

JAMMA



Wisdom Goddess of Compassion and Loving-Kindness

**Oral Teachings and Essential Practices by Yongdzin Lopön
Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Nagru Geshe Gelek Jinpa**

Transcribed, compiled and edited by
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Public Series A



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Foreword

The booklet you hold in your hands contains two practices of Sherab Jamma: firstly, teachings on the Wisdom Goddess of Loving-Kindness and Compassion; secondly, the translation of a short prayer to Sherab Jamma along with instructions on how to use the prayer.

The teachings on the Wisdom Goddess of Loving-Kindness and Compassion were given by Yongdzin Rinpoche in the aftermath of the 2011 terrorist attacks in New York which shook the world. These attacks marked the beginning of an era of decreasing security which, unfortunately, still continues today. In truth, however, personal security remains elusive even during the most peaceful periods in history since, due to personal and collective *karma*, all beings in *samsara* suffer from their own emotional afflictions and meet with negative circumstances, which in turn triggers all kinds of fears and insecurities in each one of us. That is why the practice of Sherab Jamma, the Sovereign of Protection, remains as pertinent today as it was in the distant past when these teachings were first taught to humanity.

The essential instructions in the second part of this booklet were given by Nagru Geshe Gelek Jinpa in 2006. At the request of a European Bönpo *sangha* member, Nagru Geshe Gelek Jinpa explained and translated this short prayer to Sherab Jamma prayer orally; Carol and myself subsequently transcribed and edited it, intending to verify the translation and phonetic transliteration line by line against the Tibetan text one day. However, it was not until 2015 that I found the time to do this. Despite searching everywhere for the Tibetan text, it remained elusive, so when Carol and I visited Shenten Dargye Ling that Autumn, we showed the transliterated text to Yongdzin Rinpoche and

asked him where we could find the original. To our surprise, Rinpoche was very amused by this request and began laughing heartily. ‘You cannot find it anywhere because it is an Oral Tradition! All Tibetan Bönpos know it by heart. My mother was always chanting this prayer but, somehow, it was never written down.’ We asked Rinpoche to write the prayer down but he began singing it and then told us to ask Lama Sanggye Mönlam instead.

So we went to Lama Sanggye’s flat, told him Yongdzin Rinpoche had instructed us to ask him to write down this Jamma prayer, and gave him the recording of Rinpoche reciting it. Lama Sanggye was overjoyed; he would be greatly honoured to commit this Oral Tradition to paper for the first time ever. He took out a pen and carefully set the verses down in my notebook in beautiful calligraphy. This took some time. When we all went outside, a luminescent double rainbow arched over Shenten’s *chörten*; Lama Sanggye took this as a very auspicious omen. The following day, Carol and I showed the prayer to Yongdzin Rinpoche. He was very happy it was now written down, and immediately began checking the spelling. He then kindly clarified all remaining questions, saying this practice would be very useful for all Bönpos.

So I was finally able to verify and edit Geshe Gelek’s translation against the Tibetan, and we are now delighted to present this small booklet to all who are interested. The two very essential practices of Sherab Jamma contained here will be equally useful to all Bönpos, whether seasoned practitioners or beginners.

May it bring benefit to all!

Thatsen Mustsug Marro!

ཐང་ཚེན་མུས་སུ་ག་མེད་ལོ།

Dmitry Ermakov,
North Pennines, UK,
21 September 2016

Teachings on Jamma

by Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche

Paris, September 2001

This morning I will teach on the Loving Goddess who is called Jamma.¹

Something unexpected happened which has really shaken the world,² and we are included within the world population, so each of us has to think individually how to deal with our fear. It won't be easy. We have to think. We have been practitioners for years and years now, we have been thinking and praying, asking [Refuge from] the Divinities and the Buddhas, the *dharmā* and *sangha*. The purpose of taking Refuge is for protection during this life and the next. That is the main purpose. Protection does not just mean protection for your own body during this life time. When we recite the Refuge prayer, we ask for protection for ourselves but we also include all sentient beings and pray that they may be protected from their emotions; the real enemy is emotion. If an individual person has emotion, then that emotion is poison. We have to pray to be protected from this: from emotions. If each individual thinks they are free from emotion, then that is real salvation, real freedom. We have been holding retreats for years and years now, and we are all thinking and trying to learn something; now you really need to practise that.

