དབང་བསྐུར་བའི་གཟུངས།

The Initiating Dhāraṇī

Abhiṣiñcanīnāmadhāraṇī

འཕགས་པ་དབང་བསྐུར་བའི་གཟུངས།

’phags pa dbang bskur ba zhes bya ba’i gzungs

The Noble “Initiating Dhāraṇī”

Āryābhiṣiñcanīnāmadhāraṇī

· Toh 569 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 90 (rgyud ’bum, pha), folios 195.a–196.b

For referencing Tibetan sources, please see our Scholar’s Edition



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Summary

s.1 *The Initiating Dhāraṇī* is taught by the Blessed One in the company of a great number of monks and bodhisattvas in Śrāvastī, where he encourages Śāriputra to foster this spell. After a detailed and somewhat apologetic discussion on the interpretation of the term *dhāraṇī*, the incantation itself is pronounced, followed by an enumeration of its benefits.

Acknowledgements

ac.1 The text was translated from Tibetan by the Buddhapīṭha Translation Group (Gergely Hidas and Péter-Dániel Szántó).

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. Laura Goetz edited the translation and the introduction, and Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Sameer Dhingra was in charge of the digital publication process.

Introduction

i.1 *The Initiating Dhāraṇī* is taught by the Blessed One in the company of thousands of monks and innumerable bodhisattvas in Śrāvastī, where he encourages Śāriputra to foster this spell. There then follows a discussion on the interpretation of the term *dhāraṇī*, which concludes that a/the dhāraṇī is taught in order to bring benefits to bodhisattvas, who once they obtain it are to be called buddhas. This part of the text conveys a rare apologetic tone to justify and promote the use of dhāraṇīs, which is perhaps a reaction to those circles, here unspecified, who may have voiced doubts about the employment of such mantric strings of words. Then the incantation itself is pronounced, followed by an enumeration of the benefits, which include the accomplishment of perfect awakening and the establishment of protection from weapons, fire, and wild animals.

i.2 The Sanskrit original for this work does not seem to have survived, and there is no identifiable Chinese translation. Although we do not have a Sanskrit source, the reconstruction of the Sanskrit title is guaranteed by the transcribed word *abhiṣiñcanī* in the text of the dhāraṇī proper. The word *abhiṣeka* derives from the prefix *abhi* plus the verbal root *sic*, which means "to anoint" or "to sprinkle," evoking a cardinal moment in a royal coronation, when the king-to-be is bathed in various waters. In a way, this is the equivalent of being anointed with holy oil in the Western tradition. In the Buddhist world, this word also became the name for tantric initiation. The Tibetan translation is not literal, as *dbang bskur* means "transfer of power," as it is sometimes, perhaps misleadingly, translated. In fact, here *dbang* stands for Sanskrit *adhikāra*, a word meaning both the right and the duty to perform a certain action, in our case tantric practice. The feminine noun *abhiṣiñcanī* means something that is able to perform the *abhiṣeka*, and it is in this meaning that our rendering, "initiating," should be understood. The name is possibly an allusion to the fact that our text, somewhat uncharacteristically for texts of its class, also has a fairly long and mystical explanation of what *dhāraṇī* means from the viewpoint of ultimate

reality. This explanation is strongly reminiscent of Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā) literature, as is the fact that the dhāraṇī is termed "mother of buddhas."

i.3 The Tibetan translation is a product of the Imperial Period, and the title is listed in both surviving catalogs from the period, which are dated to the early ninth century.[1] According to the colophon in the Degé and other Kangyurs, it was translated by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Dānaśīla, along with the Tibetan translator Bandé Yeshé Dé, thus confirming its dating to this period. No witnesses of the text seem to survive in the Dunhuang manuscript corpus. Next to the usual formulas met with in such colophons, we are also told that the translation was updated to the "new language" (*skad gsar*) according to the edict (*chad*). The edict in question was promulgated in the early ninth century by the central authorities, and its aim was to uniformize and standardize Buddhist technical terminology.[2]

i.4 The English translation was made principally based on the Tibetan translation of the text found in the Tantra Collection (*rgyud 'bum*) and the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs (*gzungs 'dus*) in the Degé Kangyur,[3] in consultation with the Stok Palace manuscript Kangyur and the Phukdrak manuscript Kangyur.

