

How Achi Chokyi Drolma Acquired Her 3 Names

(excerpted from A Brief Instruction on Tara) by H.E. Garchen Rinpoche

As for Tara's connection to the Drikung Kagyu lineage: In the Drikung Kagyu lineage she appeared as Achi Chokyi Drolma, who has her own life story. Achi's three names (Achi, Chokyi, and Drolma) weren't given when she was born, but she acquired them gradually. When Achi was born, numerous auspicious signs, such as flowers, parasols, and rainbows, appeared in the sky. This is why her birthplace is still known as Kyetrag Thang (Plain of Joy).

As a small child, she was always reciting the mantra of Tara. This is why she was given the name Tara (Drolma means "Tara"). So Tara was her first name, which is the third one in Achi Chokyi Drolma. Later, when she grew up, she began to teach the Dharma, telling people about karma, and love and compassion. This is why another name was added, and she became known as Chokyi Drolma, which means "Dharma Tara."

She overcame a lot of difficulties and went through a lot of hardships throughout her life. As an adult, she traveled to Kham in Eastern Tibet, and arrived at a place called Kyura Drak. Kyura is the name of a family lineage in Tibet that was semi-divine: half from the god realm and half from the human world. This line was close to becoming extinct, and in order for that not to happen, she formed a liaison with a descendant of that noble Kyura clan, and gave birth to four sons. Of her sons, Pekar Wangyal also fathered four sons, one of whom, Naljor Dorje, became Lord Jigten Sumgön's father. Jigten Sumgön was a great being whose activities equaled the Buddha's. He is said to have had a vast assembly of a million and two hundred thousand disciples. In any case, this was how she got the last of her three names, Achi, which means "great-grandmother"; she was Jigten Sumgön's great-grandmother. Thus, she finally had three names, Achi Chokyi Drolma.

Achi attained the rainbow body and departed, with her horse and a small dog, from this world to the dakini pure land without leaving her mortal body behind. They all left a footprint that can still be seen today on the rocks in Kyura Drak in Kham, Tibet. Many of the elder lamas know about the Rainbow Body Cave—the cave from which she departed.

Achi also composed her own sadhana, which is quite extensive. In it she says, "In the future, when the Buddha's teachings encounter difficulties—when there are difficulties in upholding, sustaining, and increasing the Buddha's teachings—you should supplicate me."