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Sūtra of the Buddha-Crown Superb Victory Dhāraṇī

Translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in the Tang Dynasty

by

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Thus I have heard:

At one time the Bhagavān was staying in the Anāthapiṇḍika Garden of Jetavana Park in the city kingdom of Śrāvastī, together with 8,000 great bhikṣus. As recognized by the multitudes, all of them were venerable voice-hearers, or great Arhats. At the head of this group were great voice-hearers, such as the venerable Śāriputra, Mahāmaudgalyāyana, Mahākāśyapa, Aniruddha, and others. Also present was an innumerable multitude of Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas, adorned with immeasurable virtues, all standing on the Ground of No-regress. Among them were Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, Great Might Arrived Bodhisattva, Maitreya Bodhisattva, Sublime Lotus Store Bodhisattva, Annihilating All Hindrance Bodhisattva, and Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas such as these, seated with the multitude in the assembly, were at the head of 32,000 Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas. At the head of the Brahma group were god-kings from Brahma Multitude Heaven, Great Brahma Heaven, and Sudarśana Heaven, and at the head of 12,000 gods was the god-king Śakro-Devānām-Indra. Also seated in the assembly was an innumerable multitude of gods, dragons, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kiṁnaras, mahoragas, kumbhāṇḍas, piśācas, humans, nonhumans, and others. At that time, surrounding

the World-Honored One with reverence and gazing at Him with adoration, His four groups of disciples and others listened single-mindedly to the Dharma.

Meanwhile, the gods in Trayastriṃśa Heaven, or the Thirty-three Heavens, met in the Good Dharma Hall, and among them was a god-son named [Supraṭiṣṭhita] Well Established. Accompanied by goddess-daughters and attendants from the Great Jewel Palace, he frolicked indulgently with those surrounding him and amused himself with those goddess playmates. In the post-midnight period, he suddenly heard a voice in the sky pronouncing these words:

“God-Son Well Established, after seven days, you will die and fall to the southern continent, Jambudvīpa, to be reborn seven times as animals of different species, which eat filthy, impure food. Then you will fall into hell to undergo all kinds of suffering. Only after many kalpas will you become a human. Although you will have a human body, you will be born incomplete, eyeless, looking gross and ugly. Your breath will constantly be foul, and you will always lack food and clothing. You will be poor, sordid, and repulsive.”

The god-son Well Established was terrified, and the hair on his entire body stood on end. Forthwith, he and his well-adorned palace attendants, carrying incense, flowers, and other objects of offering, went to the god-king Śakra. After kneeling and bowing down at the god-king’s feet, he cried in sorrow and said to the god-king, “Please hear me. While I was making merry in the Good Dharma Hall with a multitude of gods and goddesses, I suddenly heard a voice in the sky calling my name. It said that my life would end after seven days, and that I would descend to Jambudvīpa to be reborn in animal form for seven lives, eating impure, filthy food. I would then enter into hell and suffer for many kalpas. Afterward, I would gain a human body without eyes. I would live in destitution with a gross, ugly appearance. My breath would be foul, and I would be poor and sordid, fettered by afflictions and detested by others. God-King, how would you save me from this fate?”

At that time the god-king Śakra was astonished to hear these words, and he pondered what merit had caused the god-son Well Established to be reborn in

heaven, enjoying wonderful pleasures for many kalpas. He also pondered what evil karma would cause his celestial-life requital to end suddenly and cause him to be reborn in Jambudvīpa in animal form for seven lives, to enter into hell to undergo a great deal of suffering, and then to become a human without eyes, living under wretched conditions. After those thoughts, he thought about what animal forms Well Established would assume. Using his God-eye to scan these prospective requitals, Śakra saw in a momentary samādhi the seven animal forms that the god-son Well Established would assume. They would be pig, dog, jackal, monkey, python, raven, and vulture, all of which eat very foul, filthy things. What he had just seen aggravated his concern, making his heart ache with sorrow and anguish. Śakra then thought: “I have only seen a small part of his requitals. Matters responding to causes deep and far are beyond my ability to conjecture. Only the Tathāgata, the Ocean of True Omniscience, knows the good and evil causations such as these. I should go consult Him about this matter. The World-Honored One, out of His great lovingkindness, would tell us the reasons and even help Well Established to avoid such suffering.”

