

༄༅། །རྗེ་བཙུན་སྒྲོལ་མའི་སྒྲིང་ཉིག་ལས། ཕུ་བ་དོ་རྗེའི་ཚིག་ཀང་།

Root Vajra Verses from the Heart Essence of Ārya Tārā

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

This text is intended to be read and practiced by those who have received the requisite Vajrayāna authorizations, transmissions, and instructions. If you are unsure whether you have received the appropriate permissions, please consult a qualified Dharma teacher of the relevant tradition.

rje btsun sgrol ma'i snying tig las:_rtsa ba rdo rje'i tshig rkang :

D109

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Khyentse Vision Project: Translating the Works of
Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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INTRODUCTION

In 1843, when Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo was twenty-four years old, he visited the sacred place of Shang Zabulung in Central Tibet. On the journey back, he and his attendant, Tsultrim Gyatso, stopped in a meadow for a meal. Khyentse Wangpo clearly perceived a cycle of treasure scrolls hidden in a neighboring cliff, but he lacked the means to retrieve them. Instead, Guru Padmasambhava and Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal appeared before him, blessed him, and the words of the cycle appeared clearly in his mind. From this visionary encounter, he wrote down the *Root Vajra Verses from the Heart Essence of Ārya Tārā*, a treasure revelation extracted from the treasury of wisdom mind. While Khyentse Wangpo was writing, the guardian of this treasure cycle appeared before him in the guise of a layman and handed Khyentse Wangpo a statue of Ārya Tārā.¹ This cycle is therefore classified as both a mind treasure and an earth treasure. In the colophon of this text, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo identifies himself by his secret treasure-revealer name, Ösal Trulpe Dorje (Luminous Emanated Vajra). These root vajra verses serve as the basis for six related texts in the same cycle, including a feast offering, a supplication prayer, and empowerment texts, which Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo composed. These texts are included in the Seven Transmissions (Kabab Dun) compendium.

The text is divided into three sections: (1) the origin of the teaching, with an homage and overview; (2) the main section, which describes how the initial empowerment should be given by a qualified teacher, how the practitioner should perform the general generation stage practices, and how to undertake the advanced practices of the completion stage; and (3) the concluding verses with a prophecy.

ཕ་བ་དྲེའི་ཚིག་ཀང་།

Root Vajra Verses

Homage and Introduction

In the language of India, this text is called *Vajrapādakam*. མེ

In the language of Tibet, it is called *Dorje Tsik* (“Vajra Verses”). མེ

Homage to Ārya Tārā! མེ

In the hidden land of Shang Zabulung, མེ

In the Palace of the Bliss-Gone Assembly, མེ

The queen of ḍākinīs, Lady Tsogyal, མེ

Thus entreated the *Oḍḍiyāna* Master: མེ

“From Noble Padmapāṇi’s tears མེ

A lotus blossomed, མེ

And from it Ārya Tārā was born! མེ

Please reveal to me her concise means of accomplishment.”² མེ

When she issued this request, མེ

The Great Oḍḍiyāna Master replied: མེ

“Listen, Noblewoman of Kharchen, མེ

Tārā is the dharmakāya endowed with all supreme aspects, མེ

Her form is the saṃbhogakāya of great bliss, མེ

And she has myriad nirmāṇakāya manifestations. མེ

If you wish to accomplish this Swift Heroine, མེ

Begin with ripening, མེ [465]

And after that, accomplishment and offering, མེ

And later, the profound yoga. མེ

These three aspects make up the concise practice.” ॐ

Main Body

Ripening

First, a master who has reached accomplishment, ॐ
Or is wise and loving, ॐ
Should perform for a disciple whose karmic affinity has awakened, ॐ
Or who has faith, intelligence, and diligence, ॐ
A ritual for the site ॐ
And the threefold preparatory ritual: ॐ
Draw and establish the maṇḍala, ॐ
Enter awareness in the correct manner, ॐ
And grant entry to the disciple. ॐ
Confer the five common awareness empowerments ॐ
And the elaborate vase empowerment, absorb the wisdom deity, ॐ
Give the permission blessing, ॐ
Confer the secret mantra empowerment, ॐ
Along with the wisdom empowerment and the fourth empowerment, ॐ
Grant prophecies, and uplift the disciple with honor and praise. ॐ [465]
This is the concise ritual with elaboration. ॐ
Alternatively, for one with the fortune ॐ
To have been previously ripened by someone else, ॐ
Confer the four profound symbolic empowerments. ॐ
For supreme practitioners, meditative absorption will suffice. ॐ
Then the root and branch samaya vows ॐ
Should be guarded like one’s own life. ॐ
If one simply abides by this alone, ॐ
One will reach supreme accomplishment within sixteen lifetimes. ॐ

