Mindrolling History Project

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Introduction

We are happy to present you with a short introduction to the family history of Mindrolling. The lineage of Mindrolling has been very vast and important historically and is connected to so many aspects of Tibetan Buddhism and the various lineages, that in recording its history, one would also have to record the history of many other familial and practice lineages and other great clans of Tibet. This would then make the work of compiling a detailed history of Mindrolling into a very long work which would require a much larger effort and a lot of time and research. Therefore, at this time, we have brought you some brief and concise information on the history and biographies of the main family members of Mindrolling who were pivotal in their role of preserving and propagating the precious Dharma in general and the Mindrolling lineage in particular.

The main family of Mindrolling has always maintained its tradition of remaining very low profile. Avoiding any exhibition of pomp and display, it has tried to remain very rooted to just connecting to the various ways in which it can serve the Dharma. The family history was mainly documented by an oral tradition wherein the family chamberlain was entrusted with keeping and recording the family history. On the first day of *Losar* (Tibetan New Year), the chamberlain would publicly recite the entire history in the presence of the monastic and lay assembly in the main shrine hall.

One of the reasons for there being very little written family history was because of this system of oral tradition which fell through when Tibet was invaded by the Chinese army and many of the senior monks and administrators were killed or died in imprisonment. Nevertheless, this family is known throughout the world of Tibetan Buddhism and regarded with great respect and love by everyone. The immeasurable contribution of Mindrolling to the history of Dharma is mentioned time and again by great masters of the past such as the Dalai Lamas, the Karmapas, Jamyang Khyenste Wangpo, Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye, Sechen Kongtrul, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and many other great masters of all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Despite their busy schedule and other responsibilities while traveling, Mindrolling Jetsün Khandro Rinpoche and Jetsün Dechen Paldrön, who are both

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the 12th generation direct descendents of this lineage since Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, have been overseeing the compiling of this short version of their family history for the students of this lineage in the west and others who might be interested. We hope these short documentations collected from written family history and anecdotes received from their root teacher and father the 11th Kyabje Mindrolling Trichen and some other teachers will be helpful to people in knowing a little more about this very precious lineage.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part I

The Origin of the Mindrolling Lineage

The Mindrolling lineage as we know today is historically descended from the Nyö lineage of Tibet. It is said that the lineage of Mindrolling is twofold with one line that is recorded from the time of the establishment of the monastery of Mindrolling at Drachi (near Lhasa) and thereafter renowned as the Mindrolling familial lineage. This line was in fact much older in its history. The original family line of what later became more widely known as the Mindrolling lineage dates long before the Mindrolling Monastery was established. This family line is known as the lineage of Nyö and often referred to as the Glorious Nyö lineage. All the members of the Mindrolling familial lineage are therefore also known as descendents of the Nyö lineage.

Prior to the establishment of the Mindrolling Monastery in Drachi, the Nyö family lineage was based at Dargye Chöling in Dranang. It was founded by Tsele Natsog Rangdrol, the emanation of Tertön Ratna Lingpa. After Tsele Natsog Rangdrol, it became the seat of Tenzin Drakpa, the emanation of Tertön Pema Lingpa. It then became the seat of Nyö Khedrub Dongag Tenzin who was an emanation of Tsele Natsog Rangdrol and was one of the foremost masters of the time. After Khedrub Dongag Tenzin, his son, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub, who was an emanation of Nub Sangye Yeshe, assumed the seat at Dargye Choling. It was here that the King of Doctrine, Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, was born as the son of Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub.

Nyö Jachung Karpo, Founder of the Nyö Clan

It is said that the reasons for study of the history of lineages is not in order to guard one's caste and birth like a Brahmin but so that one can accumulate immense merit through the reading of the lives of the great masters and be inspired by their activities.

The origin of the Nyö lineage dates back to a very long time ago in Tibet much before the spread of Buddhism there. It is said that at a time when Tibet had just been settled, one dawn on the mountain of Jomo Kharag in Tsang, people saw a handsome, young man in white descend. Possessing all the qualities of a deva, he radiated with light and had a very peaceful aspect. No one knew him or had seen him before, no one understood his language, but because of his radiant and

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wondrous appearance, they bore him on their shoulders and revered him as a celestial being.

The humans called him Jachung Karpo or White Garuda. This was because he was very majestic and beautiful to look upon and had flown down to earth. He was a deva from the deva realms but due to the close proximity with humans who were enthralled with him and kept him surrounded at all times, this devaputra (son of devas) became tainted by *mi grib* or *drib* of humans and couldn't return back to his deva realm. He is described as having been slightly "intoxicated" by human defilements and thus the descendants born from Ja Chung Karpo (the White Garuda of Nyö) were called Nyö. The Tibetan word *smyos* is derived from the original word *myos*. The word *myos* literally means intoxicated and *smyos* means crazy in the literal sense. Since then many members of the Nyö lineage have also been described as demonstrating crazy wisdom and many mahasiddhalike activities and have therefore added to the multi layered meaning and organ of the word Nyö (*smyos*) in the name of the lineage.

Nyö Jachung Karpo married the princess of rmu, Ding Mo Tsün Shö (*rmu lcam ding mo btsun bshos*), who was herself a wisdom dakini and their descendents were called the Nyö and the lineage was thereafter known as Palden Nyörig or the Glorious Nyö lineage.

The Nyö Lineage

The lineage of the Nyö descendants is as follows:

- Nyö Jachung Karpo (*smyos bya khyung dkar po*) married Mü Cam Ding Mo Tsün Shö
- Nyö Je Tsenpo (*smyos rje btsan po*) married Dongza Karmo
- Nyö Senge Shakya (*seng ge shakya*) married Mü Za Menmo Tsün Shö *(rmu gza' sman mo btsun bshos*) and had four sons- Dra Khar Je, Je Phen, Yag Je and Gur Je
- Nyö Dra Khar Je (*smyos gra mkhar rje*) had two sons- Thug Je and Zhang Nge
- Nyö Zhang Nge (*zhang nge*)
- Nyö Dri De (*smyos 'bri lde*) - son of Zhang Nge
- Nyö Dri Chung (*smyos 'bri chung*)
- Nyö Palgyi Yönten (*smyos dpal gyi yon tan*)
- Nyö Lopön Tshulyon (*smyos slob dpon tshul yon*)
- Nyö Guru (*smyos guru*)

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- Nyö Lhaphen (*smyos lha phan*)
- Nyö Thugyal (*smyos mthu rgyal*)
- Nyö Lo Yönten Drag (*smyos lo yon tan grags*)
- Nyö Tsang Dorje Lama (*smyos gtsang rdo rje blama*)
- Nyö Palgyi Senge (*myos dpal gyi seng ge*)
- Nyö Nag Dragpa Pal (*smyos nag grags pa dpal*)- emanation of Dharma King Ashoka
- Nyö Gyalwa Lha Nangpa (*smyos rgyal ba lha nang pa*)
- Nyö Tashi Wangchug (*smyos bkra shis dbang phyugs*)
- Nyö Dragpa Dorje (*smyos zhig chen po grags pa rdor je*)
- Nyö Padma Dorje (*smyos sgom chen po pad ma rdo rje*)
- Nyö Tön A Mi Kirti (*smyos ston aa mi kirti*)
- Nyö Tön Dragpa Tashi (*smyos ston grags pa bkra shis*)
- Nyö Tön Dragpa Rinchen (*smyos ston grags pa rin chen*)
- Nyö Dragpa Özer (*smyos grags pa 'od zer*) and Nyö Dragpa Gyaltsen (*grags pa rgyal mtshan*)
- Nyo Jö Bum Pal (*'jo bum dpal*) - son of Nyö Dragpa Gyaltsen
- Nyö Phagpa Pal (*smyos 'phags pa dpal*)
- Nyö Sonam Dragpa (*smyos bsod nams grags pa*)
- Nyö Döndrub Namgyal (*smyos don 'grub rnam rgyal*)
- Nyö Gönpo Tsewang (*smyos mgon po tshe dbang*)
- Nyö Namgyal Lhündrub (*smyos rnam rgyal lhun grub*)
- Nyö Tön Tsewang Dorje (*smyos ston tshe dbang rdo rje*) and Yum Tsering Buga (*tshe ring bu dga'*)
- Nyö Künkhyen Dongag Tenzin (*kun mkhyen mdo sngags bstan 'dzin*) married Yum Je Rig Gö Dzom (*rje rigs dgos 'dzoms*)
- Nyö Sangdag Thrinley Lhündrub (*gsang bdag 'phrin las lhun grub*) married Yum Lhadzin (*lha 'dzin*)

The older family history records seem to mention only the male members who succeeded in heading the clan during their generation.

The Mindrolling Lineage

The second of the twofold lineage of Mindrolling is the lineage that begins with the establishment of the seat of Mindrolling in the form of the Mindrolling Monastery in Drachi. This lineage is still the lineage of the Nyö descendents but following the establishment of the Mindrolling Monastery, was thereafter known as the Mindrolling lineage. The Mindrolling lineage enumerates successively the

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Trichens. The term Trichen literally means great throneholder and the throneholder of the Mindrolling Monastery is known as the Mindrolling Trichen.

The lineage of Trichens is counted in two ways. According to Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje's History of Dharma, Terdag Lingpa, the son of Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub, is counted as the first Mindrolling Trichen (written as Tri for short). His younger son Tri Rinchen Namgyal is counted as the second Mindrolling Trichen. In this way, the lineage is counted as follows:

1. Tri Chögyal Terdag Lingpa
2. Tri Rinchen Namgyal
3. Tri Gyurme Pema Tenzin
4. Tri Gyurme Thrinley Namgyal
5. Tri Gyurme Pema Wangyal
6. Tri Gyurme Sangye Künga
7. Tri Gyurme Yidzhin Wangyal
8. Tri Gyurme Dechen Chogdrub

The sons' lineage ended with the 8th Mindrolling Trichen- Tri Gyurme Dechen Chogdrub. During the time of Tri Gyurme Dechen Chogdrub, there were only daughters and no sons to carry on the family lineage. It was then that the daughter of Tri Gyurme Dechen Chogdrub, Mindrolling Jetsün Chimed Donden Dolma, married the son of the great treasure master-Tertön Rangrig who was an emanation of Terdag Lingpa. His son, Pema Wangchen, married into the family of Mindrolling and became the Tritsab or regent. In this way of enumerating the Trichens of Mindrolling, Tri Pema Wangchen is counted as the 9th Mindrolling Trichen. The son from his marriage to Jetsün Chimed Donden Dolma became the 10th Trichen, Tri Dondub Wangyal who was the father of His Holiness Kyabje Mindrolling Trichen, our root Guru.

9. Tri Pema Wangchen
10. Tri Dondrub Wangyal
11. Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Kunzang Wangyal

However, according to the more widely acknowledged way of enumerating the Trichens, we consider Terdag Lingpa's eldest son Pema Gyurme Gyatso, the 2nd Trichen. Due to the forces of degenerate times and obstacles, he was killed at a young age by the Dzungar Mongol army. However, he did hold the throne for the short period between the parinirvana of Terdag Lingpa and his own passing.

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His younger brother Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal thus became the 3rd to be enthroned as Mindrolling Trichen. Thus, in this way of enumeration, Pema Gyurme Gyatso is the second Trichen in the Trichen lineage. Tritsab Pema Wangchen, although greatly revered as the regent of Mindrolling who kept the profound tradition of Mindrolling entirely intact through a very delicate period in the history of Mindrolling, is not counted amongst the Trichens of Mindrolling in this enumeration of Trichens. Tri Gyurme Dechen Chogdrub is counted as the 9th Trichen and His Holiness Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Kunzang Wangyal's father, Tri Dondub Wangyal, is counted as the 10th Mindrolling Trichen and Rinpoche himself the 11th Throne holder of Mindrolling.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part II

While referred to as descendents of the Palden Nyö Rig (Noble Nyö Lineage), the history of Mindrolling itself begins with the biographical accounts of Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub, the father of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa.

Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub

The father of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub was a direct descendant of the Glorious Nyö lineage. He was born as the son of Vidyadhara Khedrub Dongag Tenzin (*mkhas grub mdo sngags bstan 'dzin*), and Yum Je Rig Gödzom *(rje rigs dgos 'dzom*) at Chak Jangchub Ling in 1611, on the 26th day of the auspicious fourth month of the Iron Female Pig Year. Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub was the incarnation of the great master Nubchen Sangay Yeshe, one of the 25 disciples of Guru Padmasambhava.

Nubchen SangyeYeshe, of the clan of Nub, received many transmissions from Guru Rinpoche as well as from 30 thirty other accomplished teachers of the time and he became a renowned master of the tantras. He was one of the three greatest receivers (*babs sa*) of tantra, who transmitted and spread the teachings of Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Semde of Atiyoga in Tibet. It is said that when king Lang Darma began to destroy the Dharma in Tibet, he summoned Nubchen Sangye Yeshe and his disciples and seeing the power of Nubchen's realization, he decided to spare the tantrikas and the tantric teachings.

Sangdag Thrinley Lhudrub's own contribution, unfortunately, is often not mentioned enough, due to the great focus on the remarkable life and peerless activity of his eldest son Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa. However, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub's contribution is, in its own right, extraordinary. He was a visionary who was exceptionally learned in all aspects of Dharma and supremely accomplished in mantrayana. He was renowned for his courage and deep insight into the needs of the future, which inspired him to break ground for creating a new environment for research, study and practice of the dharma. He was credited with bringing a change in the approach of learning and studying the dharma and in encouraging the equality of class, gender and different lineages. He paved the way for revival of research and studies in the most authentic way and firmly believed that education was the best method of bringing progressive changes while retaining the purity of traditions.

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From a very young age, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub showed signs of great accomplishment. He received many teachings and instructions and completed retreats under the guidance of his father, the great master Khedrub Dongag Tenzin. He later took ordination from Tsuglag Gyatso and received the name Thrinley Lhundrub. At a remarkably young age, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub mastered the teachings of both the Kama and Terma lineages. He studied under his father and countless other great masters and teachers and became one of the most learned masters of the time.

He received the Nyingma (old translations school) teachings from the great masters Sungtul Tsultrim Dorje, Lochen Shenphen Dorje, Lhatsün Kunzang Namgyal, Dzogchenpa Drugdrag Zangpo, Bönlungpa Tsultrim Gyaltsen, Zur Chöying Rangdrol and Trulzhig Norbu Chöten. He studied the Sarma (new translation) teachings from many great masters of the new translations such as Gyaltsab Dragpa Chöyang and Gönpo Sönam Chogden. In all he studied under some thirty masters of the old and new schools. Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub spent many years in solitary retreat and accomplished all the levels of the doctrine.

Many of the masters of his time regarded Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub to be unequalled in the depth of his learning and understanding of the Dharma, and particularly in his knowledge of the vast body of the secret Vajrayana teachings, meditation and rituals. Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub married Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Dolma. He passed away at the age of 52.

Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub's contribution to the preservation of Buddhist teachings in Tibet and the legacy he passed on to his sons is extraordinary. During one of his retreats, it is said that Padmasambhava appeared in a vision to Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub and prophesized, "You shall have four sons. Three equal to you and one greater than you."

Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Dolma

Padmasambhava prophesized to Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub that an emanation of Shelkar Tsho, born in the year of the Rat and by the name of Yangcen, found near his own province of Dranang, would be his consort.

And so it was that in accordance with this prophecy that Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Dolma, the mother of Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, was born in the year 1624 in the

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wood male rat year in Dranang. Yum Lhadzin Yancen Dolma was the emanation of Shelkar Tsho who was one of the consorts of Padmasambhava.

Lhadzin Yangcen Dolma was respected and renowned as a direct descendent of the Chögyal Dynasty of great Kings, Songtsen Gampo and Trisong Detsen. The Chögyal dynasty itself was considered to be a branch of the Shakya Licchavi clan of India.

The Shakya Licchavi Clan existed in the northern region of Lumbini- foothills of the Himalayas in ancient India. It was a tribal kingdom that existed prior to the birth of Shakya Thub pa or Shakya muni Buddha. Buddha as Siddhartha was born into this clan. Shakya - the word itself means "Sugar Caners". There were the small kingdoms of Shakya Licchavi and Shakya Vaishali and both were overrun by war and rivalry. Shortly, after the parinirvana of the Buddha, the Shakya Licchavi kingdom ceased to exist and its survivors scattered into the neighboring countries such as Nepal.

Songtsen Gampo (604 - 650) was a great emperor who contributed to the introduction and growth of Buddhism in Tibet. Under his reign the Buddhist Sutrayana teachings started to take root in Tibet. He was also responsible for sending the great scholar, Thönmi Sambhota, to India. It was this great scholar and master who then created the Tibetan alphabet, which became instrumental in the spreading and preservation of the teachings in Tibet. Thönmi Sambhota was one of the previous lives of Terdag Lingpa. It was also during the reign of Songtsen Gampo that the Ten Virtuous Actions were first introduced in Tibet and became the basis of Tibet's code of laws.

King Trisong Detsen, descendent of the same Chögyal lineage, reigned in the years 756-797 (or 804 according to different sources). Under his reign, Buddhism was established as the state religion of the country. He invited great Buddhist scholars to Tibet from India. Amongst them were the great learned abbot Shantarakshita, and the Second Buddha of our time, Mahaguru Padmasambhava, who established the Vajrayana teachings in Tibet.

From a very young age, Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma was very learned, accomplished and kind. She was greatly loved by the people of her family and the province and known for her gentleness and grace. Especially known for her generosity, she made many vast offerings to various great masters and monasteries and saved innumerable animals which were to be slaughtered.

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From a very young age she studied recitation, calligraphy and other fields of knowledge. Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Dolma received many transmissions and teachings from great masters of the day such as Sakyapa Zhabdrung Garchen, Tsherlungpa Künga Namgyal, Khenpo Shakya Rinwang, Tshe Tsham Par Dragpa and Na Lung Trulzhig.

Lhadzin Yangcen Dolma married the great master of the Nyö lineage, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub when she was in her twenties. After she became the Sangyum (consort) of Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub, she gave birth to seven children, four sons, two daughters and one who died at childbirth:

Her oldest son, Rigdzin Gyurme Dorje, aka Chögyal Terdag Lingpa was born in the year of the Fire Dog Year.

- Gyalse Tenpa'i Niyma was born the Year of the Earth Rat.
- Semo Sönam Paldzom was born in the Year of the Female Iron Hare, after one child who died at birth.
- Chöpal Gyatso, the Great Lochen Dharmashri was her third son and was born in the Year of the Wood Horse.
- Chung Je Wön Chagdzöd Künga Tsultrim *(gcung rje dbon phyag mdzod)* was born in the Fire Monkey Year.
- Semo Lhachig Paldzom was born in the year of the Earth Pig.

Semo is an honorific term given to daughters of noble families. These days, this word is being translated loosely as 'princess' but it is not entirely correct. The term princess applies when we use the term *Gyalpo'i Semo* which literally means "daughter born to a king."

The literal translation of Semo, a term used mainly for daughters of teachers who are lineage heads or for daughters who are born to nobility, would be 'she-sons' as derived from the word 'Se' which is an honorific word for son. The term semo may be translated as noble daughter.

