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Nectar of the Heart:
A Guide to Sumpa Lotsāwa's
Ear-Whispered Mind Training

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo



KHYENTSE VISION
PROJECT

sum pa lo tsā ba'i blo sbyong snyan brgyud kyi kbrid yig snying gi bdud rtsi

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Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo

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INTRODUCTION

Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's *Nectar of the Heart* presents an instructional text on mind training or *lojong* practice. It is based on a text by one of his previous incarnations, Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk (1524–1568), in which the latter recorded Tsarchen Losal Gyatso's (1502–1566) teachings in the form of notes. In the present guide, Khyentse Wangpo shows how to put into practice the teachings of the *Ear-Whispered Mind Training*, a terse *lojong* text mainly evolving around four vajra statements.¹ The *Ear-Whispered Mind Training* in turn was transmitted by the twelfth-century master Sumpa Lotsāwa, who received them in a vision from Vajravārāhī and Tārā during his travels in India.

Authorship of the Ear-Whispered Mind Training

As pointed out by Thupten Jinpa in his translation of a related text entitled *Sumpa Lotsāwa's Ear-Whispered Mind Training*² and included in the *lojong* compendium *Mind Training: The Great Collection*, Sumpa Lotsāwa remains a rather elusive figure.³ Right at the beginning of the present text, Khyentse Wangpo tells us that Sumpa Lotsāwa Darma Yönten is also referred to as Palchok Dangpö Dorje. However, according to Gö Lotsāwa's *Blue Annals* and other sources, these are two different masters both bearing the name "Sumpa Lotsāwa." Palchok Dangpö Dorje was in fact Darma Yönten's uncle.⁴

Darma Yönten traveled to Nepal, where he worked with the Indian paṇḍita Jāyasena to translate several texts related to Cakrasaṃvara.⁵ It was Palchok Dangpö Dorje who visited Bodhgaya in India, also spending some time in Kashmir and Nepal.⁶ Two of his translations of texts related to logic and epistemology are included in the Tengyur.⁷ Following the *Glossary of Scholars and Siddhas of the Land of Snow*⁸ and Khyentse Wangpo's *Survey of Kunga Drölchok's One Hundred Teaching Manu-*

als,⁹ we can surmise that the Sumpa Lotsāwa who received the *Ear-Whispered Mind Training* was in fact Palchok Dangpö Dorje.¹⁰

From the transmission lineage of the *Ear-Whispered Mind Training* in Khyentse Wangpo's lineage prayer,¹¹ which directly precedes the present text in his collected works, and from the introduction in the work itself, we discover that Sumpa Lotsāwa first received the instruction at the Mahābodhi temple in Bodhgaya directly from its progenitors, the deity Vajravārāhī and the female bodhisattva Tārā, when he was about to leave India. He initially transmitted it to the famous master Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251), resulting in a subsequent combined Sakya and Jonang line of transmission:¹²

- Vajravārāhī and Tārā
- Sumpa Lotsāwa (fl. twelfth century)
- Sakya Paṇḍita (1182–1251)
- Chögyal Pagpa Lodrö Gyaltzen (1235–1280)
- Zhangtön Könchok Pal (1240–1317)
- Chöje Drakpugpa (1277–1350)
- Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen (1312–1375)
- Ngulchu Togme Zangpo (1295–1369)
- Lotsāwa Jangchub Tsemo (1303–80)
- Hor Kabshipa Senge Gyaltzen (fl. late fourteenth–early fifteenth centuries)
- Dulzin Palden Zangpo (1402–1473)
- Neten Sampenpa Jangsem Jinpa
- Ratön Yönten Pal (d. 1509)
- Kunga Chogdrub (1454–1526)
- Kunga Drölchok (1507–1566)
- Draktöpa Lhawang Drakpa (fl. sixteenth century)
- Tāranātha (1575–1634)
- Jonang Jetsunma Kunga Trinle Wangmo (1585–1668)
- Nyingpo Lodrö Taye (fl. seventeenth century)
- Dzalongkar Lama Drubwang Kunzang Wangpo (fl. early eighteenth century)
- Katok Tsewang Norbu (1698–1755)
- Ngawang Nampar Gyalwa
- Wön Dzalongkar Lama Kunzang Chöjor
- Drinchen Lobzang Tutob (fl. late eighteenth–early nineteenth centuries)
- Chagzam Tulku Nyima Chöpal
- Shalu Losal Tenkyong (1804–1864)
- Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892)

Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk and Tsarchen Chökyi Gyalpo

As the colophon of Khyentse Wangpo's *Nectar of the Heart* tells us, his text is based on a guidebook with the title *Dispelling Darkness in the Heart: Notes on the Oral Tradition*¹³ by one of his previous incarnations, Nesarwa Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk Tenpe Gyaltzen (1524–1568).¹⁴ This master was born into the Nesar family lineage, named after the Tsi Nesar temple they established in the Nyang valley in the eleventh century. He eventually became a great master of the Sakya tradition and an important lineage holder of the esoteric Lamdre teachings known as Explication for Disciples.¹⁵ On account of several visions and his activities as a minor treasure revealer he also became affiliated with the Nyingma tradition.

