

ॐ ह्रीं श्रीपार्श्वनाथाय नमः
Aum Hriṃ ŚrīPārśvanāthāya Namaḥ
Jay Jinendra

प्रश्नोत्तर रत्नमालिका
PRASHNOTTARA RATNAMALIKA
The Jewelled Garland of Questions & Answers

By King Amoghavarsha I

English translation by Manish Modi

<http://www.navelgazing.net/2016/06/nripatunga-rajarshi-amoghavarshas.html>

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Who was King Amoghavarsha?

Amoghavarsha I (800–878 CE), was the crowning jewel of the Rashtrakuta dynasty, and one of the greatest emperors of India. His title ‘Nripa-tunga’ {mountain among kings} reflects his stature amongst his contemporaneous rulers.

According to the Arab traveller Suleiman, Amoghavarsha I's empire was one among the four great contemporary empires of the world. Because of his peaceful and loving nature, Amoghavarsha has been compared to Emperor Ashoka. Famous among scholars during his time were Mahaviracarya, Virasena, Jinasena, Gunabhadra, Shakatayan, and Shri Vijaya.

Amoghavarsha's ‘Kavirajamarga’ is a landmark literary work in the Kannada language and became a guide book for future poets and scholars for centuries to come. His Sanskrit masterpiece Prashnottara Ratnamalika is said to have been written in his old age when he had distanced himself from the affairs of the state.

Amoghavarsha I patronised Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. However, according to the scholar Reu, writings such as ‘Mahapurana’ by Gunabhadra, ‘Prashnottara Ratnamalika’ and Mahaviracarya's ‘Ganitasara Samgraha’ are evidence that Nripatunga Amoghavarsha had taken to Jainism.

Amoghavarsha was a disciple of Acarya Jinasena. Proof for this comes from the writing, ‘Mahapurana’ (also known as ‘Uttara Purana’) by Acarya Gunabhadra in which the author states "blissful for the world is the existence of Jinasenacarya, by bowing to whom Amoghavarsha Nripatunga considered himself to be purified". The same writing proves that Amoghavarsha was a follower of the Digambara tradition of Jainism.

Prashnottara Ratnamalika

Is a set of 65 elegantly composed questions and answers through which King Amoghavarsha I passed on the most important facets of enlightened wisdom to his readers.

Here is my English translation:

Opening Colophon

I commence the *Prashnottara Ratnamalika*
{Bejewelled Garland Of Questions And Answers}
By paying obeisance to the lord of lords, *Vardhamana Mahavira*,
Who is worshiped by serpents, demigods and humans.

Is there truly anyone,
Deft at evident and occult accomplishments,
Who will not constantly recite,
This flawless bejewelled garland of questions and answers?

Question 1. O lord, what is worthy of emulation?

Answer: Your guru's teachings are worthy of emulation.

Question 2. Which action is worthy of abandoning?

Answer: Any unethical or immoral act that leads to Increase in attachment and delusion should be abandoned.

Question 3. Who is a guru?

Answer: One who knows the true nature of samsara and is constantly involved in the emancipation of all living beings is a guru.

Question 4. What should be the first task for the wise ones?

Answer: Destroying the causes of samsara {transmigration} should be the first priority of the wise.

Question 5. What is the seed of liberation?

Answer: Samyak jnana {enlightened knowledge} coupled with appropriate conduct is the seed of liberation.

Question 6. What is the true provision for the journey of life?

Answer: Dharma is the true provision for the journey of life.

Question 7. Who is pure?

Answer: One whose thoughts are pure, is truly pure.

Question 8. Who is a pundit?

Answer. He who is wise, is truly a pundit.

Question 9. What is poisonous?

Answer. Insulting one's guru is poisonous.

Question 10. What is the essence of the world?

Answer: Upon constantly pondering over this question,
One concludes that on attaining birth as a human,
One should imbibe a true understanding of reality
And constantly strive for liberation,
As well as the liberation of others.

Question 11. What is as intoxicating as alcohol?

Answer: Attachment.

Question 12. Who is the thief?

Answer: The senses are thieves. (They steal our attention from the soul)

Question 13. What is the stem of transmigration?

Answer: Desire is the stem of transmigration.

Question 14: Who is the enemy?

Answer: Indolence is the greatest enemy.

Question 15. What is feared most in samsara?

Answer: Death!

Question 16. Who is more blind than the blind?

Answer: One who is attached is more blind than the sightless ones.
(For despite having eyesight, he has no vision.)

Question 17. Who is brave?

Answer: He who remains unaffected and unmoved by
The coquettish looks of beautiful women is truly brave.

Question 18. What should be heard and treasured by the ears as nectar?

Answer: Enlightened teachings should be accepted as nectar.

Question 19. What is the root of greatness?

Answer: Not expecting or begging from others is the root of greatness.

Question 20. What is hard to understand?

Answer: The conduct of women.

Question 21. Who is clever?

Answer: One who is not affected by women.

Question 22. What is poverty?

Answer: Absence of contentment is poverty.

Question 23. What is meanness?

Answer: Begging is meanness.

Question 24. What is life?

Answer: Blemishless behaviour is life.

Question 25. What is apathy?

Answer: Not walking on the right path despite knowing it, is apathy.

Question 26. Who is awake?

Answer: The wise are awake.

Question 27. What is slumber?

Answer: Ignorance and stupidity are slumber.

Question 28. What is as unsteady as a drop of water on the leaf of a water lily?

Answer: Youth, wealth and life span are as tremulous

As a drop of water on the leaf of a water lily.

Question 29. Who resembles moonbeams?

Answer: Virtuous people resemble moonbeams (because they spread joy wherever they go).

Question 30. What is hell?

Answer: Being dependent on others.

Question 31. What is bliss?

Answer: Freedom from all attachment.

Question 32. What is the truth?

Answer: The desire to emancipate all living beings is the truth.

Question 33. What is most dear to all living beings?

Answer: Life.

Question 34. What should donation be like?

Answer: Donation should be free from any expectations.

Question 35. Who is a friend?

Answer: One who turns us away from sin is a true friend.

Question 36. What is the true ornament?

Answer: Good conduct is the true ornament.

Question 37. What is the jewel of speech?

Answer: Truthfulness is the jewel of speech.

Question 38. What is the result of wrongdoing?

Answer: A perturbed mind is the result of wrongdoing.

Question 39. What is the source of happiness?

Answer: Friendship.

Question 40. Who is capable of completely destroying all evil passions?

Answer: One who forsakes all (desires) shall destroy all evil passions.

Question 41. Who is blind?

Answer: He who indulges in wrong acts is blind.

Question 42. Who is deaf?

Answer: He who is incapable of hearing that which would be beneficial to him, is deaf.

Question 43. Who is dumb?

Answer: He who cannot say the right words even at the right time.

Question 44. What is death?

Answer: Ignorance is death.

Question 45. What is priceless?

Answer: Help given at the right time, is priceless.

Question 46. What can pierce your soul even as you lie on your deathbed?

Answer: Sinful acts done stealthily can hurt you even on your deathbed.

Question 47. Where is it appropriate for one to make efforts?

Answer: One should always make efforts to acquire knowledge

Question 48. And one should always donate medicine.

Answer: What must one always be disinterested in?

One must always be disinterested in evil people, others' wives and others' wealth.

Question 49. What should man think of, night and day?

Man must always think of the impermanence of samsara,

And not think of women.

Question 50. Whom should one choose as one's beloved?

Answer: One should choose compassion, gallantry and friendliness as one's constant companions.

Question 51. Whom should one never submit oneself to, even under the threat of death?

Answer: Even under threat and coercion, one should never yield oneself to a fool.
And one must never give in to despondency, arrogance and ungratefulness.

Question 52. Who is worthy of worship?

Answer: One who has right conduct is worthy of worship.

Question 53. Who is truly poor?

Answer: One has given up his vows and the path of right conduct, is truly poor.

Question 54. Who has conquered this world?

Answer: Those who are truthful and forgiving, have truly conquered this world.

Question 55. Who is worshiped by celestial beings?

Answer: One who is guided by sympathy and compassion is worshiped even by the celestial beings.

Question 56. What should sane men fear?

Answer: Sane men should fear the forest of samsara.

Question 57. Under whose spell are all living beings?

Answer: Living beings are under the spell of the truthful, well-spoken and respectful people.

Question 58. Where should one stay?

Answer: One should stay on the path of justice, which yields visible as well as invisible benefits.

Question 59. What is as fickle as lightning?

Answer: The company of evil people is fickle, and so are young women.

Question 60. Who are noble in the era of sinfulness?

Answer: Those who do not sully the fair name of their families with their inappropriate conduct, are truly noble.

Question 61. What is regrettable, despite being wealthy?

Answer: If one is stingy despite being wealthy, it is to be regretted.

Question 62. What is praiseworthy, despite being wealthy and powerful?

Answer: Generosity is praiseworthy in one who is wealthy and powerful.

Question 63. What is praiseworthy in a poor man?

Answer: His generosity.

Question 64. What is praiseworthy in a strong man?

Answer: Forgiveness and tolerance is especially praiseworthy in a strong man.

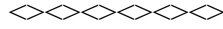
Question 65. What is as rare as the wish-fulfilling gem in this world?

Answer: In this world, four things are as rare as the wish-fulfilling gem
Say the souls who have destroyed all blemishes:
Donation accompanied by kind and considerate speech
Knowledge free from arrogance
Valour accompanied by forgiveness
Wealth accompanied by generosity

Closing Colophon

Those who constantly recite this
Flawless bejewelled garland of questions and answers,
Shall add lustre to the company of scholars
Despite lacking all ornaments.

This garland of jewels has been composed by King Amoghavarsha,
Who, after attaining wisdom, gave up his kingdom.
It has been composed to enhance the insight of the learned ones.



King Amoghavarsha