A great learned practitioner and scholar, Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma continued to receive teachings from many great masters. Along with Padrö Chöwang Lhundrub, she received the entire Hundred Thousand tantras of the Nyingma School (rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum) and numerous other teachers from Yabje Rigzin Chenpo. Furthermore, she received many teachings from other great masters of the day such as Peling Sungtul Tsultrim Dorje, Bönlung Rinpoche and Padro Chöje. In this way, she received many teachings and

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accomplished the practices becoming renowned as a great yogini. She was also known for her accomplishment of the dream yoga.

Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma also assisted her husband Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub in his vast activities of teachings. Her biography mentions that several times she donated all her material wealth for the construction of temples and to support the poor of the provinces and in this way setting an exemplary tradition for all Sangyums (an honorific term mainly used for consorts who are actually married to a master of great accomplishment) within the lineage to follow in supporting and engaging in the activities of their consorts.

To these two great masters were then born the children who went on to establish and found Mindrolling which then became the one of the major Nyingma learning and practice centers. There are six main lineages or monasteries of the Nyingmas: Mindrolling, Dorje Drag, Shechen, Dzogchen, Kathog and Palyul.

All of these major monasteries are holders of the vast and profound teachings of the Secret Mantrayana teachings. However, due to the vast vision and tireless efforts of the two Mindrolling brothers, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri, Mindrolling became known as one of the epicenters of authentic tradition of Buddhist rituals and practices containing the highest levels of learning and practices of Dzogchen.

This great monastic institution renowned as Mindrolling was established by the eldest son born to Sangdag Trinley Lhundrub and Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Dolma, Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa.

Terchen Rigzin Gyurme Dorje aka Chögyal Orgyen Terdag Lingpa

Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa was born as the eldest son of Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub and Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma, on Monday, 26th March 1646, the 10th day of the 2nd month of the Fire Dog Year, at his father's monastery, Dargye Chöling in Dranang, Central Tibet.

Before the birth of Terdag Lingpa, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub dreamt that a beautiful maiden came and offered him a blazing red HRI syllable. His consort, Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma, too, saw in her dream a beautiful celestial maiden offering her a crystal stupa. As soon as she held the stupa in the dream, Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma awoke just as the sun arose in the dawn. Upon

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birth, Terdag Lingpa was given the name Künga Ngödrub Rinchen Wangyi Gyalpo.

Tertön Gyurme Dorje aka Chögyal Rigzin Orgyen Terdag Lingpa, also known as Pema Garwag Gyurme Dorje, is known as the emanation of many great bodhisattvas, mahasiddhas and masters. To enumerate a few of whom we hear often - he was Ananda during the time of Buddha Shakyamuni, Thönmi Sambhota at the time of King Songtsen Gampo, the great scholar and translator Vairocana during the time of Guru Rinpoche and Zurchen Shakya Jungne, one of the three great receivers *(babs sa)* of the Nyingma teachings.

From a young age, Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa received many teachings and initiations. At the age of five he went to receive the blessings of the Jowo in Lhasa. As soon as he offered prostrations, his mind filled with great clarity and he was able to clearly remember his past lives. From then onwards, he began to receive extensive teachings and transmissions from learned abbots of the time. In particular, Terdag Lingpa began to receive religious training under the guidance of his father, who first bestowed upon him the initiation of the Kagyed Sangdzog *(bk'a brgyad gsang rdzogs)*.

Terdag Lingpa studied reading, writing, grammar and literature with the great scholar Dhöndup Wangyal. His other teachers in his early age were Rigzin Pema Thrinley, Gönpo Sönam Chogden and Lochen Zhenphen Dorje.

At the age of nine, Chögyal Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa received his first vows, the genyen vows *(dge bsnyen)* from his father and thereafter received further training in meditation, rituals and rites of the Nyingma practices with particular emphasis on the dzogchen teachings. Then he went into a three month retreat, during which he had visions of Guru Padmasambhava and received empowerments from him.

While in retreat, Terdag Lingpa was able to memorize the texts of numerous sadhana practices without any difficulty. He also studied and learned by heart numerous root texts and commentaries, among them were the Essential Root Tantra (rtsa rgyud gsang ba snying po), The Peerless Continuum *(rgyud bla ma)*, The Relaxation of Mind Nature (sems nyid ngal gso), the Wish Granting Treasure *(yid bzhin mdzod)* and the Four Medicine Tantras *(sman dpyad rgyud bzhi)* and many others. Thus in his young age, Terdag Lingpa's depth of learning and understanding had become truly immeasurable.

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Between the age of 15 and his early twenties, Terdag Lingpa received the oral transmissions of the 18 volumes of Nyingma Tantra *(rnying ma rgyud 'bum bco brgyad)* at Tashi Chöling monastery. Later he also received the transmissions of innumerable treatises and cycles of teachings of both the Kama *(bka ma)* and Terma *(gter ma)* lineages.

At the age of 23, Terdag Lingpa went to Palden Drepung Monastery *(dpal ldan 'bras spungs)* where the Great Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobzang Tenzin Gyatso performed the *(gtsug phud)* hair cutting ceremony and bestowed upon him the name Ngawang Pema Tenzin. Later he received from the Great Fifth Dalai Lama the yongdzog genyen vows *(yongs rdzogs dge bsnyen)* - the complete lay vows of Pratimoksha, Bodhisattva, and Tantra traditions. This auspicious bestowal of the yongdzog genyen vows marks the beginning of an exceptional and very close teacher-student-teacher relationship between the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa.

From then on, Terdag Lingpa continued to receive a vast amount of transmissions and he accomplished many retreats. From the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Terdag Lingpa received numerous transmissions; amongst them was the Great Sealed Secrets *(gsang ba rgya can)*, a cycle of teachings comprising of the Fifth Dalai Lama's visionary texts, treasure teachings and supplementary notes on the secret levels of practices. Traveling between the monasteries of Gungthang, Benyul, Nyemo and Kyitsal, Terdag Lingpa continued to study scriptures and meditation. These included the Great Illusion Tantra *(sgyu 'phrul)*, the Union Tantra *(mnyam sbyor)*, the Vajrakila *(phur pa)*, the Yamri Tantra (gshed skor), treatises on the meditation level *(sgrub sde)*, as well as the tantra teachings such as the Hundred Sadhanas *(sgrub thabs brgya rtsa)*, Chakrasamvara *(bde mchog)*, Guhyasamaja *(gsang 'dus)*, Hevajra *(dkyes rdor)*, the Ladzog Thugsum *(bla rdzogs thugs gsum)* which was the Trio of Guru Sadhana, Atiyoga and the Great Compassionate One, and many others. Terdag Lingpa also studied the texts and expositions of great scholars like Sakya Pandita and in particular the Great Omniscient Longchen Rabjampa.

Out of all the great master and accomplished teachers of Terdag Lingpa, there were three who were incomparable in their kindness, eleven from whom he had received nectar-like teachings for self-emanation and growth, and twenty-five who were the source of Terdag Lingpa's extensive vision and from whom he received a vast amount of teachings and transmissions. The first three were:

- The Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobzang Tenzin Gyatso

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- Rigzin Terdag Lingpa's own father, Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub
- The great master, Sungtrul Tsultrim Dorje.

Among the eleven masters from whom Terdag Lingpa received the nectar-like teachings were Rigzin Pema Thrinley, Zhalu Rinchen Sönam Chogdub, Zur Ngawang Phuntsog, Trulshig Longyang Odsal, Sakyapa Sonam Wangchuk, Konchok Lhundrub and others.

In all, Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa had over thirty five teachers from whom he had received oral transmissions and profound teachings on meditation and ritual practices.

In the History of Nyingma, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche presents the following enumeration of transmissions and teachings Terdag Lingpa received, and of the scriptures and texts he studied and accomplished:

"Terdag Lingpa's studies of the doctrinal transmissions were infinite. It would be difficult to grasp even the titles, but they include all the transmitted precepts of the Ancient Translation School for which there exists a continuous lineage nowadays, such as the *Sutra Which Gathers All Intentions*, the *Magical Net*, the *Three Traditions of the Mental Class (sems-sde lugs-sum)*, the *Buddhasamayoga*, and the cycles of *Yangdak Heruka, Vajrakila* and *Yamantaka*; most of the well-known treasures as exemplified by the varied transmitted precepts of the class for means of attainment, the *Trio of the Guru*, *Atiyoga* and *Great Compassionate One*, in general and in particular; the general transmitted precepts of the New Translation School, such as the *Vajra Garland* and the *Hundred Means of Attainment*, as well as such particular transmitted precepts as those of *Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, Kalachakra, Guhyasamaja, Yamantaka*, and the Kriya and Yoga empowerments, guidance and exegetical transmissions, along with many works of the sutra tradition; and the transmission of the entire *Kangyur*, which is the root of them all.

Starting in his thirteenth year, Choegyal Terdag Lingpa memorised the *Root Tantra of the Secret Nucleus*, the *Supreme Continuum of the Greater Vehicle*, the *Mind at Rest*, and the root text and commentary of the *Wish-fulfilling Treasury*; and from his venerable father he gradually received their oral exegeses. Later, he mastered the scriptures of the Nub tradition, the Zur tradition of Rongzom Pandita, Sakya Pandita's *Analysis of the Three Vows (sa skya pandi ta'i rab dbye)*, Comden Rigpei Reldri's *Definitive Order of the Tripitaka (bcom ldan ral gri'i spyi rnam)*, and the *Profound Inner Meaning* by the 3rd Karmapa Rangjung Dorje *(rang byung zhabs kyi*

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nang don). In particular, by diligently studying all the scriptures of the great all-knowing Longchenpa, he obtained unimpeded powers of intellectual analysis, and thereby resolved all doubts."

Furthermore, His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche continues to write:

"He received the empowerments, instructions, and exegetical transmissions of the four rivers [of the Sutra which Gathers All Intentions] in their entirety, including the seal entrustment and the longevity empowerment for final support from Taktön Chögyel Tenzin who had opened forty five mandalas on the basis of the *Empowerment Ceremony of the Sutra which Gathers All Intentions entitled the Jewel Rosary ('dus pa mdo'i dbang chog rin chen phreng ba)*. Moreover, on the basis of the *Empowerment Ceremony [entitled] the River of Honey (dbang chog sbrang rtsi'i chu rgyun)* he received, from the same guru, the complete empowerments, transmissions, and instructions, relying on twenty one mandalas painted on cloth. Again, from Rigzin Pema Thrinley of Dorje Drak, he received the full empowerments, instructions and exegetical transmissions, based on the *Empowerment Ceremony entitled the Jewel Rosary*, relying on a condensed version which utilised twenty-seven mandalas, of which the root mandala was painted on cloth, a nd the surrounding ones laid out schematically. Both of these masters conferred on him the secret name Gyurme Dorje Tsal."

After this period of extensive study and training, Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa went into a solitary retreat and he accomplished many practices. Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa then revealed many treasure teachings (terma). Hence Terdag Lingpa is also renowned as a great Tertön or treasure finder. Among the treasures he revealed are the following:

- At the age of eighteen, he discovered the terma of the Heart Essence of the Vidyadharas *[rig-'dzin thugs-thigs]* at Yamalung on Friday, June 15, l663 (25the day of the 4th month tenth day 5th month, water hare year).

- At the age of twenty-two, he discovered the terma of Yamantaka, The Destroyer of Arrogance *[gshin-rje dregs' joms]* at Yarlung Sheldrag (Yarlung Crystal Caves) on Saturday, September 24, 1667 (8th day khrums month, fire sheep year).

- At the age of thirty-one, he discovered the terma Zabter Thragthung Pema Dragpo of the Wrathful Guru (Guru drag-po) and the Atiyoga and the

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Vajrasattva cycle *[rdor sems ati'i skor]* at Okar Drak on Saturday, December 19, 1676 (15th day, tiger month, fire dragon year)

- At the age of thirty-five, he discovered the terma of the Doctrinal Cycle of the Great Compassionate One as The Universal Gathering of the Sugatas *[thugs-rje chenpo bde gshegs kun-dus kyi chos skor]* in public at Shawuk Tago on Friday, August 23, 1680 (29th day, 6th month, iron monkey year).

Having received many teachings from the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa in turn also bestowed numerous teachings and transmissions to the The Great Fifth Dalai Lama. These transmissions included the Tantra of Vajrapani's Whispered Lineage *(phyag rdor snyam brgyud)*, the Seven Treasury Texts *(mdzod bdun)* of the Great Omniscient Longchen Rabjampa, as well as the treasure teachings of Padma Lingpa, Dorje Lingpa, Ratna Lingpa and numerous other transmissions. It is said that once while the Great Fifth Dalai Lama was receiving a transmission from Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, many witnessed numerous miraculous signs.

The exceptional and auspicious teacher-student-teacher relationship between the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa continued throughout the lives of both these accomplished masters. When Terdag Lingpa was 25 years old, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama fully patronized the building of Terdag Lingpa's monastery and gave it the name Og Min Ogyen Mindrol Ling Ngedön Gatsal Ling meaning:

Og Min (Akanishta),
Ogyen (Uddiyana),
Mindrol (ripening and liberation),
Ling (land),
Ngedön (definitive meaning),
Gatsal (joyous garden).

The Mindrolling Monastery was thus founded in the year 1646. Terdag Lingpa's great vision paved the way for many changes in the existing system in the structure and traditions observed by the Mindrolling Monastery. Terdag Lingpa stressed the importance of merit and learning over more conservative traditions of hierarchy. Therefore, in the Mindrolling Monastery in Tibet, there was only one throne for the Trichen in the main shrineroom and everyone else sat on the thick cushions used in shrinerooms all over (*böden*). Only when a regent would be appointed in the absence of a Trichen, was another throne set up for the regent.

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The order of seating of monks too was based on learning and seniority. If a monk passed the necessary classes and studies which were essential in order to be permitted to sit in the shrineroom, he would then take his seat and then the next one who passed the tests, would sit after him and so on. It was not based on age or rank.

Terdag Lingpa emphasised the importance of maintaining a low profile for practitioners and exemplified this in his own monastery. He stressed on the quality of the practitioners instead of great numbers, and so even at its peak, Mindrolling never had more than 300 monks. Terdag Lingpa constructed Mindrolling in a place in the Drachi valley where it was almost hidden and could not be seen until one was almost there. This he said was to remind his students and followers of the lineage that a practitioner must not live to display one's practice but to live a quiet, humble life steeped in tranquillity and reflection. That a practitioner should not have to impress others or seek others but that others should seek the practitioner should they need to.

Another shift from the existing ethos of the time was Terdag Lingpa's view on gender equality. Terdag Lingpa emphasised the importance of educating women and their role in transmitting and practicing the authentic dharma. In this he led by example and made sure that his daughters had a choice and were educated in the same way as his sons. He stressed that daughters of his lineage were to be taught just like the sons. This was a revolutionary concept in its day and from then on the daughters of Mindrolling have the title of Jetsün. Jetsün in Tibetan comes from two words. Je *(rje)* meaning lord or sovereign and tsün *(tsun)* means persons of great nobility and virtue. So together it is often translated as a title meaning the exalted one and literally means sovereign of virtuous and noble ones.

Terdag Lingpa established Mindrolling monastery with the great vision of establishing a source of the pure and authentic traditions of mantrayana where learning and practicing of the genuine dharma would be its only purpose. In the subsequent years, Mindrolling became the reference point of all the ritualistic traditions such as sadhana practices, ritual dances and mandala making for the Nyingma monasteries and various other lineages from all over Tibet. It was seen as the source of most ritualistic traditions and is even now referred to as the *chu go* of the Nyingma School. Chu go meaning the source or the mouth from which something flows out into the open.

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Upon the completion of the building following seven years of construction, on the day of the inauguration of Og Min Ogyen Mindrolling, The Great Fifth Dalai Lama personally performed the hair cutting ceremony for the new monks of Mindrolling.

In the subsequent year, when the Dalai Lama fell sick, Terdag Lingpa performed practices and rituals to expel obstacles, and it is said that due to the power and blessings of those practices, The Great Fifth Dalai Lama recovered fully.

When his activities were thriving, at the age of 33, Rigzin Terdag Lingpa became seriously ill. Based on a prediction and instruction of The Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Rigzin Terdag Lingpa accepted a spiritual consort, who was an emanation of Kshetrapali. It was due to her blessings and presence that Terdag Lingpa not only regained his health and prolonged his life, but his realization also became greatly enhanced and deepened. Due to the presence of certain obstacles, this consort did not bear a child, but later Terdag Lingpa successively married two consorts (sangyum) who gave birth to three sons and two daughters, all of whom became exceptional practitioners.

The first of two sangyum was the Great Lady Yönten Dolma, who gave birth to Terdag Lingpa's eldest son Pema Gyurme Gyatso.

The second Sangyum was the daughter of Tsug Lag Dzin, a direct descendant of the king of Zahor, and her name was Phuntsok Paldzom. She was known as the emanation of Dorje Phagmo (Vajrayogini). Sangyum Phuntsok Paldzom gave birth to two sons and two daughters:

- Zhabdrung Yidzhin Lekdrup
- Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal
- Semo Jetsün Migyur Paldron
- Semo Cham Paldzin

As we will see in the subsequent chapters, all of Terdag Lingpa's children came to be exceptional practitioners and masters of their time.

Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa was known for his great generosity. Whatever material offerings he received were always generously donated to the Mindrolling Monastery and for other Dharma activities, and thus the monks of Mindrolling never lacked anything. Furthermore, Terdag Lingpa also commissioned many paintings and sculptures, as well as over five hundred

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volumes of rare and precious texts in gold and silver, including the Kangyur, and numerous xylographs for the commentaries, exegeses, ceremonies and rituals.

Not only was this great master known for revealing treasure teachings and for further teaching and transmitting the vast and profound treasure teachings, but to him is also credited the unexcelled contribution of preserving the Kama lineage. He compiled many texts, was a great composer, received and reinforced many teachings and in this way renewed the transmission lineages of many lines of transmissions.

One of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa's greatest contributions has been the restoration and preservation of some of the great cycles of terma teachings which had been discovered in the past but had lost much of their transmissions, exegesis, and understanding. Almost no one at the time knew the methods of practices contained within these termas or had the required transmissions to practice these profound traditions. Chief amongst them were the works of the two greatest of tertöns, Nyang Ral Nyima Ozer (1124-1192) and Guru Chöwang (1212-1273). Terdag Lingpa revived the numerous termas of these two great early tertöns and nurtured the growth and flourishment of their teachings. Nyang Ral Nyima Ozer's great terma Kagyed Desheg Düpa *(bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa)* which became one of the pivotal traditions maintained at Mindrolling. In fact when Terdag Lingpa was about to pass into parinirvana, he instructed his disciples not to mourn him but instead to do a ten day drubchen of Kagyed Desheg Düpa in order to benefit all beings in the samsara.This tradition is maintained in Mindrolling right up to the present day. Guru Chöwang's famed terma, Lama Sangdü *(bla ma gsang 'dus)*, also became one of the principal traditions held at Mindrolling. It is the drubchö based on Lama Sangdü that is performed every year on the auspicious occasion of the 10th day of the Monkey month (7th month) and is called the great Tse Chu ceremony.

