

Wake up!

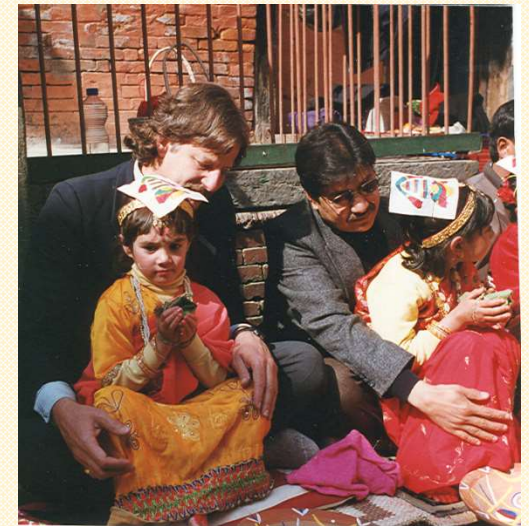


# “Dharma as Power in Buddhist Tradition”

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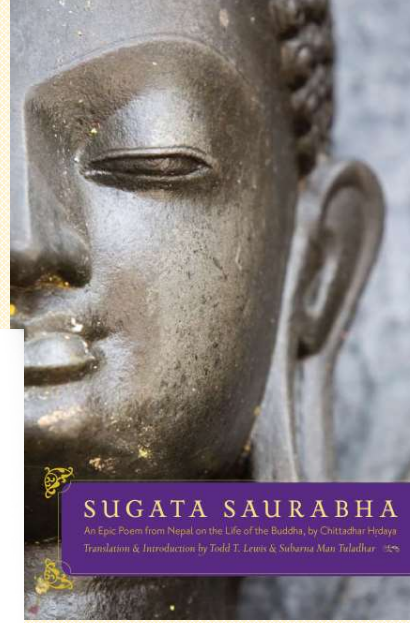
Research: Ethnographic Participant Observation  
and Textual Translation and analysis





## बोधि प्राप्ति

भव्य भवने नित्य स्वस्तिकपिनिगु मङ्गल सः न्यन्यं  
 दनिम्ह गौतम दन विहंगमतय् सलं तृण-आसनं ।  
 मागधपिसं थःगु कुलया याःगु सुन्दर वर्णन,  
 सूततय्सं कंगु बाखं न्यनिम्ह रविकुल नंदन-  
 यात ययिपुक गीत न्यंकल स्वच्छ सरितां कलकलं  
 प्रकृतिया बाखंत कंवल च्वां वयाः मलयानिलं ।  
 वस्त्र व्वेकाः वेत स्वागत यायि थें रमणीदलं  
 मृदुल मर्मर शब्द वय्काः यात समुमन तरु-हलं ।  
 राग रञ्जित सुन्दरीपिं स्वेगु पल्लवसा दिन दिन  
 राग पूर्ण कुसुम खनाः अन वेगु मन खुलु खुलु मिन ।  
 थःम्ह जीवन-संगिनी सम याय्त दृढ़ आलिङ्गन  
 अन दु पृथिवी, मेगु हानं च्वन्यत सितुया आसन ।  
 म्हीग तक जीखां क्वखायाः खर्णया पर्यङ्कस  
 ग्योम्ह गोपानाथया म्हे तल तियाः गेरिक वसः ।  
 त्वीक चंपाखां छुनाः ह्याउँक सते सचिका तयाः  
 वेगु सेबाय् नित्य तत्परपि मिसातय् ख्वाः स्वयाः

