

The Life of
Chokgyur Lingpa

as told by

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translated by
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A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

The Dharma was first introduced to Tibet by King Lha Totori then further established during the reign of King Songtsen Gampo. Later, King Trisong Deutsen benefited Tibet greatly by inviting many great masters such as Guru Rinpoche, Vimalamitra, and others so that the Dharma became very widespread.

Trisong Deutsen had three sons. The second, Lhasey Lotsawa, also known as Murub Tsenpo, was later reborn thirteen times as a tertön. The great tertön Terchen Chokgyur Lingpa was the last of these incarnations.

Chokgyur Lingpa was born in Nangchen, a province of Kham in eastern Tibet. His family name was Kyasu. His father was called Pema Wangchuk and his mother Tsering Yangtso. Born in the year of the Ox, auspicious signs must have occurred at the time of his birth, but there is nothing clearly stated about such occurrences. His first name, given by his parents, was Norbu Tendzin.

As a boy, he herded the cattle. One day at a place named Manika he met a lama in the form of an Indian mendicant (*atsara*) who asked him what his name was. “My name is Norbu Tendzin,” he answered. “What is this place called?” “Manika,” he said. “What is the name of this valley?” “It is called Arya Nang,” he answered. “That is very auspicious,” the Indian mendicant declared, “You will become quite well-known in this world.” The mendicant was Guru Rinpoche.

As a youth, Chokgyur Lingpa learned some reading and writing from his uncle, but he did no higher studies. He found a *tσα-tσα* [footnote]* one day and put it in his pocket. As he was passing the house of a big family, many dogs attacked and bit him. Some people came to check whether or not he was wounded. When they undid his belt the *tσα-tσα* dropped down and hit a stone. Out of the *tσα-tσα* came a roll of paper: the inventory of all his termas.

Chokling went to Dragkar Dzongchung after this and revealed a terma containing a small vajra which had been the practice support of Lhasey, Trisong Deutsen’s second son. This vajra is now in the reliquary of the young Chokling Tulku in Bir. The terma also contained a small mirror and a crystal which had been Garab Dorje’s practice support. Together with these were twenty teachings meant to be practiced

by him alone and not to be passed on to others. This was Chokgyur Lingpa's first terma.

According to local tradition, Chokling then became a monk at Parmi Gönpa monastery. Taklung Matrul, the first lama he met, gave Chokling novice vows. From the eighth Pawo Rinpoche, Tsuklag Chökyi Gyalpo, he received the empowerment of *Lama Gongdü*, a terma of Sangye Lingpa. "It is of utmost importance that you practice this," Pawo Rinpoche advised him.

For a long time he stayed at Parmi Monastery which belonged to the Drikung Kagyü school. Later, local laws required that he go and become a monk at Nangchen Gar, the monastery under the king of Nangchen. Each major family had to send one son to that monastery. Kyasu, as a big family, also had to send a son. Thus, Chokgyur Lingpa went to Nangchen Gar, a Drukpa Kagyü monastery. Although he was finding many termas at this time, he kept them very secret, telling only Chögyal Dorje, who was also a tertön himself.

In Nangchen Gar, Chokling received thorough instructions in the tantric traditions. Becoming an adept in *cham*, the tantric dances, he was made the dance leader. One dance called *Purba Tsarcham*, which was performed regularly, is still done in Khamtrül Rinpoche's monastery in Tashi Jong in India.

Once while leading the tantric dances Chokling had a vision of Guru Rinpoche and the twenty-five disciples performing another dance in which he joined, causing the other dancers to make mistakes. When the leader is wrong all the others follow the mistakes. Everyone was very astonished and the disciplinarian came to beat Chokling. Such a thing had never happened before at that monastery and as a result Chokgyur Lingpa was expelled.

Next he went to Derge and stayed at Jamgön Kongtrül's monastery. No one considered him a tertön at this time and when he told some people that he was, he was mocked and nicknamed Kyater, or the tertön of Kyasu, his family name. Guru Rinpoche had predicted that he would remain unrecognized and unknown until the age of twenty-five.

At twenty-five, Chokgyur Lingpa met Palpung Situ Rinpoche, also known as Padma Nyinche Wangpo, prophesied by Guru Rinpoche to be his own genuine incarnation. Guru Rinpoche had said, "If you ask his advice and place your full

confidence in him, everything will be successful.” Chokling met Situ Rinpoche (Padma Nyinchey) in the Miracle Month, the first month in the lunar calendar. He offered Situ Rinpoche a phurba and showed him his termas. Situ said, “This might be very good. No rain has fallen this year. Make it rain and I will consider whether or not you are a tertön.” Chokling succeeded in causing rain and Situ Rinpoche said, “You must be a tertön, but a person who fakes can only become a charlatan. Being a tertön is nothing special, but being a servant of Guru Rinpoche is. You shall reveal many *sa-ters*, but keep your other termas such as *gongters* secret.” He then gave Chokling a statue of Guru Rinpoche which had been found by Sangye Lingpa and said, “Keep this as your companion,” and then told him to perform a life ceremony to extend Situ’s lifespan.

After this Chokling returned to Jamgön Kongtrül. At first Kongtrül Rinpoche did not receive any of Chokling’s empowerments. He was very sick and he asked Chokling to perform a long life ceremony. Many in Derge ridiculed Chokgyur Lingpa and, when taking him around for house ceremonies, made him ride a yak instead of a horse. Some however considered him very powerful.