One of his main teachers was Tsarchen Losal Gyatso (1502–1566), arguably the most prominent figure in the Explication for Disciples tradition, whose lineage diverged from the Sakya mainstream into a separate school with his name. Tsarchen became abbot of Shalu Monastery in 1555, a position that Khyentse Wangchuk took over in 1559.¹⁶ Tsarchen in turn was the main disciple of Kunpang Doringpa (1449–1524), another major lineage holder of the Explication for Disciples.¹⁷ It was mostly Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk and Mangthö Ludrub Gyatso (1523–1596) who recorded Tsarchen's teachings.¹⁸

OUTLINE

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Nectar of the Heart

Om svasti siddham.

The quintessence obtained from churning the ocean of treatises of the supreme
vehicle

Are the instructions of the aural lineage,

The nectar of the heart of the exalted ones of the golden eon:

To the masters apt in granting those I bow and shall disclose a little of the profound
path. [23]

This will consist of two parts: (1) the history of the instruction to inspire faith and demonstrate the authenticity of its origin, and (2) the actual instruction which emerged from that history.

I. The History of the Instruction to Inspire Faith and Demonstrate the Authenticity of its Origin

Sumpa Lotsāwa Darma Yönten, also referred to as Palchok Dangpö Dorje, who achieved scholarship and accomplishment, remained for a long time in the noble land of India. When the desire arose in him to return to Tibet, he made elaborate offerings of what was left from the gold he had brought for his expenses in Bodhgaya, India. Feeling a bond to India's sacred places and masters, he had doubts as to whether he should leave or remain, and so his heart was heavy and he felt uneasy. As he was circumambulating the Mahābodhi temple, there was a reddish girl following a bluish girl who were also circumambulating the temple. At times they circled

above in the air, and at other times they were walking on the ground some distance from him. Thinking they would vanish if he pursued them, Sumpa Lotsāwa stayed where he was.

At that point, the reddish woman said, “Lately I have been feeling restless; I also feel like I want to go somewhere. Might it be a premonition of my death? In fact, I’m terrified of dying.”¹⁹

To this, the bluish woman responded, looking straight toward Sumpa Lotsāwa, “O lady, if you are content with whatever happens, whatever you do will bring happiness. You suffer because you are lacking this quality of contentment.”²⁰ [24]

After the bluish woman had responded to the reddish woman’s queries with four vajra statements beginning with the one just mentioned, a perfect understanding of their meaning dawned upon the lotsāwa: he knew how to practice the import of all the teachings he had learned in the past, and extraordinary realization arose in him. The point of all the teachings he had studied in the past became clear,²¹ and for this reason he held those instructions in greatest esteem. He said that the two women, red and blue, were Vajravārāhī and the noble lady Tārā.

After Sumpa Lotsāwa had translated these vajra statements, he taught them to Mañjughoṣa Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen Palzangpo, who then passed them on to Pagpa Rinpoche, the protector of beings, and to the siddha Darcharwa Rinpoche Zangpo. After that they were successively passed on. It is known that in later times, when Gyalse Rinpoche Togmepa requested the glorious Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen to give him the one instruction which was the essence of his own personal practice, he bestowed upon him these four vajra statements. Urged by Geshe Pagpa Lha,²² Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltsen is also said to have composed a guidebook at that time.²³

When Lachen Sölo of the family lineage of Sakya went to China, Gyalse Rinpoche accompanied him until Lhasa. [25] It was at that time that this very instruction came to be taught by masters from all over, first and foremost by Gyalsepa, in public teachings in the courtyards of Lhasa, as it is recorded in Chöje Gyalsepa’s biography. These examples illustrate that many great masters have made this instruction the center of their personal practice.

Of particular note is Tsarchen Chökyi Gyalpo, in whom the rivers of the two transmission lineages passed down by Jamgön Sapaṅ converged into a single stream. Tsarchen himself had received the instruction from Jetsun Doringpa. On the occasion when Tsarchen was giving experiential instructions based on Chöje Lama Dampa’s guidebook at the glorious Shalu Serkang Monastery,²⁴ Nesarwa Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk, who was Mañjughoṣa in person, wrote *Dispelling Darkness in the Heart: Notes on the Oral Tradition*.²⁵ The transmission of these experiential

instructions then continued uninterrupted throughout later times, and it was venerable Kunga Drölchok who, having received the instructions in the transmission lineage of Gyalse Rinpoche, included them in his work *One Hundred Instructions*.²⁶ Their oral transmission has continued to this day.²⁷

II. The Actual Instruction, Which Emerged from That History

The practice of this instruction known as *Sumpa Lotsāwa's Ear-Whispered Mind Training*, also referred to as the *Ḍākinīs' Four Vajra Statements*, begins as follows.