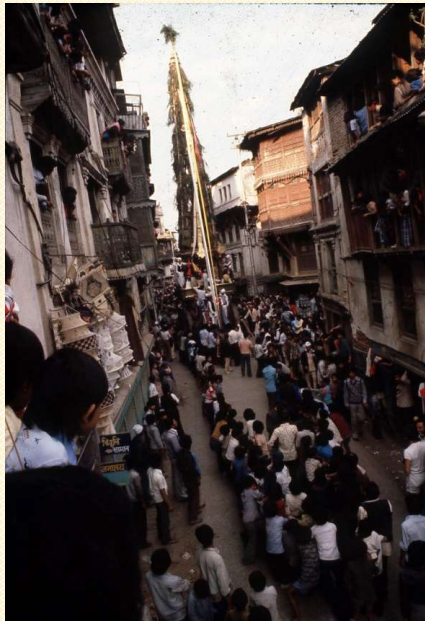




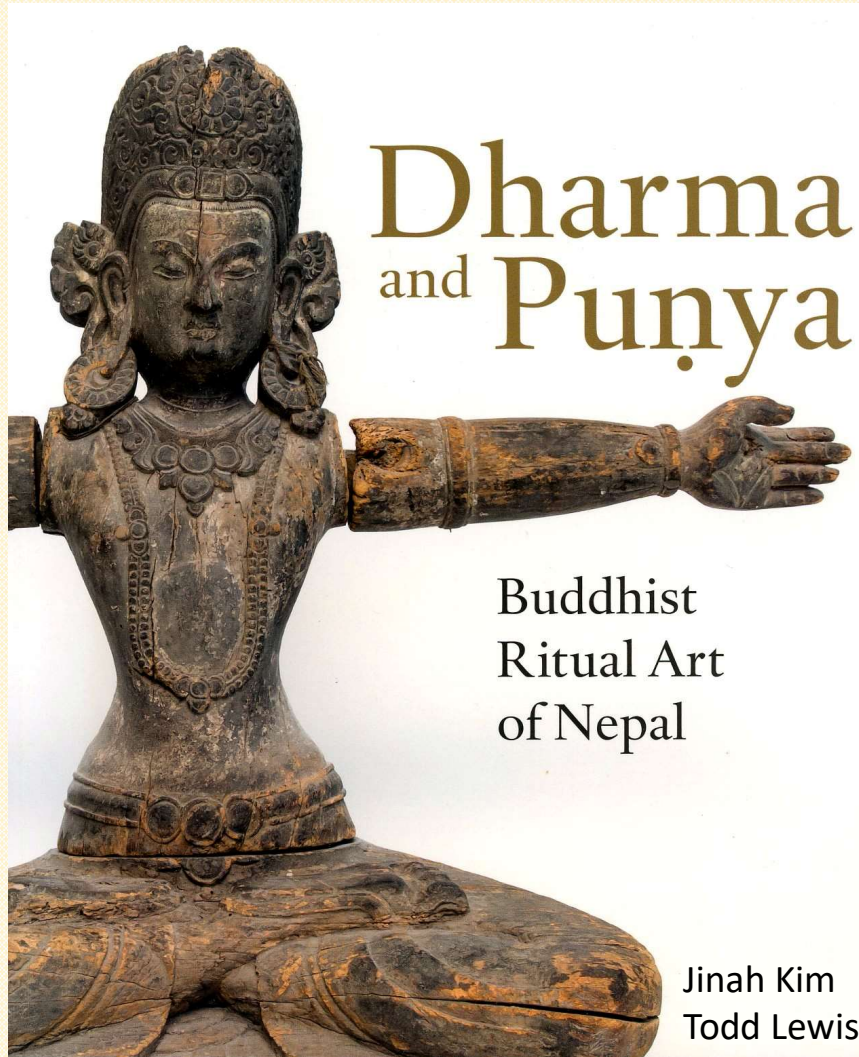
Fieldwork in Nepal beginning in 1978:

# Asan Tol of Kathmandu

Study of Uray Buddhist Merchants  
and  
Surviving ancient Indic Buddhist rituals







# Dharma and Pūṇya

Buddhist  
Ritual Art  
of Nepal

Jinah Kim  
Todd Lewis





**BUKKYO DENDO KYOKAI**

Society for the Promotion of Buddhism



仏教聖典と英訳大蔵経



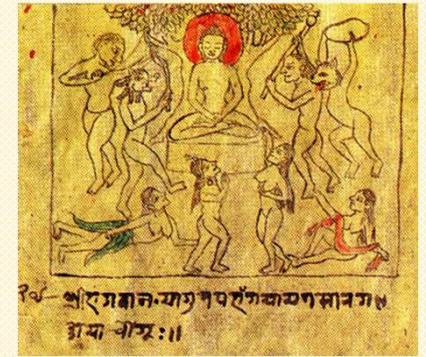
The Teaching of Buddha and English Translation of the Buddhist Canon



84000

TRANSLATING THE WORDS OF THE BUDDHA







The pivotal moment in the Buddha's defeat of Māra is when he calls on the earth to witness his merit and affirm his imminent realization. Māra had asserted that no one could affirm Siddhārtha's claim, but the Bodhisattva in response touches the earth itself to be his witness:

“the great earth, letting out a roar, with a hundred roars, with a thousand roars, with one hundred thousand great roars, said: ‘I was then the witness.’” The significance of the “Great Earth” quaking seven times in six ways, “as far as the ocean, uttering a terrible sound” is a pivotal instance of a Buddha's presence altering the entire cosmos.



