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The Dhāraṇī of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin

Āvaraṇaviṣkambhidhāraṇī

འཕགས་པ་སྐྱབ་པ་རྣམ་པར་སེལ་བ་ཞེས་བྱ་བའི་གཟུངས།

'phags pa sgrib pa rnam par sel ba zhes bya ba'i gzungs

The Noble Dhāraṇī of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin

Āryāvāraṇaviṣkambhināmadhāraṇī



Toh 891
Degé Kangyur, vol. 100 (gzungs, e), folios 166.a–166.b

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co.

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SUMMARY

s.1 *The Dhāraṇī of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin* presents two short dhāraṇīs that purify evil deeds, ease the dying process, and bring about birth in the heavenly realms.

ac.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ac.1 This text was translated and introduced by Catherine Dalton and edited by members of the 84000 editorial team.

ac.2 The translation was completed under the patronage and supervision of 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.

INTRODUCTION

i.

i.1 *The Dhāraṇī of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin* begins with homage to the Three Jewels, and then presents two short dhāraṇīs of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin. It is explained that reciting these dhāraṇīs will purify evil deeds that have been accumulated, result in a pleasant death rather than a painful one, and bring about subsequent rebirth in the heavenly realms.

i.2 Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin is referred to in this short text as both a buddha and a bodhisattva. As a bodhisattva, he is generally associated with the removal of obscuration and evil deeds. He is also one of eight bodhisattvas who appear together in texts from the Guhyasamāja corpus and are referred to as a group in later Tibetan tradition as the “eight close sons” (*nye ba'i sras brgyad*) of the Buddha Śākyamuni.¹

i.3 The present text is included in the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs section of the Degé Kangyur and other Tshalpa lineage Kangyurs that have a separate dhāraṇī section. In the Tshalpa lineage Kangyurs that do not contain a dhāraṇī section, it is placed in the Tantra section. However, it is not included in any Thempangma lineage Kangyurs. In fact, this text is one of only twelve works from the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs section of the Kangyurs that is not duplicated in other sections, either as a sūtra or a tantra. Like the few other texts in this unique category, the present work may have been included in some Kangyurs specifically due to its being part of an earlier collection of dhāraṇīs and associated ritual texts, which was later incorporated into the Compendium of Dhāraṇīs.² These collections, known in Sanskrit as *dhāraṇī-saṃgraha*, appear in South Asia as well as in Tibet—including at Dunhuang—and as extracanonical Tibetan dhāraṇī collections.³

i.4 The text lacks a translator’s colophon, so we do not know when it was translated into Tibetan. It does not appear in any of the imperial catalogs, nor among the Dunhuang manuscripts. It also does not appear to be extant in Sanskrit, nor to have been translated into Chinese.

The present English translation of *The Dhāraṇī of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin* was made on the basis of the Degé Kangyur recension of the work, with additional reference to the notes from the Comparative Edition (*dpe bsdur ma*). The text is stable across all recensions consulted. The dhāraṇīs proper are transcribed exactly as they appear in the Degé recension of the text.

**The Noble
Dhāraṇī of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin**

1.

The Translation

[F.166.a]

- 1.1 Homage to the Buddha.
Homage to the Dharma.
Homage to the Sangha.

Beginning with these lines of homage, the dhāraṇī of noble Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin should be recited as follows.

- 1.2 If one recites this essence of the blessed, thus-gone, worthy, perfect Buddha Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin seven times, all evil deeds related to one's body will be purified and at the time of death one will die happily.

- 1.3 *oṃ śvetavaravijaline svāhā*

- 1.4 If one recites this essence of the bodhisattva great being Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin seven times during the day and seven times at night, the continuum of the evil deeds that one has accumulated will be purified, [F.166.b] and at the time of death, one will not experience strong pain as the vital energies are interrupted. Instead, one will die happily.

- 1.5 *oṃ sarva āvaraṇaviṣkambhine svāhā*

- 1.6 If someone makes proper offerings of clean food and the like to the buddhas and their offspring, then at the time of death that person will be free from illness and pain, and they will die happily. After death, they will be born among the gods in the Heaven of the Thirty-Three, in the Heaven Free from Conflict, or in the Heaven of Joy, where they will live happily.

