







Brief Accounts of the Lives and Deeds of the Incarnations of the Lord of Refuge

THRANGU RINPOCHE



### न्ययामुयान्वराग्रायशास्याप्यायवेषात्रेष्यवरावतेःश्चेवशाहेषात्याःश्चेयाश्चेतेःसर्वःवि

Calligraphies of the Thrangu Tulku names by His Holiness, Ogyen Trinley Dorje, the 17th Gyalwang Kamapa

श्चेर'यहूर। न्नुःयपञ्चा

Preface Lama Pema

लु'न्या'या अविव'र्ये'यग्रीया प्रबर'र्ये'कें'रेट्य विं'सेन्'व्या'रे

Editor Khenpo Tashi Sangpo Tsering Tromé Dragri

गडिगाशुर तकर तर्गित पात्र राभेईश तेगित या धे नेश क्षे से

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न्ये श्रुवा

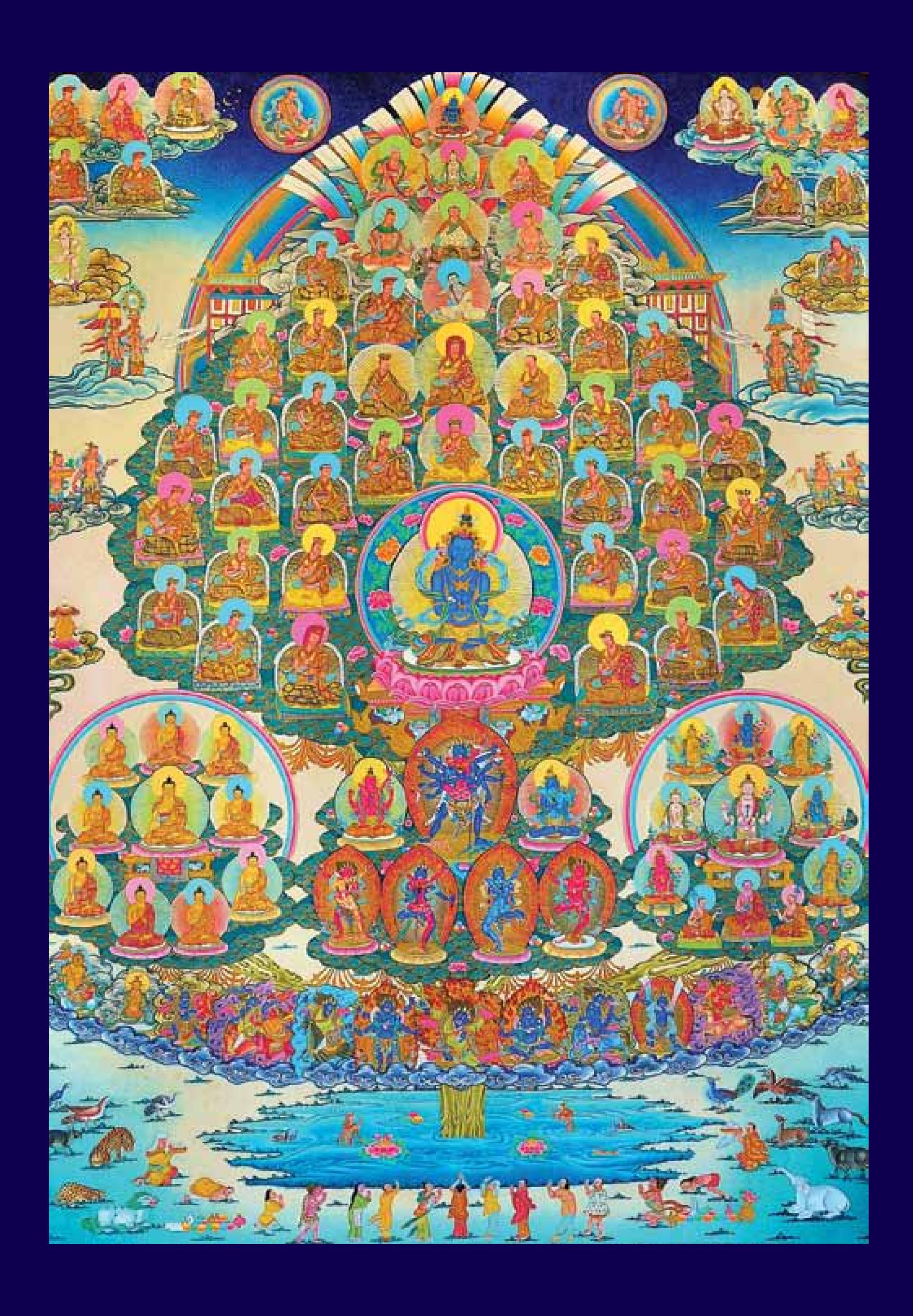
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  of The Head-Abbot and Vairacarya of the main-seat of the Kagyudpa Sect.
     A holder of the Remunciation Vow, the Bodhisattva Vow & Tantric Vow.
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## OM SVASTI

I bow the crown of my head to the feet of Khenchen Thrangu,
Abundant with the wisdom, love, and power of the infinite buddhas
Whose mind, magnificent within the folds of a lotus flower,
Is unequaled in bringing benefit and happiness to beings and the teachings.

With this auspicious verse serving as an introduction, now to speak of the present topic:

It is said often in many sutras and tantras that it is more meritorious to venerate a single pore on the guru's body than to make offerings to all the infinite buddhas. Recalling this, I have commissioned, with a pure motivation and gratitude, beautiful paintings of all the previous incarnations of the Lord of Refuge Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, our precious teacher and tutor to His Holiness the Seventeenth Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje.

Lobsang Dorje, the chief attendant of our precious Lord of Refuge, informed His Holiness of this project, who not only praised it as excellent but also wrote the names of each of the incarnations by hand and gave his signature. In this way, he blessed these paintings to become a superb object of veneration for those with faith. I humbly spread my fingers across my chest and express my gratitude. I would also like to thank the artist who painted them, Karma Dradul, a monk from our monastery.

The names of the previous incarnations of the Thrangu Tulku are:

- 1. Sherap Tenpe Gyaltsen
- 2. Gendun Senge
- 3. Karma Risang
- 4. Karma Namgyal
- 5. Karma Sherap Gyatso
- 6. Karma Kunkhyap Nyima
- 7. Karma Ngedön Gyatso
- 8. Karma Tenzin Trinley Rabgye
- 9. Karma Lodrö Ringluk Maway Senge

All of them have been great lions who have proclaimed the teachings of the Practice Lineage on snow mountains.

With the virtue of creating these paintings foremost,
I gather all positive karma that spirits away the good fortune
Of new clouds, and dedicate it as the cause
That the glorious lama live a hundred aeons.

The spiritual friend is the source of the sweet honey rain
Of the True Dharma that ripens the crops of pure white virtue
In the fertile fields in the minds of fortunate beings.
May he, the youthful cloud of an age of perfection live long.

His explanations are the golden scalpel
That opens the eyes of those blind to what to do and what to avoid.

May the great guide who clearly indicates
The path to perpetual happiness live long.

To conquer the gathering darkness of degenerate times
And steal away the chance for harmful acts to occur,
He radiates many rays of the sunlight of activity.

May the friend, the torch for beings, live long.

He liberates all beings from the vast seas of samsara,
That roil with the waves of birth, aging, illness, and death
And abound with the sharks of karma and afflictions.
May the great captain of all wanderers live long.

In every life after this, may we
Be born in a precious human body and be caught
On the hook of the glorious lama's compassion.
May he lead us to the citadel of the Victor's four kayas.

Thus prays Dungse Lama Pema Tsewang, the resident master of Thrangu Monastery Canada. May it be just so.

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## SVASTI VIJANTU

Ever-excellent great bliss, peaceful might of dharmadhatu,
Deities, splendid and supreme, of all-encompassing purity,
Bring forth the delightfully abundant siddhi of prosperous longevity
To secure this peerless master's life forever.

Within the sphere of wisdom vision, the equality of existence and peace,
You are awakened as effortless luminous awareness;
Yet, may your endless magical displays, filling all of space,
Remain alive and well as the essence of Lokeshvara.

Serene expanse, all-pervasive and utterly free,
Your wisdom experience has been pure from the beginning;
Yet, may your joyful dance, uniting emptiness and bliss within basic space,
Remain alive and well as the essence of the bold Manjushri.

The ground expanse, from the beginning unbroken by mental constructs, Is the unending kaya, the ease of delighting in the supreme secret;

Yet, may you, unmoved in great actionless nondoing,

Remain alive and well as the essence of Vajrapani.

May the life of this noble master be everlasting;
May the eminent parasol of your Dharma renown billow over the world;
May the darkness, decline and fears of beings completely subside;
And may your auspicious light spread forever.

Anointed with the dewdrops of the title Perfect Buddha Glorious Karmapa, I, Orgyen Trinley Kunkhyab Wangi Dorje, pray that this supplication, offered with pure aspirations on the second Joyful Day in the waxing phase of the Victorious Month, may be fulfilled accordingly.

March 2nd, 2001

Translated on the occasion of the Karmapa's first visit to the Vajra Vidya Institute.

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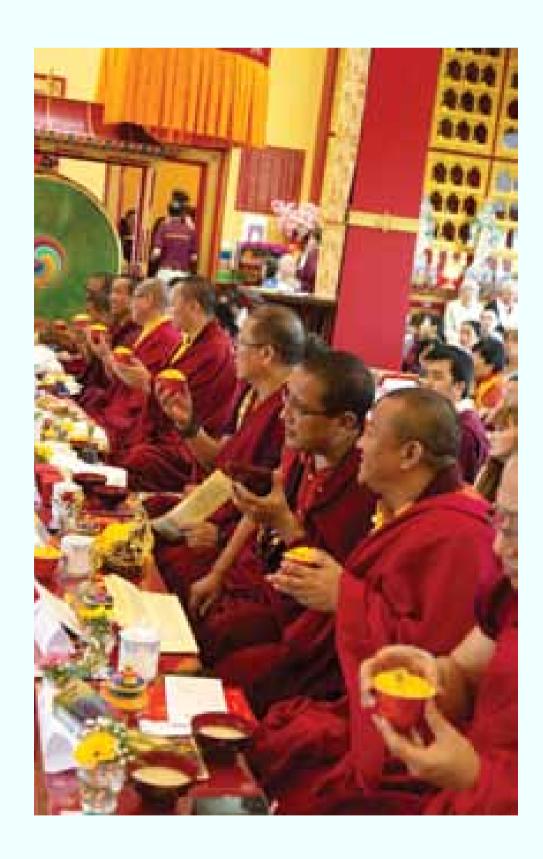
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### OM SVASTI

O friend, born from the ocean of the two accumulations, Who cool the heat of beings' torments,

You who are the perfect orb of a full moon triumphant
In the battle over the Rahula of the two obscurations,

Illuminating everything in samsara and nirvana
In a single moment with hundreds of rays of the two truths,

Master of the teachings of the two traditions,

A hundred times I bow my head to you.

