

༄༅། །འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱིས་དཔྱད་བཅུགས་པ།

Mañjuśrī's Sworn Oath

འཕགས་པ་འཇམ་དཔལ་གྱིས་དཔོན་བརྩམས་པའི་གཞུངས།

'phags pa 'jam dpal gyis dmod btsugs pa'i gzungs

The Noble Dhāraṇī “Mañjuśrī’s Sworn Oath”

· Toh 546 ·

Degé Kangyur vol. 89 (rgyud 'bum, pa), folios 13.b–14.a



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co.

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SUMMARY

- s.1 *Mañjuśrī's Sworn Oath* provides instruction in an incantatory practice focused on Mañjuśrī, in the form of a vidyā that Mañjuśrī himself pronounces. The vidyā unfolds in a series of forceful imperatives suggestive of battle, conquest, and celebration, and after enunciating it, Mañjuśrī explains that its recitation will lead to virtuosity in the memorization of scriptural verses. The benefits of recitation are then enumerated in more detail, relative to the number of times it is recited and whether the recitation is accompanied by ritual performance. As indicated by the title, Mañjuśrī then swears an oath to assure the vidyā's efficacy, pledging to take on the karmic burden of the five misdeeds with immediate retribution should its promised benefits fail to ensue.

ac.

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ac.1

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i.

INTRODUCTION

i.1 *Mañjuśrī's Sworn Oath* is the second of six short dhāraṇī scriptures (Toh 545–550) gathered together within the Tantra section of the Degé Kangyur that provide instruction in incantatory practices that feature the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Five of these scriptures (Toh 547 omitted) also appear in the Dhāraṇī section of the Degé Kangyur as Toh 892–896.

i.2 The scripture begins with a salutation to the Three Jewels and to Mañjuśrī under the epithet “Gentle Protector.” It then presents a narrative of the dhāraṇī’s revelation: Mañjuśrī bows to the Blessed One and suggests that the sublime vidyā be spoken. The Blessed One and the assembled retinue agree and request Mañjuśrī to speak it. Mañjuśrī bows to “all dharmas, the essence of all buddhas” and, having qualified that his recitation is empowered by the Blessed One himself, commences the vidyā. In form and content, this petition resembles framing narratives found in *The Root Manual of the Rites of Mañjuśrī* (*Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*), which likewise preface Mañjuśrī’s recitation and instruction of various vidyās, mantras, and associated rites.

i.3 The vidyā itself begins with salutations to the tathāgatas and to Mañjuśrī himself, even as the vidyā is spoken by Mañjuśrī, and then unfolds in a series of forceful imperatives suggestive of battle, conquest, and celebration. After his utterance of the vidyā, Mañjuśrī explains that its recitation will lead to virtuosity in the memorization of scriptural verses. The benefits of recitation are then enumerated in more detail relative to the number of recitations and whether the recitation is supported by ritual performance.

i.4 As indicated by the title, Mañjuśrī then swears an oath to assure the vidyā’s efficacy, pledging to take on the karmic burden of the five misdeeds with immediate retribution should its stated benefits fail to ensue. This oath resembles the “promise” (*dam bcas pa*) sworn by bodhisattvas in other, similar texts.¹ A more complete expression of this vow also appears in a handful of Sanskrit practice manuals in the *Sādhanaṃālā*.²

- i.5 *The Oath Sworn by Mañjuśrī* bears no Sanskrit title, and no Sanskrit version of the text is to our knowledge extant. It also appears that the text was never translated into Chinese. The Tibetan translation lacks a colophon, so we have no information about the history of its transmission or the identity of its translators. Its absence from the Denkarma and Phangthangma imperial catalogs³ suggests that it was translated into Tibetan later than the beginning of the ninth century CE⁴ but earlier than the flourishing of the scholar Butön Rinchen Drup (1290–1364), who listed the titles of all six dhāraṇī scriptures in this collection in his *History of Buddhism*.⁵
- i.6 This English translation is based on the two versions in the Degé Kangyur, one in the Tantra section (Toh 546) and the other in the Dhāraṇī section (Toh 893),⁶ in consultation with the variant readings recorded in the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) and with the Stok Palace Kangyur. Where divergences may point to a plausible or significant alternative reading, they appear in the notes.