Accomplishment and Offering

Having thus received the ripening empowerments, ॐ
In a supremely sacred place extolled for its qualities, ॐ
Rise early in the morning, and upon a *kuśa*-grass seat, ॐ
Perform ablutions, don clean clothing, ॐ
And seat yourself in the cross-legged lotus posture. ॐ

Take refuge, arouse bodhicitta, and exert yourself in accumulation and
purification. ॐ
Arise as the innate deity, dispel obstructing forces, ॐ
Bind the cardinal and intermediate directions with the protective circle, ॐ
Bring down wisdom blessings, consecrate the offering substances, ॐ

And settle yourself in the state of ordinary simplicity. ॐ

By virtue of performing these six rituals, ॐ

Tārā appears in the sky, ॐ

Which billows with clouds of the oceanic Three Jewels. ॐ

Gazing at her, recite the seven branches and offer a maṇḍala. ॐ

Having completed these steps, ॐ

Recite the *Homage and Praise to the Twenty-One Tārās* ॐ

Two, three, or seven times. ॐ

This causes light rays to shine from Tārā's heart, ॐ

Cleansing your bodily elements³ into emptiness. ॐ

Instantly, you arise in the form of Tārā. ॐ

In both of your heart centers⁴ is a moon seat, ॐ

Upon which the mantra garland is clearly arrayed. ॐ [467]

Recite it conjoined with the rise and fall of the breath. ॐ

In forms arisen from the five aspects of enlightenment, ॐ

All the wisdom beings symbolically enter you. ॐ

Then perform the activity of emanating-and-absorbing visualization and
recitation. ॐ

Once again, invite the empowerment deities ॐ

Who confer empowerment, and a stream of amṛta ॐ

Fills your entire body. In the twenty-four sacred places, ॐ

Visualize the Tārās of awakened body, speech, and mind, ॐ

Along with the twenty-one emanations, ॐ

And make offerings, recite praises, and so on. ॐ

Then a second deity emerges from you. ॐ

Gazing upon it in front of you, offer a *gaṇacakra* feast. ॐ

The deity reenters you, ॐ

Confers empowerment, and vividly abides. ॐ

Perform immense activity fire offerings, ॐ

Compassionate rope-of-rescue rituals to guide the dead, ॐ

And cleansing rituals to remove faults. ॐ

Resound the Sanskrit vowels and consonants, ॐ

Perform pacifying, enriching, magnetizing, and fierce activities, ॐ

And the other activities of skilled vajra masters, ॐ

Who adhere to the words of the guru, ॐ

And behave according to the general secrets. ॐ

Finally, dissolve all elaborations of the apparent aspect ॐ
And arise in the form of the innate deity. ॐ
Dedicate the merit, make aspirations, ॐ
Recite auspicious verses, and maintain the yoga of conduct. ॐ
Anyone who practices in this way ॐ
Will become equal to the Noble Lady herself ॐ
In every action, now and forever. ॐ
What need is there to say more? ॐ
This concludes the second part of the concise vajra verses. ॐ [468]

The Profound Yoga

In order for those with proficiency in the path of elaboration ॐ
To reach the freedom of liberated ease, ॐ
There is the profound path of vajra yoga, ॐ
Which I will briefly describe in vajra verse: ॐ

In a remote and pleasant place, ॐ
Inspire yourself with fierce determination to be free. ॐ
Take refuge, arouse bodhicitta, exert yourself in purifying and increasing,⁵ ॐ
Cultivate the guru yoga of blessings, ॐ
Take the four empowerments, and merge your mind with the guru's mind. ॐ
Following the four classes of tantra, ॐ
Cultivate the generation stage of inseparable profundity and clarity, ॐ
Which applies the seal of bliss-emptiness, in four daily sessions. ॐ

Having thoroughly trained body, speech, and mind, ॐ
Accomplish the meditative absorption of unified calm abiding and higher insight. ॐ
Generate blissful warmth with winds and yogic heat. ॐ
With a mudrā,⁶ bring down, hold, reverse, spread, and stabilize the essence drops ॐ
To generate the four joys. ॐ
Settle in the state endowed with the six special qualities. ॐ
(Relying upon the first three classes of tantra,)⁷
Practice the yoga of winds, mind, and essences, ॐ
Seed syllables, yogic breathing, and recollection, ॐ
Fearless conduct, and the yoga of light and darkness, ॐ
Thereby completing the branches of the path. ॐ

