

## His Holiness Kyabgon Gongma Trichen Rinpoche (41st Sakya Trichen)



### Short Biography of His Holiness Kyabgon Gongma Trichen Rinpoche (The Sakya Trichen) 41st throne holder of the Sakya Tradition

His Holiness Kyabgon Gongma Trichen Rinpoche (The Sakya Trichen) served as the 41st head of the Sakya Order of Tibetan Buddhism until March 2017, when the throneholder duties were handed over to His Holiness Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, the 42nd Sakya Trizin, formally addressed as His Holiness Kyabgon Gongma Trizin Rinpoche.

The Khön family from which the Sakya lineage has descended is known by three special names, each of which tell a story. Because the family is descended from Gods of the Realm of Clear Light who entered the human realm, the family came to be known as the "Celestial Race." Then because this family subjugated the raksas, a class of harmful spirits, they were called "the Family of Conquerors." Finally, because they also established the Sakya Order, they were known as "The Sakyapa Lineage."

In more recent times, because the palace of the lineage to which the present Sakya Trizin belongs was built next to the turquoise Tara shrine at the Sakya Monastery in Tibet, this divine family also came to be known as the "Drolma Phodrang" or "Tara Palace" lineage.

Since this celestial race descended upon earth over one thousand years ago, the lineage remains unbroken to this day. Many illustrious masters and practitioners have appeared in the lineage including the Five Great Masters of the Sakya Order. His Holiness the present throne holder of the Sakya tradition is the 41st in an unbroken lineage that dates back to 1073 A.D.

His Holiness was born on the 7th of September 1945, the 1st day of the 8th Lunar month in the year of the Wood Bird at the Sakya palace in Tsedong. Immediately after his birth, in accordance with age old traditions to increase his wisdom, the syllable DHIH was traced on his tongue and profound rituals were performed. Many signs traditionally associated with auspiciousness were observed on this day: the milk collected from a 100 different dri (female yaks) and a statue of the Guru Padmasambhava were miraculously offered to the Palace.

Initially given the Sanskrit name Ayu Vajra, His Holiness was only later given his actual name of Ngawang Kunga Thegchen Palbar Trinley Samphel Wangyi Gyalpo, when his father Vajradhara Ngawang Kunga Rinchen gave him his first major initiation, that of the Nine Deities of Amitayus. When His Holiness was only four years old, he received the major initiation of the peaceful and wrathful aspects of Vajrakilaya and many other profound teachings from his father.



His Holiness lost both his mother and father when he was very young. His maternal aunt then dedicated herself to raising His Holiness. She appointed his first tutor with whom His Holiness learned to read, write, memorize and recite basic prayers. He also learned chanting, music, ritual dancing, mudras, and so forth from his junior tutor. Both tutors taught His Holiness how to perform all the rituals and prayers in the traditions of both the northern and southern Sakya monasteries. At the conclusion of these studies, a great celebration was held, in which His Holiness officially entered the Mahayana and Vajrayana Monasteries to perform the traditional Sakya ceremonies. In 1950, at the age of five, his main root Guru, the great Ngor abbot Vajradhara Ngawang Lödrön Shenphen Nyingpo bestowed upon him the Lamdre and other profound teachings.

In 1951, His Holiness made a pilgrimage to Lhasa , where he was designated the throne Holder of the Sakya Order by His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama. Accordingly, the following year, a preliminary enthronement ceremony was held in which he accepted the official Sakya seals. Even at this early age, he was exceptionally intelligent and skilled in fulfilling his responsibilities. At the tender age of seven, he passed an extensive oral examination on the Hevajra root tantra at the Great Sakya monastery. At the Ngor monastery, the Great Ngor abbot and his root guru bestowed upon him both the common and uncommon Lamdre teachings. In 1953, in response to his root guru's expressed intention to enter into Mahaparinirvana, His Holiness performed his first long life initiation of Amitayus at Ngor monastery and also undertook his first Hevajra meditation retreat in Sakya. His Holiness was then only eight years old.

The following year His Holiness received the initiation and reading transmission of the "Collection of Sadhanas" from Ngawang Tenzin Nyingpoi, the regent of Vajradhara Ngawang Lodro Shenphen Nyingpo. He also received the initiation and profound oral instructions of the Three Red Deities and the two main Protectors of the Sakya Order from Lama Ngawang Lodro Rinpoche. He also presided over an elaborate Vajrakilaya Ritual in the main Sakya monastery. At the age of ten, His Holiness again made a pilgrimage to Lhasa , where he received religious instructions in the Potala from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Before a large audience, His Holiness gave an extensive explanation of the Mandala Offering, which caused his wisdom to be proclaimed throughout Tibet. On a pilgrimage to India he received many initiations and teachings belonging to the Sakya Tradition, as well as the Great Perfection and Dzogchen Teachings from Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro. In 1957, His Holiness received the Lamdre Teachings again, this time from the great abbot Vajradhara Khenchen Jampal Sangpo according to the Khon lineage transmission.