The Translation

1. # The Noble Initiating Dhāraṇī

1.1 Homage to all buddhas and bodhisattvas![4]

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Blessed One was residing in Śrāvastī, in Prince Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park, together with a great monastic retinue of eight thousand[5] monks and countless crores[6] of bodhisattvas who had venerated previous victors.

1.3 Then the Blessed One said this to the elder Śāriputra: "Śāriputra, it is like this: you should cultivate and teach the mother of bodhisattvas, the previous conduct of bodhisattvas,[7] the truthful prayer, the one embraced by bodhisattvas,[8] these teachings of the bodhisattvas, namely this Dharma discourse, *The Initiating Dhāraṇī*."[9]

1.4 Then the elder Śāriputra said this to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, the dhāraṇī does not reside in the land and does not reside in the quarters, yet, Blessed One, we say, 'dhāraṇī, dhāraṇī.' But what, Blessed One, is the meaning of this word *dhāraṇī*?"

1.5 This is what he said, and the Blessed One replied to the elder Śāriputra: "Excellent, Śāriputra, well done! It is excellent that you not only[10] have entered the Great Vehicle, exert yourself on the Great Vehicle, and honor the Great Vehicle, but that you also point out that the dhāraṇī does not reside in the land and does not reside in the quarters.

1.6 "Why is that? Śāriputra, since the dhāraṇī in reality[11] does not arise in the past, or the future, or the present, Śāriputra, the dhāraṇī cannot be described as something past, or something future, or something present, or a thing, or no thing, or having characteristics, or not having characteristics, or as arising or

perishing because of some phenomenon. Nevertheless, Śāriputra, it[12] is to be taught so that it brings benefits to bodhisattvas. For this dhāraṇī, this Dharma-discourse dhāraṇī, is the path to formlessness; it is established with the power of awareness,[13] it is the virtue of the buddhas, it achieves the veneration of the buddhas, it is the morality of the buddhas, it has been gathered by the buddhas, it is the intention of the buddhas, and it is that from which the buddhas arise."[14]

1.7 Then the elder Śāriputra said this to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, pray tell me, Well-Gone One, pray explain to me where the dhāraṇī resides, and how, if a bodhisattva were to obtain it,[15] they would reach the state of nonregression from unsurpassed, perfect awakening, having their vows holding good, not residing in phenomena, not having doubts concerning the 'I,' not needing further training,[16] and established on their own path."

1.8 The Blessed One replied: "Excellent, Śāriputra, well done! Śāriputra, the bodhisattva who has obtained the dhāraṇī is indeed to be called a *buddha*. Śāriputra, those who honor, hold in high esteem, revere, or worship the bodhisattva who has obtained the dhāraṇī[17] will have honored all buddhas. Those who hear and have faith in this dhāraṇī—they, too, will become worthy of worship just like the buddhas, and they will never part from the resolve of awakening.

1.9 "Śāriputra, this is the dhāraṇī:

1.10 *saṃdhāraṇī uddhāraṇī saṃpratiṣṭhitā uttamā supratiṣṭhitā vijayabalā sarvapratijñā ārohā jñānavatī utpādanī vinimaṇī abhiṣiñcanī abhivyahārā śubhavatī aniśritabahukumbha abhivaca.*[18]

1.11 "Śāriputra, these are the Dharma-words[19] of *The Initiating Dhāraṇī*. If any bodhisattvas, past, future, present, or well established[20] accept and uphold them, they will swiftly curtail their way to perfect awakening by one hundred[21] or one thousand eons by virtue of their prayer. No weapons will ever harm them. No fire or vicious animals will ever harm them. Why is that? For, Śāriputra, this

dhāraṇī is the mother of past buddhas.[22] Śāriputra, if a son or daughter of good family were to offer clothing and good food to buddhas filling ten times uncountable trichiliocosms for an uncountable eon, and another son or daughter of good family were to retain just a single word from this dhāraṇī, the latter would amass more merit. Why is that? For, Śāriputra, this *Initiating Dhāraṇī* is the mother of buddhas."

1.12 Thus spoke the Blessed One, and those monks, those bodhisattvas, and the world of gods, humans, asuras, and gandharvas were delighted, and they praised the speech of the Blessed One.

