

The Song of the Vajra

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Good day to everybody. We will do a short Ati Guruyoga.

The Song of the Vajra belongs to the series of *semdzin* but originally it is not a *semdzin*. When we say '*semdzin*', what does that mean? It means a kind of a practice, a method to discover our real state. But how does it work? Mostly it works through some mental concentration or visualization. It's working with the mind first of all. The word *semdzin*, *sem* means 'mind', *dzin* means 'to hold', 'to keep stable or firm'. Why? Because in general our mind is very agitated and always jumps from one thought to another. So the first thing we should learn at the beginning is how to hold this mind and make it stable.

In this sense *semdzin* is also a preliminary practice in Dzogchen. In general, when we say 'Dzogchen meditation', 'Dzogchen contemplation', it does not imply any effort by the mind. So if we say, "I want to do a Dzogchen meditation", it means at that moment we shouldn't have any particular idea where we want to be or what we want to reach, otherwise that already becomes an obstacle. Also, if we say 'Dzogchen meditation', 'Dzogchen contemplation', it's already very clear. It says in the tantras and texts, "If you don't meditate, ok, don't meditate. But if you meditate, don't close your eyes." Already from this very short line we can understand what the essence of Dzogchen meditation is. It means we are in that natural state and we are completely

open to sense perceptions.

This already is explained in the Semde. And in the Longde, of course, particularly, we have the four *da*, and from the beginning we start with the senses open. Then, of course, there is the Upadesha series with the four *chogzhag*, and the main point of the four *chogzhag* is integrating, that is *nangwa chogzhag*, the *chogzhag* of the visions. Why do we need to do that? Because every sentient being has bodhicitta, or their primordial state. How do we explain the nature of this bodhicitta? We say it's like a mirror. This mirror has no particular essence; we cannot say it is one way or another way because we can have different shapes, different colors, there is no substance. The essence of the mirror is its capacity to reflect. In the same way the nature of mind, or bodhicitta, has capacity of reflecting infinite potentiality because the primordial state is not just emptiness but at the same time it's empty and clear and possesses infinite energy.

From our point of view, in a limited way, we say that it is emptiness because we cannot find any substance, yet at the same time it is clarity because there is thought arising and we have sense perception. But this mirror, even if it's pure and has infinite capacity to reflect, now it has become dirty and dark, obscured. Now we don't have this infinite perception of what we call the three kayas, five wisdoms, infinite pure dimensions, we don't have that capacity. Now we perceive a very small personality, which we call 'the self' with its surroundings, five skandhas, or five aggregates, and all the functions of subject and object. It's what we are living. It's our dimension.

How can we go back – 'back' is not the right word, – but how can we allow this primordial manifestation of wisdom? Then we have to go back to the source, the source of samsara, that means our dimension with confusion, dualism on one side and what we call the manifestation of wisdom; their source is the same. This is what we call bodhicitta, this is the meaning of bodhicitta. But then this bodhicitta becomes obscured or completely forgotten by all sentient beings.

Then through many *kalpas* of transmigration finally we meet the teacher who says, "I introduce you, you are in samsara, now you have to do something." Then the teacher shows what the source is and how you have to recognize that source. Once you recognize it, we call that the state of *rigpa*; that is the meaning of *rigpa*. Practicing Dzogchen means now we have to try to continue in that state as long as possible, as often as possible. Then the way this knowledge can develop more quickly is through integration with our senses because the senses are the door of wisdom. All the functions that we have now – we are talking, we are hearing, we are seeing forms and colors – everything is based on the five elements. Now all these five elements are in a distorted or impure form, but the same nature of these five elements manifests as infinite wisdoms and kayas, for example. Then this same energy that manifests through sense perceptions, if we allow this manifestation of the senses to display without the workings of our mind, that means we are allowing that wisdom to come forth. That's why they say, "If you want to meditate, don't close your eyes", for that reason.

That's what we call real Dzogchen meditation, Dzogchen contemplation. But the base of

Dzogchen contemplation or meditation is that we have recognition of our primordial state. This recognition in the Dzogchen way is that the teacher usually gives us direct introduction. But direct introduction does not mean that the teacher says, “Now you concentrate, you visualize this” or “I will do something and you will try to be in that state”, and you don’t experience anything and it’s finished. That is not direct introduction. If I ask somebody if they received direct introduction from Rinpoche they may say that they received it 10 or 15 times. But if this person tells me that they still don’t understand if they are in the state of rigpa or not, it means this person did not receive direct introduction. They received the blessing of the transmission, but that is not the same.

I already explained last year that people are confused about transmission and direct introduction. It’s not the same thing at all. Also there are many ways of direct introduction. In direct introduction mainly it is the student who has to work by him or herself. Therefore we have many methods like *rushen*, *semdzin*, and so on, with which we can have an experience and at one point have that flash, that understanding, and we think, “Oh, I think this is it, finally”. Then maybe the following year, Rinpoche gives direct introduction again and we think, “Yes, it’s the same experience I had at that time, so it must be it.” Until every time we receive direct introduction we find ourselves in the same state, and every time we apply our practice and it works we find ourselves in the same state, then we can be certain of that.

