

༄། །ཀུན་མཁྱེན་ཆེན་པོ་ལ་བསྟོད་པ་རྒྱུ་འབྲི་ཤིང་།

**The Rose Apple Tree:
In Praise of the Great Omniscient One**

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

kun mkhyen chen po la bstod pa dzam+bu'i khri shing

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Khyentse Vision Project: Translating the Works of
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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INTRODUCTION

This ode to the most preeminent figure in the history of the Nyingma tradition, Longchenpa (Longchen Rabjam, 1308–1364) is one of several abecedarian poems that Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo composed. The author’s palpable awe is fashioned into stylized metric lines, each beginning with a consecutive letter of the Tibetan alphabet, and followed by free-form verses at the end. Our translation attempts to do the same with the English alphabet. As mentioned in the colophon, the text pays homage to key aspects of Longchenpa’s life story, from his time as a wandering yogi to his extensive time in retreat, while focusing especially on his accomplishments as an adept in the practices of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection. At the same time, Khyentse Wangpo displays his own mastery of the traditional Indian style of *kāvya* poetry. The poem is thus embellished with classic Indian images and metaphors woven into the Tibetan landscape of Longchenpa’s homeland.

ཇི་སྐྱེ་འཁྲི་ཤིང་།

The Rose Apple Tree

*Namo gurujñānāya.*¹

Adept in the realization of the primordially pure vast expanse (Longchen),
Beyond mere platitudes, you have true omniscience.
Consummately free and immaculate (Drimé), like the moon,
Dispelling the torment of ego with your rays (Özer)—to you I bow!

Eliminating idle chatter, indestructible tones
From your indivisible central space resound.
Gifts of tea or wine can't compare to your teachings that
Hold scripture and realization like fragrant jasmine—to you I bow!

In the midst of the Thus-Gone One's paths of the two truths,
Just Dzogchen surpasses all other vehicles and beliefs.
Knowing you're already free and don't need liberation again,
Luxuriating continuously everywhere—to you I bow!

Majestic as Venus, the nectars of aspiration and application
Nourish you, as lilies blossom on your *pāramitā* path.
On par with a wish-fulfilling jewel, you fulfill
Perfectly all beings' hopes and desires—to you I bow!

Quietly bearing the hardships of heat and cold,
Roaming through pilgrimage sites and sealed places like Cāritra,
Similar to the River Jahnu, your focus in development and completion flows—
Tucked away like a fox alone in the mountains—to you I bow!

Upon the ample vine of naturalness free from rigidity,
Valiantly guiding us all to liberation, you bestow the Dharma
Without dividing scriptures and realization, having amassed all knowledge
Exactly like gathering trinkets in a box—to you I bow!

You are like a yak horn that no speck of dust can blemish,
Zestfully regaling villagers with benefit and happiness.
With your new decrees of the ten bhūmis you bind
All the murderous, flesh-eating, haughty chieftains—to you I bow!

Having tasted the emptiness and bliss that exudes
The sweet scent of *hari*,² you grew into your prime
In the unity of Ati, and intoxicated your consort,
The noble lady Prajñāpāramitā—to you I bow!

You've halted the currents of fleeting existence in the central channel,
And ripened the maṇḍala of major and minor marks, the immutable three seats.
Steadily reveling in the consummate, great wisdom,
May you purify all realms and bring beings to maturity!

Binding the object, the simplicity of emptiness
With the subject, great bliss,
May we reach the state free of alteration,
Bliss-emptiness in union endowed with all supreme qualities!

From the vast sea of devotion this cloud of verses arose,
Letting down a pearlescent rain of virtue that I dedicate
So that the scorching heat of suffering is allayed,
And the lotus of innate liberation blossoms!

This simple flower of praise of the Omniscient Second Buddha, with references to the narrative of his achievements, was composed quickly and spontaneously by Young Abhaya.

NOTES

1. “Homage to the Guru of Wisdom.” Emended from *na mo gu ru dz+nyA na ye*.
2. Probably a reference to *haricandana*, a type of sandalwood.

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GLOSSARY

aspiration and application

སློན་འཇུག་ • *smoṅ 'jug*

The two aspects of awakening mind (*bodhicitta*): commonly understood to refer respectively to the intention to achieve awakening for all beings and the actions taken to achieve that.

Ati

ཨ་ཏི། • *a ti* • *ati*

A synonym of Dzogchen, the highest of nine vehicles and third and foremost of the inner tantras according to the Nyingma tradition.

Cāritra

ཙ་རི་ཏྲ། • *tsa ri tra* • *cāritra*

The sacred mountain and pilgrimage site in southern Tibet also known as Tsāri or Dagpa Shelri (*dag pa shel ri*, Pure Crystal Mountain).

central channel

དབུ་མ། • *dbu ma* • *avadhūtī*, *madhyanāḍī*

The main energy channel running vertically through the center of the body according to tantric theory.

consummate

ཡོངས་གྲུབ། • *yongs grub* • *pariniṣpanna*

The true reality of things according to the three-nature framework (*mtshan nyid gsum*) often associated with Yogācāra and Other-Emptiness Madhyamaka; it refers to the fact that the dependent nature (*paratantra*; *gzhan dbang*) is empty of the imagined nature (*parikalpita*; *kun btags*).

development and completion

བསྐྱེད་རྫོགས། • *bskyed rdzogs*

The two stages of practice in tantric Buddhism.