One day Chokling told Jamgön Kongtrül he would like to go meet Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who was then living at Dzongsar in Derge. Since Jamyang Khyentse was from a very influential family and also a great master, Chokling requested Kongtrül Rinpoche to write a letter of introduction, without which he would have little chance of getting an audience. Jamgön Kongtrül wrote, “As you are the knower of the three times, this you must also know. Kyasu Tertön here maintains that he is a tertön. I feel he is genuine. He has revealed one terma named *Padma Tsuktor* whose meaning and words are perfect, yet he is quite uneducated and couldn’t even write a letter himself.” [just a question but I was under the impression from above and elsewhere that he was quite learned by this point and could easily write]

With this letter of introduction, Chokgyur Lingpa went to see Jamyang Khyentse. Khyentse Rinpoche welcomed him immediately, saying Chokling was no different from Guru Rinpoche. He also said, “For thirteen lifetimes, we have been connected like father and son.”

Jamyang Khyentse gave Chokling first the transmission of *Yangsang Pudri* and one of *Vajra Kilaya* according to the Sakya tradition of Khön. He also gave him the

empowerment of *Lama Yangtig*, at which time Chokling saw Jamyang Khyentse as Vimalamitra in person. An earthquake and many miraculous signs occurred. They both saw Ekajati who declared, “In three years, you will receive a great siddhi,” indicating that together they would reveal the teaching of *Dzogchen Desum*.

At the age of twenty-seven, Chokling received the empowerment of *Yangdag Heruka* from Jamyang Khyentse. He saw Jamyang Khyentse become the heruka in person, who then dissolved down through the top of his head. This untied the knots in the nadis of his heart and from then on he could sing songs spontaneously without obstructions.

Chokgyur Lingpa showed Jamyang Khyentse the yellow parchment scroll of *Tukdrub Barchey Künsel*, *Sheldam Nyingjang* and his other terma teachings. Concerning these, Khyentse said, “I too have a terma teaching called *Tukdrub Deshek Düpa* with the same meaning as yours; even the words are identical. Therefore we should make it into one. Mine is a gongter and yours is a sa-ter, which is more auspicious.” Thus Jamyang Khyentse’s terma was combined with Chokling’s, and *Tukdrub Barchey Künsel* became a terma common to them both.

Jamyang Khyentse then told Chokling to commit to writing any termas not already written down. Khyentse became the secretary, transcribing a great part of Chokling’s terma teachings. This is why Jamyang Khyentse has written so many of Chokgyur Lingpa’s termas.

They once performed a terma practice together and both had the vision of meeting Guru Rinpoche and Yeshe Tsogyal in person. Jamyang Khyentse and Chokgyur Lingpa did not have even the slightest doubt about each other. Khyentse Rinpoche received all the empowerments and reading transmissions of Chokling’s terma teachings, and he considered Chokling no different from Guru Rinpoche. Both became indisputably renowned as tertöns like the sun and moon.

During this period Chokling received bodhisattva vows from the first Dazang Rinpoche, also known as Tenpa Rabgye, and didn’t eat any meat for three years. He possessed the compassion of considering all sentient beings of the three worlds as no different from his own mother.

Having become very famous, Chokling went to see Jamgön Kongtrül on his way to Nangchen to establish his monastery and discover some termas. When he told Kongtrül what had happened between himself and Jamyang Khyentse, Kongtrül

replied, “I had suspected that was the case . Now you must give me an empowerment. If my merit is insufficient to receive empowerment, at least give me a blessing.” Chokling answered, “You are already my root teacher and will be the second holder of my teachings, a true incarnation of Vairotsana. As you were my root teacher, before I could not ask you to receive empowerment from me, nor did you request it. Therefore I have waited until now.” He then offered empowerment to Kongtrül.

Jamgön Kongtrül suffered from a leprosy-like disease which had something to do with his past life as Vairotsana.¹ Chokling told him, “Guru Rinpoche concealed the *Dorje Bechön* teaching for your sake alone. Practice it a little bit and you will soon be cured.”

Chokgyur Lingpa, by now very renowned, went to Nangchen. Amazing even the two Jamgöns, Khyentse and Kongtrül, he found many termas there -- *36 altogether. He stayed at Kela in Nangchen and, in accord with an order by Guru Rinpoche to make a monastery there, he established his second residence.

At this time Chokling had a vision of Jamyang Khyentse inseparable from Guru Rinpoche. From his two eyes light came forth touching a rock in Kela called Norbu Pünsum. A big Guru Rinpoche and seven symbolic letters appeared on the rock. At the same time Jamyang Khyentse had a vision of Guru Rinpoche pointing at the rock at Kela. He sent a man to Chokling with the message that a terma was there and asking Chokling to bring it back to him. This terma was the *Tukdrub Sampa Lhündrub*, and with it was a small statue called Ngödrub Palbar which is no different from Guru Rinpoche. Even someone who has committed one of the five boundless evil deeds will be liberated upon seeing it. This statue had been Trisong Deutsen’s practice support. Chokling gave it to Khyentse since he was the owner. Also included were seven symbolic letters from which he wrote down the *Tukdrub Yishin Norbu* teachings of *Sampa Lhündrub*. The sixth of these symbolic letters was an inexhaustible source of terma teachings. The statue, terma box and symbolic letters remain in Sikkim and can still be seen.

As the sacred body representation of the terma *Padma Tsuktor*, he found a statue of Avalokiteshvara Khasarpani in the form of Semnyi Ngalso which was made from one of Yeshe Tsogyal’s bones. At present, it is in His Holiness Karmapa’s treasury. He also found one of Guru Rinpoche’s crowns which liberates

by sight. At first it was only big enough to fit on a thumb, but it became bigger through performance of the terma practice. This is now kept in the possession of Dazang Rinpoche in Nepal.