The Pali *Jātakanidāna*:

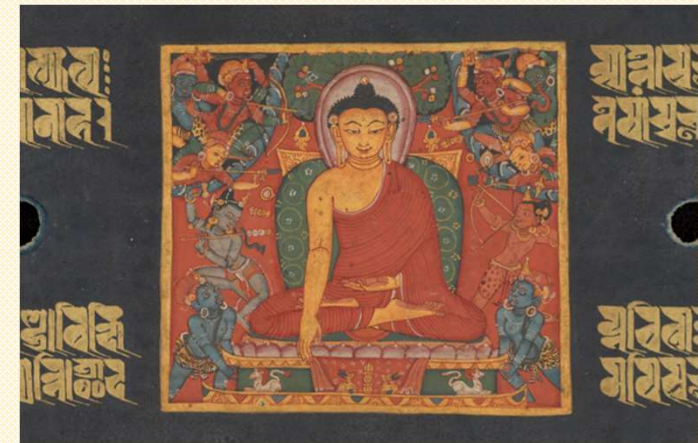
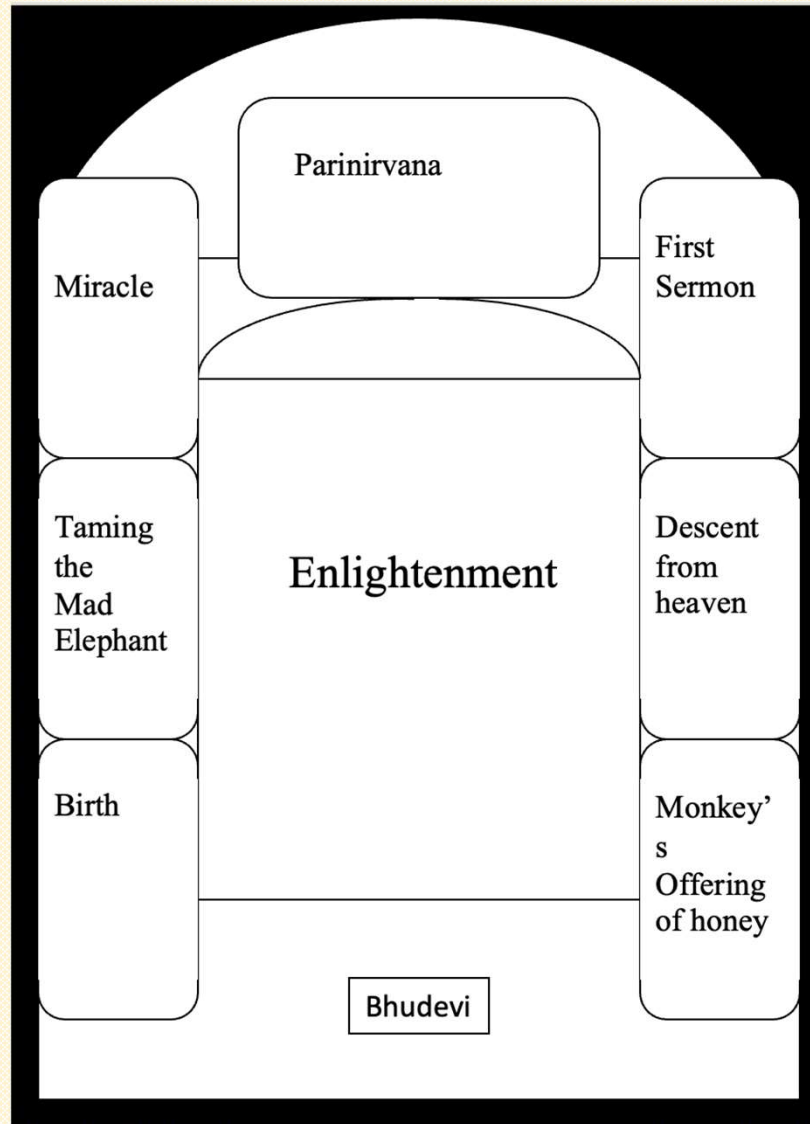
“The ten thousand world systems revolved and remained like a wreath of garlands tossed about or like a well-arranged spread of flowers. The intervening regions of eight thousand yojanas between the world spheres which had not been lit before even with the radiance of seven suns shining together became one mass of light. The great ocean eighty-four thousand yojanas deep turned into sweet water. Rivers ceased to flow. Those blind from birth were able to see...