¹ Tib. Shes rab 'byams ma / ཤེས་རབ་འབྲུམ་མ་

² A reference to the terrorist attack in New York, September 11, 2001.

First of all, what does it mean when we say Buddha emanated this or that form? ‘Buddha’ does not just mean someone who is standing somewhere externally. Each individual person who completely purifies his or her own emotions and defilements becomes a Buddha. Sometimes it is necessary to manifest [*sambhogakaya*]³ form. There are many forms of *sambhogakaya*, and the female Buddha form I am talking about today is called Sherab Jamma. That is in Tibetan but it means Loving Goddess of Wisdom. She holds a long-life vessel in her right hand at her heart level, and a mirror here in her left hand.

Visualize yourself as this Goddess. Some translators maintain that she is Tara, but I am not sure whether it is the same person or Buddha or not; it is difficult to say. But the real meaning is Nature. Whenever an individual person has purified their own defilements they become like the Nature of the Purified One.⁴ The Nature of Mind is pure, and when you purify all defilements, you are pure, and have the same Nature as Buddha, which is called Pure Nature. This Pure Nature is *dharmakaya*.⁵ We sometimes call this *dharmakaya* Kuntu Zangpo,⁶ or sometimes we call it the female form of *dharmakaya*, Kuntu Zangmo.⁷ At the *dharmakaya* level, male or female doesn’t make so much difference as it does for humans, you see, like man or woman. The Nature of both male and female forms is the same. Sometimes it is necessary to emanate a female form from this *dharmakaya*, or sometimes it is necessary to emanate a male form – any of these forms can come, according to what is suitable for the person who is ready to

³ Tib. sprul sku / ལྷུལ་སྐུ།

⁴ Bönpo word for Buddha in Tibetan is Tib. sangs rgyas / སངས་རྒྱལ། which means ‘Completely Purified One.’

⁵ Tib. bon sku / བོན་སྐུ།

⁶ Tib. Kun tu bzang po / ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ།

⁷ Tib. Kun tu bzang mo / ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་མོ།

see them, who expects to know. When a person is ready, these forms appear naturally. So there is no need to be sectarian. That is Nature.

In this case, we need to visualize the female form, the Loving Goddess, because she is the Sovereign of Protection. She is like a mother. She cares for and saves all sentient beings. So it is necessary to ask her to help us, to take refuge in her, and to ask her to protect all sentient beings. This is what I will teach about this morning.

Now we visualize the form of this Divinity. She doesn't only protect us. When we pray to her, we can receive whatever we ask from her. We can also practise Guru Yoga⁸ with her and receive the three syllables A OM HUNG ཨོཾ་ཨུཾ་ཧུཾ་ from her, thereby integrating her body, speech and mind with ours. If you decide to trust in her and integrate her body, speech and mind with yours, then that is the best protection, you see. If you do this more and more it can become familiar to you, and grow stronger and stronger. When your practice grows stronger, you realize the real value of practising. It doesn't just depend on reciting mantras; when visualization, mantra recitation, trust and everything else come together then it can work well; otherwise, if we are just speaking without thinking or without devotion, our practice doesn't work well. Everything works in the same way.

As for the visualization, if you wish to practise Guru Yoga with Jamma, then you can visualize her in front of you, a little bit higher than you, and facing towards you.

According to this text, we ourselves take the form of this divinity, the Loving Goddess Jamma, while we are trying to recite the mantra. OK? She is sitting cross-legged on cushions of a sun, a moon and a lotus. In her raised left hand she holds a mirror, and in her right hand she has a *bumpa*,⁹ a long-life vessel. Her colour is yellow, a

⁸ Tib. bla ma'i rnal 'byor / ལྷ་མའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར།

⁹ Tib. bum pa / འུམ་པ།

golden yellow. She is leaning slightly to one side.¹⁰ She appears more or less like Tara, you see, but a little different. Her left arm is raised so she is leaning into the left, while her right side is slightly lower, so this is not completely the same as Tara, although her decorations, crowns, ornaments, necklaces, bracelets and anklets are all very similar. So are her clothes.

