

Tulku Orgyen Tobgyal



HOW TO JOIN A DRUPCHEN



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Introduction

On 1st August 2013, in Lerab Ling, Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche explained the drupchen section of the Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo. He spoke briefly about the background of drupchen practice. He also clarified the unique features that sets it apart from other practices, including drupchö practice, by presenting the steps the first day of a drupchen that sets the framework for its unique power.

It can be a good idea to read this teaching alongside a 'drupchen framework' text (or drupkok). You can also have it with you during a drupchen and read it as the ritual is performed.

How to Join a Drupchen

Getting Ready: The First Four Yogas¹

Let's see whether or not you have understood what I have been talking about. For several days, the subject under discussion has been kyerim practice. It starts with the samadhi of suchness ("great emptiness") and the samadhi of universal manifestation, which is compassion and called "compassionate magic" in the text. In our practice, these two should be indivisible and are absolutely necessary for kyerim practice. Without them, your practice does not qualify as kyerim practice. And of course, if you practice Dzogchen, there is no need to talk about the samadhi of universal manifestation.

After that comes the causal or seed samadhi, which gives us a coarse object to meditate on. We then meditate on the single mudra deity, followed by the elaborate or complete mudra in which we visualize all the deities of the mandala. We must be able to create a complete clear visualization of all the deities of the mandala without ever being distracted.

The subtle aspects of the meditation practice of emptiness and compassion correspond to the phases of approach and close approach respectively. Single mudra, elaborate mudra and the great gathering practice correspond to the phase of accomplishment, which we arrive at once we have actualized all the deities of the mandala. Only after this has been fully accomplished does the teaching mention *drupchen* or 'great accomplishment'.

As I mentioned the other day, to practice at the level of great accomplishment, you must first have reached a certain level in your practice. The text describes the signs in the yogins' body, speech and mind that indicate you have reached this level – the warmth of practice manifests in body, speech and mind – and of course, Jokya's note provides more detail. The root signs are

¹ Rinpoche explains the section The Path to Accomplish the Deity from Padmasambhava et al. *Light of Wisdom: The Conclusion*. Boudhanath: North Atlantic Books, 2013, pages 45-47.

that the body experiences well-being, speech is clear and mind is non-conceptual, and the text adds several other signs concerning the eyes and so on. I don't know if anyone really does experience any of these signs – many say they do but I don't believe any of them.

The authentic sign is that the five destructive emotions have less power. The text says, “eight worldly concerns are evened out” – that must be pretty difficult as, these days, everything we do aims to increase them. The text says that once we have at least some control over the channels and wind-energies, we will develop minor superknowledges. It goes on to talk about dreams. Those who experience these signs qualify to take part in a drupchen or great accomplishment practice, but they are not signs that the person is realized. Such signs simply mean that a person has the potential to attain realization and therefore needs to practice. Therefore, the qualities gained through great accomplishment practice are said to be ‘inconceivable’.

Overview of Drupchen Practice

It is said that a tsok is called a tsok because it is the gathering of many things.² “Group” means that one person cannot perform a great tsok alone, it requires a minimum of three practitioners. Five practitioners counts as a small gathering and is called ‘small practice’, or *drupchung*. To perform a ‘great accomplishment practice’, the number of practitioners gathered must equal the number of deities in the mandala. So, if you practice the mandala of the one hundred peaceful and wrathful deities, one hundred practitioners must take part in this ‘middle-sized accomplishment practice’. An entire country must take part in a ‘great gathering practice’, from the teacher, the vajra king, to the shrineroom sweepers. It requires a huge amount of preparation and many things must be gathered – which is why it is called a ‘great gathering practice’.

The “fortunate people” are all those who participate in the practice and join “the joyful deities”. Yogins must practice until the deity is accomplished. They must, therefore, stock up with everything they might need until that happens: food, drink, medicine (in case people get sick), weapons to repel possible aggressors and many other things – basically, everything necessary. The aim of this kind of practice is the attainment of the Vajrayana bhumis (the levels of a vidyadhara), so the practitioners continue to practice together until the bhumis have been accomplished.

In ancient India, entire countries performed great accomplishment drupchen practices for as long as it took for everyone to attain the four levels of a vidyadhara. First, preparation for practice began by assembling the right people. To provide security from attack, an enormous arsenal of weapons was gathered and many soldiers enlisted to protect all those practicing and the practice

² Section Overview [of Drupchen Practice] in *Light of Wisdom: The Conclusion.*, page 48.

place from external interference. A vast pharmacy of medicine was assembled in case people fell ill, and good doctors were engaged. As they practiced until everyone had attained the four vidyadhara levels – which could take months or even years – they amassed enough food, drink and clothes necessary for everyone involved for as long the practice might take. In this way, nothing would interfere with the practice.

Next, it was necessary to have the teacher, the vajra master. The vajra master would become the lord of the mandala. He or she would give the initial empowerments, explain the tantras, give the reading transmissions and provide all the pith instructions. This approach was aimed at those who could be tamed with peaceful means and were able simply to listen. Those who couldn't be tamed peacefully were liberated through wrathful means.

Four vajra regents were then appointed, one for each activity. The wisdom minds of the four vajra regents were indivisible from that of the vajra master; they were his representatives.

Another vajra regent who was the equal of the vajra master and skilled at performing all four activities, was also appointed. As one of the vajra regents' main practices was the practice of union, they were each appointed a vajra consort.

A chant master proficient in recitation and the activities of the practice was appointed, as was a chöpön ('offering master') who was an expert in the preparation of the outer, inner and secret offerings, especially tsok gatherings, and his assistant, the chöyok. A caretaker was appointed and a vajra watchman who had the 'divine eye', to check that the accomplishments had been completed and to identify any obstacles to the attainment of the accomplishments. Should any obstacles or obstructing forces arise, it was the vajra raksha's task to perform infinite wrathful activities to eliminate them. The vajra sweepers kept the practice area clean and the vajra servants provided the male and female practitioners with what they needed. Fifteen people were appointed specific tasks and granted a name that began with 'vajra'. Once these people had been assigned a specific role, the practice would begin.

As they practiced, participants would progress through the four vidyadhara levels until they reached the supreme level of 'vidyadhara of spontaneous presence'. In India, there are numerous accounts of entire countries being emptied because the entire population attained the state of 'vidyadhara of spontaneous presence'.