Chokling also discovered the *Sabdiin Phurba*. To take out this terma, he dug a hole in a small rock. Looking inside, he saw 75 kilaya daggers emitting sparks of fire. He took the main phurba which was made of *zi* stone. The terma teaching of *Sabdiin Phurba* was written on yellow parchment on the knot of the phurba. This phurba is now in the possession of H.H. Karmapa . Dazang Rinpoche has another phurba and Sabchu Rinpoche in Nepal has the consort phurba. Discovering many other amazing termas in similar ways, his fame grew and so did the number of his attendants and disciples.

Yegyäl Namkhadzö is the most special place of Chokgyur Lingpa's termas. A white snow-capped mountain, with slopes of white rock and tall juniper trees, the foothills are covered with forests, and many waterfalls decorate the scenery. This sacred place holds many caves where Guru Rinpoche, Yeshe Tsogyal and the 25 disciples practiced. Guru Rinpoche's cave was highest. They stayed there for seven years. Signs of the miracles they displayed can still be seen: rocks which are split into halves and so forth. Many wild animals such as antelopes, stags, red bears and leopards roam on this mountain. People respect this sacred place very highly and circumambulate it. There is even a spring there with medicinal water. Drinking a lot of it, one will vomit and one's diseases will be cured, particularly cancer. People from all over, even Amdo and China, travel there to drink the water. Those too sick to make the journey have the water brought to them.

On the southern slope is a cave whose opening is behind a waterfall. When the sun shines inside, it is filled with rainbow light. Outside flowers grow everywhere and the rock inside is the color of turquoise. The cave is called Yubar Drapuk, Glowing Turquoise Cave. From this cave Chokgyur Lingpa took the body representation called Ja-ö Kyilba, Glowing Swirls of Rainbow Lights, and the terma teaching of *Kunsang Tuktig*, a most profound Maha-Ati teaching possessing great blessings. This representation now remains at the Bir Monastery in India, in the possession of the Chokling Tulku. Together with the *Kunsang Tuktig*, he also extracted the teaching of the *Kabgye Deshek Kündü* from the Yubar Drapuk.

Near this mountain's summit is another of Guru Rinpoche's practice caves.

Inside runs a path people can follow for several days. Following it up, one will reach the summit. The cave contains a stone throne which was Guru Rinpoche's seat. Above the cave entrance he took out the yellow parchment of *Tukdrub Gongpa Kündü* as well as a large vessel made of precious stone containing 25 small images of Guru Rinpoche sitting amidst sacred medicines. Chokling took one of them. Returning the rest, he closed up the rock. The place in the rock that he did this can still be seen. The representation he took was kept at Kela Monastery. I do not know whether the Chinese have destroyed it or not.

Following Chokling's stay at Yegyal Namkhadzö he went to Derge and met Jamgön Kongtrül who offered him the ceremonial praise *Kyilkhor Kündak*, *Lord of All Mandalas*. Kongtrül prostrated, saying that Chokling was Guru Rinpoche in person.

Khyentse, Chokling and Kongtrül then agreed to do many things together in Derge. At Meshö in Derge the Sakya monastery of Dzongsar sits at the top of a rock mountain. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo had a house there called Tashi Chimey Drubpey Gatsal, the Auspicious Park of Accomplishing Immortality. Going up the valley to a place known as Dzomngang there is a boulder where tall juniper trees grow. From this rock Chokling extracted a location list of termas. The three masters taught while there and their stone thrones remain.

Surrounded by white mountain cliffs, the valley of Meshö is like an open lotus flower and the foothills covered with meadows and forests. Flowers grow abundantly in summertime and water flows here and there. In the middle, the heart of the lotus, is a huge white rock with a cave in the center called Padma Shelpuk, the Lotus Crystal Cave. The rock, cave and surrounding area are all white in color. The cave contains many naturally appearing images and letters. Yeshe Tsogyal practiced in a small cave to the left, which has windows which also appeared naturally, though they look man-made. The practice caves of Vairotsana and Shri Singha with their naturally-appeared thrones are at the top of the rock.

The Padma Shelpuk, which people called the Ghost Cave, was a cave no one dared visit. Whoever went there was eaten right away. People sometimes saw a one-eyed woman they said was the ghost. A bald-headed man riding on a goat was also seen. Chokgyur Lingpa, Jamyang Khyentse and Jamgön Kongtrül went there knowing that they would receive the *Dzogchen Desum* terma. People said (about

Chokgyur Lingpa), “Today Kyater is going to take out a terma. The ghost will eat him.” Someone else said, “Since Khyentse and Kongtrül are here maybe he will indeed take out a terma.” Then a large crowd followed the three masters.

Many rainbows appeared in the sky. On arriving, they made a big burnt offering. Kongtrül offered the serkyem, the offering to the Dharma protectors, and Khyentse, holding a vajra, sang the *Lhasum Damdrak* song of command to the local deities. People said (about Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo), “Something special must be happening today because Tulku Rinpoche is doing something.” Everyone was then told to recite the Vajra Guru mantra and to supplicate Guru Rinpoche. The three masters and some others went inside the cave while those who could not fit stayed outside by the opening.

As everyone chanted the Vajra Guru mantra and the *Seven Line Prayer*, Chokgyur Lingpa’s experience blazed. Normally you can’t reach it, but he flew up and reached the ceiling. From the ceiling he extracted the terma box containing *Dzogchen Desum*. As the terma object, he took sacred medicine and nectar blessed by Shri Singha, as well as some hairs of Yeshe Tsogyal and Vairotsana. The terma box was wrapped in one of Guru Rinpoche’s garments. Chokling blessed Khyentse, Kongtrül and everyone nearby with the terma box. People now knew he was a true tertön. Chokling told them, “All who came here are most fortunate. If things work out, I have many things left to do. The kindness of Guru Rinpoche and his consort is inconceivable..” Jamyang Khyentse continued, “Chokling is a great tertön, a very precious one. His terma teaching is extremely precious, as is this place. Everyone should make offerings and circumambulations. The three of us have now opened the gate to this sacred place. When you die, you will all go to the Copper Colored Mountain -- I promise.”

