A Liberation Upon Hearing
from the Tukdrup Barché Künsel’s Wondrous Activity: The Six Dharmas of the Vidyādhara Pema Jungné

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Namo guruve1

I prostrate in devotion to Orgyen Amitāyus!

Bestow your blessings so that whoever hears this vajra speech

may be freed from the chasm of samsara

and find their ultimate relief.

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Here is the profound instruction that liberates upon hearing, one of the six dharmas that bring enlightenment even without practice. It is the enlightened activity of the vidyādhara Pema Jungné, drawn from the Tukdrup Barché Künsel’s Essence Manual of Oral Instructions.

Who should give this instruction: At best the person giving this instruction should have perfected the practice of the two stages. Next best, they should be endowed with the three trainings. At the very least, they should have undamaged vows and samayas and the excellent motivation of bodhicitta. In any case, it should be someone whom the deceased trusts and admires and with whom they have a harmonious relationship. This is very important.
Whom to give these instructions to: Regarding the deceased to whom the instructions are given, the first (1) is given primarily for those with experience of luminosity throughout both day and night; the second (2) is given primarily for those who have developed some level of samadhi, or who have received instructions on the Great Perfection and the like and have steadfast conviction in those; and the final (3) is needed by almost everyone, with the exception of a very few eminent beings.
When to give this instruction: While it will be specified below, generally, with the exception of those with experience in practice, most beings take rebirth within a week (i.e. anytime from the moment after dying up to one week from the time of death). Nevertheless some beings, because of not finding the necessary conditions, or due to karma and delusion, die from their previous intermediate state of existence at the end of seven days and once again migrate into a further intermediate state. At the longest, this can continue for forty-nine days. In that way, the duration of the intermediate state is uncertain. Since it is difficult for ordinary beings to recognize the first two intermediate states [of death and luminosity], it is important to repeat the introduction to the intermediate state of existence to them again and again. Nevertheless, when the breath ceases, whether the deceased is an experienced practitioner or an ordinary person, it is very good to give the introduction to all three intermediate states (1—3) in order. For since this liberation upon hearing is vajra speech, it has extraordinary benefit.
How to give this instruction: If it is appropriate and possible, when the person is still aware and able to communicate, place blessed objects within their sight. Likewise, display chakras that liberate upon sight as well as images of their root gurus and yidam deities, and arrange offerings. For those who are practitioners, remind them again and again of their practice, whether it be the Great Seal or Great Perfection, deity practice, or mind training and the like. Whether they are a practitioner or not, speak to them of the amazing qualities of the teachers, the Three Jewels, and the purelands, and so kindle faith within them. Help them arouse renunciation towards the sufferings of samsara and talk to them about the intermediate state in ways that are easy for them to understand. In particular, repeatedly recite the Sangyé Sechik, The Only Child of the Buddhas Tantra, the scriptures that liberate through being worn, the Lotus Essence Tantra, and other such tantras that liberate upon hearing. Also recite the names of the buddhas and dhārāṇī mantras that are extolled for their special benefits.

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Make supplications to Orgyen Amitābha and the rest from the depths of your heart. Be extra careful to avoid disturbing the dying person’s mind; avoid doing or mentioning anything that might upset them or make them angry. Remove anything they are attached to from the vicinity. In their earshot, do not utter even a single word of senseless chatter or say anything that might disturb them. Give them liberation upon taste pills that have been correctly prepared, such as the seven excellent births relic pill. Place texts and chakras that liberate through being worn on the left side of their torso if they are male and on the right side of their torso if they are female. Alternatively, according to our tradition you can also place the texts around their neck. Burn incense containing substances that liberate through smell and waft its smoke.
With the exception of those who definitely do not need phowa (the ejection of consciousness) to be performed for them, for all others, make a pungent alcoholic paste of phowa substance that liberates upon touch. As soon as their outer breath ceases, smear it onto the Brahma aperture at the crown of their heads. Once they have passed away, it is extremely beneficial if you can arrange their body on its right side with the head to the north and their face to the west. The person who then recites the instructions should do so without agitation, but with composure, vivid devotion, and compassion infused with the strength of awareness.