It didn't happen exactly like that in Tibet. Once Guru Rinpoche arrived in Tibet, he first gave the twenty-five disciples the empowerment of the *Dharma Ocean Collecting all Teachings*³ in the Blazing Turquoise Palace on the second floor of the main temple in Samyé. The *Dharma Ocean* contains the nine kagye sadhanas. Guru Rinpoche transmitted one to each of his nine heart-sons who

³ *Kadü Chökgyi Gyatso*. Wyl. *bka'* 'dus chos kyi rgya mtsho.

practiced that sadhana until they attained accomplishment. Later Guru Rinpoche and his disciples travelled to Kham where they performed a drupchen of *Dharma Ocean Collecting all Teachings* at Yegyäl Namkha Dzö for seven years, by the end of which they had all accomplished the deity and showed signs of their accomplishment. The event itself and the location of signs of accomplishments are recorded in texts and can still be seen on rockfaces and so on.

When we practice, we emulate Guru Rinpoche and his disciples, but we only practice on an aspirational level – we aspire to practice like them.

There are many elaborate drupchen texts. The different functions I just mentioned are explained in these texts, including the fifteen vajra-executants – the vajra king, vajra regent, vajra dukes, and so on – and the specific qualities required to accomplish their function. Earlier we spoke about the general qualities necessary for all drupchen practitioners. On top of that, each vajra-executant requires specific qualities related to their task. For example, the text says that the ability of the vajra king to hold view and meditation must be supreme and his compassion, in particular, must be extraordinary as he must embrace all sentient beings within his great compassion. He must be an expert in infinite enlightened activities, having fully mastered them all.

A vajra consort is Samantabhadri. She must be youthful, physically gifted, have a pleasant voice, smell good and have many other feminine qualities. Her channels, in particular, must be pure. Generally, human beings are said to have 75,000 channels in their bodies, but good consorts have more.

Likewise, it is possible to explain each quality of a practitioner and each aspect of practice in great detail. The pages on the different activities that we have studied over the past few days mention some of these details. For example, the fire offering section mentions the clothes we should wear and so on. During drupchens, specific seats are required and various ornaments and clothes should be worn. Symbols are very important, which is why ornaments are important. So, when the vajra king teaches the dharma, he must wear the chögö (the yellow patched dharma shawl of a bhikshu)⁴, but at other times he must wear the ornaments of a universal monarch or those of a heruka.

⁴ Skt. cīvara. Rinpoche said during these teachings that to call the chögö a ‘yellow robe’ is an enormous mistake: the Buddha Shakyamuni said it can be yellow, red and blue. As the Buddha said,

Concerning the chögö,
Yellow, red-ochre, saffron or blue –
Considering these colors appropriate...

For example, Guru Rinpoche’s chögö is red with golden designs. So I think it’s best to use ‘chögö’ even in the English translation, since ‘robe’ suggests the kind of toga that ancient Romans used to wear. In the practice of *Homage and Offering to the Sixteen Elders* revealed as part of the Namchö treasure cycle, the Buddha’s chögö is red.

First, Gathering the Five Perfections to Create the Environment of the Sadhana Practice⁵

Generally speaking, the activities of Secret Mantra Vajrayana can only happen once the five perfections are present. In the pure field of Akanishtha, all the five perfections are complete. The five outer perfections, the five inner perfections and the five secret perfections are mentioned in numerous tantras. Here, the text tells us that the five perfections must also be complete when we practice drupchen.

The most difficult perfection to gather is the perfect teacher. Perfect places are a relatively easy to find as we still have pleasant places to practice in; even places blessed by Guru Rinpoche, the Buddha and the great masters of the past still exist. However, although they were originally perfect for practice, many may now be obscured by samaya breakage. Apart from that, such places never lose their blessings. There is always a perfect time too – just look at the Rigpa calendar and you will see that every day is ‘perfect’ because it’s either the anniversary of a lama’s death or birth. But the perfect teacher with all the qualities described in the tantras is quite difficult to find, as is the perfect retinue.

Even so, when teacher and disciples gather, through the power of past karma and aspiration prayers, to practice drupchen, they can probably still be considered “fortunate people”. As Guru Rinpoche said:

In future, practitioners of the profound *termas*,
Will be those who now make aspirations in my presence –
All the fortunate, linked by karma, should meditate on joy.

The next perfection is the perfect dharma. Perfect teachings and dharma practice do still exist, although here too samaya breakages do, to some extent, diminish the effect of the blessings. But that’s all that can happen. The power of the blessings of the perfect dharma itself never diminishes. This is why abiding by the samayas is so important. The lineage through which the perfect dharma has been transmitted must be free from any kind of samaya breakage.

Getting Ready for a Drupchen

Up to this point, the text explains how to prepare for a drupchen practice. The drupchen begins with the ritual for blessing the ground. Until now, we have been talking about the necessary conditions for performing a drupchen, and how to ensure that everything necessary has been gathered. If the right circumstances in terms of view, meditation and conduct are not present and there are breakages of samaya, it is important to practice the meditation on Vajrasattva and recite

⁵ *Light of Wisdom: The Conclusion*, pages 49-50.

his mantra. Various practices must have been performed before the drupchen can begin, such as freeing lives, making tsatsas, building or mending roads, sang and torma offerings, reciting the four sutras (the words of the Buddha) in the four directions, and so on. In short, we must make sure that the elements we gather are pure by offering confession, which is like washing or purifying everything to do with the ritual. If, for example, the food, drink and medicines that will be used in the tsok contain impurities, they first need cleansing, which is done by sprinkling them with water, fire and wind. We also cleanse and purify the supports of enlightened body, speech and mind first in a peaceful way, then semi-wrathful, and finally wrathful. The cleansing ritual is then performed and we reconsecrate everything that has already been consecrated in order to eliminate impurities. In other words, we renew everything and bless it. This is how the necessary external objects are cleansed.

The ‘internal’ aspects are the practitioners. The vajra master and vajra assembly of vajra siblings must all have the requisite meditation experiences, realizations, wisdom and qualities, as detailed in the text. The practice cannot go ahead if this doesn’t happen, especially if practitioners have been obscured by broken samaya. The practitioners’ minds must be untarnished by broken samaya, which is why the *Stainless Confession Tantra*⁶ is read. We also meditate on Vajrasattva, recite the hundred syllable mantra, perform cleansing rituals, practice a deity like Bhurkumkuta, in order to cleanse samaya obscurations and we pour the corresponding fire offering. The most important way we purify all breakages and obscurations of samaya, is to rest in referencelessness.

