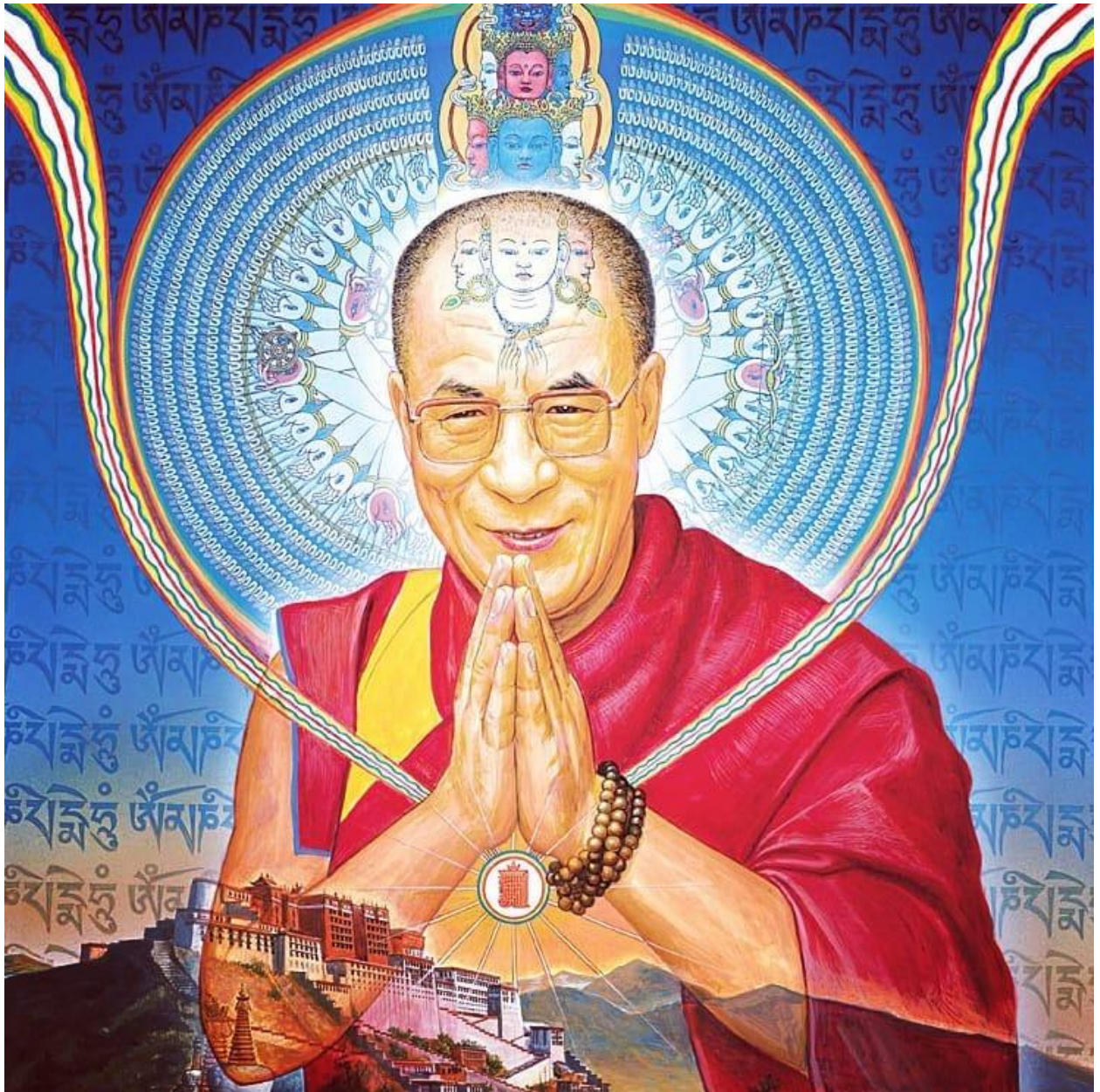


**STAIRWAY TO POTALA:
GURU YOGA ON AVALOKITESHVARA**

BY 14TH DALAI LAMA, TENZIN GYATSO



INTRODUCTION

Today, as a continuation of the research and translations on Avalokiteśvara, I offer a short post on the *Stairway to Potala: Guru Yoga of Avalokiteśvara*, recently transmitted by the 14th Dalai Lama during a teaching on the Heart Sutra in January 2021, in Dharamsala, India, see [here](#). The short daily yoga oral transmission can be watched [here](#).

A few days ago, a kind and generous sponsor/supporter of my work, requested this text with Tibetan and phonetics, as there was only an English translation available. As an offering to her, and to others who may want to read the text in Tibetan, I have thus produced a version with Tibetan, phonetics and English.

First a brief introduction to the text and where it was composed, Norbulingka.

The Daily Sadhana

The text itself is called ‘Stairway to Potala’ (བྱ་འཛོམ་ཁིང་གི་ཐེམ་ལྷས་) referring to the Potala Palace in Lhasa, Tibet (see image above). It was the winter palace of the Dalai Lamas from 1649 to 1959. The palace is named after Mount Potalaka, the mythical abode of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. The 5th Dalai Lama started its construction in 1645 after one of his spiritual advisers, Konchog Chopel (died 1646), pointed out that the site was ideal as a seat of government, situated as it is between Drepung and Sera monasteries and the old city of Lhasa. It may overlay the remains of an earlier fortress called the White or Red Palace on the site, built by Songtsen Gampo in 637.

It is a short and simple daily sadhana on the four-armed Avalokiteśvara, white in colour with mala and flower in one pair of hands and a jewel held between the other pair of hands in front of the chest (see image). The recitation is of the mantra of compassion, Om Mani Padme Hum.

The Dalai Lamas are believed by Tibetan Buddhists to be manifestations of Avalokiteśvara or Chenrezig, the Bodhisattva of Compassion. The 14th Dalai Lama has given empowerments and teachings on Avalokiteśvara many times. Recently, he gave a two day Avalokiteśvara empowerment, which can be seen here. In fact, a well-known Tibetan female teacher (and state oracle of Tibet), Khandro-la, stated that she had a vision of the 14th Dalai Lama while he was seated in a car, as the 1000-armed Avalokiteśvara.

Norbulingka and 1000-armed Avalokiteśvara

The text was composed by the 14th Dalai Lama in Norbulingka, Tibet, which is the summer residence of the Dalai Lamas. Norbulingka (ནོར་བུ་ལྷིང་ཀ་; traditional Chinese: 羅布林卡; literally "Jeweled Park") is a palace and surrounding park in Lhasa, Tibet, China, built from 1755. It served as the traditional summer residence of the successive Dalai Lamas from the 1780s up until the 14th Dalai Lama's exile in 1959. Part of the "Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace",

Norbulingka is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and was added as an extension of this Historic Ensemble in 2001.

In the past, it is said the area was prevalent with weeds, scrubs, and wild animals, and was frequently visited by the 7th Dalai Lama in the summer. Some records suggested the Dalai Lama used the hot springs in the area to cure his health problems. The Imperial Minister of the Qing Dynasty ordered for a Pavilion Palace to be built for the Dalai Lama as a summer retreat. Later in 1751, a three-floor palace named Kelsang Potrang inside Norbulingka itself was added by the 7th Dalai Lama which consisted of the Buddha hall, an assembly hall, a reading room, a god temple, and a bedroom. The 8th Dalai Lama made additions to Norbulingka in the form of palaces such as the Dragon King Temple, the Lake Heart Palace, and Han-style pavilion and gardens.

Norbulingka Palace is situated in the west side of Lhasa, a short distance to the southwest of Potala Palace and covers an area of around 36 hectares (89 acres). It is considered to be the largest man-made garden in Tibet. During the invasion of Tibet in 1950s, a number of buildings were damaged, but were rebuilt beginning in 2003, when the Chinese government initiated renovation works to restore some of the damaged structures, and also the greenery, the flower gardens and the lakes.

The park is where the annual Sho Dun or 'Yoghurt Festival' is held. The Norbulingka palace has been mostly identified with the 13th and the 14th Dalai Lamas who commissioned most of the structures that still stand today.”

There is a replica of Norbulingka that has been constructed in Dharamsala, India based on the proportions of 1000-armed Avalokiteśvara .

“With generous donations from many patrons who believed in the vision of Norbulingka, the land was purchased in 1984 and construction began in 1988. The ground plan was designed to follow the proportions of Avalokitesvara, the deity of compassion. The workshops and offices were to be constructed in the shape of his thousand arms. The temple would be his head, while in the middle would be a water spring, representing his heart, emanating kindness to all living beings. In the beginning, most of the artists were employed for the actual construction of the institute, which was designed in traditional Tibetan architectural style.”¹

It is one of the most beautiful places to visit there with stunning gardens, a temple, library, café, guesthouse and restaurant and houses an institute where people study traditional Tibetan crafts and arts, such as thangka painting and wood carving².

Written and compiled by Adele Tomlin, 23rd June 2021.

Stairway to Potala: Guru Yoga

A Very Short Sadhana of Avalokiteshvara

Composed by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama

༄༅། །ལྷ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་གྱི་འཛིན་ཞིང་གི་ཐེམ་སྐྱེས་བཀུགས་སོ།།

༄༅། །ན་མོ་ལྷ་ཅུ་ལོ་གེ་ཤྱ་རྩ་ཡ། །

namo arya lo ké shvaraya

Namo Lokeshvarya!

ལྷ་མ་དང་སྐུན་རས་གཟིགས་དབྱེར་མེད་གྱི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་མདོར་བསྐྱེས་ཉམས་སུ་ལེན་པར་འདོད་པས་སྐྱབས་སེམས་ཚོན་དུ་བཏང་སྟེ།

lama dang chenrezik yermé kyi naljor dordü nyam su lenpar döpé kyabsem ngöndu tang té

Those who wish to do a short practice unifying one's Teacher(s) and Avalokiteshvara inseparably should do so by first taking refuge and generating the spirit of enlightenment (Bodhicitta).

[The Taking Refuge and Generating Bodhicitta are not actually included in their full form in the original Sadhana, but are here incorporated for the practitioners' sake].

Refuge and Bodhicitta:

I take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Supreme Sangha

Until I am enlightened.

Through the collection of generosity and other practices

May I achieve Buddhahood to benefit all sentient beings.

[The original Tibetan Sadhana starts again from this point].

རང་གི་སྐྱེ་བོར་པད་ལྷའི་སྟེང་། །

དྲིན་ཅན་རྩ་བའི་ལྷ་མ་དང་། །

rang gi chiwor pé dé teng/

དབྱེར་མེད་འཕགས་མཚོག་འཇིག་རྟེན་དབང་། །

drinchen tsawé lama dang/

ཞལ་གཅིག་ཕྱག་བཞིའི་དང་པོ་གཉིས། །

yermé pakchok jikten wang/

ཐལ་སྐྱུར་འོག་མ་ཤེལ་ཐོང་དང་། །

zhal chik chak zhi dangpo nyi

རབ་རྒྱས་བད་དཀར་སྣང་བུ་འཛིན། །

thaljar og ma shel treng dang/

On my crown, upon a seat of lotus and moon, Sits my root Teacher,
Who is inseparable from Supreme Noble Avalokiteshvara, Lord of the World,
With one face and four hands: the first two hands folded in prayer
And the two remaining hands holding a crystal rosary
And a stem of a full bloom white lotus.

rabgyé pekar dongbu dzin/

ཞབས་རྒྱང་མི་ཤིགས་སྐྱེལ་ཀྱང་ཚུལ། །

zhab zung mishik kyiltrung tsul/

དར་དང་རིན་ཚེན་རྒྱན་གྱིས་སྐྱབས། །

གསལ་རྫོགས་མཚན་དཔའི་ཟླ་གཞོན་སྐྱ། །

sal dzok tsenpé da zhön ku

དོ་རྩེ་གསུམ་མཚན་རྩྱའོད་ཀྱིས། །

dar dang rinchen gyen gyi lub/

མཚོག་གསུམ་མ་ལུས་སྐྱེན་དངས་བསྟེན། །

dorjé sum tsen hung ö kyi/

སྐྱབས་གནས་ཀྱན་འདུས་དོ་བོར་གྱུར། །

chok sum malü chen drang tim/

His two feet are in the indestructible cross-legged position;
His body, a maiden moon, is replete with clear and complete marks and signs of [a Buddha],
and draped in silk raiment and precious jewel ornaments.
His three places on the body] are marked by the three vajra syllables (Om Ah Hum)
Of which Hum at the heart radiating light Invokes the supreme refuges that dissolve into himself.
He becomes the embodiment of all the objects of refuge combined.

kyabné kündü ngowor gyur/

དྲི་བལ་སྐྱུན་རྫོགས་དངོས་གྲུབ་གཏེར། །

ལྷ་མ་སྣ་ལ་གུས་ཕྱག་འཚལ། །

dridral lhün dzok ngödrub ter/

lama lha la gü chaktsal/

ཀུན་བཟང་མཚོད་སློན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་མཚོད། །

འོངས་པ་གང་བགྱིས་བཤགས་ཤིང་སྟོམ། །

kunzang chötrin gyatsö chö/

nongpa gang gyi shak shing dom/

I repeatedly bow to my Teacher and deity,

Immaculate, fully spontaneous, treasury of spiritual feats.

I offer to you an ocean of clouds of All Excellent (Samantabhadra's) Offerings.

I confess my wrongdoings and restrain myself.

གསང་གསུམ་མཛད་པར་རྗེས་ཡི་རང་། །

ཟབ་རྒྱས་ཚོས་ཆར་འབེབས་པར་བསྐྱལ། །

sang sum dzepar jé yi rang/

zabgyé chö charbeppar kul/

བསྐྱལ་བརྒྱུར་མི་གཡོ་བརྟན་བལྟགས་གསོལ། །

དགེ་ཚོགས་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཆེན་པོར་བསྟོ། །

kal gyar mi yo tenzhuk sol/

gé tsok changchub chenpor ngo/

ཐུགས་སྟོག་སྡིུ་ཡིག་སྐྱགས་ཤིང་ལས། །

འོད་འཕྲོས་མ་དག་སྣོད་བཅུད་སྤྱངས། །

thug sog hrih yig ngag treng lé/

ö trö ma dag nöchü jang/

འགྲོ་ཀུན་ཕྱག་ན་བསྟོ་ཡི། །

གོ་འཕང་མཚོག་ལ་འགོད་པར་གྱུར། །

dro kün chag na pemo yi/

gopang chog la göpar gyur/

I rejoice in the good deeds of your three secrets (of body, speech and mind).

I entreat you to bring down the vast and profound rains of teaching.

I pray you be un-wavered and that you remain steadfast for hundreds of aeons.

I dedicate all the collections of my virtue for the great enlightenment!

From the HRIH syllable, your heart symbol, and the mantra circle at your heart

Light radiates cleansing the impure worlds and their inhabitants

Thereby leading all sentient beings

To the sublime level of the Lotus Holder (Padmapani).

ཅེས་བསྐྱེད་དམིགས་དང་འབྲེལ་ཡིག་བྱུག

ché dé mig dang drel yig drug

[In conjunction with the meditative prayer, recite as many times as you can this Six-syllabled [Mantra]:



ཨྱི་མ་ཉི་བདེ་རྩྱུང་ཅི་བྱས་བཟླ།

om mani padmé hum

OM MANI PADME HUM

ལྷ་མ་རྗེ་བཙུན་ལྷུན་རས་གཟིགས། །

ཁྱོད་ལས་རེ་ས་གཞན་མེད་པས། །

lama jetsün chenrezig/

khyö lé resa zhen mepé/

འདི་ནས་བྱང་རྒྱལ་མ་ཐོབ་བར། །

བརྗེ་ཚེན་ལུགས་ཀྱིས་རྗེས་གཟུང་མཛོད། །

di né changchub matob bar/

tsé chen tug kyi jé zung dzö/

དེ་ལྟར་སྦྱང་ནས་གསོལ་བ་ཏུ་བསྐྱེད། །

ལྷ་མ་འོད་ལྷུ་རང་ལ་ཐིམ། །

detar nying né soltab tü/

lama ö zhu rang la tim/

གསང་གསུམ་རྗེ་རྗེའི་བྱིན་བརྒྱུ་ཡིས། །

སྐོ་གསུམ་བྱིན་གྱིས་བརྒྱབ་པར་གྱུར། །

sang sum dorjé jin gya yi/

go sum jingyi lab par gyur/

My Teacher, oh Venerable Lord Chenresig,

As I have no other to rely on but you,

From here until I reach enlightenment

Kindly guide me with your great compassionate heart.

Thus, by the force of this heartfelt prayer,

My Teacher melts into light and dissolves into me,

Thereby blessing my three doors (body, speech and mind)

With the hundred-fold blessings of the three secret vajras (his body, speech and mind).

དགོ་བ་འདི་ཡིས་ལྷུན་རླུང་བདག །

ལྷུན་རས་གཟིགས་དབང་འགྲུབ་གྱུར་ནས། །

gewa di yi nyurdu dag/

chenrezig wang drub gyur né/

འགྲོ་བ་གཅིག་ཀྱང་མ་ལུས་པ། །

དེ་ཡི་ས་ལ་འགོད་པར་ཤོག །

drowa chig kyang malüpa/

dé yi sa la göpar shog/

བྱང་ཚུབ་སེམས་མཚོག་རིན་པོ་ཚེ།

མ་སྐྱེས་པ་རྣམས་སྐྱེས་ཀྱུར་ཅིག།

changchub sem chog rinpoche/

makyepa nam kyé gyur chig/

སྐྱེས་པ་ཉམས་པ་མེད་པ་ཡང་།།

གོང་ནས་གོང་དུ་འཕེལ་བར་ཤོག།།

kyepa nyampa mepa yang/

gong ne gong du pelwar shog/

Through this virtue may I quickly

Accomplish All-powerful Avalokiteshvara

And may I lead all sentient beings,

Leaving not even one of them, to the same level of Avalokiteshvara!

May the sublime jewel of the spirit of enlightenment

Grow where it has not yet taken root.

And where it has grown, may it not decline

But increase ever more and more.

ཅེས་པ་སྐུན་རས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་ཤིན་ཏུ་མདོར་བསྐྱུས་གྲོང་གསེབ་ཁག་ཏུ་གནས་པའི་སོ་ནམ་པ་དང་།
གཞན་ཡང་ཡི་གེ་གཏན་ནས་མི་ཤེས་པ་དག་འདོན་ཁ་སློབ་བྱ་དགོས་པ་སོགས་ལ་སྦྱན་པའི་འབྱུང་བདེ་ཞིག་གསར་ཚཱ་དགོས་ཞེས་ས་རྟེན་བཅས་བསྐྱེད་པའི་རྒྱལ་
བའི་ཚེས་ཚུལ་འཛིན་པ་ཤུག་ཤིང་དག་སྦྱོང་དག་དབང་སློབ་བཟང་བསྐྱུན་འཛིན་གྱི་མཚོས་ནོར་སྤིང་བསྐྱེད་བཟང་པོ་བྱང་དུ་སྐྱུར་བའོ།།བཟླ་ཤིས།།

Colophon: Since the official colophon is not available, what has been found and can be conveyed is: —This Sadhana of Avalokiteshvara was written by the Great Fourteenth Dalai Lama in the Palace of Norbulingka. (in Tibet). The English translation from Tibetan was made in 2014, by Tenzin Tsepag-la, translator of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Tibetan and phonetics compiled and added by Adele Tomlin, 23nd June 2021. Dakini Publications.

¹ <https://india.norbulingka.org/pages/history>

² Norbulingka's art studios include Tibetan statue making, thangka painting, screen-printing, applique and tailoring, woodcarving, wood painting, papermaking, and wood and metal craft. The Academy of Tibetan Culture, established in 1997, offers a three-year course of higher education in traditional Tibetan studies, as well as English, Chinese, and world history. The Research Department of Norbulingka houses the team composing the official biography of the Dalai Lama, of which nine volumes in Tibetan have already been published. The research section is also compiling a comprehensive encyclopedia of Tibetan culture. The institute also has the two-storeyed 'Seat of Happiness Temple' (Deden Tsuglakhang) built in 1985 and set amidst the Japanese inspired Norbulingka gardens.