

Cloud-Ocean of Praises of Manjushri

Tsongkhapa · Tsong Khapa

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by Tsong Khapa

\ Who calms the flames of ambitions for one's own pleasure,
\ with the waters of long-cultivated compassion,
\ Who cuts the net of imaginative fabrications,
\ by seeing the reality of the profound as it is,
\ Who carries with tireless heart the responsibility of helping
\ others, to reveal to beings what he sees himself.

\ My mind is aimed at such a tutelary deity as you, O Manjushri!
\ Please consider for a moment these flowers of verses of praise,
\ Stirred by the wind of faith, O Manjughosha, Treasure of Wisdom,
\ O radiant shining mass of rays of saffron light,
\ Like the great solid golden axial mountain,
\ Embraced by the rays of the rising sun!

\ Though one were to seek strenuously everywhere,
\ One finds no good refuge other than in you,
\ When my mind thus turns itself toward you,
\ It is like a sun-burnt elephant plunging in the lotus pond!

\ Thus, expressing your excellence, when I let my mind go
\ Toward the means of finding fulfillment of my hopes,
\ It is like the lowly beggar's pleasure
\ When he sees the beautiful gift-giver coming!

[Praise of Body]

\ Your body is tall and straight like the axial mountain,
\ Its expanse is handsome as the banyan tree,
\ The complexion of your skin is pure and clear
\ Like dust of gold, fine, smooth, and soft.

\ On your crown, like the tip of a victory standard,
\ Your coiffe of long, soft, shining black hair,
\ Is bound in a beautiful turban whose crest
\ Has five tufts, slightly leaning to the left.

\ Your head is massive like a shapely parasol dome,
\ Adorned with a diadem of precious stones,
\ Your hair-line is high and well-defined,
\ And the spread of your brow is like the waxing moon.

\ The mid-brow is adorned by an immaculate urna-hair,
\ As if carved out in pure silver,
\ Shapely, curling to the right,
\ Clear white as a lily or as a lotus stalk.

\ Your eyebrows are long, even, of lustrous soft hairs,
\ Black in color and slightly arched.
\ Your eyelashes are attractive as a bull's,
\ Thick, soft, not bristly, well-proportioned.

\ Your eyes are long and slightly round,
\ Like the petals of the blue utpala-lotus,
\ Beautiful, the pupils and whites unclouded,
\ Your nose is well proportioned and prominent,

\ Your lips attractive, red as the bimba fruit,
\ Your forty teeth white, even, and well-polished.
\ Cheeks round and full like the king of deer,
\ Your tongue sensitive to good taste is soft and supple,
\ And can cover the entire orb of your face.

\ On the long lobes of your fine ears
\ Dangle earrings adorned with many gems.
\ And your immaculate neck is well adorned
\ With a necklace of sparkling jewels.

\ The surface of your hands, feet, arches shoulders, and neck,
\ Your body completely full, with no imbalance,
\ Its upper part as broad as Mahadeva,
\ Your chest as wide at the slope of Meru,
\ Your arm well rounded at the shoulder,
\ Long and beautiful like the elephant-king's trunk.

\ The web of beauty on your fingers and toes
\ Is well shaped like the king of geese.
\ Your nails shine with a polished red color,
\ Their garland adorning your fingers,
\ Like new shoots on the branches of the wish-granting tree,
\ Soft, flexible, long, with youthful flesh.

\ The palms and soles of your hands and feet
\ Are adorned with the best thousand-spoked golden wheel,
\ Precise and complete, not jumbled together,
\ Distinct and regular as if pressed from the same seal.

\ Adorned with armlet and bracelet
\ Your right hand holds the sword
\ That cuts the root of the tree of materialism,

\ Shining forth a brilliant net of light.
 \ Your left hand holds at your heart
 \ The stalk of a blue utpala lotus,
 \ On which rests the supreme volume of exact and full teaching
 \ Of the path of relativity, the sole doorway to peace.
 \ Upon your shimmering lower robe of variegated silk
 \ Soft and smooth, dyed with marvelous colors,
 \ The lower hem of golden tinkling bells
 \ Makes a pleasant sound, beautifully draping.
 \ Your organs are retracted like a superb horse,
 \ Your fine and soft body hairs
 \ Grow individually, curling to the right
 \ And grow upwards on your body.
 \ Their skin delicate, your calves are good and round.
 \ Your ankles are without protruding bones.
 \ Your soles are flat like a turtle's belly.
 \ A quarter of the foot turns out, and your heel is broad.
 \ On a seat of a perfectly round moon-disc,
 \ On the saffron center of a six-petalled white lotus,
 \ Ankles adorned with beautiful, tinkling anklets
 \ Your two feet are crossed in the Vajra posture.
 \ Your body is supremely beautiful, supreme body born of the
 \ superlative cause, ultimate store of merit,
 \ Like an illusion before many beings, in all superb lands
 \ limitless, throughout endless space,
 \ Born on occasion, teaching the path of enlightenment even
 \ in other lands, your body, O Teacher.
 \ Its superb array here and elsewhere, even if all beings were
 \ to become omniscient, they could not express it!
 \ As the thousand-rayed sun plunging its seven horses
 \ into the saffron ocean,
 \ Your body radiates everywhere masses of light of which one can
 \ never see enough,
 \ By whatever merit I gain by this slight praise,
 \ May the beautiful body of Manjughosha never leave my sight!
 \ When I just have beheld your body,
 \ I weary of my long wandering in existence,
 \ May my troublesome mind always taking the wrong path
 \ Come into the power of the spirit of enlightenment!