Thus, if you avoid mental engagement with distractions ॐ
And maintain one-pointed endeavor, ॐ
After six months, three years, or twelve, ॐ
You will accomplish the level of the Magical Net. ॐ

This concludes the third section of the concise vajra verses. ॐ

Conclusion

This teaching, which can never be discerned ॐ
By an assembly of sophists ॐ
Who lack the guru's pith instructions, ॐ [469]
I have explained perfectly in vajra verses. ॐ
In order to encapsulate the entire ocean of tantric classes ॐ
Of the Ārya, sole mother of all buddhas, ॐ
In a single essential teaching, ॐ
I have explained everything perfectly and concisely— ॐ
The preliminaries, outer yogas, ॐ
And the supreme endeavor of the inner yogas. ॐ
In order to encompass all the stages of the path, ॐ
I have explained them perfectly in three phases. ॐ

In the age of dregs, the final five-hundred years, ॐ
In order to protect beings in general and the land of Tibet ॐ
From all fear, ॐ
I, Pema Tötreng, have revealed this teaching, ॐ
And particularly the two activity practices. ॐ
I concealed it in the essential sphere of mind in the space of reality, ॐ
For the sake of Ösal Trulpe Dorje, ॐ
Who was blessed by Jampal Chökyi Shenyen ॐ
As a holder of self-existing awareness. ॐ

Samaya. Sealed. Sealed. Sealed. Secret. Symbol dissolved. ॐ

I, Ösal Trulpe Dorje, a servant who delights the Lake-Born Guru, revealed this when I was twenty-four years old. On the tenth day of the waxing moon in the fifth lunar month of the Female Water Hare "Adornment" year of the fourteenth Rabjung cycle⁸ (1843), when I was visiting a delightful meadow of medicinal herbs near the Great Palace of the Peaceful and Wrathful Bliss-Gone Buddhas in Shang Zabulung, Guru Rinpoche and his partner Yeshe Tsogyal came in person and blessed me. I brought these verses forth from the treasury of wisdom mind and set them down in writing. I kept them secret for twenty-seven years, and after practicing them a little and benefitting myself and others through many avenues, I offered this, along with an exceptional sacred object that is inseparable from the wisdom form of Ārya Tārā, to the disciples of Lodrö Tayepe De,⁹ emanation of the great translator Vairocanarakṣita, [470] Mañjuśrī in person. By this act, may this supreme glorious guru remain firmly among us for one hundred eons, and may his enlightened activity that delights the victorious ones be forever all-pervasive and spontaneously accomplished.

NOTES

1. Akester, *Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, 208.
2. According to three early Buddhist tantras, *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, *Mahāvairocanaḥśambodhi*, and *Tārāmūlakalpa*, Ārya Tārā was born from a lotus that bloomed in a lake of tears shed by the merciful eyes of the Lord of Compassion, Avalokiteśvara, here in the form of the bodhisattva Padmapāṇi, the Lotus-Bearer. Gazing upon the realms of beings, *Padmapāṇi* was so overcome with sadness at the sufferings of the world that he wept tears of compassion that formed a lake in which lotuses bloomed, giving rise to the various liberating emanations of Tārā.
3. Here, the Tibetan word is *dung kham* (*dung kham*), which possibly relates to the term *dung khang* (*dung khang*), meaning skull. Lama Tsering Gyaltzen explains that *dung kham* probably refers to the bodily elements here, with *dung* (*dung*) referring to the head and *kham* (*kham*) referring to the body's elements or constituents (oral communication, September 8, 2022).
4. This refers to you as Tārā and to the Tārā who appears in front of you.
5. Purifying obscurations through Vajrasattva recitation and meditation, and increasing merit and wisdom through offering the maṇḍala. These are two sections of the fivefold uncommon preliminary practices on the Vajrayāna path.
6. Spiritual consort.
7. Note that this line was inserted as an addendum and is not part of the original mind treasure revelation.
8. According to the Tibetan lunar calendar, the Female Water Year, called “Adornment,” is the thirty-seventh year of each sixty-year cycle (Rabjung).
9. This refers to Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye.

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GLOSSARY

accumulation and purification

བསག་སྐྱེད། • *bsag sbyang*

Purifying obscurations through Vajrasattva recitation and meditation, and accumulating merit and wisdom through offering the maṇḍala. These are two sections of the fivefold uncommon preliminary practices on the Vajrayāna path.

