

༄༅། །འཕགས་ལྷ་ལ་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕུག་།

The Lord of Siddhas in the Noble Land

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

'phags yul grub pa'i dbang phyug

B203

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Khyentse Vision Project: Translating the Works of
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Written for a certain lama named Lhatse Öñ,¹ this short prayer is included within a series of self-praises that Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo composed on behalf of fortunate disciples. Such texts describe his precious qualities in order to support devotion and the practice of guru yoga. However, whether this particular prayer is directed to Khyentse Wangpo himself remains a question.

Many praises to Khyentse Wangpo trace his connection to previous masters, who were either his direct previous incarnations or those with whom he had a special connection through practice lineages he held or teaching lineages he received. For example, the second line of this praise supplicates the famous Tibetan yogi and engineer Tangtong Gyalpo, who is widely renowned as one of the previous incarnations of Khyentse Wangpo and commonly appears in prayers to him.

What is unusual about this particular praise is that through Tangtong Gyalpo, Khyentse Wangpo is also connected to the Indian master Kukkuripā (one of the eighty-four mahāsiddhas, commonly known as “The Dog Lover”), the subject of veneration in the first line. While the biography of Tangtong Gyalpo reports that he met the mahāsiddha Kukkuripā when he was in India (notwithstanding the fact that they lived four centuries apart),² and Tangtong Gyalpo is alternatively regarded as a reincarnation of Kukkuripā,³ the relationship between Khyentse Wangpo and Kukkuripā is less clear.

One way to connect them is through a commonly held practice lineage. In *The Chariot of Blessings*, a prayer written by Khyentse Wangpo on the commentarial tradition of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*, Kukkuripā is the first of the historical figures to receive homage: “To the prophesied Vajra Kukkurāja [...] I pray.”⁴ The same is the case in Khyentse Wangpo’s lineage prayer on the *Gathering the Intentions Sūtra*, a key Anuyoga tantra.⁵ But this is where the connection to these lineage prayers and the current praise ends.⁶

The third master of veneration in this praise is either a certain lama named Yeshe Gyatso or Khyentse Wangpo himself, described as the “Ocean of Wisdom.”⁷

འཕགས་ཡུལ་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱག

The Lord of Siddhas in the Noble Land

འཕགས་ཡུལ་གྲུབ་པའི་དབང་ཕྱག་ཀྱ་ཀུ་རི།

pagyül drubpé wangchuk ku ku ri

Lord of siddhas in the Noble Land, Kukkuripä;

གངས་ཅན་རྣལ་འབྱོར་སྟོན་པ་ཐང་སྟོང་རྒྱལ།

gangchen naljor chöpa tangtong gyal

Yogi of the Land of Snows, Tangtong Gyalpo;

དེང་འདིར་སུམ་ཕྱན་རྟོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པའི་ཚུལ།

deng dir sumden dorjé dzinpé tsül

And the vajradhara who upholds the three vows here and now,

ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཞབས་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས།

yeshé gyatsö zhab la sölwa deb

Ocean of Wisdom—to you I pray.

སྐྱེ་ཞིང་སྐྱེ་བར་མགོན་པོ་མཚན་ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས།

kyé zhing kyewar gönpo chok khyö kyi

O supreme protector in this and future lives,

རྗེས་བཟུང་དམ་ཚུལ་སྦྱབ་པའི་བར་ཆད་ཞི།

jezung damchö drubpé barché zhi

Pacify obstacles to practicing the sacred Dharma.

ཉམས་རྟོགས་ཡོན་ཏན་ཡེ་ཤེས་གོང་འཕེལ་ནས།

nyamtok yönten yeshé gongpel né

From ever-increasing experiences, realization, qualities, and wisdom,

འགོ་ཁྱུ་ཕྱམས་གཅིག་རྗེའི་སར་འགོད་ཤོག།

dro kün cham chik dorjé sar gö shok

May all beings be established together at the vajra level!

*This was written by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo at the request of the supreme lama Lhatse Ön.⁸
Virtue!*

