
VEN. LACHEN GOMCHEN RINPOCHE
KUNSANG YOUNGDOL WANGPO

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The 4th Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche (1949-2012)

Note from the Editor:

Ven. Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche passed away on 18th September 2012. In guise of obituary, I thought it appropriate to publish a translation of the biographies of the 3rd and 4th Lachen Gomchens which were personally written by Late Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche and of which he gave me a copy some twenty years ago, to which, the translator
Tsewang Gyatso and myself only added a couple ending paragraphs in order to complete the list of Rinpoche’s achievements.\(^1\)

To the life of the 3\(^{rd}\) Lachen Gomchen, I only wish to add that the Gomchen was also known as the teacher of the French Buddhist-explorer Alexandra David-Néel who, already in 1914-16, had undertaken meditation retreats in remote corners of the Lachen Valley under the supervision of the 3\(^{rd}\) Lachen Gomchen.

Little is known of the lives of the 1\(^{st}\) and 2\(^{nd}\) Gomchens. Rinpoche once told me that the first incarnation of the Lachen Gomchen was known as Rigung Pema Yongda, a Rig ’dzin lineage holder from Pemayangtse monastery in West Sikkim. He was a good scholar and looked well after the monastery. Out of respect, villagers called him Naljor Pema Tsen Chan (rNal ’byor pad ma mtshan can). The second incarnation lived in Sang, South Sikkim, and was known as Tuputam Tsampo (mTsham po), he meditated in a cave and was not involved in monastic affairs.

THE 3\(^{RD}\) LACHEN GOMCHEN NGAWANG KUNSANG RINPOCHE

Lachen Gomchen Ngawang Kunsang Rinpoche was born at Namok in North Sikkim. He was quite stubborn and fierce right from childhood. Because of his temperament, his father and brother sought advice and placed him in the Labrang Gonpa in North Sikkim. One day, the discipline master strongly slapped and scolded him after he had dropped a pot of porridge while serving the monks. Following this incident, he ran away to the Lopon at the Phodong Gonpa. There he completed his basic training in ritual and practice, and eventually received the instruction of the ‘fierce fire flame Vajrápani,’ (’phyag rdor gtum mo me lce khrid) and went into retreat at a hermitage called Yaphi la where he stayed for a three year retreat following a simple living.

Unsatisfied with his practice, he left for Tibet where he received teachings from various accomplished masters. Among these, he received oral instructions, explanations and empowerments from Kharchen Lama (mKhar chen bla ma) and Phudak Kyabsgon (Phun dag skyabs mgon) as his previous karmic connection; he also received the

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\(^1\) We would like to thank Pema Garwang, Tsultsem Gyatso Acharya, Phurba Tshering Bhtia and Hissey Wongchuk for their help in transcribing, typing and proofreading the original handwritten Tibetan and Hissey Wongchuk for providing the Wylie transcriptions.
complete empowerment of Hayagrīva and worshipped him as his meditational deity.

In the course of his life, he undertook retreats at several locations including Zargang (located above Lachen), Thangu Gonpa, Deothang (above Kalep, on the way to Thangu) and other caves. He is believed to have undertaken strict three and nine year retreats at secluded places. Above all, he never slept during the night but remained in sitting meditation. He also used to do three daily meditation sessions.

The 3rd Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche (1867-1947)
He received teachings on arterial system and wind practice (rTsa dang rlung) from the enlightened master Tokden Shakya Shri (rTog Idan Sha kya shri) in the course of two of his travels to Tsari in Tibet. I myself heard from late Labrang Gomchen that Tokden Shakya Shri used to hold him in high regards and addressed him ‘Denjong Tokden’ or ‘Sikkimese meditation master.’ He thus gave away entire teachings as if pouring down from a vase. As later narrated to me by late Labrang Gomchen who had accompanied him, he added that each and every word should be remembered by Denjong Gomchen.

The late Lachen Gomchen was an authentic great master. He specialized in arterial system and wind practices. It is said that once he blew away a large new conch shell which nobody could blow. And, he blew it loudly. He is also said to have bent a piece of iron to be placed under a prayer cylinder which couldn’t be bent by any skilled blacksmith. He came out of retreat and bent it by simply placing it on his knee. The same is still preserved under the prayer cylinder of the Lachen Mani Lhakhang. He also possessed several other powers such as the ability to divert the direction of hail-stones, cure severe leprosy and other serious diseases caused by malignant spirits. There are several other things which I have not written here as I am now tired and will write later if the time is right.

