

སྐྱུན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ལྷུག་གི་གཟུངས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

# The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara

*Āvalokiteśvaranāmadhāraṇī*

འཕགས་པ་སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་སྤྱུག་གི་གཟུངས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gi gzungs zhes bya ba

The Noble Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara

*Āryāvalokiteśvaranāmadhāraṇī*

· Toh 696 ·

Degé Kangyur, vol. 93 (rgyud 'bum, tsa), folios 147.b–148.a



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## Summary

- s.1 *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara* is a short text that describes the visualization of Avalokiteśvara in his four-armed, white form seated on a lotus throne. It enumerates the benefits of reciting his mantra *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* and promises that reciting the mantra will purify negative karma, prevent lower rebirths, protect from dangers, cure illnesses, reveal Avalokiteśvara's face, and ensure rebirth in Sukhāvātī after death.

## Acknowledgements

- ac.1 This publication was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.
- ac.2 The text was translated, edited, and introduced by the 84000 translation team. Catherine Dalton produced the translation and wrote the introduction. Nathaniel Rich edited the translation and the introduction, and Dawn Collins copyedited the text. Martina Cotter was in charge of the digital publication process.

## Introduction

- i.1 *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara* is a short text that first describes the visualization of a four-armed Avalokiteśvara. It begins in the style of a sādhana, a ritual liturgy in which a practitioner generates the form of a deity by means of meditative concentration. Avalokiteśvara then speaks to the practitioner, describing the benefits of reciting his mantra—freedom from the consequences of evil deeds, from rebirth in the lower realms, and from harm by malicious spirits. He utters his mantra and explains that reciting it will cause a practitioner to see Avalokiteśvara directly and to take rebirth in Sukhāvātī.

- i.2 Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva who embodies compassion, appears in this work in his common four-armed form. However, this work is different from many texts categorized as dhāraṇīs in that the text begins with a structure more akin to a sādhana. However, in this text, once the deity has been generated, unlike in sādhana, Avalokiteśvara immediately begins to speak and to describe the benefits of reciting his mantra, which he then proclaims. This latter part of the text is written in a style more typical of a dhāraṇī text.
- i.3 A Sanskrit witness of *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara* does not appear to be extant, nor does it appear to have been translated into Chinese. The text does not appear in the imperial catalogs or at Dunhuang, and it lacks a translator's colophon. In the absence of such a colophon, and the absence of the text's title in any of the imperial catalogs or at Dunhuang, we are unable to date the text or its Tibetan translation.
- i.4 Like many dhāraṇī texts, *The Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara* is found in the Tantra section of both the Tshalpa and Thempangma lineage Kangyurs, listed as a kriyā tantra. In the Degé Kangyur and other Tshalpa lineage Kangyurs that have a Dhāraṇī section, it is additionally found there. The text as found in the Tantra section of the Degé Kangyur (Toh 696) and the one found in the Dhāraṇī (Toh 910)<sup>1 2</sup> section are identical except for occasional variances in their punctuation.
- i.5 This English translation was made based on the two recensions of the text found in the Degé Kangyur, with reference also to the Stok Palace Kangyur and the notes from the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*) of the Kangyur. The mantra is rendered exactly as it appears in the Degé Kangyur recension from the Tantra section (Toh 696).

## The Translation

1.

### The Noble Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara

1.1

Homage to the great compassionate noble Avalokiteśvara.

1.2

Generate the mind of awakening with the strength of compassion from within the state of noble Avalokiteśvara's love. Then, upon a lotus, sun, and moon seat, the syllable *hṛīḥ* emanates light and gathers it back. Thereby, the syllable transforms into Avalokiteśvara, who has one face and four arms. His first two arms have the palms joined. His lower right hand holds a white pearl rosary. His lower left hand holds a white lotus. His body is white in color, and his legs are fully crossed. He is adorned by various jeweled ornaments and beautified by a jeweled crown. He is flanked by the mother Ṣaḍakṣarī as well as the father Maṇibhadra, and he is surrounded by many male and female bodhisattvas.

1.3

He says, “If a son or daughter of noble family recites this mantra just once, brings it to mind, keeps it in mind, writes it down and wears it on their body, or treats it with devotion and respect, it will completely purify the five actions of immediate consequence, or any of the evil deeds connected with them, and they will not take rebirth in the three lower realms, in the eight unfree states, or in any such painful birth. They will be completely freed from all dangers from humans, non-humans, or wild animals. They will be freed from all illnesses and malicious spirits.

1.4

“Anyone who says *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* will see the face of noble Avalokiteśvara. After death they will be reborn in Sukhāvātī. Have no doubt, uncertainty, or hesitation about this.”

1.5

This completes *The Noble Dhāraṇī of Avalokiteśvara*.

## Notes

1. This text, Toh 910, and all those contained in this same volume (*gzungs, e*), are listed as being located in volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur by the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC). However, several other Kangyur databases—including the eKangyur that supplies the digital input version displayed by the 84000 Reading Room—list this work as being located in volume 101. This discrepancy is partly due to the fact that the two volumes of the *gzungs 'dus* section are an added supplement not mentioned in the original catalog, and also hinges on the fact that the compilers of the Tōhoku catalog placed another text—which forms a whole, very large volume—the *Vimalaprabhānāmakālacakratantraṭikā* (*dus 'khor 'grel bshad dri med 'od*, Toh 845), before the volume 100 of the Degé Kangyur, numbering it as vol. 100, although it is almost certainly intended to come right at the end of the Degé Kangyur texts as volume 102; indeed its final fifth chapter is often carried over and wrapped in the same volume as the Kangyur *dkar chags* (catalog). Please note this discrepancy when using the eKangyur viewer in this translation.

2. [note fae276de...]

## Glossary

### **Avalokiteśvara**

*spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug*

*avalokiteśvara*

### **dhāraṇī**

*gzungs*

*dhāraṇī*

### **eight unfree states**

*mi khom pa brgyad*

*aṣṭākṣaṇa*

### **five actions of immediate consequence**

*mtshams med pa lnga*

*pañcānantarya*

### **kriyā tantra**

*bya rgyud*

*kriyātantra*

A class of tantric scripture that generally features elaborate rites directed toward both mundane goals—such as health, prosperity, and protection—and to the ultimate goal of liberation. In this class of tantra, the practitioners do not identify themselves with the deity as in other classes of tantra, but rather seek their power, assistance, and intervention in pursuit of their goals. The Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa and Amoghapāśakalparāja exemplify this class of tantra.

### **mantra**

*sngags*

*mantra*

**Maṇibhadra**

*nor bu rin po che*

*maṇibhadra*

A god connected with Avalokiteśvara who appears as his companion.

**mind of awakening**

*byang chub kyi sems*

*bodhicitta*

**Sukhāvati**

*bde ba can*

*sukhāvati*

**three lower realms**

*ngan song gsum*

*durgatitraya*

*tridurgati*

**Ṣaḍakṣarī**

*lha mo drug ma*

*ṣaḍakṣarī*

A goddess connected with Avalokiteśvara who appears as his companion.

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