

Praise to Mañjuśrī: A Translation

One of the most popular prayers in Bhutan is the praise to Mañjuśrī called *Praise to the Noble Qualities of the Excellent Pristine Wisdom* (དཔལ་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཡོན་ཏན་བཟང་པོའི་བསྟོན་པ།). The composition is attributed to one Vajrayudha but also claimed to have been composed by 500 paṇḍitas. According to a popular story, 500 paṇḍitas in India were asked to write a praise to Mañjuśrī on their own but when they submitted their writings, they are said to have uniformly produced this praise through the blessings of Mañjuśrī.

Due to such special origin, this is by far the most common prayer to Mañjuśrī used in the Himalayan Buddhist world. Scholars and students recite this prayer every day in order to invoke the blessings of intelligence and wisdom from Mañjuśrī, the Buddha of Wisdom and the epitome of pristine awareness.

། ལྷ་མ་དང་མགོན་པོ་ཇི་བཙུན་འཇམ་དཔལ་དབྱངས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།།

Homage to the guru and protector lord Mañjuśrīgoṣha.

གང་གི་སྐོ་གྲོས་སྐྱིབ་གཉིས་སྐྱིན་བལ་ཉི་ལྟར་རྣམ་དག་རབ་གསལ་བས།།

ཇི་སྟེད་དོན་ཀུན་ཇི་བཞིན་གཟིགས་ཕྱིར་ཉིད་ཀྱི་བྱུགས་ཀར་སྐྱེགས་བམ་འཛིན།།

Your wisdom, free from the cloud of two obscurations, is immaculate and brilliant like the sun. It can see all phenomena correctly. Thus, [to symbolise this] you hold a book at your heart.

གང་དག་སྲིད་པའི་བཙོན་རར་མ་རིག་སྟུན་འབྱམས་སྟུག་བསྐལ་གྱིས་གཟིར་བའི།།

འགོ་ཚེགས་ཀུན་ལ་བྱ་གཅིག་ལྟར་བཅེ་ཡན་ལག་དྲུག་ཅུའི་དབྱངས་ལྷན་གསུང་།།

All those host of sentient beings bewildered in the darkness of ignorance in the prison of existence and tormented by suffering, you love like your only child. Your speech is endowed with sixty forms of melodies.

འབྱུག་ལྟར་ཆེར་སྐྱོག་ཉོན་མོངས་གཉིད་སྐྱོང་ལས་ཀྱི་ལྷགས་སྐྱོག་གོལ་མཛད་ཅིང་།།

མ་རིག་སྟུན་སེལ་སྟུག་བསྐལ་ལྷ་གུ་ཇི་སྟེད་གཙོད་མཛད་རལ་གྱི་བསྐྱམས།།

It resonates like thunder to wake [us] from the slumber of delusion and release [us] from the chains of evil actions. You hold the sword which clears the darkness of ignorance and cuts every sprout of suffering.

གདོད་ནས་དག་ཅིང་ས་བརྩའི་མཐར་སོན་ཡོན་ཏན་ལུས་ཇོགས་རྒྱལ་སྐྱེ་བའི་སྐྱ།།

བརྩ་ཕྱག་བརྩ་དང་བརྩ་གཉིས་རྒྱན་སྐྱས་བདག་སྐོའི་སྟུན་སེལ་འཇམ་དཔལ་དབྱངས་ལ་འདུད།།

Primordially pure, you have reached the end of the ten stages and embody all noble qualities. You are the eldest of the Buddha's heirs, adorned with a hundred and twelve ornaments (marks and tokens). You are the dispeller of darkness in my mind. To Mañjuśrī, I pay homage.

This prayer is considered throughout the Himalayas as the most powerful supplication and the essence of all prayers to Mañjuśrī. Those who seek intelligence, learning and

wisdom are urged to chant this prayer with full awareness of Mañjuśrī, his sublime qualities and his activities to benefit the world and lead the sentient beings to enlightenment. Chanting this prayer is said to help one attain intelligence, clarity, memory, wisdom, eloquence, learning and eventually enlightenment.

Karma Phuntsho is the Director of Shejun Agency for Bhutan's Cultural Documentation and Research, the President of the Loden Foundation and the author of *The History of Bhutan*. The piece was initially published in Bhutan's national newspaper Kuensel in a series called *Why we do what we do*.