

# GODDESS QUEEN OF SPACE: ACHI CHOKYI DROLMA

LIFE-STORY, TEXTS, 'PRAISES' BY JE JIGTEN SUMGON

AND TEACHING BY 8<sup>TH</sup> GARCHEN RINPOCHE



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"The Chief of the activity ḍākinīs will come to the area of Tidro cave in Drikung. This will be a nirmanakāya manifestation of Vajrayogini."

--Chakrasmavara root tantra

"I, Achi Chokyi Dolma, wrote this sadhana of myself. By this, for 15 generations, this woman (I) will take care of you. If it is important, call me. I am more tenacious than other women. By all means it is my task to ensure that there will not be breakage in the continuity of (your) lineage. These are the words of Achi."

--from Achi sadhana composed by Achi Chokyi Drolma

"There are as many ḍākinīs as there are stars in the night sky, but there is only one brilliant, shining full moon."

– Achi Chokyi Drolma

"The fact that Achi said OM TĀRĀ at her birth was proof for everyone that she was an emanation of Tārā. Tārā appears in so many different ways not just in one way. Tārā has always appeared in the past, she will always appear in the future, there are innumerable manifestations always appearing of Tārā."

--8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche

## INTRODUCTION

For the Dharma Protector Day today, am happy to offer the first research post on this website about a Achi Chokyi Drolma (A phyi chos kyi sgröl ma), often referred to as the Glorious Goddess of Space<sup>1</sup> (Ying Wangchug Pelden: dyings dbang phyug dpal ldan) considered to be a manifestation of Vajrayogini, the Drikung Kagyu tradition Dharma Protector and the great-great grandmother of Je Jigten Sumgon ('Jig rten gsum mgon) founder of Drikung Kagyu: and these are the three kāyas of Dharmakāya, Sambhogakāya and Nirmanakāya<sup>2</sup>. She is one of the few female Dharma protectors but is considered to be an enlightened, not worldly, protector (for more on that see below).

This article gives a brief overview of Achi's life-story, English language research and texts about her and depictions of her and role as protector and deity. There is also a new translation of a *Praise to Achi* by Je

Jigten Sumgon and a full transcript of a teaching on Achi given in 2021, by 8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche. This whole article (with Praise and transcript) can be downloaded as a 30-page pdf booklet [here](#).

### *Achi's Life-Story*



Photograph of the hermitages of Terdrom, courtesy of Bryan J. Cuevas, 2006 (Muldowney (2011))

There are several texts containing the life-story of Achi. Garchen Rinpoche also speaks about her life in his teaching. To summarize Achi's life-story in brief, it is said her birth and role as Drikung Kagyu protectors, and emanation of Vajrayogini<sup>3</sup>, was prophesized by Guru Padmasambhava<sup>4</sup>. She was born in Zhoto, Tibet<sup>5</sup>, with special signs and accomplishments as a child to a wealthy family. After refusing to get married, she went to Kham and while there requested to marry an old yogin, Amey Trinley Gyamtso, to maintain the rare Khyura bloodline. Reluctantly he agreed and she performed various miracles for their marriage ceremony. After practicing together, she gave birth to four sons. When her sons were older, she initiated her sons in the Vajrayoginī practice and continued to perform miraculous acts, such as binding pernicious spirits under oath. Numerous sacred sites in the area bear her mark to this day.

Achi was over 70 years old when she passed away. One of her sons, Peka Wanggyel (Dpe ka dbang rgyal), likewise had four sons, and one of their sons was Jigten Sumgon, the founder of 'Bri gung mthil Monastery. Before passing away, Achi is said to have conducted a Chod offering transforming a human corpse into a sacred offering and vowed to be a protector of Buddhism, composing a liturgy for invoking herself as a protector deity. Having composed her own sādhana practices, she promised to protect those who would continue to perform them after her death. Upon completion of the verses, she flew into the air on the back of a blue horse, accompanied by a small dog, and departed for the Pure Lands. She then manifested to Je Jigten Sumgon and others on several occasions. It is also reported that she helped prevent a Mongolian invasion of the Drikung Thil monastery in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century<sup>6</sup>. For more details on her life-story, see Muldowney (2011) and Garchen Rinpoche (2021) below.

### ***'Outward Beauty, Hidden Wrath' - Research and texts by and about Achi Chokyi Drolma***

Despite Achi's importance to the history of the Drikung Kagyu tradition, and as one of the few female Dharma protectors, little English-language research has been done on her. The most comprehensive English-language source available on Achi and texts about her, is within a relatively unknown MA thesis (Florida State University) written in 2011 by Kristen Kail Muldowney: *'Outward Beauty, Hidden Wrath: An Exploration of the Drikung Kagyü Dharma Protectress Achi Chökyi Drölma'*<sup>7</sup>, which is worth reading in full, if one has time. In her research, Muldowney has helpfully provided:

- A translation of the complete catalogue of the contents of volumes one and two of *The Sadhana handbook of the Teaching Guardian Achi: Collected Texts Concerned with the Rites of Propitiation of the Special Protective Deity of the Drikung*<sup>8</sup>.
- A translation of a short sadhana of Achi from the collected works of the Khampa Gelug master, Rongta Lozang Damchoe Gyatso (1865-1917).
- A translation of the third chapter of the *Abridged Life-story of Achi Chokyi Drolma* (Bri gung a phyi chos kyi sgröl ma'i rnam thar mdor bsdus) and Konchog Gyamtso's summary of the texts and rituals related to the dharma protectress, Achi (2011:123-127)<sup>9</sup>.



Muldowney also references a life-story (composed by Kunga Rinchen (1475-1527), the 15th successor of Kyobpa Jigten Sumgon) and several sadhanas of Achi, translated by Tashi T. Jamyangling in 2010, which are all available for free download, [here](#)<sup>10</sup>.

There are five works by Je Jigten Sumgon I saw listed in his online Collected Works<sup>11</sup>, one of which is the Sadhana that Achi wrote herself. I have listed them below and translated their titles for reference purposes (they are also referenced by Muldowney in the translations listed above). The one practiced at Garchen Buddhist Institute is written by Jigten Sumgon. It is currently not available on their website though but I have requested it.

As part of this article, I have newly translated and published a *Praise to Achi*, composed by Jigten Sumgon Gonpo (with Tibetan and phonetics)<sup>12</sup>.

### ***Enlightened, barefoot protector and yidam deity emanation of Vajrayogini***

There are different forms of Achi, in some depictions she is presented standing and peaceful with a mirror and jewel. As she is seen as a manifestation of Vajrayogini she is also depicted with that deity goddess (see image below).



Achi depicted with Vajrayogini above her

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In others, she is depicted riding a blue horse, with damaru drum and kapala, and a semi-wrathful expression. She is certainly seen as a protector capable of great wrath and power when it comes to protecting the Drikung Kagyu teachings and monasteries during invasions and threats.