Next, they traveled together to Palpung Monastery, Situ Rinpoche’s seat, and performed a combined drubchen of *Barchey Künsel* and *Sampa Lhündrub Yishin Norbu*. At Palpung, through his visions Chokgyur Lingpa composed many new sacred dances. A new incarnation of Padma Nyingche Wangpo named Padma Kunsang was there at the time. In order to dispel obstacles for his life, Chokling offered him many empowerments and long life ceremonies.

After this they went to the seat of Jamgön Kongtrül known as Tsari-like Jewel Rock, situated behind Palpung at a place with a miraculously appeared image of a

heruka in the rock. There they performed a drubchen of *Lama Gongdü*. Jamgön Kongtrül told Chokling, “This must be a sacred place. Please compose a guidebook to it.” Chokling answered, “There is no need to compose one. It already exists as a terma. We can simply write it down from that.” Transcribing it, they opened up the sacred place, taking people around and explaining its significance. In the four directions flow four rivers whose water is the nectar of Vajrasattva. There are four lakes, where four great nagas live, four mountain passes, and three levels of circumambulation: a lower, middle and higher ring. Chokling had many visions of Ekajati there and showed everyone the practice caves of Guru Rinpoche and Yeshe Tsogyal. At this place, he discovered many termas, mainly the *Sangtik Korsum*. Jamgön Kongtrül removed a lot of earth with jewels in order to make statues. Thousands of people had come along to see.

At a place called Tsitta Sangpuk, a big stone throne was erected upon which Jamgön Kongtrül was seated. Khyentse and Chokling said, “You are an incarnation of Vairotsana and a tertön. Guru Rinpoche has given you Chimey Tennyi Yungdrung Lingpa as your tertön name. In the future you must reveal many termas.” They performed a grand enthronement ceremony.

One day the three masters decided to have a horse race and see who would win. Chokling, on a dappled horse, came first, followed by Khyentse on a dark blue horse. Kongtrül finished last and arrived crying like a child. “I am so unfortunate,” he wailed. Some people said, “Jamgön Kongtrül is usually a great lama, but he weeps when he loses a horse race.” Others said it was because he was the oldest. The real reason was they were seeing who would first reach the Copper-Colored Mountain.

Earlier, when Tekchok Dorje, the 14th Karmapa, had traveled to Kham, he had met Chokgyur Lingpa and, receiving many empowerments from him, invited him to Central Tibet. Jamyang Khyentse and Kongtrül now told Chokling to go to Lhasa, so he gradually made his way there. Later, in Lhasa he had many followers gathered in a large encampment.

On the way to Lhasa he traveled through a place called Samten Kangsar. This is a desert region with one big mountain which can be seen from many days’ journey away as one travels across the plain. Here it snowed for 18 days and nights and most of the horses and mules died. Unable to find fire wood, they broke up one of the tea boxes to make some hot water. Later, they burned everything, even their

saddles. Chokling became angry, saying: “Unless I do something to Samten Kangsar today, we will continue having trouble.” He told his master of ceremonies to prepare an extra offering tormas. When he performed the solkha dharmapala prayer, he told his *umdzey*, head-chanter, to sing the *chedok* dedication. While the *umdzey* sang, Chokling heated the tormas over the fire before him until the top part of the butter melted down to the second layer. His disciple Karmey Khenpo knew why he was doing this and told him to throw it, but Chokling growled angrily. Karmey Khenpo said nothing further.

That night the weather cleared up, and Chokling said, “Tonight we shall do some good yogic exercises. When the weather is this bad, we should practice yoga.” They performed the exercises according to the Miyowa teachings. One song is called the *Snow Song*.

They practiced yogic exercises all night, performing them three times. First they practiced only the *bebchung*; then, the *bebchen*; and finally only *dorbeb*. As day broke, Chokling, who had a scarf Karmapa had given him when he visited Kham, wet it and put it around his back. 65 practitioners were able to perform the yogic exercises well. They all encircled the camp and everyone could see Chokling’s body glowing as if on fire and with a lot of vapor rising.

When the sun rose the weather was very good. “We should go on a bit further,” he said. They could not ride as all the horses and mules had died, but they traveled on a short way. The snow on the mountain had melted during the night and, as the mountain was very big, water was rushing forth. They proceeded to a place where they pitched tents.

A man on horseback arrived, dressed in a white garment with black edging. Tying up his horse, he went directly to Chokling Rinpoche’s tent while everyone watched, wondering who he was. Prostrating three times, the man spoke for a while. Chokgyur Lingpa also spoke. At times Chokling looked angry and the other looked scared. When the man left, Chokling told his people to see where he went, but nobody could. “That man was Samten Kangsar,” Chokling said. Samten Kangsar had complained, “Heading towards Lhasa you made many cleansing offerings to Nyenchen Tanglha and the others, but gave me nothing. As I am also important I created this obstacle. Nyenchen Tanglha and I are the same, accepting the orders of Guru Rinpoche in the same way.” Chokling had replied, “You are not the same. Shall

I call Nyenchen Tanglha right now?" "Please don't do that," replied Samten Kangsar, "you burned me a lot yesterday." The mountain top is black to this day.

