

Biography of the 7th Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, Gyurme Shedrub Chökyi Senge

The Lord of the Mandala, the Venerable Kyabje Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, was born to Chimed Wangmo, daughter of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Jigme Khyentse Özer, on December 25, 1967, in Chandigarh, India, during the year of the Fire Sheep in the Sixteenth Sexagenary Cycle of the Tibetan Calendar.

Before his birth, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche gave his daughter clear instructions on how to care for her child right after he was born. When the child was one week old, he was presented to Kyabje Khyentse Rinpoche, who expressed great joy, saying, "This boy is extraordinary." He recited the Manjushri mantra while blowing on his face repeatedly. He named him Tashi Tsepel.

Once, during a conversation, Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche asked the Sixteenth Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, if the reincarnation of the previous Rabjam Rinpoche and the other great lamas from Shechen had been born or if they were in the Buddha Fields? The Karmapa jokingly replied, "You don't need to search for them, they are looking for you!"

Confirming this, in 1968 (the year of the Earth Monkey), during a pilgrimage to Namu Buddha in Nepal, Rinpoche stayed at Boudhanath Stupa and had a dream in which he saw Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, Kongtrul Rinpoche, and Gyaltsab Tulku Rinpoche sitting happily together. Feeling tremendous happiness and devotion as if he were meeting the living and the dead at the same time, he recalled how the Sixth Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche and others had suffered under Chinese rule. When he asked how much they had endured, they all showed compassionate expressions and gave many prophecies about the future. After waking, he felt a mix of joy and sadness for several days and wrote down these special experiences.

On the third of February, 1970 (the year of the Iron Dog), the Sixteenth Karmapa made a prophecy:

From the ocean-like dharmadhatu emanate hundreds of light rays that tame beings and fulfill their wishes. The display of power over hundreds of luminous realms, the supreme emanation, Padma's regent is Khyentse; his noble offspring, Chimed Dronkar. From the foundation of primordial awareness, this very rebirth in the line of Shechen Rabjam's supreme incarnations will enhance the secret teachings and bear the significant burden of upholding and disseminating them far and wide.

This concludes the vision that dispels delusion.

According to this infallible vajra prophecy, the Karmapa, with his unmistakable wisdom, recognized him as the reincarnation of the Sixth Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, a great chariot of the Early Translation (Nyingma) tradition in Do Kham. He was enthroned at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim and given the name Karma Gyurme Shedrub Chokyi Senge Mijig Gocha Trinley Kunkhyab.

The first teachers of the Seventh Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche were monks from Shechen Monastery, such as Atshe Lama, from whom he learned reading, writing, and

traditional arts. However, Rinpoche relied primarily on his principal and most kind root guru, Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Gyurme Thekchok Tenpai Gyaltzen, receiving ordination, instructions on grammar, poetics, and extensive teachings on the commentaries to the Treasury of Spiritual Qualities (Yonten Dzo) by Sogpo Tendar, and Khenpo Yonga several times. He also received detailed commentaries on the Ghyuagharba Tantra based on Longchenpa's Commentary, Dispelling Darkness in the Ten Directions, and The Wish-fulfilling Ear of Corn on the Three Vows, among many others. He received complete transmissions of the Treasury of Oral Instructions (Damngak Dzo) three times, the Treasury of Precious Termas (Rinchen Terdzo) twice, the long Kama tradition (Nyingma Kama) twice, and countless empowerments, transmissions, and instructions from the five great treasuries and various lineages of teachings from both the ancient and new traditions. He received everything his teacher possessed in the manner of filling a vase to the brim.

At the age of eight, Rinpoche received novice ordination, and, at twenty, he received full monastic ordination from the crown jewel of the Early Translation tradition, the Venerable Trulshik Rinpoche; he was given the name Ngawang Chopal Gyatso. Rinpoche also received Mahamudra teachings and instructions pointing out the nature of the mind from the Sixteenth Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje.

Rinpoche received numerous empowerments, transmissions, and instructions from many non-sectarian masters, including the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso; Sakya Dagchen, Ngawang Kunga Gyaltzen; Dudjom Rinpoche, Jigdral Yeshe Dorje; Drubwang Pema Norbu Rinpoche; Zhadeu Trulshik Rinpoche, Ngawang Chökyi Lodrö; the Eighteenth Trichen Rinpoche, Ngawang Khyenrab Gyatso; the Eighth Khamtrul Rinpoche, Kalzang Dongyu Nyima; Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, Shedrub Nyinje Trinley Palzang; Lama Kalu Rinpoche, Karma Rangjung Kunkhyab; Dodrubchen Rinpoche, Thubten Trinley Palbar; Taklung Shabdrung Rinpoche, Thubten Jangchub Chokyi Nyima; Dzongsar Khyenpo Kunga Wangchuk; Gemang Khenpo Wanglo; Arik Khenpo Pema Tsewang; and many others.