Her heart is like a crystal ball. Inside there, in the centre, is a golden OM. That is the Tibetan letter, but most of you are familiar with it. It has five strokes: ཨྵ

In the centre is an A;
below that is a small stroke, the Tibetan letter for the short ‘a’ sound;
above the A there is a *naro*, a long curved line, the Tibetan symbol for the sound ‘o’;
above that there is a semi-circle like a half moon;
right at the top there is a circle, the Tibetan symbol for the sound ‘m’.
So there are five strokes altogether.

Visualize yourself as Jamma. Your heart is a crystal ball. Visualize this OM standing up in the centre of the crystal ball. The other twenty syllables of the mantra – there are twenty-one including this OM – are going around it anticlockwise. Each letter is standing up individually. They are turning anticlockwise, which is the Bönpo way. Ultimately, the direction doesn’t make much difference; the purification is the same. But quite often turning or walking clockwise or anticlockwise makes a visible distinction between Buddhism and Bön. The rest is not much different, externally.

So these syllables go round while you visualize yourself as the Loving Goddess, Jamma, and recite the mantra.

¹⁰ This is the position of compassionate activity, showing that she helps beings actively.

The syllables turn slowly at first, but gradually speed up. It is like a washing machine, you see, they speed up and spin faster and faster, until it makes a streak of light, a kind of lightning. Lights are sent out from the spinning mantra and everything the lights reach is protected. All defilements and disturbances are purified – everything. Then even more sparkling lights radiate on and on and on, extending further and further, and the whole universe as well as all the sentient beings are purified and protected. That is your visualization.

While you are visualizing this, you recite:

ཨྎྲྀ་མ་བ་མ་དེ་མ་ནི་མོ་ཏྱ་ཨེ་མ་རྩོ་མ་ཡེ་རུ་པ་ཡེ་ཏ་འདུ་འདུ་སྲ་རྒྱ།

OM MA WA MA DE MA HI MO HA E MA HO MA YE RU PA YE
TA DU DU SO HA

Although DU DU is said twice they are not counted as separate syllables, only as one, but you do have to say DU DU twice. So there are twenty-one syllables altogether, including SO and HA.

You might wonder as to the purpose of reciting this

Just after the OM, the next syllable is MA. This MA is the seed syllable which represents any kind of protector. There are many kinds of enemies, both inner and outer. Inside there is your own ignorance, anger, desire, pride, envy and so on, and these inner enemies create all the outer enemies both visible and invisible;¹¹ whatever exists. From this seed syllable MA, Jamma emanated one of the goddesses as a protector, so, in this way, Jamma protects us from all enemies.

OM is the chief or central syllable, then come the eight seed syllables:
MA WA MA DE MA HI MO HA.

¹¹ I.e. the humans, animals and other beings of the physical world as well as bad spirits, ghosts, diseases and natural disasters etc.

MA – represents protection from enemies.

WA – represents protection from all spells such as black magic.

MA – is like a wish-fulfilling jewel; quite often good families want to have children and continue for many generations, and this syllable is protection which helps to ensure the continuation of the family line.

DE – represents protection from all kinds of sickness, particularly sickness coming from *nagas* or earth gods¹² and especially leprosy, a disease which comes from earth or rock spirits.¹³

MA – is the seed syllable for developing all knowledge. It protects against your own ignorance. This is the seed syllable of this divinity.

HE – this protects from pollution, from dirtiness.¹⁴

MO – this represents the seed syllable of the long-life goddesses.

¹² Tib. klu, sa bdag / ས་བདག

¹³ Tib. stod / ལྷོད།

¹⁴ This is not just a reference to physical filth but to acts arising from the Five Poisonous Emotions (Tib. dug lnga / དུག་ལྷུ།) which defile one's spiritual dimension and create negative circumstances. These are known as Nine Impurities (Tib. mi gtsang rdzas cha sna dgu / མི་གཙང་རྩ་ས་ཆ་དགུ།):

- Tib. dme / དམེ། – Homicide/fratricide;
- Tib. mug / མུག། – The birth of a child just after the death of its father;
- Tib. nal / ལྷལ། – Incest;
- Tib. btsog / བཙོག། – Filthiness;
- Tib. than / ཐན། – Imprecations;
- Tib. ltas ngan / ལྷས་ངན། – Inauspicious signs;
- Tib. byur / བྱུར། – Possession by the spirit;
- Tib. yug / ཡུག། – Impurity due to the death of a spouse;
- Tib. thab mkhon / ཐབ་མཁོན། – Pollution of the hearth.

