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བཅད་པ་དད་པའི་མེ་ཏོག་

**Flowers of Faith:
Verses in Praise of the
Venerable Guardian Maitreya**

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

rje btsun byams pa mgon po la bsngags pa'i tshigs su bcad pa dad pa'i me tog

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Khyentse Vision Project: Translating the Works of
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo composed *Flowers of Faith* while staying at Ganden Jampa Ling (Tuṣita Maitreya Sanctuary) in the Rong Valley. Considering his professed age of twenty-one, we can deduce that he stopped here early on in the course of a several-year journey he took to central Tibet during his early twenties. Constructed under the guidance of Sempa Chenpo Zhönu Gyalchok, Jampa Ling came to house a famous twenty-meter high Maitreya statue that clearly impressed the young Khyentse Wangpo and served, at least in part, as the inspiration for this poem. Part devotional praise and part aspirational prayer, Khyentse Wangpo weaves key moments from the legendary tales of Maitreya's lives into a poetic celebration of the future buddha.

དད་པའི་མེ་ཏོག

Flowers of Faith

Namo bhaṭṭāraka maitrīnāthāya!

In ancient times, under the conqueror Pure Golden Light,
You adopted the incredible twofold mind of awakening.
Applying skillful means, you became adept in ascending to the kingdom of
omniscience
Solely on the blissful path, O Invincible One.

During the teaching era of the tathāgata Jewel Parasol,
You became known as the peerless Fresh Moonbeams,
Clearing beings' agony with the nectar of love,
Renowned throughout the three planes, O Invincible One.

Later, as a playful Brahmin youth,
You came of age in your bodhisattva conduct
And then brought fulfillment to the world with benefit and happiness.
You remind me of a marvelous sun, O Invincible One.

With your incredible powers of wisdom and compassion,
You easily overcame Kāmadeva.
You tasted the nectar of liberation yourself.
Your life story is peerless, O Invincible One.

I invoke your words of truth that state
You will give encouragement to those,
Who during the current era of the Kinsman of the Sun,¹

Perform even the smallest deeds, O Invincible One.

Is your precious, refined form a display
Of the demeanor of the hundred major and minor marks?
Please reveal directly before my eyes your wisdom body
That puts an end to doubt, O Invincible One!

Joining your melodious lute-like voice of sixty qualities
To the scriptural traditions of the supreme vehicle, profound and vast,
You awaken us from the sleep of the two extremes—
Please bring your nectar to my ears, O Invincible One!

Though you have subdued the constructs of this and that,
You persist in extending your billionfold vision
Of wisdom and love to every sentient being—
Please bless my mind-stream, O Invincible One!

With this cry of one-pointed, heartfelt faith,
As I honor you, the victors' heir, with praise
Of your life story and the aspiration to emulate you,
Please guard me until awakening, O Invincible One!

May I and all beings who rely on me approach single-heartedly
The path that leads out of existence and peace.
Please clear away all our other
Ideas and concepts, O Invincible One!

Please captain the ship bejeweled with pure discipline—
Hearing, reflection, concentration, retention, and confidence—
As I cross the sea of disturbing emotions,
Cognitions, and absorptions, O Invincible One!

When with time the experience of this life disappears,
In the delightful locus of Dharma in Tuṣita,
May the noble one hold me in his delighted arms
And grant me prophecy and encouragement, O Invincible One!

In sum, may I reach supreme awakening like you,
And may you bring me the good fortune² of activity
That sets the entire ocean of beings as far as space pervades
On the good path of benefit and happiness, O Invincible One!

This supplication was made by me, the one named Khyentse—a carefree vagabond who roams the land—when I was twenty-one, in the presence of the great image at Rong Ganden Jampa Ling, which itself came about from the activity of the great bodhisattva Zhönu Gyalchok. I then repeated it afterward many times. May this supplication be accomplished.

NOTES

1. The buddha of our time, Śākyamuni.
2. Read *bskal pa* (eon) as a misspelling of *skal pa*, “fortune.”

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GLOSSARY

brahmin

གཉིས་སྐྱེས། • *gnyis skyes* • dvija

Literally, “twice-born”: the higher three castes, generally—but frequently, in particular, brahmins—in reference to the second “birth” they undergo when invested with a sacred thread.

confidence

སྤོབས་པ། • *spobs pa* • pratibhā, pratibhāna

In Buddhist contexts, usually a reference to the confidence involved in public speaking, which also imbues one with eloquence.

construct

སྐྱོས་པ། • *spros pa* • prapañca

False conceptual elaboration.