Rinpoche completed a rigorous three-year, three-month retreat at Satsam Chorten, Paro, Bhutan, during which he practiced the specially blessed mind-treasure (gong-ter) teachings of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, along with many other deity practices from the Three Roots of the Early Translation (Nyingma) Tradition.

Rinpoche has visited the main Shechen Monastery in Kham several times, supporting the monastery's regular ceremonies and the study and practice centers (shedra and drupta) by providing essential resources. He also funded the construction of temples, sacred images, and other necessary structures. Rinpoche established regular stipends for the monks and offered them advice, empowerments, transmissions, and instructions. At Shechen Monastery in Nepal, Rinpoche has continuously supplied the monks with food, clothing, education, and all their spiritual needs.

In particular, Rinpoche established regular ceremonies based on the traditions of Orgyen Mindrolling; the main Shechen Monastery in Kham; and ceremonies based on Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's mind treasures.

In 1996, Rinpoche founded the Tsering Tibetan Art School; in 2001, he established the Pema Oling Retreat Center in Namoh Buddha, Nepal; in 1997, he built the Shechen Temple in Bodhgaya; and between 2004 and 2009, he constructed stupas at various sacred sites in India and Nepal.

In Bhutan, Rinpoche established centers for study and practice, including nunneries and retreat centers.

At the request of Her Majesty the Royal Grandmother, Ashi Kesang Chödrön Wangchuck, Rinpoche has conducted annual rituals for Bhutan's spiritual and secular well-being.

Rinpoche has also offered social services by founding schools, hospitals, and homes for the elderly in Tibet, China, Bhutan, and Nepal.

In 2010, Rinpoche organized elaborate ceremonies to commemorate the centennial of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's birth. It was attended by Kyabje Khyentse Rinpoche's disciples from all around the world.

Starting in 2010, Rinpoche served as the chairperson of the Nyingma Monlam Chenmo (Great Prayer Festival at Bodhgaya) for three years. Afterwards, the entire Nyingma community asked Rinpoche to become the eighth head of the Nyingma Tradition. Rinpoche initially declined but agreed to serve as chairperson and work for the benefit of the Nyingma tradition as a whole. Rinpoche once again took on the responsibility of chairing the Nyingma Monlam from 2023 to the present (2025).

Among Rinpoche's many other major Dharma activities, in 1994, he published the collected works of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in twenty-five volumes. In 2017, he published the seventy-one-volume edition Rinchen Terdzod (Treasury of Precious Termas), and many other publications. Rinpoche offered the reading transmission of Padma Lingpa's Kathang Sanggyachen (the Secret Sealed Biography of Padmasambhava), which Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche received from Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, as a cloud of offerings.

At Shechen Monastery in Nepal, Rinpoche granted the following transmissions: in 1994, the reading transmission of the Rinchen Terdzod; in 1997, the reading transmission of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's collected works; in 2004, the reading transmission of the Nyingma Kama and the Four Parts of Heart Essence (Nyingtik Ya-shi); in 2006, the reading transmission of the three volumes of the Heart Essence root texts (Longchen Nyingtik); in 2007 and 2008, the reading transmission of the Nyingthik Gyubum; in 2008, the reading transmission of Longchen Dzod Dun (Seven Treasuries); in 2017, the empowerments and transmissions of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's mind treasures; in 2019, the reading transmission of Jigme Lingpa's and Patrul Rinpoche's collected works, as well as the empowerments and transmissions of the Longchen Nyingthik cycle; in 2013, at the Nyingma Temple in Bodhgaya, the empowerments and transmissions of Mipham's collected works; in 2019, at Nge Sang Do Ngak Jangchub Dargye Ling in Pemako, India, the empowerments and transmissions of the Longchen Nyingthik; in 2020, at E-Wam Nyubchen Namchak Monastery in Siliguri, India, the reading transmission of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's collected works and the empowerments and transmissions of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's mind treasures, mainly the Three Roots of Clear Light Heart Essence (Tsa-sum Osel Nyingtik); in 2014, at Satsam Chorten, Paro, Bhutan, the reading transmission of the Seven Treasuries; in 2021, at Shechen Nunnery in Bhutan, the reading transmission of the Seven Treasuries; and in 2024, at Paro Bhang De Orgyen Pema Zangtok Palri in Bhutan, the empowerments of the Rinchen Terdzo.

Rinpoche has traveled to many countries around the world, giving empowerments, transmissions, and instructions to countless disciples—both ordained and lay—from all traditions. His collected writings include a clear empowerment and activity manual for Guru Padmasambhava, a subsidiary practice of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's profound treasure (terma), *The Heart Essence of the Spontaneously Arisen Padma* (Rangjung Pema Nyingtik).

Rinpoche continues to serve as the leader of both the main Shechen Monastery and its branches, living and turning the wheel of dharma. We pray that his vajra-like form remains strong for eons as numerous as the atoms in the universe, opening hundreds of doors to the profound and vast vehicles of the dharma.