His Holiness Dujom Rinpoche summarizes Chögyal Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa's incomparable contribution to the preservation of the teachings of various lineages in the following words:

"This great treasure finder, directly and indirectly, was most gracious to the entire teaching, ancient and new. More than that, he maintained the vitality of the instructions of the minor doctrinal traditions, such as the Conangpa, Shangpa and others. In particular, by the 17th century, the exegesis and attainment of the Nyingma Traditions, of which the foremost is the trilogy of the *Sutra Which Gathers All Intentions*, the *Magical Net* and the *Mental Class* had almost begun to

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resemble a lamp that had run out of oil, Terdag Lingpa, with courageous and untiring great perseverance, sought out all those traditions and restored the deteriorated teaching from its very foundations by means of exegesis, attainment, and work. In point of fact, because of the kindness of this most venerable master, his brother, disciples, and descendants, the *Sa-nga Nyingmapa*, or the "Ancient School of Secret Mantra", has been equal to the meaning of its name, and its genuine, authoritative continuous lineage has increased, without decline, down to the present day. Therefore, none can match Terdag Lingpa's wonderful kindness and legacy. For these reasons, we later Nyingmapa do not merely rely on ephemeral ceremonies and rites which are referred to as profound doctrines, but extensively maintain the tradition, which is a great treasure chest of teaching."

Thus Chögyal Terdag Lingpa is known as an extraordinary master of the Kama (oral) and Terma (revealed treasures) lineages and therefore is called Chögyal Terdag Lingpa-the Dharma King Terdag Lingpa.

It is due to his extraordinary foresight and unbiased dedication to all lineages of the four schools of Tibetan Buddhism that Terdag Lingpa is also known as a pioneer of his time in upholding the and strengthening the non sectarian view. He established a vision wherein later generation masters such as Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo founded the Rime (non sectarian) movement

It is actually impossible to write down all the vast and tireless activity of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa. Reading his biographies and listening to great teachers such as Kyabje Mindrolling Trichen, Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, speak about Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, always left listeners marveling and awestruck by this great master's realization and activity. It often seems impossible for one person to accomplish all those activities in one lifetime.

At the age of 69, he started showing signs of ill health and began leaving instructions to his sons and daughters and his students.

On the morning of 2nd day of the 2nd lunar month (Saturday 17th March 1714) Chögyal Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa got up saying: "I must now take seven steps to the East". He then took seven steps in the eastern direction and sat down in a meditation posture and said:

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"Appearances, sounds and awareness are deities, mantras and the sphere of dharmakaya. Spreading forth infinitely as the display of kayas and primordial wisdom. Within the practice of the profound and secret great yoga, may they be indivisible and of one taste in the essence of mind."

Then, gazing around at all those who surrounded him, Rigdzin Terdag Lingpa said, "I see that the dakinis have arrived to greet me", and gazing skywards entered into parinirvana. The following days were filled with amazing peace and wonderful signs that were witnessed by all throughout the region.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part III

Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima

Terdag Lingpa was the eldest of the seven children of Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub and Yum Lhadzin Yangchen Drolma. The second son, Terdag Lingpa's younger brother Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima, was born in the Year of the Male Earth Rat (1648) at Dranang Dargye Chöling in Central Tibet.

From his father Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and many other masters, Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima received numerous teachings and transmissions of both the Kama and Terma lineages, and thus became very learned and accomplished in all branches of sutra and tantra. He was particularly renowned for his great erudition in compiling many precious texts on gar thig yang rol *(gar thig dbyang rol)*- the ritual dances, art of mandala drawing, ritual melodies and ritual music. Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima also assisted in raising and teaching his younger brother, the Great Lochen Dharmashri.

The great master Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima also became the first Mindrolling Khenchen, the abbot and holder of the vinaya lineage of Mindrolling. The lineage of Mindrolling has the line of Khenchens which is also known as *khen rab*. The Khen Rab is the line of vinaya holders who bestow the vinaya vows to the monks of Mindrolling and have always been renowned scholars and exponents of the Dharma beginning with Gyalsay Tenpai Nyima. Traditionally, the Mindrolling khenchens have always been the younger sons of Trichens or the throne holders. The line of Trichens is also known as *tri rab*. The eldest son would become the Trichen or throneholder of Mindrolling and the younger son would become the Khenchen.

Owing to many obstacles and due to not having accomplished certain samaya practices at the appropriate time, Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima is said to have passed away at the young age of 27 in 1674 in the Year of The Wood Tiger.

Chöpal Gyatso, Lochen Dharmashri

Terdag Lingpa's sole inner spiritual son was his second younger brother, Lochen Dharmashri, the Great Omniscient Chöpal Gyatso, who is known as one of the foremost learned masters of the Dzogchen teachings. He was born in the year of the Wood Horse as the fifth child of the seven children of Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub and Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma.

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Although Tibet has been blessed with the presence of many great enlightened masters, it is said very few are comparable to Lochen Dharmashri in learning and understanding of the profound dharma. The Terlung *(gter lung- treasure prophesies)*, prophesized the birth of Lochen Dharmashri as the birth of "a great master with the name beginning with dharma, an emanation of Yudra Nyingpo, with unparallel wisdom and qualities of compassion and great devotion, who will uphold the victorious banner of dharma for the benefit of sentient beings."

Lochen Dharmashri was an emanation of one of the 25 disciples of Guru Rinpoche, Yudra Nyingpo. Yudra Nyingpo was a prince of Gyalmo Tsawe Rong (Gyarong) in Eastern Tibet. In Gyarong, Yudra Nyingpo received teachings from Vairocana, who was exiled in the area for a certain period of time. Studying with Vairocana, Yudra Nyingpo became a great scholar and translator. Later he traveled to Central Tibet and received teachings from Guru Rinpoche and he became one of the greatest masters of *semde* and *longde* teachings of Dzogpa Chenpo in Tibet.

Lochen Dharmashri's father, the great master Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub, passed away into parinirvana when Lochen Dharmashri was only nine years old, still a young boy. Upon the passing away of his father, Lochen Dharmashri fervently supplicated to the kudung of his father while performing the kudung chöpa *(sku gdung mchod)* - prayers and offerings to the kudung. On the same night, he dreamt that Sangdag Thrinley Lhundrub appeared amidst rainbow lights and dissolved into himself. Lochen Dharmashri awoke immediately and experienced immense joy and clarity. It is said that at that time, his mind and the guru's mind merged into one and from then on Lochen Dharmashri's mind was filled with exceptional clarity and profound understanding of the dharma.

From his young age, Lochen Dharmashri was taught the dharma and brought up by his older brother Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa with great love and kindness. He was also lovingly taught and cared for by his other older brother Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima and his mother Yum Lhadzin Yangcen Drolma.

At the age of thirteen, Lochen Dharmashri received the genyen (*dge bsnyen*) vows from Rigzin Terdag Lingpa who performed the tsug phü *(gtsug phud)*, hair cutting ceremony. Terdag Lingpa then bestowed him the name Tenzin Jamyang Wangpo *(bstan 'dzin 'jam dbyang dbang po)*.

At the age of fifteen, he received from the Great Fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobsang Tenzin Gyatso the rabjung *(rab byung)* vows and at the age of twenty, in

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the great palace of Potala, Lochen Dharmashri received from the Great Fifth Dalai Lama the gelong *(dge slong)* vows of full ordination.

Having accomplished great learning and mastering all sciences and philosophies, at the age of twenty-seven, in the presence of a great assembly, Lochen Dharmashri was granted the eminent distinction of the title of "The Great Learned One".

Most importantly, it is said that throughout his life Lochen Dharmashri was very particular in not creating any nyetung *(nyes ltung)* - transgressions and violations in relation to even the smallest of the vows. Like the brilliant sun and moon, Lochen Dharmashri always kept the most perfect conduct free of every stain. His precision and carefulness with his vinaya vows and samayas is even today considered to be the example of perfect purity within the vinaya lineage of Tibetan Buddhism. Until this day, Lochen Dharmashri's commentary on the Dom Sum *(sdom gsum)* - the "Collection of Treatises on the Three Vows" is considered one of the most important and authoritative works on the topic of ethics in buddhadharma.

At the age of 12, on the auspicious 25th day of the 7th month of the Wood Snake Year, Lochen Dharmashri received from his older brother, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, the entire cycle of teachings and the empowerment of Rigzin Thugthig (Terdag Lingpa's first terma Heart Essence of the Vidyadharas). The occasion was marked by many auspicious signs and it is said that Lochen Dharmashri had plucked an ordinary twig of a tree and put in into the bumpa, and as the empowerment was bestowed the ordinary twig bloomed with flowers.

At the age of 16, Lochen Dharmashri received the Dra Kalapa *(sgra kalhapa)* and Debgyor (sdeb sbyor) from Gungtang Panchen Shenyen Namgyal *(gung thang pan chen bshes gnyen rnam rgyal)* and also mastered the Lantsha *(lan tsha)* and Wartu *(war tu)* scripts.

From his older brother Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima Rinpoche, Lochen Dharmashri studied the science of astrology. From the master Karma Küngyen *(karma kun mgyan*) he received the teachings of the Kalachakra and from Taglung Drubchen Ngawang *(stag lung grub chen ngag dbang)* the teachings and transmissions of Saraswati.

From his older brother, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, Lochen Dharmashri studied ritual dances, the art of mandala, and ritual melody *(gar thig dbyang gsum)*. It was

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from Terdag Lingpa that he also received the teachings on the Classes of the Three Vows *(sdom gsum rab dbyed)*. From his second older brother Gyalse Tenpa'i Nyima, Lochen Dharmashri received the vinaya teachings, and the teachings on the conduct of the vinaya. At the age of 27, Lochen Dharmashri received the entire body of Longchenpa's teachings.

In particular, throughout his life, Lochen Dharmashri continued with deep devotion to carefully serve and attend to his incomparably kind teacher, Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, from whom he received a vast amount of profound teachings and transmissions.

Included in these transmissions and teachings was a vast amount of terma teachings *(gter chos)* of great Tertöns such as Grubthob Ngödrub *(grub thob dngos grub)*, Neten Dangma Lhüngyal *(gnas brtan ldang ma lhun rgyal)*, Chetsün Senge Wangchug *(lce btsun seng ge dbang phyug)*, Gya Zhang Trom *(rgya zhang khrom*), Lhaje Nubchung *(lha rje gnubs chung)*, Ngadag Nyang Ralpachen *(mnga' bdag nyang ral pa can)*, Guru Chöwang *(gu ru chos dbang)* and Pema Ledrel Tsal *(pad ma las 'brel rtsal)* and many more.

Furthermore, from Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, Lochen Dharmashri also received the empowerments, teachings and transmissions of all of the termas revealed by Terdag Lingpa, such as the Rigzin Thugthig, Thugje Chenpo Desheg Kundu and the Atiyoga and Vajrasattva Cycle. Lochen Dharmashri also received many marvelous and profound teachings and transmissions from the Great Fifth Dalai Lama.

Lochen Dharmashri received the entire transmission of the root of all teachings - the Nyingma Gyübum *(rnying ma rgyud 'bum)*. The Nyingma Gyubum consists of 25 (31) volumes containing a collection of transmissions of the three inner tantras. From the great master Dorje Drag Rigzin Chenpo Pema Thrinley *(rdo rje brag rig 'dzin chen po pad ma phrin las)*, Lochen Dharmashri received the entire body of the newer tantras Yangdag Gonlug *(yang dag 'gon lugs kyi dbang)*, Domsum *(sdom gsum)* and Rigter *(rigs gter)*.

From the master Dingri Künpangpa Lodrö Tenpa *(ding ri kun spangs pa blo gros brtan pa)* Dharmashri received the wang *(dbang)*, lung *(lung)* and tri *(khrid*) of the Zhije Ngachi Barsum *(zhi byed snga phyi bar gsum kha 'thor dang bcas pa)*, of the

essential teachings and empowerment of Kalachakra, the Gyutrül Zhitro *(sgyu 'phrul zhi khro)* and Lama Sangdü *(bla ma gsang 'dus)*.

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From the great, learned master of the Sakyapa, Sakya Dagchen Künga Tashi *(sa skya bdag chen kun dga' bkra shiz)*, Dharmashri received the transmissions of

From the great master Khedrup Chöcong Gyaltsen *(mkhas grub chos skyong rgyal mtshan*) he received the entire teachings, empowerment and profound instructions of the Shangpa lineage. From Lochen Rinzang *(lo chen rin bzang)* he received the entire tri *(khrid)* of the Jor Drug *(sbyor drug)*.

Furthermore, from Drubpei Wangchuk Lodro Gyatso *(grub pa'i dbang phyug blo gros rgya mtsho)* he received further teachings on Kalachakra and Jor Drug *(sbyor drug)*.

From Dorje Dzinpa Künga Tendar *(rdo rje'dzin pa kun dga' bstan dar)* Lochen Dharmashri received the Sang De Jig Sum *(gsang bde 'jigs gsum)*, Ngoglug Kyi Dorje Denzhi *(rngog lugs kyi rdo rje gdan bzhi)*, Mahamaya, Marpo Korsum, *(dmar po skor gsum)* and Gurzhel Gyi Jenang *(gur zhal gyi rjes gnang).*

From Shenyen Jampa Phuntsok Namgyal *(bshes gnyen byams pa phun tshogs rnam rgyal)* he received the Chenrezig Senge Dra *(spyan ras gzings seng ge sgra)*, Drozang Lug Namse Karpo Tshedzin *('gro bzang lugs rnam sras dkar po tshe 'dzin)*, Chenrezig Palmo'i Lug *(spyan ras gzigs dpal mo'i lugs)* and the Gurzhal *(gur zhal).*

From Domtsön Künga Dargye *(sdom brtson kun dga' dar rgye)* Lochen Dharmashri received the Uma Metog Threngjü *('dul ba me tog phreng rgyud)*, Sumjapa Tsadrel *(sum brgya pa rtsa'grel)*, Uma Rigsthog Kor *(dbu ma rigs tshogs skor*), Dompa Nyishupa *(sdom pa nyi shu pa)*, Lama Ngacupa *(bla ma lnga bcu pa)* and the Jowo'i Chöjung Jatsa *(jo bo'i chos 'byung 'brgya rtsa)*.

From Lungrig Mawei Wangchuk Sangye Chödar *(lung rigs smra ba'i dbang phyug sangs rgyas chos dar)* he received Uma Tsajug Zhisum *(dbu ma rtsa 'jug bzhi gsum)*, Namdrel *(rnam 'grel)*, Dulwa Dotsa *('dul ba mdo rtsa)*, Ngönpa Dzö *(mngon pa mdzod)*, Drelchung Dönsal *('grel chung don gsal)* and Sapen Gyi Thubpa Gongsal *(sa pan gyi thub pa dgongs gsal)*.

From Kyi Künga Tensal *(skyi kun dga' bstan gsal)* Lochen Dharmashri received the Gyuthrul Thramo'i Kor *(sgyu 'phrul phra mo'i skor)* and Zur Tsho Tölug Pa'i Gyuthrul Gyi Yigcha Threntsheg *(zur tsho stod lugs pa'i sgyu 'phrul gyi yig cha phran tshegs)*.

From the master Zhalupa Rinchen Zangpo *(zha lu pa rin chen bzang po)* he received the transmissions of Drimed Namnyi *(dri med rnam gnyis)*. From the

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master Kangyurwa Drubpa Dorje *(bka' 'gyur ba grub pa rdo rje)* Lochen Dharmashri received the Dode Kalzang *(mdo sde bskal ba bzang)*, Jetongpa *(brgyad stong pa)*, Ngedön Gyi Dothren *(nges don gyi mdo phran),* Jamchö Denga *(byams chos sde lnga)*, Bodhisattvacaryavtara *(spyod 'jug)* as well as many teachings of the sutra lineage. From the master Drikung Trülpay Ku *('bri gung sprul pa'i sku)* he received the Drami Nyen Pa'i Tshewang *(sgra mi snyan pa'i tshe dbang)*.

Again, from Trewo Trülpay Ku Chöying Wangpo *(tre bo sprul pa'i sku chos kyi dbang po)* he received the Chagchen Lhancig Kyejor *(phyag chen lhan cig skyes sbyor)*, Wangchig Dorje's Khriyig *(dbang phyug rdo rjes mdzad pa'i khrid yig)*, Pehar Gyi Drubthab Trin Nag Khrig Pa *(pe har gyi sgrub thabs sprin nag 'khrigs pa)*.

From the master Pawo Tülpay Ku *(dpa' bo sprul pa'i sku)* Lochen Dharmashri received the Chagchen Yige Zhipa'i Dön Tshugce Ma *(phyag chen yi ge bzhi pa'i don tshugs bcad ma)*.

In short, Lochen Dharmashri held and accomplished a vast body of *gsar rnying ris med* (new school, old school and rime school) transmissions, which he received from almost twenty different teachers. He remained extremely humble and always spoke of his learning and accomplishments as a drop in the ocean. In receiving all these various transmissions and teachings, Lochen Dharmashri not only received them, but also accomplished these practices. Furthermore, he played a pivotal role in the revival and strengthening of these transmission lineages.

He received vast teachings and transmissions from Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, his elder brother, whom he revered as his root teacher and served as an attendant. Of the many teachings and transmissions he received they included: the two kinds of Nyingthig, Kunzang Gong dü (kun bzang dgongs 'dus) and Ati Zabdön *(ati zab don snying po)*, Dorsem Khri yig *(rdor sems kyi khrid yig ma bu)*, Longde Dorje Zampa *(klong sde rdo rje zam pa)*, Dong trug *(dong sprugs kyi gzhung)*, Thrö nag *(khros nag)* and Cöd *(gcod khrid)*. Lochen Dharmashri also received Terdag Lingpa's termas and many other kama and terma transmissions as well as pith instructions.

Subsequently Lochen Dharmashri practiced and accomplished each of these ocean-like teachings and spent many years in retreats. He gained deep insight of the profound path of teachings and spent much time in retreat and practicing the teachings he received.

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In the Year of the Hare, seeing obstacles to his lifespan, he entered into a retreat of vajra recitation- rdor bzlas and accomplished great samadhi. From the age of 48 until 64, he taught extensively through the summer and winter each year.

In order to serve the Dharma and strengthen its foundation, he also bestowed and trained a huge body of monastics with excellent discipline, personally training them and giving them ordination to become exemplary monks. Following the tradition of avoiding large groups of people taking vows, he would ensure their sincerity and understanding by bestowing the vows directly to the individual or to very small groups. He is said to have personally bestowed the bhikshu (full ordination) to 447 monks, 1298 getsuls (novice- shramanera vows) and countless other vows to many fortunate ones.

He served the Dharma and his root teacher, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa throughout his life and became and a great example of *"mkhas tshul gsum ldan"*: learning, exemplary ethics and compassion. To this day, Tibet owes the presence of the pure vinaya lineage brought into Tibet by the great Khenchen Bodhisattava to the efforts and contribution of Lochen Dharmashri.

In the Year of the Fire Bird (1717) - Lochen Dharmashri had reached the age of 65 when the great conflict with the Dzungar Mongols turned into a bloody war and the invasion of the region brought massive destruction to the buddhadharma and many monasteries were razed to the ground.

At that time, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, who had passed into parinirvana a couple of years before, had established the magnificent monastery and sangha of Mindrolling and it had become one of the foremost learning centers of Nyingmapas. Mindrolling came under the destruction of the invasion and the entire monastery was destroyed and burnt.

Since the sons and daughters of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa were still young, Lochen Dharmashri was serving as the regent and administrative head of Mindrolling. He was captured and imprisoned by the Dzungar Mongol army in Lhasa. Along with many other teachers, Lochen Dharmashri was then taken to be executed. Before doing so, he was asked if he had a final wish.