This list is taken from Karmay, Samten G. *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet* (Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998), pp. 384–385). For more on Bönpo concepts of purity and pollution and purification rituals see Ermakov, Dmitry. *Bø and Bön: Ancient Shamanic Traditions of Siberia and Tibet in their Relation to the Teachings of a Central Asian Buddha* (Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2008), pp. 389-414.

HA – this is the seed syllable which represents protection from all kinds of sicknesses sent by planetary gods, the *Za*.¹⁵ We call this sickness a kind of epilepsy.

The other syllables all have their own meaning, too, but these eight are very special. That is enough for the moment.

First of all, try to remember all this visualization. OK?

Then recite this mantra as much as you can. You have to learn it by heart and recite it at least one hundred times a day; it is necessary for our times.

¹⁵ Tib. *gza* / གཟ།

Short Prayer to Sherab Jamma from an Oral Tradition

Recite the prayers as usual:

Guru Yoga

སྐྱི་གཙུག་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་ཕོ་བྲང་དུ།

CHYI-TSUG DE-WA CHEN-POI PHO-DRANG DU

From the Palace of Great Bliss on the crown of my head

དྲིན་ཅན་རྩ་བའི་སྐྱ་མ་ལ་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས།།

DRIN-CHEN TSA-WAI LA-MA LA SOL WA DEB

I request the kindness of the Root Lama!

།སངས་རྒྱས་སེམས་སུ་སྟོན་པ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

SANG-GYE SEM SU TÖN-PA RIN-PO-CHE

Precious Jewel who introduces Buddha Nature,

།རང་ངོ་རང་གི་ཤེས་པར་བྱིན་གྱི་རྫོབས།།

RANG-NGO-RANG GI SHE-PAR JYIN GYI LOB

Bless me so that I may realize my own Self-Aware State!¹⁶

¹⁶ Translation by Nagru Geshe Gelek Jinpa and Dmitry Ermakov. First published in *Tummo: A Practice Manual by Shardza Tashi Gyaltsen*, Shenten Dargye Ling, France, 2006.

Refuge

མཐིན་ལྡན་བཟེ་བའི་སྐྱ་མ་རྣམས་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི།

KHYEN-DEN TSE-WAI LA-MA-NAM LA KYAB-SU-CHI

I take refuge in the wise and compassionate *lamas*.

སྟོབས་ལྡན་སྔགས་ཀྱི་ཡི་དམ་ལྷ་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི།

TOB-DEN NGAG-KYI YI-DAM-LHA LA KYAB-SU-CHI

I take refuge in the mighty tantric *yidams*.

རུས་ལྡན་སངས་བའི་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི།

NÜ-DEN SANG-WAI KHA-NDRO-MA LA KYAB-SU-CHI

I take refuge in the powerful secret *khandro*.

སྐྱ་མ་ཡི་དམ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་གསུམ་ལ་སྐྱབས་སུ་མཆི།

LA-MA YI-DAM KHA-NDRO SUM LA KYAB-SU-CHI

I take refuge in all three: *lamas*, *yidams* and *khandro*.

Bodhichitta

གསང་བ་གསང་ཆེན་གསང་མཚོག་མཐར་ཐུག་ཀྱལ།

SANG-WA SANG-CHEN SANG-CHOG THAR-THUG GYAL

The King of the Final Goal is the mysterious, exceedingly secret, sublime essence,

གསང་མཚོག་ཡིད་བཞིན་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་རོར་བུ་ལ།

SANG-CHOG YI-ZHIN THUG KYI NOR-BU LA

Into this great secret *yidam* whose mind is the precious wish full-filling jewel of the Nature of Mind,

བདག་ཉིད་ལེགས་འཇུག་འགྲོ་ཀུན་འདྲེན་པར་བགྱི།

DAG-NYI LEG JUG DRO-KÜN DREN-PAR GYI

I enter [happily] to guide all sentient beings [to Buddhahood];

Prayer

ཨྲི་རང་ནང་ནམ་པར་དག་པའི་ཞིང་ན།

HRI RANG-NANG NAM-PAR DAG-PAI-ZHING NA

Hri! In the self-manifesting Pure Land of Buddha

ཡུམ་ཚེན་བྲུགས་ཇེ་བྱམས་མའི་སྐྱེ་ལ།

YUM-CHEN THUG-JE JAM-MAI KU LA

Is the Great Mother Goddess of Compassion and Loving-Kindness.