In an interesting chapter on categories and clothing of protectors and deities, Muldowney (2011:53-54) explains the distinction between mundane (unenlightened, worldly) and supra-mundane (enlightened) protectors:

“On one side are supramundane protectors, the fully-enlightened 'guardians who have passed beyond a ra' ('jig rten las 'das pa'i srung ma) and on the other are the worldly guardians or 'guardians who have not yet passed beyond a ra' ('jig rten pa'i srung ma / 'jig rten ma 'das pa'i srung ma). While much of the first group are only approachable by ritual specialists and yogic practitioners, the second group commonly resides in the world and can take an active role in the lives of Tibetans, some even taking possession of mediums or intervening in times of trouble.”

Muldowney concludes that according to Achi's short biography and other sources, it is clear that Achi is not worldly protector (wearing boots) but an enlightened, barefoot, protector<sup>13</sup>, as well as yidam deity (for some):

The *Abridged Life-story* contains more than just a hagiography, although Achi's life and death take up a substantial portion of the chapter. After beginning with a prayer to the deity, the author provides a

detailed description of the category of dharma protectors in Tibet, including an extensive list of examples, showing how Achi stands apart from them...

Accordingly, she herself is not the type of guardian who is bound under oath, because she is a Wisdom *ḍākinī* who deliberately came in order to protect the teachings. The unanimous glorification from the words of the authentic scholar-adepts of Tibet explains below how [this is so].

Achi revealed herself to people, such as Jigten Sumgon, and it is said some even wondered if Achi was a demoness<sup>14</sup>. For example, in Konchog Gyamtso's biography, it also says that Achi revealed herself to the 1<sup>st</sup> Karmapa, while he was debating with Jigten Sumgon<sup>15</sup>. Muldowney (2011: 38) explains that:

“Departing from the behavior of many of Tibet's mundane, oath-bound protectors, however, Achi takes multiple roles, making her an interesting point of departure in this category. According to at least one *sadhana*, besides being taken as one's dharma protector, she can be taken as one's inner-most secret lama (*gsang bla ma*), one's inner *yidam* (*nang ltar yi dam*), or one's secret *ḍākinī* consort<sup>16</sup>.”

However, 8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche (2021) advises against making divisions of protectors in his teaching that:

If one possesses wisdom then one will not make a division between the worldly and the wisdom beings and so on. Everything becomes non-dual or indivisible. Therefore, now if we make divisions on the other hand, in the practice and think that this is this, and this is that protector, we might achieve some happiness or some benefit from that in this life, but then if the motivation is not so pure then it will still become a cause of falling into the three lower realms. However, if we stay away from that division and we see their indivisible nature, then their practice will really become beneficial in this life and all future lifetimes. Then they will really become a companion on our path to liberation.

### ***8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche's Teaching – April 2021***

I also offer a full transcript of a teaching on Achi Chokyi Drolma, given by HE 8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche in April 2021 (see [here](#)). I received the online empowerment on Achi from Garchen Rinpoche, given in October 2020 (see [here](#)). The transmission and chanting of the Achi mantra, is given by Garchen Rinpoche in this video [here](#). Another Drikung Kagyu teacher, 11<sup>th</sup> Choeze Kuchen Rinpoche, offers a live teaching and practice on *ḍākinī* Day of Achi Chokyi Drolma, see [here for most recent one](#).



Garchen Rinpoche's teaching first gives some background and life story of Achi, including how she got her three names and the meaning of them, her marriage in order to maintain the ancient Khyura lineage in Tibet, which was in danger of dying out, and her great, great grandson, Lord Jigten Sumgon who was from this Khyura clan<sup>17</sup>. This was followed by a description of her qualities, the meaning of her mantra and how she is a manifestation of Tārā:

You can just also recite the short Achi mantra which is OM DHARMA TARE SVAHA. Basically, that means 'may I accomplish Dharma Tārā (Chokyi Drolma)' and that is what you can recite.

This is followed by an explanation of the ultimate meaning and qualities of Tārā<sup>18</sup>. Rinpoche states that one can practice any of the Achi sadhanas available and recite the short or longer form of her mantra. The supplication and practice of Achi, referred to by Garchen Rinpoche in his teaching, is not currently available online on the Garchen Buddhist Institute website and so I have asked them to send me a copy.

May this research, translation and transcript inspire beings to practice and attain the siddhis and protection of Achi and do more research on her life and practices! Music? Beautiful rendition with images of the [Achi Drolma mantra](#) or [Wild Horses](#) by the Sundays or '[The Power of Love](#)': 'I'll protect you from the hooded claw, keep the vampires from your door, when the chips are down I'll be around, with my undying, death-defying love for you. Envy will hurt itself, let yourself be beautiful...make love your goal.'

Written and compiled by Adele Tomlin, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.

### ***Sources/Further Reading***

Muldowney, K. K. (2011). MA thesis, Florida State University, '*Outward Beauty, Hidden Wrath: An Exploration of the Drikung Kagyü Dharma Protectress Achi Chökyi Drölma*'. See: <https://diginole.lib.fsu.edu/islandora/object/fsu:254364/datastream/PDF/view>

*Collected texts concerned with the rites of propiation of the special protective deity of the 'Bri gung Dkar bryud pa tradition A phyi Chos kyi sgröl ma.* (Bstan bsrung A phyi'i sgrub thabs be'u bum). New Delhi: Tsering Dorma Gelek, 1975.

Jamyangling, Tashi (2010). Various texts and sadhanas on Achi (Tara Foundation, Germany).

Konchog Gyatso (2004). *The Abridged Life-story of Drikung Achi Chokyi Drolma.* 'Bri gung Dkon mchog rgya mtsho. 'Bri gung a phyi chos kyi sgröl ma'i rnam thar mdor bsdus). Lhasa: Tibet's People Publishing House. Translated by Muldowney (2011).

8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche Achi Drolma teaching (April 2021) [here](#).

8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche Achi Drolma empowerment (October 2020) [here](#).

8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche Achi Drolma mantra transmission [here](#).



rin chen gyen dang dar gyi chö pen pur      chib su trin sep chu ta ngo nak chib

**Adorned with precious ornaments and billowing silk ribbon tiara,**

**Riding amidst the clouds on a blue-water horse,**

རིན་ཆེན་གོང་མེད་མུ་མེན་ཡོབ་ཆེན་འཁྲོལ།།

གསེར་སྲབ་གཡུ་མཐུར་དར་སྣ་ལྗེ་ཡིས་བརྒྱན།།

rin chen gong mé mu men yop chen tröl      ser sap yu tur dar na nga yi gyen

**Priceless, lapis-lazuli jeweled stirrups clicking,**

**Golden harness and turquoise stone reins, adorned with five types of silks,**

ཟ་འོག་དར་སྟན་གསེར་སྒྲིའི་སྐ་སྟེང་དུ།།

དབྱིངས་ཕྱག་དཔལ་ལྷན་སྟོན་མོ་བཞད་ཚོད་ཚུལ།།

za ok dar ten ser gé ga teng du

ying chuk pelden lha mo zhé chö tsül

**Atop a silk cushion on a golden saddle,**

**Rides the laughing glorious, goddess queen of space, [Yingchug Palden Lhamo]!**

གར་དགུའི་ཉམས་ལྷན་པོ་ཉ་ཚོ་འཕྲུལ་འགྱེད།།

སྣ་མིན་གཞོད་སྦྱིན་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་བསྐོར།།

gar gü nyam den po nya chontrül gyé

lha min nö jin khandrö tsok kyi kor

**With nine-fold dancing moods and miraculous display of retinue,**

**Surrounded by masses of asuras, yakṣas and ḍākinīs.**

འཕྲིན་ལས་བཞི་ལྷན་སྦྱོར་མེད་ངང་ཚུལ་ཅན།།

བར་ཀུན་སེལ་འདོད་དགུའི་དངོས་གྲུབ་སྦྱོལ།།

trin lé zhi den trö mé ngang tsül chen

bar kün sel dö gü ngö drup tsöl

**Endowed with the four activities and within the way of non-elaboration,**

**Removing all obstacles, granting siddhis and all that is desired!**

ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་གནས་དཔལ་གྱི་འབྲི་གུང་འདིར། །