Several years before, during one of his discussions with his older brother, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa had recommended that Lochen Rinpoche study and practice the accomplishment of Tsendeb Phowa (practice of transferring consciousness). He had accordingly followed that instruction of his Guru.

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Lochen Dharmashri asked if he could be taken to the Lhasa Jokhang (the Lhasa Jokhang temple was built by King Songtsen Gampo in 642 and amongst many other important relics and representations of the three jewels also contains perhaps the most venerated object of Tibet, the Jowo Sakyamuni Statue) and be allowed to offer his prostrations to the Jowo statue before being executed. His hands were bound and he was taken there surrounded by the Dzungar Mongol soldiers. As he was walking to the temple, he began reciting the Zancö *(bzang spyod smon lam)*- Prayer of Excellent Conduct as he walked towards the temple. As he recited the line *"gonpo kun gyi dung du dag chi'o"** he placed his head on the feet of Jowo and performing the tsendeb phowa, expelled his consciousness and passed away into parinirvana.

Since then, it is the tradition in Mindrolling that whenever the Prayer of Excellent Conduct is recited, there is a pause in the recitation at the point where Lochen Dharmashri passed into parinirvana. It is so that we can remember this great master's vast activities and infinite kindness and, most importantly, follow the profound path that he has shown us.

Those lamps of the world who have not yet appeared
Will progressively become enlightened, turn the wheel of dharma,
And fully demonstrate passing into nirvana, the final peace.
**I will arrive in the presence of all those protectors.*

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The History of Mindrolling: Part IV

Dzungar Mongol Invasion

This section is included in the Mindrolling Lineage history in an effort to provide background and a political history of Tibet during the time of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa's passing and parinirvana. In addition, Lochen Dharmashri and Pema Gyurme Gyatso were both assassinated during the period of the Dzungar Mongol invasion. It also helps to explain the special relationship that existed between the Dalai Lamas and the Potala Palace with the Mindrolling Lineage and Monastery.

The Great 5th Dalai Lama Lobzang Gyatso passed into parinirvana in 1682. In order to continue a stable government and complete the construction of the Potala Palace, the regent, Desi Sangay Gyatso kept the parinirvana a secret for many years. The 6th Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso, born on the 1st of March in 1683, was not recognized as the 6th Dalai Lama until 1688. They kept the young boy concealed from the outside world until 1697 when, after sending a delegation to the Chinese Emperor, the official announcement of the death of the Great 5th was made and the discovery of the 6th Dalai Lama was formalized.

In 1701, Lhasang Khan, a Mongol King and an ally of the Chinese Emperor had the regent killed. This upset the young 6th Dalai Lama who gave back his vows and changed his lifestyle. Although he did not abdicate, he rejected the monks' life and chose to live in a tent outside of the northern park of the Potala.

History records often mention his adventures in the streets of Lhasa. His drinking and many amorous relationships were known by all but he was also renowned for his exceptional poetry and compositions. Many great masters and scholars have written and spoken about him as being a very accomplished mahasiddha. Extremely intelligent and a very frank critic of the established systems, he was direct and very honest with his beliefs. Although loved by many people, the 6th Dalai Lama's outspoken ways however did not go well with the principals of the governing system and raised many doubts and great turmoil.

On June 28th in 1706, Lhasang Khan, in an attempt to gain power and taking advantage of the turmoil, deposed Tsangyang Gyatso the 6th Dalai Lama and installed a 25-year-old Lama, Ngawang Yeshe Gyatso as the 6th Dalai Lama.

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Lhasang Khan proclaimed that Ngawang Yeshe Gyatso was the true rebirth of the 5th Dalai Lama and imprisoned the true 6th Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso.

While being escorted out of the country, Tsangyang Gyatso the 6th Dalai Lama composed his most famous poem:

"White crane, lend me your wings,
I will not fly far,
From Lithang, I shall return."

In this poem, he foretold of his rebirth and true to this prophecy, the 7th Dalai Lama Kelsang Gyatso was born and discovered in Lithang, Eastern Tibet, in 1708. Soon after composing this poem, the 6th Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso died mysteriously. Some say he escaped and lived in secrecy while others claimed he was killed, but this is the reason why there is no tomb for him in the Potala.

After the disappearance/death of the 6th Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso, Lhasang Khan and his candidate for the Dalai Lama tried to take over the throne as well as the control of governance. However, there was growing disapproval from the people.

The Dzungar Mongol from East Turkistan, taking advantage of this situation invaded, deposed and killed the pretender to the throne- the candidate of Lhasang Khan. In the beginning, this brought great approval from the people but soon the Dzungar Mongols began looting and destroying all the holy places, temples and monasteries killing many great teachers and practitioners. They systematically began the destruction of Dharma and in particular the Nyingma school of Buddhism. Mindrolling, being one of the most prominent Nyingma centers and located near Lhasa, the stronghold of the Dzungar Mongols, became one of their main targets.

The Mindrolling Monastery, established by Chögyal Terdag Lingpa in 1676, had just completed its construction and fully established itself as the principal Nyingma Monastery and learning center when the Dzungar Mongol invasion occurred. In 1718, the Dzungar Mongol invaders destroyed the Monastery, burning it to the ground, killing most of the Mindrolling monks, its throne holder, regent and many holders of the lineage. 42 years after Chögyal Terdag Lingpa first established Mindrolling, it was destroyed.

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During this period, the re-incarnation of the 6th Dalai Lama, the 7th Dalai Lama Kelzang Gyatso was born. Due to the turbulent political situation, the 7th Dalai Lama was not taken to Lhasa immediately. Instead, he was secretly taken to Kumbum Monastery.

The invasion and destruction of the Dzungar Mongols brought down the power of Lhasang Khan and his candidate/replacement of the 6th Dalai Lama. Thereafter, the Dzungar Mongols remained in power bringing tremendous destruction.

In 1720, Emperor Kangxi sent his troops to help in expelling the Dzungar Mongols and Kelzang Gyatso was taken to Lhasa and enthroned as the 7th Dalai Lama.

Pema Gyurme Gyatso

Born to Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa and the great lady, Yonten Dolma, Pema Gyurme Gyatso was the emanation of Hayagriva, the wrathful aspect of Avalokiteshvara.

Upon his birth, his father Chögyal Terdag Lingpa performed all the traditional bathing rituals and conferred empowerments and blessings. Pema Gyurme Gyatso grew up manifesting great wisdom and deepened understanding of the Bodhisattva path.

It was his great fortune to have his father and his uncle, Lochen Dharmashri, be his teachers and guide him from a very young age. With their teachings and care, Pema Gyurme Gyatso grew up embodying all the qualities of - mkhas btsun bzang gsum (wisdom, diligence and excellence).

It is said that he possessed the remarkable ability to memorize and understand anything he read or heard once. He thus obtained great distinction in learning and in presenting in depth understanding of the philosophies. Due to these abilities, in the presence of the entire body of the greater sangha, Pema Gyurme Gyatso obtained the title of the "great learned one." He then went on to receive many teachings and transmissions from various other teachers.

As he was the oldest child of the great Tertön, master and founder of Mindrolling, Chögyal Rigzin Terdag Lingpa, Pema Gyurme Gyatso was trained to hold the throne of Mindrolling as the second Trichen (throneholder). Chögyal Terdag Lingpa had proclaimed his lineage would be familial and that the blood

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lineage would be given prominence over the tradition of recognizing re-incarnation.

However, from a young age, Pema Gyurme Gyatso was drawn towards monasticism. Going very much against the wishes of his father, he took on monks' vows and received ordination, shaving his hair and living as a monk. (Mindrolling members and in particular the throne holders are not allowed to cut their hair as a mark of holding the supreme tantra vows).

In the prophecies of Padmasambhava, there is a verse that says; "If Pema Gyurme Gyatso manifests his activities as a great Ngagpa (mantrayana yogi) the land of Tibet shall then be free from invaders and war."

However, as it often seems, the forces of the degenerate times were too strong. Pema Gyurme Gyatso did not immediately choose to give back his monks vows and kept his vows as a full monastic. The recorded history says, "He upheld the outer pratimoksha, inner bodhisattva and the secret Mantrayana Vidyadhara (mantrayana awareness holder) vows in his mind stream, perfectly and excellently."

One of the remarkable aspects of his life was his manifestation from a young age of the unimpeded dexterity of rigpa (rig pa'i rtsal). He received, studied and taught a vast amount of teachings and transmissions. Practicing intensively in retreats, he also worked on commentaries and compiling works of many rare and profound teachings and transmissions.

The strengthening of the forces of degenerate times, however, led to Pema Gyurme Gyatso not being able to accomplish the 3 commands of his father and teacher, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa. It is said that:

1. He took ordination, choosing to become a monk over continuing the familial lineage.
2. He shaved his hair and Terdag Lingpa had commanded that all Mindrolling lineage holders keep their hair long as a sign of being a Mantrayana practitioners. It was also believed that cutting their hair would shorten their lives.
3. He also, owing to one reason or another, could not complete a particular practice in retreat that his father wanted him to do.

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Our teachers have explained that the reasons for not fulfilling these commands is not simply because Pema Gyurme Gyatso was unable to do them but that there were many causes and conditions that brought about such situations. Chief amongst them was the karma of the sentient beings in general and of the people of Tibet in particular. Lack of merit as a collective karma brought out the play of such unfortunate events. Therefore, seemingly, due to not being able to follow the commands of his teacher, Pema Gyurme Gyatso encountered a fatal obstacle to his life and activities.

Upon Chögyal Terdag Lingpa's parinirvana, Pema Gyurme Gyatso was enthroned as the second throneholder, Mindrolling Trichen and guided by his uncle, Lochen Dharmashri, he began to undertake the responsibilities of administrating and leading Mindrolling, which had, by then gained prominence as the leading monastic and learning institute in Tibet.

The close relation between Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and the Great 5th Dalai Lama as well as Mindrolling being near the capital of Tibet, Lhasa, made it necessary for members of Mindrolling to have many responsibilities and ties. This required constant travel and engagements with the Potala Palace.

In 1718, the Earth Dog Year, the invasion and destruction of the Dzungar Mongols occurred. As the war, violence and destruction began, both Lochen Dharmashri and Pema Gyurme Gyatso were summoned to Lhasa. Despite many efforts however, the strong Dzungar Mongol forces could not be stopped and the attacking troops headed by their commanding general Tha'i Ji'i captured both Lochen Dharmashri and Pema Gyurme Gyatso along with many other senior teachers and officials.

After Lochen Dharmashri passed away, (refer to the previous biography of Lochen Dharmashri) the Dzungar Mongols then executed Pema Gyurme Gyatso by beheading him. According to the stories passed down through the ages, it is said that the soldiers were unable to behead him after many attempts and finally asked why it was that their swords could not strike his head off. Pema Gyurme Gyatso explained that he had purified all obscurations of the three doors and so his physical body could not be harmed. However, he did have one obscuration that still needed to be purified. He did not fulfill the three major commands of his teacher in his lifetime and had disregarded the importance of his continuing the lineage thereby causing many, far reaching consequences. The soldiers, who were by this time desperate to complete their orders, asked him if there was anything that they could do that would allow them to cut his head off. Pema

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Gyurme Gyatso, out of a compassionate heart, is said to have answered that they should cover his head with various impure, drib-filled articles and then strike his neck with a sword, and that due to his one obscuration they would achieve what they needed. They did just that and his head fell to the ground. At that very moment, the head of the Hayagriva statue in Samye (blessed and consecrated by Padmasambhava) also fell to the ground. Although it was repaired and reattached, to this day the mark can be seen on the neck of the statue.

Pema Gyurme Gyatso was then 33 years old.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part V

Jetsün Migyur Paldrön
Part 1 — Birth and Early Life

Perhaps one of the most important figures in the lineage of Mindrolling after Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri is Chögyal Terdag Lingpa's daughter, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön. Her contribution to establishing and spreading the dharma in Tibet and many other areas is regarded with deep gratitude by many masters and students of Tibetan Buddhism. For this reason, fortunately, a great deal of material regarding her life and activities is available. She was a pivotal figure in the propagation, continuity and growth of the lineage and teachings of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa. Many of the termas, teachings and treatises of Terdag Lingpa and the great monastic seat of Mindrolling would not have continued without the courage, exceptional dedication and hard work of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön.

It was thus prophesized within the *thal 'gyur rtsa ba'i rgyud*—

> "The one who will bring boundless benefit to all beings of the ten directions,
> And uphold and maintain the pure continuity of the termas, in particular of the profound,
> instructions on *bde gshegs kun 'dus of Sha'ug* [main terma of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa:
> *thugs rje chen po bde gshegs kun 'dus*],
> And will be the lord of the profound instructions of the heart essence of the great secret;
> Who is Dharmakaya Samantabhadri, Arya Tara in Potala, Yeshe Tsogyal in Palri Padma,
> and, after innumerable successive incarnations such as Macig Labdrön, Nangsa 'Odbum
> and so on,
> Will be born in a place south of Samye. The name of the place will begin with *Dra*.
> She will be born to a great master who will be the emanation of the great Vairocana. Her name shall have the word *Drön*."

Thus it was that Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, regarded in Tibetan Buddhist history as one of the most extraordinary and realised masters, was born to Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Yum Phuntsog Palzom, a direct descendent of the Chögyal Dynasty and from the family of the Dumpowa. She was born in Drachi Valley on the 25th

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day of the 10th lunar month in the year of the Female Earth Rabbit. Yum Phunstog Plazom, herself an emanation of Vajrayogini, gave birth to Jetsün Migyur Paldrön in her own personal chamber, Tashi Nangwa, at Chökhor Lhunpo (*ladrang* or teachers residence at Og Min Ogyen Mindrolling), amidst many wondrous signs. She was the fourth child of seven (three sons and four daughters) born to Terdag Lingpa and Sangyum Phuntsog Palzom.

Upon her birth, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa proclaimed that she would be an extraordinary person of great benefit to the lineage and hence instructed everyone to maintain strict observance of cleanliness and to serve her with great dedication. He himself performed the bathing ritual as well as the *dragmar* (Red Guru Drakpo), body, speech and mind abhisheka and the (*'chi med yang snying kun 'dus*) long life abhisheka on the very day of her birth.

It was obvious that Jetsün Migyur Paldrön was different from other children her age, in that from infancy she was already a mature child; always humble, thoughtful and considerate of others. As a baby, without tutoring, she could recognize and speak about great masters such as Padmasambhava, the Omniscient Longchenpa, Sangdag Thrinley Lhündrub and many others in great detail. At the age of five, she selected several bolts of green cloth and asked her zimpön (attendant), Gyurme Chödrön, to make bags out of them saying, "These will make sturdy bags to hold food supplies and must be kept ready for when we escape into exile." Most of the people around her at the time did not understand her or take too much notice of this statement until much later.

At the age of twelve, she commissioned a huge statue of her root teacher and father, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, in the form of Vajradhara and installed it at the main residence of the Chökhor Lhünpo Ladrang. Thereafter, she offered her hair to Chögyal Terdag Lingpa who performed the *gtsug phud* (first hair cutting ceremony symbolizing renunciation) and conferred on her the name Migyur Pal Gyi Drönma.

From a very young age, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön received a vast number of teachings, empowerments, oral transmissions and pith instructions from Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri. It is said that her learning and understanding of the precious teachings of sutra and tantra were like the unceasing flow of the river Ganges.

In particular, she received extensive and detailed transmissions of all the termas of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, all of which she practiced and accomplished. At the

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age of twelve, she received the long life mandala of Amitayus amidst wondrous signs. The vase water bubbled and spontaneously overflowed when it was conferred upon her causing Chögyal Terdag Lingpa to proclaim, "Daughter I have great hope in you. Through the force of auspicious tendrel, you will be the holder of the vast teachings of essence. Now come quickly and drink the vase water." Upon Jetsün Migyur Paldrön drinking the vase water, her guru read from the initiation of long life of Thangtong Gyalpo saying, "Master and disciple remain together inseparably."

Then at the age of thirteen, in the third month of the Iron Rabbit year (1711), having just completed a retreat, she received the Ati Zabdön Nyingpo cycle of transmissions in its entirety at the feet of her root guru and father. She then practiced them and attained certainty, realization and experience. In particular, at the time of practicing thögal, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa said, "Daughter, your understanding and realization is as great as that prophesised. Now go into retreat and practice earnestly for a few months. After that, you must practice the great sadhana of Vajrasattava and the profound path of the Complete Gathering of Sugatas (düpa do *'dus pa mdo*)."

By 1712, the Water Dragon year she had received and practiced all the outer, inner and secret practices of the terma teachings of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa. That same year Terdag Lingpa also bestowed what he had previously promised, the profound path of the Complete Gathering of Sugatas. He bestowed upon her both the empowerment with elaborations and the supreme un-elaborate empowerment.

It is said that on one particular occasion, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa remarked to Lochen Dharmashri, "This girl does not need to study the sciences too extensively. Instead, the quintessential instructions must be given to her and she should study and practice these again and again. You and Khen Rinpoche must make the child understand and learn the pith instructions of the Tantra of essence. Not long from now, her purpose for sentient beings, vast as space, will exceed that of her father. She must lead many beings to the Land of Bliss."

In the Female Water Snake year, when Jetsün Migyur Paldrön was fifteen years old, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa bestowed on her elder brother, Pema Gyurme Gyatso the empowerment, reading transmissions and secret entrustment of the Khandro section from the yellow scrolls of the Shawuk Terma. Immediately after that, Gyalsey Rinpoche conferred the empowerment and reading transmission upon his sister, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön.

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The following are only some of the teachings and transmissions that Jetsün Migyur Paldrön received and accomplished; the empowerment and oral transmission of all of her revered father's termas starting with *dreg pa 'joms byed* (Yamantaka, Subduer of Dregpas) as well as the oral transmissions of the thirteen great volumes of Terdag Lingpa's Collected Works. She also received the empowerment and oral transmissions of the Nyang Ral Nyima Ozer's great terma, *Kagyed Desheg Düpa* (*bka' brgyad bde gshegs 'dus pa*), Guru Chowang's Yangsang Pudri Vajrakilaya (*yang gsang spu gri*), the Transmitted Precepts of the Eight Commands, the Narrow Path to the Fortress, Hayagriva of the Arrow-wielding Siddha and the Excellent Vase which Fulfils All Wishes.

She also received the empowerment and oral transmission of most of the termas of Drupthob Ngödrup, the twelve "Lingpas" and the three "Stainless Ones," the earlier and later *Jangter* (northern treasures), the Sutra of Condensed Meaning, the Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (*sgyu 'phrul zhi khro*) and Shaking out the Depths of Hell (*na rak dong sprugs*). Other empowerments and transmissions she received include the extensive empowerment of Machik Labdrön's *chod yul* (*gcod yul*) cycle, commentary on the precepts of the bodhisattva vow, the cycle of pure visions of Sangdag Thrinley Lhündrup, the cycle of the Sealed Pure Visions of the Omniscient Fifth Dalai Lama and the cycle of Lhatsün Namkha Jigme's Life Force Attainment of the Vidyadhara. Jetsün Migyur Paldrön also received the empowerments, instructions and oral transmission of both the Semde and Longde Sections. The teachings and transmissions she received on the Section of the Special Oral Instructions are too numerous to list.

