

# His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche

About His Eminence (written in 2001)



His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, Ngawang Khyenrab Thupten Lekshe Gyatso, is the most senior Sakya Lama and the head of the Tsar sub-school of Sakya tradition. His Eminence is a renowned tantric master, a dedicated practitioner, an outstanding scholar, an eloquent poet, and embodies the wisdom, spirit and activities of the holy Dharma. His Eminence is a master of masters as most Tibetan Buddhist lineage holders are his disciples. Amongst these disciples are His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, and His Holiness the 41st Sakya Trizin, Ngawang Kunga, and His Eminence is regarded as the definitive authority on Kalacakra Tantra. In addition to His Eminence's stature among Tibetan lamas, the late King Birendra of Nepal awarded His Eminence "Gorkha Dakshin Babu", a tribute which has never been awarded to a Buddhist monk in Nepal before.

Born in 1919 in the Tsang province of Central Tibet into the Zhalu Kushang family of the Che clan, a lineage descended from the clear light gods, he was recognized as the reincarnation of the previous Chogye Rinpoche of Nalendra Monastery by the 13th Dalai Lama, Thupten Gyatso. Many

auspicious and marveleous signs accompanied His Eminence's birth. His Eminence is the 26th patriarch of Phenpo Nalendra Monastery, North of Lhasa. Founded by Rongton Sheja Kunrig (1367-1449), Nalendra is one of the most important Sakya monasteries in Tibet. Wondrously, each generation of the Kushang family has produced no less than four sons, most of who have served as throne holders of many important monasteries including Nalendra, Zhalu and Ngor.

The name "Kushang" meaning 'royal maternal uncle' derived from the fact that many daughters from the family were married to numerous Sakya throne holders, one of whom, Drogon Chagna, was supreme ruler of Tibet, who succeeded Chogyal Phakpa.

The name "Chogye" means 'Eighteen' and comes from the time of Khyenrab Choje, the 8th abbot of Nalendra who also belonged to the aristocratic Kushang family. Khyenrab Choje, a great teacher possessing the direct lineage of Kalacakra received from Vajrayogini, was invited to be the abbot of Nalendra by Sakya Trizin Dagchen Lodro Gyaltzen (1444-1495). Khyenrab Choje visited the Emperor of China who was greatly impressed by the tantric scholar from Tibet and bestowed on him 'eighteen' precious gifts. From Khyenrab Choje the lineage of Chogye Rinpoches began.

At the age of twelve His Eminence was officially enthroned at the Phenpo Nalendra Monastery. In these early years he studied intensively all the basic liturgies and rituals of Nalendra Monastery. His two main root Gurus were the 4th Zimwog Tulku, Ngawang Tenzin Thrinley Norbu Palzangpo, the other main incarnate lama of Nalendra Monastery, and Dampa Rinpoche Shenphen Nyingpo of Ngor Ewam. From these two great teachers His Eminence recieved all the major and minor teachings of Sakya such as the two Lamdre Traditions, the Greater and Lesser Mahakalas, the Four Tantras, the Thirteen Golden Dharmas, Kalacakra, etc. His Eminence completed extensive studies in all major fields of study taught in Lord Buddha's teachings. His Eminence becomes a master in both Sutrayana and Mantrayana teachings. His Eminence is also a great scholar of literature, poetry, history and Buddhist metaphysics and a highly accomplished poet.



In 1959, given the change in circumstances in Tibet after the Chinese invasion, His Eminence left Tibet for Mustang (Lo Monthang), where his sister was married to the Mustang Raja, the King of Mustang. His Eminence found safe refuge and stayed for some time, giving teachings and performing many ceremonies at the various monasteries. At this time His Eminence wrote the short sadhara of Guru Hevajra "At the Time of the Path", meditation in a versified form. The majority of monasteries in the Lo Monthang area are of the Ngorpa School and the main monastery was founded in the 15th century by Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo. For several years from 1962, in accordance with the wishes of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Eminence acted as the Secretary General of the Council for Religious and Cultural Affairs of the Tibetan Government in Exile in Dharamsala, India. Also, His Eminence took a leading role in preparing the manuscript of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's book "My Land and My People" and was responsible for writing Tibetan text books for schools set up for central Tibetans. His Eminence took leave from the Tibetan government in 1969. His Eminence decided to return to Nepal to rebuild the Nalendra monastery and the Seat of the Tsharpa school in exile.

In 1963, while on a pilgrimage, His Eminence visited the birth place of the Buddha in Lumbini, Nepal. Feeling something very special for this holy place, His Eminence and the King of Mustang vowed to build a monastery there. After 12 years, the construction of Tashi Rabten Ling Monastery was completed and the vow was fulfilled. His Eminence also established the first three and half year Lamdre Lobshey retreat centre in Lumbini. His Eminence has also built another monastery, Jamchen Lhakhang Monastery, in Kathmandu. A smaller retreat facility has also been established by His Eminence in Bagdora, a sacred site attributed to Krakucchanda, one of the

previous Buddhas of this age. His Eminence has also founded a Tsharpa retreat center at Lo Gekar in Mustang.