Once all these practices have been performed, we must be confident that we are completely clean and that not the slightest trace of impaired or broken samaya remains in our mindstream. If you join the drupchen thinking “I’ve broken samayas, I am really not following the samayas”, you will not be able to practice. If you have broken samayas and so on, it will all be cleansed by diligently applying the purification methods – which is why these methods are applied first.

Those who imagine they have never broken a samaya probably don’t have clear idea about what samaya really is. Unless you know in detail which samayas must be kept, how to keep them and how to respect the boundaries, you really don’t know how to maintain samaya. The tantras speak of samayas being broken “knowingly and unknowingly”, so it’s possible to break samayas unknowingly.

If you have a good knowledge of samaya and then reflect deeply about whether or not you have broken it or not, you will be shocked to see that, although you may have not broken a root or secondary samaya, you are undoubtedly responsible for any number of major infringements. But you will only realize this if you know about all the samayas. If you come to the conclusion that

⁶ *Drimé Shakgyü*. Wyl. ‘dri med bshags pa’i brgyud.

you have broken samayas and are a samaya breaker, that's confession. I don't think anyone rejoices when they realize they have broken samaya. No one laughs and says "Brilliant! I am so happy, I have broken samayas today! I am a samaya breaker!" Usually, we feel uneasy about the samayas we know we've broken, and regret follows automatically. The Victorious One, skilled in many methods and possessing great compassion, taught many methods of purification through confession. We also practice the Secret Mantra Vajrayana vehicle that takes the fruition as the path. The resultant vehicle, rich in skillful methods and devoid of hardship, is an exceptional teaching that is easy to apply, and offers many methods for purifying broken samaya through confession. A unique quality of the Secret Mantra teachings is the capacity to purify impairments of samaya through confession purification. For some reason, I wanted to mention this to you today.

The easiest part of drupchen preparation is cleaning the practice area, putting up decorations and arranging the room. I don't need to say anything about that because you are already doing it.

The First Day Preliminaries⁷

Determine the Place where the Drupchen Will Take Place

Drupchen practice begins by making a request to use the place where the drupchen will take place and the ritual practices related to the land. We must determine whether or not the place chosen is suitable for a drupchen and there are many instructions about how to carry out such an analysis. For example, the eastern side should be wide open, the south should form a mound, the west should slope gently upwards, and there should be a craggy mountain in the north. The flow of water and the direction of wind are described in detail as well. Specific qualities and characteristics are also necessary, depending on which of the four activities (pacifying, enriching, magnetizing or subjugating) are being performed.

The Chinese Portang astrological system was originally taught by Arya Manjushri and includes information about how to examine the land based on astrology. For many reasons, places that have been blessed by the buddhas, bodhisattvas and great vajra masters like Guru Rinpoche, and where masters of the past lived, are said to be suitable places for practice. Signs of the power of a master's inner realization can manifest externally, and the power of a master's practice of the deities' forms can bless external elements into the five female buddhas. Through the power of the masters' practice of, for example, the 'descent of blessing', and their training in samadhi

⁷ *Light of Wisdom: The Conclusion*, pages 51-55.

accomplishment, such places become the permanent residence of all the lama, yidam, daka and dakini deities who ‘gather’ there. The traditional example is that in the same way flies immediately swarm onto a piece of meat, deities always gather in such a place.

Traditionally, the logic behind blessing a place is illustrated using the example of fire. If you get close to a fire, you will immediately feel its heat; similarly, in a place that has been blessed many times over, you immediately receive its blessings and siddhis. As Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was on the point of setting out on pilgrimage, he said, “Thanks to the wisdom, meditation experience and realization of the great masters of the past, everywhere they visited has been blessed.” He added, “But as I have none of their qualities, I will go on pilgrimage *to receive* the sacred blessings that protect us from sickness, death and so on.” That should be enough information about the land.

Asking the Owners the Permission to Use the Land

Next, if the drupchen site has an owner – a ‘visible’ owner – you must ask their permission before you begin the practice. If the landowner wants money, you must pay it, or give the landlord whatever they ask for. Until you have an agreement and the landowner is satisfied, the drupchen cannot begin because the lack of agreement would inevitably attract obstacles. Every inch of the earth has “invisible owners”, known as local deities (for example, the tenma sisters) from whom permission to practice must be requested. As the request is made, a torma and a serkyem are held up. At the very start, before even establishing the mandala, a specific kind of white torma and serkyem offering are placed at the site. We meditate on deity yoga, immediately offer to the local deities and tenmas, and say: “We must erect a mandala on this land and perform a drupchen. Please, grant us your authorization to do so.” We then indicate the boundaries of the practice site – upper, lower, right and left – and the land-owning spirits, including the tenmas, authorize the practice, saying: “You can do whatever you need to do in order to perform your drupchen.” They then go home while we play music and throw the torma. That is the practice for requesting the use of the land.

Taking Care of the Land

Once we have received permission to use the land, we must take care of it. A sandal phurba, or “dagger”, tied with a red scarf is put on the ground. The vajra master maintains the vajra pride of thinking with confidence that he is the deity and the sandal phurba the deity as he recites the mantra. After the phurba that has become Hayagriva is planted in the ground, the horse head

neighs three times and the entire site is brought under his control. It's the same as buying land: when we own land, we must take possession and then care for it.

Cleaning the Land

Having taken possession of the land, we must clean it, which is why the vajra master touches the earth with his vajra, as he recites the Svabhava mantra seven times while resting in the state of emptiness. In this way, the practice site is purified into shunyata – the Svabhava mantra is used to clean and purify the land. This is part of the 'site ritual'.

Elimination of Obstructing Forces

We must now protect the land; there are three levels of protection, outer, inner and secret.

An elaborate drupchen practice begins with one or two days of preliminary practices to create the conducive circumstances that I will describe, including practices to protect the environment. We begin by *eliminating obstructing forces* – before we meditate on protection, we must first chase away negative influences. All practitioners put on the appropriate hats and robes then assume the vajra confidence of being the glorious deity – Hayagriva or whichever wrathful deity is appropriate. All obstructing forces are summoned, the tormas are blessed with RAM YAM KHAM and OM AH HUNG and given to the obstacle makers with the request that they leave peacefully. All those who don't are expelled forcefully using the gektor section of the sadhana. Wielding vajra, ringing the bell, and burning guggul, the practitioners circumambulate the mandala once. The second time they circumambulate they throw the power substance⁸, and the third time they dance the Sambhanti dance (a *cham* dance). In this way, the obstructing forces are sent away.

