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Supplication to the Guru Combined with Words of Advice

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KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

This brief supplication prayer in eight verses, from the first volume of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's Collected Works, is written in a fervent, devotional style characterized by a yearning tone beseeching the blessings of the spiritual teacher, considered to be the sole refuge. Such supplication prayers are often recited with guru yoga *sādhana*s. Guru yoga is traditionally described as pivotal to Vajrayāna practitioners wishing to accomplish the practices of the three roots, intended to bring about full ripening and liberation.

Khyentse Wangpo progressively guides disciples to develop the right view from beginning to end with contemplations and practices that traverse the different stages of the path and their fruition and encapsulate the threefold training in view, meditation, and conduct. The fourth and fifth verses, for instance, instruct the adept on how to engage in the common preliminaries through the contemplation on the four thoughts that turn the mind to the Dharma, followed by the special preliminaries, consisting of the practices of refuge, bodhicitta, accumulation of merit, purification, and guru yoga. The sixth and seventh verses point out the emptiness nature of mind and phenomena in saṃsāra, and how to abide in a state of equanimity inseparable from the recognition of pristine awareness through the mastery of the practices of calm abiding and special insight. Thus, this text, in its unelaborate and extraordinarily pithy form, gives the practitioner the key points to unlock the attainment of realization.

སྐྱེ་མ་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པ་ཞལ་གདམས་དང་འབྲེལ་བ།

Supplication to the Guru Combined with Words of Advice

*Namaḥ śrīmāṃ gurubhyaḥ!*¹

You have unified the pristine wisdom of the knowledge, love, and power
Of the victors of the ten directions and their descendants,
And in order to guide beings have manifested in the form of the supreme spiritual
friend.

To the glorious master, I supplicate!

Recognizing your body as the essence of the Saṅgha,
The secret of your speech as the essence of the sublime Dharma,
Your mind as the essence of the Buddha, and your enlightened qualities and
activities as the essence of the ḍākinīs and dharmapālas,
I call out to you wholeheartedly—please gaze upon me with your eyes of
compassion!

O Lord! I and every single being bereft of protection
Cannot conceive of another refuge than you.
Thus, exalted guru, please grant your blessings
That we may be inseparable from now until attaining the heart of enlightenment!

Recalling the freedoms and riches difficult to find, the uncertainty of the time of
death,
Knowing the three realms of saṃsāra to be a mass of suffering,

Becoming habituated to adopting and discarding² karma and fruition in the proper manner, through all of these,
Please bless me that I may become well trained in the common preliminaries!

By knowing the guru and the Three Jewels to be the undecieving refuge,
Bringing forth loving-kindness, compassion, and the two *bodhicittas*,
Gathering the accumulations, purifying obscurations, and having devotion to the guru,
Please bless me that I may become well trained in the special preliminaries!

All phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa are imputations of the mind.
Mind itself is free from the elaborations of arising, ceasing, and abiding.
Please bless me that I may experience the pristine wisdom
Of unobstructed clear awareness from within the sphere of non-elaboration!

Through the yoga of union of *śamatha* and *vipaśyanā*,
The state of equipoise unmoved by the wind of imagination,³
And not being separated from the essence of experience in post-meditation,
Please bless me that I may obtain the supreme accomplishment in this life!

In brief, please bless me that I may always act in accord with the Dharma,
That no signs of obstacles may ever arise,
And that having completed the Dharma activities of listening, contemplating, and meditating,
May the two benefits be spontaneously accomplished!

This was Supplication to the Guru Combined with Words of Advice. It was composed by the vagabond Jamyang Khyentse for earnest seekers on the first day of the waxing moon in the month of Pālguna⁴ of the Water Mouse year (1852) as it came to his mind.