Dzogchen

རྫོགས་པ་ཇེ། • *rdzogs pa che*

Also known as Atiyoga, the system of teachings, theories, and practices associated with the highest of the nine vehicles according to the Nyingma school. Can also serve as a reference to the nature of awareness pointed out by these teachings.

ego

ང་བདག། • *nga bdag*

Fixation on protecting the needs of the self at the expense of caring for others.

emptiness

སྟོང་པ་ཉིད། • *stong pa nyid* • *śūnyatā*

The lack of inherent existence of self and phenomena.

endowed with all supreme qualities

རྣམ་ཀུན་མཚོག་ལྷན། • *rnam kun mchog ldan* • *sarvākāraṇopeta*

The inseparable union of appearance and emptiness, the supreme of all qualities. Also explained as emptiness endowed with all the supreme qualities of buddhahood.

free; liberation

ཐར། ཐར་པ། • *thar, thar pa* • *mokṣa*

The state of freedom from suffering and the causes of suffering in cyclic existence.

haughty

དྲེགས་པ། • *dregs pa*

A class of demonic spirit associated with arrogant tendencies.

indestructible tone

གཞོམ་བྲལ་རྣམ་དུ། • *gzhom bral nA da* • *anāhatanāda*

A phrase that in Sanskrit referred to sacred sounds of mantra that arose “without striking”—i.e., not from the sound of a physical instrument—but which in Tibetan came to connote the eternal power of those sounds.

jasmine

ཀུན་ཀྱི། • *kun+dA* • *kunda*

A kind of jasmine, identified by Monier-Williams as *Jasminum multiflorum* or *pubescens*.

major and minor marks

མཚན་དཔེ། • *mtshan dpe* • *lakṣaṇa vyañjana*

The thirty-two major and eighty minor physical marks characteristic of either a buddha or a “wheel-wielding” universal emperor (*cakravartin*).

maṇḍala

དཀྱིལ་འཁོར། • *dkyil 'khor*

The sacred circle of a deity and its retinue; also, the symbolic representation of this.

moon

ག་བྱར་འཛིན། • *ga bur 'dzin* • karpūradhara

Literally, “holder of camphor,” one of several common Indian epithets for the moon.

naturalness

གཏུག་མ། • *gnyug ma*

The ultimate truth that has always been, that is never produced. The meaning overlaps with terms like “dharmakāya,” “dharmadhātu,” and “buddha nature.”

omniscience

ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན། • *thams cad mkhyen* • sarvajñā

The all-knowing state of complete buddhahood.

pāramitā

པ་རྣམ་ཕྱིན། • *pha rol phyin* • pāramitā

One of six—or, less commonly, ten—qualities cultivated by bodhisattvas on the path to awakening.

Prajñāpāramitā

ཤེས་རབ་པ་རྣམ་ཕྱིན། • *shes rab pha rol phyin* • prajñāpāramitā

The perfection of wisdom, i.e., the insight into the emptiness of all things; also that wisdom personified in the form of a goddess (Prajñāpāramitā).

primordially pure

ཀ་དག། • *ka dag*

A term associated with Great Perfection literature, referring to the way that the true nature of mind is timeless, primordially pure awareness, never stained by ignorance.

River Jhnu

ཇོ་རུ་འི་རྒྱུ། • *dza hu 'i rgyun*

The Ganges River (gaṅgā) is also referred to as “Daughter of Jhnu” (*jahnukanyā, jāhnavī; dza hu 'i bu mo*). According to Indian mythology, the sage Jhnu drank up the waters of the Ganges because it destroyed his fields and disturbed his sacred ground. Upon the prayers of the gods, Jhnu finally released the Ganges from his ears.

scripture and realization

ལུང་རྟོགས། • *lung rtogs*

The Buddhist teachings as a whole consisting of two aspects: the teachings transmitted through writing and word of mouth, and the realization of those teachings in the minds of practitioners.

ten bhūmis

ས་བརྒྱ། • *sa bcu* • daśabhūmi

The ten stages traversed by a bodhisattva on the path to awakening.

three seats

གདན་གསུམ། • *gdan gsum*

A reference to the awakened nature of the body, senses, and sense objects. There are several ways of enumerating the three seats. They can refer to: (1) the aggregates (*skandha*) and elements (*dhātu*) having the nature of the male and female buddhas; (2) the sense bases (*āyatana*) and their objects having the nature of the male and female bodhisattvas; and (3) the arms and legs having the nature of the male and female wrathful deities. They can also refer to: (1) the five aggregates having the nature of the five buddhas; (2) the five elements of earth, wind, water, fire, and space having the nature of the five female buddhas; and (3) the sense bases having the nature of the male and female bodhisattvas.

Thus-Gone One

ཏ་ཐ་ག་ཏ། • *ta tha ga ta* • tathāgata

A synonym for the Buddha.

two truths

བདེན་གཉིས། • *bden gnyis* • dvisatya, dvayasatya, satyadvaya

Conventional truth and ultimate truth.

vast expanse

ལྷོང་ཆེན། • *klong chen*

A term associated with the Great Perfection and to the writings of Longchenpa in particular; it is used to describe the profound spaciousness of mind's nature.

vehicle

ཐེག • *theg* • yāna

One of several divisions of the Buddhist teachings, viewed as a system and mode of awakening. According to the Nyingma view associated with Longchenpa, there are nine.

wish-fulfilling jewel

ཙིན་མ་ཉི། • *tsin+ta ma Ni* • cintāmaṇi

A legendary gem that grants all wishes.

Young Abhaya

གཞིན་རུ་ཨ་བླ་ཡ། • *gzhon nu a bhA ya*

An epithet of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo.