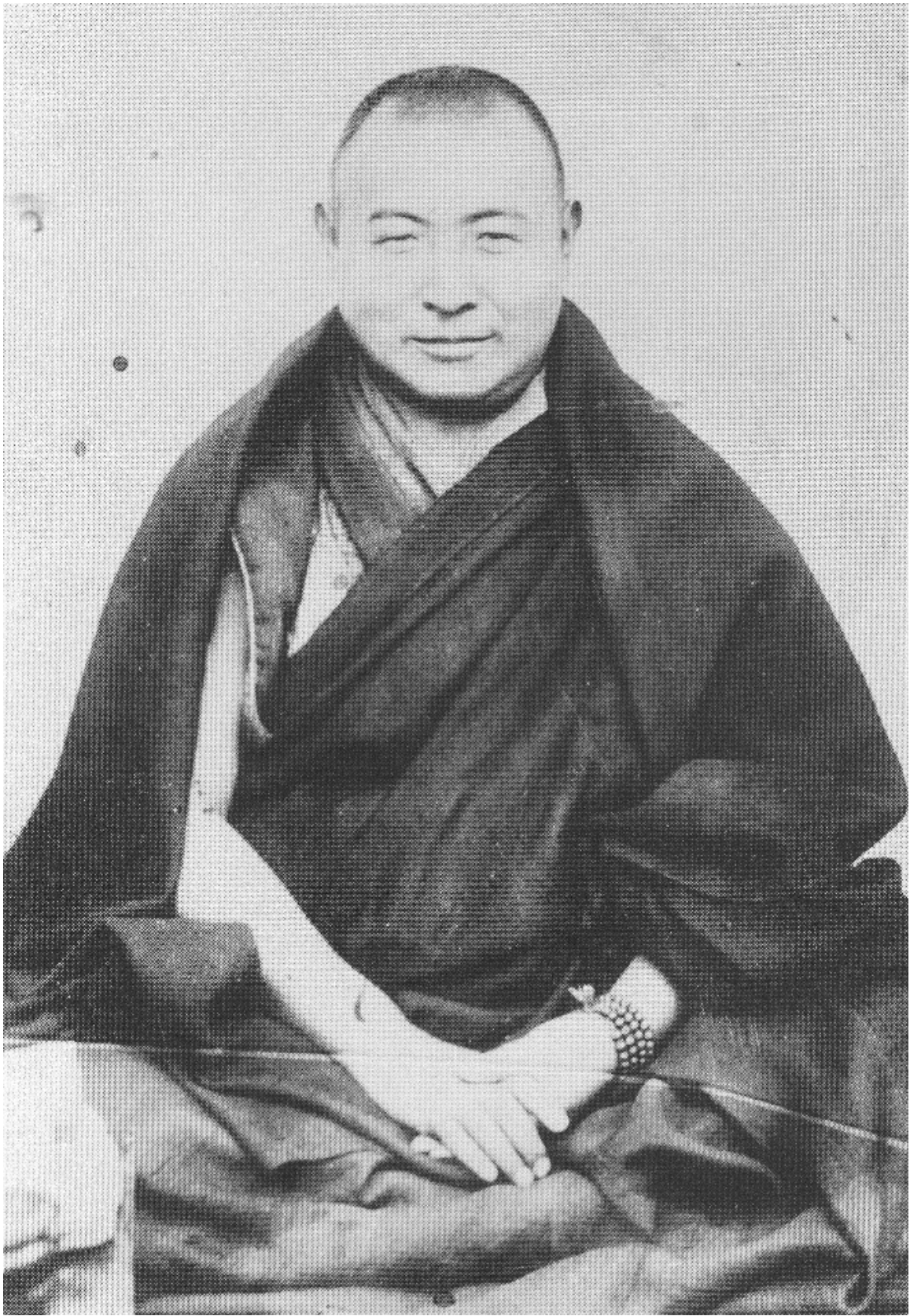


KYABJE PABONGKHA DECHEN NYINGPO



Pabongkha Rinpoche Dechen Nyingpo Jampa Tenzin Trinlay Gyatso was one of the greatest masters of the 20th century and one of the most influential teachers in Tibet. The list of his oral discourses is vast in depth and breadth and his collected works occupy 15 large volumes and cover every aspect of Buddhism. Some of his works have been translated into English and Chinese and became influential texts studied by Buddhists all over the world today.



Rinpoche was born north of Lhasa in 1878. In the night when he was born, a light shone in the room and people outside the house had a vision of a protector on the roof. As a child he exhibited unusual qualities and thus was taken before Sharpa Rinpoche Chuje Lobsang Dargye, one of the leading religious figures of the day. He was recognized as an emanation of the great scholar Jangya Rolpai Dorje (1717-1786), the lama of the Chinese emperor Chien Lung, although initially it was thought that he was the reincarnation of a learned Geshe from Sera-Mey Monastery. It is commonly believed that Rinpoche was also the reincarnation of Tsako Ngawang Drakpa, one of the main disciples of Tsong Khapa and founder of Dhe-Tsang Monastery. Rinpoche entered Gyalrong House of Sera-Mey Monastery at the age of 7, did the usual studies of a monk, earned his Geshe degree and spent 2 years learning at the Gyuto Tantric College. Rinpoche's root guru was Dagpo Rinpoche Jampal Lhundrub Gyatso of Lhoka.

When Pabongkha Rinpoche had finished his studies he visited Dagpo Rinpoche in his cave and was sent time into a Lam Rim retreat nearby. Dagpo Rinpoche would teach him a topic and then Pabongkha Rinpoche would go away and meditate on it. Later he would return to explain what he'd understood: if he had gained some realization into the topic, Dagpo Rinpoche would teach him some more and Pabongkha Rinpoche would go back and meditate on that. It went on like this for 10 years.

Rinpoche had 2 main qualities : from the tantric point of view, his realization and ability to present the all tantric teachings, and from the sutric point of view, his ability to teach the entire graduated path to enlightenment. Rinpoche was also a perfect example of guru devotion. Whenever he visited his lama's monastery, Rinpoche would dismount as soon as it appeared in view and prostrate all the way to the door - which was not easy because of his build; when he left the monastery he would walk backwards until it was out of sight. Due to Rinpoche's knowledge and practice, tens of thousands of people became his disciples, including numerous eminent lamas, powerful generals and even attracting Chinese government officials and monks coming all the way from Beijing and Shanghai to Lhasa in order to receive his teachings.

Rinpoche's 4 main disciples were Kyabje Trijang Rinpoche, Kyabje Ling Rinpoche, Khangsar Rinpoche and Tathag Rinpoche. Tathag Rinpoche was the main teacher of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama when he was a child and gave him his novice ordination. Trijang Rinpoche and Ling Rinpoche were later appointed as the junior and senior tutors to His Holiness and Ling Rinpoche was elected to be the 97th throne holder of the Gelugpa lineage (Gadan Tripa). Khangsar Rinpoche's Chinese disciple, Master Nan Hai, started a Buddhist movement in China that survived till the present day despite political changes in Communist China, with tens of thousands of spiritual descendants and over a hundred monasteries and nunneries throughout China.

Pabongkha Rinpoche passed away in 1941. His holy body was cremated and his relics preserved in one of his monasteries, Tashi Choling in Lhasa, until it was destroyed by the communist army during the 1960's.

Pabongkha Rinpoche was the holder of all the important lineages of sutra and tantra. He became the guru of most Gelugpa lamas of his time and passed those lineages on to most of the important Gelugpa lamas of the next 2 generations. If you have ever received a teaching from a Gelugpa lama, you have been influenced by Pabongkha Rinpoche.

(from Buddhist International Alliance (BIA) website)

Pabongka Rinpoche was born north of Lhasa, Tibet in 1878. When he finished his monastic studies he visited his guru, Dagpo Lama Rinpoche, and was sent to do retreat on the lam rim (stages of the path). Each day his guru would teach a topic of the lam rim and Pabongka Rinpoche would go away and meditate on it. Later he would return and explain to his guru what he understood and if he were able to demonstrate some realisation then his guru would teach some more. Again, Pabongka Rinpoche would go away and meditate on the new teaching. This went on for ten years.

In 1921 at Chuzang Hermitage near Lhasa, Pabongka Rinpoche gave an exceptionally important teaching on the stages of the path that lasted 24 days. These teachings were based on Lama Atisha's seminal text, "Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment". The renowned book "Liberation in Your Hand" is the English translation of those teachings.

Whenever he visited his guru's monastery Pabongka Rinpoche would dismount as soon as it appeared in view and prostrate all the way to the door. When he left he would walk backwards until it was out of sight.

Bodhicitta is the aspiration to achieve enlightenment in order to free all living beings from their suffering. It is the core practice of Mahayana Buddhists.

Venerable Ribur Rinpoche recalls about his teacher, Pabongka Rinpoche: "He never got angry; any anger had been completely pacified by his bodhicitta. Many times there would be long lines of people waiting for his blessings but Rinpoche would ask each one individually how they were and tap them on the head. Sometimes he dispensed medicine. He was always gentle. All this made him very special."

Pabongka Rinpoche urged his students, "Practice whatever you can so that my teachings will not have been in vain. But above all, make bodhicitta your main practice. You must pursue any of the other meditation subjects in the knowledge that they will assist your bodhicitta."

(From FPMT website)

Mahasiddha Pabongkha Rinpoche has a long history and during his time the Dharma increased greatly in Tibet. He was actually Heruka Demchok. He was born in north central Tibet and as a boy entered Gyolrang house of Sera Mey. At first he was very poor and not famous. He studied hard to be a Geshe, meditated and gave empowerments. Pabongkha studied with Jaba Sonpo Rinpoche who was a complete lineage holder, especially of the teachings of Ranchi Lama. One night, he dreamt of a person giving him a pot of milk and requesting him to drink it completely. This symbolized that the complete teachings would be transferred to him.

Later on, a monk came to see him. This monk explained that there were a lot of philosophies in Tibet but not much teaching on Lam Rim. The monk offered to be his patron so that he could go and teach.

At one time while returning from the south of Tibet, Pabongkha Rinpoche met many people, requesting Lam Rim teaching. He taught in Lhasa and he went every where in Tibet and many people became his students. Of course this caused some jealousy at times. He propagated Tsong Khapa's Dharma with much enthusiasm and stated that these teachings were the best.

Finally the monk who was Pabongkha Rinpoche patron returned and thanked him. He told him to rest, while he was away at the Five Mountains of Manjusri in China. At this period no one asked him to teach Lam Rim. Three years later, this monk returned and requested him to teach Tantra. After this many people requested Tantra teachings. Now, Pabongkha, contemplated these events and realised that this monk was Dorje Shugden.

Pabongkha went to see his guru Tapo Dorje Chang. His spiritual master was very special. He was born in Na Sur Tapo where his monastery was located. He had a long line of incarnations numbering four or five. The first Tapo Kha-cho Uncho while meditating, saw Tara, Chenrezig and they gave empowerments to him. Tapo Dorje Chang also traveled to the pure lands. Yidams give him initiations such as "Cittamani Tara". He also held the thirteen deity initiation called "Da-pan Na-ja soon".

Mahasiddha Pabongkha asked Mahasiddha Tapo Dorje Chang, his guru, to go to Tusita. In Tusita, the Mahasiddha Tapo Dorje Chang had met Tsong Khapa. At that time Tapo Dorje Chang had requested teaching from Tsong Khapa. Tsong Khapa lifted the cloth that covered the front of the golden throne he was sitting on. From under the golden throne came the five forms of Dorje Shugden. Dorje Shugden gave to Mahasiddha Tapo Dorje Chang Tempay Gyaltzen complete

instructions and the Mahasiddha returned to Tibet with this texts. Tapo Dorje Chang gave Pabongkha not only the initiation and lineage of Dorje Shugden, but also all his lineages that he held. When Tapo Dorje Chang was young, he had many visions of Lhasa and he went to Drepung monastery. Later in his life he became a sage and remained in Tapo meditating. One time Pabongkha was going to Kham and he wanted to visit the guru. Tapo Dorje Chang told him to visit on his return. But he went before so he could visit twice. Tapo Dorje Chang told him "I told you after your trip to Kham. Anyway, now many dakinis are requesting me to come". Pabongkha knew what this meant and requested him to live longer. He asked what should I do. Pabongkha said to meditate non self-existence on the events. So he went to Kham and Tapo Dorje Chang passed away (he entered emptiness).

Pabongkha Rinpoche spread the Dorje Shugden practice and had many famous and wise students beginning in 1920's. He was particularly famed for his pristine elaboration of the Lam Rim. Pabongkha Rinpoche wrote many books. These texts provide explanations on sadhanas, chanting, how to make tormas and myriad other subjects. Among these texts, is a Dorje Shugden practice which includes the empowerment which is still used to this day.

In one of the praises to Dorje Shugden, Je Pabongka says:

The aggregates, elements, sources and limbs of Lama Losang Tubwang Dorje Chang

Appear in the aspect of the five lineages of Dorje Shugden and their retinues

Realising that in reality I am practising the yoga

of the thirty-two deities of the body mandala,

I offer this practice to you, O five lineages of Dorje Shugden;

Please accept it with delight.

(from tripod website)

(Lama Losang Tubwang Dorje Chang is Je Tsongkhapa in his tantric aspect, one with Buddha Shakyamuni and Vajradhara)

H.E. Lama Zopa:

Another thing is that some Tibetans and others severely criticize Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo because he practiced Shugden, making him out to be some kind of demon. However, Pabongka Dechen Nyingpo wrote incredible teachings on sutra and tantra; on Heruka, Tara Cittamani and many other topics. All these amazing teachings were written purely from his experience. So it's impossible that he can really be some kind of evil being, as those extremists accuse him of being. There's no way he could have done the negative things they say he did.

The great translator Ra Lotsawa, one of the main Yamantaka lineage holders, is supposed to have killed many people through his tantric power, but nobody regards Ra Lotsawa as bad. Tantric powers are attained on the basis of bodhicitta, the realization of emptiness and the generation and completion stages of Highest Yoga Tantra, and when you gain the powers that come with the clear light and the illusory body and do wrathful actions—for example, separating evil beings' consciousness from their body—the main point is to transfer their consciousness to the pure land. That's the end result of wrathful tantric actions. Wrathful actions like that are done to benefit other sentient beings. When dealing with evil beings through peaceful actions doesn't benefit them the only way left to benefit them is through wrathful actions. If you possess the necessary powers and qualities you can benefit others in that way with no danger to yourself. Not only can you but you are supposed to. It's part of your samaya.

There are many stories about the great yogis and living beings. For example, one great yogi called Lobsönpel Jampel Shenpen made soup with live worms. And when Naropa first met his guru, Tilopa, he was down by the river cooking live fish and eating them, which made him think, "This can't be Tilopa." So when he asked, "Are you Tilopa?" Tilopa said, "No." Later on, when Naropa had generated faith and again asked, "Are you Tilopa?" Tilopa said, "Yes." Anyway, great yogis can assume such aspects.

<http://www.lamayeshe.com/lamazopa/shugden.shtml>

His Holiness the Dalai Lama:

So did Phabongkha's involvement [in Dholgyal] aid or hinder what he was trying to achieve? This is the crux of the matter. Now of all of Phabongkha Rinpoche's disciples, Trijang Rinpoche can really be seen as the main one and his real spiritual heir. There are those who suggest that because these two obviously pushed the worship of Dholgyal that its importance is unquestionable and that therefore it is fitting that others should also get involved in it - that the worship is validated by those two figures' association with it. To listen to these people you would get the impression that their worship of Dholgyal was the most important thing that these two did in their lives; their main contribution. That is ridiculous; it was not like that at all. One just has to look at the works that they composed, like

the Stages of the Path by Phabongkha or that of Trijang Rinpoche. They were really both masters of and heirs to that tradition. I took many Stages of the Path teachings from Trijang Rinpoche. It was quite evident that there was something quite distinct in his way of explaining, something very special about it. In terms of Tantra, as well, he was a master, particularly of Heruka Chakrasamvara, and that he was a great yogi is a generally accepted fact. Therefore, the real contribution and achievement of both of these two figures was in terms of their mastery of the Stages of the Path, Mind Training and Heruka practise. Dholgyal was only ever a secondary thing....

Anyway, I am of the opinion that Phabongkha and Trijang Rinpoche's promotion of the worship of Dholgyal was a mistake. But their worship represents merely a fraction of what they did in their lives. Their contributions in the areas of Stages of the Path, Mind Training and Tantra teachings were considerable. Their contribution in these areas was unquestionable and in no way invalidated by involvement with Dholgyal.

<http://www.dalailama.com/page.153.htm>