This is to show that it’s very important that we work on our side experiencing methods. Many times Rinpoche taught the Yeshe Santal method, or the method with the five A. So it’s very important to be sure that we can be in the right state. But in general, *rushen* and other methods have this purpose. And *semdzin* can also be applied for that purpose.

The origin of the *semdzin* is mainly from the *Dratalgyur* tantra but it just says there are 7, 7 and 7 of them and it does not even mention their names. In the *Nyida Khajor*, Union of the Sun and Moon tantra, there is a very brief explanation – this *semdzin* is for that purpose and so on – and 21 of them are listed. Of these 21 *semdzin* we have explanations of 7 *semdzin* in other texts. At the time of Longchenpa there was already an explanation of the 7 *semdzin*. The Song of the Vajra is considered as a *semdzin* in the Union of the Sun and Moon tantra but in Longchenpa’s explanation it is not included as a *semdzin*. In Longchenpa’s texts there is an explanation and translation of the Song of the Vajra but it’s in another section which explains how to apply the secret conduct.

The Song of the Vajra, in Tibetan we say *dorje lu*, but we can also say ‘vajra song’, like we say Vajra Dance and Dance of the Vajra. There are many kinds of vajra songs in the tantric tradition which have been expressed by mahasiddhas. Even in the Dzogchen Semde we have 21 teachers and their spiritual songs. Sometimes they are called *dohas*, sometimes *charya giti*, which means “songs of conduct”. Sometimes they are called “vajra songs”, or *vajra giti*. For example, some mahasiddhas, usually in the context of a ganachakra, expressed their feeling at that moment and improvised these vajra songs. A song means when you want to express your feelings: joy or suffering, some strong emotion. If you have some talent in that direction, usually you can write a

song or sing; you have that feeling and usually it's connected to that kind of energy. Art in general, painting, any kind of art is related to that energy.

In that sense with vajra songs they express their feelings of that moment, their knowledge of that state, how they perceive pure vision, etc. For example, we have this Ganachakra Song of the Vajra. Some of you may have received it from Rinpoche during Jnanadakini teachings. It is also a kind of vajra song. It explains how the situation how is there. "We are in this situation, we are happy, we are showing compassion, we don't want to have any quarrels, we are being here, enjoying these substances," this is what the Vajra Song of Ganachakra says, for example.

When we talk about the Song of the Vajra in the Dzogchen Community, it's not a song that somebody composed. It's the natural sound of the *dharmata*. When we say *dharmata*, which is just another name for the nature of the primordial state. When we say *dharmata*, the first way of manifesting is the *dang* energy and that is related to the sound. The *dang* energy means that through the sound, there is an explanation about how the letter A [manifests] from the state of Samantabhadra. Then from the letter A the manifestation expands a little more and we have the sound of OM A HUM. It's all explained in different Dzogchen tantras. The Song of the Vajra is just a development of that original *dang* energy. That's why it's explained that each syllable is related to different energy points of our body. For that reason, when we sing the Song of the Vajra, there is a possibility of deep relaxation of our energy. And this is the way we usually apply it as a *semdzin*.

In general, when we sing the Song of the Vajra, the instructions that we have is that we don't have to do anything with our mind; we are just being present in that sound. Being present in that sound means at the same moment we have contact with our senses and the sound of the Song of the Vajra pervades our outer dimension. The best way to sing the Song of the Vajra is just to remain in that instant presence or presence with this kind of openness in our mind. I use the word "openness" because it's Longchenpa's explanation which says, "This song should be sung in *semnyid yangpai ngang* – the completely vast or immense state of the nature of the mind." This is the only thing Longchenpa says about that.

It means when we sing the Song of Vajra, we try to be in that state, instant presence or presence – in any case not distracted. Then the way it works – we have this kind of inner relaxation but this will allow our thoughts to show up even more. The initial stage of meditation is generally explained like a waterfall from a high mountain. They always say that in the beginning when we do *shine* meditation we will arrive at the point when we think, "Oh, my meditation is going very badly. I'd better stop this, it's not my destiny in this life." But teachers usually explain that at that time we shouldn't worry, we should be glad because it means that it's the first stage of meditation when we discover that many thoughts exist. With the Song of the Vajra it's the same and we can have that experience. We don't recognize that we have many thoughts but then we do recognize that we have many thoughts. To recognize that we have many thoughts and to have many thoughts is a very different condition. So we are already at a very good point if we recognize that we have many thoughts.

What do we do when we recognize we have many thoughts? We just relax, saying, “Ok, there are many thoughts, but I don’t care about that”. We continue again; we are in presence now, we are not distracted. Then again some other thoughts [arise]. The Song of the Vajra can last 5-8 minutes, and during all this time we can experience this process. We are present, then some thoughts [arise], we get distracted, “Oh, I was thinking,” we regain presence again, like that. We can have that experience throughout the song. Of course, it also depends on the condition of the person, the time, and so on. We can also have an experience when we sing the Song of the Vajra and all the time we are not distracted, we gaze into space, we have clarity, of course, we can also have this experience.