153. Crowned Buddha with Life Scenes. Antichak, Bhagalpur Dt., Bihar. Ca. 11th century.





## Premodern Context of Buddhism: Three Facts of Life

### 1. Suffering:

Life expectancy c. 45 years

Half of children die before reaching age 5

***∴ Pragmatic resources of Buddhism very important***

*Why rituals utilizing Buddha-revealed POWER common*

*For healing, protection, rain making*

### 2. Literacy:

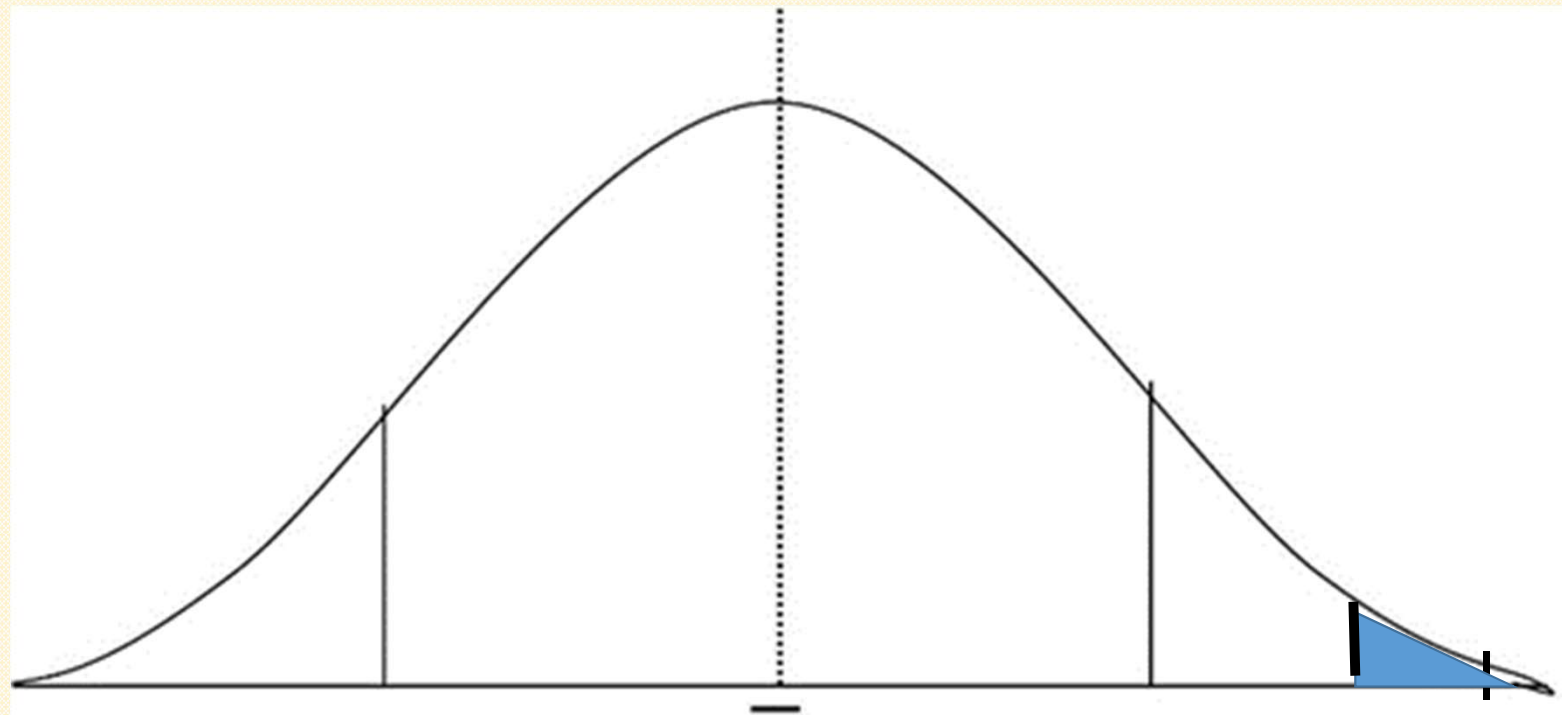
Few people were could read

***∴ art and vernacular translators central to enculturation***

*Art as “text”*



### 3. Typical Social Structure of Buddhist Communities



Householders  
95%

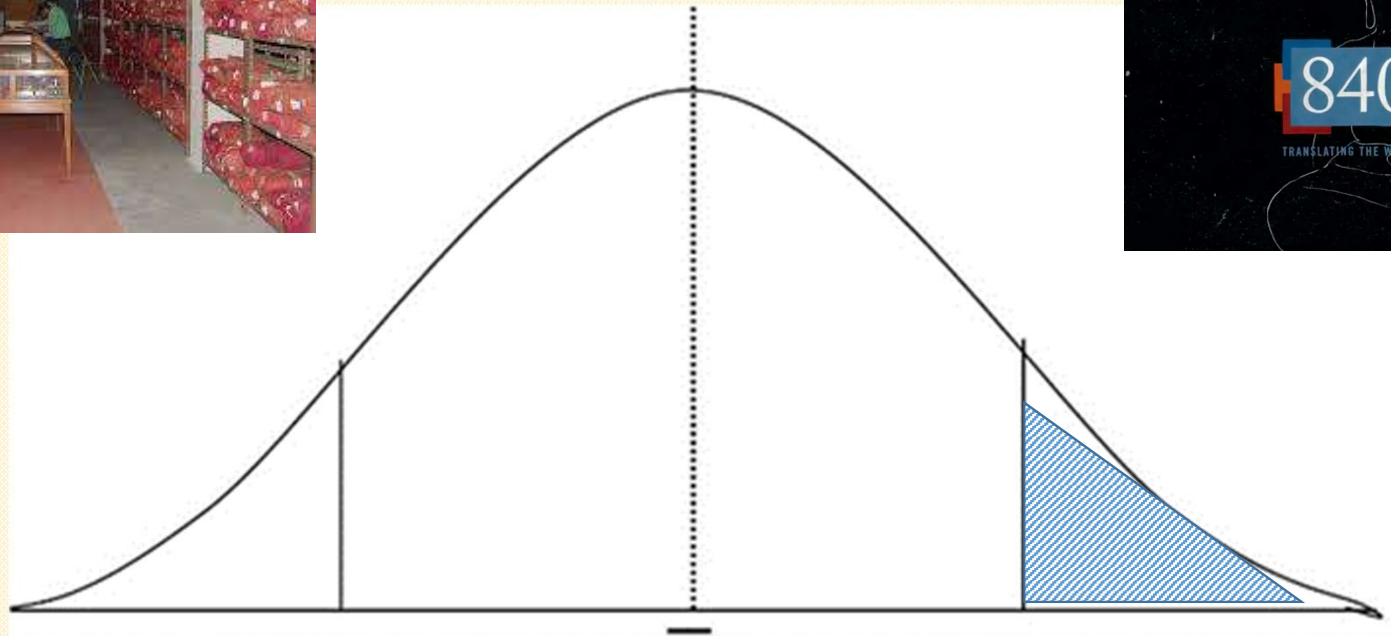
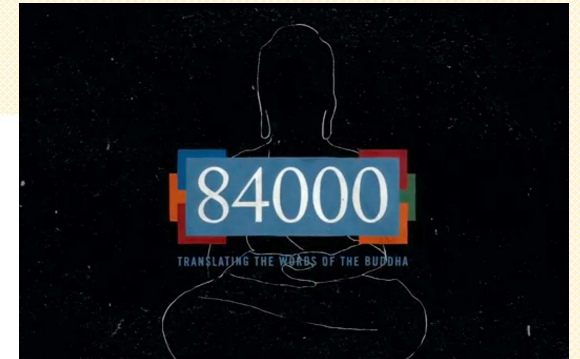
Monastics†  
5%

†- % of “philosopher monks” =?





