

Prayer to the Three Roots



BY KHENPO NGAWANG PALZANG

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By Khenpo Ngawang Palzang
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༄༅། །ཚུ་གསུམ་ལ་གསོལ་འདེབས།།
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ཧྲཱི། ཚེས་དབྱིངས་ངང་ལས་སྐྱུ་མའི་སྐྱུར་བཞེངས་པ། །
དུས་གསུམ་སྐྱུ་མ་འགོ་མགོན་ཐུགས་རྗེའི་ལྷ། །
ཞི་ཁྲོ་རབ་འབྱམས་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཁའ་འགོ་དང་། །
བཀའ་བཞིན་རྗེས་སུ་སྐྱབ་པའི་ལས་མཛད་པ། །
དམ་ཅན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཚོགས་ལ་ཕུག་འཚལ་བསྟོད། །

Hūṃ! Within the state of dharmadhātu, you assume your illusory forms:
Gurus of the three times, protectors of beings, divine compassionate ones;¹
Infinite peaceful and wrathful deities; wisdom ḍākinīs;
And vast hosts of oath-bound ones who carry out the activities we command—
All of you, I honor² and praise!

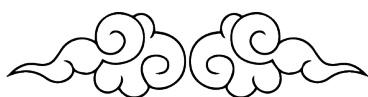
¹ Protector(s) of beings, divine compassionate one(s)" is an epithet of Avalokiteśvara/Chenrezi. Here, placed after "gurus," it is reasonable to understand the phrase as qualifying the gurus and, as a literary flourish, that the gurus are implicitly none other than Avalokiteśvara. Thus, line two addresses the first of the Three Roots: lamas, yidams, and ḍākinīs+protectors, the latter (2/3) addressed in following lines. Moreover, in the phrase thugs rje's lha, we render lha as divine rather than as the more common "god/deity." Lha is the equivalent of the Sanskrit deva, which is the etymological source of the English divine. It does not always entail an anthropomorphic god, as in the term lha chos, "divine dharma."

² "Honor" for phyag 'tshal, the Tibetan equivalent of Sanskrit nāmaḥ, "homage." The term is most often rendered as "prostration/prostrate", but the term need not entail physical bowing.



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