A. First Vajra Statement

*If you're content with whatever happens, whatever you do brings happiness.*²⁸

The practice of the import of the first vajra statement is twofold: [26] the practice methods associated with (1) the preliminaries, and (2) the main practice.

1. THE PRELIMINARIES

In a secluded place, seated on a comfortable cushion in the posture of meditative absorption, visualize the Three Jewels filling the space in front of you and imagine that you and all other sentient beings go for refuge with their three doors in unison. Practice the fourfold refuge a hundred times, a thousand times, or as many times as you can, and with your attention fixed on all beings recite three times, “I shall attain perfect buddhahood for the benefit of all beings and, to that end, I shall engage in the practice of the profound ear-whispered instructions of the Ḍākinīs.” Reciting this three times will help you to engender aspiring and engaging bodhicitta.

When you are teaching this instruction to someone else, do it in the way just described. For your own personal practice, just recite three times Atiśa's verse of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and community, which distills the key point of the *Sūtra Teaching the Four Factors*,²⁹ so that refuge and bodhicitta arise simultaneously.³⁰ The first line of the verse shows the object in which one takes refuge; “until my enlightenment” signifies the time period; “I” is the person; “go for refuge” shows the action; “engaging in giving and so on” refers to engaging bodhicitta; [27] and “may I achieve buddhahood” refers to aspiring bodhicitta. Thus it is said.³¹

The actual preliminary practice has two parts: (1) meditating on the difficulty of obtaining the freedoms and advantages of human existence and on death and impermanence, and (2) meditating on the karmic law of cause and effect and on the defects of saṃsāra.

a. Meditation on the Difficulty of Obtaining the Freedoms and Advantages of Human Existence and on Death and Impermanence

Our body may be free of illness, our mind free of sorrow, and our intentions fulfilled; other people may praise and respect³² us. Although we experience all sorts of feelings of happiness in body and mind such as these, we are not content with them. Instead we feel the urge to despise others and harbor a variety of feelings such as envy and resentment concerning other people's happiness, as well as conceit about our own. This accumulates an abundance of karma derived from attachment and aversion, and that very happiness thus becomes the cause for rebirth in saṃsāra and the lower realms.

Now, to practice contentment for whatever feelings of happiness you may experience, you should briefly call to mind the feelings of happiness in body and mind mentioned before, whenever they occur. When you experience pleasant sensations, repeatedly engage in the following reflection: "Pleasant sensations last only for a moment, like a dream just before waking up. These sensations however are not worth accumulating karma derived from attachment and aversion, so I shall be content with whatever feeling of happiness I encounter. However pleasant and beautiful a room in a guesthouse may be, [28] since I would be staying just a few nights before departing again, it would not be worth developing attachment for it. Regardless of the quality of the guesthouse's facilities or how many gatherings of people there might be, since I would be leaving after only a short time, it would not be worth becoming attached to it. Just like that, whatever I may possess in this life—dwelling place, body, wealth, retinue, attendants, and so on—are all just temporary circumstances that have come about due to my past karma and dependent origination. Thus there is no certainty as to when death will strike, and very soon I will be separated from them; and at any moment I will have to set out alone to an uncertain destination. Thus, I shall not waste my time accumulating karma derived from attachment and aversion because of these things."³³

Similarly, when you encounter feelings of suffering from bodily illnesses, or violent, unbearable mental sorrow, and you accumulate negative karma derived from attachment and aversion on their basis, that suffering will become an obstacle to liberation. So cultivate the following thought: "I shall be content with whatever feeling of suffering I encounter. There is absolutely no need to accumulate karma on that basis. This feeling of suffering is like a dream before waking up, or like a decrepit guesthouse,³⁴ bereft of facilities, to stay in which would be like an insult. [29] Whatever a guesthouse is like, since I will move on at any moment and I cannot stay there forever, it is not worth developing attachment or aversion for it. In the same way, if I die tonight or tomorrow—whatever negativity befalls me in this situation of

uncertainty, I shall not waste my time accumulating³⁵ karma based on that suffering. Now by every means, in order to not let this short life go to waste, I shall practice the Dharma.” Thus it is said.

b. Meditation on the Karmic Law of Cause and Effect and on the Defects of Saṃsāra

To engage in the practice of the line “If you’re content with whatever happens, whatever you do brings happiness” in conjunction with the meditation on the karmic law of cause and effect and the defects of saṃsāra, do as follows. If you experience happiness as explained before, reflect thus: “This kind of happiness is the result of my virtuous actions in past lives. What I want is only happiness, but happiness does not come from nonvirtue—it only comes from virtue. Thus, from now on until I die, until the sun rises tomorrow, and until the end of this meditation session, I shall accumulate by every means whatever virtue there is to be accomplished—small, intermediate, and great.”