The great yogi on his visit to Lachen was once requested to be the lama of the region by Chipon Dachom (spyi dpon dGra boom) and other residents. He was also requested to do so by Chogyal Thutob Namgyal and Prince Sidkeong Tulku. He took complete responsibility for Lachen Ngodup Choeling (dngos grub chos gling) monastery for 49 years from the eighth month of the Earth Dog year (1898) of the 15th Rabjung of the Tibetan calendar.

During his stay, he contributed the mural paintings of the temple, a statue of Guru Nangsi Zilnon (sNang srid zil gnon) made of copper gold, several clay statues of Buddhas of the three times (chos longs sprul gsum - Dharmakāya, Sambokāya and Nirmānkāya), Tengyur (bstan ‘gyur) from the Narthang press, twelve vajrā dancer costumes made of pure Chinese silk, increased the enrollment of novices and even contributed the oil-burners for the temple’s butter lamps as seed of the offerings which needed nobody else to seek from.

Eventually, he passed away in the evening at the age of 81, in the fifth month of the Female Fire Pig year (1947), 16th Rabjung cycle (thams cad ‘dul). The passing away of this great lama was marked by seven days Samādhi (thugs dam). During the funeral, devotees witnessed numerous auspicious physical signs as prescribed in the Tantra as opposed to a fictitious story.
THE 4TH LACHEN GOMCHEN KUNSANG YOUNGDOL WANGPO

I, his reincarnation, Lachen Gomchen Kunsang Youngdol Wangpo, a simple and innocent person, was born on a Tuesday morning at Yangang, South Sikkim in a humble family in the eleventh month of the Earth Ox year (1949) of the 16th Rabjung cycle of the Tibetan calendar.

When I was three, a powerful ngakpa (sngags pa) who could control hailstones was invited to our home in order to perform some rituals. One morning, I sat on the upper most section of his seat and touched his ritual instruments including his damaru and vajrā upon which the former debarrad me from doing so. On that occasion, I said that I had better ritual instruments than his and also narrated names of lamas, yaks, dri, horses, mules, etc. I can’t remember clearly but I still remember that I sat on the upper most section of his seat and uttered one word: ‘Lachen.’

Whatever it may be, during the Ngakpa’s travel to Kalimpong, he probably narrated the story to some of the tradesmen from Lachen. Upon hearing the news, the people of Lachen decided to approach Sir Tashi Namgyal, the then Chogyal of Sikkim, and briefed him about the child. The Chogyal and his council of ministers discussed the matter and consulted divinities upon which my name was confirmed. My recognition was further endorsed by HH Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche and HH the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa who were on pilgrimage to Sikkim at that particular time.

At the age of nine, I reached Lachen. Later, my hair cutting ritual was carried out by Khyentse Rinpoche at Gangtok who named me Kunsang Dechen Wangyal. In the beginning, HH Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche explained the ‘praise of Manjushri’ (gang blo ma) by opening the way of the Dharma followed by bestowing on me the empowerment of the ‘gathering of precious jewels’ (dkon mchog spyi ‘dus) and long life empowerment.

Later, upon his departure, I went to seek his blessings; he gave me a statue of Buddha, the printed khangloma (gang blo ma), vajrā and bell and a blessing cord with prayers and aspirations.

Again, when I went to see him, he was quite seriously ill due to his failing health. He did not allow devotees to visit him but gave me special time on two occasions when I also received teachings. Later, while leaving his place he gave me an upper garment and a hat made in eastern Tibet. He asked his attendant to pick a hat among others kept in boxes, held it in different ways and eventually, recited a complete ‘wish
fulfilling prayer’ (bsam pa lhun grub) and put it on my head. After some months, the news of his passing away was heard.

Thereafter, I also received teachings, explanations and empowerments from the great hidden yogi Jokhang Rinpoche Kunzang Choepel (Kun bzang chos ’phel).

Generally, I started to learn reading and writing from the age of nine, also memorizing the daily prayers. I then committed to stay in strict retreat in order to undertake the complete preliminary practices of ‘five Mandalas.’ In the course of my retreat, I recited the mantra of my meditational deity, including ‘wrathful guru and lion-faced dākini’ (bla ma drag seng), several million times. I especially recited several million mantras of my meditational deity.