In the primordium you woke to manifest buddhahood and yet

The play of your emanations can become anything.

From the beginning you have realized the equality of samsara and nirvana,
But you come as a protector for those beings who have not.

Though in the true reality you are free of aging or waning,
You display an elderly manner in the eyes of your disciples.

I supplicate you, stay for a hundred aeons

As a companion to the deathless supreme Amitayus!

Your wisdom clouds gather in the sky of knowing.

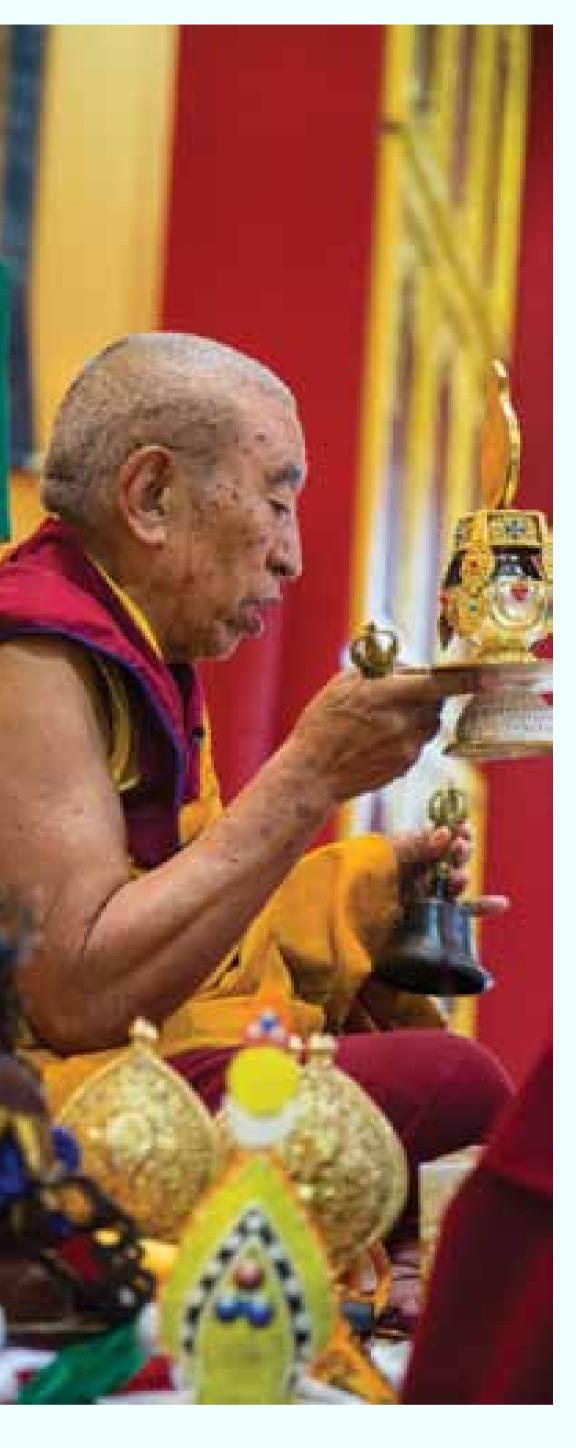
Your loving compassion showers the rain of Dharma on beings.

Your power moistens the fields of disciples.

Lungrik Maway Senge, may you be triumphant!

With these auspicious words opening wide the path of the gods, I, Dungse Lama Pema humbly place the petals of my ten fingers above the chakra of great bliss at the crown of my head with unshakable faith and make this prayer from my heart.

Reminding ourselves of the five perfections at this time, our glorious protector whose kindness defies word or concept is the one who, to call him by name, is the Yongdzin





Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche or the incomparable treasury of compassion, our glorious root lama Karma Lodrö Ringluk Maway Senge Pal Sangpo Chokle Nampar Gyalway Dey. He is the lord of all families and protector of the wheel whose fluttering white banner of renown fills all three worlds, a great paṇḍita of the definitive meaning.

This supreme being taken upon his own shoulders the great burden of the teachings of the Snow Land in general. His activity, which knows no rivals, extends throughout the vast expanse illuminating all. In particular there is no limit to the measure of his compassionate kindness for those beings born into the traditions of Himalayan people and Buddhism.

Especially he has cared for me affectionately since I was a child. He has looked at me with compassionate eyes, nurtured me with a loving hand, and raised me with all the favorable conditions of the most excellent riches of Dharma and happiness. He has fathered me with the key instructions of scripture and logic and nursed me with the milk of advice. Because of this, my precious human life has blossomed with youth. These and other kindnesses surpass the furthest limit of word and concept; I would be hard pressed to measure them. As it is said,

In qualities he is equal to all buddhas,
But in kindness he is superior to all buddhas.

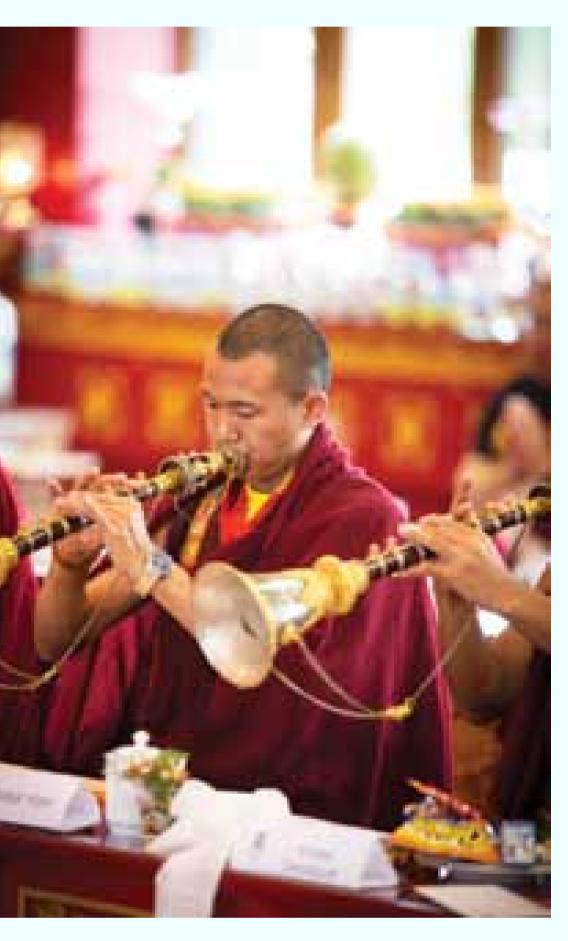
Thus it is difficult to conceive of even the tiniest fraction of his kindness, let alone to calculate it. It is also said:

Each moment of a buddha's love Is worth ten million jewels.

Though his kindness cannot be measured, the power of profound interdependence is also inconceivable. Thus there is a great need for us to make this long life offering of the Great Compassionate One Guhyasamaja.

Accordingly, we make this offering so that the activity of the three secrets of the great learned and accomplished master who is the champion and protector for Buddhism and beings, Karma Lodrö Ringluk Maway Senge, may flourish like the Playful Sea of Anavatapta in every land in all directions. We make it so that the exalted glorious protector of the teachings and beings may live for an ocean of aeons into the future,







and so that we may perfect the great accumulation of merit. Thus we offer:

An excellently crafted mandala of gold and copper complete with Mount Meru, the four continents, the subcontinents, the sun, the moon, the iron mountains and so forth; and

To represent the body as steadfast as the unchanging king of mountains, a statue of the buddha Amitayus that captivates one's gaze and shines with brilliance;

To represent speech that is like a feast of the euphonious words of the true Dharma as constant as the flow of a river of the sixty traits of Brahma's melody, *The Sutra of Boundless Life and Wisdom*;

To represent mind that dwells in the essence of the unshakable, primordially pure dharmakaya, a Kadam stupa;

To represent the inexhaustible qualities of removal and ripening that fulfill all hopes and wishes in the three worlds, a long life vase of immortality made of gold and copper as well as five kinds of grains;

To represent the activity that continues eternally without interruption, pervasively and spontaneously until samsara is empty, a double vajra;

To represent the victory banner of the teachings of the Dakpo tradition raised high in the sky, a Gampopa hat, a ceremonial hat, and complete set of robes;

The eight auspicious symbols, foremost among them an auspicious parasol that never sets with a golden staff for his head; and

The seven precious articles of an emperor, foremost among them a precious wheel victorious over hostile enemies and beautiful with a perfectly round hub, a thousand spokes, and a brilliant rim.

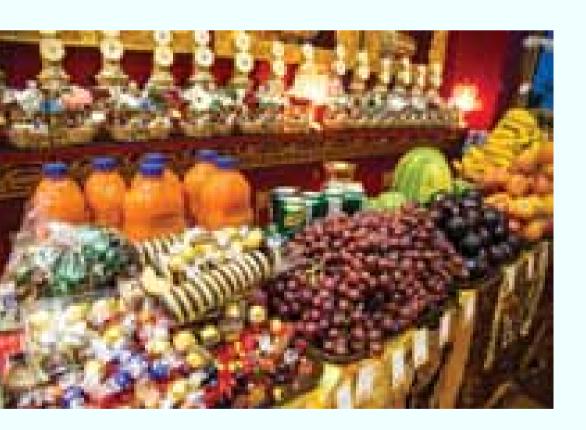
#### As it is said:

How could a Noble for whom gold and dirt are equal Be pleased if you offer them the bounty of the four continents?

Though with his wisdom he has completely eliminated any clinging, this is for us to perfect a great accumulation of merit.







We also offer a long silk scarf and gift of as well as a gift for each member of the Sangha.

