

Brahma's Diadem

Tsongkhapa · Tsong Khapa

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Brahma's Diadem – Praise of Maitreya

by Tsong Khapa

\ Reverence to Glorious Guru Manjughosha!

\ Ever showering them with tender love,
\ He yet burns the friends of darkness,
\ Though He has cut off the toughest bonds
\ He binds himself tightly with compassion.
\ Ever possessed of peaceful equanimity
\ He cherishes others more than Himself.
\ Bowing humbly at the feet of Manjughosha,
\ I praise the Guardian Invincible Maitreya!

\ Four-faced Brahma praises Him with many mouths,
\ Thousand-eyed Indra always gazes at Him with devotion,
\ Rati's Kama drops his pride and bows down to Him.
\ Reverently, I worship the Regent's feet!

\ As sunlight opens lotuses in clear lakes,
\ As the clear-sky star lord makes lily garden bloom,
\ So the sight of His body, wreathed in auspicious signs,
\ Captivates living beings' hearts, the moment they see it.
\ May the lotus foot of my Guardian Maitreya
\ Grace the crown of my head in all my lives!

\ Devil-beater, free of all fear of life,
\ Matchless hero, best teacher of the three realms,
\ Always watching over beings fallen into dangers,
\ I worship Your feet, O Leader!

\ With unrestricted access to the totality of facts,
\ Your power of knowledge conquers the devil army horror,
\ Whose thunderbolt-weapons fall before You like fresh flowers,
\ You are dazzling with the glory of the ten powers!

\ You scorch the haughty brains of elephant-rivals,
\ Sounding the great roars of eloquence amid their congress,
\ Finishing off the foxes of the false philosophers,

\ Possessed of four fearlessnesses, You are the Human Lion!
\ You turn the supreme Wheel of Dharma,
\ Unturnable even by the proud World-Creator, Lord of passions,
\ Which neither ascetics nor priests can articulate.
\ You are the Guardian who loves the living beings!

\ Not even the word "error" affects Your body and speech,
\ Unfailing in memory, always focused in equality,
\ Free of discriminations as well as thoughtless trances,
\ Your activities are always absolutely pure!

\ You are completely beyond any occasion for failure
\ Of the will, of energy, or of Your memory,
\ Of meditative concentration, wisdom, or liberation.
\ Therefore Your realization is unexcelled!

\ Your wisdom unblocked and unattached in all three times,
\ Your physical, verbal, and mental deeds are pure.
\ Accomplishing beings' aims to the end of samsara,
\ You are involved joyfully with that responsibility.

* * *

\ Having perfected the mass of magnificent virtues
\ And conquered susceptibility to the slightest faults,
\ Please consider for a moment the lamentable plight
\ Of me who is the object of your compassion!

\ Though I have this life of leisure and opportunity
\ Capable of liberation from the great ocean of suffering,
\ I am defiled by the faults of carelessness. Sloth,
\ Stupor, frivolity, and desire for gain and fame.
\ I waste this good body, using it for meaningless pursuits,
\ When it can easily achieve the supremely meaningful.
\ I inhabit this human flesh, with the attitude of a beast,
\ Pray look upon me with your great compassion!

\ Though I have won the crucial leisure so hard to find,
\ Though I see the powerful Lord Death whom no power can stop,
\ Sending forth his messengers who cannot be escaped,
\ And am already seized by old age and sickness ---
\ Beings do not remember the unsureness of the time of death
\ Nor that all is lost when death actually comes,
\ And spend the days and months and years in vain pursuits ---
\ It is time to have mercy on us deluded ones!

\ What need is there to mention the exaltation of transcendence?
\ There is no real ambition to reach even mere high estate, (i.e. I can't even gain
a high rebirth by myself.)
\ Praised by the Muni as the basis of the spiritual path,
\ Are You really being indifferent to me?

\ Though we may have won the body fortunate with high estate,
\ If we do not find the unmistakable path of goodness,
\ With the wisdom that precisely investigates the teachings,
\ Once gain we will fall into the ocean of cyclic life.
\ (i.e. Desire to escape the whole cycle of samsara.)
\ So long enveloped by the dark massive fog of delusion,
\ Obscuring our right discernment of the ground of ethical choice,
\ Please bestow upon us the lamp of wisdom!