[Praise of Speech]

\ Further, having attained an infinite store of samadhis,
 \ With retentions, superknowledges, and doors of liberation,

\ May I manifest limitless physical arrays,
\ To see the Victors in the million universes!

\ Then, having reached the limit of wide learning,
\ Satisfying limitless beings with the Dharma,
\ May I before too long attain the supreme body
\ Of the chief of all Victors, the Lord of Speech!

\ Your saffron body manifesting a thousand light-rays,
\ As if reflecting in the surface of a polished mirror,
\ Erect and beautiful as a curving rainbow,
\ I salute you Manjughosha, Lord of Speech!

\ Your voices fill all universes everywhere in every different language,
\ Satisfying the minds of all living beings appropriately,
\ eclipsing even the lustre of creators,
\ Melody of your speech like a sphere of music,
\ which sweet speech outlasts the samsara,
\ Whose ear it enters, it takes away their sickness,
\ their old age, and their death.

\ Your speech is pleasant, gentle, charming, heart-stirring,
\ Harmonious, its sweetness is pure, stainless clear light,
\ Worth hearing, taming the wild with sweetness,
\ Not rough, not coarse, very calm, it pleases the ear.
\ Satisfying body, mind, and heart, it generates delight,
\ Painless, all-informing, it is to be understood.

\ Brilliantly delightful, intensely delightful,
\ Totally illuminating, enlightening,
\ Rational, relevant, free of all redundancy,
\ Its tone is sweet as a lion, elephant, lord of serpents,
\ Dragon, gandharva, kalavinka, Brahma,
\ Crane, lord of swans.

\ Its drumbeat is no high, not low, penetrating all appropriately,
\ Your phrases are expressive, not incomplete,
\ Not disheartened, not feeble, pervaded with joy and insight,
\ Cohesive, relevant, and all conclusive
\ Satisfying all senses, not contemptuous, not vacillating,
\ Renowned throughout the whole thoughtless samsara.

\ It dispels the three times, punishes the demon hosts,
\ Emerging with supremacy in all its forms.
\ Such a voice with sixty-four qualities,
\ All are present even in a single statement,
\ It gives happiness to the hearing of the lucky
\ As far as space can reach.

\ It does not seem too loud when near, nor faint when far,
\ But accords with the language of each of countless disciples
\ like a crystal prisms various colors,

\ Manifests as coming from all parts of your body, such as
\ crown, urna-hair, and throat,
\ And yet it pacifies all the notions of all those hearers,
\ just as the Brahma-voice can manifest from sky.

\ Like the deep thunder within the rain-cloud
\ Girt with its belt of beautiful red lightning.
\ By this merit of praising the speech of Manjughosha,
\ May I never be parted from the hearing of your speech!

\ Just by hearing your stream of speech,
\ The lucky accept it, condemning wrong discourse,
\ May the well-wrought phrases reach the ultimate
\ In the explaining, writing, and arguing
\ That fascinate all the intelligent!

\ Easily obtaining supreme intellectual understanding
\ Of unhindered linguistic grasp of all languages of beings,
\ May I achieve the triumph of cutting off all doubts
\ Of all living beings without exception!

\ Never transgressing the boundaries
\ Of the statements of your instructions,
\ Through devoted single-pointed practice,
\ May I quickly achieve the mastery of speech!

[Praise of Mind]

\ Color of good gold mixed with dyes of coral,
\ Wisdom certain of the proper color of all knowables,
\ Lord of Wisdom, Manjughosha, refuge of beings,
\ May you as supreme refuge grant superlative wisdom!

\ Drunk on the ichor of materialism, knowledge of
\ right and wrong destroyed,
\ Completely wrecking the tree of virtue,

¢(i.e. Beyond simple morality, beyond the duality of right and wrong.)