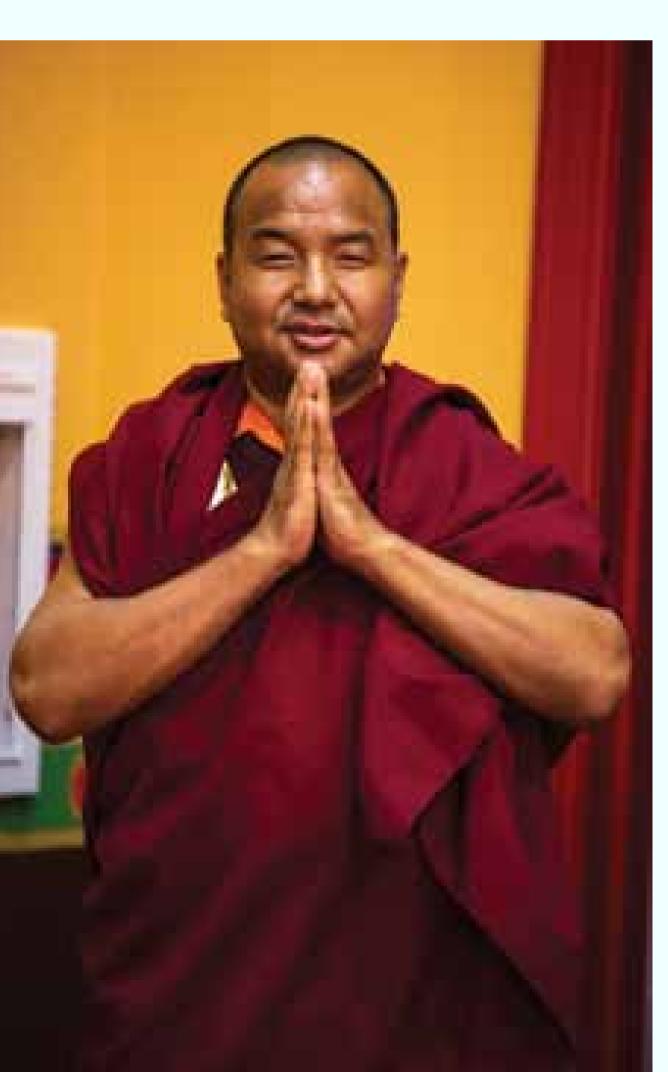
By the power of this offering, may the precious teachings of scripture and realization of the omniscient Shakyamuni in general and the teachings of the peerless Dakpo in particular, the confluence of the two rivers of Kadampa and Mahamdura that is like the quintessence of molten gold, spread, flourish, and long remain.

We pray for the beings who uphold the teachings: the jewel in every crown and guide of gods and humans, Ngawang Lobsang Yeshe Tenzin Gyatso Sisum Wang-gyur Tsungpa Mepay De; the great masters of all lineages, foremost among them the pervasive lord of the ocean of the teachings of the practice lineage, the glorious Gyalwang Karmapa, and his heart disciples; and especially our own personal deity upon whom the flower of our fate has fallen, he who raises the victory banner of the practice lineage of the Karma Kamtsang to the Peak of Existence, the crown jewel of all scholars and practitioners, the great being Khenchen Karma Lodrö Lungrik Maway Senge.

May the activity of their three secrets fill every land in all directions. May the lives of these protectors triumph over all impediments and obstacles. May the wishes of their hearts, the great burden of the teachings and beings, be accomplished effortlessly and spontaneously. And along with that may this great friend from long ago for all the weary and helpless beings live from aeon to aeon a life as long and stable as the unchanging deathless Amitayus. We pray that all the wishes in his heart be entirely accomplished.

By the power of this one-pointed prayer, may all misfortune and impediments for all sentient beings in this vast world in general and for the faithful students from North America, East Asia, and especially the Snow Land and the Himalayan mountain range be pacified. May they have good fortune equaling the glory of an Age of Perfection. May the primary cause of this, precious bodhichitta, fill their beings completely, and may the happiness of nonviolence and peace become manifest. May our prayers be accomplished just as we have aspired. A few words:





Amitayus who embody the compassion of all the victors,

Glorious Tara who are the essence of the victors' wisdom,

And Vijayī who gather the activity of all the victors into one,

Make steadfast the life of this lama who illuminates the victors' teachings.

Vajradhara, lord of all families,

Yogini, supreme of all yidams,

And the guardian pair, principal of all protectors:

We ask that from your compassion, you grant the lama long life.

May the glory of the teachings, Karma Lodrö, the sole protector of beings and the teachings,

Remain as the essence of the indestructible deathless protector.

May our wishes for this and the next be spontaneously accomplished without effort.

May his lotus feet remain unshakable for aeons; may he accomplish his wishes.

The community of the Sangha, swathed by fresh auroral clouds of saffron-colored robes

That were made by gathering uncountable jewels of merit collected in the past,

Rivals a wish-fulfilling jewel for those poor and helpless beings who serve it properly.

May it fill and plenish the entire vast earth with the glory of an Age of Perfection.

Here under the expanse of the heavens, may the results of bad intentions,

The terrifying flames of atomic weapons

And the fearsome conflagration of the end of an aeon

Be quenched by the sweet raindrops of compassion.

May new green shoots of mutual harmony fill every part of this world.

May there blaze the feast of a fortunate aeon,

And may all enjoy the glory of a peaceful age of perfection.

#### SARVA MANGALAM

Offered at the Long Life Drubchen, Thrangu Monastery Canada 2012

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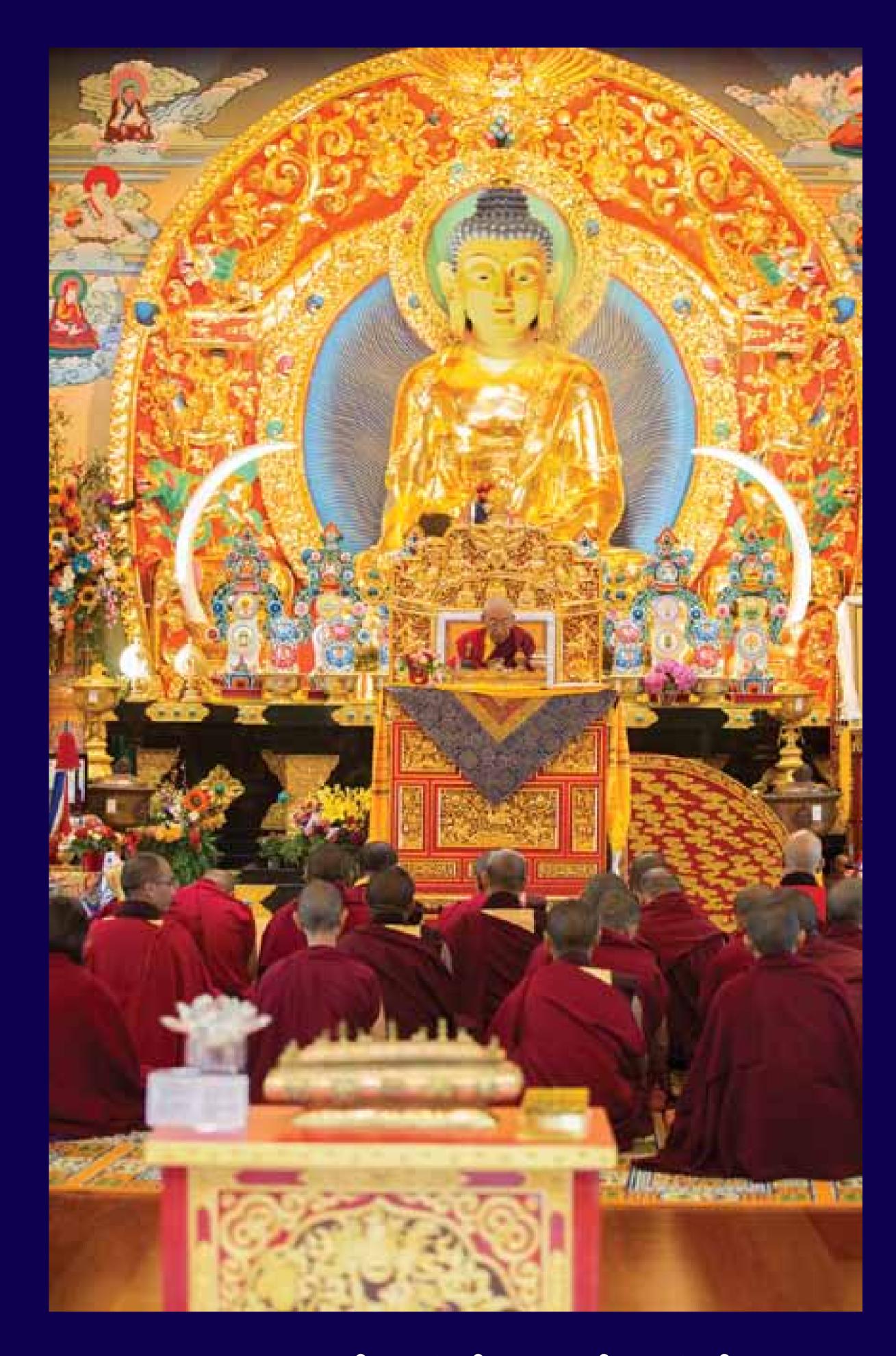
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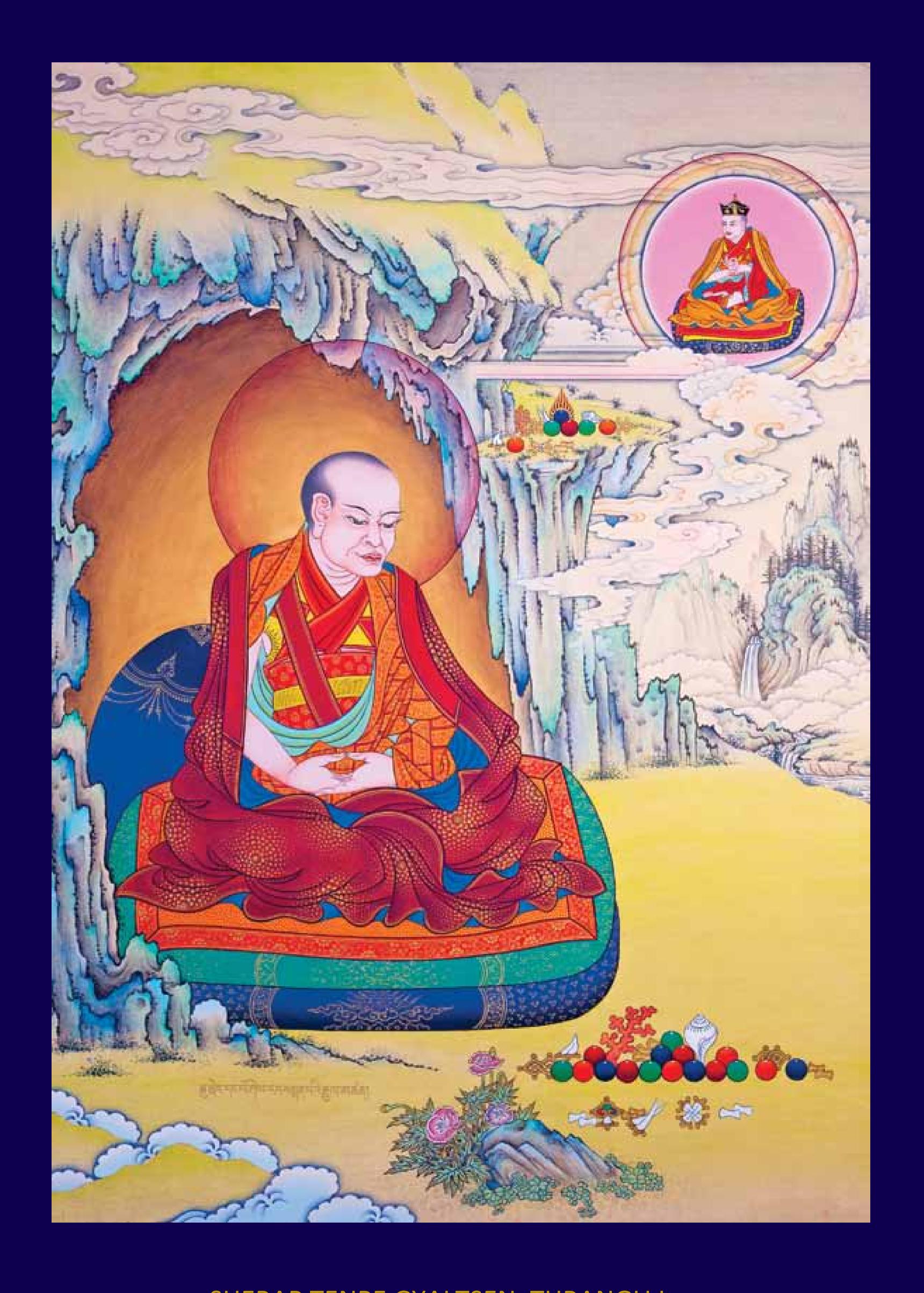