pün sum tsok né pel gyi dri gung dir

**Here in the glorious Drikung place of abundant excellence**

**In order to increase prosperity, she who protects the whole doctrine,**

ལོངས་ལྷོད་ལྷེལ་ཕྱིར་བཀའ་སྲུང་ཀུན་མཛད་མ། །

long chö pel chir ka sung kün dzé ma

བསྟན་པ་བསྲུང་ཕྱིར་གཏོར་མ་འདི་བཞེས་ལ། །

ten pa sung chir tor ma di zhé la

**Please accept this tormas to protect the teachings , and**

**May the activities of the two accumulations be completed!**

ཚོགས་གཉིས་རྫོགས་པའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ།

tsok nyi dzok pé trin lé dzé du söl

Translated by Adele Tomlin, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.



## ACHI CHOKYI DROLMA: LIFE-STORY AND SECRET SUPPLICATION

Transcript of teachings by 8<sup>th</sup> Garchen Rinpoche (April 2021)



### **The birth and name of Drolma**

I am going to share some history about Achi Chokyi Drolma. She has three names: Achi Chokyi Drolma and these arose over a period of time. First of all how was Achi born? The name Achi actually means 'great grandmother' in Tibetan. That was actually the last name, the third name that she received from within the names Achi Chokyi Drolma. The first name was Drolma which means Tārā, which was the name she was given at birth. She came from a family from central Tibet from the Nanang area, the Nanang family. There was a father and the mother from the Nanang family and they couldn't conceive a child. So they requested all sorts of divinations and future predictions and so on. Then someone with clairvoyance told them that you should go to the Swayambunath stupa in Nepal and you should circumvent the stupa and make prayers to give birth to a son.

In order to give birth to a son you need to accumulate a lot of merit. At that time, it was very difficult to reach Nepal from Tibet because it was very far away. However, this couple then walked all the way from  
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Tibet to Nepal and they arrived at Swayambhu stupa and circumambulated it and made their prayers there. They slept there overnight as this clairvoyant person had told them to make offerings to the poor and so on and to stay and sleep at the stupa. So then they slept there and both the father and the future mother had very auspicious dreams at the stupa. Many very special signs appeared. For example, they dreamt of a golden butcher and one dreamt of a crystal vajra and so forth. Details of that you can find in Achi's life story<sup>19</sup>. In the morning, when they woke up the father and the mother were very happy about their auspicious dreams. Then they returned back to central Tibet in the Lhasa area.

Later, at the birthplace of Achi Chokyi Drolma there is a military office which is there now, and there is a Chinese name for an office. The place was previously known as Dragthang. After Achi was born, she became quite famous because at her birth many very special auspicious signs appeared and people realized she was a very special being. Therefore, this place, Dragthang of her birth was renamed to Kyedrag Thang, which basically means the 'plain of great renown'. This place actually still exists now and this is how it is called today.

The mother wanted to have a son so she had a child that could maintain their family line. They were a quite wealthy and well-known family in the area and after all these hardships they endured to conceive, everyone in the area was waiting for that child to be born. Then when the child was actually born it turned out to be a girl and not a boy. In the Tibetan tradition, at that time girls were not really favored that much. Achi's father, in particular, was really disappointed about it at first. He was not happy but the mother actually was very happy. She told her husband 'don't be unhappy because this girl is much better than any boy. This is a very special girl'. She knew that by just thinking back to the auspicious dreams that they had dreamt. Also, when Achi was born many auspicious signs appeared like flowers falling from the sky, and rainbows appearing and so forth. Everyone in the area saw that and they knew that this morning this child was born. She became quite famous, which is why the area is now called *Kyedrag Thang*, which means a 'renowned plane'.

#### **Achi's Birth and first and second names: Drolma and Choki**

What happened immediately at her birth is not found in the official written story of her life. This is more of a word-of-mouth story, transmitted orally by the common people. The story goes that the

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moment she was born she cried out and shouted out OM TĀRĀ. She said TĀRĀ which is the Sanskrit word for Drolma. Then people thought that she really must be an emanation of Tārā and people started naturally to give her the name Tārā. Thus, Tārā was the first name that she received.

Then, she grew up, she became a woman with great wisdom and compassion and quite famous in the area. When she was able to talk she started to teach the dharma to others and explained karma, cause and effect to them. She had great love and compassion for all beings. So people recognized that this girl is really very compassionate, she teaches the dharma and she is not just an ordinary girl. That is how she received the second name, Chokyi.

Then she became known as Chokyi Drolma. Cho means dharma, she basically became known as Dharma Tārā. She was an extremely beautiful woman and also came from a quite a well known and wealthy family. Therefore, the sons of many families in the area asked for her hand in marriage. There was a lot of fighting and rivalry in relation to who would get her. However, at some point she said 'I will not be given to anyone, I do not want to get married because I have to go to Kham in eastern Tibet'<sup>20</sup>.

### **Leaving her homeland and settling in Kyura Drag**

At that time, some Chinese traders and merchants came to Lhasa on their way to Kham, eastern Tibet. She just followed them and traveled with them from central Tibet to Kham. They arrived at Kham, in an area called Kyura Drag (later it was called that) there's also the Mani hill there. Kyura Drag became the actual practice place of Achi where she then resided<sup>21</sup>.

She arrived in Kyuradrag with those Chinese traders and they were continuing on to China. However, when they arrived in Kyuradrag she said to them so 'now I am leaving you, I am going to stay here'. They had developed some affection for her and told her 'whatever you need, if you need any wealth or any resources and food, whatever you need take it with you'. She said 'I don't need anything', but she did accept from them a sheep leg and some Tu (which is like a kind of a Tibetan sweet) and a big slab of butter. They sent her off with her taking only that. Why did she stay there? First of all is named Kyura Drag: Drag, means rocky mountains and Kyura is like a bloodline of old Tibet.

In that area, there were three main bloodlines, divine bloodlines, there was the Sakya one, the Dalung Kardze Dung bloodline, and then the Drikung Kyura bloodline. They were the most important bloodlines that really ensured the well-being of all the people at that time in that place. One of them was the Kyura bloodline, which was a very special bloodline because supposedly the line appeared in this human world through the union of a man with a goddess. That is why it is a divine line. It is said that a goddess came from from space down to the earth and united with a human man and so on. Then this kind of hybrid became the carrier of the Kyura bloodline. There are also stories about that in the history books, if you want to read more about it.