From the age of sixteen, I again received several major empowerments, instructions and oral transmissions followed by future prophecies which I cannot put on record here. At the age of seventeen, I went to seek the blessing of HH Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje whose name and fame spread far and wide. Thus, I had a strong desire to seek his blessing at Kalimpong but he had already proceeded to Bodhgaya to participate in a congregation of non-sectarian Buddhist lamas. I also departed for Bodhgaya and sought his first blessing there. Since then, I kept meeting Rinpoche and received several empowerments, instructions and oral transmissions from him on which I will write separately. In particular, I received the Rinchen Terzod (rin chen gter mdzod) precious treasure collection empowerment at Rewalsar Lake where Guru Rinpoche miraculously transformed the fire into a lake. I will not elaborate on the teachings I received from HH Rinpoche as this isn’t the right time to do so.

At the age of twenty, just as I had the intention, the opportunity to pursue further studies came about as HM the King Palden Thondup Namgyal offered me to do so. I then joined the Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies, Deorali, Gangtok and received training for six years under the guidance of the learned scholar Khenpo Dazer (mkhan po Zla zer) and Khenpo Tsondru (mkhan po brTson ‘grus). I studied the commentary of ’ju Mi pham and other treatises and grammars for which rare and sacred texts I had a certain disposition.

Following this, as the political situation in Sikkim was deteriorating, I took a break and went into retreat for several months during the summer. Because of the harsh climate and the cold, I fell ill and did not improve despite taking both Tibetan and allopathic medicines.

In fact, I had no doubt that it was due to my previous karma. Thus, in order to purify it, I made one million miniature stupas plus thirty
thousand extra which took me three and half months without counting the time it took to dig up the soil. These were placed in a duly consecrated stuppa on the way to Thangu at a cross road where pilgrims can circumambulate it. From which, I accumulated merit in the beginning, in the end and dedicated it.

Later in the fourth month of the Fire Snake year (1977) of the Tibetan calendar it was unanimously decided to renovate the Lachen monastery (gyang dgon). The Pipon and Chutimpa (chos khrims pa), head of the village and discipline master approached the Ecclesiastical Department for a financial grant which was made and for which I remain grateful.

At that time, the monk body and people of Lachen several times together requested me to take responsibility for the monastery’s renovation even though I didn’t have the qualifications to do so. Yet, considering how times had changed and also how the time had now come according to the prediction, I saw the construction as a rare opportunity to contribute to the restoration of the Buddha Dharma. I was also encouraged to be able to utilize this precious human birth for this noble cause. It took almost two years to widen the site as the old monastery’s site was quite narrow resulting in the temple having to face south-west, which was not a favorable direction for the enhancement of the monk’s community as well as their teaching and learning practices. Because of this, the ground was leveled in an attempt to make the temple face east.

In the course of construction, the monk and people of Lachen selflessly rendered their services as unpaid labor for three months and twenty days. Moreover, the foundation of the monastery was made according to the rules stipulated in the scriptures; these were followed by making the ‘stomach of lord of earth’ (sa bdag lto phyе) along with complete rituals. After reaching a certain level of construction, the necessary rituals were performed for the installment of the sacred vase (sa chu bum gter). It was installed as per the prescribed rules and by consecrating it with the ‘Mind practice for pacifying all the obstacles’ (thugs sgrub bar chad kun sel) which was the treasure discovered by Terton Chogyal Lingpa of the degenerated age. The ritual was performed by ten monks including myself together with propitiations over a period of seven days. Nine vases were installed in different directions including one in the centre of the temple.

During this period, I had several auspicious dreams and physical signs which might sound fictitious if narrated here.
The outside of the monastery was built with white stone whereas the inner portion was made with modern technology by using rod and concrete cement.

According to the Five Dhyani Buddhas (rigs lnga) treasure of Guru Rinpoche, as predicted in the prophecy of Bayul Demonjong (sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs), in the eight directions are: Guru Nangsi Zilnon (guru sNang srid zil gnon), Panchen Bimalamita (pan chen Bi ma la mi ta), Yeshe Tsogyal (Ye shes mtsho rgyal), Gyalwa Lhotsun (rgyal ba lHa btsun), Chogyal (chos rgyal), Buddha, and paintings of exorcists together with other murals and paintings of Mipham in the temple. All the painted posts, pillars, main door and windows were made of concrete cement and rod. The main shrine ('du khang), the protector's room (mgon khang), the bed room (gzim chung), and store room were positioned as prescribed in the ‘the elegant sayings of white Bedruriya’ (legs bshad be dur dkar po).