Whatever feelings of suffering occur to you, the fact that you experience them is the result of nonvirtuous actions. Nobody wants such misery. This being the case, the only way is to abandon its cause, nonvirtue. [30] Therefore, make the fervent aspiration that from now on until you die, until the sun rises tomorrow, and until the end of this session, even at the cost of your life, you will refrain from nonvirtue, even in its most subtle forms, let alone severe ones.

Accordingly, make this aspiration, thinking: “When any of those sufferings befall my body or mind, if I cannot tolerate even such minor sufferings,³⁶ how could I bear the intense, long-lasting, terrible sufferings of the hells and the hungry ghost and animal realms? Since I cannot tolerate the multiple sufferings of gods, demigods, and human beings mentioned before, I need to refrain from negative actions, the cause of those sufferings.” Thus it is said.

2. THE MAIN PRACTICE

The practice associated with the main part of the path has two parts: the training associated with (1) conventional bodhicitta, and with (2) ultimate bodhicitta.

a. Training in Conventional Bodhicitta

Whenever you experience happiness physically or mentally, notice those feelings. When you are experiencing pleasant sensations, think, “Everybody enjoys this kind of happiness. All those sentient beings striving for happiness are not unimportant to me. They have all been my dear parents time and again in previous lifetimes. Therefore, I shall give my happiness and its causes entirely to all of them.” [31] Make that thought your fervent aspiration.

Mentally, take your happiness—that is to say, your body and possessions, and so on—and its causes, your roots of virtue, in their entirety, and imagine giving them to all sentient beings in general, in the form of a shower of jewels that effortlessly fulfills every wish they might have. Specifically, imagine that these jewels transform into a great rain of whatever sentient beings desire, such as clothing for those who lack clothing, food for those without food, and shelter for those who lack shelter, thus fulfilling all their wishes. In the same way, visualize that the torment of heat of beings in the hot hells may be dispelled by cooling rain and wind, thus granting them a pleasant coolness of body and mind, and that the darkness in the cold hells be dispelled by a warm entity such as the light of the sun. Think that you transform into a tool for clearing away the suffering in each of the six realms by giving them warmth and comfort, and so on. Make all this your aspiration.

In order to be able to visualize this clearly, make the following aspiration prayer: “May all my happiness and virtues ripen upon all sentient beings.” If you address your prayer to an extraordinary entity, whatever you pray for will come true. So make this strong heartfelt supplication to your teacher and the Three Jewels who fill the space in front of you: [32] “O master and precious Three Jewels, grant your blessings so that my³⁷ happiness and virtues ripen upon all sentient beings!”

In short, practice by alternating your aspirations, prayers, and supplications. Whatever happiness you experience, do not allow such feelings as arrogance or conceit to turn into a cause for saṃsāra. You should bring that happiness onto the path by applying key points such as this. Thus it is said.

Whatever feelings of suffering such as those mentioned before befall you, think: “To suffer like this is always unwelcome. Yet sentient beings, because they do not know the proper means, create the very suffering they are trying to avoid.” Make the following fervent aspiration: “If only the suffering and the causes of suffering (that is, the karma and afflictions) of all sentient beings would be absorbed in their entirety into my own suffering!” Imagine the suffering of all beings and its causes gathering into a dark mass, which then swiftly gets absorbed into whatever suffering may be happening to you. Then visualize them bathed in pure white light in a state of utter bliss, and rest in awareness beyond expression.

As before, practice alternately your aspirations, prayers, and supplications. [33] The aspiration prayer is as follows: “May all beings’ suffering and negative actions converge upon me in their entirety.” Supplicate like this: “O master and precious Three Jewels, bless me so that all beings’ suffering and negative actions converge upon me in their entirety!” It is important not to harbor any anger or dispiritedness about one’s suffering. Instead, take it onto the path. Thus it is said.