Protection of the Land

The protection of the land rituals come next. The ten wrathful deities' ten phurbas have their mantras tied to them and are smeared with substances; they are placed in front of the vajra master. The practitioners meditate on the ten wrathful ones, clearly actualizing their presence in the four directions, four intermediate directions, above and below. The guardians of the ten directions are the kings of the obstructing forces, so they are summoned to make the seats into which the phurbas are driven. As a result, their body, speech and mind are completely immobilized until the phurbas have been removed at the end of the drupchen. The upper part of the ten wrathful ones is a wrathful deity and the lower part is a phurba. The vajra master must also perform a dance. That is the protection.

⁸ *Tiin* (Tib; Wyl. *thun*) is a blend of thirty-two different substances used as weapon against obstructing forces.

The Boundaries

Next, the boundaries are established. The establishment of the *outer boundary* involves the four great kings. Outside the practice site, we erect the palaces of the four great kings, one in each of the four directions, and place a support in each. We meditate on each deity successively, extend an invitation for them to enter their palace, offer a tormā and entrust them with the appropriate activities. This practice is called the ‘practice of the four kings’ through which we establish the gyalto (‘the lists of the kings’).

For the *intermediate boundary*, we must suppress the damsi demons – both the karmic damsi demons which are external spirits and the inner damsi demons, people who have broken samaya. To suppress them, we draw an effigy with all the appropriate characteristics which must be purified with a cleansing ritual. Then the ‘hundred summoning’⁹ and the ‘deity opening’¹⁰ are performed as the effigy is placed with other substances in a dog’s skull. The skull is wrapped in a special black cloth tied with purple string and sealed with an image of a wrathful face. The vajra master, visualizes himself as the deity and emanates weapons from his heart that crack open the ground to form a triangular pit. The damsi demons are summoned and after the serkyem has been offered to invoke the deities’ wisdom mind, the damsi demons are thrown into the pit where they are suppressed. They must now remain in that pit until they give rise to the precious mind of enlightenment. Indeed, after the samaya breaking gongpo demon of dualistic grasping and ego clinging is suppressed, it is only liberated when the precious mind of enlightenment is aroused. So it must be suppressed until then. Suppression involves applying the seals of the four elements and of space. The demons are imprisoned under Mount Meru and the four continents, under a crossed vajra and a black tsatsa. These activities must be performed. The vajra master, the vajra regent, and the other practitioners perform the dance of the four activities with specific hand mudras. This creates the intermediate boundary.

To prevent the blessings of the practice environment from leaking out and being lost, the *inner boundary* is erected by placing the wrathful deity Amrita Kundali as gate keeper inside the door. To prevent external obstacles from entering the practice place, Yamaraja, ‘the karmic lord of death’, who is extraordinarily powerful, is placed at the door facing out. Visualize the samaya deities within their respective supports, invite the wisdom deities, make offerings, offer the tormā and entrust them with activities. We then request the deities of the inner boundary to remain

⁹ ‘Hundred summoning’ is an expression suggesting that the negative forces must be summoned many times. In practice nowadays it tends to be repeated only 3 times.

¹⁰ The vajra master is the activity deity, such as Vajrakīlaya, and makes the opening mudra while holding a bird feather in each hand: once all the harmful forces have been summoned in the effigy, the deity wipe them out with the door opening and they all disappear.

steadfast, by saying, “For as long as we do this practice, remain here in order to prevent outside obstacles from entering in and blessings from leaking out.”

The *secret boundary* is established by meditating on the protective spheres. Visualize the five spheres of the five weapons that surround the practice site, and the fire and vajra fence. Around them visualize male and female wrathful emanations, the male deities facing out, the female deities facing in. Then there are also protective spheres described in your practice text that can be outer and inner. Then by applying the boundary of emptiness to the protection, what needs to be protected against, what needs to be protected and the protector, we establish the secret protective sphere.

Once the outer boundary has been established and before all the practitioners enter the mandala to create the inner boundary, they must be sprinkled with fire, water and the power substance to eliminate all obstructing forces.

There are two secret boundaries. The ‘real’ secret boundary is the ritual for liberating Matam Rudra, the king of obstructing forces, which is clinging to ego. Once he is liberated, the inside of his body is blessed as the infinite palace. If we practice inside this palace, none of the minor obstructing forces are able to cause harm. This is why we perform the ritual for liberating Matam Rudra. His effigy has three heads, six arms, four legs, wings, the ten attributes of the wrathful ones and the eight charnel ground adornments. When we summon him, we consider the effigy to be Matam Rudra himself. The vajra master, with the vajra confidence of the great glorious one, assumes the posture of the hero. Beneath each of his hands are the wrathful activity deities and the ging Trakiraja, who liberate Matam Rudra. The ritual that liberates Matam involves establishing, without a doubt, that the three poisonous negative emotions are, by nature, the three kayas. To illustrate this point, the vajra master pierces the heart of Matam with a trident. The three poisons are liberated into their true nature, the three kayas, and Matam is transferred to the Akanishtha realm of dharmadhātu. Matam Rudra’s limbs are thrown to the four cardinal and four intermediate directions, his heart in the center. As his body is opened, we say BHRUM JÑANA MANDALA and actualize the meaning. The practitioners enter the palace, visualizing it clearly as the body of Matam. They say, HA HA HUNG HUNG PHAT PHAT as they circumambulate the mandala three times, and all potential obstacles completely vanish. You must have seen this being done during other drupchens. This is how we set the boundaries. At this point in elaborate practices, a dance is performed, but that detail is not mentioned here in the *Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo*.

Drawing the Mandala

Next we ‘erect’ or ‘draw’ the mandala. First we must ask the deities to authorize us to draw the mandala. The teacher, the vajra king, sits on the mandala wearing the regalia of a universal monarch, surrounded by the four vajra regents of the four activities and in the four directions, the four umdzes with the relevant offerings. Music for each of the four activities is played in the respective direction. The practitioners consider the main vajra master at the center of the mandala to be the buddhas of the five families and pray to him in each of the four directions, starting in the east: “May we draw the mandala correctly, just as we request?” The deities give the vajra master their authorization: “You may draw the mandala correctly, just as you have requested.” The vajra master puts on his hat, tells the students that the deities have granted their permission and tells them how to draw the mandala correctly. The lama, the lord of the mandala, and the whole assembly start singing HUNG as a song of joy or *surati* in Sanskrit. They circumambulate the site where the mandala will be drawn clockwise and receive the authorization to draw the mandala for each direction – first, the request for the east side, then south, west and north.

