

ACCOMPLISHING A RAINBOW BODY Through the Vajra Bridge Practice of the Rigzin Lineage



Rigzin Chenpo Padma Wangchen Rinpoche gave an idea about the Vajra Bridge Practice in a teaching in 2018. We bring you the excerpts here.

Common and Uncommon Practices

Preliminary Practices, also known as *Nongdro* in Tibetan, are the practices that most Tibetan Buddhist lineages have in common. These practices form the foundation and are the basic requirements for most, if not all lineages ("common practices").

There are generally four to eight types of common practices. One of these is commonly known as the *The Four Thoughts*, or *Turn Your Mind Towards the Dharma*. This is the practice of renunciation by contemplating the following : a) life is precious, b) life is impermanent, c) cause and effect, and d) the faults of samsara.

Next to common practices are the uncommon practices. Uncommon practices build on the practices common to most lineages. They refer to the different methods of practice unique to each lineage. These include refuge taking, arousing bodhicitta, and the practice of Vajrasattva and mandala.

Despite the different methods of practice, they have all been set out for the sole purpose of liberation.

What I will be transmitting today are the Kama (long lineage) and the Terma (short lineage) practices of the Nyingma (old school) tradition. Kama practices are the practices that have

been transmitted from person to person, without interruption, directly from the Buddha Sakyamuni. Terma teachings, on the other hand, are the teachings transmitted via meditation practice, dreams, or through the blessings from the Bodhisattva under very special circumstances.

There is a third method of transmission, known as Dagnang (Profound Pure Vision). This is where the Buddha appears in reality to the tertön, speaking to them in person.



Tsewang Norbu, my previous incarnation, held Kama transmissions in high regard because of the historical evidence of these teachings. However, he also considered the other two methods as equally profound.

This liturgy titled, *The Greatly Beneficial All-Encompassing Quintessence Practice of Vajra Aro's Pith Instructions for the Path* in actuality is a Guru Yoga practice. It is also known as *The Oral Transmission Vajra Bridge*.

Although there is no mention of the term "*Vajra Bridge*" in the liturgy, the handwritten notes of the teachings clearly point to the preliminaries in the Vajra Bridge practice. In addition, every section of the Vajra Bridge practice is mentioned in these notes. They are the preliminaries, main and completion practices.

Oral Transmission

So, what is an oral transmission? It is the transmission of pith instructions from mouth to ear to only a private group, and recordings (audio or otherwise) are not allowed. As such, students are required to recite the teachings continuously, until they know them well enough. This method is used in the Nyingma (old translation) school.

The new translation school known as Sarma, on the other hand, relies greatly on the karmic connection of the student to the dharma. Clearly, karma is the deciding factor if the student receives the teachings in the Sarma school.

"Vajra"

In itself, the word *vajra* means forever, unchanging, indestructible or firm. Its use in the word Vajrayana refers to how the dharma itself is indestructible, for dharma's empty nature cannot never be destroyed.

In the greater Tantrayana practice, the term *vajra* refers to the nature of emptiness. There is no true difference between blissfulness and emptiness. In fact, primordial, ultimate and pure nature is empty. It is nothing but bliss. Because emptiness is brilliant and luminous, it is therefore *vajra*.

The Vajra Bridge Practice

I shall now give you the background of this Vajra Bridge practice. It originates from the *Great Completion Practice* by Maitreya. He was not only one of the eight Great Bodhisattvas, but also one of Sakyamuni Buddha's seed sons.

The original practice dates back to the 8th century when Vairocana first transmitted the teachings to Pang Mipham Gonpo (Mipham). It was likely because of this that the Vajra Bridge practice was originally titled *Pang Mipham Gonpo's Vajra Bridge*.

Mipham was not only karmically linked to Vairocana, he was also a devoted disciple. Prior to receiving teachings in Vajra Bridge, he had already received the teachings of wrathful Mahakala and the Great Completion, both from Vairocana.

So, who is Vairocana? He was a great translator and seed son of Guru Padmasambhava. He had travelled from India to Tibet and had settled down in Eastern Tibet.

A Link-Bridge

The Vajra Bridge is a methodology serving as a bridge between two shores. It is a means for beings to cross from where they are now (samsara), to the opposite shore (nirvana). This bridge is like an expressway. In fact, the term *vajra bridge* itself actually refers to a bridge that connects the three sections of the *Great Completion Practice*. After connecting

them, it merges the three sections as one. (We will talk about this later.)

This practice therefore is an embodiment of all the Buddhist teachings. In addition, it also bridges the nine siddhis, the different cycles of Sravakayana, Pratyekabuddhayana, Bodhisattvayana and Vajrayana, as well as the the different yogas. The yogas are the Mahayoga, Anugoya, Atiyoga, and the inner and outer tantric practices.

This Vajra Bridge practice was further enhanced by Vidyadhara Kadampa Desek of the Kathog lineage, who amalgamated the three methods of practice, namely, the Great Completion's heart essences, outer practices and oral transmissions. This makes the Vajra Bridge practice an all-encompassing practice that is as vast as the ocean.

Later, this teaching became more commonly known by three other names: *The Vajra Bridge Lineage*, *Aro's Dzogchen Lineage* and *Kathog's Kama Oral Transmission*.

Guru Yoga is the Essence

What we will also talk about today are the basic practices of the four or five preliminaries of our lineage, the Rigzin Lineage. Like other Dzogchen practices, we also have our own peculiar rules, methods and teachings.

As you might already know, the Rigzin Lineage has its own Dzogchen and Mahamudra practices. And the differences between uncommon practices of the Rigzin Lineage and other lineages are in the Guru Yoga practice, and the pith instructions for the inner, outer and secret practices. As such, you might not be able to spot any difference through a cursory glance at the texts.

As Vajra Bridge is a Dzogchen practice, its focus and fundamentals are in the Guru Yoga

practice, where the essence and lifeblood is in the blessings of the Guru.

Just for the record, Mipham through diligent practice of the Vajra Bridge, eventually became an accomplished Mahasiddha. He lived for more than 100 years before leaving behind this profound teaching for us. How amazing it is too, that many of his practising disciples also attained rainbow body. In history, the most prominent record of rainbow bodies are the 100,000 from the Kathog lineage.

This liturgy created by Tsewang Norbu, "*The Greatly Beneficial All-Encompassing Quintessence Practice of Vajra Aro's Pith Instructions for the Path*" is unquestionably of great benefit and importance! 

Source : mp.weixin.qq.com/s/Ga4unGqwHdig-tKqz4CCFw, Chinese, 2 May 2018.

The Vajra Bridge practice is covered in four volumes. The preliminary practices in Chinese are in volumes one to three. Volume four is the liturgy in three languages (Tibetan, Chinese and English). Permission must be obtained from the lineage holder, the Rigzin Chenpo Padma Wangchen himself prior to practice.