Above all Jetsün Migyur Paldrön received the Special Dharma of Padmakara: the Khandro Nyingthig and Khandro Yangthig empowerments, instructions and reading transmissions, together with the Word Entrustment and Life-force Entrustment of the protectors. She also received these Nyingthig teachings in their entirety including the essential instructions and reading transmission of the Glorious Secret Heart Essence Mother and Son Empowerment, and Essential Instructions, the Word Entrustment and the empowerments for its protectors Ekajati, Rahula and Vajrasadhu. Thus, with the receiving of these Nyingthig teachings (Innermost Unexcelled Cycle of Heart Essence), Jetsün Migyur Paldrön became a holder of the entire profound Dharma.

Chögyal Terdag Lingpa told his daughter, "You must meditate earnestly on the three sections of Dzogpa Chenpo. In the future you will have to explain them to others. I have great hope in you!" With these words he enthroned Jetsün Migyur

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Paldrön as a lineage holder. Preparing special robes and making a *padma kha 'bu sgron pa* hat, he bestowed on her the name Drodul Dorje Nyingpo (Vajra Essence Tamer of Beings) and granted her a blessed image of himself as a meditation support, duly consecrated and complete with *zung* (filling). Later, his words proved to be true as Jetsün Migyur Paldrön had numerous disciples in Ü, Tsang, Ngari, Lho, Mön, Kongpo, the Upper, Lower and Central Kham as well as in Sikkim and other regions. Thus, after Chögyal Terdag Lingpa spoke these words and as long as her revered father and Guru remained in person, and even when the manifestation of his form had dissolved into the peaceful realm, she remained in retreat to accomplish all that she had received until she was forced into exile when the Mongol invasion occurred.

Then in the Wood Horse year, (1714) when she was sixteen, on the second day of the second month: the great root Guru, her father, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa transferred his wisdom consciousness to the pure realm amidst many wondrous sings. That evening, at dusk in the black darkness of the sky in front of her, while her mind was overwhelmed with boundless sorrow, her revered father appeared before her in the midst of a rainbow of light and gave her many future prophecies.

From the great Lochen Dharmashri, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön received her ordination as a nun and at the age of seventeen she received the entire *zab lam bde kun 'dus kyi 'khrul 'khor sku lus kyi 'gyur dang sgo gnad rtsa thig rlung gsum gyi man ngag*. Upon completion Lochen Dharmashri said, "The Dargye Chöling lineage will not be carried by the desired sons. This unwished for daughter will carry it. Do not forget this and look after her."

Lochen Dharmashri also conferred many other empowerments and teachings upon Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and these include the complete empowerments, instructions and reading transmissions of her revered father's termas, as well as the reading transmission of the complete cycle of explanations on those composed by Lochen Dharmashri himself. She received empowerments, instructions and reading transmissions on the whole of Machig Labdron's *Cöd Yul* and teachings on the Mahamudra Amulet Box (*phyag chen ga'u ma*). Lochen Dharmashri also bestowed upon her the essential instructions on Shaking Out the Depths of Hell (*na rak dongs sprug*), the essential instructions and empowerment for the practice of the Essence of the Three Kayas of Chenrezig, the blessing empowerment for the Palmo Tradition as well as the reading transmission and the complete empowerments for the Excellent Vase Bestowing

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All Wishes, the Sutra of the Great Gathering of Sugatas, Nyangter Kagyed and many others.

From her elder brother, Gyalsey Padma Gyurme Gyatso she received the empowerments and reading transmission of the three Termas: The Play of Awareness Empowerment of Ati, Vajrapani, and Yamantaka. She also received the empowerment and reading transmissions for Kalachakra, Cakrasamvara, Hevajra, Guhyasamaja, the Vajra Garland and the Yuthog Nyingthig.

From her elder brother Rinchen Namgyal, she received empowerments and transmissions on the extensive and medium version of the Eight Sections and the Six Sections of Accomplishment of the Jangter Mind Accomplishment, the termas of Dorje Lingpa, the Combined Pronouncements, the Razor Kilaya and many more.

Also from numerous other teachers, such as the Heruka Jigme Dorje, Kathok Rigzin, Shabdrung Gyurme Zhenphen Wangpo, Shenyen Ogyen Rabtan, Sotön Thutob Namgyal, Duldzin Kunga Lodrö and the Lord of the Gongkar Chöde Sonam Lodrö Gyaltsen she received many special instructions on both the Mind and Space sections of the Dzogpa Chenpo, the Cöd Yul of Machig Labdrön, various dharma precepts of the Zhije, the blessing empowerments for Aghora and Chagdrugpa, the Jangter Black Thröma, Naro Khachöma, the Special Instructions for the Nyida Sangye Lineage, Phowa Jagtsugma and so on. These are but a few of the many special oral instructions Jetsün Migyur Paldrön received within kama and terma teachings. They are not listed as extensively here as they are contained in her extended biography under the chapter of *List of Dharmas Received*.

Also of importance, bearing in mind the prediction of her root Guru, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön memorized the entire commentary on the Guhayagarbha tantra, the Ornament of the Mind of the Lord of Secrets. This is one example of her intense dedication to the precious dharma, to her lineage and to benefiting all sentient beings.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part VI

Jetsün Migyur Paldrön

Part 2 — The Dzungar Mongol Invasion and Exile from Tibet

Following the parinirvana of her root teacher and father, Chögyal Ogyen Terdag Lingpa, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön remained mainly in retreat. However in 1718, as prophesized by Guru Padmasambhava, the Dzungar Mongols invaded and thereby ended her retreat. This invasion brought great destruction throughout Tibet and was particularly detrimental to the precious doctrine as monasteries were destroyed and the lives of an immeasurable number of dharma practitioners were lost.

According to the recorded sources of that time, "A great number of the army under the Dzungar Mongol General, Ju Ring Thu Hong Tha'i Ji, filled the slopes of Tibet. The very name of the doctrine of the great secret mantrayana was crushed, temples destroyed, many great monasteries were razed to the ground and practitioners were scattered all across fleeing for their lives. The great Land of Snow-clad Mountains, having been thus far blessed by great masters such as Padmasambhava, great panditas, dharma kings, translators, mahasiddhas and learned ones such as the All-Knowing Terdag Lingpa, had become equal to the realm of Padmasambhava's buddha field (*rnga yab pad ma 'od*). But the Land of Snow was now filled with darkness pervading in all directions, resembling twilight without a lamp."

One year after the beginning of the Mongol invasion, in the Earth Dog Year (1718), Lochen Dharmashri and Pema Gyurme Gyatso, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's uncle and elder brother respectively, were summoned to Lhasa and held captive. Shortly after, the invading army began entering monasteries in Central Tibet including Mindrolling and Dorje Drak, setting fire to the temples, completely destroying everything in their path and imprisoning or killing monks, nuns and practitioners. It was only three to five years after the completion of the great Mindrolling Monastery, established by Ogyen Terdag Lingpa, that it was completely destroyed by the invading forces of Dzungar Mongols (see previous section on Dzungar Mongol Invasion).

Fearing for the only remaining members of the lineage, the elder monks and attendants who had managed to elude capture requested Jetsün Migyur Paldrön to leave immediately. Enquiring after her brother, Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal, her mother, Yum Phunstog Plazom and sisters, she was informed that that they

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all had fled, assisted by their attendants. However, there had been no news as to whether or not they had been successful in their escape.

She went to the private shrine of the residence and offered prayers. She then took the little statue of her revered father, Terdag Lingpa, and storing it safely in her backpack she prepared to leave Mindrolling. That evening, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön disguised herself as a lay person, wearing a simple woolen dress with her hair, which had grown while in retreat, tied in a scarf, and accompanied by a few trusted attendants, Gyurme Chödrön, her cook Gyurme Yangzom, Gelong Tashi Wangchuk and Gedün Tshamphel, they made their escape through a secret door over the peak which was behind the statue of Terdag Lingpa.

Terdag Lingpa in his lifetime had told his daughter, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, to have a small backdoor built leading out of her living quarters to the back hills of Mindrolling. Backdoors were not so common in Tibet during that time but Jetsün Migyur Paldrön followed the command of her father and had the door built as he wished. When Jetsün Migyur Paldrön asked Terdag Lingpa about it, he told her that someday it would be of great benefit to her.

While Jetsün Migyur Paldrön was making her escape, the Dzungar Mongol army razed the monastery. The main temple, Chökhor Lhunpo (the main residence), the great stupa, and all the quarters of the monks were destroyed, leaving only Sang Ngag Phodrang (one of the main temples). The powerful army wrought such havoc and left the entire area of Drachi so desolate that, to this day, the area around Drachi has never fully recovered from the destruction.

During this same time, Sangyum Phunstog Palzom and Semo Palzin, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's mother and sister respectively, were captured by the Mongol army. While being harassed and interrogated by the Mongols, Sangyum Phunstog Palzom was unable to contain herself and blurted out "I have a daughter, the great lady, Migyur Paldrön. Like a great dragon she will ensure that you are not successful in your evil actions." The General, realizing that Jetsün Migyur Paldrön was still alive, sent out troops to search for her. The early records say, 'in the whole valley, every pass, in every corner of the land, the cry of the Mongols resounded.' To ensure that the army understood the importance it placed on finding Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, the General decreed, "If Terdag Lingpa's daughter is not caught and brought here, your necks will be on the line. Day or night, she must be captured and brought to me."

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Fleeing from Mindrolling, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and her attendants reached the home of Depa Wangdu at Tsamyul. However, they had barely arrived when the troops searching for them descended on his home. Cleverly stalling them with offerings of beer, Depa Wangdu gave Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and her attendants the time they needed to make a quick escape by sliding down a rope tied under a small window of the house. They hid in a narrow space behind a mass of slate rocks, at the head of a long valley, while the horsemen roamed back and forth above their heads searching for them.

They remained in hiding for two full days. In one of her biographies, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön recounted the days saying, ""My heart was pounding with terror. I thought we would be captured but due to the blessings of the Three Jewels in general and in particular, the Glorious Guru of Orgyen, we remained safe." The Mongols, unable to find her, finally left to search in another direction and Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and her party left for *sman brjid* (Menjid).

Her attendants and the senior monks at Menjid, such as Drön Nyer Powo *(gnyerpa spo bo)*, Bum Rabjampa *('bum rab 'byams pa)*, Orgyen Kelzang *(o rgyan skal bzang)*, Shabdrung Gyurme Shenphen Wangpo *('gyur med gzhan phan dbang po)*, Gelong Ogyen Rabten *(dge slong o rgyan rab rtan)* and others, consulted together saying "the quintessence of Terdag Lingpa is in this child. We must ensure that she is safe. We must serve together so that the monastic body of the lineage can gather once again and be re-established." They decided that they would all scatter in different directions so that in the event of being captured, at least someone would survive to serve the lineage. Gelong Ogyen Rabten took the responsibility of leading Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and her attendants to safety and decided to head to Sikkim via Phagri.

Having just been in a strict retreat and being accustomed to travelling on horseback instead of by foot, the journey through rough terrain for days and nights without respite took its toll on Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and she fell ill. The heat and exhaustion also affected the entourage and upon reaching Phagri they stopped for rest. Gedün Tshamphel ventured into the little town market only to return hurriedly with the news that in the market, two horsemen had arrived with a notice saying 'Terdag Lingpa's daughter must be found and caught immediately. The People of Phari must not allow her to escape and they must inform the army officials if they see her.' Hearing this, although exhausted and ill, they left immediately taking the most narrow and precipitous path into Sikkim. Gelong Tashi Wangchuk and Gedün Tshamphel having previously travelled to Sikkim were fortunately able to find the way.

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As the travelling party reached the border of Sikkim, a man carrying news from Lhasa arrived. They told Jetsün Migyur Paldrön of the assassination of her uncle, the great Lochen Dharmashri, and her elder brother Pema Gyurme Gyatso (see the biographical accounts of Lochen Dharmashri and Pema Gyurme Gyatso). Her other elder brother, Zhabdrung Yidzhin Legdrup, her uncle, Ahku Chagdzöd, and all the senior lopöns and umdzes that remained at Mindrolling had also been killed. The message also contained a warning for her to be careful.

Struck with immeasurable grief and with tears in her eyes, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön turned towards Lhasa and with folded hands supplicated to the guru. Thus, calling the guru from afar, she then saw the figures of Guru Rinpoche, Yeshe Tsogyal and Terdag Lingpa. Appearing in the sky in an array of rainbows, they blessed her and assuaged her grief and gave her clear instructions for the future.

Shortly after this, the party safely reached their destination and temporary refuge— Sikkim. Thereafter, the King of Sikkim and Dzogchen Thrakthung Pawo Jigme Dorje, upon hearing of the arrival of the great dakini Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, arranged a grand welcome with a golden procession leading her to the golden throne. The next day Jetsün Migyur Paldrön once again shaved her head and donned the robes of a nun.

Thereafter the King made an unprecedented proclamation, (without the permission of the King or the great Dzogchenpa, people were not allowed to receive teachings from anyone in an attempt to reduce charlatans from misleading people) which he had never made for any previous lama. The King proclaimed, "All people of Sikkim, lay or clergy, behold how very fortunate we are. The daughter of the Root Guru, Tamer of Beings, Terdag Lingpa, and herself the unmistaken emanation of Yeshe Tsogyal, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, has blessed our kingdom with her presence. All fortunate ones, who wish to request empowerments, dharma transmissions and so forth, can now do so without hindrance or restraint."

Over four thousand practitioners gathered for several months while Jetsün Migyur Paldrön bestowed many empowerments and teachings. Upon Dzogchen Thrakthung Pawo Jigme Dorje, the King, a few principle attendants and fortunate students, she conferred the entirety of Terdag Lingpa's new termas and in particular the empowerments and commentary of Ati, her own cycle of teachings (giving it for the first time) as well as many new and old terma teachings and empowerments. It is said that during this period there were many

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wondrous signs including a rainbow settling over the mandala and the great Jetsünma. It was in this way that she became the root teacher of the King of Sikkim and countless practitioners of Sikkim and how she established the banner of the Dzogchen teachings throughout this region. In turn, the great Dzogchenpa bestowed upon Jetsün Migyur Paldrön the Könchog Kyidu *(dkon mchog spyi 'dus)* and Rigzin Sogdrub *(rig 'dzin srog sgrub)* empowerments and transmissions. Due to this, a strong connection has always existed between the dharma practitioners of Sikkim and the Mindrolling lineage. The monastery and the many sacred places where Jetsünma transmitted the teaching are still present in Sikkim and continue to hold her teachings and lineage to this day.

It was during this time, of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's great activities in Sikkim that her mother and sisters, Semo Paldzin and Semo Buga Kyidzom, managed to escape the perils in Tibet and join her in Sikkim. This was an incredibly joyful reunion for mother, daughter and sisters. However, soon the news of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's escape into Sikkim reached Lhasa and the ears of Lord Tsering Dhöndup who was the commander of the Mongolian troops stationed there. He immediately sent his most skilled horsemen with a guide to Sikkim in an attempt to capture Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and bring her back to Lhasa.

Recalling the instructions she had received from Terdag Lingpa, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and the great master Dzogchenpa performed the wrathful practice of subjugating the evil forces. Within a few days of these practices, a great disagreement arose among the Mongolian army that created intense internal conflict. The weather also suddenly changed drastically, bringing several weeks of harsh snowstorms, the likes of which had never been seen before, causing the army camp to be completely destroyed.

In Lhasa the Dzungar Mongolian army was not faring any better. Their power had weakened greatly due to inner conflicts and various other difficulties. Many of their generals had been forced to flee. It was only a matter of time before the army was defeated and the occupation by the Dzungar Mongols in Tibet came to an end.

Upon hearing of the defeat of the Dzungar Mongols, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and her entourage began preparing for their return to Tiebt. It is said that one of her surviving sisters remained in Sikkim and married the Chögyal, the King of Sikkim. Upon hearing the news of her departure, the king and thousands of heart-sons and daughters of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön formed a farewell procession

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with heavy hearts. They accompanied her to the border of Tibet and stood watching as she entered back into Tibet.

The party travelled to Tibet by crossing Phagri and Kharola through the *ba bcos* pass and making a stop at the estate of her maternal unlce, Dumpowa, who was overjoyed to see her again. During her stay, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön conferred the Red Guru Drakpo (Drakmar) and long-life empowerment on her uncle, all the surviving members of the family, the retainers and all those fortunate to be there. In the records it is said that during one of her public addresses she stated, "It feels like I have returned from the bardo."

Shortly after conferring the empowerments Jetsün Migyur Paldrön arrived in Dargye Chöling in Central Tibet. She bestwoed countless empowerments, teachings and audiences to the public, and, like a wish fulfilling jewel, completely fulfilled the wishes of everyone who approached her.

The morning after her arrival in Dargye Chöling, Orgyen Rabga (*o rgyan rab dga'*), who had been the chöpön of Terdag Lingpa, came to offer her a khatag (white scarf). He also offered her two chests of precious objects used in empowerments that had belonged to Terdag Lingpa. Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, amazed that these blessed and precious items had been saved from destruction and delighted by this auspicious tendrel, felt renewed strength and courage and set out for Mindrolling.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part VII

Jetsün Migyur Paldrön

Part 3 — The Return to Mindrolling

Jetsün Migyur Paldrön returned to Mindrolling via the district of Dra. Crossing the last hill before reaching home, she paused on the summit of the hill called *gnyen mkhar,* from where she could see the entire view of the monastery.

In the place where before there had been the vast and beautiful monastery, equal to the joyous grove celestial palace, now stood ruins and remains of the destroyed temples, monks quarters and stupas. Only *gsang ngags pho brang,* the main shrineroom, remained standing.

Remembering the wealth, prosperity and harmonious land that had been built and founded by her revered father and uncles and her brothers, she broke down overwhelmed by unbearable grief. This grief also brought back memories of her previous life and the many challenges and sufferings she had experienced during her previous life as *snang gsal 'od bum.*

Upon reaching the monastery, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön was escorted in by the umdze, other senior monks, the general assembly of monks and nuns as well as the lay community members who had survived and returned back after the destruction. She was led into the remaining part of her personal quarters called *gzim chung bde chen yang rtser (zimchung dechen yangtser)*—the personal residence of the family called The Peak of Great Bliss.

There she spoke to the gathered assembly, offering advice and inspiration to all. Jetsün Migyur Paldrön also offered tea and rice to all the monks and nuns along with monetary gifts and robes. She made offerings to the monastery of all the wealth and offerings she had received thus far from all the places she had visited and announced the beginning of the rebuilding of the Mindrolling Monastery and re-establishing of the monastic sangha. Thereafter, she began her work with an extensive seven-day Guru Ganachakra with vast offerings and the amending and fulfillment practices of the Dharma protectors.

Soon, Phola Thaiji Gyurme Sonam Topgyal, who had been promoted to the powerful position of Kalön (cabinet minister) came to receive Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's blessings and have an audience with her. He had great devotion to her

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and wholeheartedly made offerings of robes, hat and a white stallion to the Jetsünma, while also making offerings to the monastery.

The first building that began to be reconstructed was the *klu sding lha dbang dga' tshal (luding lhawang gatsal).* Upon its completion she performed the consecration and then remained there in strict retreat for several months.

While more renovation and expansions continued under her guidance, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön also began to teach and transmit many essential teachings, empowerments and transmissions to the monks and nuns. The sangha of monastics grew steadily and the traditional ceremonies and elaborate rituals began to be held and performed as before.