In general the Song of the Vajra has the function of relaxing our energy and allowing us to be more present and integrated with our sense perceptions. Therefore, the Song of the Vajra is not particularly employed as a *semdzin* traditionally.

I did some research about this *semdzin* last year because I was working on the *tregcho* book, which is a very important book. Rinpoche wrote it many years ago, and finally I finished it. It’s fundamental for understanding and practicing Dzogchen. I discovered this *semdzin* of the Song of the Vajra is included in the *Nyida Khajor* tantra but when in the classification of the seven *semdzin*, we only find it in the Longsal teachings. The seven *semdzin* usually don’t use the Song of the Vajra, they use other kinds, like emptiness, direct emptiness or gradual emptiness, like we have in the third series.

But this is not very important. It is important that we know that the Song of the Vajra is extremely important for our Dzogchen Community and ourselves as students of Rinpoche because the Song of the Vajra has been awakened, newly introduced for practitioners in this age by our teacher. Nobody else uses the Song of the Vajra. First of all, nobody sings the Song of the Vajra the way that we sing it and also nobody uses it as the basic practice related to Ati Guruyoga. It’s important for us to know that. The Song of the Vajra is also the essence of the Longsal cycle of teachings because every Longsal teaching starts with some lines from the Song of the Vajra. And there is always a precise correspondence how these verses are connected to that meaning. But these explanations don’t exist within Tibetan instructions, or tantras. At least in this human world for now we don’t have them. How they are connected is very clear from the root tantra of the Dance of the Vajra. It explains how every four lines of the Song of the Vajra are related to Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesha.

For our Dzogchen Community it’s very important to apply the Song of the Vajra. It has a connection to the transmission of our teacher and it also has a connection to the dimensions where there are other Dzogchen practitioners, yogis and yoginis, who apply the Song of the Vajra. You remember, in many dreams that Rinpoche wrote he says he went into one dimension and was walking on the hill and heard the sound of somebody singing the Song of the Vajra. Also this is the way he learned the Song of the Vajra – by participating in the Song of the Vajra with practitioners of other dimensions.

It's all part of Rinpoche's transmission which is called *kabab*. *Ka* means "the original word" and *bab* means "falling on that person". In this life Rinpoche was the recipient of this transmission of the Longsal cycle of teachings, and we don't know historically and very clearly – at least I don't know – what the source of these Longsal teachings is but for sure it must be connected with Garab Dorje, mahasiddhas of Uddiyana, that lineage, like Gomadevi, of course, and many other mahasiddhas. We have this immense fortune in our life if we received this transmission or received Longsal root initiation. Even if we didn't receive an initiation, just receiving transmission of the Song of Vajra is already the essence of Rinpoche's Longsal teachings.

We have received this great treasure. Some of us are becoming older, others feel they are not very old, others are quite old. Anybody, regardless of their age, let's keep this treasure very dearly inside ourselves. We shouldn't worry too much about outer circumstances. Of course, the world may become worse, and worse, and worse, but the world does not exist without us, "because we are the eyes of the world", as one famous singer sang. We shouldn't care too much about circumstances but concentrate more on what is inside. Of course, one day we will die. When we die, if we keep this treasure inside then it will be like a lamp illuminating the path for us and then we will continue in the next life. We shouldn't think, "Now there is one life, Dzogchen is the supreme teaching, I am a Dzogchen practitioner, I will immediately become a mahasiddha and will manifest all wisdoms and kayas." If we have that it's just a fantasy.

Some instructors may say, "I received Santi Maha Sangha of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level. Rinpoche is not here anymore so now I can explain everything because I know everything that Rinpoche explained". We must be very careful. These people may have this capacity but if they don't they are just blocking their own path and that is a very pitiful situation. So we must be very aware of our condition, our real condition. Real condition does not mean some abstract essence of mind or nature of mind. The real condition is that we are in samsara, suffering because of dualism and karma. We become aware of that real condition and try to do something to overcome that condition. We should never forget this point.

When we introduce [the teaching] to new people, what is the best way to do this? With that kind of knowledge because people don't have that awareness. But if we try to introduce this knowledge, it's not easy at all because it's not a kind of intellectual understanding that we can have. That knowledge only arises after a long time of purifying our obscurations etc., then we reach that state in which we become aware of the samsaric condition. That is already a very important level. That's why we shouldn't think of only one life. Of course, we are not only practicing in one life. We are all different people, we have different conditions but most of us already practiced before and met Rinpoche before, otherwise it's not so easy to meet the teaching, meet the teacher, a Dzogchen teacher like this, by chance. It doesn't happen like that.

Therefore our wish and effort should be to keep that knowledge that we have, that experience that we have, even if we don't progress quickly in this life, we keep that knowledge that we have, we

keep our pure samaya, and then we continue in the next life.

This is it about the Song of the Vajra, I don't have other things to say.