Later on, bandits were lying in wait for them. Since Chokling's group were all lamas and monks, the robbers said, "They look rich, let's rob them," and waited for night to come. Every night the bandits waited, but every night their plans were thwarted. Chokling had placed his khatvanga behind his tent and the robbers said it glowed so much that everyone could see it. They dared not come. One evening they swore, "No matter what happens we will go tonight! During the day they don't look at all fierce. They are only lamas, monks and yogis who appear very wealthy. We should rob them." Thus they agreed and waited for nightfall.

That night Chokling said, "We might have a little problem tonight, so we should perform the *garbu*." Garbu is like talking to the Dharma protectors. Chokling asked Karmey Khenpo to perform the garbu after the dharmapala offering. He then told the two people who blew the bone trumpets, "Nubchen Sangye blew differently. Blow that way tonight." Teaching them how to blow, he made them blow once. He also told the master of ceremonies to shake the Dharma protectors' black silk, which he then did. To this day when camping people blow bone trumpets according to this tradition. That night the robbers came, but finding the whole camp surrounded by wolves they were unable to enter. Several of the strongest bandits who had succeeded in entering were said to have been eaten by the wolves. The robbers later recounted that there were many wolves, but the people in the camp saw none.

Chokgyur Lingpa and his party gradually proceeded but, due to their delay, they were too late. Chokling went right to Tsurphu, Karmapa's seat, but Tekchok Dorje was already sick. Because they had not met at the right time, Karmapa had fallen ill and was therefore unable to remain more than a few years.

At Tsurphu Chokling performed the combined drubchen of Yangdag and Vajra Kilaya. The Drukchen Rinpoche, Pawo Rinpoche, Gyaltsab Rinpoche and many other Kagyü lamas received numerous empowerments from him and he performed many dances. The tradition for performing these dances has been kept without interruption and are still performed at Rumtek Monastery in Sikkim.

Chokling continued on to Lhasa. He made many offerings in front of the Jowo statue. One of his terma teachings includes a prayer for the spread of the doctrine which Yeshe Tsogyal had written on Vairotsana's robe. This prayer begins,

“*Chokchu düzhi.*” and was first recited on this occasion.²

Chokling also visited all the other pilgrimage places. At Samye he met Guru Rinpoche in person, and extracted a terma which included a thumb ring from Nubchen Sangye Yeshe. The dharma protectors Gyalpo Pehar and Tsimara entered two of the Samye monks. They did full prostrations, requesting Chokling to perform the *Lhasum Damdrak* at the top of Mt. Hepori. “We need many supporting ceremonies for the Dharma to remain in Tibet for a long time,” they said. So Chokling performed the *Lhasum Damdrak*. Since Demo, the regent of Tibet at that time, also invited Chokling Rinpoche to perform supporting ceremonies for the government, this was an auspicious coincidence.

Chokling went to Chuwori and performed the auspicious ceremony of *Lhasum Damdrak* as well as the *Nechen Jinbeb*, a ritual for consecrating sacred places.

After this, at the invitation of Minling Trichen he visited the monastery of Mindröl Ling and gave the empowerment of the *Gyutrül Shitro*, the *Magical Display of the Peaceful and Wrathful Ones*, according to the tradition of Kama. He also gave empowerments for many of his own terma teachings, as well as an oral commentary on *Guhyagarbha Tantra*.

He traveled to Dorje Drak Monastery and gave many empowerments and reading transmissions of his own terma teachings to the incarnate lama Dordrak Rigdzin Chenpo. Similarly, he visited many other monasteries and sacred places.

Chokgyur Lingpa then slowly returned to Kham. He went to the monastery of Benchen at Gar and gave empowerments and reading transmissions to the reincarnation of Sangye Nyenpa. Afterwards, he went to Thrangu Monastery, where he gave Draleb Jamgön and his monks many transmissions. There he also taught the dances of *White Amitayus*, known by the present Thrangu Rinpoche. Likewise, he visited many Sakya monasteries and gave terma teachings. In particular, many people were practicing *Tukdrub Barchey Künsel*.

Gradually, Chokgyur Lingpa reached Riwoche where he gave still more teachings. At Yegyäl Namkhadzö near Riwoche, he established the monastery of Neten called Tenchok Gyurme Ling, the Mansion of the Changeless Supreme Teaching, which became his spiritual residence. While human beings were building by day, gods and demons were seen building by night. Here he started a monastic residence where his own quarters were named Sang-ngak Podrang, the Secret Mantra Palace.

On the fifteenth day of the month, Chokgyur Lingpa reached a village called Gowa which had a small temple. He planned to stay for five days, giving teachings and performing ceremonies. When he first entered the temple, he was served some tea. As soon as tea was served, he jumped off the throne and leaped down the stairs, closely followed by Karmey Khenpo. The horses were tied near the door, still saddled. He jumped onto his horse which, knowing what was happening, had already turned around and started to go, although still tied by a rope. Karmey Khenpo grabbed a knife and cut the rope. Horse and rider went off as if in flight. There was a big river in the area which was uncrossable without a boat. Being summer, the water was very high. Chokling's attendants and everyone else followed him to see what he was doing. He rode straight into the river and at midstream disappeared under the water. After about five minutes he emerged on the other side. In the temple, Yeshe Tsogyal had just given him the prediction of a water monster holding a yellow parchment scroll between its teeth. Its mouth would close at twelve noon and he would then be unable to take the terma for another 60 years. This terma included many teachings on wrathful practices.