- 1.7 Even if a monk or nun,
Or a male or female householder,
Does not observe the calendar phases or astrology,
Nor bathe and observe purity strictures,

- 1.8 They will find success by maintaining this *vidyā*.
Yet if someone has no interest in it,
They will never be successful.
Hence, one should be greatly committed to it.
- 1.9 *This completes "The Noble Dhāraṇī of Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin."*

n.

NOTES

- n.1 The name of this bodhisattva when he figures in this group of eight is usually given in the surviving Sanskrit literature as Sarvanivaraṇaviṣkambhin, though we do see Sarvāvaraṇaviṣkambhin attested in at least one Indic source. *Nivaraṇa* and *āvāraṇa* both mean “obscuration,” and when the bodhisattva’s name is translated into Tibetan, in both cases it is rendered as *sgrib pa (thams cad) rnam (par) sel (ba)*. Here, both the Sanskrit title given in our text and the dhāraṇī render the name as Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin.
- n.2 The opening lines of the table of contents (*dkar chaḡ*) of an independent dhāraṇī collection printed in Beijing in 1731, found in the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest and transcribed by Orosz, identify the source of all such dhāraṇī collections as the extracanonical collection edited by Tāranātha (Orosz 2010, pp. 67 and 100). This mention is also noted by Hidas 2021, p. 7, n. 56.
- n.3 See J. Dalton 2016, and J. Dalton and S. van Schaik 2006, on the *dhāraṇī-saṃgraha* collections preserved at Dunhuang, which contain praises and prayers as well as dhāraṇīs. See Hidas 2021 for the catalogs of eighteen *dhāraṇīsaṃgraha* collections surviving in Sanskrit, many of which also contain praises.

b.

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GLOSSARY

· Types of attestation for names and terms of the corresponding ·
source language

AS	<i>Attested in source text</i> This term is attested in a manuscript used as a source for this translation.
AO	<i>Attested in other text</i> This term is attested in other manuscripts with a parallel or similar context.
AD	<i>Attested in dictionary</i> This term is attested in dictionaries matching Tibetan to the corresponding language.
AA	<i>Approximate attestation</i> The attestation of this name is approximate. It is based on other names where the relationship between the Tibetan and source language 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 Āvaraṇaviṣkambhin

sgrib pa rnam par sel ba

སྒྲིབ་པ་རྣམ་པར་སེལ་བ།

āvaraṇaviṣkambhin ^{AD}

A buddha and a bodhisattva in this text.

g.2 dhāraṇī

gzungs

གཟུངས།

dhāraṇī^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

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.

g.3 Heaven Free from Conflict

'thab bral

འཐབ་བྲལ།

yāma^{AD}

One of the six heavens of the desire realm.

g.4 Heaven of Joy

dga' ldan

དགའ་ལྡན།

tuṣita^{AD}

Definition from the 84000 Glossary of Terms:

Tuṣita (or sometimes Saṃtuṣita), literally “Joyous” or “Contented,” is one of the six heavens of the desire realm (*kāmadhātu*). In standard classifications, such as the one in the *Abhidharmakośa*, it is ranked as the fourth of the six counting from below. This god realm is where all future buddhas are said to dwell before taking on their final rebirth prior to awakening. There, the Buddha Śākyamuni lived his preceding life as the bodhisattva Śvetaketu. When departing to take birth in this world, he appointed the bodhisattva Maitreya, who will be the next buddha of this eon, as his Dharma regent in Tuṣita. For an account of the Buddha’s previous life in Tuṣita, see *The Play in Full* (Toh 95), 2.12, and for an account of Maitreya’s birth in Tuṣita and a description of this realm, see *The Sūtra on Maitreya’s Birth in the Heaven of Joy*, (Toh 199).

g.5 Heaven of the Thirty-Three

sum bcu rtsa gsum

སྤྱི་བརྒྱུད་གསུམ།

trāyastriṃśa ^{AD}

The second heaven of the desire realm, located above Mount Meru and reigned over by Indra and thirty-two other gods.

g.6 vidyā

rig pa

འིག་པ།

vidyā ^{AD}

A synonym for dhāraṇī.