A Precious Garland

A Brief Account of Tibetan Yoginis of the Past

AH Emptiness, free from all birth and destruction,
Of unceasing, all-pervasive nature,
Compassion’s unobstructed power of magical display–
I bow to the assembly of trikaya dakinis!

Actual form of wisdom, inconceivable and
Beyond thought, companion of compassion,
Endowed with the brilliance of one hundred thousand prajñas –
I bow to the assembly of dakinis of the mother lineage!
Because they are the very nature
Of knowing, and of knowable phenomena—
Of samsara and enlightenment without exception—
I bow to the mother who radiates everything without exception.

Form of major and minor marks of the three secrets of all victorious ones,
Speech of sixty attributes, profound and vast,
Endowed with immaculate wisdom, divine daughter, Saraswati,
I invite you, today, to the lotus lake of my mind.

Yoginis who have been kept hidden
Inside the long ever-flowing stream of history,
In truth, Vajravarahi herself,
Have appeared in great number, yet accounts are few.
As for them, except for those in the realm of men
Deluded by place, time and conditions,
They were not actually non-existent:
Some are known from history at large.

Previously, when the Lord of Sages
Taught the Dharma to the four classes of students,
Those called ‘fortunate sons and daughters’
Were equally nurtured by his profound and vast teachings.

Accordingly, they renounced samsara and,
Through faith in him, gathered the accumulations.
In this way, appeared countless women with realization
Of the profound truth of dependent arising, the natural state.
The fortunate yogins with realization of
The enlightened mind of the vidyadhara gurus of the three lineages,
Called vidyadhara dakas and dakinis,
Were embellished by the garland of the golden mountains of the lineage.

Hence, relying on the lineage blessings
And advice, their minds were ripened and
Their accomplishment yielded the two benefits.
With joy, I will share briefly an account of how this came about.

Seedling of the Zahor family,
Emanation of Datvishvari, Queen of Space, Mandarava
Attained the supreme form free from aging and decay,
As well as supreme unsurpassed siddhi.
A dance of Buddhalacchana, element of earth,
The foremost lady of the House of Karchen,
Main holder of Kila, wandered through celestial realms,
And attained infallible memory and supreme siddhi.

Water element completely purified, Mamaki,
The Nepalese Shakyadevi,
Was the key to eighteen treasures,
And attained the supreme vajra rainbow body.

Element of fire, Pandaravasini,
Accomplished lady Kalasiddhi, a commoner of Nepal,
Through the feast of supreme and common amritas,
Obtained the power of Vajradhara, the state of union.
A dance of Samaya Tara, element of wind, 
Tashi Khyidren of Bhutan, 
Mastering the siddhi of magical display, 
Emanated as a tigress, an activity consort.

Sangye Tso of the Tsenam House 
By the blessings of the lineage of vidyadharas, 
 Experienced the ripening of the three secrets and liberation – 
Her physical body vanished into a mass of light.

Padma Tso of the House of Tsombu, 
Through great confidence in the view of the two stages, 
Her mind, not being subject or object, 
Was ripened into the essence of the deity’s form.
Dorje Tso, queen of siddhas,
Most noble one of the Shelkar House,
Tore the seal of dualistic concepts,
And crossed over large rivers as if [crossing] fields.

Rinchen Tso of the House of Malgong,
Through great confidence in the view of equanimity,
Manifested an arrangement of silk brocade
Hanging on an insubstantial ray of sun.

Dönkun Drubma of the House of Rü
With the gaze of the view of the two stages,
Gathered under her command, and put to work
The twelve worldly Tenmas, among others.
Sherabmo of the Shübu House,
With the welling forth of prajña, the unobstructed power of awareness,
Obtained the realization of knowing without having learned
All the vast and profound scriptures and treatises.

Nyugumo of the Yardrog clan,
With mastery over the purity of the phenomenal world,
Upon sounding the lute of her enchanting voice,
Received instructions in reply from the deities in the sky.