Chokling traveled again to Derge, now as a great lama. Everyone considered him Guru Rinpoche in person and he brought great benefit to others. At this time he was invited to Dzongsar in Derge, from where he went to Rongmey. At Rongmey, Khyentse and Chokling called for Jamgön Kongtrül. Chokling told Khyentse, "A precious terma is to be discovered, but you must call the king of Derge." Khyentse Rinpoche wrote a letter and the king of Derge came with many chiefs, filling the whole area with horses and men. Everyone went to Karma Taktsang. At the end of town was a big cave where Guru Rinpoche had appeared as Dorje Drollö. There Chokgyur Lingpa sang many songs, saying, "Now I will take some termas. If everything is auspicious, and works out well, I have things to do for Tibet." Even Khyentse Rinpoche was amazed and sang a lot of songs. Chokling told everyone to recite the Vajra Guru mantra and the *Diisum Sangye* prayer. He said, "If the three of us work together, we can really do something." Proceeding to where the terma was located, Chokling Rinpoche put a note on a pine tree telling the guardian of the terma to give it to him. Then they went to a rock. Chokling opened the rock and extracted a vajra, leaving it half out and half in just for show. He removed a terma box and let

everyone come and touch it with his head. That was the *Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo*. The vajra is now in the reliquary of Dzongsar Khyentse in Sikkim.

Saying, "I have more to do," Chokling took out a quantity of sacred medicine which came from the 25 disciples. He ordered everyone: "Don't sleep tonight, but recite the Vajra Guru mantra and supplicate Guru Rinpoche." Chokling said he had yet more to accomplish. The group remained singing songs all night. Chokling made the king and his ministers dance and sing as well. The next day they went into the hills between the rocks. Amidst many small hills was a lake known as Senge Yutso, the Turquoise Lion Lake. The lake was frozen and everyone was told to throw stones at the ice. Most people did and the stronger ones threw big rocks and the ice on the lake broke with loud, cracking sounds. They were told to throw more stones, but Kongtrül Rinpoche cautioned, "Don't throw the stones too hard or the nagas will be disturbed." Khyentse Rinpoche laughed, "Ha ha, how can there be nagas? Nagas don't exist. That which is called naga is empty. If there are nagas, we should wake them up. Even if they exist, they are animals and I am not afraid. So if there are nagas, let them come!" Then he began throwing many large stones.

Chokgyur Lingpa removed his yogic skirt, tied it with his belt and threw it in the lake. Pulling it back, it was empty. Then his rosary broke and he said, "Even if we do not find the terma, at least we should find the rosary beads." He told everyone to look for the beads and they found them. Saying, "Now I had better concentrate on the nagas!" he again threw his robes in the lake and pulled them back up. The lake was now full of scorpions and, feeling a bit scared, Chokling came back. Jamyang Khyentse slapped him on the cheek and said, "As Guru Rinpoche's representative why are you afraid? Throw it again!" Chokling threw the robe again and found a piece of gold the size of a sheep's belly. The lake was now full of gold and everyone took some. Karpo Tsacho, the master of ceremonies, had a big silver bowl for making tormas and filling it with water, the water later turned to gold.

After this Jamyang Khyentse, for no special reason, became very angry and chased everyone with stones so they ran away. He said whoever he hit with a stone that day would not take rebirth in the lower realms. If he had the King of Derge the Dharma would have remained in Derge for a long time but the king ran away before Chokling could hit him.

They camped at the upper end of the valley, Khyentse Rinpoche was no longer

angry. They camped near many naturally-appeared mani mantras which all resounded by themselves that night. Chokling and the others were talking about these mani mantras, discussing whether the om needed a subscribed 'a-chung' or not. Karmey Khenpo said that it did not, but Jamyang Khyentse argued that indeed it did. "It needs the five wisdoms," he said. As the discussion dragged on, Jamyang Khyentse again became angry and began to throw stones, giving Karmey Khenpo a severe beating. Karmey Khenpo did not run away, but remained sitting. That day his life's major obstacle was cleared away. Later on, when he was very old and blind, he said, "I will not die, I will not fall sick. All this is thanks to Khyentse Rinpoche stoning me."

Jamgön Kongtrül was very devoted to the deity Six-Armed Mahakala. Chokling said, "I have taken a Mahakala terma including a black stone statue made by Nagarjuna from the charnel ground called Cool Grove. I will give it to you." Jamgön Kongtrül became so happy that he couldn't sleep for two or three days. Chokling got the terma and gave it to Jamgön Kongtrül. It remains in Derge.

At Jamyang Khyentse's residence was a statue of Tara which spoke to Chokgyur Lingpa three times, "*Lekso lekso rik kyi bu*" "Excellent, excellent, noble son" it said. A long commentary is connected to that teaching.

After this Chokgyur Lingpa went to Dzogchen Monastery where he took many termas from the mountain of Dzogchen Kangtrö and gave a lot of teachings. While he was performing a drubchen at Dzogchen, Paltrül Rinpoche came to see him and was offered a few of Chokling's terma teachings. In return Chokling received an oral commentary on the *Way of the Bodhisattva*. One day, while Chokling was giving a long-life empowerment and a reading transmission of *Metok Trengdzey*, Paltrül Rinpoche stood up among the people and announced in a loud voice: "There is no difference between Chokgyur Lingpa and Sangye Lingpa. Receiving this transmission is like receiving it from Sangye Lingpa himself. If you promise to recite the Vajra Guru mantra today, you will be reborn in the Copper Colored Mountain."

Next Chokling went to Shechen where he performed a drubchen of Yangdag and received many offerings. Invited to Katok, he discovered many termas and performed the Tsechu Cham, a dance of Padmasambhava's eight manifestations. During the dance, Chokling held a vajra in his hand. Having a vision of most of the

protectors of Tibet coming and making obeisance to him, Chokling told them to obey Guru Rinpoche's orders. They replied, "When you give us orders, you are no different from Guru Rinpoche, but you should also give orders to human beings as well. If human beings do nothing, neither can we."