The monastery is surrounded by the monks’ private cells with separate apartments reserved for high lamas. Altogether, it represents the ‘thirty seven limbs of enlightenment’ surrounded by a fence together with two large doors on either side.

In front of the monastery, at a distance of one fathom, there is a two storey building reserved for the novices’ recitation, memorization, reading and writing and to accommodate monk-students visiting from other places.

In 1979, I was elected as a lone Sangha member of the State Legislative Assembly and was inducted in the state cabinet in which I served selflessly as a minister for four and a half years. During my tenure, I looked after the departments of Ecclesiastical Affairs, Cultural Affairs and ST/SC Affairs. The Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies was affiliated with the Sampurnanand Sanskrit University, Varanasi during the said period. The introduction of monastic schools in the monasteries of Sikkim was also executed when I served as a minister in the State Cabinet.  

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2 *dren pa nye bar bzhag pa bzhi, yang dag spang ba bzhi, rdzu 'phrul gyi rkang pa bzhi, dbang po lnga, stobs lnga, byang chub mchog gi chos bdun and 'phags lam yan lag bryad*

3 This paragraph was added by Tsewang Gyatso and translated from a biography authored by Ven. Lachen Rinpoche published in *Bibliotheca Sikkim Himalayica, Series 1, Guru Duechen Number Symposium Volumie*, 25th July 1996, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim.
Addition: 4

Under the guidance of Kyabje Dodrupchen Rinpoche, Ven. Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche first introduced the Lama Gongdue (bla ma dngos ’dus) practice at Tashiding in 1999, which has since been performed annually at the Ringhem monastery in North Sikkim.

Later in life and with the intention of reviving Sikkim’s Pang Lhabsol tradition (dPang lha gsol—‘offering to the witness god’), 5 Rinpoche undertook the construction of Samten Choeling monastery located at Thangdu at an altitude of 14,000 ft in the upper reaches of the Lachen Valley. Following a thorough study of the scriptures concerned with the Pang Lhabsol celebration, Rinpoche personally oversaw the preparation of the costumes, the performance of the rituals and the training of the young Lachenpas who performed the Pangtö cham (dPang bstod ’cham—‘dance in praise of the witness god’) in honour of Kangchendzonga (gangs snow, chen great, mdzod treasure, lnga five), Sikkim mountain deity. The Pang Lhabsol celebration has been held annually at Thangu since 2009. 6

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4 Added by the Editor partly from an unpublished Brief Life Sketch of Late Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche authored by Rinpoche’s family.
5 This ’cham was designed by the third Chogyal, Chagdor Namgyal when he established the Pemayangtse monastery (in 1705) upon his return from Tibet.
6 Under the supervision of Rinpoche, a film was made on the first Pang Lhabsol’s celebration held at Thangu in 2009, partly in collaboration with the NIT.
བོད་སྦྱོང་བོད་གི་སྲིད་པ་ལྡན་བཞི་འཇིག་རྟེན་བཟོ་སྤྱོད།

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བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་

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བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་

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བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་

བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་

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བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་

བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་

བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་

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བོད་ལྷགས་རིག་མཆེན་རི་
ཐུང་ཐོག་མ་ཡིན་ནི་བོད་ཡོངས་བཞི་བོད་ལྡན་གཞི་བོད་་མ་བཞི་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན་ཁྱབ་པ་ན་བོད་ལྡན

null
བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་སོགས་བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་མི་འདུས་བཟོ། ། ཡང་ལུང་བར་བར་བཟོ། །

ལོ་འཛིན་མོ་ཞི་བརོད་པ་བཟོ། ། ཡང་ལུང་བར་བར་བཟོ། །

བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་སོགས་བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་མི་འདུས་བཟོ། ། ཡང་ལུང་བར་བར་བཟོ། །

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བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་སོགས་བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་མི་འདུས་བཟོ། ། ཡང་ལུང་བར་བར་བཟོ། །

བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་སོགས་བདོན་གཞི་ཕྱུག་མི་འདུས་བཟོ། ། ཡང་ལུང་བར་བར་བཟོ། །
སྐྱེས་གླུ་དེ་སྐབས་ཀྱི་མ་མཁའི་བཤད་པའི་ོབ་དེ་ཐོང་མི་ཤེས་པ་ཝཛིན་པོ་ཐེག་པ་ལ་མེད་པར་་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་བཤད་པར་མཛོད་དཔལ་བོ་སྐྱེས་ལེན་
ཐོག་གི་ཐོག་གི་གཉིས་དུས་ཚད་ཤཱ་ཧུང་སུམ་ཅིང་། ཁྱབ་ཏེ་བོད་ལས་སངས་པའི་མི་འབུས་ཐོག་དྲུག་བཞི་མེད་ཤུགས་སུ་བཞུགས་ཕིན་པའི་མི་ཐོབ་ཅིང་། སྤྲོད་ཐོག་གི་བོད་ལས་སུས་པ་སེམས་དཔའི་གོ་སྐད་བེད་དུ་བཞུགས་ཕིན་པའི་མི་ཐོབ་ཅིང་།
དངོས་པོ་ནི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཐོབ་བཞིན་པ་ནི་ཐེན་སྐྱེས་བཅོས་ཐིག་གི་ིས་མདུན་
སྲུང་བས་གཞན་བཟོ་ནི་མི་གཞི་བཟོ་ནི་མི་ཐེན་མཐའ་བཞུགས་སུ་
དཀོན་པོ་དེ་ལེགས་བཞིན་བལྟས་ཅིག་མཛོད་ཐེན་མཐའ་བཞུགས་སུ་
ཡུལ་བོ་དེ་ལེགས་བཞིན་བལྟས་ཅིག་མཛོད་ཐེན་མཐའ་བཞུགས་སུ་
ནི་ཤེས་པ་ཐོབ་བཞིན་གྱི་ལྟ་མོའི་ཐོབ་བཞིན་གི་ལྟ་མོའི་
བཞིན་དངོས་པོ་ནི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཐོབ་བཞིན་བཞིན་བལྟས་ཅིག་མཛོད་ཐེན་མཐའ་
བཞུགས་སུ་དཀོན་པོ་མི་ཐེན་མཐའ་བཞུགས་སུ་
ཅས་བཞིན་གྱི་ལྟ་མོའི་ཐོབ་བཞིན་གི་ལྟ་མོའི་
བཞིན་དངོས་པོ་ནི་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཐོབ་བཞིན་བཞིན་བལྟས་ཅིག་མཛོད་ཐེན་
མཐའ་བཞུགས་སུ་
དཀོན་པོ་མི་ཐེན་མཐའ་བཞུགས་
སུ་དཀོན་པོ་མི་ཐེན་མཐའ་
བཞུགས་སུ་
དཀོན་པོ་མི་ཐེན་
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The sublime Khen Rinpoche Dechen Dorjee (mKhan Rin po che bDe-chen rdo je) was born to Dawa Gyatso and Drolma, in the Fire Female Cow Year of the 16th Tibetan Calendrical Cycle ‘Rabjung,’ 2417 year since the Parinirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha, corresponding to Friday, October 15, 1937 in the region called Shari, near Phensang Sangag Choeding (Phan bzang gSang sngags chos sdings) Monastery in North Sikkim.
He entered one of Sikkim’s six great monasteries, Phensang Sangag Choeding, when he was eight years old. From the time he learned to read and write, he trained and excelled in the doctrines of the monastery’s systems, rituals and other aspects.

He received his name ‘Dechen Dorjee’ from Dungsey Thinlay Norbu Rinpoche (gDung sras ’Phren las nor bu rin po che, 1931-2011), son of Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche (sKyabs rje bDud ’joms rin po che). At the age of 27, he entered the Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies (’Bras gzhung snga ’gyur bshad gra Thub bstan mdo sngags chos gling) in 1964. For fifteen long years, he thoroughly studied the unique major scriptures of sutra and mantra based on ’Jam mgon mi-pham Rinpoche’s higher textbooks, as well as common subjects like spelling, grammar and poetics with Khenpo Lama Rinchen (mKhan po bla ma Rin chen, 1931-1971), Dzogchen Khenpo Dawa Wozer (rDzogs chen mkhan po Zla ba’i ’od zer, 1922-1990) and Dzogchen Khenchen Thubten Tsondru Phuntshog (rDzogs chen mkhan chen Thup bstan brtsun ’grus phun tshogs, 1920-1979).

