

LETTER FROM DPAL DBYANGS TO THE TIBETAN KING

gCes pa bsdus pa'i 'phrin yig btsun pa chen po dpal dbyangs kyis bod rje 'bangs la brdzangs pa
Sārasaṃgrahalekha

INTRODUCTION

dPal dbyangs (also known as Śrīghoṣa) is thought to have been a member of the gNyan clan, who was active in the mid to late ninth century.

Tucci (1958: 151) suggests that the letter is written on the example of the two famous letters attributed to Nagarjuna, which contain summaries of the doctrine for practical purposes.

The letter is addressed to all Tibetan people, but contains different sections relative to the activities of the king, the ministers, and the monks. There are numerous citations from Indic texts, often to finish off a section.

Sources

bsTan 'gyur (Tenjur), Dpe bsdur ma edition. 1994–2008. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa'i dpe skrun khang, Vol. 115, pp.611–42.

TBRC: W1PD95844

[Modern edition]

bsTan 'gyur (Tenjur), sDe dge edition (18th century. Vol. 204 (co), folios 226r–236v.

TOH 4355.

TBRC: W23703, vol. 204, pp. 451–72.

[Xylograph]

References

Transliteration and translation:

Dietz, Siglinde. 1984. *Die Buddhistische Briefliteratur Indiens*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, pp. 85–91, 401–529.

Summary and analysis:

Tucci, Giuseppe. 1958. *Minor Buddhist Texts*, vol 2. Roma: Is.M.E.O, pp. 141–43.

On Māṭrceṭa's Letter to Kaniṣka:

Hahn, Michael. 1999. *Invitation to Enlightenment: Letter to the Great King Kaniṣka by Māṭrceṭa and Letter to a Disciple by Candragomin*. Berkeley: Dharma Publishing.

On the authorship:

Karmay, Samten. 1998. *The Great Perfection: A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching in Tibetan Buddhism*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 68–69.

Kammie Takahashi. 2015. Contribution, Attribution, and Selective Lineal Amnesia in the Case of Mahāyogin dPal dbyangs, *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 32: 1–23.

OUTLINE

The text primarily consists of verses of seven- and nine-syllable lines, interspersed with extracts from Indic texts. It can be divided into six sections.

- 1 Prologue
- 2 General advice
- 3 Advice for the king
- 4 General advice for subjects, ministers, and monastics
- 5 Extract from the *Bodhi caryāvatāra*
- 6 Conclusion

EXTRACTS

1 Prologue

The text contains general advice to follow the *dge ba bcu* (ten virtues), the *bcu drug* (*mi chos bcu drug*, sixteen moral duties), the *bsam pa bcu* (ten things to be remembered), the *chos spyod bcu* (ten practices), and the *pha rol phyin drug* (six perfections).

2 General advice

This section contains twenty-seven verses, explaining the ten virtues, the sixteen moral rules (*mi chos*), the ten *bsam pa*, the ten practices (*chos spyod*) and the six perfections, interspersed with short extracts from Indic texts.

3 Advice for the king

This section contains three excerpts. The first is from Mātrceṭa's letter to King Kaniṣka. The Tibetan text consists of twenty verses of seven-syllable lines. It contains advice to the king on moral conduct, including matters of virtuous behaviour, attending to the doctrine, his relations with other people, and contemplation of death.

Verse nineteen:

[Tenjur Modern ed, vol. 115, p. 617; Tenjur Xylograph ed, vol. 204, fol. 228v]

[Note: this section does not appear in Mātrceṭa's text]

།དམ་ཚཱ་བསྐྱེད་བའི་ཁྲིམས་རྣམས་མཛོད།

།དམ་ཚཱ་འཇིག་པའི་སྐྱེ་བོ་དང།

།བཀའ་ཁྲིམས་འབྲུལ་བའི་ངན་པ་རྣམས།

།ལོ་ཐོག་ཕྱི་ཐོག་རྒྱས་པ་ལ།

།ཐོག་དང་སེར་བ་བཞིན་དུ་ཕོབ།

།འོན་དང་ངན་མིག་འགག་པར་འགྱུར།

།ལེ་ལོ་ཉམ་བུ་ཤེད་མ་མཛོད།

Make laws (khrims) to protect the true doctrine (dam chos).

Those who would destroy the true doctrine,

And bad people who would break the laws (*bka' khrims 'dral ba*),

As if on the ripening cereal and vegetable harvests,

By hail and thunderbolts, let them be struck.

Let deafness and short-sightedness be ended.

Do not allow laziness and faint-heartedness to prevail.