Ganden Jampa Ling

དགའ་ལྷན་བྱམས་པ་གླིང་། • *dga' ldan byams pa gling*

Also known as Rong Jamchen Chöde (*rong byams chen chos sde*), a monastery located in the Rong Valley in Tsang. Though associated with Sempa Chenpo Zhönu Gyalchok, the latter passed away the year its construction began (1439), and the completion of its central Maitreya image seated in lotus posture occurred under the supervision of his successor, Kunga Tashi Palzang (kun dga' bkra shis dpal bzang). Founded as a Sakya institution under the patronage of the Rinpungpa rulers, it later was converted into a Geluk monastery following the collapse of the Rinpungpa in the sixteenth century and with the rise of the Ganden Podrang.

give encouragement

དབུགས་དབྱུང་མཛད། • *dbugs dbyung mdzad* • āśvāsaka

To uplift emotionally or revive physically; also, to prophesize or confirm someone's spiritual awakening.

honor

མདུན་བདར། • *mdun bdar* • puraskṛtaḥ

Literally, “to place at the front,” to pay respect to someone.

Invincible One

མ་ཕམ་པ། • *ma pham pa* • ajita

A common epithet of Maitreya.

Jewel Parasol

རིན་ཆེན་གདུགས། • *rin chen gdugs* • ratnacchatra

The name of a buddha in a distant past age who gave the future buddha Maitreya his name and prophesied his future awakening.

Kāmadeva

ཡིད་སྐྱབས། • *yid srubs* • manmatha

Literally, “Heart Agitator,” an epithet of the Indian god of love.

Kinsman of the Sun

ཉི་མའི་གཉེན། • *nyi ma'i gnyen* • ādityabandhu; arkabandhuḥ

An epithet of Buddha Śākyamuni, in apparent reference to the solar associations of the Buddha's family lineage.

life story

རྣམ་ཐར། • *rnam thar*

Literally, “liberation,” referring to the hagiography of a great master's life or series of lives that culminated in their awakening.

Maitreya

བྱམས་པ། • *byams pa*

The name of a bodhisattva who appears in the retinue of Śākyamuni Buddha in certain Mahāyāna sūtras, but more often he is referred to as the buddha-to-be who resides in the realm of Tuṣita and will guide beings after the current age.

prophecy

ལུང་བསྟན། • *lung bstan* • vyākaraṇa

A prediction of future awakening.

Pure Golden Light

གསེར་བཟང་འོད། • *gser bzang 'od*

The name of a buddha in a distant past age under whom a previous incarnation of Maitreya first formed the resolve to awaken.

retention

གཟུངས། • *gzungs* • dhāraṇī

The ability to retain in memory.

sixty qualities

ཡན་ལག་རྒྱུ་བྱ། • *yan lag drug cu* • ṣaṣṭyaṅgī

Sixty attributes of enlightened speech.

Tuṣita

དགའ་ལྗོངས། • *dga'ldan*

The pure land inhabited by the future buddha Maitreya.

two extremes

མཐའ་གཉིས། • *mtha'gnyis* • antadvaya

The two extremes of eternalism and nihilism.

venerable

ཇེ་བཙུན། • *rje btsun* • bhaṭṭāraka

A term of respect used to refer to figures of an especially high spiritual status.

words of truth

བདེན་ཚིག། • *bden tshig* • satyavacana

A statement of truth or a solemn oath.

Zhönu Gyalchok

ཤེས་པ་དཔའ་ཆེན་པོ་གཞོན་ནུ་གྲུ་ལ་མཆོག། • *sems dpa'chen po gzhon nu rgyal mchog*

Zhönu Gyalchok (~1382–1439), frequently referred to as a Kadampa (*bka'gdams pa*), is claimed by both Sakya and Gelugpa lineages. His title “mahāsattva” (*sems dpa'chen po*) seems to hint at his status beyond strict affiliation, as does his association with the Mind Training (*blo sbyong*) tradition. Aside from his renown as a teacher, he also supervised the construction of a great Maitreya statue at Ngamring Chöde and inspired the building of a second at Ganden Jampa Ling.