Immediately, the god-king Śakra commanded his multitude of gods that each should have his palace attendants well adorned and carry offerings, such as garlands, necklaces, powdered incense, incense for burning, and various kinds of solid perfumes, as well as celestial garments hovering over all. Accompanied by his retinue, the god-king Śakra came swiftly to Jetavana Park. Upon arrival, he bowed down to the Buddha, circled Him clockwise seven times, and made his enormous offerings before the Buddha. Having completed such Dharma decorum, he stepped back to one side.

At the Buddha’s holy command, he said, “World-Honored One, the god-son Well Established was enjoying himself, frolicking with a multitude of gods and goddesses in the Good Dharma Hall when he suddenly heard a voice in the sky. It announced that after seven days the celestial life of the god-son Well Established would end, and that he would assume various animal forms, then enter into hell, and then become a human with incomplete faculties, undergoing a great deal of suffering. Having reported everything to Buddha, I pray only that the World-

Honored One, for the sake of Your four groups of disciples and all of us, will explain the causes and conditions in the past lives of Well Established. What meritorious karma had he done, which has brought about his rebirth in heaven to enjoy pleasures for many kalpas? And through what causes and conditions would he fall after death to become those seven animals as stated before, eating filth as food; then to enter into hell to undergo suffering for many kalpas; and then to gain a human form, eyeless, dwarfish and sordid, gross and ugly, poor and filthy, entangled in evils, and despised by others? Also, what merit had he achieved, which moved the one who spoke in the sky, forewarning him of his future requitals? I pray only that the World-Honored One, out of sympathy for Well Established and all of us, will tell the origin of these causes, conditions, and deserved requitals. Please save him with lovingkindness and compassion and enable him to achieve liberation.”

The World-Honored One told the god-king Śakra, “Good man, out of great lovingkindness, you are able to ask for Well Established’s sake about matters related to the causes and conditions in his past, which would have resulted in good or evil karmic requital. You are also able to ask me to save him from future suffering. Very Good! Hugely Good! Hearken! Hearken! I will explain to you.”

Then the World-Honored One emitted vast bright light from the crown of His head, illuminating all Buddha Lands in the ten directions. The light consisted of five colors—blue, red, yellow, white, and black—which reflected one another and circled clockwise. It returned to the Buddha, circled Him three times, and entered His mouth.

After drawing in the light, the Buddha smiled and told the god-king Śakra, “Hearken! Hearken! innumerable asaṃkhyeyas of kalpas ago, there was a Buddha called Vipāśyin, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyak-Saṃbuddha, Knowledge and Action Perfected, Sugata, Understanding the World, Unsurpassed One, Tamer of Men, Teacher to Gods and Humans, Buddha the World-Honored One. After the conditions for Him to transform the world had ended, He entered parinirvāṇa. In the subsequent Dharma-likeness age, there was a city kingdom called Vārāṇasī, where a Brahmin had an only son born to him and died soon afterward. The son

was raised only by his mother. As he was growing up, he worked in the fields planting crops, and his poor mother went about begging for food from place to place. When it was past mealtime and food did not arrive, the son, hungry, thirsty, and angry with his mother, would speak malicious words, grumbling about why she had not yet brought him food that day. With annoyance and resentment, he would go on and on. One day, he spoke angry words about her: 'My mother is less than an animal. I have seen pigs, dogs, jackals, monkeys, ravens, vultures, and the like raising their young. Even an animal, raising and caring for its young, would not let them go hungry and thirsty or leave them alone even temporarily. Why does my mother not come to see me? I am so hungry and thirsty, but she does not bring me food.'