यह्र स्यार्य यह्य प्राय

Brief Accounts of the Lives and Deeds of the Incarnations of the Lord of Refuge

## THRANGU RINPOCHE



SHERAP TENPE GYALTSEN, THRANGU I

### THE FIRST THRANGU RINPOCHE (1436-1487)



The first Thrangu Tulku, Sherap Tenpay Gyaltsen, was born in the Male Fire Dragon Year of the seventh cycle (1436 CE). The names of his parents and so forth are not known. However, this was the time of the Sixth Karmapa Thongwa Donden, who was born in 1416.

When the Karmapa went to Karma Gön, the second of his three monastic seats, he saw

rituals from other traditions being recited and asked what their purpose was. Since there were no such texts for his own tradition, he was asked about their origin. As a result, the Karmapa prepared the ritual texts for the sadhanas and mandala rituals of Vajravarahi, Jinasagara, and so forth, as is well known. At that time, the Thrangu lama had the opportunity to receive the empowerments, transmissions, and key instructions for them.

The Sixth Karmapa passed away at the age of thirty-eight in the Water Bird Year (1453). The Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso was born in the Male Fire Dog Year (1454), and the Thrangu lama became a disciple whom he cared for affectionately.

The Karmapa went to Tsarshi Lhundrup Monastery (whose ruins can still be seen today) near Thrangu in 1463 when he was ten years old. The Thrangu lama was definitely one of the Karmapa's attendants at that time and accompanied him to the site which would later become Thrangu Monastery. The Thrangu lama certainly developed an exceptional resolve and made great aspirations, although he was not able to found the monastery at that time.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> bKa' brgyud gser phreng rnam thar zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba (*The Golden Garland of Kagyu Biographies*), Vol. *da*, p. 273.

Later in the Male Wood Horse Year (1474), when the Karmapa was twenty-one, they returned to that area by way of Surmang and established the Thrangu Monastery. The Karmapa said, "Plant a Dharma community on a sun seat," and so at the age of thirty-nine, the Thrangu Lama Sherap Tenpay Gyaltsen founded a monastery on a site known to this day as Nyilung Nang or "In Sun Valley." The location was not only the birthplace of Kyopa Jigten Sumgön, the founder of the Drikung Kagyu lineage, it was also the site of the large Kyura Monastery until Jigten Sumgön moved to Drikung Monastery in Central Tibet. Thus it was a place with both blessings and history.

The oral tradition has it that Thrangu Monastery was named after a rock face, but there is no such rock face there, and that story does not seem to have a reliable source. The true story is that a group of the Seventh Karmapa's students who had strong meditation practice lived in a multi-colored tent and were thus called "The ones in the colorful (*thra*-) tent (*gur*)." They became the sangha at that new monastery, so it was named "Thragur" (*khra gur*) or "colorful tent." A few generations later, the spelling changed to Thrangu (*khra 'gu*).

The Tsarshi Lhundrup Monastery is mentioned in the life story of the Seventh Karmapa, but its later history is not mentioned in other accounts or life stories, as that area was later devastated by Mongolian armies and the monastery destroyed. It appears that its dharma activity moved on to other monasteries.

The Thrangu Lama Sherap Tenpay Gyaltsen built a temple, and the practices of the five deities of Vajravarahi and the nine deities of Jinasagara that came from the Sixth Karmapa Thongwa Donden flourished there. They continue without decline to this day. Sherap Tenpay Gyaltsen performed great benefit for Buddhism and sentient beings until passing away at the age of fifty-two in the Fire Sheep Year of the eighth cycle (1487).

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PAGE 36: 7th Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso TOP OF PAGE 37: 6th Karmapa Thongwa Dönden BOTTOM OF PAGE 37: Kyopa Jigten Sumgön

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 277.

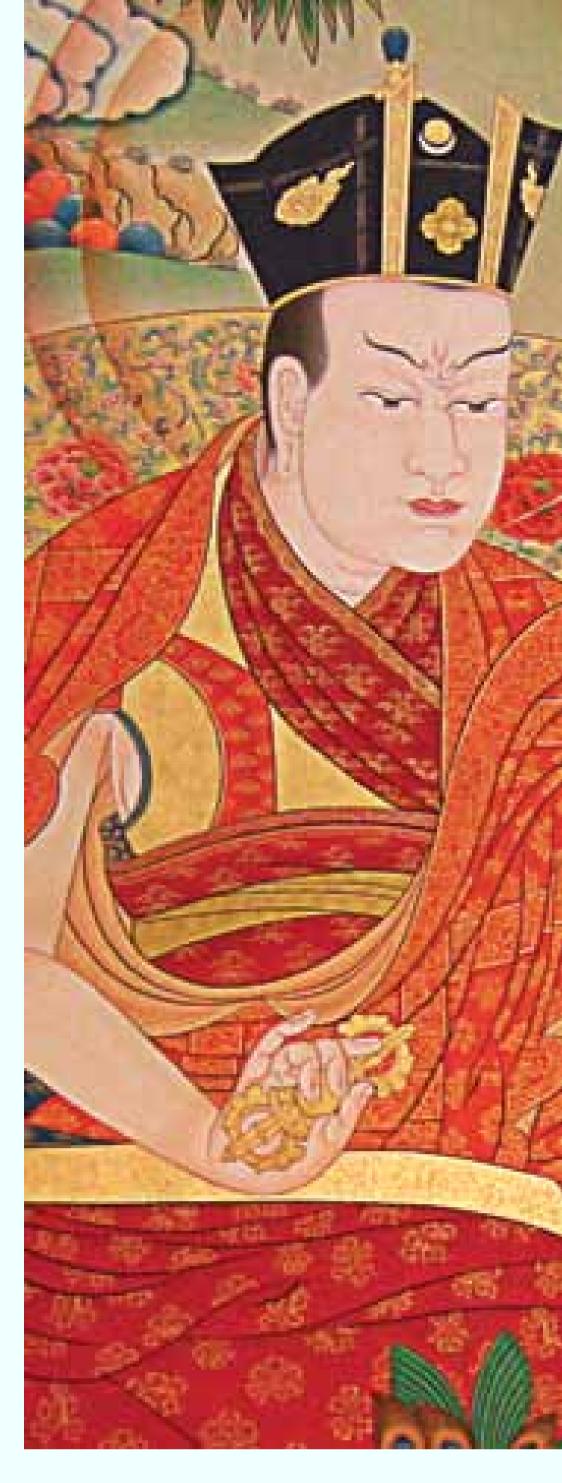
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 287.

## शुद्धेदद्दर्धिक्यम्यपश्चर्यस्य गुर्यस्य १००५०

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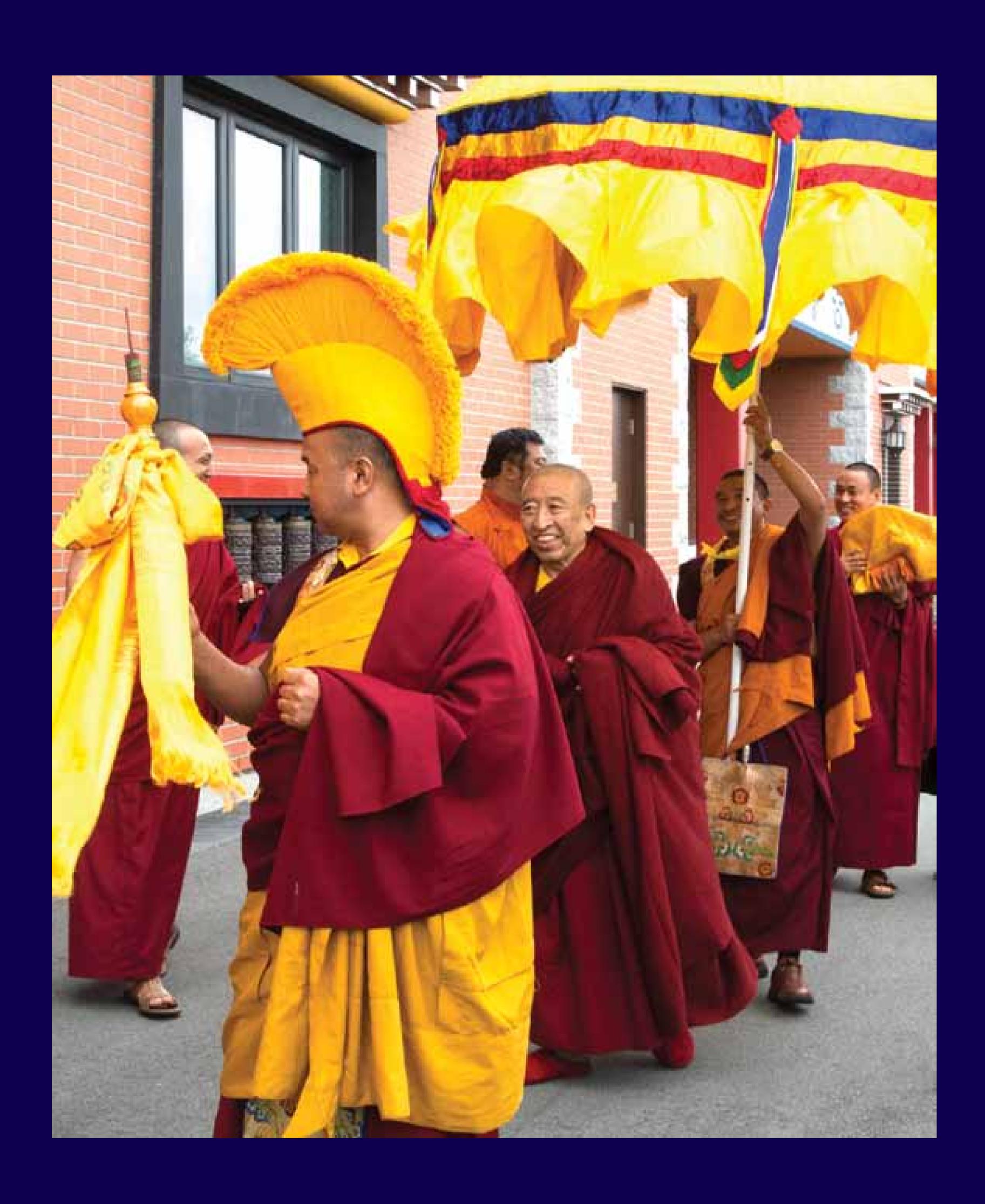