NOTES

1. “Homage to the glorious masters!”
2. *blang dor* refers to discerning what is suitable to adopt and to discard on one’s path of practice and conduct.
3. *kun rtogs* is generally translated as “conceptualization” or “mental fabrication” (see glossary entry) and it is not common to render it as “imagination”; however, here, I chose this translation as it encompasses the mental activity of elaborating on the narrative sustained by constant appraisal of the information received through sensorial perception and the ensuing tendencies of analyzing (*dpyod pa*), fixating (*gzung ba*), and grasping (*’dzin pa*) to the initial object even when this object is no longer apparent.
4. There is debate regarding whether this refers to the second or eleventh month of the Tibetan lunar calendar.

GLOSSARY

arising, ceasing, and abiding

སྐྱེ་འགག་གནས། • *skye 'gag gnas*

The three defining characteristics of all compounded phenomena.

bodhicitta

བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས། • *byang chub sems*

Abbreviation of *byang chub kyi sems*. The intent that aspires to and engages in attaining awakening.

Buddha

སངས་རྒྱལ། • *sangs rgyas*

The Awakened One, the first of the Three Jewels.

common preliminaries

ཐུན་མོང་སློན་འགྲོ། • *thun mong sngon 'gro*

The common preliminaries are a foundational practice in the Vajrayāna also known as the outer preliminaries or the four mind changings (*blo zlod rnam pa bzhi*). They comprise the contemplations on the freedoms and advantages of the precious human birth, the impermanence of life and conditioned phenomena, the law of cause and effect, and the shortcomings of saṃsāra.

compassion

སྨིན་རྗེ། • *snying rje* • *karuṇā*

The second of the four immeasurables (*tshad med bzhi*). It is the thought that wishes all sentient beings to be free from all suffering.

ḍākinīs and dharmapālas

མཁའ་འགྲོ་ཚེས་སྐྱོད། • *mkha' 'gro chos skyong*

The third of the three roots. Ḍākinīs are feminine principles of enlightenment in the Vajrayāna tradition known as embodiments of ultimate wisdom, and dharmapālas protect and preserve the Buddha's teachings and provide protection to practitioners.

devotion

མོས་གུས། • *mos gus*

Devotion is a term particularly used in Vajrayāna to describe a quality that ensues from having pristine, pure, unwavering faith in the three roots and the teachings.

enlightenment

བྱང་ཚུབ། • *byang chub* • bodhi

The state of awakening, realization of the fundamental absolute truth attained by someone who has purified the twofold emotional and cognitive obscurations.

experience

ཉམས་སྐྱོད། • *nyams myong* • anubhava

Temporary personal meditative experience gained through practice.

free from elaborations

སྐྱོས་བྲལ། • *spros bral* • niṣprapañca

The absence of mental fabrication of conceptual constructs.

gather the accumulations

ཚོགས་བསགས། • *tsbogs bsags*

The virtuous practice of gathering and perfecting the twofold accumulation of merit and wisdom needed to attain awakening.

hearing, contemplating, and meditating

ཐོས་བསམ་སྒྲོམ་པ། • *thos bsam sgom pa* • śruta, cintā, bhāvanā

The threefold process for the gradual development of wisdom.

heir

སྲས། • *sras*

Descendant, son, or heir in a family line. The term is often understood in the plural when designating bodhisattvas as the direct descendants of the buddhas.

imagination

ཀུན་རྟོག། • *kun rtog* • saṃkalpa

The conceptualization or discursive thought process of the conceptual mind that apprehends and examines what it perceives.

imputation

བཏགས་པ། • *btags pa* • prajñapti

Designation, imputation, or assigning a label to a given object and/or concept.

in accord with the Dharma

ཚོས་བཞིན། • *chos bzhin*

Something done in accordance with the view of the Dharma.

jewel

དཀོན་མཆོག། • *dkon mchog* • ratna

This term, often rendered as jewel when used in the context of the Three Jewels (*dkon mchog gsum*), means that which is rare and sublime.

knowledge, love, and power

མཐུན་བཅེ་རུས། • *mkhyen brtse nus* • jñāna, karuṇa, śakti

Qualities of a buddha that benefit others.

loving-kindness

བྱམས་པ། • *byams pa* • maitrī

The first of the four immeasurables (*tshad med bzhi*). This term denotes benevolence and love. It is the mindset that desires the happiness and well-being of all sentient beings.

