

༄༅། ཁྲི་གསལ་བསྐྱབ་བྱ་ལ་སྐྱལ་པའི་གཏམ་གཞན་ལ་ཕན་པའི་
བདུན་ཅི།

**Nectar to Benefit Others:
Advice to Encourage Intelligent People as to
What Should Be Practiced**

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

blo gsal bslab bya la skul pa'i gtam gzhan la phan pa'i bdud rtsi

B259

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Khyentse Vision Project: Translating the Works of
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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INTRODUCTION

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's *Nectar to Benefit Others* is one of the numerous short poems found in the first half of the second volume of his collected works, in the section entitled *Collection of Discourses*.¹ Khyentse Wangpo skillfully composed it in the form of an alphabetical poem, also known as an abecedarius.² The arrangement of the first letters of each line follows the sequence of the Tibetan alphabet with its thirty letters. In these eight pithy verses of advice, Khyentse Wangpo encourages his disciples to engage in fundamental Buddhist reflections, such as renunciation, the importance of following an authentic master, and the uncertainty of the moment of death. Interspersing his poem with Sanskrit terms—a typical feature of Khyentse Wangpo's poetic works—he alludes to themes of Indic mythology and evokes typical images of the Indian subcontinent. To preserve the tone of the original, the Sanskrit terms have been retained in the translation.

གཞན་ལ་སྒྲིབ་པའི་བདུད་རྩི།

Nectar to Benefit Others

*Namo gurubhyah!*³

Attention! Pay heed, my intelligent friends! [163]

Be it that you wish to practice the sublime Dharma and not just talk about it,
Choose to give up your pride, and follow with single-minded
Devotion an excellent master who will guide you wherever you go.

Endowed with the freedoms and advantages of human existence,
Fitting in appearance with the Dharma, uninfluenced by concerns for material
wealth,

Giving up craving for tea, beer, enjoyments, and socializing,
Hasten to bring your qualities to completion like the full moon.

In the solitude of, say, a *tāla* palm
Jungle, or in a town with many different things to see—wherever you may be,
Keep in mind always that you are conditioned: say to yourself,
“Let me remember, there’s no knowing when, from now on, death will strike.”

Maybe you haven’t practiced the sublime Pāramitā teachings, so you will
Need to follow your karma to the other shore. Therefore, you
Ought to increase your merit, which will fulfill all your desires, like the cow of
Plenty, the tree of miracles, or the vase of wealth.⁴

Quantifiable they are not, those sufferings of heat and cold in the three
Realms of saṃsāra, which revolve like a *cakra*.
So, constant like Jahnu’s stream,⁵ cultivate the mind of renunciation,

Traversing mountainous ravines like a fox.

Upon your head, like a crown, venerate your master and the Triple Gem.

Cast aside, like nettles, harsh thoughts and deeds.

Valuing not just yourself but others too,

Cultivate the two aspects of bodhicitta together.

We will give meaning to our lives endowed with freedoms and advantages,

If, striving hard in all ten Dharma deeds, not just a few, we display

Xtraordinary courage, just like Rāmaṇa did.⁶ [164]

By doing so, the world's three levels will be filled with our beautiful music.

You may find my words and meaning not so well connected,

Yet it is heartfelt advice to benefit others. Through this, may

Zillions of beings in their entirety realize

The meaning of the letter A—nonbirth, the ultimate Mañjuhoṣa.

This instruction was given by the renunciant yogi Khyentse Wangpo with the heartfelt wish to benefit those who rely on him. May it bring virtue and excellence!

Sarvadā kalyāṇaṃ bhavatu!^f

NOTES

1. *gtam tshogs*.
2. *ka rtsom* or *ka bshad*. Other translations of Tibetan abecedarian poetry can be found, for example, in Ricard, *Life of Shabkar*, xxxi, 421.
3. “Homage to the masters!”
4. These three symbols from Indian mythology, here compared to the Buddhist concept of merit (*bsod nams; puṇya*), all have the miraculous ability to grant wishes. The wish-fulfilling cow, also referred to as Kāmadhenu or Surabhī in its divine form, is a typical Indian symbol of abundance. The tree of miracles or “wish-granting tree” (*kalpavṛkṣa*) and the “excellent vase” of inexhaustible treasures (*bhadraghaṭa*) likewise provide beings with wealth and other means of sustenance.
5. The River Ganges (*gaṅgā*) is also referred to as “Daughter of Jahnu” (*dza hnu’i bu mo; jahnukanyā, jāhnavī*). According to Indian mythology, the sage Jahnu drank up the waters of the Ganges because it destroyed his fields and disturbed his sacred ground. Upon the prayers of the gods, Jahnu finally released the Ganges from his ears.
6. Rāma, commonly referred to as Rāmaṇa in Tibetan literature, is the main protagonist of the Indian epic Rāmāyaṇa attributed to Vālmiki. See Lin, “Döndrup Gyel,” 89: “The prince Rāma, son of King Daśaratha, marries the princess Sītā and is later exiled to the forest with Sītā and his brother Lakṣmaṇa. The demon-king Rāvaṇa abducts Sītā and takes her to the island of Laṅkā. Rāma enlists the alliance of a monkey tribe, and a monkey with extraordinary powers named Hanuman finds Sītā. Rāma defeats Rāvaṇa in a major battle, is reunited with Sītā, and returns to rule his kingdom.”
7. “May there always be virtue!”

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GLOSSARY

cakra

ཅ་ཀྲ། • *tsa kra*
Wheel.

tāla palm

ཏ་ལ། • *ta la*
Palmyra palm (*Borassus flabellifer*). The leaves of this tree, native to the Indian subcontinent, were commonly used as writing material for palm-leaf manuscripts.

ten Dharma deeds

ཆོས་སྟོན་བརྒྱ། • *chos spyod bcu* • daśadharmacaryāḥ

These are ten types of Dharma practice or spiritual activity: (1) copying texts, (2) making offerings, (3) charity, (4) listening to the teachings, (5) reading the sacred scriptures, (6) memorizing them, (7) explaining them to others, (8) reciting aloud, (9) contemplating the teachings one has received, and (10) meditating on them.

three realms

ཁམས་གསུམ། • *khamsgsum* • tridhātu

These are the desire realm (*'dod kham*s), form realm (*gzugs kham*s), and the formless realm (*gzugs med kham*s)—that is, the three worlds that make up saṃsāra.

two aspects of bodhicitta

བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་གཉིས། • *byang chub sems gnyis*

(1) Relative bodhicitta refers to the altruistic intention to achieve enlightenment in order to benefit all beings. Relative bodhicitta is in turn understood in terms of two aspects: bodhicitta in aspiration and action. (2) Absolute bodhicitta refers to the direct realization of emptiness of the fully awakened mind. See Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 656.

world's three levels

ས་གསུམ། • *sa gsum*

These are (1) the level or world of the nāga spirits below the ground, (2) the level of humans on the ground, and (3) the level of the gods above the earth.