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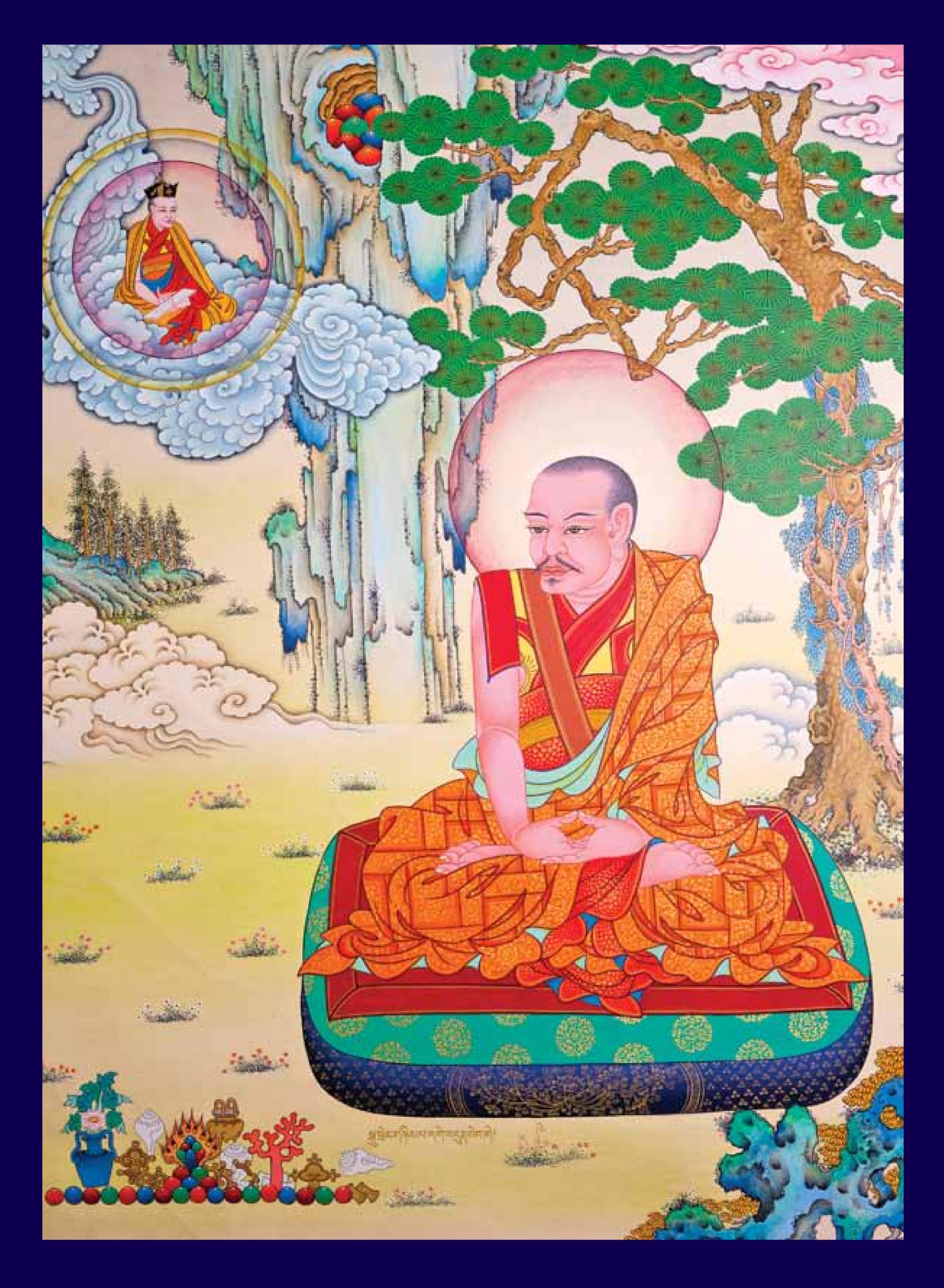
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GENDUN SENGE, THRANGU II

#### THE SECOND THRANGU TULKU (1489-1558)



His reincarnation, the Second Thrangu Rinpoche Gendun Senge, was born in the Female Earth Bird Year (1489) near the monastery to a family descended from the Kyura. Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso recognized him and indicated that he was an emanation of one of Guru Rinpoche's twenty-five mahasiddha disciples, Shübu Palgyi Senge. He named the tulku Gendun Senge. At that time, Chödrak Gyatso was thirty-six.

Gendun Senge received many empowerments and instructions from the Seventh Karmapa. As Chödrak Gyatso lived to the age of 53 (until the Fire Tiger Year of the eighth cycle, 1506), Gendun Senge regarded him as his root lama. As the sangha at Thrangu Monastery grew and the teachings flourished, not everyone fit in the first temple, so he built a second temple.

The Eighth Karmapa Mikyö Dorje was born in the Female Fire Hare Year of the ninth cycle, 1507, and invited to Thrangu Monastery at the age of eight in 1514. According to *The Golden Garland*, "He went to Tsarshi and saw the deities of Tara at the Tara Rock. He went to Tsi Ngur and saw Kyopa Rinpoche. Gendun Senge invited him to Kyura in Chutso Shong." Nowadays, Chutso Shong is a small pond in the summer that dries up in the winter where the Mahakala dance is performed. It is certain that Gendun Senge brought the Karmapa there.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Vol. *na*, p. 8.

He also met the Fourth Shamar Chen Nga Chökyi Drakpa and the mahasiddha Sangye Nyenpa. He followed the two as his lamas, receiving innumerable empowerments and key instructions from them. In particular, he also studied the mandala rituals from Ngok's tradition according to the manuals written by the Fourth Shamar and initiated new grand pujas of them. The tradition of the empowerments, transmissions, and practice were preserved uninterrupted, and Jamgön Rinpoche described how magnificent this deed was in the index to the Treasury of Kagyu Mantras.<sup>2</sup>

Genden Senge brought benefit to the teachings and beings and nurtured the sangha until he passed away at the age of seventy in the Earth Horse Year of the ninth cycle (1558).

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PAGE 44: 8th Karmapa Mikyö Dorje PAGE 45: Shübu Palgyi Senge

<sup>2</sup> p. 70.

## शुभेरायानेश्वार्यात्वाय्यात्वायाः १९५० ॥ १९५० ॥ १९५० ॥ १९५० ॥

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### THE THIRD THRANGU TULKU (1159-1625)



The Third Thrangu Tulku Karma Risang was born in the Earth Sheep Year of the ninth cycle (1559). He was recognized by the Fifth Shamar Könchok Yenlak.

Karma Risang built a large new Mahakala temple at Thrangu Monastery. According to the oral histories, when Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso performed the opening ceremonies after founding the monastery, there was an old

woman was digging droma (wild sweet potatoes), which was a good omen. "You should not stay there," he said to her. "We're building a monastery there."

"It would be fine to build the monastery up there and also to build it down there," she replied. Because of this coincidence, there was an upper and a lower monastery. The lower temple was in a location where the sky and earth made a triangle, and so it was a wrathful place. Karma Risang thought this a good location and built a large new Mahakala temple there. He began a tradition of continual practice of the three roots: the practice of Guru Rinpoche Könchok Chidu as the

guru; the self, frontal, and vase visualizations of Vajravarahi as the yidam; and the offerings to the guardian Bernakchen as the dharma protector. He followed Shamar Könchok Lama as his teacher and received many empowerments, transmissions, and instructions from him. He established the practice of the Great Mahakala Puja, combining the protector ritual Incinerating Hatred with the local protector Parol per the instructions of the Fifth Shamar. Likewise since there were the ruins of the previous seat of the Drikung, he also instituted the recitation of oblations to Achi. During the lama dance for the actual practice, he followed the tradition of Dechen Yangpachen in establishing the ritual of four different dances during the summoning of the local protector Parol: the two-armed sun and moon, Drolging, the skeleton, and the dark blue demon.

Later he received from the Sixth Shamar Chökyi Wangchuk many special empowerments, transmissions, and instructions, which he taught and spread to others. Since he lived at the same time as Surmang Trungpa Kunga Namgyal, he had a very strong dharma connection with him, and it seems they would give each other teachings. He thus brought great benefit to the Buddhism and sentient beings until passing away at the age of sixty-seven in the Female Wood Ox Year of the tenth cycle (1625).