The Noble Dhāraṇī Mañjuśrī's Sworn Oath

1.

The Translation

[F.13.b]

1.1

Homage to the Three Jewels!

Homage to the Gentle Protector!

1.2

Thereupon Mañjuśrī the ever youthful rose from his seat, draped his upper garment over one shoulder, and knelt down on his right knee, and bowing toward the Blessed One with palms joined, he lowered his head to the Blessed One's feet and enjoined the Blessed One thus:

“Blessed One, I have seen the vidyā—how wonderful if this sublime vidyā were to be spoken!” [F.14.a]

1.3

The entire retinue applauded the bodhisattva mahāsattva Mañjuśrī, “Very good, Mañjuśrī, very good indeed. O Mañjuśrī, speak the vidyā!”

1.4

“It is by means of the Blessed One's speech that I shall do so,” he said. Then the bodhisattva mahāsattva Mañjuśrī bowed to all dharmas, the essence of all buddhas,⁷ and spoke the vidyā:

1.5

*namaḥ sarvatathāgatebhyo | namo mañjuśrīye bodhisattvāya || om mañjuvara
mañjughoṣa hana hana | paca paca | mata mata | matha matha | vidhvamsaya
vidhvamsaya | kara kara | truṭa truṭa | bhañja bhañja | āviśa āviśa | tuṭa tuṭa |
truṭa truṭa | sphuṭa sphuṭa | hṛdayabandhani namaḥ sambodhani praveśa
praveśa | lota lota | kṛta kṛta | kṛda kṛda | kṛḍa kṛḍa⁸ | hasa hasa | prabandha
prabandha | āviśa āviśa | hūm hūm hūm | phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ svāhā ||⁹*

1.6

“Those who recite this thrice at midnight, or alternatively seven times during the day, will acquire the great vidyā. Such persons will be able to memorize three hundred ślokas.

1.7

“As for the associated ritual, having made a maṇḍala from sandalwood and offered lamps of clarified butter, if one recites the vidyā eight thousand times, it will be accomplished. Even if it is not accomplished, one will

memorize two hundred stanzas each day.

- 1.8 “O Blessed One, if what I have declared does not ensue even for someone who has committed the five misdeeds with immediate retribution, then I, too, will have committed the five misdeeds with immediate retribution.”

- 1.9 *This concludes the noble dhāraṇī “Mañjuśrī’s Sworn Oath.”*

n.

NOTES

- n.1 Similar statements are made by the bodhisattva *Siṃhanāda* in *The Dhāraṇī of Siṃhanāda* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh912.html>), the bodhisattva Maitreya in *The Dhāraṇī “Maitreya’s Pledge,”* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh643.html>) and Ārya Tārā in *The Dhāraṇī “Tārā’s Own Promise,”* (<http://read.84000.co/translation/toh730.html>) all of which include the Tibetan term *dam bcas pa* in their titles.
- n.2 Bhattacharyya 1968, pp. 47–48, 52, 54. The statement can be found in two works with the title *Siṃhanādasādhana* (sādhana nos. 17 and 21) and the *Siṃhanādadhāraṇī* (no. 23). An example of this statement from the *Siṃhanādadhāraṇī* reads, “If this is not accomplished after seven, thirteen, or twenty-one days, even for one who has committed the five misdeeds with immediate retribution, I myself will be one who has committed the five misdeeds with immediate retribution” (*yadi saprame divase trayodaśe divase ekaviṃśatitame vā divase pañcānantaryakāriṇo ’pi na sidhyaty ayaṃ tadā ’ham eva pañcānantaryakārī bhaviṣyāmi*).
- n.3 Three of the six texts in this series (Toh 545, Toh 548, and Toh 549) are listed in the Denkarma and Phangthangma catalogs, while three (Toh 546, Toh 547, and Toh 550) are not.
- n.4 The Denkarma catalog is usually dated to ca. 812 CE.
- n.5 Butön Rinchen Drup (*bu ston rin chen grub*), *chos ’byung*, folio 172.a/p. 975.
- n.6 Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 893 version of this text within vol. 100 or 101 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 893, n.6 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh893.html#UT22084-089-003-120>), for details.
- n.7 Or perhaps “the entire Dharma, which is in essence all the buddhas.”