obstacle

བར་ཆད། • *bar chad* • antarāya, vighna

Hindrances, impediments, interferences, or obstructions that can arise on the path of practice and are not conducive to spiritual progress, creating blockages, suffering, and various negative circumstances.

perfected

མཐར་ཐྱིན། • *mtbar phyin* • pariniṣṭhita

To bring to full completion and perfection.

post-meditation

རྗེས་ཐོབ། • *rjes thob* • pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna

The period following meditative and contemplative practices, generally when the practitioner is involved in daily activities and engages with sense perceptions. Alternative translations are “subsequent attainment” or “ensuing attainment.”

pristine wisdom

ཡེ་ཤེས། • *ye shes* • jñāna

Pristine or primordial wisdom as an essential quality of the enlightened buddha nature.

purify obscurations

སྒྲིབ་སྦྱང། • *sgrib sbyang*

The practice of purifying all obscurations that veil the true nature.

śamatha and vipaśyanā

ཞི་ལྷན། • *zhi lhag*

Contraction of the *terms zhi gnas* and *lhag mtshong*, the meditation practices of calm abiding and special insight.

samsāra

འཁོར་བ། • *'khor ba*

The cycle of conditioned existence characterized by birth, death, and transmigration, including old age, sickness, and suffering at large, caused by confusion—the ignorance of not knowing the fundamental nature.

Saṅgha

དགེ་འདུན། • *dge 'dun*

The noble beings constituting the third of the Three Jewels.

secret of speech

གསུང་གསང། • *gsung gsang* • *guhyavāc*

The speech of a fully awakened being. It is termed secret because it is endowed with countless, unfathomable qualities.

signs

མཚན་མ། • *mtshan ma* • *nimitta*

Signs, features, or marks of something.

special preliminaries

ལྷན་པར་སྒྲོན་འགོ། • *khyad par sngon 'gro*

The foundational Vajrayāna practice of the uncommon preliminaries includes taking refuge, generating bodhicitta, and the practices of Vajrasattva, maṇḍala offering, and guru yoga.

spiritual friend

བཤེས་གཉེན། • *bshes gnyen* • *mitra*

A good and virtuous friend, namely, a spiritual teacher that acts as a guide. Other variations are *dge ba'i bshes gnyen* (Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*).

state of equipoise

མཉམ་གཞན། • *mnyam gzhag* • *samāhita*

Resting evenly in a state of meditative awareness.

sublime Dharma

དམ་པའི་ཚོས། • *dam pa'i chos* • *saddharma*

Term used to characterize the Dharma in the sense of the second of the Three Jewels.

suffering

སྡུག་བསྔལ། • *sdug bsngal* • *duḥkha*

The state of pain, dissatisfaction, sorrow, and misery experienced by beings in saṃsāra.

supreme accomplishment

མཚོག་དངོས། • *mbhog dngos*

The state of awakening or enlightenment.

the freedoms and riches

དལ་འབྱོར། • *dal 'byor* • *kṣaṇasāmpad*

The freedoms and riches denote a set of qualities—commonly eighteen—considered characteristic of a precious human life endowed with the conditions conducive to the practice of the Dharma.

the three realms

ལས་གསུམ། • *kham gsum* • *tridhātu*

The desire, form, and formless realms that constitute the whole of saṃsāra.

twofold benefit

དོན་གཉིས། • *don gnyis*

The benefit of self and others.

undeceiving

བསྐྱེ་མེད། • *bslu med*

That which does not deceive, and which is authentic, not deceptive, and not fraudulent.

victor

རྒྱལ་བ། • *rgyal ba* • *jina*

Epithet of a buddha.

wind

རླུང། • *rlung* • *prāṇa*

The subtle vital energy that moves through the channels (Skt. *nāḍī*) in the subtle body.

words of advice

ཞུས་གདམས། • *zhal gdams*

Formal instructions, specifications, teachings, or advice spoken by a person, typically a teacher.

yoga

རྣལ་འབྱོར། • *rnal 'byor*

Specific techniques of spiritual practice, literally translated as “union with the natural state.”