"While the son was harboring hatred, his mother had received food by begging, with which she immediately arrived. She comforted her son and made him happy. As they sat down to eat, they suddenly saw a Solitary Buddha, in the appearance of a monk, flying in the sky from the south to the north. When the son saw him, feelings of reverence arose in his heart. At once he stood up, joined his palms, and bowed his head, asking the monk to descend. The Pratyekabuddha accepted the invitation. Joyfully, the son prepared a white grass seat, gathered beautiful flowers, and took a portion of his food. He offered these to the monk, who, after finishing eating, taught him the essentials of the Dharma, which brought him benefit and delight.

"Later on, the son was able to renounce family life, and was assigned to be the taskmaster in a temple. About that time, a Brahmin had living quarters built for the monks, and donors had offered a lot of butter and oil. It happened that some visiting monks were eating in the temple. The general director, stingy and antagonistic, saw the visitors eating and regarded them as trouble. He did not give them butter, oil, or other food. One of the visiting monks asked, 'It is customary to give food to visiting monks. Why do you save it and not give it to us?' The ill-natured director exploded, shouting at the visiting monks: 'Why don't you eat feces and urine, instead of asking for butter? Your eyes are blind? Did you see me hide the butter?'"

The Buddha told the god-king Śakra, “The Brahmin’s son of the past is the god-son Well Established now. Because he used angry words comparing his mother to animals, he has drawn an animal’s body for himself for the next seven lives. Because he, as the taskmaster, spoke of eating filth, the karmic response is that he himself would eat filthy things. Because he was too stingy to offer food to those monks, he was bound to fall into hell to undergo suffering. Because he scolded the monks as being blind, he would receive the requital of having no eyes for seven hundred lives, staying in darkness for a long time, undergoing tremendous misery. God-King, you should know that such sinful karmas never fail to bring corresponding requitals.

“Moreover, God-King, the god-son Well Established has been reborn in heaven because he made offerings to a Pratyekabuddha in the past and, specifically, because of the karmic force generated from his having prepared a seat, respectfully offered flowers and food, and listened to the teachings. Therefore, he has received the heaven-fortune for several kalpas, continuously enjoying wonderful pleasures. Besides, he looked up in admiration at the Pratyekabudhha flying across the sky, and then sincerely bowed his head down, paying respects. In response to this merit, the divine voice in the sky declaring Well Established’s future requitals was from his palace-guardian god.”

Accepting what the Buddha had said, Well Established acknowledged that his karmas originated from past conditions. He severely reproached himself before the Buddha: “In the past, I had been angry with my mother and scolded the monks out of hatred and stinginess. Those karmas would bring me future horrendous requitals. Accepting His holy finding, I now repent with my life.”

Well Established then threw himself to the ground. Blood all over his body, he stayed unconscious for a long time. When he gradually came to, overcome by anguish, he cried loudly, tears falling like rain.

The Buddha told Well Established and the god-king Śakra: “Of the ten evil karmas, abusive speech is the worst. Malicious scolding is stronger than a blazing fire. While a blazing fire can burn the wealth of the seven treasures, which are

only worldly playthings, the flames of an abusive mouth can burn the wealth of the seven noble treasures. They can completely burn out all the merit needed for transcending the world and can swiftly bring evil requitals. In your case, Well Established, your words of hate about your mother and abusive language to the monks have completely burned out your heaven-reward, sending you to hell.

“You should not insult god-kings, parents, or monks. Instead, you should respect, honor, and make offerings to them. You should praise them with gentle words and constantly remember their lovingkindness. Remember that lovingkindness in the Three Realms of Existence comes only from your parents. The fields, encountered in your past, present, and future lives, for planting seeds of fortune do not outweigh the monks as such. For example, making offerings to monks in the eight holy ranks, to the twelve sages, and to holy beings will never be in vain, because such virtue can support you to transcend the world and, furthermore, to attain bodhi. How could you ever use abusive language to the monks?

