

DR RIGZIN NGODUP DOKHANGPA (1943-2005)
Research Officer, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology

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Dr Rigzin Ngodup Dokhangpa was born in 1943 (Water Female Sheep year) in the village of Tshothang, Tashiding, in West Sikkim. His parents, Pasang and Laydon Bhutia, had three daughters and two sons who both became lamas of the Tashiding monastery. Dr R.N. Dokhampa joined the monastery at the age five when the Ven. Dorje Lopon Ajo Chugli of Tashiding performed his first hair cutting offering ritual. He received his early monastic education from his uncle Pema Tshering.

Already at the age of nineteen, along with other Tashiding lamas, he practiced the *kLong chen snying thig 'pho ba* under H.E. brTul zhugs gling pa Rinpoche. At the age of twenty, he received instructions from Mi nyag Khenpo on the *dKon mchog spyi 'dus* and completed the preliminary retreat at Tashiding. In 1968, he joined the Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies (Sheda) at Deorali, Gangtok, where for five years he studied Nyingma philosophies under Khenpo Rinchen, Khenpo Dazer and Khenpo Tsundue. In 1968, he received the initiation and oral transmission of the *Rin chen gter mdzod* from H.E. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche at Enchey monastery, Gangtok. Again in 1968, he received the initiation of the *Bla ma dgongs pa 'dus pa* from H.E. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche at Tashiding monastery.

In 1972, he joined the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology as a 'scholarship holder'. During this initial two-year period he read Buddhist Philosophy and received teachings from Ven. Khenpo Lodoy Zangpo, a learned scholar of the Institute. He was appointed in 1974 to the post of Assistant in the Tibetan Library. In 1975, he received *bka' ma* teaching and initiation from H.E. Dodrup Chen Rinpoche. In 1978, he received the oral transmission of the *kLong chen mdzod bdun* from H.E. Dodrup Chen Rinpoche at Phensang monastery, North Sikkim. In 1978, he was transferred to the post of Museum Assistant. In 1985, he received the initiation of the *kLong chen snying thig ya bzhi* from Dodrup Chen Rinpoche. Again in 1985, he received the *sGrub skor rnam gsum* initiation and oral transmission from H.E. Taglung Tsetul Rinpoche at Tashiding. In 1988, he obtained the Acharya degree in

Buddhist Philosophy from the Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies, Gangtok and was promoted to Research Officer in 1992.

Dr R.N. Dokhangpa wrote a book on Buddhist ritual objects and obtained his Ph.D. degree from the International Indo-Tibetan Nyingmapa Buddhist Cultural Preservation Society, University of Shantineketan, West Bengal. In 2003, he received further initiations and oral transmissions from H.E. Taglung Tsetul Rinpoche at Namchi, South Sikkim. And again in 2004, he received teachings on the *Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung* and *'pho ba* instructions from H.E. Domang Terchen Yangthang Rinpoche at the Gangtok Tsuglagkhang along with a number of lamas from various Sikkimese monasteries.

Dr R.N. Dokhangpa has published numerous articles in the *Bulletin of Tibetology* including 'Origin of Bumchu of Brag dkar bkra shis sdings' (1992, 2003), 'A Brief Account of the Life of Nga' bdag Sems dpa' chenpo (1591-1656)' (1996), 'Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs' (1998), 'Biography of Gter ston Rig 'dzin rgod kyi ldem phrul can' (1999) and 'A Short Biography of rNal 'byor mched bzhi' (2000). His latest book on the life of Padmasambhava remains unpublished.

At the age of 63, following a prolonged illness, he told his family "a girl has come to receive me, so I will go early tomorrow morning". And thus he passed away in the morning of the 7th March 2005.

Dr R.N. Dokhangpa was the Namgyal Institute's most learned scholar. A man of great kindness and humility, he openly shared his knowledge with a large number of students and scholars of Sikkimese history, religion and culture. He will be missed by many, including a generation of young Sikkimese scholars who still had much to gain from his knowledge and guidance. He is survived by his widow and five children.