

༄༅། །སྐྱུན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱུག་གིས་ལྷུས་པ་ཚོས་བདུན་པ།

---

## The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara on the Seven Qualities

---

*Avalokiteśvaraparipṛcchāsaptadharmaka*

Translated into Tibetan by  
Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna · Gewai Lodrö

འཕགས་པ་སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱུག་གིས་ལྷན་པ་ཚོས་བདུན་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་ཐེག་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་མདོ།

*'phags pa spyan ras gzigz dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen  
po'i mdo*

The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra “The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara on the Seven  
Qualities”

*Āryāvalokiteśvarapariṣcchāsaptadharmakanāmahāyānasūtra*



Toh 150  
Degé Kangyur, vol. 57 (mdo sde, pa), folios 331.a–331.b

Translated by the University of Calgary Buddhist Studies Team  
under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha

First published 2014  
Current version v 1.26.12 (2023)  
Generated by 84000 Reading Room v2.19.5

**84000: *Translating the Words of the Buddha*** is a global non-profit initiative to translate all the Buddha's words into modern languages, and to make them available to everyone.



This work is provided under the protection of a Creative Commons CC BY-NC-ND (Attribution - Non-commercial - No-derivatives) 3.0 copyright. It may be copied or printed for fair use, but only with full attribution, and not for commercial advantage or personal compensation. For full details, see the Creative Commons license.

This print version was generated at 11.40pm on Tuesday, 21st November 2023 from the online version of the text available on that date. If some time has elapsed since then, this version may have been superseded, as most of 84000's published translations undergo significant updates from time to time. For the latest online version, with bilingual display, interactive glossary entries and notes, and a variety of further download options, please see <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh150.html>.

co.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- ti. Title
- im. Imprint
- co. Contents
- s. Summary
- ac. Acknowledgements
- i. Introduction
- tr. The Translation
  - 1. The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara on the Seven Qualities
- c. Colophon
- ab. Abbreviations
- n. Notes
- b. Bibliography
  - Tibetan Kangyur Editions
  - Other References
- g. Glossary

s.

## SUMMARY

- s.1 This brief sūtra is introduced with the Buddha residing on Vulture Peak Mountain in Rājagṛha, together with a great monastic assembly of 1,250 monks and a multitude of bodhisattva mahāsattvas. The Buddha is approached and asked by the bodhisattva mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara about the qualities that should be cultivated by a bodhisattva who has just generated the altruistic mind set on attaining awakening. The Buddha briefly expounds seven qualities that should be practiced by such a bodhisattva, emphasizing mental purity and cognitive detachment from conceptuality.

ac.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 Translation by the University of Calgary Buddhist Studies Team. The sūtra was introduced and translated by James B. Apple.

This translation has been completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

## INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara on the Seven Qualities*<sup>1</sup> is a brief sūtra describing seven qualities that should be cultivated by a bodhisattva immediately upon generating the altruistic mind set on attaining awakening. The mind of awakening is the intention or resolution to attain full and complete buddhahood for the benefit of oneself and all sentient beings.

i.2 The structure of the sūtra is in three parts: the opening formula that gives the time, place, and Buddha's retinue when the discourse was taught; the prescription of seven dharmas to be cultivated; and a formulaic conclusion.

i.3 The Buddha delivers his teaching in response to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Avalokiteśvara's inquiry. What is unusual in the formulaic inquiry phrases of this sūtra is that Avalokiteśvara places his right knee in the center of a lotus flower; in most sūtras that follow such a pattern, the questioner places their knee on the ground. This implicitly demonstrates the reverence in which Avalokiteśvara was held by the compilers or transmitters of this sūtra. The Buddha prescribes seven qualities or dharmas that one should cultivate after producing the mind of awakening. They emphasize mental purity and cognitive detachment from conceptuality. These prescriptions are straightforward and easy to understand according to the overview of the sūtra by Pekar Sangpo (*pad dkar bzang po*, see bibliography).

i.4 *The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara on the Seven Qualities* was initially translated into Tibetan from an Indian language, most likely Sanskrit, by Atiśa Dīpaṅkara-śrījñāna (982–1054) and the Tibetan monk Gewai Lodrö.