“It is arduous toil for parents to bear and rear a child. It takes ten months of gestation and three years of nursing. As parents spend years of worries and hardships, rearing and educating their child, they hope that the child will develop outstanding abilities. They also hope that their child will renounce family life and transcend his cycle of birth and death. Their kind concern is too great to requite. Therefore, as I have told Ānanda, even if you carried your father on your left shoulder and your mother on your right to circle Mount Sumeru a billion times, shedding blood ankle deep, it would not be enough to requite their lovingkindness in nurturing you for one day. How could you ever think evil thoughts and speak angry words about them?”

The Buddha said to the god-king Śakra and the god-son Well Established: “Because you have seen me today, your five eyes are purified. Because your repentance is thorough, your sins have been expunged.”

Looking at Well Established, the Buddha said, “You can stop crying now because I have a Dharma Door called the Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra.

Those who recite this mantra can be liberated from their suffering. Well Established, this Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra of mine is pronounced by a billion koṭi Buddhas. This dhāraṇī, which I will soon pronounce, can be compared to all the Buddha-crowns and is most dignified and most victorious. It can annihilate all karma hindrances, bringing purity; pull sentient beings out of their life-journeys in hell, as animals, and in King Yama’s dominion; and eradicate the afflictions of life and death for all sentient beings.”

The Buddha then told the god-king, “If, among good men, good women, bhikṣus, and bhikṣuṇīs, there are those who can uphold this pure Buddha-Crown Superb Victory Dhāraṇī Mantra, reading and reciting it, this merit can obliterate their ten evil karmas and their five rebellious acts done in a billion kalpas, and can prepare them to attain anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi. They will have past-life knowledge without changing their present bodies, and they will be reborn in one Buddha Land after another. They will constantly encounter Bodhisattvas Samantabhadra, Mañjuśrī, Avokiteśvara, and Great Might Arrived, who will rub their heads and proffer them a guiding hand, recognizing them as Bodhisattvas. They will constantly hear and uphold the true Dharma in a bodhimaṇḍa and acquire sarvajña. Their lifespan will be lengthened, and they will not die accidental deaths because their body, voice, and mind will be pure. With their bodies pleasantly tingly, they will feel very clean, light, and tranquil anywhere and anytime. If they remember this dhāraṇī upon dying, they will be reborn in Buddha Lands.”

When the god-king Śakra heard the Buddha praise the inconceivable virtue of this Superb Victory Dhāraṇī, he was filled with joyful appreciation and whole-hearted longing. He said, “World-Honored One, I pray only that the Tathāgata, taking sympathetic consideration of Well Established and the rest of us as well as sentient beings in the expected Dharma-ending age, will pronounce this Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra. I should train myself to have all sentient beings forever avoid the suffering of the eight difficulties.”

Then the World-Honored One, for the sake of the god-king, the god-son Well Established, His four groups of disciples, and others, pronounced the mantra:

namo bhagavate trai-lokya prativiśiṣṭāya buddhāya bhagavate | tad-yathā oṃ
viśodhaya viśodhaya | asamasama samantāvabhāsa spharaṇa gati gahana
svabhāva viśuddhe | abhiṣiñcatu mām | sugata vara vacana | amṛtābhiṣeke
mahāmantra pāne | āhara āhara āyuh sandhāraṇi | śodhaya śodhaya gagana
viśuddhe | uṣṇīṣa vijaya viśuddhe | sahasra-raśmi saṃcodite | sarva
tathāgatāvalokana ṣaṭ-pāramitā paripūraṇi | sarva tathāgata
hṛdayādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhita mahāmudre | vajra-kāya saṃharaṇa viśuddhe |
sarvāvaraṇāpāya-durgati pari-viśuddhe | prati-nivartayāyuh śuddhe |
samayādhiṣṭhite maṇi maṇi mahāmaṇi | tathātā bhūta koṭi pariśuddhe | visphuṭa
buddhi śuddhe | jaya jaya vijaya vijaya smara smara | sarva buddhādhiṣṭhita
śuddhe | vajre vajra-garbhe vajraṃ bhavatu mama śarīraṃ | sarva sattvānām ca
kāya pari-viśuddhe | sarva gati pariśuddhe | sarva tathāgatāśca me
samāśvāsayantū | sarva tathāgata samāśvāsādhiṣṭhite | budhya budhya vibudhya
vibudhya | bodhaya bodhaya vibodhaya vibodhaya | samanta pariśuddhe | sarva
tathāgata hṛdayādhiṣṭhānādhiṣṭhita mahāmudre svāhā | |

