

A TIBETAN MNEMONIC GRAMMAR POEM

THE DIVINE TREE

by

NOBLE ROSS REAT

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The Divine Tree : A Tibetan Mnemonic Grammar Poem is the first translation of an original Tibetan grammatical text which the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives is Publishing.

Along with the other works published on Tibetan Language in English, we are sure that **The Divine Tree** will be of decided value and use to all those students and scholars who are striving to specialise in Tibetan language. We congratulate Noble Ross Reat for his fine translation and intelligent analyses of **The Divine Tree** which explains the essence of Thonmi Sambhota's treatise in thirty verses.

Gyatso Tsering
Director
October, 1981.

THE ESSENCE OF THONMI'S TREATISE IN THIRTY VERSES,
"THE DIVINE TREE" IS CONTAINED HEREIN

1. *Namo guru mañju-ghoshāya*
2. To the best teacher, and, no different than he,
3. To Mañjuśrī, salutations rehearsed,
4. Of the treatise of Thon-mi, thirty-versed,
5. The essence will be told in brief.

(The alphabet :)

6. The action of vowels for to show,
7. There are four signs : i, u, e, o.
8. There are thirty consonants : "ka" & Co.

(The ten suffixes or rjes-'jug :)

9. *ga, nga, da, na, ba, ma, 'a,*
10. *ra, la* and *sa* are the after-enter ten.

(The two post-suffixes or yang-'jug :)

11. *da* and *sa* may enter again.
12. *da*, after three : *na, ra, la*, reigns.
13. With *ga, nga, ba, ma* : *sa* obtains.

(The five prefixes or sngon-'jug :)

14. *ga, da, ba, ma, 'a* enter before.

(The eleven full-stops or slar-bsdu :)

15. *go, ngo, do, no, bo, mo, 'o,*
16. *ro, lo, so* and *to* show a thought is o'er.
17. *rdzogs-tsig* and *sla-sdud* are two names more.
18. With ghostly *da* : *to*. With vowels : 'o.
19. The others with their similars go.

(The accusative, dative and locative cases or la-don :)

20. *su, ru, ra, du, na, la* and *tu*
21. All mean "la", a seven membered crew,
22. To mark the cases : "for, in, or to".
23. For times and sameness they are also used.
24. After *sa*, use *su*. With *ga, ba*, and ghostly *da*, use *tu*.

25. With *nga, da, na, ma, ra* and *la*, use *du*.
26. With 'a and vowels, use *ra* or *ru*.

(The genitive and instrumental cases :)

27. *gi, kyl, gyl, 'i, yi*, these five,
28. Mark the words with which things give.
29. These five, with "s" supplemental,
30. Mark the third case, instrumental.
31. After *na, ma, ra* and *la*, use *gyl*,
32. With *da, ba, sa* : *kyi* ; with *ga* and *nga* : *gl*.
33. With 'a and vowels, use 'i or *yi*.

(The particles *kyang, yang* and 'ang :)

34. *kyang, yang* and 'ang mean "too" or "though".
35. Use *kyang* after *ga, da, ba, sa* and *da*, the ghost.
36. *yang* may after *nga, na, ma, ra* and *la go*,
37. And may, like 'ang, after 'a and vowels show.

(The connectives *te, de* and *ste* :)

38. *te, de* and *ste* show there's more to say.
39. After *na, ra, la, sa* and the ghostly *da* : *te* ;
40. After *da* : *de*. *ga, nga, ba, ma* and 'a remain ;
41. After these, and vowels, "sa-te" obtains.

(The eleven byed-sdud particles :)

42. *gam, ngam, dam, nam, bam, mam, 'am*,
43. *ram, lam, sam* and *tam* mean "or" or a question.
44. Their use is the same as *go, ngo, do*, and the rest of 'em.

(Metrical alternatives :)

45. *ra, ru, 'i, yi, 'ang* and *yang* are not cheaters,
46. But choices to satisfy unfulfilled meters.
47. 'o, 'u and 'am, in- or out-side the dot,
48. Are used the same way, for poets, the lot.

(The ablative case :)

49. *nas* and *las* mark the ablative case,
50. In real ablative either one choosin',
51. From similars : *nas* ; from dissimilars : *las*,
52. And *nas* in the sense of inclusion.

(The vocative particles, *kye* and *kva-ye* :)

53. *kye* and *kva-ye* are the words of address.
54. They mostly precede the name that they stress.