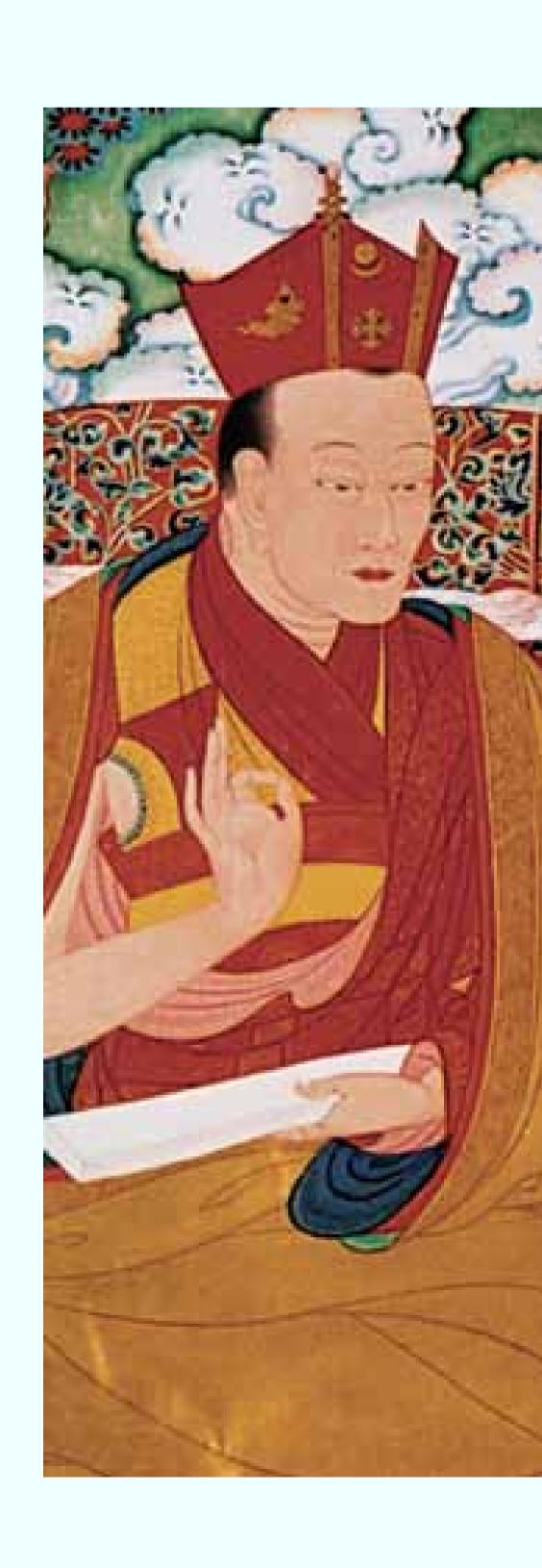
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## शुंधेरामशुंधायाम् रेमाश्याचारा १५५० ॥ १५५० ॥

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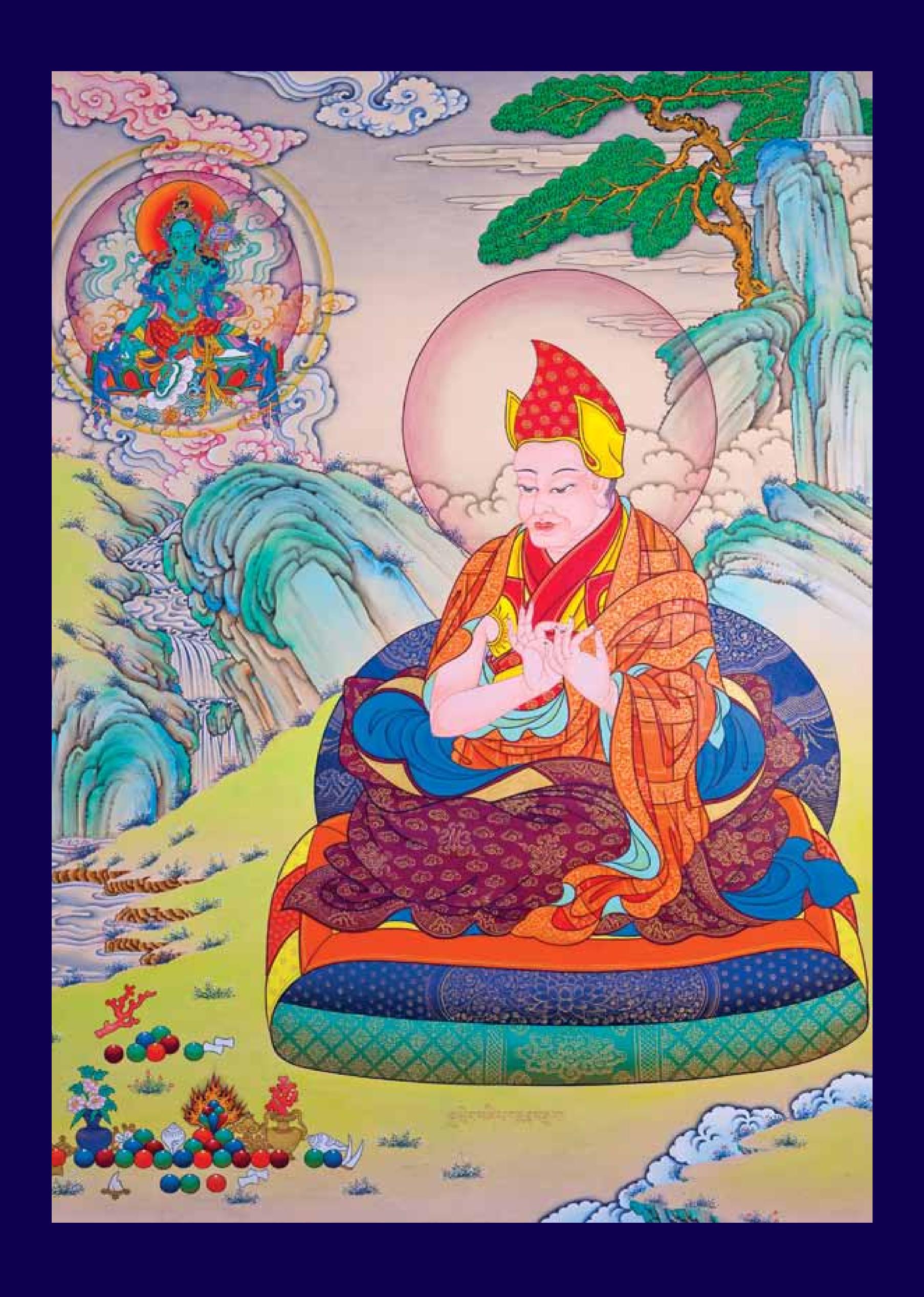
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#### THE FOURTH THRANGU TULKU (1626-1694)



The Fourth Thrangu Tulku Karma Namgyal was born in the Male Fire Tiger Year of the tenth cycle (1626). He was recognized by the Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorje. In general he behaved simply and had few activities, but he was extremely diligent in his practice and thus had great miraculous powers.

At that time, the Mongol armies had conquered Qinghai and brought the strife of

war to the region of Dokham. Soldiers arrived at the monastery, and their general Hor Chökyap stormed into the great Mahakala temple, where an old monk was sitting playing the drum. The general saw him suddenly disappear into the drum, stabbed the drum with a knife, and tore it down out of hatred and pride. He then took the drum and had it cast off of the Genyen Dong, but it rolled back up and went into the Mahakala temple. He followed it back up, but when he reached the door of the Mahakala temple he spat up blood and died. His dried hand could later be seen by the door of the Mahakala temple. The drum was unharmed and could be seen up to the modern day. While this was happening, the soldiers were brewing and drinking tea near a good spring. When they heard the story of the general's death, they fainted from grief and terror, and so the spring became known as the "Fainting Enemy Spring."

In any case, because of Karma Namgyal's miraculous powers, he was able to protect the monastery from being destroyed or vandalized. He lived to the age of sixty-nine, providing great service to beings and the teachings until his death in the Wood Dog Year of the twelfth cycle (1694).

ABOVE: Tara of the Acacia Tree Forest FACING PAGE: 10th Karmapa Chöying Dorje

## श्रियत्वेयाग्राह्य गुप्ति । गु

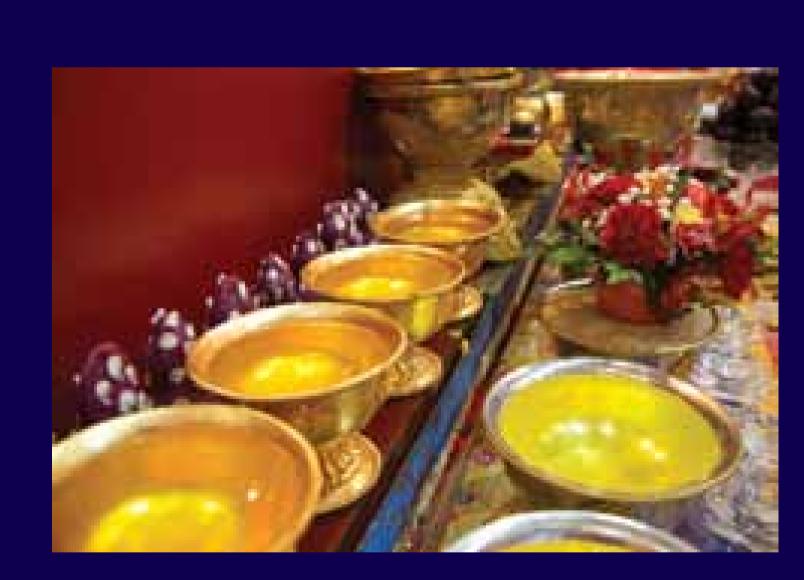
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#### THE FIFTH THRANGU TULKU (1697-1768)



The Fifth Thrangu Tulku Sherap Gyatso was born in the Fire Ox Year of the twelfth cycle (1697) and recognized by the Eleventh Karmapa Yeshe Dorje. He performed great deeds and had great mental powers. He established the tradition of holding a Grand Maṇi Puja based on the Great Compassion Guhyasamaja practice, one of the four from Ratnalingpa's Guhyasamaja cycle, following the manuals prepared by the great scholar and meditator Karma Chakme. This tradition has been preserved to the present day, following the

detailed and extensive Nedo tradition of preparing the sand mandala, making tormas, chanting melodies, and so forth.

Most of the land belonging to the Thrangu Ladrang was given to him as an offering. Of the four ladrangs of the Thrangu Monastery, the Thrangu Ladrang had the smallest estate.

The second Traleg Rinpoche Nyima Gyurme had performed extensive activity, but the Third and Fourth Traleg Rinpoches, Nyima Salche and Chögyal Nyima, were both yogis who stayed in an isolated mountain retreat called Tserlung Putra, so the Thrangu Lama Sherap Gyatso invited the Fifth Traleg Trinley Nyima to Thrangu Monastery and invested him as the master of the teachings. Traleg Rinpoche then built a third temple. The two worked together, and as a result the new temple was large and of excellent craftsmanship, and the sangha throve. There are stories of many great masters such as Sewo Nyima Latak coming there.

The Mongolian governor Lobsang Tendzin brought conflict to Qinghai, and in 1728 the Chinese army forcibly deposed him. Among this and other events, it was a tumultuous time, but through Sherap Gyatso's skillful means, the temple and monastery were not harmed in any way. He lived serving the teachings and practicing meditation until the age of seventy-two, when he passed away in the Male Earth Rat Year of the thirteenth cycle (1768).