Preparation of the Pumbas

To accomplish the deities, the preparation of the vase – the main purpose of which is its role in granting the empowerment – must be inserted before the mandala is drawn. Ideally, there should be as many vases, or pumbas, as there are deities in the mandala. For example, there are fifteen deities in the *Tukdrup Barché Kunsel*, so ideally there should be fifteen pumbas. The teachings include details about the dimensions and characteristics of the pumbas – the vase should be small at its base and wide around the middle, the liquid it contains should be water or chang and so on. So for the elaborate practice, we use the same number of pumbas as deities, and for a simple practice, we use one main pumba and one activity pumba.

First, we need to eliminate all the obstructing forces of impure dualistic clinging and so on that relate to the vase by chasing away obstructing forces, burning fragrant guggul, and scattering the power substance. The vase is then purified into emptiness. As the Svabhava mantra that purifies into emptiness is recited, water with the eight qualities of pure water is poured into the vase. The water must be drawn from a constant flow of water (not a stream that is sometimes stagnant) by a child from a good family whose parents, both father and mother, are still alive. The child must bring the exact amount of water necessary – it is completely inappropriate to throw away even a drop of this water – and the water must be fresh and clean and never have been washed in or drunk.

The necessary substances are poured into the pumba as the appropriate mantra is recited. There are five sets of five substances – twenty-five in all: the five precious substances, the five medicines, the five grains, the five fragrant substances and the five extracts. For Highest Yoga Tantra practices, we add another ten substances, making thirty-five in all. The vase must be two-thirds full, not completely full, and tied with a cloth called a *panchalaka*. The top ornament – most of which are made of kusha grass and the wood of a fruit tree – is placed on top. For a Dzogchen empowerment, a peacock feather is the top ornament of the vase. The five-colored cord is then attached to the vase and the other end is tied to a vajra. Until this point, the vase of the main deity and the activity vase are prepared in the same way.

Both pumbas are considered through meditation to be palaces of the deities. Outwardly, they look like pumbas, but on the inner level they are palaces and their contents are the deities. We make offerings, praise and recite the mantras of the deities of the mandala in the main pumba. As we recite the mantra, we visualize ourselves as the deity. From the heart of the self-visualization, rays of light emanate, enter the pumba and invoke the wisdom mind of the deities, with the request that they grant all wisdom and blessing. Their blessing and wisdom appear as nectar that dissolves indivisibly in one taste with the water in the vase.

The activity pumba: we generate the activity deity Hayagriva. Following the same process, Hayagriva dissolves into light and merges with the vase water, which can now easily accomplish all the activities without hindrance.

The deities vary according to the practice. The deities of the main vase are the mandala of the sadhana being practiced. The deities of the activity vase are Hayagriva, Amrita Kundali and so on, depending on the practice being performed. This is how to prepare the vases.

Preparation of the Students

Next is the preparation of the students. All students must receive the empowerment, which must therefore be granted at that point. The empowerment includes the preparation and the main part and in addition, blessings are received. There are many existing explanations about how students should be prepared, so I will not go into any of that here.

Deity Preparation

Next is the deity preparation. On the mandala, we place the same number of heaps of grains as deities in the mandala. Again, we visualize the deities, invite the jñanasattvas, make offerings, offer praises and so on. With the mantra BHRUM BISHO BISHUDÉ, we lift them up above the place

where the mandala will be marked out. Before we start, we must first sprinkle water to cleanse the ground and various other substances (for example, the five substances of a cow).

The vajra king or the vajra regent stands to the west of the mandala and the vajra consort (represented by the chöpön) stands in the east. They begin to mark out the lines of the mandala using five-colored cords – the tantras contain many detailed explanations about the different cords – which must be blessed first. Then the vajra master rolls them in his hands. He then gives the cords to the consort who twists them together and pulls on them.

The visualization that accompanies marking out the lines of mandala begins by considering the vajra master as the male deity and the vajra consort as the female deity. From their union the nectar of bodhichitta emanates light and is used to draw the lines. According to the pith instructions of the Vajrayana tradition, the marking out method is very specific and includes which direction the vajra master and vajra consort face and how they move around the mandala. There are eight major lines. First the wisdom lines are drawn in space. As their reflection, the karmic lines are marked out on the ground. These lines form the basic structure. Then the drawing of the mandala begins using the different colored cords that have been blessed as the five buddha families. If it's not possible to mark out the complete mandala in one day, place a kapala upside down with a vajra on top of it in the middle of the mandala site to prevent obstructing forces interfering during the night.

Once the mandala has been marked out, the local situation and 'interdependences' must be investigated. It is said that if the mandala is drawn vividly, precisely and without blurred lines, the practice of this mandala will be accomplished.

If it's not possible to create a sand mandala, as the wisdom lines are being drawn in space, add a mandala image that has been painted on cloth – this is acceptable. As it is said, the best option is colored sand and the next best, or middling option is an image drawn on cloth.¹¹

Practice Articles and Substances

Now, the practice supports that will be put into this mandala must be assembled. The main practice supports are the kapala marked with the wheel of life; the vase, support for the empowerment (the vases that we prepared earlier); and the five supports of the enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities and activities. A representation of the deity being practiced (a statue, tsaklei or thangka) is used as a support for the enlightened body. The volume of the tantra associated with the sadhana we will practice and written in gold is the support of the speech. A

¹¹ Or on paper. Traditionally in Tibet, paintings were painted on cloth, however here any image of the mandala, including one printed on paper is acceptable.

vajra and a bell bound together with red and white silk, a stupa, a crystal and a mirror are the supports for the enlightened mind. Chülen pills are the support of the enlightened qualities. And a phurba is the support for the activities. The phurba must be sprinkled with mustard seeds, smeared with rakta and fumigated with guggul – a phurba consecrated with deity, mantra, mudra and samadhi is what's necessary here.

The supports for longevity practices are a long life torma¹², a long life drink, long life pills and the ribboned arrow.