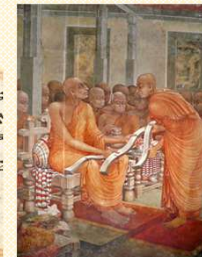




Narrative Texts

Ritual Texts

Philosophical Texts





## Back to Dharma as Power....



The lord of the world... remains through the form of the mantra.  
The omniscient one, possessing all forms, appears on the surface of the earth.  
-- *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* (25.286.9-10)



“The power of all the buddhas, and the bodhisattvas who are full of wisdom  
Manifests itself as an accomplishment in all activities that involve the mantras.  
It is in order to bring about this accomplishment  
That this king of manuals has been taught by the lord of sages.” {15.216}

### Dhāranīs as More Potent than Karma.

“Even if they commit offenses  
Such as the five acts of immediate retribution,  
Even if they lack morality, they will succeed  
At the various mantras that have been taught. [5.15]

### Benefits of Recitation Praxis

“Having done their recitation  
They will swiftly gain accomplishment.  
The sick will be freed from their illness,  
The poor will obtain wealth,  
The childless will obtain sons

### Art as Transformative Spiritual Medium.

When they behold the medium painting. [5.16]  
“In terms of purpose, the only purpose of ritual performance  
Is always for the sake of aim-oriented activity.  
Ritual performance...with a motive is a karman (retributive activity).

As activity that relies on ritual bears results,  
One should always perform rituals. [11.249]

### Buddhist Legitimation of Astrology.

“Their birth-assigned position has been described in brief  
By the most eminent of men.

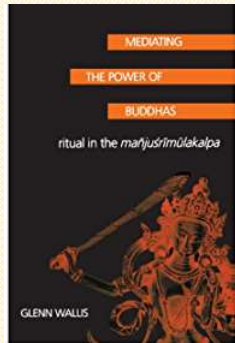
Its limitations and standards are determined  
By the planets who oversee the world. [15.176]

“These planets rise regularly  
At their usual time, as is their nature.  
Auspicious or inauspicious, they always  
Course in their orbits. [15.177]

### Dhāranīs Act on Spirit Beings.

“All spirits can be summoned  
By those who correctly employ the mantra methods.  
One who knows the mantras for summoning and possession  
Can use them on beings who inhabit the bodies of others. [15.197]





The world the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* imagines (Glen Wallis 2002:102):

“The men and women of the world are engulfed by moral and mental darkness. The darkness prevents them from perceiving the enlightened power of the Buddha at work in the universe. There are means, however, by which this power can be disclosed... - ritual and cultic in nature – [by which] the practitioner is transformed into a being of power himself or herself.

The disclosure of the text and the transformation of the practitioner represent the culmination of India’s religious history.”

“You are liberated from all obstacles, you dominate the entire world, O Muni! ...

You destroy all the afflictions of all beings completely;

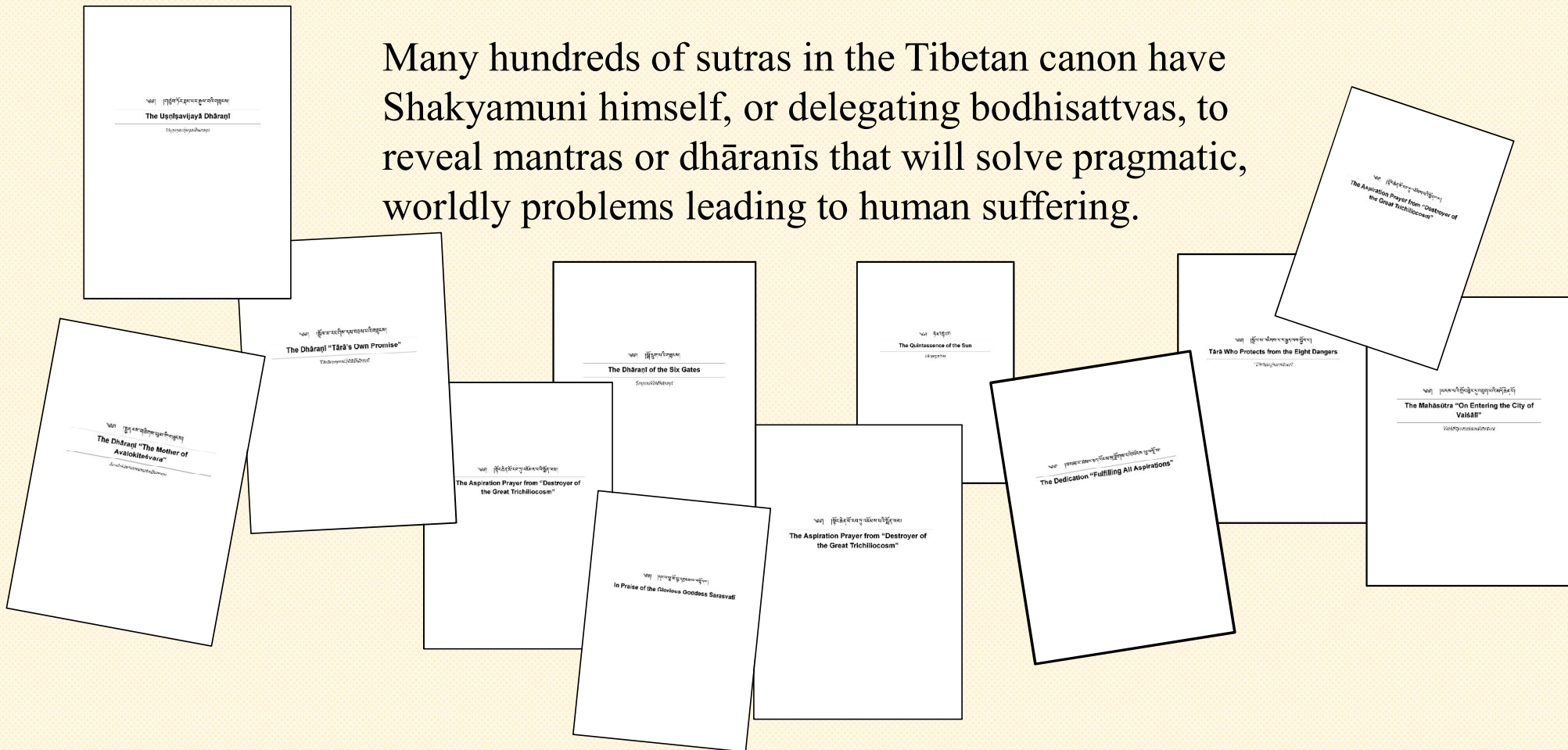
You crush afflictions, you have compassion for afflicted beings! Homage to you!”