Bliss-Gone Buddha

བདེབར་གཤེགས་པ། བདེགཤེགས། • *bde bar gshegs pa, bde gshegs* • *sugata*

An epithet of the Buddha, literally meaning “gone to bliss.”

disciple whose karmic affinity has awakened

རིགས་སངས། • *rigs sad pa*

The awakening of a propensity for a particular spiritual tradition.

endowed with all supreme aspects

རྣམ་ཀུན་མཚོག་ལྷན། • *rnam kun mchog ldan*

The inseparable union of appearance and emptiness, the supreme of all aspects. Also explained as emptiness endowed with all the supreme aspects of buddhahood.

endowed with the six special qualities

ལྷན་ཚོས་རྒྱལ་ལྷན། • *khyad chos drug ldan*

The six special qualities of Samantabhadra, which describe the great stage of primordial liberation: (1) (*gzhi las 'phags*) arises from the ground, (2) (*rang ngor snang*) appears as the true essential nature, (3) (*bye brag phyed*) differentiates specific aspects, (4) (*phyed thog tu grol*) liberates directly within openness, (5) (*gzhan lung las ma byung*) does not come from elsewhere, and (6) (*rang sar gnas pa*) abides in its own natural condition.

final five-hundred years

ལྷ་བརྒྱུ་ཉི་མ་མ། • *Inga brgya'i tha ma*

According to Buddhist prophecies, the 2500 years after Buddha Śākyamuni's death are divided into five five-hundred-year periods, the last of which is our current era, a 500-

year period of strife and conflict marked by five kinds of *snyigs ma* or dregs.

five aspects of enlightenment

མངོན་བྱང་ལྷ། • *mngon byang lnga*

The five aspects of a deity that are visualized during the generation stage: moon disc, sun disc, seed syllable, symbolic attributes, and the complete form of the deity.

five common awareness empowerments

ཐུན་མོང་རིག་པ་འདི་དབང་ལྷ། • *thun mong rig pa'i dbang lnga*

The empowerments of water, crown, vajra, bell, and name.

four classes of tantra

རྒྱུད་སྡེ་ནམ་བཞི། • *rgyud sde rnam bzhi*

Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga, and Anuttarayoga.

Jampal Chökyi Shenyen

འཇམ་དཔལ་ཚོས་ཀྱི་བཤེས་གཉེན། • *'jam dpal chos kyi bshes gnyen* •

Mañjuśrīdharmamitra

One of the names of Dorje Lingpa (1346–1405), a major treasure revealer and emanation of the great translator Vairocana. Some of his treasure teachings were rediscovered, practiced, and propagated by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. See Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, 789–92.

kuśa-grass seat

ཀུ་ཤ་འཛི། • *ku sha'i khri* • kuśāsana

The Buddha sat on a seat of *kuśa* grass under the Bodhi tree when he attained final complete awakening. Thus it is the ideal, auspicious (but not indispensable) seat for meditation.

Lady Tsogyal

མཚོ་རྒྱལ་མ། • *mtsho rgyal ma*

Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal, eighth-century Tibetan master and spiritual partner of Guru Padmasambhava.

level of the *Magical Net*

རྒྱ་འཕུལ་བྲ་བའི་གོ་འཕང་། • *sgyu 'phrul drwa ba'i go 'phang*

Magical Net (*māyājāla*) refers to the eight categories of the *Magical Net Tantra* of Vajrasattva, the buddha of the indestructible nature, and therefore this symbolizes the level of full buddhahood (oral communication with Lama Tsering Gyaltzen).

Noblewoman of Kharchen

མཁར་ཚེན་བཟའ། • *mkhar chen bza'*

Yeshe Tsogyal, who was born a princess in the Kharchen clan.

Oḍḍiyāna

ཨོ་རྒྱན། • *o rgyan*

Oḍḍiyāna, also spelled “Uḍḍiyāna,” is often referred to as the “land of ḍākinīs.” It is both a historical and a mythical place, usually associated with the Swat Valley in modern-day

Pakistan. It is most significantly known as the birthplace of the great Indian Buddhist master Padmasambhava, who is often called the Master of Oḍḍiyāna.

Oḍḍiyāna Master

ཨོ་རྒྱལ་རྗེ། • *o rgyan rje*

Guru Padmasambhava, eighth-century Indian Buddhist master born in the land of Oḍḍiyāna, who brought Vajrayāna Buddhism to Tibet.

Padmapāṇi

ཕྱག་ན་པ་སྐྱོ། • *phyag na pad+mo*

The Lotus-Bearer. Form of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion, usually depicted with one face and two arms, either standing or seated in the posture of royal ease, holding a lotus in his left hand.