The Buddha said to the god-king, “This Purifying Life-Journey Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra of mine can totally annihilate the hindrances caused by sinful karma and end the suffering of the three evil life-paths. This dhāraṇī mantra is pronounced by all Buddhas, as numerous as the sands of eighty-eight koṭi Ganges Rivers. They all remember, safeguard, delight in, and praise it. It bears the seal of sanctification of all Tathāgatas because it can expunge for all sentient beings their sins of the ten evil karmas, and can rescue those that are taking life-journeys in hell, as animals, as hungry ghosts, and in King Yama’s dominion. Suppose the meritorious karma of all sentient beings is diminishing, and some of them should receive the requital of a short lifespan or of being handicapped, sickly, ugly, dwarfish, destitute, blind, deaf, or mute, or should fall into hell or assume animal form to undergo suffering. If they hear me speak the name of this dhāraṇī, their evil requitals will be revoked and they will be liberated. Even sentient beings that have accumulated evil karmas, including

the ten evil karmas and the five rebellious acts, will benefit. All their hindrances caused by sin, whether severe or slight, will be annihilated. They will eventually attain anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi, forever leaving behind all suffering, forever free from King Yama's dominion or from taking life-journeys as animals or even asuras, yakṣas, rakṣasas, pūtanās, kaṭa-pūtanās, apasamāras, and the like."

The Buddha said to the god-king, "If there are those who can accept and recite this mantra, once they have kept reciting it, they will be forever free from the evil life-journeys and will always be with Buddhas in the ten directions. They will be reborn in the excellent company of Bodhisattvas, or they will be reborn into the noble Brahmin caste. They will always be in the bodhimaṇḍas of Buddhas' Pure Lands, and they will even attain the unsurpassed bodhi and achieve the liberation body in the ocean of true omniscience of Tathāgata-Saṃbuddhas."

The Buddha said to the god-king and the god-son Well Established: "This Purifying Life-journey Superb Victory Dhāraṇī Mantra of mine has vast spiritual power, great virtue, and awesome might. It is like the auspicious sun and like a precious jewel. It is pure and immaculate like the sky. From its site, it illuminates the world, just like the superb seven treasures of the world. Among all sentient beings, including kings, queens, princes, prime ministers, and state officials, whoever has seen it will treasure it and never tire of seeing it, because this wonderful jewel is never tainted by filth. God-King, this dhāraṇī is like the jewel I just described. Whoever accepts and upholds, reads and recites, or copies this dhāraṇī, or makes offerings to it, the eight classes of Dharma protectors, such as gods and dragons, will treasure his merit as they do that wonderful jewel, which they would not want to part with even temporarily. Why? Because the power of this dhāraṇī can expunge the grave sins of all hell-dwellers, animals, and hungry ghosts! Furthermore, its power will enable its upholder to attain anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi."