1. Elucidating the Intermediate State of Death for Experienced Practitioners

When their outer breath has ceased but their inner breath has not, without moving them at all, recite the following to them at their left ear, with clear pronunciation and in melodious tones.

Alas! Noble child of great fortune,

kyema kalden rik kyi bu

Alas! Noble child of great fortune,
do not get distracted, but listen with one-pointed attention!

Every single thing that appears in this world is a dream, the deceptive lure of Māra.

All is impermanent and the cause of death.

So relinquish suffering, child of noble family!

The vivid experiences of white, red, and black
ཐམས་ཅད་སེམས་ཀྱི་ཆོ་འཕྲུལ་ཡིན༔
				tamché sem kyi chotrül yin§
	are all manifestations of mind.§

རང་ལས་གཞན་དུ་སྣང་བ་མེད༔
		rang lé zhendu nangwamé§
No appearance is separate from you.§

མ་འཇིགས་མ་སྔངས་རིགས་ཀྱི་བུ༔
		ma jik ma ngang rik kyì bu§
Child of noble family, do not panic, do not fear.§

ད་ལྟ་རིག་པ་བརྒྱལ་འདྲ་བ༔
		danta rikpa gyal drawa§
At the moment, it is as if you had fainted.§

ཕྱི་སྣང་ནམ་ལངས་མཁའ་དང་འདྲ༔
		chi nang namlang kha dang dra
Outer experience is like the sky at dawn.§

ནང་སྣང་བུམ་ནང་མར་མེ་བཞིན༔
										nang nang bum nang marmé zhin§
Inner experience is like a candle in a vase.§

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Clear, yet thought-free, abiding one-pointedly—

this is the luminosity of death.

This itself is the realization of the buddhas.

Rest easily, without contriving or tampering,

noble child, and you will be liberated into the dharmakāya!
Recite that three times. If signs appear that they have entered thukdam (meditative absorption after physical death) then stop here, since these beings of supreme capacity will thereby be liberated.

2. Elucidating the Intermediate State of Dharmatā

If that instruction does not help the deceased, or even if it does help them but then the deceased’s state of thukdam dissolves or there are signs that the inner breath has ceased (such as fading of the body’s warmth and complexion), then the following elucidation of the intermediate state of dharmatā should be given.

Alas! Noble child of great fortune,
do not get distracted, but listen with one-pointed attention!
Before you did not recognize awareness

and so from now on for the next seven days

All appearances will arise as rainbows, light-rays,

bindus, and the forms of deities.

All are manifestations of the five family buddhas’

wisdom and skillful means.
ö dang özer trak tser yang
So have no terror, have no fear

dé la ma jik ma trakpar
of these fiercely shining lights and rays:

rangnang yinpar la dö shik
Resolve that they’re your mind’s own display.

dé dang lhenchik özer ni
Together with these will arise

trakmé yi la tepar char
dull and muted light rays that attract you.

dé la ma chak khorwé lam
Do not get attached, for they are the path to samsara;
**duk nga rang dang nangwa yin**
they are the radiance of the five poisons.

**detar khyö kyi nangwa la**
In this way, both the pure and impure path

**dak dang ma dak lam sharwé**
will manifest and appear to you.

**lam gyi damka ma norwar**
Do not choose the wrong path!

**rik nga yabyum tuka né**
From the hearts of the five male and female buddhas,

**dorjé sempé seng lam ché**
a tube of light, the great, secret shortcut of Vajrasattva,
ö kyi bugu mik la zuk
will pierce your eyes.

rikpa lhen gyi nepé tsé
While abiding within awareness,

daknyi tukjé zung shik ché
supplicate with intense yearning,

dünpa drakpö solwa dap
saying, “Embrace me with your compassion!”

rang dang lhar nang yermé ngang
You and the appearing deities are indivisible,

pang lang sal zhak mé par kyang
and there is nothing to adopt or abandon, to eliminate or estalish
—rest in this state.
At that point, the deities will dissolve into the deities
and you will be liberated into the sambhogakāya.