The translation took place in all probability at the monastery of Tholing in West Tibet, where the rulers of Ngari (*mnga' ris*) first officially welcomed Atiśa and where Gewai Lodrö was active.<sup>2</sup> Gewai Lodrö collaborated with the great Kaśmīri scholar Subhūtiśrī(śānti) in Tholing before working with Atiśa. Atiśa and Gewai Lodrö worked together on several translations found in editions of the Tengyur, including the verses of the *Bodhipathapradīpa* (Toh



3947) and the *Cittotpādasamvaravidhikrama* (Toh 3969), and two texts found in most Kangyurs, the *Gaṇḍisamayāsūtra* (Toh 299) and the *Siddhaikavōtramahā-tantrarāja* (Toh 544, Degé 541).<sup>3</sup>

i.5 Atiśa makes explicit reference to this sūtra in his *Bodhimārgapradīpapañjikā*, *Cittotpādasamvaravidhikrama*, and *Ratnakaraṇḍodghāṭanāmamadhyamakopadeśa* (Toh 3930, English translation Apple 2010, pp. 142–43). In the *Bodhimārgapradīpapañjikā* this sūtra is mentioned in the sections discussing the mind of awakening (Sherburne 2000, p. 101), the monastic life (Sherburne 2000, p. 127), and the supersensory knowledges (Sherburne 2000, p. 209). The *Cittotpādasamvaravidhikrama* also advocates the practice of this sūtra's prescriptions for a bodhisattva who wishes to attain supersensory knowledge quickly (Sherburne 2000, pp. 540–41).

i.6 The present translation from Tibetan is based upon a critical edition of ten Kangyur exemplars. A detailed philological analysis of the extant editions of this sūtra indicates that the oldest copies of this sūtra are preserved among Western Kangyur collections such as the Gondhla Collection, Hemis Kangyur, and Phudrak (*phug brag*) Kangyur.

**The Noble Mahāyāna Sūtra**  
**The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara on the Seven Qualities**

1.

## The Translation

[F.331.a]

1.1 Homage to the Bhagavān Mañjuśrīkumārabhūta!

1.2 Thus did I hear at one time. The Bhagavān was dwelling in Rājagṛha<sup>4</sup> on Vulture Peak Mountain<sup>5</sup> together with a great monastic assembly of 1,250 monks and a multitude of bodhisattva mahāsattvas. At that time, the bodhisattva mahāsattva Noble Avalokiteśvara rose from his seat, arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, and placed his right knee in the center of a lotus flower.

1.3 Joining his hands in devotion toward the Bhagavān, he asked him, “Bhagavān, in how many qualities should a bodhisattva train, just after generating the altruistic mind set on attaining awakening?”<sup>6</sup>

The Bhagavān replied to the bodhisattva mahāsattva Noble Avalokiteśvara’s inquiry with the following words:

1.4 “Kulaputra, bodhisattvas should train in seven qualities just after generating the altruistic mind set on attaining awakening.<sup>7</sup> What are the seven? They are as follows:

“(1) One should not have sexual enjoyment even in thought, not to mention joining together the two sexual organs. [F.331.b]

“(2) One should not take up with a nonvirtuous friend even in dreams.

“(3) With a mind free like a bird, one should be completely without grasping.

“(4) With mastery in skill and wisdom, one should be without pride and reified conceptions of ‘I.’

“(5) One should abandon conceptions of existence and nonexistence and be firm in the emancipation (*vimokṣa*) of emptiness.

“(6) One should not take delight in saṃsāra through an inauthentic conceptual understanding, saṃsāra being like a magical illusion or dream.

“(7) And one should refrain from deprecating the law of cause and effect.

“Kulaputra, a bodhisattva who has just generated the altruistic mind set on attaining awakening<sup>8</sup> should train in these seven qualities.”

1.5 When the Bhagavān had spoken, the bodhisattva Noble Avalokiteśvara, along with the monks and bodhisattvas, rejoiced and praised highly what had been proclaimed by the Bhagavān.<sup>9</sup>

1.6 *This completes the noble Mahāyāna sūtra, “The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara on the Seven Qualities.”<sup>10</sup>*

c.

## Colophon

c.1 Translated and edited by the Indian preceptor Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna and the translator monk Gewai Lodrö.

ab.

## ABBREVIATIONS

- D* Degé (sde dge) PK  
*F* Phug brag MsK  
*Go* Gondhla Collection MsK  
*He* Hemis MsK  
*J* Lithang PK  
*K<sub>Q</sub>* Peking Qianlong PK  
*L* London MsK  
*MsK* Manuscript Kangyur  
*PK* Printed Kangyur  
*S* Stok Palace MsK  
*Z* Shey Palace MsK

n.