In short, if someone comes along and gives you even a mere needle and thread, this is the positive outcome of your having practiced generosity to others in the past. It was neither accidental nor due to something else, such as your good appearance. Offer all your happiness and virtues, such as the fact that you have been given that needle and thread, entirely to your teacher and the Three Jewels. Give them in their entirety to all sentient beings without differentiating. Having given them away, imagine as before that they turn into whatever beings desire, thus making them content. This is taught to be the key point by which one can accumulate immeasurable virtue on the basis of even the most minute things such as a needle and thread. Thus it is said.

b. Training in Ultimate Bodhicitta

Whatever feelings of happiness you may experience, their nature can by no means be established as something separate from your mind. If you search for the time, the place, [34] and the manner in which this mind of yours first came to be, you will not find³⁸ anything—in the beginning, mind has no cause, no origination. So where, starting from the internal and external parts of your body, from the essential inner organs up until the external world and its inhabitants, large and small, does the mind dwell? Even if you search and examine thoroughly how the mind might dwell in terms of shape, color, and defining characteristics, you will not be able to say, “It is *this*.” Therefore, in the middle there is nothing of the mind that remains.

Given that arising and remaining cannot be established, cessation—which can only be posited in relation to the former two—is not established either. Nobody, even if they search, will find anything and say, “At the end it dissolved into something like *this*,” or “*Here* it has come to an end.” Therefore, mind has no result, no final cessation.³⁹ In short, settle your mind fully into its ineffable fundamental nature devoid of the three stages of arising, remaining, and ceasing. In the same way, whichever feeling of suffering arises, look at its nature and practice as explained above.

In summary, whatever appearance of dualistic phenomena such as happiness and suffering or joy and sorrow arises, bring them onto the path without conceited attachment or anger and so on by applying a key point like this, so that “whatever happens, there will be happiness.” Whatever happens will then turn into Dharma, and happiness will ensue—temporarily and ultimately. Thus it is said.

B. Second Vajra Statement

If your mind rests where it's placed, [35] even traveling elsewhere will be okay.

The practice associated with this statement contains two points: (1) the common yoga, and (2) the uncommon yoga.

1. THE COMMON YOGA

In order to engage in the practice of the common yoga, you should in whichever virtuous action you undertake make fervent, heartfelt aspirations. Carry these aspirations in your heart always, like a mother whose only son has died. Whatever distraction arises, if you can practice without falling under its influence, whether you travel, go for a walk, sleep, or sit, you will still be able to apply your mind. Thus your virtue will not degenerate, but rather increase. Therefore, it will be all right if you stay in one place, and “even traveling elsewhere will be okay.”

2. THE UNCOMMON YOGA

As for the practice of the uncommon yoga, master Śāntideva states,

Penetrative insight joined with calm abiding
Utterly eradicates afflicted states.
Knowing this, first search for calm abiding,
Found by people who are happy to be free from worldly ties.⁴⁰

As stated here, having made your mind pliant by means of calm abiding, the afflictions will be quelled; and, once you have realized the nature of your mind by means of penetrative insight, they will be uprooted completely. Knowing this, you first need to search for calm abiding, which is the foundation of penetrative insight.

Since calm abiding arises from a sense of utter disengagement in body and mind, [36] fully relinquish all the futile vicissitudes⁴¹ of your present life. Then, as a beginner, go to a secluded place and sit cross-legged on a comfortable cushion. Assume a straight sitting posture, leave your energy wind in its natural state, and supplicate your teacher and meditation deity. Having severed all conceptual elaborations of the three times, rest evenly, without any grasping, in the mind’s ineffable fundamental nature—in an open state, free of any thoughts. In this way, a meditative experience of stillness will gradually arise. Once you have gained a certain amount of familiarity with that experience, you will be able to remain in meditative equipoise at all times.

If you strive in this way, you will—without getting carried away by external circumstances—recognize the nature of your mind, be able to maintain its natural state, and attain freedom. Then, whatever object you focus on, if your mind rests where it is placed, whether you are physically in a city or on a long journey on the road, your mind will not be separated from that experience, and whatever you do will be okay.

C. Third Vajra Statement

If your mind is turned to Dharma, even dying will be easy.

The practice associated with the third vajra statement has two parts: (1) the common practice, and (2) the extraordinary practice.