1.13 *Here ends the noble "Initiating Dhāraṇī."*

Colophon

c.1 This was translated, edited, and redacted with updates according to the edict concerning the new language by the Indian preceptors Jinamitra and Dānaśīla and the great editor-translator Bandé Yeshé Dé.[23]

Notes

1. For the Denkarma, see Herrmann-Pfandt 2008, p. 224, no. 392; for the Phangthangma, see Kawagoe 2005, p. 21, no. 361.

2. Simonsson 1957, pp. 210–33.

3. Note that there is a discrepancy among various databases for cataloging the Toh 859 version of this text within vol. 100 or 101 of the Degé Kangyur. See Toh 859, n.3, for details.

4. This is the so-called translators' obeisance (*'gyur phyag*) and is not part of the main text.

5. Stok omits "eight thousand."

6. Phukdrak omits "crores" (*bye ba*).

7. This reading is somewhat uncertain. We expect "the conduct of (or 'the one practiced by') previous bodhisattvas." However, while Phukdrak has "bodhisattva" without the genitive particle, it does not transmit "previous." Both Degé and Stok transmit the version we have translated here (*byang chub sems dpa'i sngon gyi spyod pa*).

8. Here we adopt the reading *byang chub sems dpas* in Stok and Degé (Toh 859), instead of Degé's (Toh 569) *byang chub sems dpa' sa* and Phukdrak's *byang chub sems dpa' rnams*.

9. The name of the dhāraṇī is transmitted only in Phukdrak.

10. The particle *yang* is omitted in Toh 859, Phukdrak, and Stok, most likely due to a haplography, since the next word is *yang dag par zhugs pa*.

11. The original Sanskrit for "in reality" (*chos nyid kyis*) was most likely *dharmatayā*.

12. Here we adopt the reading of Phukdrak, which does not have the word *chos* ("Dharma") as the subject (or logical object).

13. This is the reading of Stok and Phukdrak (after correction). Instead of *rig pa*, Degé and Phukdrak (before correction) have *rigs pa* ("reason").

14. We understand *sangs rgyas 'byung ba* to reflect a Sanskrit compound (such as **buddhodbhava*/**buddhasaṃbhava*) that might also be interpreted as "arises from the buddhas."

15. Perhaps the original meaning was a question of whether a bodhisattva were to obtain the dhāraṇī, regardless of where it resides. We suspect this because the answer does not contain a reference to the location of the dhāraṇī, a topic that now seems to be a closed one.

16. Only Phukdrak transmits this, our selected reading; Degé and Stok transmit *slob dpon* ("master," "teacher") for *slob pa*.

17. While Toh 569 reads *byang chub sems dpa'i gzungs thob pa* ("the one who has obtained the bodhisattva's dhāraṇī"), we follow the reading in Toh 859, Stok, and Phukdrak: *byang chub sems dpa' gzungs thob pa*.

18. A tentative translation is as follows (strings that we cannot interpret are left in the original reading given in Toh 569): *"Supporter, Uplifter, Perseverance, Excellent, Consecrated, Victory-Power, All Promise, Elevated, Wise, Producing, vinimaṇī, Initiating, abhivyahārā, Splendid, aniśritabahukumbha abhivaca."*

19. This is the reading of Phukdrak, *chos kyi tshig*; Degé and Stok have "Dharma-names" (*chos kyi ming*).

20. The syntactical position of this word is questionable.

21. Phukdrak has "eight," but this is very likely a mistaken reading of *brgyad* for *brgya*.

22. The variant reading of Phukdrak is quite attractive: "past, future, and present blessed buddhas."

23. The translators' colophon is omitted in Phukdrak.

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Glossary

asura

lha ma yin

ལྷ་མ་ཡིན།

asura

A type of nonhuman being whose precise status is subject to different views, but is included as one of the six classes of beings in the sixfold classification of realms of rebirth. In the Buddhist context, asuras are powerful beings said to be dominated by envy, ambition, and hostility. They are also known in the pre-Buddhist and pre-Vedic mythologies of India and Iran, and feature prominently in Vedic and post-Vedic Brahmanical mythology, as well as in the Buddhist tradition. In these traditions, asuras are often described as being engaged in interminable conflict with the devas (gods).

Bandé Yeshé Dé

ban+de ye shes sde

བན་དེ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྡེ།

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.

blessed one

bcom ldan 'das

བཅོམ་ལྡན་འདས།

bhagavat

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”).

bodhisattva

byang chub sems dpa’

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ།

bodhisattva

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.

buddha

sangs rgyas

སངས་རྒྱས།

buddha

A fully awakened being. Buddha is the past participle of the Sanskrit root budh, meaning “to awaken,” “to understand,” or “to become aware.”

Dānaśīla

dA na shI la

དྷ་ན་ཤཱི་ལ།

dānaśīla

An Indian preceptor from Kashmir who was resident in Tibet during the late eighth and early ninth centuries. He translated many texts in the Kangyur in collaboration with Bandé Yeshé Dé.

daughter of good family

rigs kyi bu mo

རིགས་ཀྱི་བུ་མོ།

kuladuhitṛ

Indian term of address used by a teacher regarding a student. While originally related to family lineage, in Mahāyāna sūtras the term is also sometimes interpreted as implying that the person so addressed has entered the lineage of the buddhas, i.e., is a follower of the bodhisattva path.

dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī

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.

Dharma discourse

chos kyi rnam grangs

ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་གྲངས།

dharmaparyāya

The Sanskrit paryāya regularly has the sense of “method,” “procedure,” and “approach,” though the term dharmaparyāya can also simply refer to a Dharma teaching or discourse.

gandharva

dri za

དྲི་ཟ།

gandharva

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.”

god

lha

ལྷ།

deva

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.

Great Vehicle

theg pa chen po

ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོ།

mahāyāna

When the Buddhist teachings are classified according to their power to lead beings to an awakened state, a distinction is made between the teachings of the Lesser Vehicle (Hīnayāna), which emphasizes the individual's own freedom from cyclic existence as the primary motivation and goal, and those of the Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna), which emphasizes altruism and has the liberation of all sentient beings as the principal objective. As the term "Great Vehicle" implies, the path followed by bodhisattvas is analogous to a large carriage that can transport a vast number of people to liberation, as compared to a smaller vehicle for the individual practitioner.

Jinamitra

dzi na mi tra

ཛི་ན་མི་ཏྲ།

jinamitra

Jinamitra was invited to Tibet during the reign of King Tri Songdetsen (*khri srong lde btsan*, r. 742–98 CE) and was involved with the translation of nearly two hundred texts, continuing into the reign of King Ralpachen (*ral pa can*, r. 815–38 CE). He was one of the small group of paṇḍitas responsible for the *Mahāvyutpatti* Sanskrit–Tibetan dictionary.

merit

bsod nams

བསོད་ནམས།

puṇya

In Buddhism more generally, merit refers to the wholesome karmic potential accumulated by someone as a result of positive and altruistic thoughts, words, and actions, which will ripen in the current or future lifetimes as the experience of happiness and well-being. According to the Mahāyāna, it is important to dedicate the merit of one's wholesome actions to the awakening of oneself and to the ultimate and temporary benefit of all sentient beings. Doing so ensures that others also experience the results of the positive actions generated and that the merit is not wasted by ripening in temporary happiness for oneself alone.

phenomena

chos

ཆོས།

dharma

One of the meanings of the Skt. term *dharma*. This applies to "phenomena" or "things" in general, and, more specifically, "mental phenomena" which are the object of the mental faculty (*manas*, *yid*).

preceptor

mkhan po

མཁན་པོ།

upādhyāya

A person's particular preceptor within the monastic tradition. They must have at least ten years of standing in the saṅgha, and their role is to confer ordination, to tend to the student, and to provide all the necessary requisites, therefore guiding that person for the taking of full vows and the maintenance of conduct and practice. This office was decreed by the Buddha so that aspirants would not have to receive ordination from the Buddha in person, and the Buddha identified two types: those who grant entry into the renunciate order and those who grant full ordination. The Tibetan translation *mkhan po* has also come to mean "a learned scholar," the equivalent of a *paṇḍita*, but that is not the intended meaning in Indic Buddhist literature.

