

DRUPCHEN
A TEACHING BY LAMA THARCHIN RINPOCHÉ

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What we call the Dharma, the Buddha's teachings, is something extremely vast, and I have no qualities to be able to describe to you just how vast those teachings are. On your side, using our ordinary way of analyzing or investigating things with our minds, you have no capacity to hear how vast these teachings are. So in brief, to get to the real core of the teachings, we are now practicing this Drupchen, which is an intensive group practice. And this is a very wonderful, incredible style of practice. But more particularly, as a framework for this practice we're using a text that was passed to His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche directly by Khandro Yeshé Tsogyal, called "Collection of Seven Treasures (*Ter Kha Dun Dü*)."¹ It was Yeshé Tsogyal who asked HH Dudjom Rinpoche to compose this specific text.

Yeshé Tsogyal is the crown ornament of ten million dakinis. She is the teacher who has been the most kind to all of the Tibetan people. And it is she who appeared in a vision to HH Dudjom Rinpoche, who himself is like the monarch of Dharma within the three realms of beings. He is our supreme spiritual guide. We call him by the name of His Holiness, or Lord of Refuge, Kyabjé Jigdral Yeshé Dorjé Drodul Lingpa Tsal as his long name. Yeshé Tsogyal appeared in a vision to His Holiness, and told him that this was the time to compose this text that gathers together six previous treasures as well as His Holiness' own terma of the practice of Guru Rinpoche. This then is this very holy, important, vital practice that we are all doing here together. By recognizing the qualities of this practice, you will develop faith. Having developed faith and then actually doing this practice, you receive its blessings. And by receiving its blessings you achieve the two forms of accomplishment – both common and supreme. Common accomplishments are what we call the four enlightened activities and the eight powers. Supreme accomplishment is to make manifest that which has always been present in the basis of our being from the beginningless beginning – our own enlightened nature. This is the reason why we are doing this practice, and there is no other reason to be doing Drupchen besides that purpose.

One reason this "Collection of Seven Treasures" practice of Guru Rinpoche is so special is that it gathers together seven different treasure lineages into one. This

is through the kindness, once again, of Yeshé Tsogyal, who asked His Holiness to do just that. You can imagine, if we didn't have this practice, it might be possible here in the West for some people to find a few of those lineages but probably not all of them. The same is true even in Tibet. Some of those lineages would be accessible to people, but rarely would they be able to gather all seven together. Thanks to the kindness of Yeshé Tsogyal, however, all the blessing and the power of all seven lineages have been gathered within this single practice.

When we are practicing any of these techniques, the point in any of the vehicles within Buddhism is always the same. Whether it is on the level of the Hinayana, the Shravaka practitioners, whether it is Bodhisattvas, or those practicing the tantras, or whether it is those practicing the Clear Light Great Perfection teachings, every Buddhist practitioner's goal is to attain enlightenment. However, each practice's approach is somewhat different. On the level of the Hinayana, one sees all phenomena as being like a magical display or a magical illusion, and bringing that attitude toward all phenomena is the path to enlightenment. In the Mahayana, one thinks of all phenomena as being empty. Bringing that attitude to bear at all times and meditating on the empty nature of all phenomena is the path to enlightenment. When practicing according to the tantras, such as in this particular practice, one considers all phenomena as wisdom deities and pure realms. Since the primordial, original nature of all phenomena is recognized as extremely pure wisdom deity, tantric practitioners don't need to impose other thoughts, such as: "Oh, things are a magical illusion," or "Things are empty." The nature of the deities themselves is originally pure. These are the wisdom manifestations of magical illusion, which are empty, which are the wisdom deities. So just focusing on that is itself a very powerful means to attain enlightenment.

This is the basic approach of the tantras. Then among all of the deities that are possible within the tantric tradition, we focus our Drupchen practice on the wisdom deity that is the most effective, that is to say, Guru Rinpoche. There are inconceivable numbers of practices within the tantras focused on different wisdom deities. Yet, our Drupchen practice focuses on Guru Rinpoche because Guru Rinpoche said that during the time of decline in this world, which is to say, our time, sentient beings will have very powerful, very coarse afflictive emotions, and Guru Rinpoche said his compassion would be that much stronger during this time of degeneration. Guru Rinpoche, himself, also said that the darker the time (darkness being a measure of the coarseness of people's afflictive emotions), the brighter the moonlight of his compassion. So this is the promise behind our practice and our choice of focusing on Guru Rinpoche.

So we have this practice of Guru Rinpoche whose compassion and blessings are that much stronger during such times as our own, which are very dark, with very coarse afflictive emotions. And we've received the lineage of these teachings from the teacher who is invested, empowered, praised, and lauded by Guru Rinpoche himself as his own representative, that is to say, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche. Guru Rinpoche and Yeshé Tsogyal appeared directly to His Holiness in a vision and they gave him the name Drodul Lingpa Tsal, the Adept Who Tames Beings, and at the time they invested him as their representative in this world. This, then, is the original source of this lineage, and we have received these teachings directly from His Holiness and from his son, who is also his spiritual heir, Dungsé Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, whose wisdom mind is completely of a single flavor with that of his father. We have received these teachings from both father and son in a very direct lineage that brings with it all of the power and blessing and influence of the original source. Having received these teachings is like having a wish-fulfilling jewel placed in our hand. We have it here in our hand, but we must recognize it as such. If you have a wish-fulfilling jewel in your hand, you can pray to it for whatever you wish and you'll receive it. Not recognizing this, you might as well be holding ordinary rocks and stones because if you've got an ordinary rock in your hand you don't think of praying to it and you don't receive anything from it. If you have a wish-fulfilling jewel in your hand and you don't recognize it as such, it might as well be something very ordinary. So, we must think, "Oh, this is the source of the lineage. Here we have it."

And further, you should be very happy with yourselves. Why? Because you have attained that which is very difficult to get in this world: that is to say, a precious human life. And in this human life you have met with that which is difficult to meet: the tantric teachings. You have met with qualified spiritual masters in the persons of HH Dudjom Rinpoche and Dungsé Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, and you have the opportunity to practice. These are signs of incredible merit on your part. So you should feel overjoyed at yourselves. You are the vessel for these teachings. You have the opportunity to practice. And yes, we have about a week for this Drupchen practice. It might seem like a short time, but it's not. A week is time enough. With recognition of your fortune to practice, with recognition that you're holding this wish-fulfilling jewel in your hand, a week is more than enough time. Without recognizing your fortune, you can practice without faith, without belief, without trust for an aeon of time and it won't be enough. If you have trust and faith in this practice and lineage, a week is time enough for you to attain supreme accomplishment. So please recognize your fortune and be happy.

Some people believe that once they become Buddhist the best thing to do would be to practice absolutely everything there is available – to practice the Sakya tradition and the Nyingma tradition, the Kagyu tradition and the Gelug tradition, at least. And if not that, then even within one tradition, they think it's best to have received as many teachings as possible. That's what some people believe – the more the better. Some of my Western friends have come to me and said, "You know, your center at Pema Ösel Ling... all you're doing are just all the rituals and practices of Dudjom, everything is just... Dudjom, the New Treasures of Dudjom Rinpoche. What gives?" And they're sort of unhappy about it, or they're questioning: "Why is it that you're just limiting yourself to such a small piece of this whole picture?" Well, the entire range of Buddha's teachings can be found within the Dudjom lineage, within these teachings. With these teachings, you have before you really the very innermost essence of all of the Buddha's teachings. It's really not necessary to go anywhere else. You have everything right here in these teachings, and to go elsewhere for teachings doesn't seem to make much sense. Here is the heart blood of the dakinis. Here are teachings that are vital, that are still powerful, that still have their blessing if you practice them.

What is proof of the fact that if you practice these teachings, they will lead to enlightenment, since attaining enlightenment is what we want in practicing the Buddha's teachings? Well, Dudjom Lingpa, Dudjom Rinpoche's previous incarnation, the source of many of these teachings, had at least thirteen disciples who attained rainbow body. And Dudjom Rinpoche had a student named Jigmé Chöying Norbu, a lama who had requested that Rinpoche write many teachings down, who he praised in the colophon of many of his texts as "my foremost disciple" or "the best among all of my disciples." Dudjom Rinpoche revealed a treasure with a prediction of this man's life and his attainment of rainbow body at death. And he did attain rainbow body. That was one example. A second example was one lama who was originally a Gelug geshe who received transmission of Dorje Phurba Namchak Putri teachings from His Holiness, who said, "Now you're the *chö-dak*. You're now responsible for these teachings." This lama wrote a long commentary to the Namchak Putri teachings. He, as well, attained rainbow body. And there was yet another who had received teachings from both Dudjom Lingpa and his reincarnation, HH Dudjom Rinpoche, and he also attained rainbow body. These are three that we know of, and who knows how many other students of Dudjom Rinpoche attained rainbow body? This is proof that these teachings alone contain all of the essential points, the innermost essence of the Buddha's teachings, because practice of these teachings alone can lead to enlightenment and to these marvelous signs of rainbow body at the time

of death. This is the basis of my faith in these teachings and this practice. I have very deep faith and trust that these teachings lead to enlightenment. This is the point of my making this opportunity available to all of my dharma friends to practice these Dudjom teachings because I trust very deeply that these are the heart blood or heart essence of the dakinis. These will lead my dharma friends to enlightenment. This is why I have made this center in this way.

