

A Prayer for Tibet in Times of Trouble

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This short teaching was given by James Low towards the end of the retreat at Kamalashila Institute in the Eifel during April 2008. At that time there were uprisings and suppressions reported in Tibet. It was transcribed by Jo Féat and edited by Barbara Terris.

A PRAYER FOR TIBET IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

This particular prayer comes from a collection of prayers from Padmasambhava's *Le'u bDun Ma: Seven Chapters of Prayer*¹. C R Lama and I first translated it a long time ago in India and various other translations of it are now available.

I had been revising the *Le'u bDun Ma* text just at the same time as violence and troubles were erupting in Tibet in 2008². I think this prayer is particularly useful because it highlights the prediction from Padmasambhava that in future troubles will come to Tibet. I suggest that we recite this prayer now three times, thinking about the troubles in Tibet, both wishing well for the people in Tibet, but also being aware of just how fragile everything is.

The *Le'u bDun Ma* prayers were taught by Padmasambhava to the close disciples that he had at the time when he was in Tibet. He taught it near Samye monastery. There is a prayer for the King, a prayer for the King's son, a prayer for Yeshe Tsogyal, for Namkhai Nyingpo and others.

As well as lineage prayers, they are meditative prayers and biographical prayers of Padmasambhava. Of course when we read long lineage prayers, we don't really know very much about the individual lamas, but the function of naming them is to make a definite connection so that there is an unbroken tradition of these teachings and practices from the time of Padmasambhava. Also, for us to remember the importance of respect and gratitude.

We live in a culture where you can just go into a bookshop and easily buy the precious teachings of the great masters. There are many incredible books available and anyone can buy them. You buy them, you read them, and then maybe you put them on the floor and think, 'Yes, that was quite interesting.' Later you may rest a coffee cup on top of it, and now it's just any old book. In the tradition this is not how it is: it is something very precious, a golden key which helps liberation for yourself and all beings. The idea that this has come to us because of the practice of other people, and that we are dependent on other people for our

¹ *The Seven Chapters of Prayer as taught by Padma Samhava of Urgyen, known in Tibetan as Le'u bDun Ma*. Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche & James Low (Wandel Verlag, 2010) ISBN 978-3-942380-02-7. Free download at http://www.simplybeing.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/SevenChapters_Leu_Dun_Ma_31a_sm_final_ARuft_Apr_2011.pdf

² "The Tibetan capital of Lhasa was on the brink of chaos today as the fiercest anti-government protests in almost 20 years erupted into violence between Chinese security forces and protestors wielding iron bars." Taken from The Guardian Newspaper website. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/mar/14/tibet.china1>

liberation—people from the past and people in the present—is enormously important in the whole tradition of buddhism.

We can see it in terms of dependent co-origination, and we can see it in terms of non-duality. How could our liberation be ours, when the problem that we are trying to be liberated from is the sense that we are sealed in a little ball all by ourselves? Liberation occurs when we become aware that we are part of this infinite integration of all phenomena. That is why respect and gratitude is very important.

For a long period of time, the culture of Tibet was acting like a great museum of very ancient traditions in the world. There are traditions and practices in Tibet from the stone age and the iron age which are so old that they are almost gone. The people who knew these and held these have pretty much vanished, because they were very much located to particular places, and people aren't allowed now to practise in these places. Whole strata of human experience that were developed over thousands of years have gone. These were part of the world's richness. In the same way, many species of animals and plants are being obliterated just at the point when we realise how useful they are for medicines and so on.

We can use the prayer to develop the wisdom of understanding the interconnectedness and the fragility of everything, as well as developing compassion for those whose situation has been thrown into turmoil due to the dogmatic greed and intolerance practised by many people.

[*Reciting the prayer*]

DRO DRUG DUG NGAL CHEN POE NYEN PA DANG

KHYAD PAR BOE KYI JE BANG DUG NGAL NA

YID NYI THE TSHOM ME PAR SOL WA THOB

DAE GU MOE PAE DUNG WAE SOL DEB NA

UR GYAN THUG JE PHO GYUR ME PAR ZIG

UR GYAN PAD MA JUNG NAE LA SOL WA DEB

SAM PA LHUN GYI DRUB PAR JIN GYI LOB

When the beings in the six realms are troubled by great misery, and especially when the King and people of Tibet are suffering, we must pray without doubt or uncertainty! For if we pray with genuine loving faith and devotion you, Padma Sambhava, will look on us all with your constant compassion. Padma Sambhava of Urygan, we pray to you—please bless us that our wishes may be easily fulfilled!

On an outer level, this means when troubles arise we remember to pray to Padmasambhava. We imagine that he always hears our prayers from his pure land of Zangdopalri, and that he remembers us and includes us in his wisdom blessing.

On an inner level, Padmasambhava is the nature of our own mind: he is the integration of the three kayas. When troubles arise in our life and we feel oppressed by the intensity of objects acting on us, or our own feelings towards objects, it's very easy to get lost in the confusion of trying to sort things out and feeling personally persecuted.

At that time, we pray to Padmasambhava and we do that by reciting prayers like this, and also by going into the *Three Aa* practice, which is integrating into the mind of Padmasambhava. Resting in that space we have some freedom from the oppression, instead of feeling that the whole of my existence is now caught by these terrible circumstances. We return to the site of infinite freedom; this unborn freedom that's always there.

Faith is very important, because it counters our strong tendency to be caught up in events. People say, '*Oh, it's terrible. That shouldn't happen. How can that be?*' All of this can make events seem very solid. So without diminishing awareness of the suffering of self and other, one can take refuge in the nature of one's own mind. With the freedom of that there is more possibility of responding to the circumstances.

We have done this prayer for removing obstacles in Tibet, and now we will do the *Three Aa* practice followed by the Dedication of Merit.