Alas! Noble child of great fortune,
if you are not liberated then,
although the time will not change, appearances will transform:
the cardinal and intermediate directions, above and below—everywhere—
ja ö mé pung trukpé long
will become a thunderous expanse of fire and rainbow lights.

palchen traktung lhatso khang dang
The Great Glorious One and his host of herukas,

jikpé chaknyen duma yi
together with a multitude of terrifying attendants,

tsöncha nowé charbebs shing
will shower down a rain of piercing weapons.

hung pé gé mö tong kham yo
Their laughter of hūṃ and phat will shake the thousand-fold realm,

barwé namrol chiryang tön
and their raging display will appear in all sorts of ways.
dé la ma trak ma ngangwar
Do not panic, do not fear;

tamché rang gi riktsal du
recognize all as the expression of your own awareness.

ngö zung takchö rangbap shok
Be certain of this, and rest naturally.

dünpa tö la yermé sé
Focus on them and merge indivisibly,

lam na zin né drolwar gyur
and you will enter the path and be liberated.

Recite that again and again. It is taught that those of middling capacity will thereby be liberated.
3. Introducing the Intermediate State of Existence

Although it is taught that this should be recited from the seventh day onwards, in that context “days” is referring to “days of concentration.” This being so, generally speaking, this and only this introduction should be recited from the third day onwards. It is very meaningful to do this. When the inscription-burning ritual is performed, this introduction should be appended and recited once after the dedication of food. It is also alright to recite it alone. Visualizing yourself as the deity and with a mind full of compassion, imagine that you have summoned the deceased’s consciousness before you. Then, after the sur dedication recite the following with a clear and melodious tune:

\[\text{kyema nyön chik rik kyi bu}^\$\]

Alas! Listen, noble child,\$
ma yeng ma yeng drenpa ten
do not get distracted! Focus!

dani lungsem düpé lü
You now have a body of prāṇa and mind

sipa bardö nangwa shar
and the appearances of the bardo of existence are arising.

chiwar shé shing sön la treng
You know you are dead and cling to the living.

shinjé ponya tumpö zin
You are confronted by Yama’s ferocious messengers.

jikpé dra dang nyampé trang
Terrifying sounds and fearful abysses—
ངེས་དང་མ་ངེས་རྟགས་མང་ཤར༔

ngé dang ma ngé tak mang shar

all sorts of signs, some stable and others fleeting—arise.

དེ་ཀུན་རང་གི་སེམས་ཀྱི་རྩལ༔

dé kün rang gi sem kyi tsal

All of these are the expression of your own mind.

སེམས་ནི་སདོང་པ་ནམ་མཁའ་འདྲ༔

sem ni tongpa namkha dra

Mind is empty like space.

ནམ་མཁས་ནམ་མཁའ་གླགས་མི་རྙེད༔

namkhé namkha lak mi nyé

Space can do nothing to harm space,

དེ་ཕྱིར་ཆོས་ཉིད་དཔའ་གདིང་སྐྱེད༔

dechir chönyi paving kyé

so arouse the dignified courage of the true nature!

བྱིན་གྱིས་བརབས་པའི་གསུར་བསྔོ་འདི༔

jin gyi lapé sur ngo di

This consecrated and dedicated sur offering,
zé mi shepé longchö dé
an inexhaustible enjoyment,

zakmé nyang drol zhalzé yin
is defilement-free food that liberates upon taste.

zhé shik sön la ma trengwar
Partake of it and do not miss the living.

dünpa lha dang lamar tö
Turn your attention to the deities and gurus!

di né nup kyi chok röl na
To the west of here is Sukhāvatī,

dewachen gyi zhingkham yö
the Pureland of Bliss,
སྒྲོན་པོ་རྒྱུ་འབྲོན་པའི་བདེ་ཡི་མཚན་ལེན་མོ་སྤྲོད་པ་

wherein the protector Amitābha resides.