1. THE COMMON PRACTICE

In the conventional practice, take the Three Jewels as a witness and engage in mind training in accordance with the teachings by using the practice taught in the context of the first vajra statement—that is to say, what needs to be avoided and adopted when it comes to even the most subtle aspects of the karmic law of cause and effect [37] and conventional bodhicitta. Thus undertake whatever is in accordance with the Dharma, single-pointedly and sustained by mindfulness and vigilance. Having done so, your mind stream will fuse with the sublime Dharma, and you will be able to live a life of virtuous conduct and bodhicitta without ever falling under the influence of nonvirtuous or neutral deeds. Then even if you were to die right now, you would not be sundered from virtuous thoughts, and you will come to a comfortable state of ease, such that even dying will be easy. As it is stated in the *Way of the Bodhisattva*,

Mounted on the horse of bodhicitta, . . .
What lucid person could be in despair
Proceeding in this way from joy to joy?⁴²

2. THE EXTRAORDINARY PRACTICE

With regard to the uncommon practice, when the third vajra statement speaks of “mind” using the Tibetan word *lo*, here it refers to Tibetan *sem*, and “Dharma” here is the dharmatā, the ultimate nature of the mind, the very essence of which is the absence of all conceptual elaboration. In short, the defining characteristic of the mind is clarity, and its essential nature is emptiness. Once you have realized its nature—the inseparable union of emptiness and clarity, and its being entirely beyond the limits of language—with nonconceptual penetrative insight, you should strive to maintain that recognition. Thus it is said.

If you strive in this way, mind and dharmatā will blend into a single taste. This is what “your mind being turned to Dharma” means. Then, even if you were to die right now, dualistic perceptions leading to hope and fear would not arise. [38]

D. Fourth Vajra Statement

If you have recognized your mind as unborn, there will be no death.

The point of this statement is that once you have trained your mind in the two aspects of bodhicitta, no circumstances (including death) can harm you. Moreover, if you examine closely, although it seems that death is taking place, ultimately there is no death for there was no birth. It is like unconditioned space.

So how is it that there is no birth? As for the body, ultimately it does not exist except as a mere designation imputed by the mind, and in the beginning mind—as mentioned earlier—has no cause, no origination: it is devoid of the three stages of arising, remaining, and ceasing. Therefore, if death were truly real, is it the body that dies, or the mind? Or do they die together? The body is just inanimate matter, akin to earth and stone; there is nothing that could die. Body and mind dying simultaneously has never happened and will never happen to anyone. Having established that mind, spacelike and free from conceptual elaboration, is bereft of anything that could die or that causes death, all fears of death are dissipated. As it said,

Nothing transferred, no transference; that is for the very best.⁴³

Such is said to be the best of all transference. In short, when you realize that an initial birth is only a designation, the conceptual thought of clinging to final death as something real will naturally come to an end too; and thus the harm of death, which only exists because there is birth, will collapse. [39] Once you have established the realization that mind is devoid of arising, remaining, and ceasing, with no distinction between meditation and post-meditation, the face of immortal uncontrived mind will reveal itself to you.

If one were to summarize the import of what has been said here, the first vajra statement comprehensively teaches the preliminaries and main practice of the Mahāyāna path; the second statement teaches mainly calm abiding; the third, penetrative insight; and the fourth vajra statement provides an instruction for the final journey. The heart of the practice is to never fall under the influence of whatever circumstances you encounter—such as gain and loss, happiness and suffering, or high and low status—but to make them part of the path by means of the two aspects of bodhicitta, and to do so always with joy in your heart.

Through the wisdom *dākinī*'s words, expressed as vajra statements
In Sumpa Lotsāwa's *Nectar of the Heart* instruction,
The mind training of the aural lineage, may all beings
Extract the essence of happiness and benefit!

This is based on a guidebook by Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk in which he transcribed the words of Tsarchen Chökyi Gyalpo as notes.⁴⁴ Elaborating somewhat more on the last three vajra

statements, the renunciant-yogi Khyentse Wangpo, a servant who delights Lama Mañjughoṣa, put this into writing. May it develop into a supreme feast of virtue and excellence! Maṅgalam.

