The present work is a translation and analysis of a particular variant of the second chapter of the Ratnaketu Dharani Sutra, entitled “Purvayogaparivarta,” the provenance of which can be traced to Vikramadityanandi, the second king of the Patola Shahi Dynasty, who ruled the kingdom of Bolor around the turn of the seventh century CE. Using the analytical category of myth theorized in terms of ideology, I argue not only that this variant of “Purvayogaparivarta” constructs and naturalizes a worldview in which kingship and buddhahood are intricately interwoven, but also that Vikramadityanandi commissioned the Ratnaketu Dharani Sutra to be copied in order to legitimate his rule over Bolor and to dissolve the distinctions between himself and buddhas.

This thesis is a contribution to the discipline of Buddhist Studies, as well as the wider field of Religious Studies—it is not simply a translation, but an analysis of the text in its historical context framed in terms of a particular understanding of myth. Previous scholarship has treated myths variously—sometimes as false stories produced by inferior minds, sometimes as stories about the original creative activity of nonobvious beings, sometimes as an abstract entity underlying the stories of a culture. In distinction to these approaches, I read “Purvayogaparivarta” as a rhetorical device used to achieve practical, political aims.