

Heart Drop  
of the  
Loving Mother

Tempa Dukte Lama

Olmo Ling Publications

P I T T S B U R G H

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I dedicate this book to my mother, Serzangmu Lama  
to Roshi Joan Halifax  
and to all mother sentient beings





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## Introduction

The Loving Mother is the mother of all. She is the source of our wisdom. She is the source of wholesome aspiration. She is the ceaseless source of compassion, skillful means, and power. Through these qualities, the Loving Mother nurtures all beings without hindrance. She is clarity without obstacles. She is the awakened nature of all beings, the true nature of the mind and of reality. She is love because she wants all beings to be happy. She is compassion because she wants all beings to be free from suffering. She is presence because she is always there, offering us strength, protection, and clarity. The Loving Mother does not have a form. She is formless, unborn, and unceasing like boundless space. She is neither born nor can she be exhausted. She transcends any thought and concept. She is everything and at the same time she is beyond everything because she is empty. The natural state that is unstained by any condition is her essence. This essence is the inseparability of compassion and wisdom.

Wisdom is primordial awareness of the true nature of reality. Wisdom clears not knowing, wrong knowing, and doubt, both internally with regard to the self and externally with regard to phenomena. The wisdom that knows the true nature of the self and of phenomena is called *omniscience*. Omniscience is comprised of the fivefold wisdom of the Awakened One: the Wisdom of Emptiness, Mirror-like Wisdom, Discriminating Wisdom, Wisdom of Equality, and All-accomplishing Wisdom. The Five Wisdoms correspond to the five main qualities of the Loving Mother, wisdom,

aspiration, skillful means, compassion, and power. The fivefold wisdom is categorized as the twofold wisdom based on its function. The first, *jitaba*, is the wisdom that recognizes phenomena as they truly are, as empty of inherent existence. The second, *jinye-pa*, is the wisdom that recognizes phenomena as they appear to us in myriad manifestations.

To become a Loving Mother we need to develop, strengthen, and establish ourselves into these qualities. We have to do our best to embody the qualities of aspiration, compassion, skillful means, power, and wisdom that are her essence. We have to support and nurture these qualities until we become them. Then we will be an inspiration to others because we empower others to realize the myriad benefits of these qualities.

The Loving Mother transmission is translated from the language of Zhang Zhung. In Zhang Zhung the Loving Mother of Wisdom is called Satrig Ersang. “Satrig” means wisdom, and “Ersang” means Loving Mother. In Tibetan the Loving Mother of Wisdom is called Sherab Jamma. “Jamma” consists of the two syllables *jam*, which means love, and *ma*, which means mother. “Sherab” means wisdom. Together these two words are the Loving Mother of Wisdom. This particular practice, *Heart Drop of the Loving Mother*, was composed by the twenty-second abbot of Menri, Kunkyen Sönam Lodrö, also known as Sherab Gonggyal. The Loving Mother herself gave it to him in a vision.

*Heart Drop of the Loving Mother* has seven parts that together constitute a complete practice. The first part is generating the mind of awakening, the heart and mind that want to awaken in order to benefit all beings. The second part is taking refuge in the

Loving Mother. This is the practice of seeking help and asking for the help and protection that we need. The third part is confessing unwholesome actions of the past, present, and future, and making a commitment not to engage in unwholesome actions in the future. The fourth part is offering the *maṇḍala* to the Loving Mother. This is the practice of accumulating merit. The fifth part is invoking the Loving Mother and her myriad qualities. The sixth part is inviting the Loving Mother. The seventh part is the actual practice through which we manifest and embody the essence of the Loving Mother.

Are you a Loving Mother of Wisdom? Would you like to be a Loving Mother of Wisdom? How would you embody the qualities of the Loving Mother of Wisdom? The Loving Mother of Wisdom sees all beings as her children. And we begin our practice by seeing all beings as our mother. We remember how our mother has nurtured and protected us with immeasurable love and compassion when we were small and helpless. Some of us may find this difficult because we feel that our lives have been harmed by our parents' lack of skill. This is why it is essential that we practice giving non-fear to others so that we will never become the object of another's fear and hatred. One essential quality of the Loving Mother of Wisdom is to provide a refuge to all beings. We need to understand that even a small act can have a large impact on another being. Providing refuge is the practice of giving non-fear and nurturing. This is why she is called the Loving Mother of Wisdom. With love she nurtures all beings, and with her wisdom she discerns and fulfills the needs of all beings. Where there is love and wisdom, there is no hatred and no fear. Wisdom is like

the tip of the lamp on which darkness cannot abide. When we light the lamp, darkness is removed without effort.

We may feel that we cannot be a Loving Mother. We imagine that the Loving Mother has to be someone who has outstanding qualities. The fantasy of outstanding qualities that we project is a mere concept. The true quality of the Loving Mother is within us from beginningless time, and it will be there forever. From the perspective of the relative truth, practicing the Loving Mother means that we recognize this quality within ourselves. Based on this recognition we nurture it and finally use it as a skillful means of refuge and protection for the self and others. From the perspective of the absolute truth we practice the Loving Mother by recognizing the true nature of the self and phenomena, and establishing ourselves into this recognition. Within the continuum of this recognition, the wellbeing of both the self and others is spontaneously manifested.

*Heart Drop of the Loving Mother* is a very simple practice. It is not necessary to do a long, solitary retreat in order to practice *Heart Drop of the Loving Mother*. If we read *Heart Drop of the Loving Mother* from our heart as our daily practice, this carries the blessings of the whole Bön Canon. This is because the Loving Mother is the source of all Bön teachings. If we read and practice *Heart Drop of the Loving Mother* with complete dedication, there is no doubt that we will become a compassionate being and eventually awaken. In fact, if we make this our daily practice, we have the opportunity of awakening completely in this lifetime and in this body. There is no doubt about this, because this is the word of the Loving Mother of Wisdom herself. This practice is the instruc-

tion, transmission, and teaching of the myriad manifestations of the Loving Mother.