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ABOVE: Guhyasamaja FACING PAGE: 11th Karmapa Yeshe Dorje

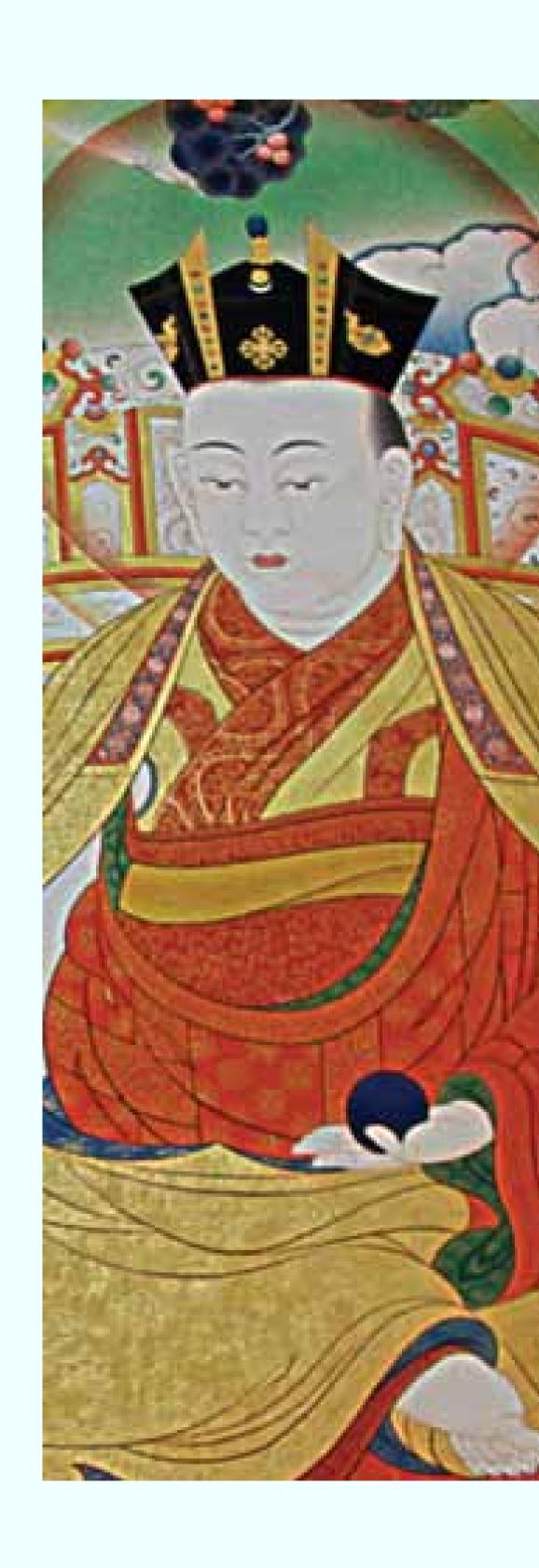
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KARMA KUNKHYAP NYIMA, THRANGU VI

### THE SIXTH THRANGU TULKU (1769-1819)



The Sixth Thrangu Tulku Kunkhyap Nyima was born in the Earth Ox Year of the thirteenth cycle (1769) and recognized by Situ Chökyi Jungne. He had all three qualities of being learned, venerable, and good, and had extremely great merit as well, so there began a custom of calling all the following incarnations "Thrangu Kunkhyap Nyima" when supplicating them.

Once when he was young, he saw Guru Rinpoche in person at a place called Thri Putsuk, though the servant accompanying him was confused by strong wind and did not see it. An old *thangka* painting depicting this could be seen in the Ladrang until modern times.

Thrangu Kunkhyap Nyima invited Belo Tsewang Kunkhyap to the monastery, who corrected their practice of the Ngok mandalas. Belo also painted the mandalas on the upper ceilings of the temple.

He also enthroned the reincarnation of the Fifth Traleg Rinpoche, the Sixth Traleg Yeshe Nyima, on a gold throne. Yeshe Nyima invited Lodrö Nyima from Surmang to stay at the monastery as his representative. (The first Lodrö Nyima lived in Surmang—he is the one who appears as one of the lineage lamas of the Karling Peaceful and Wrathful deities. It was the second Lodrö Nyima Rinpoche who came to Thrangu Monastery.) Similarly Yeshe Nyima gave all the empowerments and transmissions of the tantras of the Marpa Tradition to Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche, thus preserving and spreading the empowerments and transmissions of Hevajra and other tantras, as is described in the life story of Jamgön Kongtrul Rinpoche.

Later Thrangu Kunkhyap Nyima went to Central Tibet. He made strong Dharma and worldly connections with the Eighth Gyaltsap Chöpal Sangpo, who had been born in Jangyul. When he went on a pilgrimage to Samye, the protector Pehar gave him a flag and spear and promised to accomplish his activity. Because of this, there began a custom of the Thrangu Ladrang making oblations to Pehar.

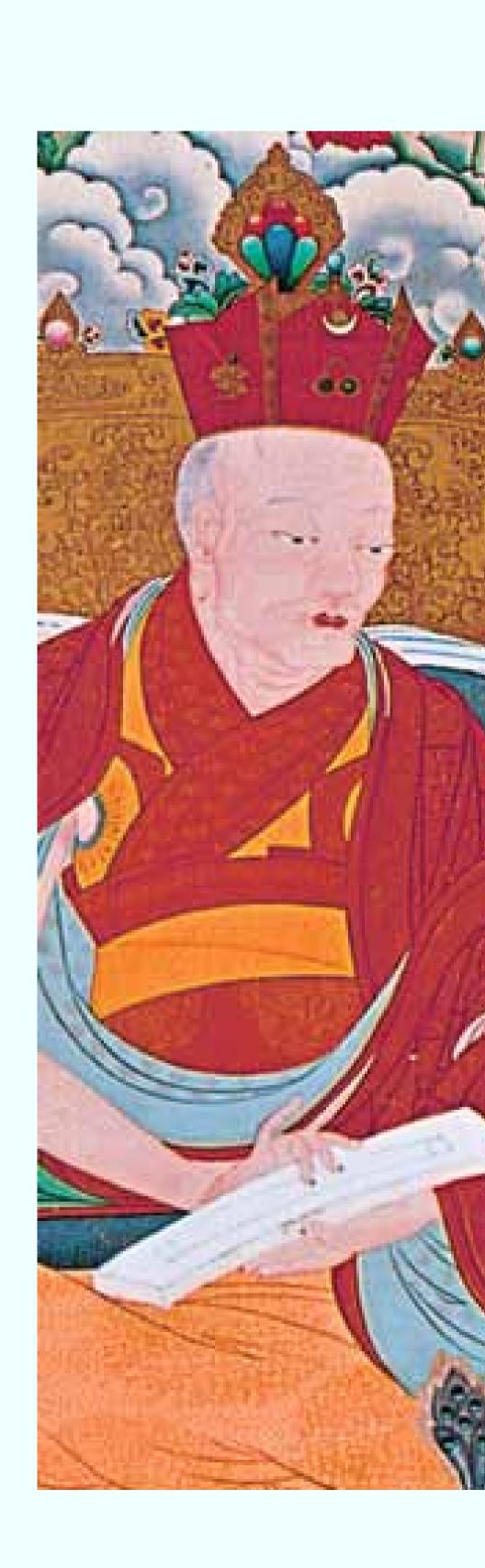
He spent a long time at Tsurphu and gathered all the ritual objects and dance costumes in order to institute the Great Tenth Day festival at the monastery. While on the way back to the Monastery, when he arrived at the Western End of the Kar Ri Pass, he heard the terrible news that Thrangu Monastery had been destroyed in an earthquake. He passed away on that spot. The young Third Lodrö Nyima Rinpoche also passed to nirvana in the earthquake. At that time in the Earth Hare Year of the fourteenth cycle (1819), Thrangu Kunkhyap Nyima was fifty-one. Most of his possessions were lost on the road, but among what remained where nine paintings featuring the eight Indian mahasiddhas and five paintings featuring the Six Ornaments and Two Supreme Beings. These could be seen in the Ladrang in modern times.

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KARMA NGEDÖN GYATSO, THRANGU VII

### THE SEVENTH THRANGU TULKU (1822-1877)



The Seventh Thrangu Tulku Karma Ngedön Gyatso was born in the Water Horse Year of the fourteenth cycle (1822) in a household called Drukhang Ngöntsang. Later the great scholar and meditator Dru Jamyang Drakpa was also born in the same family. Karma Ngedön Gyatso did not appear to have great qualities and continually recited Maṇis—he completed seven hundred million recitations of the Maṇi mantra. Together with Traleg Yeshe

Nyima, he rebuilt the monastery after it had been destroyed in the earthquake, and following the Karmapa Tekchok Dorje's advice, they invited the great Tertön Chokgyur Lingpa to the monastery, who performed a ceremony of taming the earth. They established an elaborate "Embrace of Means and Wisdom" long life puja with lama dancing based upon the pure visions of the great Tertön.

The Fourteenth Karmapa came and made the masks for the protector in the great Mahakala temple. On the top of the Mahahala temple there were Mahakala and consort and a black umbrella with the five members of the retinue, each of which had its own life stone and life chakra. Later he enthroned the reincarnation of the reincarnation of Traleg Yeshe Nyima, the Seventh Traleg Kunkhyap Nyima.

The first Zuru Tulku, who was identified by the great terton Chokgyur Lingpa as the dharma master of White Amitayus and also known as an emanation of the Elder Bakula, lived in Tsurphu and headed the Zuru monastic community. The Second Zuru was born in Jago and spent his life simply at a mountain retreat called Zuru Dong. The Third Zuru Tulku was born in Dru Seru and brought to Thrangu Monastery. The later incarnations all lived at Thrangu. The Fourth Zuru was born near the monastery and became very skilled in rituals, lama dancing, and so forth.

The fourth Lodrö Nyima Mingyur Shepa Tsal, who had extraordinary and unusual qualities, went forth and became fully ordained on the same occasion as Thrangu Karma Ngedön Gyatso, so they were Dharma brothers. At that time, Mingyur Shepa Tsal had an indication of a terma, and saying that it was important to treasure the precepts of novices and bhikshus, he returned his vows. It is also said that there is a secret prediction of this in the oral tradition of his previous incarnations.

The Seventh Thrangu Tulku identified and enthroned the next reincarnation of Lodrö Nyima. He continued his activity on behalf of the teachings until the age of fifty-six, when he demonstrated how to pass away while sitting in meditation at Gyam Gyal Doti Gangkar. This was in the Fire Ox Year of the fifteenth cycle (1877).

