

The Heart Essence: My Heart's Advice

by Kyabje Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok

1. May the youthful sun of speech, Mañjuśrī, in his enlightened form,
With its signs and marks, embodying the secret body, speech and mind
Of all the infinite buddhas and their bodhisattva heirs,
Turn your minds towards the path to perfect awakening!
2. There are countless Dharma teachings, profound and extensive,
Suited to the mental capacities and inclinations of limitless beings,
Yet, by gathering all the key points together in a way that can be
practised,
I offer this pithy advice to you, my friends, who are as dear as my own
heart.
3. Should you be attached to this life you'll have no chance to practise the
Dharma.
The more you indulge your desires, the more your craving will only
increase,
And you'll never find satisfaction. Wealth, happiness, fame and praise —
To pursue them is like buying and selling in a dream: let go of such
concerns!
4. By relying on genuine, qualified spiritual teachers,
Your virtuous qualities will develop and increase,
And all your faults and failings will be cast away,
So serve them in the three ways,¹ and accomplish others' aims.
5. Just as gardens are not to be found growing in midair,
All the bounties of the higher realms and liberation,
Will never be yours as long as you lack moral discipline,
So with mindfulness, awareness and caution, control your mind.
6. Up to now, you have wandered as if crazy and without a guide,
Through the vast darkness of unknowing in beginningless existence.
So now, in order to find the great palace of peace and happiness,
It's right that you take joy in studying the ocean-like teachings.
7. Yet hearing alone will not be enough to eliminate misconceptions,
And confidence in the teacher and teachings will not come easily,
So, through a hundred forms of debating, explaining and composing,
Gather the elixir of mind that is the wisdom born of reflection.

8. Even the most erudite of teachers with vast scriptural learning,
Can repeat words like a parrot, without taking them to heart,
But when death suddenly arrives, this will only bring regret,
So rely on the essential meaning of the teachings, my heart-friends!
9. All the infinite teachings of the buddhas, so vast in number,
Are imparted purely as a means to subdue our own mind.
Don't put your faith in words alone! I urge you once again:
Let the key points of the deeper meaning seep into your hearts!
10. This physical existence is difficult to find, like *anuḍumbara* flower,
Yet more rewarding than the discovery of a million precious gems.
To find an opportunity like this again in future will be difficult indeed,
So don't let it pass without accomplishing the highest of all aims!
11. Our great enemy, the lord of death, arrives like lightning from the sky,
And nobody can predict when and where he will strike next.
So you can ill afford to be idle, waiting months or even years.
Now, right now, is the time for virtuous Dharma practice!
12. For all beings, actions will not go to waste, but will bear fruit,
And when karma ripens, there's no way to change its outcome.
So now, while you're fortunate enough to have some influence,
If you still insist on deceiving yourself, who then will protect you!
13. If merely thinking about saṃsāra's various sufferings,
Which are unbearably intense, causes you to shudder,
Ask yourself: What will it be like when body and mind
Actually undergo these countless forms of *duḥkha*?
14. Only they have the power to lead us from this great terror,
So extremely difficult to escape: no one else could ever save us!
So we should take these three most precious jewels as our refuge,
For they are infallible, wise, compassionate, and powerful.
15. All the three worlds' misery comes from wanting happiness for ourselves,
And all virtue and happiness is born of a mind that wishes others well.
So, following the example of the teacher of all gods and human beings,
Generate the supreme mind that is set upon unsurpassed awakening.
16. When the crystal mirror of your own mind is covered completely
With the thick layer of dust that is the adventitious defilements,
It's difficult for the reflection of profound, clear samādhi to appear,
So strive to clean it with the pure cloth of confession's four powers.

17. All sights, sound and awareness are deity, mantra and dharmatā,
And knowing that this is how it has always been is the view.
Without losing sight of this, take aim with meditation's arrow,
And master the activities of eliminating harm and providing care.
18. If you can generate bliss, clarity and non-thought as means of support,
Through the techniques of breathing and adopting physical postures,
You will come to master the illusory body of clear light,
So it's right that you allow the perfection stage to penetrate your mind.
19. At this time, when the darkness of the five degenerations prevails,
It is hard for the starlight of the eight lower yānas to banish it.
So shine the light of the Nyingtik sun with its hundred thousand rays,
All drawn along by the swift carriage of the three kinds of faith!
20. Whatever arises, in pure awareness, unaltered and unconfined,
Look into the mind that settles by itself, resting naturally.
If you recognize the natural clarity, always empty and without origin,
You'll traverse at once the paths and stages, and capture the fruition.
21. While leaving things just as they are, if, through the right postures and
gazes,
You experience naturally manifesting space and light-spheres as pure
awareness,
Then dualistic perception, saṃsāra's darkness, will disappear in all-
pervading space,
And, perfecting the four visions, you'll achieve a body of light, the great
transference.
22. What I have said here—this plain talk arranged in verses—is my heart's
advice.
Although it lacks the poetic turns of phrase that might delight the
intellectuals,
As a spontaneous, unaltered outpouring from the depths of my mind,
It is in the preferred style of the vidyādhara of the Early Translations.
23. Through the merit of this, may all beings without exception
Gain perfect sovereignty over the kingdom of the four kāyas,
And may I too never be separated, even for a moment,
From the fortitude of Mañjuśrī, the ever youthful!

This was composed spontaneously in China, at the solitary place of Wu Tai Shan (The Five-Peaked Mountain), on the peak upon which the supreme deity, the youthful Mañjuśrī, turned the wheel of the profound and vast Dharma for tens of thousands of bodhisattvas, by Ngawang Lodrö Tsungme (Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok) who set down

in twenty-three minutes all that came to mind. May it be virtuous!

| Translated by Adam Pearcey, 2005, revised 2015. Thanks to Lama Chökyi Nyima for his kind assistance and to Matthew Pistono for his encouragement.

1. Offering material support, attending the master and practising meditation. ↔



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