Pema Tōtreng

པ་སྐྱོ་ཐོད་ཐྱེང། • *pad+ma thod phreng*

Lotus Skull-Garland. The secret name of Guru Rinpoche.

purifying and increasing

སྐྱུང་སྐྱེལ། • *sbyang spel*

Purifying obscurations through Vajrasattva recitation and meditation, and increasing merit and wisdom through offering the maṇḍala. These are two sections of the fivefold uncommon preliminary practices on the Vajrayāna path.

rise and fall of the breath

ལྷང་འཕྱག་རྒྱུང། • *ldang 'jug rlung*

Literally, “the rising and entering of the winds” (*ldang 'jug rlung*). In this recitation practice, the mantra is conjoined with the natural rhythmic movement of the winds, which rise, enter, and abide. This corresponds to the exhalation, inhalation, and pause in between. “Rising” means the winds rise from their seat and move to another location, and “entering” means the winds return to their seat after moving. When the winds rise and enter, they do so with the sound of the mantra, which blesses the winds with the body, speech, and mind of the deity and stabilizes the mind.

ritual for the site

ས་ཡི་ཚོག། • *sa yi cho ga*

A ritual to claim or request permission to use a particular site.

rope-of-rescue rituals

གནས་ལུང་སྦྱིང་རྗེ་འདྲམ་ཐག། • *gnas lung snying rje'i dpyangs thag*

This is a class of rituals used to guide the deceased person’s consciousness to a pure realm. The master’s compassion acts as a rope to lasso the deceased’s consciousness and rescue that person from taking rebirth in the lower realms.

seed syllables

ཡིག་འབྲུ། • *yig 'bru* • bījākṣara

Seed syllables are the quintessence of Buddhist tantra. They are the unborn natural sound of dharmatā or true reality. Each buddha, bodhisattva, and physical element is associated with a particular seed syllable, which expresses and encompasses perfect

nondual wisdom. When these sacred letters are used in Vajrayāna visualization and recitation practices, they enable practitioners to connect with their own primordially awakened nature.

Shang Zabulung

ཤང་གི་ཟབ་བུ་ལུང། • *shang gi zab bu lung*

The sacred site of Zabulung in the Tibet's Shang district is the location of Ḍākinī Yeshe Tsogyal's Rainbow Body Cave. Zabulung is considered foremost among all of Guru Rinpoche's sacred practice places, and according to the Guru's vajra prophecies, anyone who sees, hears of, thinks of, or touches this sacred place will be brought to the level of awakening. For further reading, see the *Pilgrimage Guide to Zabulung* (Jnanasukha Foundation, 2011).

Swift Heroine

ལྷུང་མ་དཔའ་མོ། • *myur ma dpa' mo*

Epithet of Tārā, whose liberating blessings are particularly swift.

threefold preparatory ritual

སྟུ་གོན་རྣམ་པ་གསུམ། • *sta gon rnam pa gsum*

Preparatory rituals for the deity, the vase, and the disciple before a major empowerment.

twenty-four sacred places

གནས་ཉེར་བཞི། • *gnas nyer bzhi*

According to various Nyingma traditions such as the Longchen Nyingtik, the twenty-four outer sacred places correspond to twenty-four inner sacred places on the vajra body.

vowels and consonants

དབྱངས་གསལ། • *dbyangs gsal* • āli kāli

The sixteen vowels and thirty consonants of the Sanskrit alphabet, which are recited to purify speech and the inner winds and to multiply the benefits of mantra.

yoga of light and darkness

སྣང་སྟན་རྣལ་འབྱོར། • *snang mun rnal 'byor*

The yoga of light refers to spontaneous-presence Tögal practice (*lhun grub thod rgyal*) and the yoga of darkness refers to dark retreats (*mun mtshams*).

yogic breathing

སྲོག་རྩོལ། • *srog rtsol* • prāṇāyamā

Literally, “vitality and exertion.” Prāṇāyamā: a system of yogic breathing techniques to harness and channel the body's subtle winds (*prāṇa*).

yogic heat

གཏུམ་མོ། • *gtum mo* • caṇḍālī

The tantric practice of generating intense inner heat which leads the winds into the central channel and melts the nectar at the crown. This generates the experience of the four joys.

Ösal Trulpe Dorje

འོད་གསལ་སྒྲུབ་པའི་རྡོ་རྗེ། • *'od gsal sprul pa'i rdo rje*

Luminous Emanated Vajra. The secret treasure-revealer name of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo.