

The Ninth Gangteng Tulku



The Ninth Gangteng Tulku, Kunzang Rigdzin Pema Namgyal was born to the Bonbi Choeje family in Trongsa on December 17, 1955. His father was Tshering Dorji and his mother Tshering Pelmo. The birth of the Tulku was preceded by numerous auspicious and miraculous signs such as a rainbow-filled sky and the out-of-season flowering of trees and plants.

While the Tulku was still in his mother's womb, she had a very auspicious dream in which boiling water turned to milk and many children were fetching water. She also dreamt that sand and stones on the banks of the nearby stream turned into white pearls and that the water cascading from one of two openings on the shining cliff towards the north of the house turned to milk. When the Tulku was about a month old, while his mother was giving him a morning bath, to everyone's surprise and amazement, a five-coloured rainbow was seen striking from the eastern direction onto the bath. Coincidentally, around the same time, Gyal Yum Ashi Phuntsho Choden [Royal Consort of Bhutan's Second King and Royal Mother of Bhutan's Third King], while on her way from Bumthang stayed at Sha Samtengang near the Luetsho Lake, where she dreamt of a girl adorned with flowers and silk scarves, carrying a bowl of milk. She said that the milk was for Gangteng Tulku Rinpoche and asked the Gyal Yum to offer it to Rinpoche. When Her Majesty asked the girl in the dream who she was, the girl replied that she was the Tshomen (water spirit) of the Luetsho Lake and offered the following song:

I offer this song to the Three Jewels: the ultimate refuge,

There is none other than you to rely on.

If you wonder what this place may be,

It is the Luetsho lake of Sha Samtengang.

If you wonder who this girl might be,

I am Deki, the Tshomen of this lake.

The lake is the Spirit Lake (Latsho) called Gakhil,

The Spirit Lake of Pelings heart incarnation,

One Lama for one human generation,
After reaching six generations,
I have become very unfortunate here:
The Tulkus Buddha activity is focused elsewhere.
A number of years have gone by,
At Sang-ngag Chöling, his main seat,
No one yet sits on the throne.
In the sixth month, at the end of summer,
I went looking for the Tulku.
Towards the east from here,
Behind the great Pelela Mountain Pass,
Towards the source of the Mangde Chu,
Where the unique Henked language is spoken,
The youngest of the three sons,
Is in the full bloom of health.
At Gangteng Sang-ngag Choling,
The mind feels empty without a Tulku,
Thanks be for the Great Queen Mothers arrival here,
Couldn't you invite the Tulku to his monastic seat?

As the Tulkus birth was so clearly indicated in this song, during the morning tea, in the presence of Changzod Lapsap Kuenley, Wangdue Dzongs guest caretaker, Shar Gyalmo and Kurtoe Ashi Tshewang Lhamo, Gyal Yum Phuntsho Choden sent an order that the monks of Gangteng should be advised that if they wanted to seek the reincarnation of their Tulku, they must look for him towards the source of Mangde Chu. Moreover, the above song was given to Ashi Tshewang Lhamo by the Gyal Yum.

As a child, the Tulku often talked of the Goenpa and imitated actions of a lama such as conducting blessings and teaching ceremonies. From the previous incarnation of the Lama Namkhai Nyingpo Rinpoche, he received empowerment and transmission of the Soeldep Leu Duenma and the novices vows. When the Tulku was about seven years old, he was admitted as a monk in Trongsa Dratshang. From Lam Neten Tshewang Gyeltshen and other teachers, the young Tulku effortlessly learnt the basics of reading and writing.

He also mastered the inner and outer ritual practices, playing of religious instruments and so on. During this time, the Great Dzogchen yogi, Polo Khenpo Rinpoche recognized the Tulku as a reincarnate lama. Similarly, His Holiness Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdrel Yeshe Dorje and His Holiness the Gyalwang Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpai Dorje recognized the Tulku as the unmistakable reincarnation of Gangteng Tulku.

Then the Tulku was enrolled in Tango Buddhist College, where he received the secret Vajrayana teachings including the complete Sarma and Dzogchen teachings from His Holiness the 68th Je Khenpo Tenzin Dondrub, His Holiness the 69th Je Khenpo Geduen Rinchen and other learned teachers.

The young Tulku was enthroned as the Ninth Gangteng Tulku at an elaborate enthronement ceremony at Gangteng Sang-ngag Choling Gonpa in....

His Holiness Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche not only transmitted all the teachings, empowerments, transmissions and detailed pointing out instructions of Pema Lingpa, but also conferred the complete empowerment, transmission and teachings of the Old and New Treasure teachings of

the Dudjom lineage. With great affection and regard, His Holiness also composed a long life prayer for the Tulku. From the great masters including Kyabje Jadrel Rinpoche, Kyabje Penor Rinpoche, His Holiness the 68th Je Khenpo Tenzin Dondrub, Kyabje Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche, Kyabje Dodrub Rinpoche, Polo Khenpo Rinpoche, Sakya Khenchen Rinchen, Khenchen Khedrub, Khenchen Dampa Noryang, Khenchen Dazer, Nyoshu Khen Jamyang Dorje Rinpoche, and Yanglop Shakya Dorje, the Tulku received important teachings such as the Rinchen Terdzoed, Dam Ngag Zoed, Nyingthik Yazhi, Ngel So Kor Sum, Gyud Gyal Sangwa Nyingpo and other teachings comprising the entire Kama and Terma teachings.

The Tulku then went to the Buddhist Ngagyur Nyingma College in Mysore, India where he studied Buddhist philosophy including Madhyamaka, Prajnaparamita, metaphysics, logic and so on and mastered debate, composition and teaching skills. After that, the Tulku underwent three years of strict meditation and retreat at Kunzang Choling in Gangteng Goenpa, during which many signs of accomplishment were seen.