NOTES

1. Tib. *rdo rje'i tshig*.
2. *sum pa lo tsā ba'i snyan brgyud kyi blo sbyong*. This text also appears in Khyentse Wangpo's collected works under the title *sum pa lo tsā ba'i snyan brgyud kyi blo sbyong gzabzung khrid yig dang bcas pa* (see bibliography). For a translation of this work, see Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 215–16.
3. Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 604–5, n. 338.
4. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 388–89. The fact that they are two different masters is confirmed by Jamgön Amé Zhab (1597–1659) in his *sa skya gdung rabs ngo mtshar bang mdzod* (70) in a list of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltzen's (1147–1216) teachers: *bal po dza ya se na/ lo tsā ba dar ma yon tan/ sum pa lo tsā ba dpal mchog dang po'i rdo rje*. I thank Matthew Akester for drawing my attention to this point and for pointing out the relevant sources mentioned in this introduction.
5. <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Sumpa-Lotsawa-Darma-Yonten/P10183>. Note the spelling mistake of Darma Yönten's uncle as Palchok Depe Dorje (*dpal mchog dad pa'i rdo rje*) instead of Palchok Dangpö Dorje (*dpal mchog dang po'i rdo rje*) in Roerich, *Blue Annals*, 389, and in the biography by Alexander Gardner on Treasury of Lives. Also in his *ngo mtshar lha'i pad tshal* (295.1–2), Khyentse Wangpo seems to confuse uncle and nephew, mentioning that it was Palchok Dangpö Dorje who received empowerment and teachings on the *bde mchog mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho'i rgyud* from Jāyasena.
6. <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Pelchok-Dangpo-Dorje/1728>.
7. The two texts are *chos dang chos can gtan la dbab pa* (Toh. 4262) and *byis pa 'jug pa'i rto ge* (Toh. 4263). See Drakpa Jungne, *ming mdzod*, 1764.
8. *sum pa dpal mchog dang po'i rdo rje ... sgröl ma dang/ phag mo las blo sbyong snyan rgyud sogs la gsan*. Drakpa Jungne, *ming mdzod*, 1764.
9. *phag mo dang sgröl mas sum pa lo tsā ba dpal mchog dang po'i rdo rje la gnang ba'i blo sbyong snyan brgyud ma*. Khyentse Wangpo, *dpal ldan kun dga' grol mchog blo gsal rgya mtsho'i sde'i zhal snga nas rtsa ba'i khrid brgya'i rnam grangs*, 97.4–5.
10. See also <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Pelchok-Dangpo-Dorje/1728>.

11. *sum pa lo tsā ba'i blo sbyong snyan brgyud kyi bla ma brgyud pa'i gsol 'debs*. For more information on the lineage, see the translation of and introduction to this text, also published by Khyentse Vision Project.
12. This line of transmission, until Kunga Drölchok (1507–1566), can also be found in his *Lineage Prayers of the One Hundred and Eight Guidebooks* (see note 26 below and Dorje, *Jonang*, 10–11). Another lineage until Zhönu Gyalchok Könchok Bang (fourteenth century) appears in the colophon of *Sumpa Lotsāwa's Ear-Whispered Mind Training* in *Mind Training: The Great Collection* (Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 216).
13. *gsung rgyun zin bris snying gi mun sel*. So far, I have failed to locate and identify this text.
14. The following biographical information is taken from Akester, *Life of Jamyang Khyentsé Wangpo*, 264, n. 21. For further reading, see also <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Nesar-Jamyang-Khyentse-Wangchuk/2338>.
15. For an introduction to the Explication for Disciples teachings (*slob bshad*), see Stearns, *Taking the Result as the Path*, 1–7.
16. Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, 42–43.
17. Stearns, *Taking the Result as the Path*, 2–3, and Stearns, *Luminous Lives*, 41.
18. Stearns, *Taking the Result as the Path*, 3. Sumpa Lotsāwa's mind training was handed down to Khyentse Wangchuk in the following lineage: Lama Dampa Sönam Gyaltzen (1312–1375), Lachen Kunga Gyaltzen (1344–1418), Jamyang Namkha Gyaltzen (1398–1472), Dagchen Dorjechang (1444–1495), Doringpa (1449–1524), Tsarchen (1502–1566), Khyentse Wangchuk (1524–1568). See also Jamgön Amé Zhab, *sa skya pa ā nanda'i ming can gyi thob yig chen mo'i kha skong brjed byang du bkod pa don gnyis mthar phyin bsam pa lhun grub*.
19. Each of the four vajra statements is meant as a reply to one of these four queries.
20. In the related text in *Mind Training: The Great Collection* mentioned in the introduction, it is the bluish woman that asks and the reddish one that responds with the four vajra statements (see Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 215, and Khyentse Wangpo, *sum pa lo tsā ba'i snyan brgyud kyi blo sbyong gzhung kbrid yig dang bcas pa*, 18.6–19.2).
21. Emended to *gnad du song* (text: *nor du song*, 24.2), supported by Khyentse Wangpo, *sum pa lo tsā ba'i snyan brgyud kyi blo sbyong gzhung kbrid yig dang bcas pa*, 19.5. All emendations refer to the 2014 edition.
22. Emended to *dge bshes 'phags pa lha zhes bya bas* (text: *dge bshes 'phags pa lha zhes bya *ba*, 24.5).
23. Kunga Drölchok compiled extracts from this guidebook in his *One Hundred Instructions of Jonang* (see note 26). Its primary source in Sönam Gyaltzen's collected works remains unidentified. For an English translation of this excerpt, see Dorje, *Jonang*, 230.
24. Emended to *chos grwa* (text: *chos gra*, 25.3).
25. *gsung rgyun zin bris snying gi mun sel*. I have failed to locate this text.
26. The *jo nang kbrid brgya* is an anthology of short instructions of the eight practice lineages (*sgrub brgyud shing rta chen po brgyad*), which was later included by Jamgön Kongtrul in volume 18 of his *Treasury of Precious Instructions* (*gdams ngag mdzod*), translated in *Jonang: The One Hundred and Eight Teaching Manuals* by Gyurme Dorje. Kunga Drölchok received the Kadam- and mind training-related instructions in the *kbrid brgya* from his uncle Kunga Chogdrub (fl. fifteenth–sixteenth century); see

