

# Heart Jewel

*The teachings of Jampal Lekshe Chokyi Nyima, the holy master who is the body, speech and mind emanation of Khenchen Ngawang Palzang, the crown ornament of the old translation school<sup>1</sup>.*

I supplicate at the feet of my root guru, the Sugata Lord of Dharma Tenpa'i Nyima,<sup>2</sup> who personally taught me the meaning of the primordial Sugatagarba without mistake or error.

Alas and alack! Compassionate three jewels, since you Victors possess hearts filled with lovingkindness, grant your blessings so that I and all others in the six classes [of sentient beings] may be liberated at once from the sufferings of conditioned existence!

Hey, listen up, reverend friends, why don't we have a candid heart-to-heart talk, come on over here and give me your attention! My words are without the iron hooks of deception! Whether they are pleasant or not, let your ears decide. Their profundity or shallowness can be tested through reasoning. Ask any learned person and you'll know whether they are correct or not. Their truth or falsity will become obvious when you apply them In your lives.

Friends and relatives are many, but qualified spiritual advisors are rare. There are many topics of conversation, but those in harmony with dharma are hard to find. Goals are plentiful, but those pursuing enlightenment are few. Although there are plenty of opinions out there, it is not so hard to make up one's mind.

If you really think about it, we have been going around and around in this conditioned world, taking rebirth after rebirth countless times; and if we don't accomplish the holy dharma this time around, afterwards, too, we will continue to be born and die countless times, with no end in sight. Unless we destroy the mechanism of illusory, interdependent existence, we will never reach a point when we can simply relax, and remain happily.

The higher and lower reaches of the six classes are just six white and black prison compounds. They are burdened with the three sufferings, which are like harsher and lighter criminal sanctions. So long as we are not released from this awful place, there will be no interruption to the pains we will feel. No matter how you look at it, samsara is pitiable. No matter where you are reborn, how awful, how terrifying!

Still, right now, we have obtained a human body endowed with leisures and resources. This thing we have obtained, though, is just like a bubble of water. We don't know when it will burst apart, it could happen at any moment without warning. And when that happens, we will have no choice but to depart for regions unknown. Though I cannot foresee it clearly, you yourself should have a fairly good idea [where you are headed]. If you want to know more, that can be done, look to your karma

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<sup>1</sup> In 1944, in accordance with Khenpo Ngawang Palzang's own prediction (found in his autobiography), his reincarnation was born in Gongpo of Tibet. Kathok Situ Rinpoche and others lamas identified him as the Tulku and his father named him Sangye Tsering. Reting Rinpoche (the regent of the Tibetan government) bestowed upon him the name 'jam dpal legs bshad chos kyi nyi ma.'

<sup>2</sup> This is the 2nd Nyoshul Lungtok, Shedrup Tenpa'i Nyima, the reincarnation of Khenpo Nyoshul Lungtok who was Khenpo Ngawang Palzang's root guru at Nyoshul Monastery. Tenpa'i Nyima succeeded Khenpo Ngawang as head of the monastery, but passed away in prison during the cultural revolution.

for answers. But even though you can be so informed, you'll still have to deal with the eventuality. Ask yourself, do you possess the iron mettle in your heart to do so?

And so, right now, when, ever so briefly, the means are at our disposal, and we can make effective use of them to release ourselves from this dark dungeon, choosing our own way on a pleasant path towards true happiness, going forth without ever looking back, isn't that wonderful indeed?

If you are resolved to embark on this journey, you will fortunately reach the state of liberation. But if you just linger in a state of bewilderment, that will never deliver you to freedom. If I can discern these outcomes and make my own decision, so you too must choose for yourself whether you prefer dharma, or something else.

If my words fall on deaf ears and your minds are pointed elsewhere, if you don't want to proceed or are not really sure, but would just feign interest for my sake, don't bother. Figure out for yourself what you want, and then act on it. Give up any hopes about what you might report back to me later on. Don't concern yourself with what you might say to stroke me further.