### **Meeting and marrying the yogi – Amey Tsultrim Gyamtso**

In any case, at that time when Achi (Dharma Tārā) arrived in Kham, the reason she wanted to go there was because there was a yogi who was the only one left belonging to that Kyura bloodline. He was also an old monk. His name was Amey Tsultrim Gyatso. If this old monk died, then that would mean the end of the Kyura bloodline in this world. She knew that and therefore, wanted to seek him out.

At that time, in Kyura Drag, Amey Tsultrim Gyatso was meditating in retreat in a cave and so she went there to meet the old monk in order to sustain the divine god lineage of the Kyura and she took her sheep leg and butter as an offering. She went there and told him they should get married. Then the monk told her that he had spent all these years already until now in retreat and had kept his vows and now he was old and that she should leave him alone and it would not be good for them to get married. Also, he said he had nothing, no wealth, no possessions, no family members, no relatives, friends in the area. It was customary to have such a kind of a retinue if you wanted to get married. Achi replied that 'in general, I also don't want to get married but you have a very special bloodline and it must not stop. You're the only one left and it would not be good if you die and the lineage is interrupted. So that's why we have to get married and produce children'.

After Amey agreed<sup>22</sup>, he then became worried about not being able to provide for her or arrange a wedding with friends and relatives and so on. Then she performed various miracles telling him 'Do not worry, I will take care of it.' She then miraculously pulled a damaru from her right pocket and a kapala from her left. Then beating the damaru and holding the kapala in her hand she made a mystic dance

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while gazing into the sky. Immediately the house was filled with the finest food and drink and the richest garments with which to clothe themselves<sup>23</sup>. The people of the area were then invited for the wedding. She then miraculously emanated precious jewels for him to wear as ornaments for a wedding, like gold and Dzi<sup>24</sup> stones and so forth. Then, people actually thought that this yogi is quite rich and he must have been hiding all of these precious gems all the time. In any case, they became quite famous and eventually they had four sons<sup>25</sup>. They practiced together and from this practice, four sons were born, one after the other. We can read more about the names of all these sons and their sons and so on in the history books.

### **Lord Jigten Sumgon and the Kyura bloodline**

That is how the lineage of the bloodline of the Kyura was sustained. One of Achi's four sons had a son, they had a son and so on, and that went on for four generations. After the fourth generation, Naljor Dorje was a descendant of one of those sons who became Lord Jigten Sumgon's father. If you want to know more about all the names and the details of the history, Khenpo Tenzin can share that with you.

In any case this is how Jigten Sumgon was born into this Kyura bloodline. Achi became quite famous for that. Also, Jigten Sumgon's coming was foretold in the sutras and in the tantras by Guru Rinpoche as a regent of the Buddha Shakyamuni himself. So, Jigten Sumgon was said to be Shakyamuni's regent, that was already predicted in many scriptures a long time ago.

### **Achi Practice Cave - horse and dog footprints and self-arisen HUM**

Returning to the topic of Achi, before she departed from this world, she stayed in this area called Kyuradrak. There is also a cave the Achi practice cave, where she spent most of her time practicing together with Amey Tsultrim Gyamtso.

Later, when it came time for her to depart from this world, she left on a horse and with a small dog. So the three of them, the horse, the dog and Achi together flew up into the sky, her riding the horse and bringing the dog with her into the sky. Then, the horse and dog both left foot imprints from the place where they took off into the sky. These footprints of the horse and the dog can still be seen today in the rocks there<sup>26</sup>.



That was the point where Achi departed to the ḍākinī pure lands in space. She left this world without leaving her physical body behind. Nowadays, this cave from where they departed is called the Khacho Phug, which is the ḍākinī Pure Land cave from where she departed from this world. It is considered a very holy pilgrimage place now. It is still there and be seen there in Kyuradrag in Kham. Also, in that area, close to that cave is another rock, and after she departed, on that rock a self arisen HUM syllable appeared. This HUM syllable then became the original form of the Drikung Kagyu logo. This is how she then received her third name which is Achi. After four generation, she became Jigten Sumgon's great--great grandmother, Achi . That is how she became Achi Dharma Tārā, or in Tibetan it's Achi Chokyi Drolma. Achi is the last name she received.

As I said before, the Kyura bloodline came from space and so Kyura is a Tibetan word, which means to throw down, to cast or throw down. It means the one who was thrown to earth. So the goddess who came from space to earth united with a human man. After uniting, she left and then brought back the child, and threw the child to earth. The child was not brought gently to earth but was thrown down to earth and hit its head a little bit on the ground. This made a dent in the back of the head of that child. So that is why actually the proper name for the bloodline Kyura means 'dent bloodline'. Apparently everyone after that who was born to this bloodline is said to have is born with this dent in the back of their head.

#### **An emanation of Tārā - the meaning of Tārā**

For Achi, the fact that she said OM TĀRĀ at her birth was proof for everyone that she was an emanation of Tārā. As Tārā appears in so many different ways not just in one way. Tārā has always appeared in the past, she will always appear in the future, there are innumerable manifestations always appearing of Tārā. All these Tārā manifestations appear in order to benefit sentient beings. For example, the Buddha Shakyamuni's mother, Mayadevi, was also said to be an emanation of Tārā who specifically came to this world in order to give birth to the Buddha Shakyamuni in order to bring him to the human world. A week after Buddha was born, Mayadevi also departed onto the pure land and passed away. That was her purpose, she was an emanation of Tārā.

Also, at the time of the Tibetan dharma King Songtsen Gampo was said to be a nomination of Chenrezig, Tārā appeared to assist him in the propagation of the Buddha dharma. At that time, Tārā appeared as his two queens, the princess Wencheng from China and the Nepali princess who were said to be emanations of the white and green Tārās. In the past, also white and green Tārā took a commitment pledge to Chenrezig to assist him in his activities to benefit the teachings and sentient beings.

Then also Tārā appeared as Machig Labdrön and many other famous female masters or practitioners who have appeared in so many different ways in this world. Not only in Tibet but also in other countries. For example, nowadays there are many famous or good-hearted females who act to benefit sentient beings to bring about their happiness. You find them all over the world globally. Actually, any female who acts for the benefit of sentient beings can be said to be an emanation of Tārā.

Also, for example, in the time of Guru Rinpoche, Tārā appeared as his consorts, Yeshe Tsogyel and Mandarava. Jigten Sumgon who was the great, great grandson of Achi, was also said to be an actual emanation of Buddha Shakyamuni. Achi appeared in this world in order to increase and protect the Buddhist teachings and also the Drikung lineage teachings and also in order to preserve the Kyura bloodline on this planet earth. There's a much longer story about that that you can read about.