\ with its trunk poisoned with afflictions,
\ The mind dragged by the chains of existence, losing the
\ female elephant of success,
\ Such is the elephant of the mind hard to tame, running amuck
\ in the jungle of unconsciousness!

\ It should be bound tightly with the rope of conscience,
\ mindfulness, and awareness,
\ Driven with the goad of genuine reasoning,

¢(i.e. Guarding the doors, controlling the mind, seeking the subtle nature of our own mind.)

\ And guided onto the good path of holy relativity,

¢(i.e. Dependent origination is the key to the path. Everything is empty of inherent existence because dependently arisen, merely imputed by the mind.)

\ Praised and trodden by millions of supreme holy ones.
\ With the powerful force of tireless effort on that way,
\ By meditating again and again for limitless aeons,
\ By the Vajra of the illusion-like samadhi,
\ The mountain of extremisms is rendered merely a name!
\ (i.e. The necessity to develop this meditation through repeated effort -- seeking the real nature of the mind, the originary awareness.)

\ Again the innumerable Lord Victors,
\ Being pleased by oceans of clouds of supreme offerings,
\ With the sound of the Brahma-voices from their taintless throats,
\ Grant supreme instruction taught with one intention.

¢(i.e. Asking for the Dharma.)

\ This food of nectar eradicating the hundred illnesses of existence,
\ By constant use increases the strength of the body of intelligence
\ Which reaches the transcendences of the energetic deeds
\ Of the Bodhisattva so very difficult to reach.

¢(i.e. The six paramitas: the perfection of all practices like generosity, morality, patience, effort, concentration, wisdom. Transcending those by knowing the emptiness of all the elements.)

\ The one is no longer oppressed by extremist habits,
\ False appearances entirely conquered, there arises
\ The chief of all samadhis without hindrance ---
\ The samadhi renowned as like a Vajra.

¢(i.e. Purifying the originary awareness; always in meditation about the inseparability of appearances and emptiness. Always aware of the real nature of the mind, how could one be fooled by its own creations. On the contrary, one sees the dependently originated creations and is not attached to those illusions anymore. The Wheel of samsara stops turning. But one is still able to help all other sentient beings. One is totally free to take any point of view in order to find the best skilful means to help them. That is Omniscience.)

\ By the power of your manifestation of that
\ Appearance on the part of illusory objects
\ And the dream-like intelligence, which knows clearly
\ All experience and appearance, enter the ultimate realm.

¢(i.e. Nirvana is knowing the real nature of everything: the dependent origination and emptiness -- both together. One is totally free to use any skilful means to help all other sentient beings.)

\ Thus, like a tree whose root is destroyed,
\ Since you have eradicated the seeds of all habits,
\ How could you, refuge, ever deviate
\ From the Body of Truth, as long as space shall last!

¢(i.e. Permanence of Enlightenment. Once the mind is purified, once the ignorance is gone, once you have seen the projector, you are not fooled by its projections anymore. And that is permanent.)

\ Thus while you, Protector, never leave the ultimate realm at all,
\ The vivid appearance of the many objects are perfectly known
\ individually without mixing,

¢(i.e. While never leaving emptiness, one can still see appearances, use skilful means. The Union of the Two Truths; the inseparability of appearances and emptiness. The poles of a duality are seen as not the same, not different.)

\ Though like reflections in a mirror, or like a rainbow in the sky,
\ O Intuitive One, Your wisdom embraces all even in an instant!

¢(i.e. Omniscience)

\ From generosity comes wealth and not poverty,
\ From avarice comes poverty and not wealth!
\ You understand all such points of inexorable relativity,

¢(i.e. Perfect understanding of dependent origination, karma, the Wheel of life, and emptiness.)

\ Therefore, you are the chief of philosophers!
\ The process of evolution with its fruits of virtue and sin
\ Of all those who move unchecked through existence,
\ There is nothing in it that you do not understand; (i.e. Omniscience)
\ Therefore, there is never any parting from your speech.

\ The process of various attitudes such as sticking to desire,
\ Inclining to hatred, or the reverse of these and so forth;
\ Since you directly see all this, none of your deeds
\ Can ever fail to accomplish the aims of beings,

¢(i.e. Using perfectly adapted skilful means)

\ Not a single one of all the categories of the eighteen elements
\ Are hidden in the slightest from your understanding,
\ Therefore you never exceed in the slightest
\ Just proportion in training the faculties of disciples.

¢(i.e. Using perfectly adapted skilful means)

\ Since your understanding is never blocked in application
\ To the sharpness, dullness, or absence of faculties
\ Such as faith in those who wander in existence
\ You are extremely skillful in the technique of teaching Dharma.