ཕྱག་འཚལ་གསོལ་བཏབས་པ་ཙམ་གྱིས།

CHYAG-TSAL SOL TAB-PA TSAM GYI

I prostrate and beseech you to instantly

འཇིགས་བརྒྱད་གཡུལ་ལས་རྒྱལ་བར་མཛོད་ཅིག།

JIG-GYE YUL- LE GYAL-WAR DZÖ-CHIG

Conquer the Eight Fears!¹⁸

Perform the dedication as usual:

¹⁸ Tib. 'jigs pa chen po brgyad / འཇིགས་པ་ཚེན་པོ་བརྒྱད། - the Eight Great Fears are considered to have an outer aspect and an inner aspect. Outer fears are reactions to dangers which threaten our life and property. Inner fears are defilements and obscurations blocking practice.

Outer fears are: Tib. chu / ཅུ། - fear of drowning; Tib. mi rgod / མི་རྗོད། - robbers;

Tib. seng ge / སེང་གེ། - lions or wild animals Tib. klu / ལྷུ། - water-spirits and snakes; Tib. me / མེ། - fire; Tib. sha za / ཤ་ཟ། - flesh-eating demons and ghosts;

Tib. chad pa / ཆད་པ། - imprisonment, slavery; Tib. glang po / གླང་པོ། - elephants.

Inner fears are: Tib. 'dod chags / འདོད་ཆགས། - attachment; Tib. log lta / ལོག་

ལྟ། - wrong views; Tib. nga rgyal / ང་རྒྱལ། - pride; Tib. phrag dog / ཕྲག་དོག་ - jealousy, envy; Tib zhe dang / ཞེ་དང། - anger, hatred; Tib. dogs/ དོགས། -

doubts; Tib. ser sna / སེར་སྣ། - avarice; Tib. gti mug / གཉི་མུག་ - ignorance.

Dedication of merits

སློ་གསུམ་དག་པའི་དགོ་བ་གང་བགྱིས་པ།

GO SUM DAG PAI GE WA GANG GYI PA

All the pure, virtuous actions of my Three Doors [of body, speech and mind]

ཁམས་གསུམ་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དོན་དུ་བསྐྱེ།

KHAM SUM SEM CHEN NAM KYI DÖN DU NGO

I dedicate to the benefit of all sentient beings of the Three Worlds.

དུག་གསུམ་བསགས་པའི་ལས་སྐྱིབ་ཀུན་བྱང་ནས།

DUG SUM SAG PAI LE DRIB KUN JYANG NE

Having totally purified all karmic defilements accumulated through the three poisonous emotions,

སྐྱུ་གསུམ་ཚོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ལྷུང་ཐོབ་ཤོག

KU SUM DZOG PAI SANG GYE NYUR THOB SHOG

May they swiftly achieve the perfect realization of the Three Buddha Bodies! ¹⁹

¹⁹ Translation by Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche and Dmitry Ermakov. First published in *The Secret Practice of Khöpfung Drenpa's Innermost Essence*, FPYB, UK, 2013.



Yongdzin Rinpoche checking the Prayer to Yumchen Thugje Jamma.
Shenten Dargye Ling, 19/09/2015. Photo by Carol Ermakova.

This short, essential practice of Yumchen Thugje Jamma which protects from all fears, disturbances, diseases etc. sent by the Eight Classes, was taught by Nagru Geshe Gelek Jinpa, 16th September, 2006. This Oral Tradition was set down in writing for the first time on 18th September, 2015 by Lama Sanggye Mönlam on the instruction of Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche, who verified the text the following day and approved it for publication. The original translation was then checked against the Tibetan and edited by Dmitry Ermakov and Carol Ermakova.

May it bring benefit to all!

ཐ་ཚཱ་ལུ་ཚུག་སྣར་རོ།།