Outside Nepal, His Eminence has established centers in Hong Kong and Taiwan. The center in Hong Kong is named after Green Tara. With the sincere invitations of his disciples, His Eminence has traveled to these centers to give teachings and initiations. His Eminence is also the supreme patron of ten centres in Australia and New Zealand founded by his disciple, Lama Choedak. As two of the main centres in Australia are named after Rongton and Tsharchen. His Eminence regards them as future pillars of strength to uphold his teachings and practices. To acknowledge these developments in Australia, His Eminence made two important visits to Australia in 1996 and 2001.

It is often said that His Eminence maintains the style of a hidden yogi as he has engaged in several three-year meditation retreats. Outside of these retreats, His Eminence spends most of his time in deep meditation and practicing tantric rituals and prayers from early dawn to many hours past midnight. Normally sleeping sitting up, it is said His Eminence only requires one hour each night. His Eminence is regarded as the modern day manifestation of past Indian Buddhist siddha saints such as Mahasiddha Virupa. At the age of 82 today, His Eminence continues this very admirable practice every day. This in itself is already an inspiration to all practitioners.



His Eminence has continuously given initiations, transmissions, empowerments, teachings and instructions on Buddha's teachings. Those who have had the fortune to receive an audience with His Eminence will no doubt agree that he is also an enthusiastic storyteller. Every initiation or empowerment given by His Eminence is almost always accompanied by precious stories about the particular Bodhisattvas or teachers of that lineage,

as well as stories that illustrate the importance of Boddhicitta and other precious teachings of Lord Buddha such as Prajna Paramita. His Eminence is the lineage holder of the highly prized uncommon esoteric teachings of the practice lineage of the Tsharpa school, such as Vajrayogini and Lamdre Lobshey, the uncommon Hevajra tradition for close disciples. His Eminence's commitment to spread the holy Dharma has no geographical boundaries and is truly global. This is evident by His Eminence's numerous travels overseas to give teachings, initiations and empowerments to his disciples abroad.

For example, in 1988, His Eminence traveled to the United States and Canada. In 1994, His Eminence taught in Japan and in 1996, His Eminence visited Australia. In 1998, His Eminence visited Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Australia to give many initiations and teachings. In the same year, His Eminence bestowed the Kalacakra initiation and other teachings for an assembly of 6,000 disciples in Taiwan. In 2000, at the request of His Eminence Shamar Rinpoche of Kagyu Tradition, His Eminence visited France where he bestowed the Collection of Sadhanas. In the same year, at the request of the Sakya centers in Spain, His Eminence visited Spain where he gave the Kalacakra initiation and public talks in Barcelona on Peace in the World according to Kalacakra Tantra. Most recently in 2001, His Eminence has just completed a two-month trip overseas to Hong Kong, Taiwan, Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, New Zealand, Singapore and Kuching in Malaysia, where he bestowed upon his disciples precious teachings and initiations of many important Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In Australia during this recent trip, His Eminence added a new chapter to the history of Buddhism in Australia by ordaining twelve Australians as monks and nuns, in the same manner as Shantarakshita did in 7th century Tibet when he ordained seven Tibetans. The ripple effect of His Eminence's visit to Australia will definitely be felt for many hundreds of years to come.

**Works in English by His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche:**



"Gateway to the Temple" by Thubten Legshay Gyatsho, translated from Tibetan to English by David Paul Jackson; 1979, Patna Pustak Bhandar, Katmandu, Nepal.

"History of the Sakya Tradition" by Chogy Trichen, translated from Tibetan into French by Ven. Phende Rinpoche and Jamyang Khandro and from French to English by Jennifer Scott; 1983, Ganesha Press, Bristol.

"Fortunate to behold" by Ngawang Khyenrab Legshe Gyatso, the 26th Chogy Trichen, translated from Tibetan to English by Cypus Stearns; 1986 Sahayogi Press, Katmandu, Nepal.

"The profound Pith Instructions on Mind Training & Compassion" by His Eminence Chogy Trichen Rinpoche, translated from Tibetan to English by Lama Choedak; 1999 Jamchen Lhakang, Kathmandu, Nepal.

"A Short Sadhana of Guru Hevajra" by His Eminence Chogy Trichen Rinpoche, translated from Tibetan to English by Cyrus R. Stearns; 1999 Jamchen Lhakang, Kathmandu, Nepal.

**Photos taken during His Eminence visit to Cairns in 2006**