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གཞན་པན་བདུད་ཚིའི་སྒྲིན་ཆར།

**Gentle Rain of Nectar to Benefit Others:
A Brief and Truthful Story of How I Found
Realization, with Instructions**

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

don gyi rtogs brjod mdor bsdus gdams pa dang 'brel ba gzhan phan bdud rtsi'i sprin char

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Khyentse Vision Project: Translating the Works of
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The present text belonging to the *avadāna*¹ literary genre is a short address with autobiographical elements to an unknown group of lamas and monks, which Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo composed spontaneously on his way to Central Tibet, expressing “whatever came to his mind.”² He begins by describing in typical Tibetan self-deprecating manner his own outer, inner, and secret roles as an inept teacher of the classical fields of knowledge, a hypocritical bodhisattva, and a yogi of the Vajrayāna. He then recounts how he contemplated his masters’ instructions, how he laid the foundation for the Buddhist path by thinking about death, how he kept the three vows, and so forth. Finally he addresses his audience directly, exhorting them to follow his example and turn away from the distractions and petty affairs of ordinary life. The text concludes with five more verses, in which he stresses the importance of his previous statements and laments the present state of affairs of this world, cast adrift by the great masters of the past who have passed away and left for other realms.

གཞན་པན་བདུད་ཅིའི་སྒྲིན་ཆར།

Gentle Rain of Nectar to Benefit Others

Om svasti siddhir astu!

I prostrate in reverence at the stainless lotus feet of the glorious masters and take refuge in them. Your illusory form is nothing but a manifestation of the wisdom of all the conquerors in all directions and times. Grant your blessings throughout the chain of all my successive lives!

Outwardly, my appearance is that of a teacher of sacred lore who has merely heard the name of a few fields of knowledge. Inwardly, [210] I pretend to be a bodhisattva, a son of the Conqueror who has only the benefit of others in mind. Secretly, I am a yogi of the Supreme Vehicle, whose body, speech, and mind have been blessed as the nature of vajra wisdom by many sublime sovereign masters who have attained learning and accomplishment. I, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, address these words to you excellent lamas and monastics.

Since my childhood, I have had admiration for monastic life, and when I got a little older, I studied some of the fields of knowledge. I received the pure lineage of the three vows from more than eighty teachers of the Dharma, including my twenty-three sublime mentors, who have been especially kind to me. I drank the nectar of their profound and vast instructions on the Tripiṭaka and the four classes of Tantra, never satisfied with what I had received already. Having examined their meaning to a certain extent, I adopted an attitude of not making long-term plans, knowing that the time of death is uncertain and everything is pointless. Thus I laid the foundation for the path.

Concerning the vows of individual liberation, I abandoned five things: the four root downfalls and carelessly drinking beer. For the bodhisattva vows, I abandoned from the bottom of my heart any intention to harm others and filled my mind only

with altruism. Concerning the vows of Secret Mantra, [211] I wholeheartedly abandoned the wrong view of disparaging the sublime masters, even in my dreams, and trained in pure perception to the best of my abilities. For these reasons, my root commitments of the three vows have remained unblemished. I have tried to confess any violations of the minor branch commitments and vowed not to repeat them. I never listened to the words of anyone and have no bias in favor of those who are very close to me or against those who harbor a strong hostility toward me. Therefore, even though I may not have benefitted the teachings and sentient beings, that is acceptable since I did not cause them much harm either. Wherever I stay, my mind is at ease, and I am happy. This is the story of how I found realization and of what I presume to be my virtues so far. What will happen in the future depends on the compassion of the master and the Three Jewels. Apart from them, I do not place my hopes and fears in anyone else.

You, too, have obtained for once this human existence with its freedoms and advantages, which is so hard to find and of great benefit. There is no certainty as to when death will strike. When it strikes, nothing but Dharma will be of benefit—that is certain. Therefore, mindful of the fact that the time of death is uncertain, keep the root commitments of the three vows mentioned above, even at the risk of your life.

Because we have left home to go forth into homelessness, we should stay as much as possible in our monasteries; there is no benefit in wandering around ordinary villages. We get attached to petty affairs, such as defeating enemies, protecting loved ones, taking care of our household's livelihood, [212] doing business or farming, and indulging our feelings of attachment, aversion, hopes, and fears. We think that they are very important. This is just like mistaking dog shit for gold and then treasuring it! Therefore, you who have the capacity to think, please reflect on this.

This being so, do not let this human life with its freedoms and advantages come to an end without having accomplished anything, and, most importantly, engage in listening, contemplation, and meditation for your own sake as much as you can, and do the following to the best of your abilities: carefully analyze the law of behavioral cause and effect, renounce saṃsāra, have compassion for sentient beings and devotion for your master, and experience the view of the inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. In particular, on the basis of the monastic regulations and rules of conduct that are not to be violated, a good heart is the very root of the path of all those who have embarked on the Mahāyāna path, and for this reason I urge you to reflect on it. There is a lot more to be said than just this, but since that can be learned from looking into the ocean of the words of the Buddha and the treatises, I have just presented the essential points here.

Aho!