Around this time, her elder brother Ratna Vijaya (*Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal)* and her younger brother *rgyal sras nye ba'i mgon po* (*Gyalsay Nyewa'i Gönpo*)having escaped the dzungar Mongols, returned from Kham with their attendants. Their reunion was an occasion of great joy and delight.

But the hardships and the enormous responsibilities of rebuilding Mindrolling took its toll on her health and at the age of 22 Jetsün Rinpoche fell seriously ill. Her personal physician, Emji Lophel-la diagnosed the illness as a serious tumor in the stomach and began giving her long-life pills and Tibetan medicines. The entire Sangha offered many prayers and conducted various *zhabten* (prayers and ceremonies for stability of life, dispelling of obstacles etc). After a severe spell of illness, she gradually recovered enough to resume her activities and teachings once again.

Under her direction and guidance, much of Mindrolling was rebuilt and renovated, despite her health difficulties and once again it began functioning as an important and pivotal center of learning and practice of the precious Dharma.

Jetsünma's name and fame spread throughout the regions of Ü, Tsang, Ngari, Lhö, Mön, Uru, Yöru and the provinces of Drakpo, Lhodrag and Kham etc. People gathered to receive her blessings and teachings. But for some senior ranking people, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's activity and influence began to worry them and wanting her out of their way, they began to plan a way to remove her from Mindrolling.

Knowing Thai Ji's influence, they approached him and convinced him to believe that many people longed for Jetsün Rinpoche to come to Kongpo to teach and

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spread the Dharma. And that this activity would also be of immense benefit to many people as well as Mindrolling. Believing it to be true, Thai Ji supplicated to Jetsün Migyur Paldrön to consider this request, especially now that much of the work in rebuilding and establishing of Mindrolling was nearing completion. Jetsün Migyur Paldrön accepted the request and soon departed for the remote region of Kongpo.

Over a year passed and having not received any news of Jetsün Rinpoche, Thai Ji enquired about her when he happened to meet Gelong Ogyen Rabten and Gelong Tashi Wangchuk during an official appearance at the Court in Lhasa.

Kalon Thai Ji enquired, "Is Jetsün Rinpoche doing a great deal of Dharma activity and is she well?" Gelong Ogyen Rabten answered, "Actually no. Other than a few people passing by occasionally, she has no dharma activity there at all. Most of the time, she and her attendants, Gyurme Yangzom, Gyurme Chödrön and Gelong Drakpa are working in the fields."

Thai Ji realizing how he had been fooled, said, "Akha (alas) I have been fooled by these people. I must quickly remedy this." Immediate orders were given to invite Jetsün Migyur Paldrön back to Lhasa.

Upon her return to Lhasa, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön visited the Arya Lokeshavara temple and other sacred temples making vast offerings and prayers. She then performed many ceremonies and drubchens and conferred long-life empowerments and the one hundred fold long-life empowerment to many fortunate people. She performed one hundred fold fire-offerings and the thousand-fold peaceful fire offering rituals of The Accomplishment of Vajrasattava.

While in Lhasa she engaged in numerous Dharma activities and also had an audience with His Holiness the 7th Dalai Lama Kalzang Gyatso who conferred on her the name Jetsün Sherab Drönma. The monks of the Namgyal Dratsang, the main monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama offered her Tenzhug, the ceremony supplicating for her long life and requested the Jetsünma to compose an invocation prayer for her, which they could always do regularly. It is said that she composed a prayer so profound and deep in its meaning that it left many great scholars in awe and greatly struck by its composition.

As she bade farewell, people lined along the route and with many tears supplicated her to return. At Kha Rabmo Rag Go, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön was

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met by hundreds who, along with her own mother, had travelled from Mindrolling to greet her.

The author of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's biography, Gyurme Ösel, who first met her here later wrote—

"I was eight when I first saw the Noble Lady Migyur Paldrön and the sight of her marvelous countenance was so inspiring that I could not contain my tears. Such a strong devotion arose along with the conviction that I must follow her."

It is said that he remained with her as her most trusted student until the passing away of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön. He became her attendant and student at eight and wrote her biography when he turned sixty seven, 13 years after the passing away of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön.

Upon her return to Mindrolling, she held audiences with her family and senior monks of the monastery and then entered into a yearlong solitary retreat. After the completion of the retreat, she conferred upon everyone the Profound Heart Meaning of Ati (Ati Zabdön) empowerments and teachings.

Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's biography mentions her continuing with tireless activities of performing many great ceremonies for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government as well as giving teachings and empowerments while at the same time overseeing the completion of Mindrolling Monastery's rebuilding.

Meanwhile, political changes and turmoil continued in Tibet. When the monastery's rebuilding was completed, Jetsünma once again entered into a three year retreat. Upon its completion, she bestowed the Heart Essence of Dakinis (Khandro Nyingthig) empowerment and teachings to a vast gathering of fortunate disciples.

Following this, she embarked on a long pilgrimage with many senior monks and nuns along with her mother and sisters. The party travelled to many sacred places where she continued to bless and bestow teachings and empowerments to the numerous people who gathered at every place to receive her blessings.

At Samye, it is said that when Jetsünma offered the Chökyong Pehar (dharmapala Pehar) a white scarf, the statue resounded saying, "It is excellent that the consort of the great Ogyen, the Lady of Kharchen, has returned to this

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palace for the sake of sentient beings. May your life remain long. I will remain with you even though you cannot see me".

In 1732, as Jetsün Migyur Paldrön turned thirty-four, she received many older and senior practitioners, retreatants and students of her father, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, from Lato. Among them, great yogis such as Gyurme Namdrol and Gyurme Tharchin and their students arrived with auspicious offerings and sacred articles. She then conferred the profound Dakini instructions from the Shawug Terma upon them.

Thereafter, she also composed an instruction manual for the Khandro Sangwa Yeshe Sadhana called the "Lamp Illuminating the Profound Crucial Points." She then taught it extensively to the gathered assembly of yogis and yoginis and to the practitioners who had come from all over the Töd region of Tibet. Upon its completion, once again she entered into another three years retreat, spending all the time in practice and strict retreat.

In 1736, at the many requests of various officials and senior practitioners, Jetsünma's brother, Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal, invited the greatly renowned Lelung Jedrung Rinpoche to Mindrolling. He and his entourage of sixty people were received with great honor and ceremony. Having just completed her retreat, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön with her attendants and senior monks paid her respects to Jedrung Rinpoche and upon his request conferred the reading transmission and related explanation of the Guru Yoga of Guru Rinpoche.

Deeply impressed, Lelung Jedrung Rinpoche sent her a message saying, "If in this life Minling Jetsün Rinpoche and I join together in the auspicious relationship of indivisible Means and Wisdom, there will be fruition to the prophecy that the degeneration of the dharma will be averted for another 500 years." To which Jetsün Migyur Paldrön replied, "I shall not be able to accept your offer. I have pledged to follow the instructions of my root master, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, to keep this body pure and to simply practice the Dharma."

In the biography of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön there is mention that Jedrung Rinpoche persistently followed Jetsünma with the same request for quite sometime and each time was refused. This request and several other prominent figures approaching her with similar requests made Jetsün Migyur Paldrön once again enter into a retreat. She spent many years in retreat occasionally coming

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out to further teach and give transmissions to the monks and nuns and many devotees who journeyed to receive her blessings.

From 1739 until 1744, she transmitted the Dzogchen teachings, the entire cycle of Ati, the Guhayagharbha, the complete cycles of Vajrasattava, Thugje Chenpo Desheg Kündü (Mahakarunika as the Gathering of All Sugatas), Dorje Phagmo (Vajravarahi), Khandro Sangwa Yeshe and various teachings on Yogic exercises or Trulkhor etc.

She also bestowed the elaborate transmissions of Ati Zabdön and Macigma's Chöd teachings upon the nuns from Menjid, Shong Ga-gang, Sogphu Samten Ling and hundreds of yogis and yoginis. Around this time, due to samaya violations of some nuns and monks, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön fell gravely ill. Many prayers of protection and long life were performed.

It is said in the Jetsünma's biography—

"The throne-holder (Tri Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal) along with Chagdzöd Kushog, Rabjampa Chödrak, Gomchen Döndrub, Sotön Thutob Namgyal, Rabjampa Palgön and many eminent senior practitioners and monks performed elaborate rituals of the wrathful Red Guru, Yamantaka and Amitayus etc. for her long life.

The monks' assembly did protectors' practices and amendment, confession and purification rituals connected with Metsek. A hundred thousand peaceful fire-offerings and a hundred thousand ganachakra connected with Thugje Chenpo etc. were offered for her long life. Stupas were renovated and vast offerings were made, bridges and roads were repaired and constructed to help others, food and clothing were distributed to thousands of poor and many other practices were carried out. Led by her mother, Gyalyum Chenmo (great mother) and her sisters the Semo Jetsünmas, the rituals of Ransom and Turning back the Dakinis were performed to supplicate Jetsün Migyur Paldrön to remain and not turn her mind to Akanishta.

The great master Gomchen Döndrub la one day came to her presence to find that she had sat in meditation with her eyes turned upward and mind fixed in Dharmadhatu. With tears falling down from his eyes, he supplicated saying, 'Isn't it unkind of you to leave your young son-like disciples behind on their path? You, a Dakini, who has attained freedom, should not leave as yet. Think of

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those you will leave behind.' As he said these words, the Jetsünma looked slightly downward.

From the next day, her health gradually became better to everyone's good fortune and great joy."

Jetsün Migyur Paldrön regained her health but thereafter fell ill often. However, she continued with many activities of transmitting and teaching the Dharma. She undertook the enormous project of collecting many profound texts and teachings and creating an archive. As printed texts were rare, she also began the printing of the collected works of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and the great master Lochen Dharmashri and the precious texts of Nyingthig Yabzhi, thus making them available for numerous students of dharma and bringing immense benefit.

Along with her vast activities she continued to build and expand on the works of Samten Tse, Dechen Ling and Özer Ling where nuns and yoginis received complete training and teachings of the precious Dharma.

Jetsün Migyur Paldrön began spending more and more time in retreat. She practiced six sessions daily remaining in the continuity of the Dzogchen state and completing many great practices, the list of which would be too long to mention here. In between retreats, she would grant audiences, teachings and empowerments.

Her biography says, "Always kind and equal to all, the powerful and the humble, she with great affection constantly inspired others to practice the Dharma. She was never anxious for her own happiness or comfort. She carried each day along the path of meditation with no boundaries between periods of meditation and post-meditation and never strayed into mundane activity."

At the request of the throne-holder, her brother Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal, and Thugsey Rinpoche, she composed the Excellent Path of the Great Bliss Instruction Manual for the Heart Essence of Mother and Son Combined in accordance with the prophecy of the wisdom sound—a text that would have been difficult for anyone else to compose.

Throughout her life, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön composed numerous texts which brought immeasurable benefit to countless students of the buddhadharma. She composed the Introductory Practice for Daily Practices and the Collection of Daily Recitations, the Guru Yoga called Clearing the Darkness of Longing, the

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biographical invocation prayers to the Guru and the Tenzhug liturgy, a collection of various invocations to the Guru, a collection of heart-teachings called Clearing the Darkness of the Heart, questions and answers gathered in one called the Clear Radiant Mirror, Inscriptions of Thangkas and scarves gathered and collected together called the Spontaneous Wish-fulfilling Jewel, a manual on how to make offerings and scarf-offerings, the history of the lineage of the Gathered Essence of the Sugatas, Lineage chant of Garwang Tshe Pagme, the liturgy connected to the Lam rim of Khandro Sangwa Yeshe, the lineage chant for the Heart Essence of Vajrasattava, Rigzin Thugtig and other new termas of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, the manual for the ritual of empowerment of entering the mandala of Shaking the Depths of Hell (*Narak Dontrug*) called the Excellent path of Great Bliss, the liturgy for entering the visualization of oneself as the deity of the new terma of the Wrathful Guru (*Guru Drakpo*) called the path of attaining the Wrathful Empowerment, the extended explanation on the Wrathful Guru practice and the sequence of the practices of creation and completion stages, the empowerment of Thögal of Dzogchen Ati Zabdön Nyingpo, the prayer connected to Ati Zabdön and a collection of advice on the practice of Ati, the invocation liturgy for the phowa practice of Rigdzin Thugtig, additional notes (*zin-bris)* on the sequence of concentrations (*dmigs rim*), the daily practice of Garwang Tse Pagme, the empowerment for Künchog Kyidu called Delighting the Fortunate Ones, the instruction manual for Künchog Kyidu called the Oral Instructions on the Essence of the Bright Lamp and the fulfillment and amending ritual for the Vajra Dharma Protectors called Künzang Roltsho.

Her vast activities continued and Jetsün Migyur Paldrön tirelessly worked for the benefit of the people of Tibet with great concern for the preservation of the authentic and precious teachings. She was often haunted by the experience of her youth, when the teachings of Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri and what they had so carefully gathered had nearly faced extinction in the hands of the Dzungar Mongols. This made her work tirelessly and continuously despite its heavy toll on her health.

Her biography says, "Although she had done so much in preserving and propagating the teachings which had been entrusted to her, she felt she had not done enough. Often scolding the monks and practitioners for their lax behavior, she encouraged nuns and monks on strict discipline. She was also very direct in speaking about the sadness she experienced in seeing the jealousy and strife among practitioners and asked everyone to try go beyond such negativities."

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Most moving are the accounts of her last days as she suffered from grave illness. It is said she still insisted on giving a series of elaborate empowerments herself, saying, "What is the use of leaving the teachings on a corpse?" She was then 70 years old.

On a morning in the year 1769, she visited all the sacred shrines of Mindrolling. She then bestowed empowerment in great detail and following that, gave heart-advice to all those who were present. She later met with all her attendants and presented them with personal presents and advices. Then she insisted on meeting with a local official who had earlier requested a transmission. Because she was so ill, many tried to dissuade her and the official himself requested that she not exert herself but she insisted and bestowed on him the full transmission.

This was her last activity. That night, she sat in meditation and dissolved her wisdom mind into dharmadhatu. Jetsün Migyur Paldrön remained in samdhi for three days gazing outward into the space.
The throne-holder of Mindrolling and her brother, Tri Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal, announced Jetsün Migyur Paldrön's parinirvana to the assembly of Mindrolling.

"The great bliss-warrior of supreme means—Samantabhadra
United in bliss with Samantabhadri—the wisdom,
Appeared indivisibly in the form of Migyur Paldrön
In order to raise the Vajra Song of the secret teachings of Atiyoga.

This Lord's activities—a treasure of qualities
So countless that it is difficult for even a Buddha to describe—
Is unfathomable to the near-sighted ordinary mind.
Of what I have heard of this great Lord,
This is just a single drop."

—from Gyurme Ösel's biography

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The History of Mindrolling: Part VIII

Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal — the 3rd Mindrolling Trichen

Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal was born to the great master Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Yum Phuntsog Palzom who was a direct descendent of King Tsuglag Dzin of the *dbon* lineage. Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal was the youngest of their three children. He was born in the 11th lunar month of the Male Wood Dog year at the residence called *bkra shis snang ba'i khang bzang* (tashi nangwe'i khang zang).

From a very young age, Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal received a thorough education from many great teachers and in particular from his father Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, his uncle Lochen Dharmashri, and his older brother Pema Gyurme Gyatso. Displaying great skill and erudition in the field of Buddhist studies, he became adept in all forms of rituals, *gar cham* (ritual dances), *dbyangs rol* (ritual melodies and instruments) and the five traditional sciences (*rig gnas lnga*).

He received extensive teachings on the peaceful and wrathful Guru, Minling Dorsem cycle, the Thugje Chenpo cycle, Yamantaka, Mahottara Heruka, Amitayus, Guhyasamaja, *dong sprugs* (Stirring the Depths), *bka' brgyad* (Eight Logos/Eight Sadhana Teachings), *tshogs chen 'dus pa* (Scripture of the Great Assemblage) and the entire cycle of termas of great tertöns such as Pema Lingpa, Kunkyong Lingpa, Sangye Lingpa, Ratna Lingpa, Zhig po Lingpa, Ngadag Nyang as well as the Kama teachings, transmissions and empowerments.

From Lochen Chöpal Gyatso (Lochen Dharmashri), he received the entire cycle of *sgyu 'phrul zhi khro, 'dus pa mdo, rog lugs phur pa, dpal ldan dus 'khor, sems sde ma bu bco brgyad, bla ma dgongs 'dus, gu ru chos dbang gi bla ma gsang 'dus,* and *dong sprugs pad ma brgya ldan*.

From Pema Gyurme Gyatso he received *bka' brgyad gsang rdzogs lugs gsum gyi dbang rgyas pa, yang dag bka' ma, sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor, rgyud sde lnga'i dbang, bka' brgyad bde 'dus*, and the entire collection of termas of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa.

During this period of Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal's education and early life, the Dzungar Mongol invasion caused great destruction in Tibet and Mindrolling too came under their invasion and destruction *(refer to Parts IV and V)*. Many great

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masters including Lochen Dharmashri and Pema Gyurme Gyatso were assassinated. Jetsün Migyur Paldrön fled Mindrolling and Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal, assisted by several attendants, fled to Eastern Tibet (*Kham*) to the province of Kho Khyim.

It is said that many years before, during one of his visits to this province, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa had commented that this region would one day play an important role for Mindrolling and would become for Mindrolling a *mkho khyim* (important/necessary household). Later, a great, learned master *bla ma rnam grol bzang po* established a monastery in the same location. During the invasion this great master and monks from this monastery played a pivotal role in helping Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal escape and it was at there, at the *mkho khyim* monastery, where he lived for several years.

The present Khochhen Rinpoche is known as the incarnation of *bla ma rnam grol bzang po,* the founder of the *mkho khyim* monastery. Subsequently, all incarnations of this master are known to have served Mindrolling in many ways. The current Khochhen (aka Khokhyim Rinpoche) Rinpoche has once again played a crucial role in serving Kyabje Mindrolling Trichen and the Mindrolling Monastery for almost 55 years. His Eminence Khochhen Rinpoche escaped from Tibet with Kyabje Mindrolling Trichen and still oversees all administrative activities of the Mindrolling Monastery in India.

While in Kham, Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal propagated the Dharma extensively. He bestowed numerous teachings at other important Nyingma monasteries such as Kathog, Dzogchen and Sechen. For several years, he bestowed numerous teachings and transmissions to many dharma practitioners including many prominent lineage holders and senior officials of the Tibetan Government.

Returning to Mindrolling, after the decline and dispersion of the Dzungar Mongol invaders, he joined his sister Jetsün Migyur Paldrön and his brother Gyalsay Dewe'i Nyima, who had also survived the Mongolian invaders' destruction.

At the age of 29, he was formally enthroned as the 3rd Trichen (throne-holder) of Mindrolling. His older brother, Pema Gyurme Gyatso *(refer to Part IV for a biographical account of Pema Gyurme Gyatso)* who had been assassinated during the Dzungar Mongol invasion, was officially recognized as the 2nd Trichen. Many great signs of rainbow clouds and a mild earthquake heralded the auspicious

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enthronement ceremony which was blessed by the Great Supreme One, His Holiness the 7th Dalai Lama.