## NOTES

- n.1 Within the title, D, Go, He, J, K<sub>Q</sub>, and L have *spyān ras gzigs dbang phyug*; F, S, and Z have *spyān ras gzigs kyi dbang phyug*. Go has the title *'phags pa spyān ras gzigs dbang phyug gyis zhus pa / byang chub sems dpa'i slab pa bdun pa* ("The Inquiry of Avalokiteśvara: the Seven Points of a Bodhisattva's Training").
- n.2 See Chattopadhyaya 1967, p. 325.
- n.3 See Dharmachakra Translation Group 2016 (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh544.html>).
- n.4 Go, L, S, Z *rgyal po'i khab na*; D, F, He, J, K<sub>Q</sub> *rgyal po'i khab*.
- n.5 F, Go, L, S, Z *bya rgod kyi phung po*; D, He, J, K<sub>Q</sub> *bya rgod phung po*.
- n.6 F, Go, He, L, S, Z *byang chub tu sems*; D, J, K<sub>Q</sub> *byang chub kyi sems*.
- n.7 D, F, Go, He, L, S, Z *byang chub tu sems bskyed*; J, K<sub>Q</sub> *sems bskyed*.
- n.8 D, F, Go, J, K<sub>Q</sub> *byang chub tu sems bskyed*; He, L, S, Z *sems bskyed*.
- n.9 Go omits *'phags pa spyān ras gzigs dbang phyug dang / dge slong de dag dang byang chub sems dpa' de dag yi rangs te/ bcom ldan 'das kyis gsungs pa la mngon par bstod do*.
- n.10 D, F, He, J, K<sub>Q</sub>, L, S, Z *chos bdun pa*; Go *byang sems dpa'i / slab pa bdun pa*.

b.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### · Tibetan Kangyur Editions ·

(rKTs = University of Vienna Resources for Kanjur and Tanjur Studies, <http://www.rkts.org> (<http://www.rkts.org/>). For other abbreviations, see notes.)

*'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo* (*Āryāvalokiteśvaraparipṛcchāsaptadharmakanāmahāyānasūtra*). Toh 150, Degé Kangyur vol. 57 (mdo sde, pa), folios 331.a–331.b. [tbrc.org](http://tbrc.org) (<http://tbrc.org/link?RID=W22084>)

*'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*. rKTs-K150, He48.6, Hemis Kangyur (He) (MsK), mdo sde, nga, folios 296.b–299.b. Digital scans from rKTs.

*'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*. rKTs-K150, J94, Lithang (li thang) Kangyur (J) (PK), vol. 52 (mdo sde, pa), folios 278.a–279.a. [tbrc.org](http://tbrc.org) (<http://tbrc.org/link?RID=W4CZ7445>)

*'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*. rKTs-K150, Q 817, Peking Qianlong (KQ) (PK), vol. 33 (mdo sna tshogs, nu), folios 293.b–294.b (p. 36 in bound edition).

*'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*. bka' 'gyur (dpe bsdur ma) [Comparative Edition of the Kangyur], krung go'i bod rig pa zhib 'jug ste gnas kyi bka' bstan dpe sdur khang (The Tibetan Tripitaka Collation Bureau of the China Tibetology Research Center). 108 volumes. Beijing: krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House), 2006–9, vol. 57, pp. 875–78.



'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gyis zhus pa / byang chub sems dpa'i slab pa bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. Go16,04, Gondhla Collection (Go) (MsK), vol. 16 (ka), folios 49.a–49.b. Digital scans from rKTs. See also Tauscher (2008) below.

'phags pa spyan ras gzigs kyi dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. rKTs-K150, L154, London Kangyur (L) (MsK), vol. 52 (mdo sde, za), folios 8.b–9.a. Digital scans from rKTs.

'phags pa spyan ras gzigs kyi dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. rKTs-K150, C790, Phug brag Kangyur (F) (MsK), vol. 80 (mdo sde, la), folios 371.b–372.b. Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions. 1990.

'phags pa spyan ras gzigs kyi dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. rKTs-K150, Z242, Shey Palace Manuscript Kangyur (Z) (MsK), vol.69 (mdo, za), folios 7.a–8.a. Digital scans from rKTs.