The preparatory ritual preceding the official enthronement of His Holiness as the Sakya Trizin was performed in 1958. That year His Holiness also performed the Blessing Pill and Local Deity Rituals, as well as the extensive Vajrakilaya Ritual. In 1959, following a seven day Mahakala ritual, His Holiness was formally enthroned as the throne Holder of Sakya in an elaborate three day ceremony with the representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in attendance. On that occasion, he bestowed an explanation of the "Illumination of the Sage's Intent" to the assembly of Sangha, guests and lay followers.

Following the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1959, His Holiness moved to India, established the Sakya Guru monastery in Darjeeling and began the major task of reassembling the Sakya community. In exile he continued to receive extensive philosophical teachings in Logic, Abhidharma, the Prajnaparamita and the Clarification of the Three Vows from great scholars such as Khenpo Dosep Thubten, Khenpo Serjong Appey and Khenpo Rinchen. From Khenpo Serjong Appey, he received a thorough and detailed explanation of the Hevajra Root Tantra and many other related teachings. From H.E. Phende Khen Rinpoche, who was also one of His Holiness' root Gurus, he received the initiation and explanation of Yamantaka in the Ra Lotsawas tradition, as well as the collected writings of Ngorchen Konchok Lhundup.

In 1962, at the age of seventeen, His Holiness gave his first Hevajra initiation in Kalimpong. After moving to Mussoorie, in 1963 he set about to re-establish the main seat of the Sakya Order in nearby Rajpur. The assembly of Sakya monks were relocated to the newly established Sakya Centre, where he gave many profound teachings and initiations. In the same year for the very first time, His Holiness gave the precious Lamdre teachings in Sarnath, Varanasi . A year later, he established the Sakya settlement, in Puruwala, Himachal Pradesh, for the lay members of the Sakya community.



In order to main the tradition of the Khön family lineage, His Holiness married Dagmo Tashi Lhakee in 1974. Within the year they celebrated the auspicious birth of their elder son Ratna Vajra. In the meantime His Holiness made his first teaching tour of Europe, America and various countries in Asia . In 1976 His Holiness gave his second Lamdre teachings at the Sakya Centre. The following year, at the request of H.E. Luding Khen Rinpoche, His Holiness taught the "Collection of Sadhanas" at the Matho monastery in Ladakh. In

1977, he again gave teachings throughout Asia, Europe and the United States . Two years later, in 1979, his younger son Gyana Vajra was born.

In 1980 His Holiness performed the opening ceremony of the main Sakya monastery. Thubten Namgyal Ling in Puruwala, and bestowed his first Lamdre Lobshed teachings. In 1982, His Holiness the Dalai Lama paid an official visit to the monastery and bestowed many teachings. From Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, His Holiness also received the uncommon Tsarpa tradition of Lamdre teachings and the Jonang tradition of "The Hundred Explanations." A year later His Holiness performed a special long life ceremony for His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala.

He once again taught widely in Asia and Europe in 1984. At Sakya Tsechen Ling in France he gave the Lamdre Lobshed teachings for the second time. The following year His Holiness consecrated the Maitreya temple in Kathmandu at the request of Chogye Trichen Rinpoche. At the end of that year he attended the Kalachakra initiation given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya.

In 1986, His Holiness once again gave the uncommon Lamdre teachings at the Sakya College to an assembly of monks and western Dharma disciples. In 1988 His Holiness presided over the consecration of the newly built Ngorpa Centre in Manduwala. His Holiness remained there for several months in order to bestow over thirty major initiations of the Sakya tradition. The next year at the request of his many disciples in Europe, the United States and Canada , he traveled to each of the Sakya Dharma Centers there giving extensive teachings. Since then for the benefit of the Buddha Dharma and for his disciples, His Holiness has bestowed numerous initiations, teachings and public talks, traveling extensively worldwide to do so.

In this way, just as water is poured from one vase to another, His Holiness has received all the profound teachings of the Sakya tradition and many of the teachings and transmissions of other lineages from numerous teachers of the other traditions, and has passed them on to his disciples around the world.



In order to promote higher education and extensive philosophical training, as well as to maintain the living transmission of the Sakya teachings, His Holiness has established the Sakya College in Rajpur and the Sakya Institute in Puruwala. For the benefit of the Sakya nuns, His Holiness established the Sakya Nunnery in Dekyiling, Dehradun where over 170 nuns are receiving religious instructions. This way, through His Holiness' wisdom and insight, His Holiness has revitalized both the Sutric and Tantric traditions of the Sakya Order in particular and that of Tibetan Buddhism in general and ensured the continuity of Buddha Dharma.

### Biography Note

This biography is just a fraction of the numerous activities of His Holiness that a common person has the capacity to perceive. Many of His Holiness' inner and outer activities are beyond our grasping and understanding.

**Source: *Palden Sakya News Magazine.***

### More Information

- [His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's website](#)