Chokling also went to Palyül Monastery and gave many Tersar teachings to Gyatrül Rinpoche. In both the Palyül and Katok monasteries, he began the *Dütön*, a drama commemorating Guru Rinpoche's coming to Tibet. Leaving Palyül Monastery, he traveled to Golok.

At Yilung in Derge he constructed many small monasteries. The royal family invited him to the Derge Monastery in the capital of Derge where he performed the drubchen of *Kabgye* with Kongtrül Rinpoche and others. The king of Derge was the incarnation of King Trisong Deutsen's youngest son. Chokling discovered that prince's costume.

He also visited the palace at Dzongshö Deshek Düpa where he discovered many termas and performed many drubchens. He discovered many more termas in Dagam Wangpuk at Pawo Wangchen Drak. In Burmo Cave, he also discovered several termas including Ananda's dharma robes and an undergarment of Yeshe Tsogyal.

Because of a vision, Jamyang Khyentse advised Chokling to go to Bhutan. "If you can take the teaching of Khandro Gongdü from Karpo Drak in Paro, you will attain the rainbow body of the great transformation." Thinking of the future, Chokling gave Jamgön Kongtrül some special empowerments, in particular the *Shinje Tsedag* and the *Chökyong Gongdü* and entrusted Kongtrül with all the terma teachings he had so far kept secret.

Chokgyur Lingpa slowly proceeded towards Bhutan, but as his attendants disobeyed him, he failed to reach his destination. He went to Karmey Monastery, to Surmang Monastery and gradually to Neten Monastery where he fell ill. His disciples performed many ceremonies, but he passed away in the morning of the first day of the fifth month. Flowers rained and the earth quaked. Jamyang Khyentse was asked about the body. He replied that it should be placed intact in a stupa and not cremated. So Chokgyur Lingpa's body was adorned with Guru Rinpoche's crown and the white yogic skirt he had thrown in the lake. Dressed in all his robes, his body was placed in the round part of a stupa made of gold, ornamented with silver and studded with jewels, many of which came from his termas. The

stupa was kept at the monastery in Kela, his principal seat. In 1969 the Chinese destroyed it. Some monks cremated his body. The relics remain.

This was the biography of Terchen Chokgyur Lingpa.

VISIONS

Once, when practicing *Könchok Chidü* in his house, Chokgyur Lingpa had a vision of Guru Rinpoche with consort. From that time on, he could always converse with Guru Rinpoche as if speaking in person. Guru Rinpoche made a prediction for him in accordance with which he stayed in strict retreat above Karmey Monastery, in the residence Sang-ngak Podrang, the Secret Mantra Palace, which was his ‘body seat’. During this time he had visions of many yidam deities. When his experience blazed, he would sometimes keep his vajra and bell hovering in the air before him. Later, staying in retreat for three years above Tölung Tsurphu, Gyalwa Karmapa’s monastery, he manifested all the signs of complete accomplishment in Maha Ati. For the sake of future disciples, he then composed two commentaries on Trekchö and Tögal, which were like his heart.

Likewise, before constructing the Neten Monastery he had a vision of the Indian siddha Mitradzoki, a corpulent Indian *atsara*, pointing a finger at Neten and saying, “Build a monastery there.”

During his life, Chokling personally visited the Copper-Colored Mountain, Guru Rinpoche’s pure realm, three times. Once was from Karmey Monastery. He told his attendant, “I am closing my door from inside. For one week let no one enter my room.” In his vision, came down from the sky four dakinis, placed before him a white cloth with a crossed vajra design on it, and requested that he sit upon it. He sat down and the dakinis flew with him through the sky. From the air he saw Tsari Dagpa Shelri, Lhasa and many other places in Tibet, as well as Bodhgaya, the river Nairanjana, Kushinagar and other places in India. They then flew west and he saw Mount Malaya. They landed at sacred places and he made circumambulations and aspirations. Finally arriving at the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain, they crossed the water surrounding it by boat with Songpo Labpey, one of the 25 disciples, as boat man. They saw all the cities of the rakshasas and the dakinis explained that an emanation of Guru Rinpoche lives in each of the cities of the eight directions. They went through the Khandro Sanglam, the Secret Dakini Path, and arrived at Ngayab Palri, the Glorious Mountain on the Continent of Chamara.

Chokling saw a vast and miraculous palace. Emanations of Guru Rinpoche filled the air, coming and going, being sent out and re-absorbed. Guru Rinpoche was also being carried in a chariot around the palace as a drubchen was about to begin. The dakinis said, “We are a little late. We must go to the four palaces of the pacifying, increasing, magnetizing and subjugating activities.” They went first to the eastern palace, then to the southern, western and northern palaces. In each palace an emanation of Guru Rinpoche was teaching on one of these four activities. Chokling received blessings in all four places. At the palace of subjugation, a *dokpa* ritual was being performed. Taksham Nüden Dorje, Düdül Nüden Dorje and so forth, all twenty-one Nüden Dorjes, led the dances. Afterwards, the dances of Sangye Lingpa, Ratna Lingpa and the other thirteen Lingpas were performed with Chokgyur Lingpa dancing with them.

The two dakinis took Chokling to a small house where many sixteen-year-old girls were performing dakini sadhana. Chokling asked, “Who is the main girl?” His companions didn’t answer but giggled. Finally the girl said, “I am the one you always pray to. Don’t you know me?” In amazement, Chokling made many full prostrations and received much advice from Yeshe Tsogyal. The two attendants dissolved into Tsogyal’s heart. Choking thought, “I must meet Guru Rinpoche and also visit the middle and upper stories. Without a companion, I will not know the way.” Then Yeshe Tsogyal laughed and again emanated the two girls from her heart.