'phags pa spyan ras gzigs kyi dbang phyug gis zhus pa chos bdun pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo. rKTs-K150, S211, Stok Palace Manuscript Kangyur (stog pho brang bris ma) (S) (MsK), vol. 73 (mdo sde, za) folios 7.b-8.b. TBRC W22083. 109 vols. leh: smanrtsis shesrig dpemzod, 1975–80. [tbrc.org](http://tbrc.org/link?RID=W22083) (<http://tbrc.org/link?RID=W22083>)

#### · Other References ·

Apple, James B. "Atiśa's Open Basket of Jewels: A Middle Way Vision in Late Phase Indian Vajrayāna." *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 11 (2010): 117–98.

Chattopadhyaya, Alaka. 1967. *Atiśa and Tibet Life and Works of Dīpaṃkara Śrījñāna in relation to the History and Religion of Tibet*. (Reprinted) New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999, 2011.

Dharmachakra Translation Group, trans. 2016. *The Tantra of Siddhaikavīra* (<https://read.84000.co/translation/toh544.html>) (*Siddhaikavīratāntram*, Toh 544). 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha, 2016.

Pad dkar bzang po (author), mi nyag mgon po (editor). "'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dbang phyug gis zhus pa'i chos bdun pa'i mdo.'" In *mdo sde spyi'i rnam bzhag*, p. 426. Beijing: mi rigs dpe skrun khang (Minorities Publishing House), 2006. TBRC W1PD76588. [tbrc.org](http://tbrc.org/link?RID=O2DB70299|O2DB702992DB70539$W1PD76588) ([http://tbrc.org/link?RID=O2DB70299|O2DB702992DB70539\\$W1PD76588](http://tbrc.org/link?RID=O2DB70299|O2DB702992DB70539$W1PD76588))

- Sherburne, Richard. *The Complete Works of Atīśa Śrī Dīpaṅkara Jñāna, Jo-bo-rje: The Lamp for the Path and Commentary, together with the newly translated Twenty-Five Key Texts (Tibetan and English Texts)*. New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2000.
- Tauscher, Helmut. *Catalogue of the Gondhla proto-Kanjur*. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 2008.

## GLOSSARY

## · Types of attestation for Sanskrit names and terms ·

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in the Sanskrit manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other Sanskrit manuscripts of the Kangyur or Tengyur.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in Tibetan-Sanskrit dictionaries.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where Tibetan-Sanskrit relationship 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 Atiśa

*a ti sha*

ཨ་ཏི་ཤ།

*atiśa*

Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982–1054 CE), often referred to in Tibetan as *jo bo*, “(The) Lord,” was a renowned figure in the history of Tibetan Buddhism famous for coming to Tibet and revitalizing Buddhism there during the early eleventh century.

g.2 Avalokiteśvara

*spyang ras gzigs dbang phyug*

སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་ཕྱུག

*avalokiteśvara*

A bodhisattva who first appears in the *Sukhāvataṣṭyaḥ sūtra* (Toh 115) and then in a number of other Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* (Toh 113). Avalokiteśvara develops into a great bodhisattva who embodies compassion with multiple forms in Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan Buddhism.

g.3 generating the altruistic mind set on attaining awakening

*byang chub kyi sems bskyed*

བྱང་ལྷན་གྱི་སེམས་བསྐྱེད།

*bodhicittotpāda*

The altruistic resolve to achieve complete and perfect buddhahood for the sake of oneself and all sentient beings.

g.4 Gewai Lodrö

*dge ba'i blo gros*

དགེ་བའི་བློ་གྲོས།

—

Ma Gewai Lodrö (*ma dge ba'i blo gros*), a Tibetan lotsāwa, was an important disciple of Rinchen Zangpo (*rin chen bzang po*, 958–1055) who translated several texts with Atiśa and worked with the Kaśmīri master Subhūtiśrībhadrā to translate a number of pramāṇa texts.

g.5 opening formula

*gleng gzhi*

གླེང་གཞི།

*nidāna*

g.6 Subhūtiśrī

—

—

*subhūtiśrī*

Subhūtiśrī(śānti) was a paṇḍita from Kaśmīr invited to Western Tibet during the reign of the king Lha Dé (*Lha lde*) who translated a number of Prajñāpāramitā texts, sūtras, and works of pramāṇa.

g.7 Tholing

*tho ling*

ཐོ་ལིང།

—

The important West Tibetan monastery founded in 996 CE by King Yeshé Ö (*ye shes 'od*) and the translator Rinchen Zangpo (*rin chen bzang po*).