– *Mahāyānasamgraha* [150a11-13]



# The Refuge of Dharma as Mantras and *Dhāranīs*

Many hundreds of sutras in the Tibetan canon have Shakyamuni himself, or delegating bodhisattvas, to reveal mantras or dhāranīs that will solve pragmatic, worldly problems leading to human suffering.





༄༅། །མངས་ཁྱིམ་སྤྱི་པའི་གཞུང་གི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

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

*Buddhahṛdayadhāraṇīdharmaṃpariyāya*



## *Āryabuddhahṛdayanāmadhāraṇīdharmaparyāya*, “The Noble Discourse of the Dhāraṇī of the Buddha’s Essence

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

*tadyathā buddhe subuddhe mahā buddhe iha buddhe tatra buddhe buddhe [F.73.b]  
buddhe buddha mati buddhe sarva buddhānumati sarva buddhānujñāna te buddha  
buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha buddha*

“Although the objects that the Buddha perceives and the Dharma that he has taught are infinite, the simplified instruction is that one should focus the mind on a single thing. “The following *dhāraṇī* has been taught by all the buddhas out of their sincere love for all beings. It is the seal of all qualities:

*tadyathā śuddhe suśuddhe suśuddhe śodhani sarṁśodhani sarṁśodhani nirmale malāpagate gate samatikranti krame samasare  
sarāsaraparyāśoke viśoka śokaśamani śānte upaśānte praśānte avabhāse sarvapunya parimaṇḍite sarvadharmā pratimaṇḍite  
hara hara mala hara cara cara sarṁcara cala cala sarṁcala tala tala matala samatala riṇe riṇe suriṇe samariṇe riṇamati loka  
dhare loka dhariṇe dhara dhara ḍara ḍara rodha rodha mahāvijaya vāhini hana hana sarva buddhe hriphreṣi trasī sarva jñāpathe  
sarva jñāpāramite mahā pratibhāna saṁpanne samantāloke buddhe viśaye buddha pratimaṇḍite bhagavate  
sara sara prasara prasara visara visara prasara sarva śokāpagate svāhā.”*

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

...“All beings should continually contemplate this *dhāraṇī* and meditate while recollecting the Buddha. If they contemplate the words of the *dhāraṇī*, all their karmic obscurations will be purified, they will attain the meditative concentration called “*the lotus array*,” and they will be able to wash away all illnesses and diseases with their hands. They should perform innumerable recitations of this *dhāraṇī*.”