- Dorje, *Jonang*, xx. Kunga Drölchok also studied under Kunpang Doringpa, who was mentioned before; see Dorje, *Jonang*, xvii.
27. This historical introduction is, in fact, clearly based on Kunga Drölchok's *kbrid brgya'i brgyud pa'i lo rgyus* included in volume 18 of Kongtrul's *Treasury of Precious Instructions* (Kongtrul, *kbrid brgya'i brgyud pa'i lo rgyus*, 73–74). For an English translation of the relevant passage of Kunga Drölchok's version, see Dorje, *Jonang*, 161–62.
 28. The translation of the four vajra statements follows that of Thupten Jinpa in *Sumpa Lotsāwa's Ear-Whispered Mind Training* (Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 215–16 and 604, n. 338), with adjustments according to the present context of Khyentse Wangpo's commentary.
 29. *Caturdharmanirdeśasūtra* (Tib. *chos bzhi bstan pa'i mdo*). For an English translation of this text, see <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh249.html>.
 30. The verse reads as follows: To the Buddha, Dharma, and the excellent community, / I go for refuge until my enlightenment; / Through the merits of engaging in giving and so on, / May I . . . achieve buddhahood for the benefit of all beings. (Translation by Jinpa, *Mind Training*, 544).
 31. It is a common practice of Tibetan authors to lend their statements a certain sense of authority by showing that it is not something they newly invented, but rather a reproduction or rendering of something an authentic master of the past or an authoritative scripture has said before. This sometimes creates difficulties in identifying the actual source of the statement, since in Tibetan it commonly suffices to add the verb *gsungs* (“said”) at the end of the sentence, which also Khyentse Wangpo does on multiple occasions in this text. It is therefore not clear whether Khyentse Wangpo is referring to Jamyang Khyentse Wangchuk's guidebook *Dispelling Darkness in the Heart*, which this text is based on; to Tsarchen Losal Gyatso, whose teachings Khyentse Wangchuk recorded in his guidebook (see colophon); or whether it simply refers to what the respective vajra statement “says.”
 32. Emended to *bkur* (text: *bskur*, 27.3).
 33. Emended to *de la brten nas* (text: *de la brten na*, 28.3).
 34. Emended to *mgron khang* (text: *mgron khang pa*, 28.6).
 35. Emended to *gsog tu* (text: *gsog du*, 29.2).
 36. Emended to *'di tsam gyi* (text: *'di tsam gyis*, 30.2).
 37. Emended to *bdag gi* (text: *bdag gis*, 32.1).
 38. Emended to *rnyed* (text: *snyed*, 34.1).
 39. Emended to *'bras bus stong pa* (text: *'bras bu stong pa*, 34.3–4).
 40. *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 8:4; translation by Padmakara Translation Group, *Way of the Bodhisattva*, 183.
 41. Emended to *bya ba* (text: *bya la*, 36.1), confirmed by 1919 (17a.1) and 1977–80 editions (33.1).
 42. *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 7:30; translation by Padmakara Translation Group, *Way of the Bodhisattva*, 169. The first line in the Tibetan (line 2 in the translation: “which puts to flight all mournful weariness”) was left out here.
 43. Emended to *rab ste* (text: *rang ste*, 38.5), confirmed by source text; translation by Harding, *Niguma*, 141. This quotation can be found in Niguma's *Vajra Lines of the Six*

Dharmas (*chos drug rdo rje'i tshig rkang*), in the Tengyur, comparative edition, vol. 42, 844. This text also appears in the *Treasury of Precious Instructions* (*gdams ngag mdzod*, vol. 11, 5.1) together with interpolated commentarial notes by Lochen Gyurme Dechen (1540–1615). An English translation can be found in Harding, *Niguma*, 139–42. For Khyentse Wangpo's relationship with the Shangpa tradition, see Ngawang Zangpo, *Timeless Rapture*, 347–49. The transmission of Kunga Drölchok's *jo nang kbrid brgya* was handed down after his death within the Shangpa Kagyu (and of course Jonang) lineages; see Dorje, *Jonang*, xxii.

44. This guidebook is his *Dispelling Darkness in the Heart: Notes on the Oral Tradition*, mentioned in part 1.

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