The Buddha told the god-king and the god-son Well Established: "Suppose, among kings, queens, crown-princes, princes, prime ministers, state officials, bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, good men, and good women, there are those who, as an offering, copy this dhāraṇī mantra and enshrine the copy, whether in a pagoda

made of the seven treasures, on a jeweled lion-throne, on a vajra pedestal, in a pagoda containing holy relics, or on the top of a cylindrical banner. Then suppose, among sentient beings born through the four modes of birth, bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas, and upāsikās, there are those who have committed grave sins, such as the ten evil karmas, the five rebellious acts, or violations of the four grave prohibitions, and therefore should be reborn in Yama’s dominion or even journey the six life-paths, suffering along the way. Should these sinners walk by the pagoda containing this dhāraṇī and should the dust of the pagoda fall on them, their sins would all be expunged. Even if the wind sweeps across the pagoda then blows a little on them, they will be reborn in heaven to enjoy splendid pleasures or reborn in a Pure Land according to their wishes. Should a person who upholds this dhāraṇī wash his hands and drip water from his hands to the ground, even ants and insects touched by the water would be reborn in heaven. Therefore if, among bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas, upāsikās, men, and women, there are those who can observe their precepts day and night in the six periods and keep reciting this dhāraṇī without interruption, their grave sins in the past and present, such as the five rebellious acts, violations of the four grave prohibitions, and the ten evil karmas, will all be expunged. Moreover, Bodhisattvas and Tathāgatas will rub their heads, recognizing them as Bodhisattvas, and say to them, ‘Good men, because you can accept and uphold the Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra, you will certainly attain anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi in a future life.’”

The Buddha said to the god-king, “If someone can at crossroads build a treasure pagoda or erect a high cylindrical banner to enshrine this dhāraṇī sūtra, and can make offerings of flowers, incense, necklaces, adornments made of the seven treasures, wonderful garments, food and drink, and medicinal potion, his merit will be immeasurable and boundless, and his fortune and wisdom incalculable. This person is truly a Bodhisattva-Mahāsattva and a Buddha-son. Why? Because he is saving and benefiting innumerable sentient beings that pass by under the pagoda.”

In the post-midnight period, Yama, king of the underworld, accompanied by his retinue in the billions of koṭis, carrying flowers, incense, and various kinds of

adornments, came to the Buddha to make offerings. He circled the Buddha clockwise seven times, bowed down at the Buddha's feet, and offered Him flowers, incense, and other things. He said, "World-Honored One, I have heard that the World-Honored One is pronouncing the Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra. Therefore, I now have come to hear, accept, and follow His oral teachings, and to safeguard them."

Also at the same time, the four god-kings, who protect the world, the god-king Śakro-Devānām-Indra of Trayastriṃśa Heaven, and the god-kings of Suyāma Heaven, Saṃtuṣita Heaven, Sunirmita Heaven, Vaśavartti Heaven, Brahma Heaven, Great Brahma Heaven, and other heavens, accompanied by their retinues, carrying incense, flowers, and necklaces, came to the Buddha to make offerings. They circled the Buddha clockwise seven times and said, "We pray only that the World-Honored One will pronounce the Dharma procedure for upholding this Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra, so that we can know how to perform the rite of offering."

The Buddha said to the world protectors, the great Brahma-kings, King Yama, and others: "Hearken! Hearken! I speak at your request. If there is a suffering sentient being with grave sins and with no one to rescue him, he should, on the fifteenth day of a waxing moon, bathe, wear clean clothes, and accept the eight precepts. He should mindfully kneel on his right knee, facing the image of an enlightened being, and recite this mantra 1,080 times. Then all his sins and karma hindrances will be removed. He will be able to retain all the meanings of this Dhāraṇī Door and to command unimpeded eloquence, and he will be purified and liberated."

The Buddha told the god-kings, "If a person hears this dhāraṇī, though he himself does not recite it, the sound, once it enters the ear, can condition his ālaya consciousness and become the Buddha seed. As an analogy, when a small adamantine substance falls to the ground, it can penetrate deep into the earth. Unobstructed by the thickness of the earth, it will reach the core and stay there. In the same way, the sound of this mantra, once heard, can condition the person's habitual nature into a resolve to attain the perfect enlightenment,

unhindered by his afflictions, however severe they may be. Even if he becomes a hell-dweller, an animal, or a hungry ghost, he will not be stopped by his karmic requitals. By the power of this mantra, he will progress and eventually arrive at the Buddha Ground.