\ The rain of weapons falls upon the body,
\ Licked by flames on the ground of molten iron,
\ Yama's minions impale it on a stake,
\ And ladle gobs of molten brass upon the tongue.
\ Frozen in caves of ice in surrounding icy peaks
\ Lashed by blizzards driven by fierce winds,
\ Some are covered with blisters, some wounded,
\ Others torn into many pieces. (i.e. the hell beings)

\ Faces covered with hair, with mouths parched,
\ They see a river and run to drink,
\ Creatures prevent them, blocking them with swords and spears,
\ And the water seems to turn to blood and pus. (i.e. the hungry ghosts)

\ Mouths like a needle's eye, throat choked off by goitres,
\ Even finding food and drink they cannot enjoy it.
\ Whatever they do eat or drink burns internally,
\ They live on excrement and urine, or eat their own flesh.

\ Enveloped in the great darkness of delusion,
\ Minds incapable of discerning right and wrong.
\ One killing another, controlled by gods and men,
\ They suffer the misery of beating and drudgery. (i.e. animals)

\ All peace of mind overcome by the burning fire
\ Of their consuming jealousy of the glory of the gods,
\ Bodies slashed and lost from the fighting,
\ Deceived by trickery, with no fortune to see the truth. (i.e. jealous demigods)

\ .
\ Not to mention the experience, mere hearing about these realms
\ Produces terror in the heart, one shudders in general
\ At the fall into the great abysses
\ Of the hells, ghosts, beasts, and titans,
\ Having accumulated from the beginningless and still doing so,
\ I quail in the face of this great abyss ---
\ It is time to save me from the terror of bad migrations! (i.e. desire for liberation)

\ Even in the human abodes, with the high estate
\ Of power and property, there is the worry of loss,
\ And the ruin from parting from excellence of fortune.
\ And the seeking only after the pleasures of desire.

\ Wanting happiness, one uses means to get it,
\ But afterwards one will find great suffering
\ So much more, from the many forms
\ Of physical pain and mental anxiety.

\ Even the gods, who sport in the glory of heaven,
\ With beautiful bodies, adorned with jeweled ornaments,
\ In fine mansions surrounded by pleasure gardens,
\ Savoring long the pleasures of desire,
\ Finally are gripped by the signs of unwanted death.
\ Then they see they will unwillingly be parted
\ From the lovely goddesses who captivated their hearts,
\ From the delightful pleasure gardens,
\ From the nectar food, fine dress, ornaments of beauty,
\ And the other youthful gods, so soon!
\ Then they burn with fiery tongues of sorrow,
\ Generated by the mental anguish so much more intense
\ Than all the physical pleasures of that place.
\ Thus terminates the fruit gained by their striving
\ In actions of goodness for many lives,
\ And their carelessness, the cause of bad states, affects them finally,
\ And once again they fall into the hellish realms.

\ Even those who have gained the form and formless heavens,
\ Long abiding in pure bliss by power of samadhi,
\ Without notions longing for desire, without malice,
\ Beyond sleep and deeds of mental anguish,
\ Free of suffering from physical and mental harm,
\ Are not liberated from the bond of cosmic suffering,
\ And when the impulse of the prior samadhi ends,
\ Again they fall down and continue their migrations.

\ Thus even the lords of life, gods and men, are caught
\ In the ocean of existence by suffering's currents,
\ Of birth and death and sickness and old age.
\ So surely it is wrong to love the mundane happiness!
\ So please save me from the current of existence,
\ I whose eye of wisdom life obscures,
\ Mistaking suffering for happiness,
\ Confused by perverse and foolish notions!
\ Stuck in the mud of desire, strayed from the path of liberation,
\ Lost in the gloom of nescience, without the eye of wisdom,
\ Caught in the trap of fabrications, chained in the prison of samsara,
\ Tormented by evolution, I am in need of Your compassion!

* * *

\ To stop at the cliff of the terrible samsara,
\ One must surely reach the stage of skill
\ Depending on no other, by discerning rightly
\ The definitive and interpretable in the boundless teachings,

\ By the power of pure reason of correct analysis,
\ Depending on extensive and impeccable learning ---
\ No need to mention the subtle intention of the Victor!
\ (i.e. The Mahayana Path, The Middle Way : We need both method and wisdom -- the two accumulations.)

\ But my intellectual vision becomes not very clear
\ Even about the crude points of involvement and cessation,
\ And still this enemy of delusion obscures my heart
\ And I have no chance for liberation!

\ Consider this situation, clear the darkness from my heart!
\ Awaken my instincts left from constant practice
\ In the ocean of learning over many lives
\ Of the sciences taught by the Victors and their Sons!
\ You the sole eye revealing the good path to beings!

\ I, wretched and without protector,
\ Abandoned by the holy ones of old,
\ Like a guest arrived from distant regions,
\ It is time You cared for me with Your great kindness!

