path, and the seven branches of awakening.

g.68 thus-gone one

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 is also often used as a specific epithet of the Buddha Śākyamuni.

g.69 town of Viśvā

sna tshogs kyi grong

སྐྱ་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་གྲོང་།

viśvā purī

A town near the Himalayan mountains which is one of the settings of this sūtra.

g.70 trichiliocosm

stong gsum gyi stong chen po'i 'jig rten gyi kham

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོའི་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས།

trisāhasramahāsāhasralokadhātu

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The largest universe described in Buddhist cosmology. This term, in Abhidharma cosmology, refers to 1,000³ world systems, i.e., 1,000 “dichiliocosms” or “two thousand great thousand world realms” (*dvisāhasra-mahāsāhasralokadhātu*), which are in turn made up of 1,000 first-order world systems, each with its own Mount Sumeru, continents, sun and moon, etc.

g.71 Trolungpa Lotrö Jungné

gro lung pa blo gros 'byung gnas

གྲོ་ལུང་པ་བློ་གྲོས་འབྱུང་གནས།

—

A famous Tibetan scholar who was active in the late eleventh to early twelfth centuries. His most famous work was the *Bstan rim chen mo* (*Stages of Doctrine*), a detailed compendium of Buddhist doctrines.

g.72 vajra

rdo rje

རྡོ་རྗེ།

vajra

The term stands for indestructibility and perfect stability. According to Indian mythology, the vajra is the all-powerful god Indra’s weapon, likened to a thunderbolt, which made him invincible. It also relates to a substance called *vajra*, which is the hardest physical material.

g.73 world of Yama

gshin rje'i 'jig rten

གཤིན་རྗེའི་འཇིག་རྟེན།

yamaloka

The preta realm, or the realm of ghosts, where Yama, the Lord of Death, is the ruler and judges the dead. Yama is also said to rule over the hells. This term is also the name of the Vedic afterlife inhabited by the ancestors (*pitr*).

g.74 yakṣa

gnod sbyin

གནོད་སྦྱིན།

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 rule of the Great King Vaiśravaṇa.

Several members of this class have been deified as gods of wealth (these include the just-mentioned Vaiśravaṇa) or as bodhisattva generals of yakṣa armies, and have entered the Buddhist pantheon in a variety of forms, including, in tantric Buddhism, those of wrathful deities.

g.75 Yeshé Dé

ye shes sde

ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

—

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Yeshé Dé (late eighth to early ninth century) was the most prolific translator of sūtras into Tibetan. Altogether he is credited with the translation of more than one hundred sixty sūtra translations and more than one hundred additional translations, mostly on tantric topics. In spite of Yeshé Dé's great importance for the propagation of Buddhism in Tibet during the imperial era, only a few biographical details about this figure are known. Later sources describe him as a student of the Indian teacher Padmasambhava, and he is also credited with teaching both sūtra and tantra widely to students of his own. He was also known as Nanam Yeshé Dé, from the Nanam (*sna nam*) clan.