## 1 Transmission of the Loving Mother

*Heart Drop of the Loving Mother* was first taught by the Awakened One Tönpa Shenrab near the sacred Mount Meru. At that time the Awakened One was surrounded by a perfect assembly who made countless offerings to him. Those gathered included the Awakened One's three hundred and sixty closest disciples, Five thousand five hundred compassionate beings, and Eighty-four thousand *kandroma*, great female masters who were his disciples.

Out of this vast assembly, four great compassionate beings, called the Four Great Shen, rose from their seats and asked the Awakened One to explain the different aspects of the wisdom of the Loving Mother for the assembly. The Awakened One was very moved by their request to give these teachings for all those present. In response to their request, he explained the benefit of the heart essence of the Loving Mother. This is how the practice of the Loving Mother was first transmitted.

Tönpa Shenrab, the Awakened One, thus spoke. The Loving Mother is the mother of the Awakened Ones of the three times of past, present, and future. She is the mother of all, the one who gives birth to all Awakened Ones, all compassionate beings, and all beings of the three times. All beings are born from her and are a display of the Loving Mother. This is the innermost aspect of the Loving Mother. She is the base of everything, and yet she herself is beyond everything. The base of everything is boundless and spacious. She is the Great Mother who is unsurpassable, in-



exhaustible, and primordially pure. She is Sanggyé, the Awakened One who is free from all impurities and has fully developed all noble qualities.

The Loving Mother benefits beings through the three bodies of the Awakened One, the truth body, the enjoyment body, and the emanation body. The Loving Mother is never altered or removed from the natural state and never moves away from it. The natural state is the truth body, which is primordial purity. In order to help all compassionate beings, the Loving Mother manifests in the form of the body of perfect enjoyment. In order to help ordinary beings, she manifests in the form of the emanation body. Manifesting the emanation body means that we become a firm resource for others so that others will benefit from our very being. They feel delighted when they simply look at us, like a small child who is afraid but feels empowered the moment he thinks of or sees his mother. Whether you are an Awakened One, a compassionate being, or an ordinary being, you have to remember the Loving Mother and stay connected with her always. She is your mother. No matter who you are and where you are, you have to pay homage to her and call upon her for protection and blessings.

The Loving Mother is the source and lineage of all wisdom teachings, whether they are from the Path of Renunciation, the Path of Transformation, or the Path of Self-Liberation. She is the source of all teachings, all views, and all paths. The Loving Mother is the source of everything, and everything is a manifestation of the Loving Mother. Our love and compassion are the manifestation of the Loving Mother. Our wisdom is the manifestation of the Loving Mother. She is the fruit of all practices. She is our

attainment. She is the base, the path of practice, and the fruit of our practice. Thus we have to remember her, pay homage to her, and pray to her.

The Loving Mother is the source of everything. This has two aspects. Both the phenomena of cyclic existence and the phenomena of great liberation are included in the Great Mother. Everything goes back to her. Everything that we could experience within and beyond cyclic existence is her spontaneous manifestation. If the Loving Mother is the source of all, how can she create something that is not pure? The Loving Mother does not create. She is beyond birth and death. She is the natural state. The natural state is like the Sun that is always there, yet its light can be obscured or blocked by a cloud. The cloud is our karmic conditioning. We can talk about our true nature, but we do not yet abide in it. As long as we are under the obscuration of karmic conditioning, the cyclic continuum exists and we experience suffering—but to the Loving Mother, neither the cyclic continuum nor suffering has inherent existence. In that state, there is no suffering. The Loving Mother herself is never separated or altered from the natural state. When her child is afraid, her aspects simply manifest in his mind to help him.

When the Awakened One had thus spoken, the Four Great Shen asked him to expound on the different aspects of the Loving Mother. The response of the Awakened One to each Shen is one the Four Transmissions of the Loving Mother. The First Shen, who was called Power of the Lion, asked the Awakened One to explain the root of the teaching of the Loving Mother. Tönpa Shenrab's response is the First Transmission of the Loving Mother,

called *Jamma Bum*. This is the Perfection of Wisdom, the introduction to the essence or innermost aspect of the Loving Mother. *Bum* means numerous, vast, and expansive. The root text of the Perfection of Wisdom has three hundred and sixty volumes, which are explained in condensed form in thirty-four volumes. The vast teachings of the Perfection of Wisdom are grouped into five categories, called *Bumnga*.

The first category of the Perfection of Wisdom teachings is *kamgyé*, the training of wisdom. To explain and expound the training of wisdom, the Awakened One manifested as the Loving Mother of Wisdom. Through teaching the training of wisdom, he showed the view, conduct, and practice of the Middle Way, which is the highest path within the Path of Renunciation. The training of wisdom has sixteen volumes and seven branches.

The second category of the Perfection of Wisdom teachings is *gebum*, the training of conduct or behavior. The training of conduct explains how we can eliminate unwholesome actions of body, speech, and mind by transforming the karmic conditioning of ordinary beings that gives rise to delusion and unwholesome action. The training of conduct then explains how we can cultivate and nurture wholesome qualities by engaging in wholesome practices of body, speech, and mind. The training of conduct also contains the teachings on the mastery of the Five Sciences of grammar, dialectics, healing, arts and crafts, and philosophy. The complete teaching of the training of conduct has fourteen volumes and forty-three branches.

The third category of the Perfection of Wisdom teachings is *dülbum*, the teachings on the nature and types of relative phenom-