The Prayer which Saved Sakya from Epidemics

By Thangtong Gyalpo

La ma yi dam sang gye chang sem sog  
Kyab ne chi dang khye par thug je chen

Lo ma gyon ma’i lha tshog khor che kyi  
Dro kün ne don geg le sung du sol

Lamas, tutelary deities, buddhas, and bodhisattvas,
All objects of refuge in general, and especially the greatly compassionate
Goddess dressed in leaves (Parnaśabarī) and her encircling retinue,
Protect all beings from illness, negativity, and misfortune!

Le tang lo bur kyen le gyur pa yi  
Don tang net tang jung po’i tse wa sog

Sem chen yit mi de wa’i net nam kun  
Jig ten kham su jung war ma gyur chig

May all the ailments which oppress the minds of beings,
The attacks of diseases, negative forces, elemental spirits and the like,
Arising from karma and immediate circumstances
Never occur anywhere in the universe.
May all the painful sicknesses which snatch life away,
Separating mind and body in a single instant
Like an executioner dragging away his victim,
Never occur anywhere in the universe.

May epidemics, temporary or chronic,
The mere sound of whose name engenders fear
Like falling into the jaws of Yama, lord of death,
Never harm any being.

May the eighty thousand types of harmful obstacles,
The three hundred sixty sudden dangers from evil spirits,
The four hundred four types of disease and other ills,
Never strike any being.
May all sufferings due to disturbances of the four elements,  
Which plunder the well-being of body and mind be pacified;  
May we have radiance, strength,  
Health and happiness, and a long life free from sickness.

Through the compassion of the Teachers and Three Jewels,  
The ability and might of the dakinis and Dharma protectors,  
And the power of the unfailing law of cause and effect,  
May all our dedications and wishes be fulfilled.

When the great seat of the Sakypas was assailed by a multitude of epidemics, the tantrikas and shamans tried all kinds of practices – ransom – rituals, torma-offerings, healing mantras and protection ceremonies – but nothing worked. Sakya was on the point of becoming completely depopulated. The great accomplished siddha Thangtong Gyalpo told the people to practice the refuge formula which begins, ‘Our mothers, infinite as space...’, accumulate a large number of recitations of the mani, and conclude with this prayer. They did as he said, and as a result all the epidemics immediately disappeared. This prayer, whose vajra words emanate clouds of blessings, became famous as ‘The Prayer which Saved Sakya from Epidemics’. 