Not only do we have these incredible teachings. You know, we are unbelievably fortunate – I guarantee that. I'm not competing or playing politics or anything, but under this blue sky today, there is an incomparable teacher who is the living Buddha Samantabhadra in human form and that is Kyabjé Thinley Norbu Rinpoche. Kyabjé Dungsé Rinpoche is our Lord Protector. For us to have this kind of good fortune and not make a serious effort to practice would be a big loss. You know we have this precious human life. Human life is more precious than that of the devas or gods. People think the deva or god realm is better than the human realm, but actually that's not so. In terms of temporary experiences of pleasure, happiness and joy, yes, devas have all that. But to reach the final, long-term happiness and joy of complete enlightenment, human life is more powerful even than the gods'. Why is this? It's because of our motivation. We develop the motivation to benefit all sentient beings equally under this blue sky. How many sentient beings are there? Wherever sky pervades, there are sentient beings. Wherever there are sentient beings, there's karma. Wherever there's karma, there's suffering. That's samsara. We think that we want to empty this samsara and liberate all sentient beings from their suffering. We develop that kind of vast motivation. Plus we have the skillful wisdom aspect of Vajrayana, these teachings. And the most powerful is the human body because while normally beings have five elements, humans have one extra called the element of the wisdom of exaltation.

Though devas do temporarily have some kind of joyful, light body that's not solid, still that body is based on karma. When this karma is exhausted, they can be reborn in other realms within samsara because they're not enlightened. The human body is the most powerful thing we have for practice. It's our good fortune to have this precious human life. And according to our positive circumstances, you can see what kind of teacher and teachings we have. We're unbelievably rich. Then, when we take that essence of our precious human life, it's most powerful. But without recognition, we lose that essence. Of course, we have to have faith. Generally speaking, on an external level, you have to have faith in the Triple Gems. And from the point of view of tantra, you first must have faith in your own enlightened nature, your Buddha nature. When you have

that faith, then naturally you will have manifestation of Triple Gems, of inconceivable Buddha phenomena, externally manifesting unobstructedly. When these two, your faith and Buddha's manifestation, come together, it's very powerful. When you're doing practice, then even though your life is one day longer, it's most meaningful. Every day you can recite mantra, do Dharma practice, accumulate virtue, and think of the Triple Gems' blessing with faith and devotion. If you keep receiving the blessings and continually repeat that, you will become fully enlightened. You know, we have Buddha nature, but based on two different circumstances, we find ourselves stuck in samsara or enlightened. When we are engaged with the afflictive emotions, that produces karma. Karma produces suffering. That's called samsara. Based on other circumstances, if our mind is engaged with the phenomena of the Triple Gems, and we develop that habit, repeating it again and again, then we become enlightened.

I'm trying to say that even one week is never too short because you're experiencing true positive circumstances. Normally we are always repeating and experiencing worldly material phenomena, which lead us to samsara. But for this one week of Drupchen, we are totally engaged with Buddha phenomena. For instance, you can look at all these external art forms, such as the Guru Rinpoche statue. Like we say in Tibetan, you can put the whole world on one side and this statue on the other side, and this statue will be more valuable than the whole world. We have this kind of support for our practice created by Kyabje Dungsé Rinpoche's own hand. The moment you think of this support, you continually receive its blessings. And everything we are doing during this retreat is Dharma. Then your mind repeats that experience and creates that habit. Then after Drupchen, when you go home, you can remember this experience: this mantra, this sadhana, the visualization, your faith and devotion. When you die, whatever kind of mental habit you've created awakens and you will be reborn wherever that habit takes you. If your anger habit wakes up, you wake up in the hell realm. If your habit of pride wakes up, you'll be reborn in the deva realm. And so on for each of the six realms. This Drupchen creates only the habit of Buddha phenomena. When that habit wakes up, immediately you wake up in the Buddha's pureland. That's what we're doing, creating this kind of pure habit. That's why this practice is so powerful. Through the kindness of Kyabje Dungsé Rinpoche and Lama Sonam Rinpoche, we have these kinds of genuine teachers to guide us. It's an incredibly unique and fortunate circumstance. Please keep that appreciation.

Then also it's most important to practice. You know, people have the idea, "Oh, I want to do practice, but I don't know how." Lots of people have this thought. But

Patrul Rinpoche said that's not true. He said, "Everybody knows how to say *Om Mani Padme Hung*, but only a few people accumulate a hundred million." People know how to recite mantra, but they're not doing it – that's the problem. To practice the Dharma, you don't have to know much. Dharma practice has to do with a pure heart. Have genuine faith in the Triple Gems and genuine loving kindness toward all sentient beings. Also have genuine trust in your own Buddha nature, and try to keep that awareness present all the time. It's that simple.

Thank you so much.