As the Trichen of Mindrolling and to ensure the continuity of the sacred blood lineage of Terdag Lingpa and the Nyö lineage, Tri Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal took as consort the noble lady Tsewang Palzom who was endowed with all the qualities of a bodhisattva.

Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal contributed greatly to the rebuilding of Mindrolling and along with his sister, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, they rebuilt many temples and structures of Mindrolling that had been destroyed during the invasion. One of his foremost contributions was to bring about the revival of the immensely sacred ritual dance of *gar cham* and all the other authentic and profound traditional rituals that had been set down by his father, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, and uncle, Lochen Dharmashri.

The Dzungar Mongol invasion had created tremendous havoc in Tibet and destroyed many monasteries as well as learning and practice centers, weakening the very foundation of Dharma. By establishing the monastic order, all aspects of the disciplines of learning and training, Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal re-established Mindrolling as one of the eminent centers of Buddhist practice and studies famed throughout the realm of Tibet.

Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal also took on the enormous responsibility of once again gathering all the teachings and transmissions he had received from Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri and undertaking their preservation and growth. He took on the great responsibility of transmitting and teaching all that he had received from his great teachers, thus enabling the precious lineages to continue without disruption. His wisdom and activity allowed many prominent lineages of the Nyingma as well as other lineages to once again gain strength and for the continuity of the Dharma to not only continue but flourish in all ten directions.

In this way Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal also became the root Guru of many great masters such as -

- *rdo brag rig 'dzin chen mo* Dorje Drak Rigzin Chemo
- *rdzogs chen sku phreng gnyis pa gyur med theg mchog bstan 'dzin* The Second Dzogchen Tulku, Gyurme Thegchog Tenzin
- *ka thog rig 'dzin chen po Kathog Rigzin Chenpo*

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- *chos rgyal gling pa yab sras* Chögyal Lingpa Yabse
- *zhe chen rab 'byams* Sechen Rabjam
- *mnga bdag kong ston rig 'dzin rgya mtsho Ngadag Kongtön Rigzin Gyatso*
- *gter chen nyi ma grags pa'i sprul sku* Terchen Nyima Drakpa Tulku
- *'phyong rgyas dpal ri sprul sku* Chongje Palri Tulku
- *rgyan pa dge theg sprul sku* Gyenpa Detheg Tulku
- *kong po rdzogs chen* Kongpo Dzogchen
- *chab mdo 'phags pa lha* Chamdo Phagpa Lha
- *hor bla ma gyur med skal bzang* Hor Lama Gyurme Kelzang
- *dpal ri bla ma kun bzang 'od gzer* Palri Lama Künzang Özer
- *bla ma rnam rgyal grags pa* Lama Namgyal Drakpa
- *mon yul the pe bla ma* Mönyul Thepe Lama
- *bla ma pad ma dar rgyas* Lama Pema Dargye
- *bla ma 'dren mchog* Lama Drenchog
- *bla ma rig 'dzin* Lama Rigzin
- *ba skal sprul sku* Bakal Tulku
- *rje drung sprul sku* Jedung Tulku
- *zangs mkhar sprul sku* Zangkhar Tulku
- *thang 'brog sprul sku* Thangdrog Tulku
- *rtse li sprul sku* Tseli Tulku
- *grub chen phrin las mthar phyin* Drubchen Thrinley Tharchin
- *grub chen rat na seng ge* Drubchen Ratna Senge
- *shing rtsa sprul sku* Zhingtsa Tulku
- *za ra sprul sku* Zara Tulku
- *rab 'byams smra ba'i dbang phyug ogyen skal bzang* Rabjam Mawe'i Wangchuk Ogyen Kelzang
- *ogyen chos grags* Ogyen Chöje
- *mkhan chen 'gyur med don yod* Khenchen Gyurme Dönyöd
- *rab 'byams smra ba'i chos grags* Rabjam Mawe'i Chödrak
- *blo gsal rgya mtsho* Losel Gyatso, and many more.

At the age of 65, in the year of Male Earth Tiger year, foreseeing the end of his activities of his life, he retired to the eastern shrine of *dag po'i gnas 'ol khar*. There he summoned all his sons, principal students and disciples and bestowed upon them the *'da' ka'i zhal chems* (final advice and wisdom instructions). Then, resting in meditation, amidst many wondrous signs, the 3rd Trichen of Mindrolling, Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal passed into parinirvana.

After the passing, the Kudung was brought back into the main shrine room of *gsang sngags pho brang*. The great stupa of Dharmakaya, one of the largest stupas

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in Tibet at the time was later built and the Kudung of this great Guru was then placed within the Stupa for the benefit of all sentient beings.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part IX

Zhabdrung Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub

Zhabdrung Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub was one of the three sons of the Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Sangyum Phuntsog Palzom. Chung (younger brother), as his siblings affectionately referred to him, was born in the year of the Female Earth Sheep.

Along with his brothers, Pema Gyurme Gyatso, Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal and sister, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, he grew up receiving a vast amount of teachings and transmissions from many teachers, primarily his father, the dharma monarch Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and his uncle, the great Lochen Dharmashri.

From a very young age Zhabdrung Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub manifested great devotion to the path of practice and embodied the qualities of renunciation, wisdom and compassion. He chose to receive ordination and became particularly proficient in the training and teachings of the Vinaya. He was recognized as the incarnation of the great master and scholar of the 15th century Chokyong Zangpo *('jig rten mig gcig bya rgod pa mkhas grub chos skyong bzang po)* but as is the tradition in the Mindrolling lineage, a great amount of emphasis was not laid to the recognition as the bloodline of the Mindrolling family and lineage was considered most important and where Zhabdrung Gyurme Legdrub's activities would manifest most widely.

Being exceptionally endowed with the qualities of wisdom and understanding, Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub became perfectly accomplished in the study, practice and conduct of the dharma. He became a great proficient master in all the three streams of rituals—ritual dances, mandala and ritual chants (*gar thig and dbyangs*). Besides upholding the many responsibilities of being a son of the Mindrolling lineage, he was also being trained to hold the title of Khenchen and become the great abbot and holder of the Vinaya lineage. With regard to this, he accomplished many years of intensive studies and practices of Buddhist philosophy and all branches of knowledge and sciences. He was expected to be and showed all the signs of being a great Khenchen who would inspire many generations of practitioners in the future.

He mainly studied with his father, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and his incomparably learned uncle, Lochen Dharmashri. He received all the profound and pith instructions of the sutra and tantra from both of them including all the

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empowerments and transmissions within the kama and terma lineages. In particular he received his Gelong vows (full ordination) from the omniscient one, Lochen Dharmashri, thus becoming a holder of the purest of Vinaya lines. Zhabdrung Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub was completely trained and capable to lead the Mindrolling Monastery and its many branch institutions in the monastic orders of the Vinaya lineage.

Zhabdrung Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub also imparted many profound transmissions and empowerments of the precious family terma teachings to his younger brother, Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal and many other heart sons of the family. He was thus one of the main holders of his father's precious terma transmissions such as the extraordinary terma of Minling Dorsem (Minling Vajrasattava) with its profound Ati teachings.

Tragically in 1718 in the Earth Dog year, the Dzungar Mongals invaded Tibet, beginning years of incredible destruction and violence. Not only was Mindrolling Monastery razed to the ground but Lochen Dharmashri, Pema Gyurme Gyatso and Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub were all captured and imprisoned. Only a few family members—Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal and Sangyum Phuntsog Palzom, were able to escape this terrible invasion.

Later that same year, the Dzungar Mongals executed Lochen Dharmashri, Pema Gyurme Gyatso and Zhabdrung Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub. Gyurme Yidzhin Legdrub was not yet thirty years old when he was killed and a great master was thus lost to the immense misfortune of not just the Mindrolling lineage but of the entire Nyingma school and Tibetan Buddhism.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part X

Gyurme Pema Tenzin — the 4th Mindrolling Trichen

The fourth Trichen (throneholder) of Mindrolling was born as the eldest son of the third Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal who was a direct emanation of Pandita Vimalamitra. His mother was the great learned Yum Tshewang Paldzom, who was herself endowed with all the qualities of a bodhisattva. The fourth Trichen was born in the year of the Female Fire Snake and was named Gyurme Pema Tenzin.

Manifesting great qualities of gentleness and kindness towards everyone from a young age, Gyurme Pema Tenzin was endowed with an exceptional ability to learn and memorize texts. His learning ability was so remarkable that he expounded perfectly by memory the entire commentary on the profound Guhayagharba in the presence of a large assembly of teachers and monks, to the great amazement of all those assembled.

Entrusted to teachers from a very young age, he learned and gained proficiency in all the branches of Buddhist studies. He took a particularly keen interest in the vast body of new and old termas (*gter kha gsar rnying*). He received and practiced both the profound kama and terma teachings and became able to fully hold and contribute to the continuation and flourishing of these two sacred lineages. In this way, he demonstrated a keen awareness of his responsibilities, not only exerting effort in obtaining the transmissions and teachings but also practicing them with great diligence. He spent a major part of his early youth in various retreats of different lengths.

In particular he received and diligently practiced the teachings of the great Omniscient One, Longchenpa and the great master, Rigzin Jigme Lingpa. Gyurme Pema Tenzin also studied and practiced thoroughly the profound essential Tantra of Guhayagharbha—its lineage held and expounded within the great father-son lineage of the great Chögyal Terdag Lingpa. Gyurme Pema Tenzin was one of the most famed exponents of his time of the most detailed commentaries of Guhayagharbha as composed by the great Lochen Dharmashri.

In short, he received and practiced all the sutra and tantra teachings and became the great holder of all the precious kama and terma lineages. His main teachers were his Aunt Jetsün Migyur Paldrön, the 5th great Sungtrul, Drubchhog (supreme Mahasiddha) Dorje and the great Nyangtön Rigzin Gyatso.

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Taking the lotus feet of his principal teacher, Jetsün Migyur Paldrön to his head, he received the entire body of empowerments and transmissions of the new and ancient lineages, both pith and profound teachings. Embodying great learning and accomplishment of practice, Gyurme Pema Tenzin became the sovereign master of all of Tibet during his generation.

Upon completion of numerous retreats he began to propagate the teachings, particularly transmitting to the next generation of teachers and students the transmissions of his family lineage, the profound termas of Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, such as *Thugje Chenpo*, *Rigzin Thug Thig* and *Minling Dorsem* from the new termas and from the old termas of Guru Chöwang and Nyang Rel Nyima Ödzer such as the great *Lama Sangdü*, *Kagyed* and so forth.

Gyurme Pema Tenzin also taught extensively the profound and extensive instruction on *bskyed rim* and *rdzogs rim* (creation and completion) stages, pure perception, and mandala principle. Through great compassion for all beings, he also composed and taught on many sadhanas on *zhabs rim* (rites or rituals of aid) and rituals of repelling and dispelling obstacles for special, medium and ordinary beings.

At the age of 22, when his father, the 3rd Trichen of Mindrolling Tri Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal passed into parinirvana, Gyurme Pema Tenzin formulated and structured (composed) an extensive ritual for the parinirvana practices for this great master. He did this by combining the methods laid out in various tantras and scriptures to form a beautiful composition which not only had the essence of the various earlier rituals but was also a perfectly laid out ritual practice which covered every fine and essential point of practice for all such occasions. This composition continues down to this day as the basis for extensive mandala and ritual offerings practiced at the passing of great masters.

Gyurme Pema Tenzin built many representations of the Three Jewels and also the great stupa for the Kudung of Trichen Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal to commemorate the passing of his father. Then, at the appropriate time, Gyurme Pema Tenzin was enthroned upon the Golden Lion throne of the great Chögyal Terdag Lingpa as the 4th Trichen of Mindrolling. He was 23 years old at the time of his enthronement.

The 4th Trichen of Mindrolling was renowned throughout Tibet as one of the most loved and influential teacher of his time. His biography says, "His gentleness, humor and radiant wisdom combined with great innate warmth

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made all respect and honor him utterly and yet kept him very accessible and loved by all."

He was known as "the light of the lineage" of Mindrolling and everyone held him in great esteem and reverence. His vast bodhisattva activities shone like the bright sun in all ten directions and the auspicious and beneficial activities of the general and particular dharma flourished vigorously under his leadership and vision.

Just as the saying, '*pha shul bus 'dzin*' (son taking up the father's inheritance), Trichen Gyurme Pema Tenzin and his brother undertook the enormous responsibility of carrying on the dharma activities, work and vision of the great brothers, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri and the other great masters of the Mindrolling lineage. Tri Gyurme Pema Tenzin fully fulfilled all his responsibilities as the throneholder of this impeccable lineage. He left many precious teachings and advices to his heart sons and students for many generations to come at the time of displaying the final activity of gathering his rupakaya into the dharmadhatu. Gyurme Pema Tenzin passed away into parinirvana after having contributed enormously to the continuity of the Mindrolling lineage in particular and the Buddhadharma in general.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XI

Ögyen Tenzin Dorje — the 3rd Mindrolling Khenchen

The third Khenchen of Mindrolling was Khenchen Odiyana or also known as Ögyen Tenzin Dorje. He was born in the year of the water dog as the second son to the third Trichen of Mindrolling, the great Drinchen Rinchen Namgyal and his Sangyum, Tshewang Paldzom.

At a very young age he was recognized as the emanation of the great translator Yudrak Nyingpo and was endowed with excellent qualities of devotion and compassion. He entered into the path of practice by taking monastic vows from a young age and receiving numerous empowerments and transmissions from his noble father and many other teachers. Just as a precious vase is filled with pure nectar, he filled his mindstream with the noble dharma.

He studied and became learned in grammar, poetry and composition, astrology (*sgra snyan rtsis)* etc. in general and particularly adept in the profound teaching of *'dul mngon dbu tshad phar phyin sdom ga sum etc.*

He also did extensive studies of the profound teachings of tantra, especially the *gsang bdag dgongs rgyan*. He successfully memorized them all and also composed many pith commentaries, and as such completely displayed the qualities of the title he was conferred—*mkhyen rab kyi pad ma*—'Lotus Perfect Learned One.'

At the age of fifteen he received the *dge tshul* (shramanera) vows from Do Ngak Rabjampa Gyurme Phelgye. Thereafter, he entered into a long solitary retreat and undertook the completion of accomplishment of all the *gter gsar* (new termas) sadhanas and he thus became a learned and accomplished master.

At the age of 20, he completed all his studies and training. In that same year of iron snake, on the full moon day of the first lunar Month of Miracles, in the presence of thousands of masters and scholars and officiated by Ngak Rabjampa Gyurme Chöden, he was conferred the title of khenpo. At the time, he also received the full ordination of a gelong (bhikshu*).*

Thereafter, he took on the enormous task of spearheading the studies and practice of the Mindrolling Monastery and all affairs related to the vinaya transmissions. In short, embodying the perfection of the qualities of learning, discipline and goodness (*mkhas btsun bzang gsum*), he became a true example of a

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master of the sacred buddhadharma and thus, strengthening the vision of the great master Chögyal Terdag Lingpa.

His older brother, the fourth Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Pema Tenzin, the most exceptional revered one renowned as the 'Jewel Ornament of the Crown of Dharma', passed away at a young age. After his passing, Khenchen Ögyen Tenzin Dorje assumed all responsibilities of building all the outer and inner representations of the three jewels and three roots etc. and imparting teachings to the monks and community of practitioners.

He also undertook the complete responsibility of raising, teaching and training the heir to the throne of Mindrolling, the young son of his older brother the fourth Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Pema Tenzin, the future fifth Trichen Gyurme Thrinley Namgyal.

In this way, having selflessly devoted his entire life to the service of the precious dharma and the expansion and continuity of the Mindrolling lineage, the third Mindrolling Khenchen Ögyen Tenzin Dorje passed away into parinirvana in order to further benefit sentient beings.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XII

Gyurme Trinley Namgyal—the 5th Mindrolling Trichen

The 5th Mindrolling Trichen, Gyurme Trinley Namgyal was born to the 4th Trichen, the great throne holder Gyurme Pema Tenzin and his Sangyum (consort). Displaying wondrous signs of accomplishment, clarity and brilliant wisdom from his childhood, he grew up with great care and training from his father and uncle and became very learned in both the Sutra and Tantra teachings.

He was accomplished in the three prajnas of hearing, reflecting and meditation. In particular, he was greatly learned in *gar thig* and *yang rol* and all forms of traditional ritual practices.

Upon the parinirvana of his father, the 4th Trichen, he undertook the responsibility of the parinirvana ceremonies completing them with great devotion and performing all rituals extensively. He continued to construct and build a wonderful collection of inner and outer sacred implements and shrines. He was then installed as the 5th throne holder of Mindrolling by the learned master, his uncle, Khenchen Ogyen Tenzin Dorje who was the 3rd Minling Khenchen. From then on he undertook all the responsibilities of the Mindrolling Monastery by furthering the vision and vast activities of his father, the 4th Trichen Gyurme Pema Tenzin and all the past masters of the lineage.

For many years he also undertook a dedicated approach to study and practice of the precious and profound teachings. He studied under his great learned uncle, the 3rd Khenchen Ogyen Tenzin Dorje along with numerous learned and accomplished masters of that time. Thus, by these means he became an exponent of all the precious teachings in general and the profound Nyingma kama and terma teachings in particular. Gyurme Trinley Namgyal also received extensive teachings and transmissions of the entire collection of teachings and transmissions of the great Ogyen Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri. He then went into retreat and accomplished all the precious practices of the lineage so that he became a true treasure trove of all the teachings and practices of the new Mindrolling termas as well as all the other lineages held and preserved at Mindrolling.

Following the retreat he taught and transmitted the teachings by bestowing them to the lineage holders and practitioners of the next generation. In his lifetime he also renovated and built several shrines, thus adding to the growth and

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strengthening of a strong foundation of the precious dharma and the lineage of Mindrolling.

Due to the unfortunate karma of sentient beings, this great 5th throne holder of Mindrolling entered into the samadhi of parinirvana at a young age after dedicating his entire life towards the expansion and flourishing of the precious dharma and ensuring its continuity in the purest way.

Generally, the life of the Mindrolling Trichens throughout history falls into similar patterns, appearing not to have great differential qualities. It is important to understand that the training was conducted in very similar ways and the qualities of 'personality' were not considered important and therefore were not distinguished in a historical preservation context. As long as the political struggles in the land were not imposing themselves on the daily life of the Mindrolling Monastery, the emphasis was mostly on the training and teaching of the profound dharma, the means to produce exceptional individuals that would ripen and reveal the profoundest bodhisattva activity. Therefore, it is important to understand that every single one of these great masters led exceptional lives embodying the qualities of a true bodhisattva and it only through their life-long efforts that the teachings have continued down to this day in its most pure and authentic form.

Kyabje Mindrolling Trichen used to always remind his students that the real challenge lies in the day-to-day activities of a monastery where in every single moment and every single activity, a teacher has to ensure that it is in accord with the dharma and that it is of benefit to all sentient beings. Kyabje Rinpoche always maintained that building something is in many ways the easy part. Preserving it authentically and ensuring its growth is the difficult part. Thus, we owe the greatest of debt of gratitude to all the masters of the lineage who through centuries strove to preserve and nurture the growth of that which was established by the peerless gurus, Ogyen Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XIII

Sang Ngag Tenzin — the 4th Mindrolling Khenchen

The Fourth Khenchen of Mindrolling, Sang Ngag Tenzin was born the second son of the 4th Mindrolling Trichen, Tri Gyurme Pema Tenzin. He was renowned as a great learned master and holder of the pure vinaya lineage. Displaying complete freedom from all samsaric stains, he was endowed with great clarity of mind and exemplary wisdom and understanding of the profound teachings from early childhood.