He received the complete empowerments and transmissions of Nyingma Kama (rNying ma bka’ ma) and Terma (gter ma), lower and higher Nyingthigs (sNying thig), Lama Gongdue (bLa ma dgongs ’dus), the nine volumes of Jigme Lingpa (’Jigs med gling pa), the five volumes of the 3rd Dodrupchen Rinpoche (rDo grub chen rin po che) and other transmissions from his personal Lord, the fourth Kyabje Dodrupchen Rinpoche Thinlay Pal Sangpo (sKyabs rje rDo grub chen rin po che ’Phrin las dpal bzang po, b.1927).

In the Male Earth Monkey Year (1968), he received empowerments and transmissions of the Rinchen Terzod (Rin chen gter mdzod), the Great Treasury of Precious Termas, from Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche Rabsel Dawa (sKyabs rje Dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che Rab gsal zla ba, 1910-1991) at Woenchen Sangag Rabtenling (dBen can gsang sngags rab brtse gling) Monastery. From Kyabje Dudjom Jigdrel Yeshi Dorjee (sKyabs rje bDud ’joms rin po che ’Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, 1904-1987), he received the empowerments and transmissions of the new cycle of Tersar teachings of Dudjom Lingpa (bDud ’joms gling pa, 1835-1903) and the empowerments of his own cycle of teachings in the Female Fire Snake Year (1977) in Nepal. He also received empowerments and transmissions from Kyabje Mingling Trichen Rinpoche Gyurme Kunsang Wangyal (sKyabs rje sMin gling khri chen rin po che ‘Gyur med kun bzang dbang rgyal, 1930-2008), Kyabje Yangthang Rinpoche Kunsang Jigme Dechen Woesel Dorjee (sKyabs rje gYang thang rin po che Kun bzang ’jigs med bde chen ’od
gsal rdo rje, b.1929), Khunu Lama Rinpoche Tenzin Gyaltsen (Khu nu bla ma rin po che bsTan ’dzin rgyal mtshan, 1895-1977), Dungsey Thinlay Norbu Rinpoche (gDung sras ’phrin las nor bu rin po che), Khen Rinpoche Mewa Thupten Woeser (mKhan rin po che sMe ba thub bstan ’od-zer, 1928-2000) and several other lamas and noted masters.

In 1971, he took on the responsibilities of prefect in the dharma place of the Shedra (bshad gra). In 1973-74, he received the novice ordination vows from the propounder of the five sciences, Pandita Khenpo Tsordru (mKhan po brTsun ’grus). In 1977, he received the full ordination vows of a bhikshu from Kyabje Dzarong Zhadeo Trulshik Rinpoche Ngawang Choekyi Lodro (sKyabs rje rDza rong zha de’u ’khrul zhig rin po che Ngag dbang chos kyi blo gros, 1924-2011) at the Jarung Khashor (Bya rung kha shor) Boudhanath Stupa in Nepal.

On the 18th day of the 11th month of the Female Fire Snake Year (1977), Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche Jigdrel Yeshi Dorjee issued a handwritten letter bestowing the Khenpo title along with a white scarf as a mark of auspicious blessing. Following which, on the extraordinary holy day commemoration of Matchless Shakyamuni Buddha’s Sambhodiprapti day, on the 15th day of the fourth month (Saga Dawa) of the Female Earth Sheep year (1979), Kyabje Dodrupchen Rinpoche designated and enthroned him as a Khenpo at Chorten Sangchen Ngodrup Palbarling Monastery in Gangtok. From the time of his recognition as Khenpo, till the Female Fire Ox Year (1997), he served as the fourth in the succession of great scholar-abbots of Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies. For 19 years, he bestowed instructions on the ocean of sutras and tantras of the Nyingma system, as well as by serving as the administrator of the Shedra, among other things. During his tenure as the Principal of the Shedra, he managed to procure the affiliation with the Sampurnananand Sanskrit Vishwaavidhyala, based in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. He took great care in maintaining a very high standard of discipline and decorum in the Shedra as well as a high standard of education qualification among the students, thus contributing immensely to the Buddha Dharma during the onset of this Kalyug age. After retiring from the Shedra as per the Sikkim Government Service rules, he gave teachings on various Buddhist topics as well as moral advice to the general public of Sikkim, both monks and lay, at regular intervals. Beside he also organized the first observance of the rite of Drupchen (sGrub chen) Great Accomplishment on Lama Gongdue (bLa ma dgongs ’dus) Summary of
the Guru’s Intention at Ringon Rigzin Choeling (Rin dgon rig ’dzin chos gling) Monastery in North Sikkim.