“God-Kings, once sentient beings born through the four modes of birth have heard this dhāraṇī, they will not have more troubles or repeat their old troubles in their present lives. Instead of assuming the form of an embryo again, they will be reborn with miraculously formed bodies in lotus flowers, and all shackles of their afflictions will be broken forever. Their five eyes becoming pure, they will have past-life knowledge and will eventually attain anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi.”

The Buddha said to the god-kings, “If a person recites this dhāraṇī mantra twenty-one times to a handful of yellow soil and scatters the soil on the remains of someone who is just deceased or has been deceased for a long time, the deceased will be reborn in any of the Pure Lands in the ten directions. If the consciousness of the deceased has already begun his life-journey in hell, as an animal, as a hungry ghost, or in Yama’s dominion, when the mantra soil touches the bones, he will be liberated and reborn in heaven, abandoning the evil life-journey.”

“If a person expecting a short life desires longevity, on the fifteenth day of a waxing moon, he should bathe, wear clean clothes, observe the precepts single-mindedly, and recite this dhāraṇī mantra 1,080 times. This person expecting a short life will thus gain longevity, and all his karma hindrances will be annihilated.

“Furthermore, if a person recites this dhāraṇī mantra only once into the ears of an animal, this animal, having heard this mantra once, will not assume animal form again after this life. Even if the animal is supposed to enter hell, it will be exempted.

“If a person who is suffering immensely from an evil disease hears only the sound of this dhāraṇī mantra, his hindrances caused by sin will be annihilated, and he will be able to leave his suffering behind. Even sentient beings born through the four modes of birth, having heard this mantra, will be freed from

illness, suffering, and their modes of birth. Through miraculously formation, they will be reborn in lotus flowers, and they will know their past lives and not forget their birthplaces.

“If a person since birth has done any of the ten evil karmas, or committed any of the five rebellious sins or the four grave root-sins, he knows that, because of his evil karma, after death, he will fall into Avīci Hell to undergo dreadful suffering for many kalpas, and will repeatedly be reborn there, kalpa after kalpa, for thousands of kalpas. He also knows that if he goes down the life-path as an animal, he will repeatedly take that evil life-path without reprieve. On the fifteenth day of a waxing moon, before the image of an enlightened being, this person should place in the maṇḍala one liter of pure water in a gold or silver container, accept the Bodhisattva precepts, and observe the precept of not eating food after lunch. He should stay on the west side of the maṇḍala, facing the holy image on the east side. He should burn incense, do prostrations, and pray with utmost sincerity, mindfully kneeling on his right knee. He should recite this dhāraṇī mantra 1,080 times without interruption. Then he should sprinkle the water in all four directions, also up and down, praying that all sentient beings be purified. After he has performed this rite, his evil karma, which would cause him to fall into hell or become an animal or a hungry ghost, will be obliterated, and he will be liberated. King King Yama’s exoneration officer, not angered but respectful, will joyfully join his palms and praise this person’s merit. After death, he will be reborn in a Buddha Land and, as he may wish, he can visit Pure Lands in the ten directions. In addition, on the fifteen day of a waxing moon, one may recite the mantra to pippala figs in butter-honey 1,080 times and let the sinner eat them. Having eaten, his sins of the ten evil karmas and the five rebellious acts will all be expunged. Furthermore, he will eventually attain anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi.”