In the year 1983, the people of Banjar community in Tsamang under Mongar District invited and requested Tulku Rinpoche to bless their village. On that occasion, the Tulku was able to bring forth sacred water springs from three places, thus fulfilling a long-felt wish of the Banjar community. Even to this day, this proof of the amazing Buddha activity of Rinpoche can be seen in that village.

Understanding that the Buddha Dharma is vital for peace and happiness in the world and that learning, meditation and practice are essential to ensure the continuity and spread of the Dharma, Rinpoche felt the need to set up Buddhist colleges and meditation centres. As auspicious coincidence would have it, His Majesty, the Fourth King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck commanded that a Buddhist college and a meditation centre be established at Gangteng Goenpa.

In the future interest of the Monastery and the Lineage, as well as in the general interest of upholding the Dharma for the sake of all beings, His Majesty graciously commanded the Royal Government to extend full support. Accordingly, Kunzang Choling college was established at Gangteng in 1985. In 1992 a retreat meditation centre was established at Gangteng. During this time, Her Majesty the late Gyal Yum Phuntsho Choden supported this initiative by sponsoring the construction of three large images of Lord Buddha, Guru Rinpoche and Rigdzin Pema Lingpa and of a temple housing many precious contents. In addition to this, the private secretary of the Gyal Yum, Lopen Phub Dorje made contributions including offering many articles and other things to the Goenpa.

Following this, Rinpoche also instituted Ugyen Thegchok Choling in Karshong; the Anim Goenpa (nunnery) Pema Choling at Tang, in Bumthang; Tsamang Tokari Nunnery in Mongar; Chasikhar Shedra in Mongar; Tshaidang Ugyen Chholing Shedra in Zhemgang, Samdrub Choling at Chasilakha; Ugyen Thegchok Choling at Tingtibi; Kunzang Choling at Gangteng; meditation centres at Aja Ney; and Tsakaling in Mongar, amongst others. In short, there are now around 36 old and new subsidiary meditation and learning centres associated with Gangteng Goenpa in the country.

In addition, Rinpoche has been continuously and tirelessly teaching and conferring empowerments, transmissions and blessings to people from all walks of life. Since 1997, Rinpoche has imparted the complete cycle of the Teachings of Pema Lingpa around five times in Gangteng Sang-ngag Choling and other places. Moreover, Rinpoche has founded Yeshe Khorlo centres around the world and has been teaching and conferring empowerments, transmissions

and blessings to students in the United States, Canada, Europe, Taiwan, Singapore, Russia, India and other countries. For the benefit of the students from around the world, Rinpoche has also started the online teaching programs.

The newer monasteries and shedras include

Kunzang Choling at Gangteng Monastery, Gantey, Wangdue Phodrang District

Trashy Rabten Ling Monastery at Pan Bang, Zhemgang Dist.

Chokden Gonpo Choling Monastery, Zurphel, Zhemgang Dist.

Kangrab Nunnery in Bumthang Dist.

Trashy Be Tsogyel Shey Drup Choekhorling Nunnery, Zhemgang Dist.

Trashicholing Shedra, Sherzhong, Mongar Dist.

Rukha Monastery in Wangdhi Dist.

Riwo Ugyen Choling Ling Monastery in Samdrupjonkhar Dist.

Nalanda Ati Ling Shedra, Panbang, Zhemgang Dist.

Sudrang Trashy Choling Monastery Zhemgang Dist.

Tshakhaling Samten Choeling Monastery Mongar Dist.

Tormashong Sanjay Choling Shedra Nunnery Mongar Dist.

Ting Tibi Sankdo Pelri Ugyen Thegchok Choling Shedra Zhemgang Dist.

Tsamang Sedrup Choekhorling Zherim Shedra Nunnery in Mongar Dist.

Kengkhar Monastery Mongar Dist.

Ugyen Thegchok Choling Shedra Karshong Trongsa Dist.

Morakhar Changlochin Zherim Shedra Wangdhi Dist.

Ugyen Choling Monastery, at LEO in Kunnaur, Himachal Pradesh India

Bjoka Lhundrup Choling Monastery Zhemgang Dist.

Kharshong Rigzin Gatsheling Retreat Centre Trongsa Dist.

Anim Goenpa (nunnery) Pema Choling at Pan Tang in Bumthang Dist.

Pan Tang Sherab Choling Monastery in Zhemgang Dist.

Chaksa Khar Shedra Mongar Dist.

Tshaidang Ugyen Chholing Shedra in Zhemgang Dist.

Samdrub Choling at Chasilakha

Nay Monastery Retreat Centre Wangdhi Dist.

meditation centres at Aja Ney; and Tsakaling in Monga Dist.

Yeshe Khorlo Centres in Asia: Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia

Yeshe Khorlo Centres in Europe: France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Estonia

Yeshe Khorlo Centres in North America: Canada, USA in Los Angeles and Chöying Dzong Retreat Center, Crestone Colorado, Puebla Mexico

Pema Lingpa Centre in Victoria and Vancouver British Columbia Canada

Khakyab Dorje Nyingma Buddhist Centre of Vancouver British Columbia Canada

Khakyab Dorje Nyingma Buddhist Centre of Los Angeles California

Rinpoche's Education summary:

About age 7 (about 1963) started education at Trongsa Monastery

About age 20 (about 1976) started intermediate studies at Tango Monastery

About age 25 (about 1980) started higher studies at Ngagyur Nyingma College at Mysore

About age 29 (about 1985) started at Gangteng Shedra

Then at age 33 beginning on September 21, 1989 to December 24, 1992 Rinpoche made a three year three month three day retreat.