Anyone who tries to offer advice to an unruly sort barrelling along towards a ghastly end will just get his own brains scrambled, so wouldn't we all be happier if we just remained alone with our mouths shut? Before too long, when you find yourself cooking in Yama's cauldron, I won't feel too sorry, even to see it directly with my own eyes. It's not that I'm without any empathy, but having left nothing unsaid, what more could I do for one so irredeemable?

At the time of the cause, you laugh heartily while accumulating bad karma. At the time of the result, you take a bad rebirth and shed profuse tears. Even as the flame of regret blazes, the flames burn you up.

Those of you with bad karma whose regret is belated and futile, without any sense of what will become of you over there, nearsightedly focused over here, you sing little ditties about good times while you strut around with shoulders held high, your hands busily engaged in evil acts you can hardly recall, spouting foulness from your mouths that I daren't describe, your five disturbed mental states raging and ten evil actions rampant, believing yourselves to be real big shots, and being told so by others whose heads are on backwards, lauding you for having accomplished so much; but your pretentious 'worthy causes' only destroy the true doctrine of the Victors like a head-on collision.<sup>3</sup>

When they behold the demise of such base characters of bad karma, the bodhisattvas pour a great torrent of wet tears from their eyes. Such evil actions in this sorry, mundane world produce nothing but zombies ready to be confined within Yamaraja's prison compound the moment they become corpses.

So go ahead and do your dirty work over here. Toss your first black hair right in front of Yama. Throw far away the burning embers from your hearth stone.<sup>4</sup> There are many [of Yama's] sentinels stationed, waiting.

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<sup>3</sup> According to Khenpo Sonam Topygal, the author is mocking the 'enlightened' attitudes of those who promote communist ideals within Tibetan society in order to win favor and position.

<sup>4</sup> In other words, draw Yama's interest towards your evil actions, and snuff out your own means of survival; go ahead and be as self-destructive as possible.

All of you with this mentality are frantically rushing about, always too busy. But lurking below are Yama's people, also very busy preparing. If you don't know for whose sake they so busy themselves, well, some of them are so busy on your behalf!

So be more cautious about your deeply-ingrained, leisurely ways, as the Mara of death is about to arrive right at your doorstep. If you have real guts, you can try your best to challenge him, "I'm not going, turn around and leave, don't just stand there!" But he holds his ground, grimacing fiercely.

That enemy will toss his noose around your neck, and on that fateful day, when the teardrops fall, what is there to do as you are led away? All of you with evil karma who have cut the dangling cord of compassion, who are tumbling like a rock in an avalanche, falling down into the yawning crevasse, wouldn't it be better to flee right now, while you still can?

Though you may wish earnestly for freedom, to flee from this prison, since you have no idea how, if I were to write down what must be done, for those who are curious, I shall explain this with the best intentions.

I, the non-matured knowledge-bearer, the child of divinity with modest virtues, could certainly claim that I can do it, that I have the ability; but I'd prefer to say "do this," and, "That would be helpful!"<sup>5</sup> Whoever may be inclined to listen, their pure thoughts will be spontaneously accomplished.

Without mistake or error, like the pronouncements of the gods; not secret or concealed, like a parent's counsel; helpful to oneself and to others, like the finest medicinal amrita; won't you please make good use of this threefold analogy?<sup>6</sup>

[1] Cut the fetters of existence with the sword of renunciation. Without cutting them, what else can one possibly do?

[2] With the longing that is the key to opening the doorway to liberation, if one does not open the door, from where else might one get out?

[3] Smash the head of habitual tendencies with the hammer of commitment. If you haven't killed them, how will you rid yourself of preoccupations?

[4] If you don't ready the forces of the three refuges as a welcoming party, the allies you hope for will never arrive, they will be waylaid.

[5] If the king of Mahayana does not show up to guard your back, sinister agents will once more make you their captive, to be sure.

Even with the three excellences guarding you from evildoers, if you don't gather together these five effective measures, you don't stand a chance. Some fools, having gotten by so far without mishap, knowingly continue in the same fashion; seeing this, one can only wonder what those mindless lunatics are up to.