Kargyalma of the House of Oche,
Attained confidence in the visions of spontaneous presence,
The unobstructed power of primordially pure dharmakaya,
And asked the deity for instructions.
Dzemza Lhamo, with mastery over
The phenomenal world’s treasury
Of primordial and spontaneously present desirables,
Partook of overflowing food and drink that filled space.

Daughter of Bar, the noble Yangchenma,
Her wisdom free of the cloak of obscurations,
Through magical emanations, the skillful means of love,
Was unrivalled in taming the mind streams of others.

Seedling of the Chog-ro family,
The noble Jangchubmo attained accomplishment and,
In order to dispense the splendor of happiness and benefit to others,
Emanated her own body as fire and water.
The daughter of Drom, Bamti Chenmo,
With mastery over the crucial points of yogic training
Of the channels and winds, obtained the siddhi
Of flying like a bird in the sky.

Lady of the Rongmen lineage, Tsultrin Drön,
Intoxicated by the elixir of pith instructions,
Realized her own nature within the view of equanimity,
And ate solid rocks and stones as if it were porridge.

Foremost of women, Paltsun, daughter of Khu,
Obtained confidence in the view of the two stages, and
As the recitation phurba bounced up from the offering platform,
Attained mastery over the four activities.
Shelmen, daughter of the Thrum Family,
To whom the fetters of concepts of substantial and insubstantial
Naturally collapsed within the essence of the view,
Placed a bundle of flowers on the sky.

In brief, there came many fortunate yoginis
Who subdued all torments of samsara and nirvana
Upon tasting the excellent stream of nectar –
Profound, peaceful and free of elaboration.

There came powerful women who achieved great confidence
Upon drinking the pristine water of tantras, scriptures and instructions
From the vessel of the vidyadhara minds,
And attained the sublime and common siddhis
There came dakinis who, through the profound two stages of development and completion, thoroughly purified impure phenomena, and reveling in the equality and purity of appearance and existence, roamed about celestial realms.

There came women who, seeing the fundamental nature of the most secret meaning through gradual or instantaneous realization, arrived at the level of exhaustion of the four visions, and accomplished the rainbow body.

To those who take to heart the noble path of non-dual wisdom and skillful means, they taught that, in this doctrine, kind or caste do not outrank the shared experience of being sentient.
ཀལ་ཏེ་ཆགས་ཀང་གོམས་ཆེས་པས།
དེ་དག་མིན་པར་མཐོང་།
འདི་ཡིས་དམ་པའི་དོན་མ་མཐོང་།

If one with a strong habit of attachment and aversion,
Regards this dharma as inauthentic –
Even though it is untainted by defilements –
They will not see the sacred meaning.

སེམས་ཉིད་ཐེ་གཞི་བདེབས་བདེ་དང་མཐར་བག་ལ།
དམ་པའི་ནོར་མཆོག་ཆོས་འདི་ང་།

Ema! Assembly of deities of the victorious Three Roots,
Who abide primordially in basic space, heed me!
Protect this teaching, the supreme sacred wealth
That cannot be earned through the riches of the three realms!

བོགས་བུམ་པའི་ནོར་བཙན་པོ།
དབང་ཤེས་ཐང་བཞིན་ནོར་R་ཞིག

By this teaching, may the realms of beings without distinction
Find temporary well-being and ultimate liberation.
In brief, it is a wish-fulfilling jewel
That, still uncorrupted, remains steadfast in this world.
May the luminous light of benefit and happiness of these words,
Like the splendid light of a brand-new sun,
Dispel all the darkness of delusion,
And become a source of glory to the teachings and beings.

Due to place, time and circumstances, some individuals who have not realized the essence of the Buddha’s precious teachings have said that the Buddha dharma is a doctrine of, and ruled by, men. Having seen and heard that these ideas—which are contrary to the very nature of reality—are occurring and perpetuating themselves, and holding in my heart the hope that such individuals and others like them could see a different pathway I, Chöying Namgyal, also called Chönam, respectfully wrote this. It was completed on the date of May 28th, 2021.

May there be virtue! Auspiciousness!

This was translated, and revised under Lama Chönam’s guidance, by Síbele Corrêa, and edited by Chagdud Khadro and Lee Schmidt.