He studied under many great masters and accomplished the learning and practicing of all the profound and precious teachings and received all the various vinaya vows which he maintained in the purest of forms. He was renowned for his exemplary ethics and moral conduct.

After taking on the responsibilities of the Khenchen of Mindrolling, he bestowed the precious vinaya vows to countless monks and began manifesting his vast activity of teaching the precious Dharma and assisting his older brother, the 5th Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Trinley Namgyal in the administration of the Mindrolling Monastery.

His chief contribution was in maintaining and seeing to the growth of the pure vinaya lineage in Tibet during a time when more and more spiritual materialism threatened the authenticity and genuine lineage of Dharma.

True to the tradition of Mindrolling, Khenchen Sang Ngag Tenzin dedicated his entire life to the preservation and flourishing of the precious Dharma in general and the supreme vinaya lineage in particular. His dedication to Mindrolling and serving the vision of Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri ensured the continuation of the precious teachings in their entirety down to the next generation. Khenchen San Ngag Tenzin's love and devotion towards his brother, Tri Trinley Namgyal, was an inspiration to all and together they worked to further the work of their predecessors.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XIV

Tri Gyurme Pema Wangyal — the 6th Mindrolling Trichen

The 6th Trichen of Mindrolling, Gyurme Pema Wangyal was born to the 5th Trichen, Tri Gyurme Trinley Namgyal. He was also recognized as an emanation of the great tertön and founder of Mindrolling, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa.

In accordance with the tradition of Mindrolling which does not recognize reincarnations within its own lineage and instead emphasizes the direct bloodline, Gyurme Pema Wangyal was recognized as an emanation of Terdag Lingpa but the title was never used and precedence was given to the fact that he was the oldest child of the 5th Mindrolling Trichen and thereby known to be the holder of the title of Trichen (throne holder).

Displaying wondrous signs of great wisdom and freedom from all samsaric tendencies even as a young child, he joyously accomplished great learning of the precious Dharma without any effort. His gentle and pure conduct, humility and kindness towards everyone astounded all, including his teachers. He received extensive transmissions and teachings from the great *Dor dzins** of Mindrolling and many great masters of the day.

In this way at a young age he became one of the greatest scholars of his time learning all forms of major and minor sciences and receiving and practicing all transmissions of the precious sutra and tantra teachings.

He studied and received all profound transmissions and teachings of the kama and terma and practiced them under the direct guidance of his noble father, the 5th Trichen of Mindrolling and his sister, the great Dzogchen Master, Jetsün Trinley Chödrön. In this way he became the holder of many precious lineages of the profound Ka-Ter teachings.

Knowing the immense importance of being the lineage holder of these rare and precious streams of transmissions, he undertook many retreats to practice the teachings and enriched his mindstream with the profound pith instructions. In particular, he accomplished the *lhag pa'i lha rtsa ba gsum* (The Essential Sadhana of the Supreme Practice of the Three Roots). Displaying wondrous signs of accomplishing the pith instructions, he completed numerous practices and undertook the responsibility of teaching and transmitting the profound dharma

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to a multitude of students. In this way, he brought immeasurable benefit to all sentient beings and followed the example set by his predecessors.

Having accomplished the samadhi of *bskyed rdzogs* (utpattikrama and sampannakrama), Tri Gyurme Pema Wangyal was renowned throughout the Land of Snows for his practice of Dharma in the purest of form. He chose to stay away from all aspects of worldly dharma and unnecessary refutations and debates regarding views etc. (at that time, there was a great prevalence of scholarly debate and display of knowledge rather then emphasis of practice). Famed for his noble disposition and unshakeable moral character, instead of seeking political connections or expansive worldly ambitions, Tri Pema Wangyal worked tirelessly to maintain the authentic teachings and led by example through his unshakeable devotion, infinite wisdom, compassion and quiet dignity. He instilled the importance of authentic practice in all the monks and nuns of Mindrolling and inspired many fortunate ones onto the path of practice, bringing their minds fully to ripening and liberation.

In this way he became known as the single source of the genuine Dharma and one of the foremost lineage holders of his time. Many of the great masters of the time became his devoted student as he was the single holder of many rare and precious Dzogchen teachings. Recognizing the immense importance of ensuring the continued flow of the lineage transmissions through him, he tirelessly taught many students, hardly ever turning away any requests. And knowing the importance of practicing those profound pith instructions, he also made every student go into practice retreat under very close guidance and direction.

His activity benefited countless beings, and most importantly, enabled the authentic Dharma to once again gain steady foundation and growth. With immense dedication and kindness to all beings, Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Pema Wangyal, manifested his vast activity of teaching the Dharma and also created a vast archive of rare and precious teachings until his parinirvana, when he dissolved into the mind of the great Mahaguru Padmasambhava. Tri Pema Wangyal thus joined the ranks of all the great bodhisattvas within the lineage who single mindedly dedicated their lives to serving the Dharma and benefitting countless sentient beings. Without their great efforts and perseverance, the flow of the precious dharma, in particular the vast Nyingma teachings, would have ceased. Their peerless legacy is unmatched in its kindness, effort and benefit and every single act of united wisdom and compassion resonates in every single practice we do down to this day.

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**Dor dzin* (rdor 'dzin) - In the Mindrolling tradition, the title of dor dzin was bestowed to a very few select, extremely realized and learned masters who accomplished many retreats and practices and were especially adept at the profound new termas of Mindrolling. The title, which means Holder of the Vajra, was bestowed by the Trichen. The *dor dzins* were not reincarnate tulkus or recognized teachers rather they were selected from the group of lopöns who had completed all learnings, trainings and retreats. The lopöns were ordinary monks who rose to the position through their learning and accomplishments.

The dor dzins became senior lopöns and presided over drubchens, bestowed transmissions and served as retreat masters and advisors to the general administration of the monastery. Among them, the most accomplished often became the tutors of the sons and daughters of the lineage and also served as regents on many occasions in the history of Mindrolling. Many great masters including Minling Chung Rinpoche, the 8th Minling Khen Rinpoche and Kyabje Trulshig Rinpoche studied under the dor-dzins of Mindrolling. His Holiness The 11th Mindrolling Trichen was also tutored by the great dor dzins as was the previous Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche (Dudjom Jigdral Yeshe Dorje) whose root guru was one of the great dor dzins of Mindrolling—Dor-dzin Namdrol Gyatso.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XV

Jetsün Trinley Chödrön

Jetsün Trinley Chödrön, who is known as one of the greatest and only known female masters of some of the most renowned dzogchen masters of her time, was born amidst marvelous and wondrous signs as the daughter of Mindrolling's 5th Trichen, Gyurme Trinley Namgyal. Jetsün Trinley Chödrön is credited with having kept the lineage of many great dzogchen teachings alive through a difficult period and thus her contribution to the preservation of the Nyingma teachings is amongst the greatest and most remembered.

Born as the sister to the 6th Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Pema Wangyal, she displayed immense wisdom and clarity of mind from a young age and became accomplished in all levels of studies of Buddhist texts, calligraphy, grammar and Buddhist arts. She pursued her studies of the methods of the sutras and tantras at an early age.

Her great learning ability enabled her to begin intensive studies and training in buddhist philosophy and teachings from many great teachers. She began receiving many teachings and sutra and tantra from her learned uncles and the great master and brilliant scholar Rabjam Jampa Palgön.

In particular, at a young age she received the *Minling Tersar* (the new Mindrolling termas) and the complete collection of sadhanas compiled by Terdag Lingpa called *'dod 'jo bum bzang* (The Excellent Wish-fulfilling Vase), which were her father's legacy as well as many other empowerments and teachings such as the entire collection of the great master Pema Lingpa's cycle of teachings and transmissions.

Jetsün Trinley Chödrön then went on to practice the teachings and soon became the holder of the teachings of the secret and pith transmissions within the Nyingma school. She then accomplished the intensive retreat of the *rtsa gsum lhag pa'i lha*, displaying many signs of their accomplishments.

In particular, she received the entire *rdzogs chen gsang ba snying thig gi chos skor*— the Secret Dzogchen Nyingthig cycle of teachings— from her father, the noble and great Trichen Gyurme Trinley Nangyal. She practiced these profound teachings her entire life with great dedication and actualized their meaning and realization with supreme confidence beyond doubts and hesitations.

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Satisfactorily bringing to exhaustion the *snang ba bzhi zad* (four appearances) she became known as the supreme lineage holder of *rang bzhin dzogs pa chen po*) (the natural Great Perfection) or the dzogchen lineage.

It is thus written in her biography, "Jetsün Trinley Chödrön directly experienced the authentic unshakeable confidence born of realization and reached the furthest limit of the four visions. She thus became a lineage holder of the natural Great Perfection".

Great masters such as the great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye received the precious ocean-like profound transmissions and empowerments of Dzogpa Chenpo Lonchen Nyingthig and the entire Minling terma transmissions from her. She thus became their guru and these precious teachings which were at that time on the verge of extinction once again flourished and continued allowing the great dzogchen lineage to continue down to our present times.

Jetsün Trinley Chödrön tirelessly turned the wheel of the precious dharma and manifested incalculable dharma activities for the benefit of others enabling the great teachings to be spread and strengthened during this time in Tibet. She transmitted manifold transmissions and empowerments and taught the profound path of dzogchen to countless practitioners of the dharma bringing them to maturity and liberation. In this way she became one of greatest female masters of Tibet and the only woman of Mindrolling whose activities rivaled those of Jetsün Migyur Paldrön.

Her father the fifth Trichen Gyurme Trinley Namgyal entrusted the main transmissions onto her which at that time led to Jetsün Trinley Chödrön being one of the very few living masters who had received the authentic lineage and also accomplished the practices.

The great masters Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye were two of the greatest masters during the nineteenth century who, along with Chokgyur Lingpa, led the great renewed flourishing and spread of the dharma in Tibet and were instrumental in the preservation and compilation of the key transmissions of the Nyingma school. Jetsün Trinley Chödrön bestowed teachings and transmissions to these two great masters thus enabling them to continue the peerless pith transmissions of the dzogchen lineage and of many other precious terma cycles.

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Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo received the Nyingthig teachings of Dzogchen— the ripening empowerments, liberating instructions, entrusted advices and so forth—from Jetsün Trinley Chödrön. Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye received these transmissions of the direct lineages of the two lines of Nyingthig teachings and transmissions from Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. They were able to impart the transmissions they had received from Mindrolling to a succession of students, thus ensuring that these teachings spread not only throughout Tibet but also in all ten directions. In this way, the authentic and pure line of transmission of the precious dzogchen teachings which was almost in danger of being interrupted was once again firmly established through the efforts and kindness of Jetsün Trinley Chödrön.

Jetsün Trinley Chödrön served the dharma by firmly establishing a strong foundation of pure dharma in Mindrolling as well as engaging in vast dharma activities throughout her life. She beautifully balanced her own retreat and practice as well as seamlessly expounding the precious teachings and transmissions to thousands of practitioners.

It was a great loss for buddhadharma in Tibet and particularly for Mindrolling when Jetsün Trinley Chödrön passed away at a very young age. Amidst marvelous signs of exhaustion, she allowed her mind to dissolve into the expanse of dharmakaya.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XVI

The Fifth Khenchen of Mindrolling — Gyurme Ogyen Chöphel

The fifth Khenchen of Mindrolling, Gyurme Ogyen Chöphel, was the younger son of the fifth Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Thrinley Namgyal. His older brother was the sixth Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Pema Wangyal and his sister was Jetsün Thrinley Chödrön. Due to the fifth Khenchen and his great siblings efforts, Mindrolling and all of Tibet enjoyed a period of strong and pure practice as well as the flourishing of the buddhadharma.

From a very young age Khenchen Ogyen Chöphel displayed great signs of sacred conduct cultivating a deep fondness for silence and contemplation. He received full ordination from the great Khenchen Sa Ngag Tenzin, the fourth Minling Khenchen and undertook rigorous training under some of the most accomplished masters of his time, receiving a vast treasury of teachings and transmissions of the sutra and tantra. Becoming very learned in all forms of Buddhist teachings and practices, he continually exerted determined efforts in receiving countless teachings from masters of various lineages and schools traveling far and wide, despite hardships to ensure that he received the precious transmissions and teachings from as many diverse sources as possible and in this way acquired a wealth of transmissions.

After exerting tremendous effort to receive hundreds of transmissions of multiple lineages, he then gradually undertook numerous retreats and remained dedicated to cultivating a life free of the worldly dharmas. Khenchen Ogyen Chöphel was particularly dedicated to the study and practice of *sdom gsum*—Ascertaining the Three Vows. The historical records mention this great master's wisdom and activities as being vast and completely dedicated to the benefit of all beings and in particular, they mention his great dedication to living the life of a true renunciate.

He not only lived but also taught the principles of renunciation, establishing a legacy of authentic vinaya conduct for the entire line of khenchens who followed him as well as for all the monks and nuns whom he personally guided. He shunned all activities related to the eight worldly dharmas, seeing them as poisons that veiled ones potential to practice genuine dharma and strove all his life to lead by example.

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He continued to serve Mindrolling as its abbot and taught extensively for many years helping his brother the sixth Mindrolling Trichen and his sister Jetsün Thrinley Chödrön. People from all over Tibet came to receive teachings and vows from the fifth Kenchen, regarding him as one of the most pure lineage holders of the vinaya in the Land of Snow, and inspired by his example, a very strong gathering of monastics began to establish themselves in many regions throughout Tibet.

Besides engaging in the various activities of teaching and transmitting the dharma, later in life he preferred to live as a recluse, often staying in retreat for long periods. During his lifetime, he also composed one of the revered commentaries on the Guhayagharbha Tantra and worked dedicatedly in establishing a vast archive of important transmissions from various lineages.

In this way, the fifth Khenchen of Mindrolling unflaggingly served the vision of the founders of Mindrolling, Chögyal Terdag Lingpa and Lochen Dharmashri. Khenchen Gyurme Ogyen Chöphel established a strong foundation of pure practice of the precious buddhadharma and worked tirelessly to accomplish the practices himself, providing an example of a pure practitioner to all the disciples, holding the vinaya without blemish and always with the view of doing so for the benefit of all sentient beings throughout the six realms.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XVII

The 7th Trichen of Mindrolling

Renowned as the emanation of the great master

Nubchen Sangye Yeshe

Nub Sangye Yeshe of the Nub clan from Nub was one of the twenty-five main disciples of Padmasambhava. He was a great scholar and one of the great translators in the time of King Trisong Deutsen. He was particularly known for holding the lineage of Guhayasamaja *(gsang ba 'dus pa)*. He translated Guhayasamaja texts and wrote a set of fourteen commentaries and other articles regarding the main texts. Two main lineages of the teaching and practice of the yidam according to Ngagyur (the Old Translation School) evolved from him.

The 7th Trichen of Mindrolling was born as the son of the 6th Mindrolling Trichen Pema Wangyal and named Gyurme Sangye Kunga. Manifesting great signs of wisdom, his mind was fully matured with perfect knowledge from a very young age. He received a vast treasury of transmissions and teachings chiefly from his father and also from numerous other great teachers. Having accomplished all outer and inner teachings, he manifested vast and immeasurable activities for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Trichen Gyurme Sangye Kunga received all the precious and profound Dzogchen Nyingthig transmissions and in particular the entire profound transmissions of the Mindrolling lineage. He also received an ocean-like vast number of empowerments within and from the lineage of the great masters, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thaye. His other teachers were his father, the 6th Mindrolling Trichen Pema Wangyal, his aunt Jetsün Trinley Chödrön and the great learned master Gyalse Zhenphen Thaye.

Keeping the tradition of Mindrolling as set forth by Chögyal Terdag Lingpa, the 7th Mindrolling Trichen continued in the footsteps of his father and other ancestors of the lineage by not only receiving innumerable transmissions but by also going further and actually accomplishing them thoroughly. In this way, he maintained the treasury of teachings and ensured their continuance through to the next generation.

The 7th Mindrolling Gyurme Sangye Kunga further propagated these precious transmissions and teachings to many lineage holders and practitioners of his generations. He strengthened the foundation of Secret Mantrayana teachings and

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in particular the many profound forms of Vajrayana rituals of Gar, Thig and Yang. Throughout his life, he dedicated himself towards the efforts of the tradition of Mindrolling lineage in preserving the rare and authentic transmissions and teachings of the Secret Mantrayana.

After an entire life dedicated solely in the service of the buddhadharma and continuing the precious legacy of Terdag Lingpa, Tri Gyurme Sangye Kunga passed into parinirvana amidst wondrous signs leaving generations to come with the perfect example of a lifetime dedicated only to the practice of genuine dharma.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XVIII

The 6th Khenchen of Mindrolling — Rigzin Zangpo

The 6th holder of the victorious banner of the Vinaya lineage of Mindrolling was Minling Khenchen Zangpo. He was known to have been a wonderful teacher, extremely learned and endowed with many good qualities.

According to the biographical accounts of the lineage of Khenchens compiled by Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, although it is not clear to whom Khenchen Rigzin Zangpo was born, it is however documented that he was born within the Nyö Lineage. According to some other sources, Khenchen Rigzin Zangpo was said to have been born within the family lineage of Ratna Lingpa.

According to the catalogue of Mindrolling history *ngo tshar shel gyi adarsha*, it is written that Khenchen Rigzin Zangpo was born as the son of the 6th Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Pema Wangyal.

He studied with many learned teachers of his time and displayed many wondrous qualities which helped strengthen the foundation of Buddhadharma in general and the Mindrolling lineage in particular. Khenchen Zangpo received his ordination from the renowned Khenchen Ogyen Tenzin at the age of twenty-one and went on to become a living example of the perfect Vinaya tradition. He dedicated his entire life to the preservation and flourishing of the Vinaya tradition and thus became one of the most respected and venerated masters of his generation.

When the great renowned master Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo turned 21 years of age, he received his ordination from Minling Khenchen Rigzin Zangpo.

Minling Khenchen Rigzin Zangpo's wisdom was said to be like a vase overflowing with nectar and a multitude of fortunate beings benefitted from his amrita-like teachings and example.

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The History of Mindrolling: Part XIX

The 8th Trichen of Mindrolling — Gyurme Yidzhin Wangyal

The 8th Mindrolling Trichen Gyurme Yidzhin Wangyal was born as the son of the seventh Mindrolling Trichen Sangye Kunga. From an early age he received extensive training and teachings in both the Sutra and Tantra traditions from his own revered father, the seventh Mindrolling Trichen as well as eminent teachers of his time.

Endowed with all the perfect qualities of teachings, practice and activities, he served to strengthen the foundation of the Buddhadharma in general and in particular the profound Nyingma lineage by upholding, preserving and spreading the precious teachings of the Buddha throughout the Land of Snow.

Displaying realization of all outer, inner and secret aspects of the unsurpassable wisdom teachings, his continuous stream of enlightened activities benefitted many practitioners and led to the flourishing of the Kama and Terma teachings.

His entire life is recalled by many great masters and a wonderful example of simplicity, wisdom and great compassion for everyone held without any bias or partiality.

Additional installments to the Mindrolling History will be added as they become available.

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