སྐྱེ་བར་འགྱུར་

Whoever keeps his name in mind

is reborn there in the pureland.

So keep the protector’s name

in your mind and supplicate!

Thinking, “Avalokiteśvara and Padmasambhava,

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khyen no nyam du mögü kyé
Look upon me!” kindle devotion within.

tetsom mepé ngang nyi né
Completely free of doubt,

rangjung dorjé drö kyi song
move on with the self-occurring vajra gait!

zingkham dé ru pemé bup
Then, in that pureland in the heart of a lotus

dzü té nyurdu kyewar gyur
you will quickly take miraculous birth.

dechir ga shing trowé ngang
So, with joy and delight
dé mö kyé chik rik kyi bu
arouse faith and devotion, child of noble family!

Recite that again and again. By doing so, it is taught that those of least capacity will be freed.

4. The Instruction on Gaining Liberation Through Rebirth

From the seventh day onwards, after the above instructions, recite the following, the instruction on gaining liberation through rebirth:

kyema nyön chik rik kyi bu
Alas! Listen, noble child:

da ni ngal go ma khekpé
the entrance to the womb is uncovered

dong dum drok puk mün trö dang
so you will now see tree trunks, hollows,
naktsal zhalyé khang tong yang
dark covers, forests, and palaces.

dé la chak dang zhenpa pong
Cast away attachment and desire for them.

dzamling chi dang bö kyi yul
Focus your attention

khyö kyi lamé zhab drung du
on taking birth near your teacher

kyewa lenpé dünpa tö
in a country in this world, or in particular in Tibet.

chodên rik kyi pama nyi
Visualize your father and mother, both of Dharma caste,
pema jungné yapyum gom
as Padmasambhava and consort.

chak dang dangvé lo pong la
Relinquish thoughts of desire and anger

depé samten ngang du shuk
and with faith enter into a meditative state.

zapmö chö kyi nö gyur né
Then, you will become a vessel for the profound Dharma

nyurdu yeshé toppar gyur
and swiftly attain pristine awareness.

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Recite this each day until the end of the forty-nine day period. The benefits of doing so are explained in the scriptures where it is said: “Through these step by step instructions, they will be liberated within seven lifetimes, no matter how inferior their capacity may be.” And: “This most profound instruction liberates simply by being heard, without need for practice.” Thus, if you apply this correctly it will surely be so.
At the end of reciting these instructions, one should also recite many Mahāyāna aspiration prayers, such as The King of Aspiration Prayers, the aspiration for rebirth in Sukhāvaṭī, the aspiration for rebirth in the realm of Pure Joy [Akṣobhya’s pureland] and so on. Then dedicate the merit to enlightenment and let be in meditation for a long time within the state of primordial purity, in the single taste of mind and objects. Later on, put powder that liberates upon touch on the corpse and recite mantras such as the mantra that purifies the lower realms. If the liberation upon wearing texts and so on are used correctly, since the Primordial Protector’s enlightened speech is infallible, there is no doubt that the deceased will be freed from the fear of samsara and the lower realms and attain the glorious reassurance of liberation through the blessings of these many profound skillful means.

Some people claiming to be performing the benefit of others recite a dedication and aspiration just once and regard that as a great service.

Others distort realization with conduct and so neglect the details and arrogantly regard it enough to vaguely perform phowa just once.

Most people are ignorant of what to actually do.
The guide’s own mind is more scattered than the one in need of guidance, the deceased’s.

This being so, although it is difficult to benefit everyone,

I suppose this could serve as a reminder

to a few noble beings with hearts of compassion

of the practice of these profound, instantaneous skillful means

that grant protection to our vulnerable old mothers.

Thus, this was written by the kusāli Lodrö Tayé while practicing

at the sacred place Dzongshö. By the virtue of doing so,

may all beings together be naturally liberated into the primordial state.

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May virtue and excellence flourish!