In the Female Iron Snake Year (2001), he established Ngagyur Shedra Pema Drodl Phelgiling (sNyag ’gyur bshad gra Pad ma ’gro ’dul ’phel rgyas gling) which is adjacent to Sangag Yangtse (gSang sngags yang rtse) monastery in Rinchenpong (Rin chen spungs) in West Sikkim. The newly set-up Shedra has over 80 students assembled from all over Sikkim. The juvenile students were taught reading, writing, memorization of text, alongside imparting the knowledge of making dough offerings, chanting, and performing ritual traditions. The senior ones were strenuously taught the major scriptures of the Buddha Dharma including the milk-like amrita of the sacred Dharma. Since most of the monks in the monastery are novices and pre-novice monks, he bestowed full ordination of a bhikshu or gelong (dge slong) to four senior monks, thus setting the ground for a proper learning by firmly establishing monastic vows and discipline at the Shedra. In order to expand the Institute, as per Khenpo’s own initiative and directives, the committee of monks of Rinchenpong Monastery unanimously provided ten acres of land in order to realize his vision. The expansion work was sponsored under the Members of Parliament’s fund, from the Central Government of India, and he laid the foundation work of the extended construction. Currently, Khenpo’s disciples are fulfilling the construction of the assembly hall, an office, and quarters for the monks as envisioned by Khenpo.

In 2010, as per the request by the committee of the monks of the Phensang Sangag Choeding Monastery including umdze (dbu mdzad) and discipliner, Khenpo was ceremoniously enthroned as the Vajra Master of the monastery and after assuming the role he looked after the monastery well in all aspects. Besides, he also conferred the ordination of novice monks to the new recruits at Chorten Sangchen Ngodrup Palbarling Monastery in Gangtok. In summary, he strictly guarded the Vinaya rules and freely gave the teachings of holy Dharma. As such he spontaneously evoked the faith of the people and hence was highly revered by people from all walks of life in Sikkim.

Khenpo contributed several articles related to the hidden land of Sikkim as well as wrote commentaries on Byang chub smses dpa’ spyod pa la ’jug pa (Boddhisatvas Way of Life) and rGyal sras lag len so bdun ma (Thirty Seven Practices of Bodhhisatva), etc.

Khenpo Dechen Dorjee remained as an ornament of the Buddha Dharma in general and to the Hidden land of Sikkim in particular for having contributed immensely in the service of the Dharma. However,
as a result of lack of *karma* on the part of monks and laypeople of Sikkim, after assuming an illness for a few years, the sublime Khenpo Dechen Dorjee passed away peacefully on Friday late evening on the 21st day of the fifth month of the Male Water Dragon year of the seventeenth Tibetan Calendrical Cycle, corresponding to 9th July 2012, at the Central Referral Hospital, at 5th mile, Tadong, Gangtok. As per the instruction of Kyabje Dodrupchen Rinpoche, his reliquary body was kept for one week at Phensang Sangag Choeding Monastery which was followed by two days at Rinchenpung Sangag Yangtse Monastery, to allow and enable monks, lay disciples, followers and general public to pay their last respect. Subsequently, his reliquary body was carried to Drakar Tashiding (Brag dkar bkra shis sding), the heart of the sacred sites of the Hidden land of Sikkim, and was incinerated while performing the religious rituals from the four corners at the crematorium site, based on the *mandala* rituals of the profound Tantra, led by Kyabje Yangthang, along with *khenpos*, *tulkus* (sprul sku) and monks of Phensang Sangag Choeding Monastery, Rinchenpung Sangak Yangtse Monastery, Drakar Tashiding Monastery, and Chorten Sangchen Ngodrup Palbarling Monastery, Gangtok.