## शुंधेरायद्वायाम् रेनेशर्वेव मुंशर्के। १५११ ॥ १५११ ॥

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KARMA TENDZIN TRINLEY RABGYE, THRANGU VIII

### THE EIGHTH THRANGU TULKU (1879-1932)



The Eighth Thrangu Tulku Karma Tenzin Trinley Rabgye was born in the Earth Hare Year of the fifteenth cycle (1879) and recognized by both the Tenth Situ Pema Kunsang and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye.

In 1896 when he was eighteen, the Nyakrong war brought a time of great turmoil, but because of his protection and service, no great harm befell the monastery.

The Second Palpung Wöntrul Karma Tekchok Tenpel sent a letter along with a donation, saying that they should establish a retreat center for the six yogas of Naropa, and he also sent Dzage Lama Tashi Lhadar as a retreat master for that purpose. He provided all the facilities to construct the retreat center and make preparations, and everything came to fruition.<sup>1</sup>

Likewise Khyungpo Khenpo Karma Özer, a khenpo who had studied many texts with Situ Pema Wangchuk Gyalpo, was invited to the monastery. He instituted a tradition of performing the three fundamental rituals including the rains retreat with great care for all the details. At that time, a prosperous and generous monk from the monastery named Betsang Pedar sponsored the construction of a temple for the rains retreat.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> I have previously written in a history of the retreat center that it was Wöntrul Wanggi Dorje, but that was a mistake made from not finding reliable sources.

Thrangu Karma Tenzin Trinley Rabgye enthroned the Fifth Zuru Tulku Chökyi Senge, who recited two hundred million Vajrakilaya mantras, the Sixth Lodrö Nyima Rinpoche, who was born in Lhasa, and the Eighth Traleg Rinpoche Shedrup Chökyi Nyima. When great masters including Mipham Jampal Gyepa Dorje, who was Manjushri in person, and the great realized master Shakya Shri came to the monastery, he received many key instructions and profound teachings from them. He became very well known for his clairvoyance and great powers. He subdued several fearsome ghosts and demons, and protected many people from danger, fear, death, and insanity. He continued this extraordinary activity until passing away in the Water Monkey Year of the sixteenth cycle (1932).

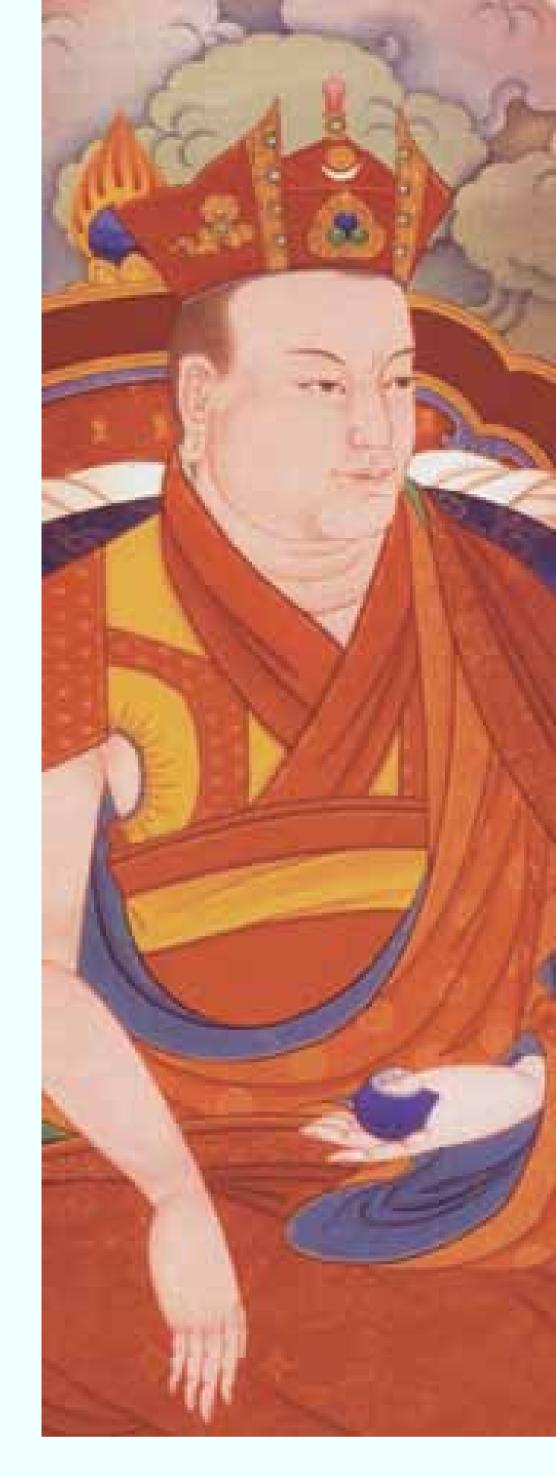
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PAGE 88: Guru Dorje Drolö TOP OF PAGE 89: Situ Pema Kunsang BOTTOM OF PAGE 89: Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye FACING PAGE: Four Rinpoches of Thrangu Monastery, Quingai: Left to right: Eighth Thrangu Rinpoche, Eighth Traleg Rinpoche, Eighth Lodrö Nyima Rinpoche, Seventh Zuri Rinpoche

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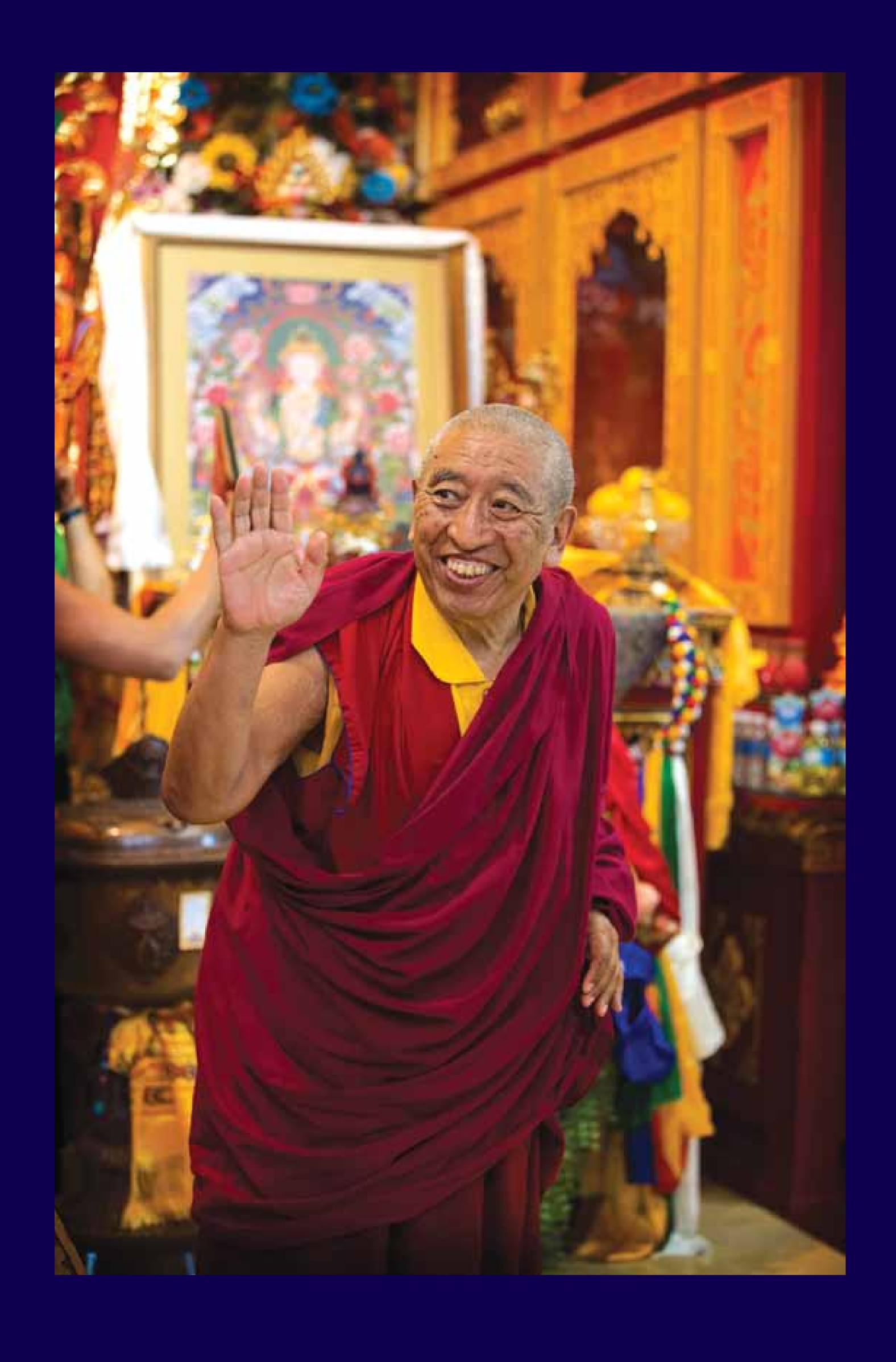
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KARMA LODRÖ RINGLUK MAWAY SENGE, THRANGU IX

#### THE NINTH THRANGU TULKU (1933-)



I, Karma Lodrö Ringluk Maseng, am said to be his reincarnation, the Ninth Thrangu Tulku. I gained a precious human body in the Female Water Bird Year of the sixteenth cycle (1933). Though I myself have no confidence or proof at all, Situ Pema Wangchuk Gyalpo and the Sixteenth Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje recognized me in a wondrous way, and so I had the opportunity to enter the gate of the Dharma. Subsequently, Traleg Shedrup Chökyi Nyima invited Khenpo Lodrö Rabsal from Shechen to

found a monastic college, and though I lacked enough intelligence or diligence to develop any qualities, I did have the fortune to listen and contemplate. Later I encountered many difficulties during a tumultuous time, but because of the cool shade of the Sixteenth Karmapa's compassion, I was very fortunate to at least develop an unmistaken virtuous mind. This is my own story.

Because some people who are close to me made persistent and unrelenting requests for me to write a history of the Thrangu tulkus, I have written this based on the oral and written histories, with some points clarified from other life stories.

## शुंधेरात्यास्यां संर्थेश्वराय्यास्य शुंधेरा १०४४

याचेश्वरवृत्ता

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अविश







Karma Lodro, Splendour of The Teachings, May You remain steadfastly present.

Your qualities of the Glorious and good Dharma spreading as far as space can go.

May your activity of Teaching and Practice be universally victorious

and may the Magnificence of this Triumph blaze forth.

This was written by Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa.



