

OBITUARY

MAYUM CHONYING WANGMO DORJI

On the night of March 26, corresponding to the 15th day of the second Bhutanese month, Her Royal Highness Mayum Chonying Wangmo Dorji His Majesty the King's beloved grand-mother attained the final state of beatitude in Bhutan House, Kalimpong. Mayum Chonying Wangmo Dorji, who had attained the ripe age of 97 years was one of the architects of Bhutanese History.

The prayers and ritual obsequies were presided over by Lam Namkhyi Nyingpo and Shechen Rabjam Rimpoche with the monks of Jongsang Goemba. A vast concourse of people from all walks of life including friends and well-wishers of the late Mayum thronged the Bhutan House premises at Kalimpong to catch a last glimpse of the grand lady whom they admired and adored, and to pay their final homage and tribute to the departed one.

Amidst universal mourning all over Bhutan, the Kuphung was cremated at the sacred Kurji Lhakhang in Bumthang on April 25, coinciding with the 15th day of the third month of the Bhutanese calendar.

Mayum was born in 1897 in Sikkim as the youngest child of Chogyal Thutob Namgyal the ninth consecrated ruler of Sikkim. Mayum who was the only sister to the 10th Chogyal Sidkeong Trulku and the 11th Chogyal Tashi Namgyal was given monastic education in her early years. She also acquired a good modern education.

She was a deeply religious person and a scholar with keen interest in the history and culture of Bhutan. She was a versatile adept in the history and culture of Tibet and Sikkim.



Mayum Chonying Wangmo Dorji with H.M. the King in 1979
Courtesy 'KUENSEL' (Bhutan)

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In the loving memory of her husband Gongzing Sonam Tobgye Dorji, son of Raja Ugyen Dorji, who died in 1953 Mayum offered gold to a project patronised by the third king His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, to write the whole set of Kanjur and Tenjur, comprising more than 300 volumes of the sacred teachings and expositions of lord Bhuddha, in letters of gold.

Mayum also constructed many Lhakhangs (Temples) and generously donated money for the renovation of monasteries and for the regular performances of rites and Dubchhen at Punakha, in keeping with the traditional Bhutanese Culture; and also for promoting the course of Mahayana Buddhism.

Rani Chonying Wangmo Dorji took active part in the organizational activities of Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim. She was co-opted in the General Council of SRIT; for the years 1964-65. Her name was proposed for election as Vice-President of the Institute General Council and executive board of the Institute for crudition in the field of Buddhist scholarship.

She was one of the permanent founder members of this Institute which is devoted to the study and promotion of Buddhism. We have in our possession, the 'Mayum Chonying Wangmo Dorji Blocks' of the Book containing the Tibetan translation done by Rani Churni Dorji and Chang-lo-chen Gong Kusho of the english narrative of the discovery and installation (Serthi-NGASOL) of His Holines the XIV Dalai Lama. Several copies were reproduced from this Block-print, on account of overwhelming demand for this work.

The President and Governing Body members, Director and Staff pay homage to the great departed soul and pray for eternal peace.

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