### **Appearance of Tārā**

Now so many signs that have appeared of Tārā appearing in this world. For example, appearing as a female and who has accomplished the benefit of others but basically Tārā and Chenrezig are said to be like the parents, or like the basis from which all the other deities arise. For this reason, we need we need to understand what is Tārā and what is Chenrezig. It is not necessarily to look exactly like Tārā or Chenrezig. Do not grasp mainly at the physical appearance of Tārā or Chenrezig, it is really the inner mind of Tārā and Chenrezig that you should understand. What that means is that basically any male person that has great compassion and benefits sentient beings really is an emanation of Chenrezig and any female with great compassion who benefits sentient beings really is an emanation of Tārā. The reason how they can bring about great benefit in such a vast way to sentient beings is because they possess great merit. If one possesses great merit, then one can also do great things, it is the great merit is the ability and the attainment of enlightenment so Tārā and Chenrezig have

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attained enlightenment and that is such a great merit that gives them the ability to benefit so many sentient beings. In the Dzambala practice, it says at the end, please grant me enlightenment in a single lifetime, which is the endless accumulation of merit. So when one attains enlightenment, one's merit becomes endless. Meaning that one's activities to benefit others become endless and vast. Therefore they appear in so many different ways.

Therefore, to me, any male with compassion is Chenrezig and any female with compassion really is Tārā or Achi or Mahakala. So if you see it in this way, that that is really their essence and their essence is the same. Then you won't have any doubts about it, and if not, you will make divisions and you will say so 'these belong to the worldly category, and these belong to the wisdom being category' and make divisions. Then, if you make divisions between those different beings, then your mind will enter into a dualistic grasping and perception. Therefore, always come back to the mind, which is most important, the mind of love and compassion. The body is really uncertain, the body can appear in various different forms, there is no specific form that it appears. Tārā and Achi can appear directly in any form that bring benefit to others.

### **Achi as the three kāyas and the secret supplication**

There are different kinds of sadhanas of Tārā and also for Achi<sup>27</sup>. Her dharmakāya form is the great mother, the Prajnaparamita dharmakāya, the sambhogakāya is Vajrayogini and the nirmanakāya is Tārā, and also Achi appeared as a nirmanakāya. So there are different Achi sadhanas and different Tārā sadhanas. For Tārā, for example, there's also this green booklet the seven verses of supplication to Tārā for protection. This prayer here shows actually how Tārā and also Achi are actually within your own mind. When great love and compassion arise within your mind then that is the mind of Chenrezig or Tārā. This supplication shows how Tārā really is within your own mind within your love and compassion.

When love arises, wisdom will arise and wisdom realizes that samsara and nirvana actually do not inherently exist. That is what we realize when we engage in the practice of this supplication here. You can practice any sadhana that you wish and if you have no sadhana you can just read this green booklet, the seven verses of supplication to Tārā. This is a very special supplication because Jigten Sumgon spoke

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that supplication when Tārā appeared to him directly as a vision, and the supplication is related to the nature of the mind. On how she is actually inseparable from your own mind. So there's this one verse in there: 'goddess of non-dual mind' please protect those who are bound no matter what they do, By habitual dualistic grasping at concepts in the mind that is self-arisen non-dual primordial wisdom.' So she is the goddess of non-dual mind, inseparable from your own mind. So your own wisdom is Tārā, your compassion is Tārā, it is just this thought of me this I that is not Tārā. That fixation to me is what creates samsara.

In brief, Tārā is your own wisdom and compassion manifesting in various actions that bring about the benefit and the happiness of sentient beings all arising from this mind of Tārā and also Achi, is that mind. Also it's the mind of Mahakala and so forth or Chenrezig and so on.

### **The Dharma Protectors**

Regarding the protectors, every protector has an outer, inner and secret aspect and they appear in different forms. So the outer aspect of the protectors is their appearance that appears in various forms, different colors, implements, ornaments and so on. Their inner aspect is their love and their compassion. From that arises the secret aspect which is wisdom. If one possesses wisdom then one will not make a division between the worldly and the wisdom beings and so on. Everything becomes non-dual or indivisible. Therefore, now if we make divisions on the other hand, then in the practice protector and think that this is this and this is that protector, we might achieve some happiness or some benefit from that in this life, but then if the motivation is not so pure then it will still become a cause of falling into the three lower realms. However, if we stay away from that division and we see their indivisible nature, then their practice will really become beneficial in this life and all future lifetimes. Then they will really become a companion on our path to liberation.

### **Beautiful Face of a Shining Moon – Achi's Secret Supplication and verse**

Now I am going to read this secret supplication to Achi and you will have it available on the internet. You can also hear it later and then you can either practice this sadhana. If you have no other sadhana, it's fine too, you can just read the seven verses of Tārā supplication or just this secret supplication to Achi, which I am now going to read to you as a transmission.

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There are several different Achi sadhanas, there are a few of them that she herself composed just before she departed from this world into the pure lands, the ḍākinī lands. There are some quite lengthy sadhanas, there are many different scriptures. We can also find some of them I quoted, maybe you can find them in the internet, but in any case this one that we have here is very short and it contains the secret supplication. In the future, you can practice any sadhana, but if you have no other sadhana then you can just recite this secret supplication.

Regarding the mantra, you can just recite the Tārā mantra. For the Achi mantra there is a longer one, and a shorter one. You can just also recite the short Achi mantra which is OM DHARMA TARE SVAHA. Basically, that means 'may I accomplish Dharma Tārā (Chokyi Drolma)' and that is what you can recite. Now I'm going to read to you the transmission of the secret supplication. (see video at [1:01:27](#)).

The supplication I just read is from page 17 page 22 is a supplication to Achi. You can download that from the internet and then practice it yourself. Especially if you have some important activity to accomplish, then you should first develop a single-pointed faith and trust and with that mind, recite this secret supplication. Also, another thing is that before you recite this supplication, as an offering to the protectors you take one of those Buddha begging bowls and you fill it whichever offering and think that you are offering it to all the Buddhas, gurus, dakas and the ḍākinīs and the dharma protectors. First, you generate the motivation, then you arrange your begging bowl with the offerings, and then you recite the secret supplication with great devotion. So use a begging bowl for your offerings.

In this supplication, there is especially one verse consisting of Tibetan lines, that Achi herself actually spoke. I am going to put this together and make it available for you online and also get it translated into English. It is a very special verse. There are many different sadhanas. For example, the ones that she herself had composed and then there's also the practice of the seven verses of protection to Tārā that are spoken by Tārā herself. Then there is sadhana that was spoken by Achi herself. The fact they spoke these themselves is a very significant point.



There is a verse that has not yet been translated and I will also make available to you online. The significance of this verse is it says ‘there are as many ḍākinīs as there are stars in the night sky, but there is only one brilliant, shining full moon.’ So she is saying ‘that is me, my face is as beautiful as the shining, brilliant moon’. What she meant by saying that ‘I am beautiful like the moon’ is that this beauty is a sign that she has become the protectress of the teachings of the thousand Buddhas of this aeon. She is the assistant that benefits and helps all sentient beings. This particular verse is also a sign, or a kind of a proof, that she is here to accomplish all of our wishes and to benefit the sentient beings just perfectly. There are many different sadhanas and different words, praises and prayers, but this particular one really encapsulates it all and I am going to take that out from the elaborate practice, and have it translated and then make it available to you.

### **Upholding the Buddha’s teachings?**

It says that Achi increases and benefits the Buddhist teachings, so what sometimes people think is that, what are the Buddha's teachings, they think that upholding the Buddha's teachings means to build a very large monastery, or to support a very special lama and so on. Actually that's not true at all. What does it mean to uphold the Buddhist teachings? It means for a person to give rise to love and compassion in their mind stream. Basically, they wish to benefit sentient beings. Anyone who possesses love and compassion, and then due to that also wisdom, is actually holding the Buddha's teachings on an ultimate level. Therefore, you can really recognize if you have that within yourself. You can recognize this is the Buddha's teachings, this is how I hold the Buddha's teachings, whoever possesses love and compassion, will also possess wisdom. If you want to uphold the Buddha’s teachings you must uphold love and compassion.”

## WORKS BY JE JIGTEN SUMGON ON ACHI CHOKYI DROLMA

### **Great Drikung Dharma Treasure – TBRC W00JW501203<sup>28</sup>**

*Achi Sadhana which she composed herself* (a phyi'i sgrub thabs rang gis mdzad pa/) - 23: 315- 321

*Precious Cycle of Texts on Achi Chokyi Drolma from Fifteenth Chapter of Rinpoche Chodpen* (a phyi chos kyi sgrol ma'i sgrub skor rin po che'i cod paN las le'u bco lnga ma/) - 23: 321- 355

*Achi abridged Sadhana Carrying Bliss* (a phyi'i sgrub thabs 'khyer bde ba bsdus pa/) - 23: 355- 360.

*Achi Sadhana of the Whispered lineage of Extremely Great Blessings* (a phyi'i sgrub thabs snyan brgyud byin rlabs shin tu che ba/) - 23: 360- 370.

*Garland of Jewels: Appeasing the Guardian of the Teachings, Achi* (a phyi'i bskang ba nor bu'i 'phreng ba/) - 23: 370- 385.

### **Collected Works of Jigten Sumgon - TBRC W23743<sup>29</sup>**

*Sadhana of Guardian of the Teachings, Achi Chokyi Drolma* (bstan srung a phyi chos kyi sgrol ma'i sgrubs thabs/) 9: 564-578

*Garland of Jewels: Appeasing the Guardian of the Teachings, Achi Chokyi Drolma* (bstan srung a phyi chos kyi sgrol ma'i bskang ba nor bu'i phreng ba/) 9: 578-597.

*Concise Sadhana of Achi Chokyi Drolma* (bstan srung a phyi chos kyi sgrol ma'i sgrub thabs bsdus pa/) 9: 597-604.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Here translators have translated the Tibetan term ying (dbyings) as 'space' which is normally 'namkha' in Tibetan. The term has more the sense of 'expanse' than 'space' .

<sup>2</sup> Achi also appears as a protector in the Karma Kagyu refuge tree as Achi Chodron and is a dharmapāla protectot and ḍākinī in the life story of the Nyingma tertön Tsasum Lingpa (rtsa gsum gling pa).

<sup>3</sup> “Before this body [of Chokyi Drolma was born], in the place of the Zhoto Terdrom (Gzho stod gter sgron), [Vajrayogini] taught to the gathered seven action mamos from a few tantras of the Glorious Chakrsamvaras (Dpal bde mchog). [She] taught each of them, and the Protectress who confers the swift excellent path of Vajrayana (gsang chen mchog gi myur lam) gave [teachings] to Master Padmasambhava [as well]. Later, it is well-said from the mouth of Achi herself, “[At] Terdrom, I served as the consort (karma ) of Padma[sambhava], performing activities [in this capacity]. Afterward, I went to Dento Sung Ngu (‘Dan stod tsung ngu).” (Muldowney, 2011: 19-20).

<sup>4</sup> “In Uddiyana, the country from which Vajrayana came, there is a divine palace where Vajrayogini appeared in the form of Vajradākinī and promised to defend the teachings of the Buddha. She gave this promise to the five Wisdom dākinīs. Later, in the eighth century, when Guru Padmasambhava was invited to Tibet to spread the teachings of Dharma, he blessed many parts of Tibet and meditated in many caves. Among them was the Tidro cave near Drikung, where Guru Rinpoche spent seven years - the largest time he spent in any place in Tibet. During this period, Vajrayogini appeared before Chief Karmaḍākinī and promised to defend the teachings of Vajrayana. Through manifestations in the jnanakaya (body of wisdom) it protects precious teachings and brings good to all living beings.”--prophecy about Drikung Kagyu protector, Achi Chokyi Drolma

<sup>5</sup> Zhoto Terdrom (Gzho stod gter sgron), north of the Drikung Til complex, the birthplace of Achi which literally means “Box of Treasures.” Is alternatively known as Tidro in early sources, and it contains some of the oldest and most sacred sites of the region with legends dating back as early as the eighth century. A cave there was said to have been practiced in by Yeshe Tsogyel during various points of her life with Padmasambhava, alone and with her male consort, one time for seven years and returned there to do solitary retreat for the rest of her life. For more detail on that see Muldowney (2011: 93-96).

<sup>6</sup> “Around this same time [1239], another raiding party, led by the commander Miliji (Mi li byi) reached Drikung Til, but upon seeing the face of the Fourth Drikung Hierarch (Spyan nga grags pa 'byung gnas, 1175-1255), “faith was born in him,” and the party left without harming the monastery or its inhabitants. Around a month later, Dorda Darkhan arrived in Drikung to do the job himself, but again the miraculous powers of the abbot is said to have thwarted his attacks. While the Blue Annals reports that this miracle came in the sudden magical showering of stones from the sky, local legends claim that Achi, now regarded as the deified protectress of the monastery, was responsible for the defeat, having imprisoned many of the invaders in her lhakhang located below the monastery and incinerating them inside.” (Muldowney (2011: 90).

<sup>7</sup> MA thesis by Muldowney, K. K. (2011). ‘Outward Beauty, Hidden Wrath: An Exploration of the Drikung Kagyü Dharma Protectress Achi Chökyl Drölma’. See: [http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU\\_migr\\_etd-4677](http://purl.flvc.org/fsu/fd/FSU_migr_etd-4677)

<sup>8</sup> Bstan bsrung A phyi'i sgrub thabs be'u bum: *Collected Texts Concerned with the Rites of Propitiation of the Special Protective Deity of the 'Bri gung* (New Delhi: Tersing Dorma Gelek, 1975).

<sup>9</sup> See Muldowney (2011: 123): this short biography by Konchog Gyeltsen is published in a text called: Dpal lhan lha mo dbyings phyug a phyi chos kyi sgröl ma dang 'brel ba' (Lhasa: Tibet's People Publishing House, 2004). "According to the colophon of the *Abridged Life- Story of Drikung Achi Drolma*, (Bri gung a phyi chos kyi sgröl ma'i rnam thar mdor bsdus) this small, three-chapter booklet was commissioned by one of the two current leaders of the Drikung Kagyu, Chungtsang Tenzin Chokyi Nangwa Rinpoche (Chung tshang bstan 'dzin chos kyi snang ba rin po che, 1942- present) himself, and written at Lhasa's Norbulingka palace in the year 2000.(2011: 13).

<sup>10</sup> These texts are: A phyi'i Gsang sgrub ( ecre chi dhana); A phyi'i 'Khrung rabs ( Life story of Dharma Tara or Achi Chokyi Drolma); A phyi'i Sgrub skor Bstod pa'i Rim pa (Praise from the Cycle of Achi Liturgy. All published by the Tara Foundation of Germany, 2010, Tashi T. Jamyangling. They are all available for free download here: <http://www.drigung.com/translations.html>

<sup>11</sup> In the *Great Treasure of Drikung Kagyu Dharma*: 'bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo/. TBRC W00JW501203. Lhasa 'bri gung mthil dgon/, 2004.

<sup>12</sup> The Praise is in *The Garland of Profound Dharma Jewels* (khams gsum chos kyi rgyal po thub dbang rat+na shr'i'i thun mong ma yin pa nang gi zab chos nor bu'i phreng ba bzugs so/) Volume 9:2-3 in *the Collected Works of Jigten Sumgon* ('jig rten mgon po'i gsung skor/ ) published by Songsten Library, Dehra Dun in 2008. TBRC W3JT13348.

<sup>13</sup> To back up this conclusion, Muldowney (2011) discusses the footwear of worldly Dharma protectors who normally wear boots, whereas enlightened protectors are normally barefoot.

<sup>14</sup> “Regarding the Goddess Queen of Space (Dbying phyug lha mo) herself: Even though, as explained, she is fundamentally not a type [of dharma protector] who is bound under oath because she is a genuine wisdom dākinī who intentionally undertook worldly existence [as a] teaching method, some [people], because of a measure of ignorance, wonder if she is a female demon ('dre mo ). She is not. Lord Jigten Sumgon from the *Introduction to Vajrayana* (Rdor rje theg pa'i lde mig), praises [her, saying],

"I am known as the Lord of Dakinis. The Mother Queen of Space is a Vajradakini. [Mundane] sky-goers were vicious [and were] subjugated. Yogins [who have] not transcended are protected [only] because of their oaths. Not only [that], love has been nurtured, [and the sky-goers] grew affectionate. Today, the minds [of] the mistress [sky-goers] have become [loving] like one's own children. As for this Vajradakini, a great grandmother is a low woman, but a maternal grandmother is very low."

The entire assembly having entrusted [themselves] to her, including the hermits, [Achi] is known in all directions.” (2011:30-31).

<sup>15</sup> The abridged biography says that Drubthob Khampa Gyagar (Grub thob khams pa rgya gar, 1110-1193) [which Muldowney explains is a common name for the 1<sup>st</sup> Karmapa, Dusum Khenpa] and Jigten Sumgon:

“.. were debating in Drikung Changchupling ('Bri gung byang chub gling), the sound of a damaru [resounded] from the sky and the melodious voice of a ḍākinī arose. Druptop asked the Lord of the Dharma (Chos rje) how this could be, [and] he replied, "The voice which arises is a Wisdom ḍākinī, my Grandmother." Druptop insisted, "What is her sadhana like? How is [her] practice done?" ] Because of that [Jigten Sumgon] bestowed many extensive sadhana and the fifteen chapters [of] the Precious Diadem in the Sadhana ycle (Sgrub skor rin chen cod pan le'u). Druptop said, "Having reviewed the oral transmission with earnest, the essence [of the] goddess (hri ma) rose up from the sphere of reality, [and I] perceived [her] with divine sight from the sphere of wisdom.”

Is that like a vicious demoness? Moreover, that method [of practice is] not only [in] the Precious Five Ornaments (Rin chen gyi rgyan can lnga),<sup>101</sup> [but] the empowerment of this Protectress Deity is also said to be like [those among] the Highest Mother Tantras (Bla med ma rgyud). This itself is able to indicate the truth [that she is] a mother who is born a Wisdom dakini Victorious One, because an empowerment [which] entrusts the life-force to a kind of mundane demon is not a true [empowerment].

When some say [she] is like the Sakya witches (Sa skya'i 'bag mo), [she] is not. As for that, the hateful beings teach [that she] is a demoness of an arrogant lineage, but she herself is actually the mother of the Victorious Ones." (2011:31-32).

<sup>16</sup> Meghan Howard, trans., *The Unelaborated, Easy to Implement Sadhana of the Sole Mother Chokyi Drolma, Lady of Nanam* (Frederick: Tibetan Meditation Center, 2005), see Muldowney (2011).

<sup>17</sup> ‘Khyura is ‘an illustrious clan from Tsungu (tsu ngu) in Kham that claims descent from King Relpachen. It was Jikten Gonpo Rinchen Pel from this clan who founded Drigung Til Monastery in central Tibet in 1179 and established the Drigung Kagyu tradition. With the rise of Drigung as a center of political power in the thirteenth century, the Kyura clan became one of the rivals to Sakya rule in the period of the Mongol Yuan dynasty. Kyura control of Drigung ended in the seventeenth century, replaced by two incarnation lines, the Drigung Chetsang and the Drigung Chungtsang’. (See: <https://treasuryoflives.org/en/institution/Kyura>).

<sup>18</sup> Mantra of Achi Chokyi Drolma: OM MAMA CHAKRA SVAHA YAR DU SARWA DU RADZA RADZA DU MAMA DU HUNG PHAT SVAHA. OM MAMA means "to me". CHAKRA is a Sanskrit word, it means a wheel that symbolizes all kinds of activities and excellent qualities. SVAHA means "may it be so." OM MAMA CHAKRA SVAHA is a very short version of the Achi mantra. YAR DU is a peaceful activity. SARWA DU is increasing activity. RADZA RADZA DU is magnetizing activity. MAMA DU is wrathful activity. By those activities, Achi can destroy external and internal maras - all mental delusions and defilements with her great compassion and wisdom. HUM means getting these qualities. PHET means the removal of all obstacles. SVAHA here means "may it be so".

<sup>19</sup> ‘From the bottom of their hearts they prayed for the child, and one night a woman named Drize Dharzam had a dream that in the east a bright shining sun appeared, which shone light in ten directions and then dissolved in her intestine, and then appeared I am the light that filled the whole universe, especially lighting up the country where she was born . On the same night, her husband Nanam Chovopal saw a dream that a necklace of clear white light appeared from the eastern land of Buddha and entered his wife's womb. In the morning, they discussed their dreams and he said that they have a special son and they should show great care before the child is born. They made tsoḡ offerings, prayed hard to fulfill their wishes, then returned to their homeland in Drikung.’

<sup>20</sup> In the *Abridged Life-Story of Achi* (17.4) she said: "I will not stay in this [place]. There is a person of a good family in the direction of Kham. We have a profound connection with that [place]. From [our] great unbroken method, a fortunate person [of] a good family will arise." Method here is being used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse. Muldowney (2011: 25):

Here, "method" (thabs) is used as a euphemism for sexual intercourse; see chapter four for an elaboration on this usage and its impact on Achi's hagiography.”

<sup>21</sup> Dentö (Dan sTod) is where Kyura Drag is in today’s Yu Shu county in Qinghai Province. The capital of this county was known as Ga Kyegu Dho in olden days. Kyura Drag was the first base/seat of Drigung Kyobpa Rinpoche. (see Jamyangling 2010: 16).

<sup>22</sup> According to the *Abridged Life-Story of Achi*, Achi said: "I also do not have great worldly attachment. Due to the both of us, auspicious connections will be created which will bring forth many great beings who will accomplish activities for the precious teachings of the Buddha. We exist for this. Because of [this] wealth of prosperity, [we] need not fear destitution. [This is] what must be done to make attainments [for] everyone." After Amey accepted it is said that people began to mock and deride him and ask him ‘what is the use of that woman?’

<sup>23</sup> According to the *Life-Story of Achi* translated by Tashi Jamyangling (2010:11-12):

“Now, do not be intimidated by lack of wealth and prosperity,” Chökyi Dolma said to Amé Tshultrim Gyaltshen. “I’ll get them.” That very night, the marriage ceremony leader was called in. Next day Chökyi Dolma said, “All my relatives are in Tibet, which is too far.” She added that her wedding guests were the members of the merchant caravan, who were in the area, and she sent out the word to all of them. Amé Tshultrim Gyaltshen and his group were scared stiff. “We are barely able to make ends meet. What can we do for the guests?” They panicked. Chökyi Dolma made the sound of Phat once and miraculously produced a skull from her left breast pocket. With the sound of another Phat, she produced a hand drum from her right breast pocket. “Please put in here whatever you have for the turning of the wheel of accumulating merits,” she said, and held out the skull. A right front leg of a lamb was offered to Chökyi Dolma. She said, “Yes, it is of great interdependent origination.” “I’ll bear four sons,” she continued. “These sons will, directly and indirectly, turn out to be great sublime beings who will serve the Buddha Dharma,” and she

played the hand drum. An incalculable amount of various food and drinks appeared as if rained down. The guests were entirely pleased with food and drink.

<sup>24</sup> Dzi are a type of indigenous Tibetan beads that are oblong, round, cylindrical, or tubular in shape, black or brown in color, with white eye-like features. They are considered auspicious.

<sup>25</sup> ‘The sons were Namkhe Wangchuk, Pekar Wangyal, Sonam Pal and Kathung Trushi. Particularly intelligent, they became great scholars, both on a worldly and spiritual level. Pekar Wangyal in turn had four sons: Khenpo Dharma, Konchog Rinchen, Tsunpo Bar and Naljor Dorje, the father of the great Ratnashri Jigten Sumgön, the great Drikungpa, reincarnation of Nagarjuna.’

<sup>26</sup> Muldowney (2011:28-29) explains:

“The great mother herself enrolled her four sons into the practice of Vajrayogini (Rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma), and having done so, they experienced [the goddess] in bodily form and discerned the true nature of reality. Then, on the Sky Cliff (Nam mkha' brag - , with her own hands, made a four-petaled lotus from the center of the dharmodaya (chos 'byung , writing [the syllables] " Bam hi ri ni sa." Even now it exists to go see. On the ground under the large rock, [one can] see an image of five – the mother and sons - together with remaining traces at the front, back, right and left [sides]. [These] are established as marks of accomplishment. Now, all are directly [able] to benefit from a sight like that. Furthermore, embodiments of malicious hateful beings, [such as members of] pernicious lineages and wicked worldly kin , were bound under oath and placed into service [by Achi at that time]. Having [subdued them], she did the great blessing activities of doctrine beings, such as giving directions to uphold the teachings. To the subdued worthy ones, [she] said, "I myself, having taken the way of rebirth in samsara intentionally, increase and spread the Buddha's teachings, and I have come here by means of prayers in order to preserve [them]. If desired, supreme and common attainments will be given to you all." Having said that, she instructed [them]. Afterward (Dpa' smad chu bo). Taking a genuine fresh corpse from the charnel ground, she created a tantric feast offering. At the feast, many common and supreme siddhi attainments arose to those able to enjoy [it], but [those of] inferior fortune and few accumulations [of merit] were obstructed by wrong views. At the assembly, a share of attainments came in isolation to those unable to enjoy [it].

That cave is known as "Achi Cave" (A phyi phug), and there is also a body imprint [of] the mother and sons in the rock. Then, reflecting on the disciples and children of the Fortunate One, she herself performed her own sadhana. She said, "For the sake of [my] sons and grandsons, I myself have performed my own sadhana. If great importance is put on me, [in] the distant future, I [will spread] further than any other young woman. It will be impossible to break [my] family lineage and the precious teachings will be spread." And like a golden line, she prophesized the lineage of descendants would not be cut and temporal and spiritual activities would arise until the end [of the age]. When, in stages, the training of the noble

[woman's] disciples was finished, she said, "All the activities of this very female body have been completed. Now, to these generations of children, an ancient supreme teaching will arise from the general teachings. I myself will act [as] the dharma protectress of that. Even now, I myself will also act [as] a protector until the fifteenth generation of practice with whoever performs these sadhana . Having given [her] final words, such as "Put a great importance on me" and so forth, without renouncing [her] body she departed to the celestial realm (mkha' spyod), manifesting the form of the Great Transference into Rainbow Body ('ja' lus 'pho ba chen po). All non-human evil-doers of the world-system without exception, [who were] evil, ferocious, and praying for evil, were [subject to her] subduing activities. Achi herself, by means of the Padmasambhava m dra, shook the entire world-system, completely felling god-demon evil-doers. Because [of this,] it is said that all disciples will achieve the secret [teachings]. (2011: 28-29).

There is a similar story in the Life-Story translated by Jamyangling (2010: 12-13).

<sup>27</sup> 'Once when Jigten Sumgon was staying at Jangchub Ling in Drikung Thil, he heard the sound of the damaru accompanied by beautiful celestial songs. Drubthob Khamba Gyagarwa, a great yogi disciple was there and asked Jigten Sumgon about the music. Jigten Sumgon said, 'The incomparable sounds are from Achi Chokyi Drolma, my grandmother, who is a wisdom- dākinī.' Then Drubthob Khamba insistently requested that he be given a method on how to practice Achi Chokyi Drolma and then Jigten Sumgon composed a sadhana consisting of ten leaves which is contained in the 'Achi Pebum.' *Prayer Flags - The Life and Spiritual Teachings of Jigten Sumgön* by Khenpo Könchog Gyaltshe.

<sup>28</sup> The *Drikung Kagyu Great Treasure* is a massive collection of texts from the Drikung Kagyu, as well as some texts from other Kagyu orders. Edited by Agon Rinpoche and Rase Kunchok Gyatso. 'bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo/. TBRC W00JW501203. 23: 315 - 321. Published in Lhasa by Drikung Thilgon ['bri gung mthil dgon/], 2004.

<sup>29</sup> In the *Collected Works* of Jigten Sumgon (gsung 'bum/ 'jig rten mgon po) TBRC W23743. 9: 564 - 578. Delhi: Drikung Kagyu Ratna Shri Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 2001.