“Those who desire to perform this maṇḍala rite should, on the fifteenth day of a waxing moon, mix perfumed water with yellow soil and cow dung and smear the ground with this mixture. The square maṇḍala measures four elbow lengths on each side, and it should be surrounded by three tiers of gemstones from the

Laṅkā Mountain, which are in five colors. An ancillary tier of white Laṅkā gemstones marks the boundary on the four sides. Scatter flowers inside the maṇḍala and place four vessels of water on the lotus flowers painted in the four corners. The vessels should be the same in size. Reverently place a bottle of holy relics and cow's bezoar on the center lotus flower. In the maṇḍala, scatter various flowers and burn incense and various kinds of fragrances, such as camphor, saffron, agalloch, and so forth. Light various kinds of lamps, such as butter lamps, oil lamps, and scented lamps. As an offering in the maṇḍala, place grape and pomegranate juices and various kinds of food, such as rice, milk, cream, butter, oil, and cane sugar, in a container made of the seven treasures. Then the spiritual trainee should observe the Bodhisattva precepts to purify his conduct, and eat the three white foods as a meal. He should wear clean clothes and stay on the west side of the maṇḍala. After praying with his palms joined, kneeling on his right knee, he should first make the mudrā of Buddha protection then perform the Buddha-mind maṇḍala rite by reciting this Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra 1,080 times. All his sins, such as the ten evil karmas, will thus be expunged, and he will eventually attain anuttara-samyak-saṃbodhi. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will rub his head, personally bestowing upon him the prophecy of his attaining bodhi. If he wants to visit the abode of Bodhisattvas, they will take him to their own palaces, traveling to and fro among Buddha Lands in the ten directions.”

Finally, the Buddha said to the god-kings, “Such is the Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra! In the Dharma-ending age, if, among bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, upāsakas, and upāsikās, or among kings, queens, queen-mothers, crown princes, princes, princes' wives, prime ministers, state officials, humans, and nonhumans, or even among sentient beings that understand the human language, there is someone who can perform this maṇḍala rite, he should smear the ground with a mixture of water or perfumed water, soil, and cow dung to purify the ground. When he adorns the maṇḍala with scattered flowers, burning incense, cylindrical banners, canopies, and lanterns, and makes an offering of various kinds of precious jewels, food, and drink, this is called dāna-pāramitā. When he maintains the maṇḍala without any resentment at disturbances, it is called kṣānti-pāramitā.

When he performs this maṇḍala rite diligently and bravely without negligence or indolence, it is called vīrya-pāramitā. When he follows the rules single-mindedly without being distracted, it is called dhyāna-pāramitā. When he arranges things straight and proper, knowing the difference between right and wrong, it is called prajñā-pāramitā. God-Kings, if you follow my oral teachings to conduct Dharma affairs, you will naturally practice the six pāramitās. Therefore, you should in turn pronounce these teachings to all sentient beings to benefit them and enable them to attain bodhi.”

After the Buddha finished expounding this sūtra, the god-king Śakra and the god-son Well Established returned to their own palaces. Well Established recited the mantra according to the instruction for seven consecutive days, then he saw that the requitals for his sins had all been revoked. Moreover, his celestial lifespan was lengthened immeasurably. Forthwith, he and the god-king Śakra, along with other gods, carrying incense, flowers, and various kinds of wonderful celestial garments and necklaces, came to make offerings. They bowed down to the Buddha in celebration of His great lovingkindness and compassion, and they joyfully and exuberantly circled Him thousands of times.

Then the World-Honored One opened His golden hand and rubbed the god-son’s head, bestowing upon him the prophecy of his attaining bodhi. The Buddha said to him, “This sūtra is called The Superb Victory Buddha-Crown Dhāraṇī Mantra That Annihilates karma Hindrances. All of you and my four groups of disciples should accept and uphold it.”

The four groups of disciples, Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas, and the eight classes of Dharma protectors—gods, dragons, gandharvas, asuras, yakṣas, garuḍas, kiṁnaras, and mahoragas—together with kumbhāṇḍas, piśācas, humans, nonhumans, and others, having heard the Buddha’s words, greatly rejoiced. With faith, acceptance, and determination to carry out the teachings, they made obeisance and departed.

—Sūtra of the Buddha-Crown Superb Victory Dhāraṇī

Translated from the digital Chinese Canon (T19n0970)