NOTES

1. The exact identity of this figure remains a mystery. The title Öñ (*dbon*), which means “monastic head,” may refer to a lama who belonged to the Dzongsar Tashi Lhatse Monastery in Kham (established in 1253); however, it also has a more general and familial sense of “nephew” or “grandson.” Following either of these interpretations, the Lhatse Öñ mentioned in the colophon of this text may have lived in Eastern Tibet. However, his name also suggests that he may have been from the Lhatse region in the Yarlung Tsangpo Valley of Central Tibet. This identification is supported by the fact that Tangtong Gyalpo, one of the masters mentioned in this praise, was from that very same area.
2. See Stearns, *King of the Empty Plain*, 124.
3. Gerner, *Chakzampa Thangtong Gyalpo*, 2.
4. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *dpal gsang ba snying po'i bshad rgyun gyi brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs byin rlabs shing rta*, 57.
5. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *lung a nu yo ga 'dus pa mdo'i dbang gi brgyud 'debs*, 377.
6. Tangtong Gyalpo is not mentioned in the lineage prayers at all, and the Yeshe Gyatso (the student of Nubchen Sangye Yeshe in the ninth or tenth century) found there is certainly different than the one mentioned in the fourth line of the praise here (based on the chronological order in which he appears, following Tangtong Gyalpo).
7. Regarding this enigmatic Yeshe Gyatso, it is tempting to connect him to either Gyaltsab Yeshe Gyatso (rgyal tshab ye shes rgya mtsho, 1404–1473), a Sakyapa contemporary of Tangtong Gyalpo who lived at Shalu Monastery (zha lu dgon), or Jetsun Yeshe Gyatso (rje btsun ye shes rgya mtsho, sixteenth century), a student of Tāranātha who lived a hundred years after Tangtong Gyalpo but belonged to the same Shangpa Kagyu tradition. The text suggests otherwise, however, describing this figure as “the vajradhara who upholds the three vows here and now,” that is, someone living in the nineteenth century. Since Khyentse Wangpo elsewhere uses the phrase “vajradhara who upholds the three vows” to refer to himself (see, for example, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, *bla ma'i rnal 'byor ye shes mchog stsol*, 226; KVP B1367), it may be tentatively concluded that this praise is also a self-referential guru yoga to himself. Since the name Yeshe Gyatso (ye shes rgya mtsho) is nowhere else associated with Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, and this is a unique occurrence, it is better rendered here simply as the epithet “Ocean of Wisdom.”

8. Note that this colophon mirrors almost word for word that of the next text in the volume, *'jam pa'i dbyangs sogs* ([KVP B204](#)). In this case, Khyentse Wangpo penned the composition; in the other text, he spoke it.

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GLOSSARY

Kukkuripā

ཀུ་ཀུ་རི། • *ku ku ri* • Kukkuripā

The mahāsiddha Kukkuripā was a monk who practiced Vajrayāna. Famed for his songs of realization, he is also known for abandoning the sensual delights of the Thirty-Three Heaven and returning to this world out of compassion for his dog. For this reason, he is called “The Dog Lover.”

Land of Snows

གངས་ཅན། • *gangs can*

Literally, “Endowed with Snow,” this is an epithet for the Himalayan region and, more specifically, Tibet.

Lhatse Ōn Lama

ལྷ་ཅེ་དཔོན་བླ་མ། • *lha rtse dbon bla ma*

An unidentified lama with this title, described by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo as both “supreme” (*mchog*) and “sublime” (*dam pa*), appears in the colophon of two prayers in the Kabum ([B203](#) and [B204](#)) as the person who requested them.

Noble Land

འཕགས་ཡུལ། • *'phags yul*

An epithet for India.

Nubchen Sangye Yeshe

གུའུ་ཅེན་སངས་རྒྱལ་ཡེ་ཤེས། • *gnubs chen sangs rgyas ye shes*

Sangye Yeshe (ninth or tenth century) was a key figure in the survival of texts during the Dark Age of Tibet, traveling to India as many as seven times and preserving a number of lineages. [BDRC P2885](#).

Tangtong Gyalpo

ཐང་སྟོང་རྒྱལ་པོ། • *thang stong rgyal po*

Considered a mind emanation of Padmasambhava and a great yogic adept, Tangtong Gyalpo (1385–1464) is also known for his architectural and engineering works, as

evidenced by his popular name, “The Iron Bridge Maker” (lcags zam pa). He is included in lists of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo’s former lives.

vajra level

རྫོགས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ • *rdo rje'i sa*

This refers to the eleventh bhūmi, the vajra level of “constant illumination” (*samantaprabhā; kun tu 'od*) of manifest buddhahood.

vajradhara who upholds the three vows

སུམ་ལྡན་རྫོགས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ • *sum ldan rdo rje 'dzin*

The three vows are the vows of individual liberation (*so sor thar pa'i sdom pa*), the commitments of the bodhisattva (*byang chub sems dpa'i sdom pa*), and the tantric pledges (*gsang sngags kyi sdom pa*). These three sets of vows not only complement but reinforce each other. Without the foundation of the first set, it is argued that the latter ones cannot be observed. These three sets of vows are held to comprise the whole spectrum of Buddhist practices that Tibetans inherited from their Indian teachers.