¢(i.e. Using perfectly adapted skilful means)

\ Since you know without obscuration entirely
\ The paths of ascendance and of transcendence
\ And of going to the wretched states,

\ You are the excellent spiritual friend of living beings.

¢(i.e. Knowing perfectly how karma works.)

\ Through all samadhis such as those of form and formless,
\ The lion's stretch and terrific triumph,
\ You are not confused in the practice-methods of entrance and arisal,
\ You are consummate in all meditational absorptions.

¢(i.e. Knowing all methods.)

\ You are skilled in the limits of the past,
\ Since you realize in a mere instant
\ The memory and understanding of former lives of self and others
\ Which have been continuous from beginningless samsara.

¢(i.e. Knowing perfectly how karma works.)

\ You are skilled in the limits of the future,
\ Since you know very well all the places of rebirth,
\ Having migrated through death from just this present time
\ According to one's good and evil actions.

¢(i.e. Knowing perfectly how karma works.)

\ Your direct vision, completely free of blocks,
\ Sees the Nirvana that is the termination of defilements
\ And the Eightfold Path the means of terminating them;

¢(i.e. Perfect knowledge of the paths and the fruit.)

\ Thus you are the best of all refuges.

\ Your knowledge penetrates unhindered the appropriate
\ and the inappropriate, the effects of evolution,
\ Attitudes, the universes, the degree of faculties, the paths
\ that lead everywhere,
\ The afflictions, purifications, the past abodes, death,
\ migrations, birth, and termination of defilement,
\ What point of knowables is not under your command, not
\ your object?

¢(i.e. Perfect knowledge of the paths and the fruit.)

\ Those who wander in existence from the beginningless,
\ Though they frequent with powerful effort
\ The path of harming others to gain their own happiness,
\ Are erring as their hardships will prove fruitless.
\ So you also see that those who for themselves,
\ Even not harming others even in the slightest,
\ Day and night strive a hundred ways for liberation,
\ Have also turned their backs on the true path.
\ Thus you long practiced the good path of compassion,

¢(i.e. The necessity of both bodhicitta and emptiness)

\ The sole path of all the Victors,
 \ The Mother which looks after all beings,
 \ The door for entering the fray of the hero Bodhisattvas.

 \ You, loving one, see the great error of forsaking
 \ Others' happiness, as there's no virtue in all this world,
 \ Not accepting suffering even in your dreams,
 \ And not resting content even with the utmost pleasures,
 \ And so by your primal cultivation
 \ Of the spirit of enlightenment that sees
 \ The equality of self and others, (i.e. Equanimity)
 \ You hold all living beings as yourself.

 \ Craving one's own happiness blocks the path.
 \ Cherishing others is the treasury of all excellence.
 \ Thus your practice again and again the method of exchange
 \ Of self and others, making all beings yourself.

¢(i.e. The method of Tchékhwawa to develop Bodhicitta)

\ Thus you, Lord, completely nurse physical strength
 \ Frequently with the mother of compassion,
 \ How can even the culmination of excellence
 \ Be deprived even by the bliss of peace?

 \ Just as the king of birds soars in the heavens
 \ Not falling to the earth, not his proper place,
 \ By praising your mind that stays neither in existence nor in peace,
 \ May I never be apart from the wisdom and love of Manjughosha!

¢(i.e. The real nature of Nirvana / Enlightenment is beyond existence and non-existence.)

\ The view that removes all occasions for extremism.
 \ And the compassion that sees all beings as one's only child.

¢(i.e. We need both together method and wisdom.)

\ Having achieved them easily within my mind.
 \ May I lead all beings onto the supreme vehicle!

 \ The retention that remembers word and meaning of all teachings,
 \ And supreme eloquence that answers all questions,
 \ Quickly generating these, may I spread out the feast
 \ Of eloquent explanations of the masses of the Dharma!

 \ By the glory of the mind of Manjughosha
 \ Who, without calculating, fulfills the hopes
 \ Of various disciples according to their inclinations,
 \ May I become beautiful as the autumn moon in the sky!

 \ Ceaselessly praised by limitless Victors
 \ in the universes of the ten directions,
 \ He is called Manjughosha, whose sweetness fills the three realms,
 \ And this ocean of clouds of praises, reverently

\ expressing just a bit of his excellence,
\ Who upholds it and reads it, May Manjughosha
\ quickly enter his mind!

Composed by the learned Easterner Losang Dragpa Pal at the hermitage of O-de-gung-rgyal at the prince of snowy mountains in Tibet, written down by the Buddhist scholar Bhadrapala.

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

[End]

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