- n.8 Toh 846 reads *kṛta kṛta kṛda kṛda kṛṭa kṛṭa*. Toh 893 reads *kṛda kṛda kṛta kṛta*, exchanging the order of these combinations and omitting *kṛṭa kṛṭa*.
- n.9 Provisional translation: “Homage to all the tathāgatas, homage to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī! *Om*, Mañjuvara Mañjughoṣa, strike, strike, cook, cook, *mata mata*, churn, churn, crush, crush, act, act, split, split, break, break, possess, possess, *tuṭa tuṭa*, split, split, burst, burst! O captivator of hearts, homage to you! You who cause to understand, enter, enter, *lota lota*, cut, cut, *kṛda kṛda*, play, play, laugh, laugh, tightly bind, bind, possess, possess, *hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ phaṭ phaṭ*, *svāhā!*”

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 Blessed One

bcom ldan 'das

བཙུག་ལྷན་འདས།

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.2 bodhisattva

byang chub sems dpa’

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔལ་།

bodhisattva

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

A being who is dedicated to the cultivation and fulfilment of the altruistic intention to attain perfect buddhahood, traversing the ten bodhisattva levels (*daśabhūmi*, *sa bcu*). Bodhisattvas purposely opt to remain within cyclic existence in order to liberate all sentient beings, instead of simply seeking personal freedom from suffering. In terms of the view, they realize both the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena.

g.3 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

The term *dhāraṇī* has the sense of something that “holds” or “retains,” and so it can refer to the special capacity of practitioners to memorize and recall detailed teachings. It can also refer to a verbal expression of the teachings—an incantation, spell, or mnemonic formula—that distills and “holds” essential points of the Dharma and is used by practitioners to attain mundane and supramundane goals. The same term is also used to denote texts that contain such formulas.

g.4 ever youthful

gzhon nur gyur pa

གཞོན་ནུ་གུར་པ།

kumārabhūta

An epithet used for the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī.

g.5 five misdeeds with immediate retribution

mtshams med pa lnga

མཚམས་མེད་པ་ལྔ།

pañcānantarya

The five most negative actions. Upon death, those who have committed one or more of these immediately proceed to the hells without first experiencing the intermediate state. They are (1) killing an arhat, (2) killing one's mother, (3) killing one's father, (4) creating a schism in the saṅgha, and (5) maliciously drawing blood from a tathāgata's body.

g.6 Gentle Protector

'jam pa'i mgon

འཇམ་པའི་མགོན།

—

An epithet of Mañjuśrī.

g.7 maṇḍala

dkyil 'khor

དཀྱིལ་འཁོར།

maṇḍala

Literally a “disk” or “circle,” in the ritual context maṇḍala is a sacred space on the ground or a raised platform, arranged according to a pattern that varies from rite to rite.

g.8 Mañjuśrī

'jam dpal

འཇམ་དཔལ།

mañjuśrī

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Mañjuśrī is one of the “eight close sons of the Buddha” and a bodhisattva who embodies wisdom. He is a major figure in the Mahāyāna sūtras, appearing often as an interlocutor of the Buddha. In his most well-known iconographic form, he is portrayed bearing the sword of wisdom in his right hand and a volume of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in his left. To his name,

Mañjuśrī, meaning “Gentle and Glorious One,” is often added the epithet Kumārabhūta, “having a youthful form.” He is also called Mañjughoṣa, Mañjusvara, and Pañcaśikha.

g.9 śloka

sha lo ka

ཤལ་ཀ

śloka

A type of stanza with four lines of eight syllables.

g.10 tathāgata

de bzhin gshegs pa

དེ་བཞིན་གཤེགས་པ།

tathāgata

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.11 Three Jewels

dkon mchog gsum

དཀོན་མཆོག་གསུམ།

ratnatraya

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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

g.12 vidyā

rig pa

རིག་པ།

vidyā

This term may, according to context, refer to exoteric or esoteric knowledge, a goddess, her associated dhāraṇī, or some combination of these. In the body of this scripture, the dhāraṇī is referred to as a *vidyā*. In tantric literature these two terms are frequently used interchangeably.