(The indicative particle *ni* :)

55. *ni* is for indication or emphasis.

(The connective/imperative particle *dang* :)

56. *dang* shows division, inclusion, the reason,
57. The time, a command : a word for five seasons.

(The indicative particle *de* :)

58. Use *de* before a noun or phrase,
59. Or after the same, in a second way,
60. As a particle used to demonstrate.

(The relative/interrogative particles *ci*, *ji*, *su* and *gang* :)

61. *ci*, *ji*, and *su* are a versatile three :
62. Before *zhig*, *ste*, *slad*, *'dra* and *phyir*, use *ci*.
63. Before *snyed*, *srid*, *ltar*, *bzhin* and *skad*, use *ji*.
64. *Su* is only for people, but *gang* is free.

(Categorical particles :)

65. *pa*, *ba* and *ma*, without or with "o",
66. Show the category in which something goes.
67. After *ga*, *da*, *na*, *ba*, *ma*, *sa* : use *pa* or *po*.
68. *nga*, *'a*, *ra*, *la* and vowels aren't dependable :
69. In a word of odd syllables, *ba* is defendable ;
70. With syllables even, *pa* recommendable.
71. Likewise when as part of a word they pose,
72. But *ma* is feminine, and goes where it goes.

(Negative particles :)

73. *ma*, *mi*, *min* and *med* are the words of negation :
74. *ma*, *mi* : use before ; *min*, *med* : after station.
75. *ma* between words makes a third, by combination.

(Dependent particles :)

76. The dependent particles are *zhing* and its pals.
77. After *nga*, *na*, *ma*, *'a*, *ra*, *la* and vowels,
78. *zhing*, *zhes*, *zhe-'o*, *zhe-na* and *zhig* find towels.
79. With *ga*, *da*, *ba* and *da* the ghost,
80. *cing*, *ces*, *ce-'o*, *ce-na* and *cig* find a host.
81. *shes* means "to know", so after *sa*,
82. Use only *shing*, *shig*, *she-'o*, *she-na*.
83. But, like "*kha-cig*" and "*lhan-cig*", these are sometimes found
84. Not obeying these rules, 'cause they're part of a noun.

(The suffix 'a to clarify pronunciation :)

85. After prefixed singles enter 'a without fail,
86. Except with marked vowel, a head or a tail.

(Punctuation :)

87. To break up a list, or passages long or middle,
88. Use one slash, as well as at the end of a little.
89. In verse, after *ga*, one slash is fine,
90. Otherwise two at the end of each line,
91. And two after "*go, ngo, do, no*" and kind.
- 92-3. Use four at the end of a chapter or section.
94. Between letter and slash, but for *nga*, the exception,
95. Use no dot. In these matters, strive for perfection !

(Epiloguc :)

96. Not obscured by verbal leaves.
97. The meaning-fruit of this "Divine Tree"
98. Hangs down richly, to be grasped with ease.
99. *dbyangs-can grub-pa'i rdo-rjes* wrote it.

ANALYSIS

//thon-mi'i	legs - bshad	sum - cu - pa'i	snying-po
"Thon-mi" + gen. = "of Thonmi"	good, spoken, well explained = well-explained = "treatise" (1)	three ten = 3 × 10 = thirty = "of one having thirty (verses)"	"one having" + gen. essence, heart, substance

= "The essence of Thon-mi's treatise having thirty verses"

- (1) A literal Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit :
subhāshita, "treatise" (*su* = "well" + *bhāshita* = "spoken").

ljon - pa'i	dbang-po	bzhugs -	so// (See # 16)
district, forest, tree paradise, heaven + gen. = "divine tree" or "king of the forest"	lord, master, king, supreme	stays i.e. "is herein", "follows below"	

* Thus : "The following, (entitled) 'The Divine Tree', is the essence of Thon-mi's *Treatise in Thirty Verses*".

1. //na-mo gu-ru manydzu - gho-shā-ya//

salutations	master	pleasant	voice dat.
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* "Salutations to Mañjuśrī", a transliterated Sanskrit benediction. Mañju-ghosha = Mañjuśrī, the *bodhisattva* of wisdom.

2. bla-ma mchog dang dbyer med-pa'i//

guru, teacher = supreme teacher	best, supreme	and	difference = "non-different", "the same as" (1)
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- (1) The genitive case links this phrase with 'jam-pa'i-dbyangs' in the following verse. See translation note on verse 28.