\ You Maitreya who free all beings with Your love,
\ Are the refuge served with devotion again and again!
\ Swiftly, swiftly come and be my spiritual friend
\ In the Universal Vehicle in all my lives!

\ Before You, who constantly look out
\ For all beings with Your great love,
\ If they remember Your excellence with mind of faith,
\ Daily You will come to them!

\ Yet even though one wishes to frequent lonely places
\ To enjoy the taste of solitude in isolation,
\ It is physically impossible to go.

\ Thus, You, to please the holiest of fields of merit,
\ With pure high resolve filled the realms of space
\ With jewels, gold nuggets, and heavenly silks,
\ With the three robes, monk's staffs, and ascetic's bowls,
\ Recommended by the Sage to the religious seekers,
\ And also emanated an excellent array of exquisite offerings
\ From your samadhi and vows,
\ And offered them all to the Lord of Humans,
\ With mind detached and free of expectations.

* * *

\ By the mass of pure virtue coming from that
\ May I become the refuge of all beings
\ Who have wandered so long in existence
\ Devoid of joy, tormented by the million pains!
\ May all beings who are out of contact

\ With the holy exaltation of the World-Leader,
\ Take lives as monks with the pure spiritual life,
\ And awaken their Universal Vehicle genealogies!
\ (i.e. Rejection of Nirvana for self, in order to be a Bodhisattva and help all
sentient beings.)

\ May they obtain unwavering honesty and tolerance,
\ Dauntless heroism and intense powerful faith,
\ Devotion, and the effort of constant practice,
\ And the consummate wisdom of discernment!

\ May the Sugatas be pleased by the ceasing of doubts
\ Through sustained practice in the ocean of wide learning,
\ Depending on the spiritual friends, supremely skillful teachers,
\ Kindly leading others with techniques from their own insight,
\ Having discovered the Victor's intention by the power of pure reason,
\ And by putting into practice the import of their understanding!

\ Not transgressing the regulations of the Muni,
\ Devoted to the Victor's heir, the spiritual friend,
\ Extremely sharp of mind, free of faults of wrong practice,
\ May You have such a retinue of perfect purity!

\ Disturbed by the mind of dark tendencies,
\ Obstructed in enjoying the feast of meritorious deeds,
\ May I never encounter even for an instant,
\ Such an evil friend, relative of devils!

\ When I train myself, with proper devotion to Shakyamuni,
\ May there not even be the name of hindrance,
\ Blocking the fulfillment of the energetic deeds,
\ The demonic action that follows the unlucky ones!

\ Thus endowed holy and delightful persons
\ May they achieve without any obstruction
\ All the favorable circumstances of the deeds of enlightenment,
\ Praised by the Leader as the ornament of religious persons!

\ During the enlightenment deeds, may I establish
\ All realms of disciples in the renunciation
\ Bound by the pure precepts, and grant them just with a thought
\ All the furnishings appropriate to them!

\ From now on throughout all my lives,
\ Whatever I do with body, speech, and mind,
\ May it all become the cause of benefit
\ To all beings on all occasions!

\ Like a mother when her beloved son dies,
\ Through the love always breaking my heart,
\ For all beings tormented by all sufferings,
\ May I give away all my wealth!

\ When I purify all taints of the stage of deeds in faith,
\ May I become like Meru amid the golden mountains,
\ Among the common individual Bodhisattvas
\ Of the past, present, and future;
\ And becoming exalted through all the qualities
\ Of the eyes, superknowledges, and great learning,
\ May I attain the eloquence not dependent on others!

\ Training in the stages of the holy Bodhisattvas,
\ May I become like the eagle among the birds,
\ Among all the universal beings of three times,
\ The great heroes abiding on the stages,
\ And with impeccable intuition penetrating without block,
\ All the points of knowables extremely vast
\ Hard to fathom by other Bodhisattvas,
\ May I become a treasury of energetic deeds!

\ When I gain the fruit of such practice,
\ May I perfect through practice of liberative technique,
\ The very same sum of whatever are the body,
\ And field and retinue, deeds, lifespan, and vows
\ Of all the Victors of the three times!
\ And this world which I contemplate from afar,
\ May I liberate in a single instant
\ By the falling of the great rain
\ Of the nectar of the Holy Dharma.

This "Brahma's Diadem", Praise of the Protector Maitreya, the Victor, sole refuge for the whole world including the gods, was written by the learned Easterner Losang Dragpa Pal at the Retreat House, "Empty Mountain Sunrise", at Lho Brag.

It is translated by Professor Robert Thurman and the translators from the Library of Tibetan Works & Archives.

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