# ***Pañcaraksā: Boons***

## **2. Mahāpratisarā**

Destruction of all obstacles to success  
Freedom from dangers posed by poison, weapons,  
fire, water, wind, and contagious diseases  
Birth of a son (2X)  
Easy childbirth  
Life blessings with plenty and honor  
No evil omens or bad dreams  
Acquisition of a *vajrakāya* (indestructible body)  
Cure of snakebite  
Defense of city against enemies  
Pain relief from serious illness  
Defense from torments of hell  
Escape from misfortune at sea  
Wish fulfillment  
Subduing demons  
Safety from execution by sword, monster, or drowning disasters  
Immunity from diseases



## **1. Mahāsāhasrapramardinī**

Prevention, relief from natural disasters  
Disease immunity  
Protection of cattle  
Help for sick trees  
Insuring medicine success

## **3. Mahāmāyūrī**

Cure of snakebite  
Freedom from snares  
Deities and demons grant assistance  
Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* grant assistance

## **4. Mahāśītavātī**

Removal of fear  
Tranquility

## **5. Mahāmantrānusāriṇī**

Relief from pestilence



# Pañcaraksā

## Mahāpratisarā



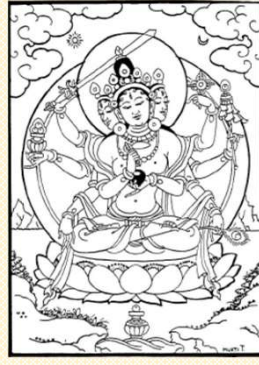
*Om manidhari vajrini mahapratissare  
raksa raksa mam sar-vasattvanama  
hum hum hum phat phat phat svaha*

## Mahāsāhasrapramardinī



*Om amrtavare vara vara  
pravaravishuddhe Hum hum hum  
phat phat phat svaha*

## Mahāmāyūrī



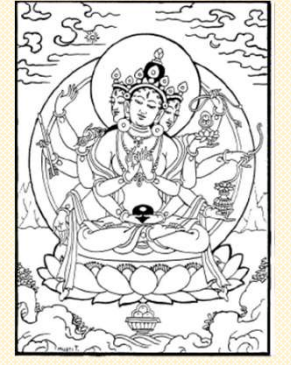
*Om amrtavilokini garbhasa-  
raksani akarsani Hum hum  
hum phat phat phat svaha*

## Mahāśītavatī



*Om bhara bhara sambhara  
sambhara indriyavara vishodhani  
Ruru care hum hum hum phat phat  
phat svaha*

## Mahāmantrānusārīṇī



*Om vimale vipule jayavare  
jayavahini amṛta Viraje hum hum  
hum phat phat phat svaha*





## Conclusions:

Mantras and *dhāranīs*, forms of Dharma, are derived from Buddhas and bodhisattvas, a form of “other power” gifted to humanity.

By paying attention to the totality of extant ritual texts found in archives and libraries, and taking seriously their ubiquity, the focus on Dharma as power can allow a reassessment of Buddhism in history.

The sheer number of ritual and recitation manuscripts (such as the *Pañcarakṣā*) copied in so many places across Asia venues support the proposition that rituals harnessing the powers established in the “Buddhaverse” were at the center of Buddhism throughout its history.

Decentering philosophical discourse and scholasticism as the imagined center of Buddhism, and scaling up the importance of the material, praxis-protective, and institutional ritual traditions are all essential correctives in understanding the history of the tradition.

Only then can scholars finally get beyond the first draft of Buddhist history oversampling the role of the elite and the impact of philosophical study.

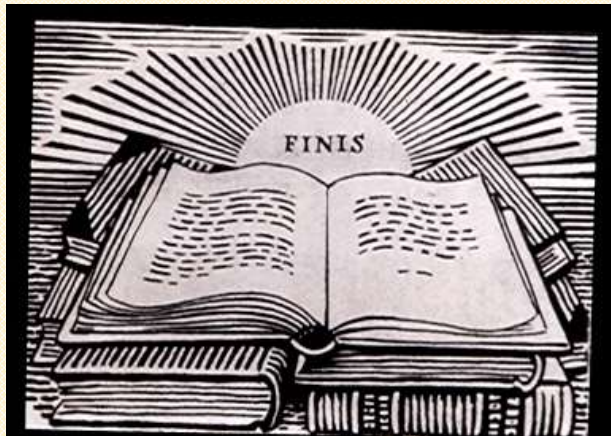


**Seeing the reality of Dharma as a source of power and the popularity of taking refuge in ritual practices  
is a historical desideratum in Buddhist studies.**

**Yamāntaka and Mañjuśrī are both essential to understanding the history of Buddhist Dharma and Buddhism.**







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