These are the main practice supports, but other substances, offerings and supports are also required, like amrita, torma and rakta. None of the substances should be of poor quality; they should all be beautiful, pleasant, resplendent and full of blessings; they should also have the right dimensions, be the right amount and have the right characteristics (meaning, exactly as described in the instructions).

Purification When Required

Once the mandala has been marked out, if the signs are good, it's great. If they aren't, then a fire offering will be required, as well as a Bhurkumkuta recitation and all the practitioners must recite the hundred syllable mantra to purify breakages of samaya.

Dressing the Mandala the Decorations

Immediately after the mandala has been marked out, ornaments are added, as described in the practice texts. The decorations and practice articles are laid out, purged of obstructing forces using peaceful, semi-wrathful and wrathful methods, and washed with a cleansing ritual.

When dressing the mandala with ornaments, the vajra master and the whole assembly must rise magnificently to the occasion, wearing their hats and robes. In the tantras, it is said that the practitioners must wash with the five nectars, comb and braid their hair, wear fragrance (it is not 'perfume', which is a French thing, but a mixture of five fragrant substances, such as sandalwood and *arura*), dress well and wear the bone and jewel ornaments. As the practitioners in Tibetan monasteries these days are all monks, they wear their chögö, and a hat.

So, we have established the mandala and inserted each practice article, one after another – the supports of enlightened body, speech, mind, qualities and activities, vase, torma, etc. Each article is significant and there are important reasons for their inclusion in the mandala. The exterior of the mandala is adorned with so many mandala ornaments that I don't have time to list them all here – the four victory banners, four pendants, a parasol above the mandala, as well as four

¹² *tse'i drang gyé* (Tib; Wyl. *tshe'i 'brang rgyas*), which is a torma shaped like a human heart.

swords, four melongs, four arrows and so on. Each of them has a symbolic meaning and significance.

The self-visualization of the mandala and the front-visualization are connected and are the same, which is symbolized by the mantra cord that is now attached.

Induction of the Practitioners

Once the ornaments have been arranged on the mandala, the next step is to *tell the practitioners what their tasks are*. The teacher, the vajra king, sits on the throne, the vajra regent stands in front of the vajra master and chang is offered. Those who will take an active part in the practice are given their tasks, starting with the vajra king, the vajra regent and so on as I mentioned earlier, after a speech has been read out loud from the *Drupchen Digest*¹³. Once the practitioners have been inducted they are not allowed to move and must keep their seats.

Dressing with the Deities Regalia

After the induction we must ‘display the symbols’ or ‘put on the regalia’ – either the accoutrements of a peaceful deity, or the wrathful deities’ eight charnel ground ornaments and ten ornaments of glorious one, depending on the sadhana being practiced. As we meditate on the deity, we are supposed to actualize that deity with these symbols.

Integration of the New Practitioners

Next, *the new practitioners are integrated* into the ritual. Those who have experienced such a practice many times are united with the new practitioners and they are all considered to be the same. Blessings are bestowed during this process. First, the newer practitioners are grouped together and separated from the rest of the assembly, often sitting directly in front of the vajra master; the most experienced practitioners sit behind them. If the new people are not sitting in front of the vajra master, he will go to them. The vajra master performs the elimination of obstacles for the new practitioners, meditates on the protective sphere, explains the dharma, asks the students to promise to keep the samayas, which are explained. If they agree to keep the samayas, they are given the vajra, the ‘oath’ water and the mala and each time they vow to keep the samayas. Finally, the vajra master says, “You are the same as the older practitioners and now you must practice”. The newer practitioners sit with the older ones and are all given amrita in the form of chang. Most drupchen instruction manuals place the integration of the new practitioners before their induction, but in this case it is the opposite, which is why my explanation is in this order.

¹³ *tongtün* (Tib.; Wyl. *gtong thun*)

According to the Chokling tradition, the practice begins with eleven blessings: the blessings of the place, the master, the hand, the vajra and bell, the mala, the drum, the cymbals and so on. The middling approach involves five blessings. The elaborate drupchen instruction manuals indicate that the vajra master proceeds among the practitioners, gives the empowerment with the mala, the drum, food (tsampa, butter, meat etc. on a tray and presented to each practitioner) and many other activities, all of which are significant and important. For example, a mala is given to each practitioner, who must use it to count recitations when the vajra master tells them to, “recite the mantra like the continuous flow of the river”; the drum – “as we beat the drum of bodhichitta, meditate to the sound of the drum”; food, “eat all these ‘enjoyments’ as a ganachakra feast”. These examples clearly indicate that there are many significances and meanings to be explained.

Descent of Blessings

At the end of the preparatory stages, before the main drupchen practice begins, the wisdom deities who, as you may remember, are present in the space above the mandala, must descend, so the descent of blessings is performed. This concludes the preparatory and preliminary stages of the practice.

Day 2 to 8: Practicing the Sadhana

The main part of the practice goes on for seven days and this is where we accomplish the deity. I have been explaining this for the past several days¹⁴ so I will not talk about it again. The seven preliminary sections of the practice, the seven sections of the main part that start with the three samadhis, and the seven concluding parts make up an ‘activity manual’, an elaborate sadhana. Other shorter sadhanas can also be inserted into the drupchen.

As it is said, during a great accomplishment practice, it is best to do the sadhana three times during the day, and three times during the night – six times in total. The next best or middling option is to do it twice during the day and twice during the night. A couple of instruction manuals state that the minimum number of repetitions is once during the day and once at night, but no one does this.

We must now practice the three aspects of clear visualization, vajra pride and remembering the purity, as well as the four nails that bind the life-force of the practice. And we must offer the ganachakra tsok feast.

¹⁴ Basically, teachings on kyerim.

At twelve points during the practice – six during the day and six at night – twelve elemental demons appear and must be tamed by twelve wrathful manifestations (for example, the All-mighty Queen), using twelve prescribed substances.¹⁵ Basically, we must expel the nyulé demons. Each time, one of the twelve accomplishment granting deities appear, which is why we also must also perform the descent of blessings.

From the beginning of the practice until the end, we must see everything as the deity, hear all sounds as mantra, and perceive all thoughts as the enlightened mind.

Texts also detail many less important instructions – tsok offerings must be large, many butter lamps must be offered, zhalzé (food offering tormas) and other tormas must be prepared, and so on.