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<sup>5</sup> The author is deriding Lamas who boast and seek prestige by claiming they can remove other's bad karma through empowerments or other tantric rituals.

<sup>6</sup> The author is describing the value of his own advice using these three analogies.

Those near and dear speak to you warmly, their hands clasped imploringly, not letting go, dragging you down even as you call them loyal friends; meanwhile, those who don't give up, and would pull you back up, are seen as enemies. Mistaking who, in fact, is the enemy, you chase after the executioner.

The deities and gurus toss their lassos of compassion out to you remarkably thoughtless, infantile characters, catching you before you're lost, calling you back up, over and over again; still, you flee further and further away from their support. Heartbroken, staring vacantly [after you], the holy ones are worn out.

So don't treat them that way, respectfully put your trust in them, look up, be invigorated, reach out for the white lasso with your hands, the kind ones are calling out, "hold on, don't let go! Most fortunate child, pull yourself up from the depths, place yourself under the command of the powerful master, our teacher the Buddha, as his servant, and in the end you will be rewarded." Our excellent leaders, the Lamas, with full backing from the deities, aren't they very highly positioned?

Now, the ways in which we should rely upon the noble spiritual guides, and the names by which we address the wisdom deities whom we supplicate, approach and accomplish, and from whom we request siddhi, are so many indeed. Still, we can rely on the five deities whose activities are swift and whose accomplishment is near at hand: the White Noble of Potala, Chenrezig; the Noble Lady Tarema<sup>7</sup> in the paradise of turquoise leaves; the Vidyadhara of the glorious mountain in Chamara, Padmasambhava; these three are renowned as the kindly, destined deities of Tibet. They three, particularly, in this field of training, the snowy land of Tibet, are swift to act and bestow siddhi when one merely supplicates them. [But] The red-faced ingrate children of monkeys don't know their own ancestral preceptors, and so reject them.

In China, on Wutaishan, is Manjusri. In the castle of the Yakshas is Vajrapani. The enlightened deeds and activities of the Sattvas of the three families, the regents of the Buddhas, are infinite, equal in extent to those of the Victors themselves. The deeds and activities of the Bodhisattva emanations are also boundless. When you look through even the eye of a needle, still the ends of space cannot be seen. To hold wrong views or denigrate them is a heavier sin than the weight of a mountain. So don't accumulate bad karma, train diligently in pure perception.

If you are looking for some dharma other than [that of] the cannibal demons, up to the vehicle of defining characteristics is the common system. To rely on the all-sufficient Guru as the jewel atop your head, and stake your very life on samaya, is the uncommon system of secret mantra. In these bad times, students are samaya-breaking demons disguised as human beings. They turn their backs on kindness and throw into the sewer the instructions and advice they've received. They lash out at their gurus and place no value upon samaya. Isn't that a hailstorm that destroys the harvest crops?

The sangha with loose discipline who make up the rank and file, for one; the samaya corrupters who occupy the positions at the feast, for two; the charismatic charlatans, fools passing themselves off as great teachers, for three; these are how the first bad omens of a pending catastrophe are laid out.

If practicing according to the guru's instructions does not liberate you, you may well be rearranging them to suit yourself. Rather than imbibe the nectar that pours from his mouth, you prefer to drink

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<sup>7</sup> I.e, Tara.

the foul liquid that emerges from the crotch – how revolting! What is introduced by the lama who is an expert on the path, and the right way to rely upon him—these you should retain in the mandala of your heart as rare collectibles, as vitally important and deeply profound.

Within the secret heart treasury of the glorious guru are found five dharmas of upadesa more precious than a wish-fulfilling jewel. Development and completion; the path of liberation; the upper and lower paths of skillful means—these three are renowned as the central highways [to liberation] contemplated by the secret tantras. The profound “cutting,” and highly secret Ati, these two are the secret express routes of Vajradhara. Each of these upadesas is more profound than the one preceding it. If they remain merely theoretical, though, not a single one is at all profound. Don't have a hundred arms but still get swept away trying to swim the sea; exert yourself at one [dharma]. If you complete a single one, you will have completed them all.