Prince Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍada's Park

rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba

རྒྱལ་བུ་རྒྱལ་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཚལ་མགོན་མེད་ཟས་སྦྱིན་གྱི་ཀུན་དགའ་ར་བ།

jetavanam anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ

One of the first Buddhist monasteries, located in a park outside Śrāvastī, the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kośala in northern India. This park was originally owned by Prince Jeta, hence the name Jetavana, meaning Jeta's grove. The wealthy merchant Anāthapiṇḍada, wishing to offer it to the Buddha, sought to buy it from him, but the prince, not wishing to sell, said he would only do so if Anāthapiṇḍada covered the entire property with gold coins. Anāthapiṇḍada agreed, and managed to cover all of the park except the entrance, hence the name Anāthapiṇḍadasyārāmaḥ, meaning Anāthapiṇḍada's park. The place is usually referred to in the sūtras as "Jetavana, Anāthapiṇḍada's park," and according to the *Saṃghabhedavastu* the Buddha used Prince Jeta's name in first place because that was Prince Jeta's own unspoken wish while Anāthapiṇḍada was offering the park. Inspired by the occasion and the Buddha's use of his name, Prince Jeta then offered the rest of the property and had an entrance gate built. The Buddha specifically instructed those who recite the sūtras to use Prince Jeta's name in first place to commemorate the mutual effort of both benefactors.
Anāthapiṇḍada built residences for the monks, to house them during the monsoon season, thus creating the first Buddhist monastery. It was one of the Buddha's main residences, where he spent around nineteen rainy season retreats, and it was therefore the setting for many of the Buddha's discourses and events. According to the travel accounts of Chinese monks, it was still in use as a Buddhist monastery in the early fifth century CE, but by the sixth century it had been reduced to ruins.

resolve of awakening

byang chub kyi sems

བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས།

bodhicitta

In the general Mahāyāna teachings the mind of awakening (bodhicitta) is the intention to attain the complete awakening of a perfect buddha for the sake of all beings. On the level of absolute truth, the mind of awakening is the realization of the awakened state itself.

Śāriputra

shA ri'i bu

ཤཱ་རིའི་བུ།

śāriputra

One of the principal śrāvaka disciples of the Buddha, he was renowned for his discipline and for having been praised by the Buddha as foremost of the wise (often paired with Maudgalyāyana, who was praised as foremost in the capacity for miraculous powers). His father, Tiṣya, to honor Śāriputra's mother, Śārikā, named him Śāradvatīputra, or, in its contracted form, Śāriputra, meaning "Śārikā's Son."

son of good family

rigs kyi bu

རིགས་ཀྱི་བུ།

kulaputra

Indian term of address used by a teacher regarding a student. While originally related to family lineage, in Mahāyāna sūtras the term is also sometimes interpreted as implying that the person so addressed has entered the lineage of the buddhas, i.e., is a follower of the bodhisattva path.

Śrāvastī

mnyan yod

མཉན་ཡོད།

śrāvastī

During the life of the Buddha, Śrāvastī was the capital city of the powerful kingdom of Kośala, ruled by King Prasenajit, who became a follower and patron of the Buddha. It was also the hometown of Anāthapiṇḍada, the

wealthy patron who first invited the Buddha there, and then offered him a park known as Jetavana, Prince Jeta's Grove, which became one of the first Buddhist monasteries. The Buddha is said to have spent about twenty-five rainy seasons with his disciples in Śrāvastī, thus it is named as the setting of numerous events and teachings. It is located in present-day Uttar Pradesh in northern India.

trichiliocosm

stong gsum gyi stong chen po

སྟོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྟོང་ཆེན་པོ།

trisāhasramahāsāhasra

The largest universe described in Buddhist cosmology. This term, in Abhidharma cosmology, refers to $1{,}000^3$ 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.

unsurpassed, perfect awakening

bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub

བླ་ན་མེད་པ་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ།

anuttarasamyaksambodhi

The complete awakening of a buddha.

victor

rgyal ba

རྒྱལ་བ།

jina

An epithet for a buddha.

well-gone one

bde bar gshegs pa

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པ།

sugata

One of the standard epithets of the buddhas. A recurrent explanation offers three different meanings for *su-* that are meant to show the special qualities of "accomplishment of one's own purpose" (*svārthasampad*) for a complete buddha. Thus, the Sugata is "well" gone, as in the expression *su-rūpa* ("having a good form"); he is gone "in a way that he shall not come back," as in the expression *su-naṣṭa-jvara* ("a fever that has utterly gone"); and he has gone "without any remainder" as in the expression *su-pūrṇa-ghaṭa* ("a pot that is completely full"). According to Buddhaghoṣa, the term means that the way the Buddha went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*) and where he went (Skt. *gata*) is good (Skt. *su*).