Last Day: Receiving the Siddhis and so on

Receiving the Siddhis

If good signs manifest, we must receive the accomplishments then and there – called ‘siddhis in the flow of practice’. If there are negative signs, we must recite the hundred syllable mantra, perform the dance of Hayagriva and so on.

I have spoken about this for many days and as you are all practitioners and have done retreat before, enough has been said. Some of you have some experience of drupchen practice. In a couple of months, we will do two more drupchens here, at Lerab Ling. Drupchens tend to attract the curious who have no idea about what’s going on, but believe there will be blessings as something special must be happening. (Westerners especially love to take pictures and observe.) Others who know and understand a little about drupchen will choose to stay away because they think it is too difficult.

I don’t need to talk about the signs of accomplishment that are the result of doing this kind of practice – all that is described very clearly in the text and I don’t have anything special to add.¹⁶ Experiences and realizations arise in the mind of each practitioner, so how would I know anything about that? I will only know about your realization if you start to fly or something like that. In the past at Katok Monastery, practitioners often left empty dagams¹⁷ on their seats during drupchen as they went into rainbow body – a clear sign that could be seen by others.

¹⁵ See *Light of Wisdom: Conclusion*, notes 83-84, pages 84-85.

¹⁶ *Light of Wisdom: The Conclusion*, page 54.

¹⁷ A dagam is a heavy woolen cape that monastics wrap around themselves when sitting for long periods of time doing meditation or ritual.

According to the Katok tradition, the ritual for receiving the accomplishments of the path of union and the path of liberation is called the ‘consort and enemy rituals for receiving the siddhis’. The text speaks of the outer and inner practice places, which I mentioned briefly when I spoke about tsok.¹⁸ Jamgön Kongtrul writes about this and I would not even attempt to add anything. Why? Because it’s all far beyond me.

The text says that we must first place all the siddhi substances and articles listed in the text on the shrine, which must all be covered with a red silk ‘umbrella’.

As we meditate on the self-visualization of the deities of the mandala, we begin the ritual for receiving the accomplishments by thinking about how excited all the deities must be about granting the accomplishments – there is a specific mantra to recite here. They are all delighted and on the point of granting the empowerments. To the deity’s mantra, SAMAYA SARWA SIDDHI HUNG is added. So all the deities are in union and ready to grant the siddhis. From the point of union, the nectar of bodhichitta flows down, bursting with rays of light, and the deities are entirely happy and joyful.

In your meditation, imagine that the siddhi substances dazzle with magnificence, the amrita boils, the butter lamps blaze, the rakta dries up, and all the deities on thangkas and statues laugh and smile.

Something that is not mentioned here is that beings who want to steal or obstruct the blessings must be eliminated before we receive the accomplishments, the blessings are invoked (‘brought down’) and we meditate on the protective spheres. As we meditate on the accomplishments now ready to be granted, we recite the ‘receiving the siddhis’ verses that request accomplishments for this and that purpose. Having requested the siddhis, we recite the mantra KAYA SIDDHI OM | WAKA SIDDHI AH | CHITTA SIDDHI HUNG and visualize receiving the siddhis of body, speech and mind. The visualization for receiving the blessings is the same visualization as that of receiving the four empowerments. The deities melt into the fire of great desire and from the point of union

¹⁸ “The kind of tsok house described in the tantras or the life stories of the mahasiddhas has three spaces: outer, inner and innermost. Like a mandala palace, the outer area has four doors. The inner area has only one door, and the innermost room has no doors. Terdak Lingpa’s biography describes a pure vision in which he was invited to such a *tsok khang* by a dakini. In the outer four-doored area he met male and female practitioners of kyerim and dzogrim who had pure samaya. As he entered, the area seemed vast and was set out like a pure realm. He saw an unimaginably huge gathering of male and female practitioners, some of them feasting on ordinary offerings, some on human corpses and others on various animals.

The single door of the inner room was protected by Ekazati. As the dakini led him towards her, she glared at him with her huge eye and his whole body shook with fear. Inside, he found a gathering of yogins and yoginis dressed in bone ornaments and united in sexual embrace. The innermost room had no door, so he asked how he could enter it. He was told that, although many great masters from India had gained entry, only a few Tibetans, including Yeshe Tsogyal and Vairochana, had ever done so. The dakini said that as Terdak Lingpa was an emanation of Vairochana, he should try. By entering into meditation and directing his awareness, Terdak Lingpa was transported into the room, where he saw Vajravarahi at the center of many great vidyadharas from India. This is the kind of three-level tsok house mentioned in the tantras and access to the various areas is based on your level of realization.” (Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche, Lerab Ling, 13 July 2002.)

of the all-victorious ones, white bodhichitta enters our forehead with the siddhi of enlightened body, red bodhichitta enters our throat with the siddhi of enlightened speech, dark blue bodhichitta enters our heart with the siddhi of the enlightened mind, yellow light enters our navel with the siddhi of enlightened qualities and green light brings the siddhi of enlightened activities. We are now completely confident that we have received all the accomplishments. If you are able to rest in meditation in the one taste of the deities that grant the siddhis, the ritual for receiving the siddhis and the recipient, yourself – if you know how to rest in this meditation – you will have received the siddhis. Those already familiar with the practice will see an improvement in their practice. Those who understand some of the principles of the practice, will begin to directly experience what they have understood. Those who experienced something will gain some realization, and those who already had some realization will increase that realization. The accomplishment articles and substances are placed at the forehead, throat and heart, and the empowerments are received. The edible accomplishment substances are eaten and the fluids that you now consider to be, by nature, the nectar of primordial wisdom, are drunk. Owing to its power, as we taste the nectar, it penetrates all our body's subtle channels. As a result, the supreme wisdom of great bliss arises and we gain the ultimate accomplishment. Therefore, if you take part in a drupchen practice and receive the accomplishments, your practice will improve a little. When practicing great drupchen accomplishment practice until the supreme accomplishment (the level of mahamudra vidyadhara) has been reached, the ritual for receiving the accomplishment involves receiving the siddhis through the path of union and through the path of liberation. But for those of us who practice on an aspirational level and whose practice is a mere reflection drupchen practice, it is fine to receive the accomplishment from the deities. Monks lose their vows if they receive the siddhis through the path of union without having applied the key points of this path. People like you who are not ordained can do this practice. That's easy to understand.