Keeping up appearances, and the eight dharmas, do not matter; the meaning in the sutras is what matters. One's image, and keeping count, do not matter; authenticity counts the most. Listing all the practices you have done doesn't matter; accomplishing the practice you do, does. Confident faith, the crossroads of a hundred vital points, is critical.

Leaving the oral instructions within the domain of theory, for one; completing the requisite measure [of mantras] by spinning through a lot of rosaries, for two; showing off the signs of attainment like parlor tricks, for three; how horrifying are the examples set by Lamas in these bad times. Not knowing the system of teachings, when they teach dharma, they only put their own foolishness on display. Not knowing the system of practice, the accomplished deity is converted into a demon. Not knowing the system of meditation, their conceptual meditation only drives you crazy faster. What is created without any real grounding can only be a worthless wonder.

And so, even though the systems of practice and systems of meditation are potent, and even though there exist a wide variety of more or less complex sadhanas, as a dharma meant for these times, easy to do and quickly accomplished with few obstacles, I feel there is nothing better than supplicating with heartfelt devotion. The turbulent waves of thoughts make development stage difficult, and artificially making your body hairs stand up is a hard way to practice completion stage. In fact, for the unworthy and indolent, everything is difficult. Don't you think the instructions of the upper echelons of vidyadharas are a bit too much to take on?

Happiness first begins when you take an interest in the dharma. The second source of happiness is found when you meet a qualified spiritual master. The third step on the course to happiness occurs when you meet the deity face to face. Your purpose is wholly fulfilled when you enter into the hallowed ranks of the nobles. On the path of vision occurs the first breaking of dawn. On the path of training the sun's rays first start poking through. On the path of no more training the glorious, crowning canopy of light is all-pervasive. On the island of omniscience, the sun of happiness and delight is warm and inviting. On every happy occasion when the sun of auspiciousness shines, a great banquet of happiness is laid out. Toward the pageantry of such a remarkable celebration, who could possibly resist a smile, or fail to feel delight?

When another sack of filth, which is the tie that holds samsara together, is conceived, and then gradually is drawn out, until it plops down onto [its mother's] lap, wailing and releasing a nauseating mess, remarkably, this sets off an incredible party, as everyone celebrates the joyous occasion.

On this very day when a child who knows nothing is confused by all he sees, the old and wise folks share a deep and hearty laugh, don't they? And on the very day when terribly important people go

about their terribly important business, who among the nobles, possessed of wisdom, manages not to smile?

Five methods of liberation, five great paths for transient beings, five spiritual mentors who know the way, five profound oral instructions, and five meditation deities; so five fives makes a string of twenty-five. This is the instruction that is like a rosary of precious jewels.

The perfect attainment, the kingdom of manifest perfection itself, is like an immutable vajra mountain of great bliss. When the victory banner of complete triumph over the Maras is planted atop the peak of the conditioned world, the unsurpassed level of infinite dominion has been achieved. Through the kindness and conduciveness of these inspiring words, in sets of five, is attained the mastery of completion of the fivefold five resultant dharmas. Guidance that would serve multitudes upon multitudes of transient beings can be drawn from these simple and inviting words. Whatever essence of glory there is in a thousand glories, may all of you fortunate ones be so fortunate as to put it to good use! Such glory and goodness of the marvellous conclusion of the two benefits completes my prayer of aspiration, bestowing auspicious happiness and goodness.

*from Kunchen Do Ngag She Drub Choling, in 2002, written by Sanjay Tsering, the most insignificant disciple of [Katog] Chagtrul Pema Trinley Jamtso.*

*Translated at the request of Nyoshul Lungtok III, as conveyed by Khenpo Sonam Topgyal Rinpoche, by the devoted student of the Nying Tig lineages of which Khenpo Ngawang Palzang was a master, Sherab Dorje the nominal Tulku of Lung Ngon Thubten Chokhorling Monastery in Golog, April 2011. © 2011 Blazing Wisdom Institute. This text may be freely distributed for non-commercial purposes.*