Although I do not possess any good qualities,
Inspired by the blessings of the venerable masters,
I addressed with pure intention some words
To you lamas and monastics.

These are the last words of this carefree yogi
Who aimlessly roams the land.
Even if I continue to live, I have nothing more than this to say, [213]
And if I die, this shall be the essence of my testament.

Kyema!

The supreme holders of the teachings have departed to other worlds.
Teaching and practice of the Dharma have become mere names.
Beings' happiness and well-being are like bees at autumn's close.
Who wouldn't feel sad about the way things have become?

Therefore, O master and precious Triple Gem,
Grant your blessings so that in whatever is left of my life,
I can wholeheartedly practice the teachings for the time of death
Without chasing after this life's appearances.

By the power of our connection, as master and disciples in Dharma and samaya,
May we meet again and again in this life,
May all our thoughts and deeds in accord with the Dharma be accomplished without
obstacles,
And may all be auspicious for everything good in existence and peace to increase!

This was spoken spontaneously by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, a carefree yogi who roams the land and has a deepfelt admiration for the conduct of the bodhisattvas, the scions of the Conqueror, while he was traveling from an area of Greater Tibet to the sambhogakāya realm of Ü-Tsang. May it be of benefit to all! Sarvadā maṅgalam.

NOTES

1. Sanskrit for “great act/achievement.” The Tibetan equivalent, *rtogs brjod*, may be translated as “story of realization” or “realization account.” Texts belonging to this genre tell the story of the protagonist’s journey on the spiritual path and of their deeds and achievements, often to illustrate the workings of karma. In the canonical context, *avadānas* are counted as the seventh among the twelve scriptural categories of the Buddha’s teachings (*gsung rab yan lag bcu gnyis*) included in the Tripiṭaka.
2. *gang dran smras pa*. Khyentse Wangpo traveled to Central Tibet twice, the first time in 1839–1843 and the second time in 1848–1851; see Akester, *Khyentsé Wangpo’s Guide*, 15.

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GLOSSARY

aho

ཨོ་ཏྲ། • *a ho*

“*Aho*” is an interjection expressing astonishment and joy or a sense of wonder and admiration, often used at the beginning of songs of spiritual realization (*mgur*).

fields of knowledge

རིག་པའི་གནས། • *rig pa'i gnas*

These are the five major fields into which Sakya Paṇḍita formalized the classification of knowledge in Tibet. These are: (1) arts and crafts (*bzo rig pa*), (2) medicine (*gso ba rig pa*), (3) language and grammar (*sgra rig pa*), (4) logic and epistemology (*gtan tshigs rig pa*), and (5) the inner science of Buddhist thought (*nang don rig pa*).

four root downfalls

རྩ་བཞི། • *rtsa bzhi*

These are the four fundamental precepts of the vows of individual liberation, the violation of which leads to expulsion from monkhood: (1) violating the vow of chastity (*abrahmacarya*; *mi tshangs par spyod pa*), (2) taking what is not given (*adattadāna*; *ma byin par len pa*), (3) killing (*prāṇātīpāta*; *srog spyod pa*), and (4) lying (*mṛṣāvāda*; *rdzun du smra ba*).

inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa

འཁོར་འདས་དབྱེར་མེད། • *'khor 'das dbyer med*

The view of the inseparability of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is a fundamental doctrine in the Sakya tradition in the context of the Vajrayāna and is the resulting realization of their Lamdre system. For a translation of a fundamental text on this view by Dragpa Gyaltsen (1172–1216), see Smith, *Sakya: The Path with Its Result*, 27–31.

kyema

ཀྱེ་མ། • *kye ma*

“*Kyema*” is an interjection, often used at the beginning of songs of realization, expressing a sense of sadness. It may be rendered as “alas.”

sacred lore

གཙུག་ལག་ • *gtsug lag* • āṛṣa

The Tibetan term *gtsug lag*, a concept stemming from pre-Buddhist Tibet, covers a broad range of meaning. It may designate wisdom in the broadest sense, the fields of knowledge (similar to *rig gnas*), religious teachings, a know-how, morality, and the writings that speak of them; see Stein, *Tibetica Antiqua III*, 126–29. It is also used to translate the Sanskrit term *ārṣa*, (related to the word *ṛṣi*), which means “sacred,” “sacred scripture,” or anything derived from or belonging to a *ṛṣi*.

three vows

སྡོམ་པ་གསུམ། • *sdom pa gsum* • trisaṃvara

These are three sets of commitments a Buddhist practitioner takes depending on the scope of their practice: (1) the vows of individual liberation (*prātimokṣasaṃvara*; *so thar gyi sdom pa*), (2) the bodhisattva vows (*bodhisattvasaṃvara*; *byang sems kyi sdom pa*), and (3) the vows of Secret Mantra (*mantrasaṃvara*; *gsang sngags kyi sdom pa*).

Tripitāka

ཐྱི་ཐཱ་གསུམ། • *sde snod gsum* • tripitaka

The threefold canonical collection of the Buddha’s teaching, comprising the Sūtras, the Vinaya, and the Abhidharma.