Lower Activities

After a drupchen has been completed, the other necessary activities that must be done to conclude the practice should happen at that point. Vajrakilaya, Kagyé and Yamantaka practices, for example, involve the higher activities related to enlightenment and the lower activities of liberating the enemies and obstructing forces; these specific practices must be performed at that point. But such practices belong to a more elaborate approach and are not required here.

Concluding Steps

The outer boundary of the mandala is not opened until the siddhis have been received, and the *remainder* offerings (called “ritual for the residual” in the text) are kept inside the mandala because the ishvaris, langkas and so on¹⁹ are outside, surrounding the mandala. Once the siddhis have been received, the remainder offering must be taken outside.

Tormas for the dharma protectors must then be offered.

If required, *hurl the weapon torma* (*zor*), which is the same as ‘throwing the averting torma’ (*tordok*). Inevitably, during a drupchen, we make mistakes, so we must *request forgiveness* for all those errors. Then, there is the *dissolution* of the mandala and *re-arising*.

The *four kings* standing around the mandala are now dissolved, as are as two deities on the lintel. Then the *phurbas of the ten wrathful ones are removed* in reverse order. They were ‘planted’ from zenith to nadir, so we remove them, from nadir to zenith and the blades of the phurbas are washed with milk.

Consider all phenomena to be emptiness and as we ring the bell, *the sand mandala* is dismantled, starting at the eastern wall.

We then seal the practice with the ‘lamp aspiration prayer’ (*marmé mönlam* in Tibetan). According to some traditions, the vajra master chants each line which the assembly repeats.

We *dedicate* all our efforts towards perfect buddhahood.

We recite *words of auspiciousness*.

Then we celebrate for three days. The instruction is not to go far from the practice place. When we finally leave a drupchen, we should endeavor not to meet with samaya breakers.

Benefit of Drupchen Practice

By diligently practicing in this way for seven days and by doing our best to maintain the slight familiarity with the practice we have developed, we have accomplished a drupchen. Remember, people like us practice simply on an aspirational level: our drupchen is a pale reflection of the real thing. Therefore, we practice, as instructed, for seven days, then we maintain our familiarity with the practice by doing it regularly. In this way, the fruits of the practice will quickly manifest.

¹⁹ When in ancient times, the Great Glorious One liberated Rudra, the 28 ishvaris, 16 great gings, 60 langkas, seven mothers and four sisters, eight barmas, 360 messengers and so on (Jokyab present different manners of listing them in *Light of Wisdom, Volume 2*, note 204, page 204) did not enter the mandala. So they couldn’t partake of the first pure portion of the tsok but only enjoyed the remainder offering taken to them outside. Since, they dwell on the periphery of the mandala. They have taken the vajra pledge to honor at the crown of their heads anyone who merely bears the name of the deity or the master. During tsok practices, the remainder offering is given to them to invoke their promise and to call upon them to fulfil their all-encompassing activities.

As Guru Rinpoche said, the benefit of seven years of undistracted solitary practice is surpassed by seven days of drupchen practice: in the seven days of drupchen practice, a practitioner can accomplish what usually takes seven years in one-pointed solitary retreat. He also said that it is as if all those who remember the name of such a drupchen and join in the practice, mix their blood with the blood of Guru Rinpoche's heart. Even if you have committed one of the five crimes with immediate retribution, by confessing and taking part in the drupchen great accomplishment deity practice, those five crimes will be purified and you will attain the level of a vidyadhara. This is the unique power of Secret Mantra.

For the bad times that will come in the future after him, when retreat and practice become difficult, and yogins face outer, inner and secret obstacles, Guru Padma has skillfully and with great compassion given numerous pith instructions about drupchen practice. Revealed as dakinis' termas, they retain the full power of their blessings. He said that if we practice them, there is no doubt we will reach the vidyadhara levels. If we cannot attain the four levels of vidyadhara in this life, the instant our breath stops we will be reborn at the Copper Colored Mountain, where there are no obstacles or unfavorable circumstances. There we will meet Guru Rinpoche, and the moment we hear his dharma teaching, we will instantly gain the realization of four levels of vidyadhara and reach buddhahood. It is said that even those who never take part in a drupchen practices and only make a connection with its name, will put an end to samsara. The bottom line here is that Guru Rinpoche said the benefits of drupchen practice are inconceivable. There were more than one hundred great tertöns who revealed an inconceivable number of termas, each of which can be practiced as drupchen.

The Result of Practicing Drupchens²⁰

This section of *the Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo* describes how to attain the four vidyadhara levels. Practitioners with superior capacities can accomplish the practice in six months. For those with middling capacities, it can take twelve months. And the dullest of the dullest take eighteen months.

Outwardly, they master kyerim, inwardly they master dzogrim, and their rigpa and wind-energies become more pliable. When Patrul Rinpoche was asked, "what is pliability over wind energies like?" – he said: "like this". He held his breath, sent the wind energy to his head and his head grew

²⁰ *Light of Wisdom: Conclusion*, pages 56-59.

very large indeed. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche said that when he practiced vase breathing, he only renewed the air in his body once or twice a week.

Once you have mastered your internal wind energy, you are able to see where the sun and the moon are, and therefore what the time is, without having to look outside. Having control over the wisdom awareness of rigpa, or “mind”, is the level called “exhaustion of phenomena”. At this point there is only clarity. As the *Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo* root text says:

While in the body of maturation, the mind ripens into the form of the deity.²¹

With the three defilements exhausted, you attain life mastery.²¹

Through the body of mahamudra, holding the lineage of the five families,²¹

You are the Spontaneously Accomplished on the level of the great regent.²¹

The explanation is given in the next section of the Light of Wisdom, the commentary to the *Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo* by Jamgön Kongtrul. This is the path all our teachers followed. I doubt we are capable of following the same path, but we should at least try, and this is why we do drupchens.

I cannot promise that the result of your seven-day drupchen practice will be exactly as described in this text, but there is no doubt that it will be beneficial. As a Buddhist, it is especially important to rely on the correct reasoning and authoritative teachings for our information. The termas of the knower of the three times from Oddiyana are filled with authoritative teachings! What did he say? “If you practice drupchen, you will reach the vidyadhara levels in this life, or at least you will be reborn immediately on the Copper Colored Mountain, where you will perfect the four levels of accomplishment, of that there is no doubt.” If all the teachings that mention the benefit of drupchen alone were gathered from the termas, you would end up with an enormous volume of teachings. There is a very good reason for this: something a single person cannot do is easily accomplished by a group because together we are stronger.

²¹ Ibid., page 56.