He went to the central temple where Guru Rinpoche sat on a big throne in the center. Many people were there, including Indian and Tibetan panditas and siddhas, the twenty-five disciples, all the tertöns and King Trisong Deutsen and his sons, attending as patrons. Chokling Rinpoche made various offerings both actual and imagined to Guru Rinpoche who then gave him many empowerments, transmissions, predictions and instructions. All the dakinis performed a feast offering. Vajra songs resounded from the sky. Chokling chanted the song *Dagli Pungkham* with the others all immediately joining in. Chokling thought, “This is a song by Longchenpa, yet they chant it at the Copper-Colored Mountain.” A voice from the sky said, “Like the tantras, Longchenpa’s songs pervade all buddhahelds.”

Gradually he climbed the stairs to the middle story, meeting Avalokiteshvara and receiving empowerments and transmissions of many practices. Proceeding to the top story, he met Guru Amitayus and received many life tantras, transmissions and

blessings. Returning downstairs, the two dakinis said, “You may return to Tibet now.” Chokling thought, “I must see Guru Rinpoche again and ask for more advice.” Guru Rinpoche was in the park with Vairotsana, Namkhai Nyingpo and several other disciples. Chokling met him and asked many questions. Guru Rinpoche placed his hands upon Chokling’s head, blessed him and gave him many instructions. The other disciples also gave him a lot of advice. Chokgyur Lingpa thought, “I must see Yeshe Tsogyal one more time.” Immediately from the sky a voice resounded, “We are never apart for even an instant. I will always instruct you in times of need. We will meet again and again.” Satisfied, Chokling flew back through the sky and arrived in his room just as his door was being opened. One week had passed.

Chokling’s second visit to the Copper Colored Mountain was quite similar to the first. It occurred during the building of Neten Monastery. After finishing the main construction of the monastery, a drubchen was performed. The walls were incomplete; nonetheless the drubchen was held inside. Through the cracks Chokling saw many sunbeams and rainbows. One ray touched his skull cups of amrita and rakta and they began to boil. In the vapor he saw the Copper Colored Mountain, met Guru Rinpoche and received instructions.

The third time he visited the Copper Colored Mountain was in a dream at Neten Monastery.

From Neten, he made a pilgrimage around the mountain of Yegyäl Namkhadzö. Here he had a vision of the thousand buddhas of this aeon. In the vision, they bestowed a golden stupa blazing with light on him. Following this, he visited Yertsong and met Lui-de, one of the sixteen *sthaviras*, original elders, surrounded by five hundred arhats.

At Karmey Monastery he had a vision of the 27 Karmapas, seeing the details of their lives and activities. Explaining this to artists later, he had them make paintings on the monastery walls. Similarly he saw the lives of the Situ Rinpoches: eight Situ incarnations to be named Padma, emanations of the eight manifestations of Guru Rinpoche. The present is the fourth Situ with the name of Padma. There will likewise be 17 incarnations of Chokgyur Lingpa. He saw how they will benefit the doctrine and sentient beings.

While remaining in a Maha Ati meditation retreat in Sang-ngak Podrang he saw the 12 buddhas of the Maha Ati lineage. Light radiating from their hearts was

absorbed into his. Afterwards, he had this vision painted on his wall.

He opened up a practice cave of Vimalamitra in the sacred place of Riwo Wangshu. Here he had a vision of Vimalamitra appearing within a blue light. Vimalamitra gave Chokling many oral instructions.

With the Dharma protectors and the doctrine guardians he conversed as if talking with people. He also saw Durtrö Lhamo in the form of an old woman. She placed a great butter lamp in front of him. At first it was not bright, but later the old woman made it very brilliant. Therefore all followers and future incarnations will benefit from keeping Durtrö Lhamo as a protector.

Many local deities such as Nyenchen Tanglha, Magyal Pomra and others welcomed Chokling. Other nonhumans also came to receive his teachings, giving him offerings of objects from the realms of the nagas and others. Magyal Pomra gave him a Guru Rinpoche crown, a very magnificent one, that had also been worn by King Gesar. The Tibetan government later took it. These exemplify merely a few of Chokgyur Lingpa's visions.

Chokling Rinpoche passed away on the first day of the fifth month and on the 19th day Jamyang Khyentse saw him in a vision. To the west of this world, Chokgyur Lingpa had manifested a new buddhafield called Padma Kepa, the Lotus Covered Realm, where he appeared in the form of the sambhogakaya buddha Padma Nyugu. In this vision Jamyang Khyentse received many empowerments, transmissions and oral instructions which he later wrote down as sadhanas. Chokling promised that future followers would be reborn in that pure land immediately after death. This was the testament of Chokgyur Lingpa received by Jamyang Khyentse.

TEACHINGS

Chokgyur Lingpa received a list enumerating over a hundred terma treasure places, but specifically he and Jamyang Khyentse had what is known as the seven transmissions, the *Kabab Dün*.

Kama, the oral tradition of the Nyingma lineage, is the first of the seven transmissions, including the *Do*, *Gyü* and *Sem* meaning *Düpeydo*, *Gyutrül* and *Semdey*,³ which in this case includes *Longdey* and *Men-ngak Dey*. Chokling Rinpoche received these complete teachings within the empowerments and reading transmissions of *Nyingma Kama*, *Nyingma Gyübum*, the *Kangyur* and so forth. Frequently passing on the *Kama* transmission, he established the tradition of its practice at his two seats. His termas often contain the same words and meaning as the *Kama*.

Sa-ter, or earth-treasure is the second transmission. Chokgyur Lingpa revealed 37 such termas. At the age of 13 he received the practice support of prince Lhasey. At Danyi Khala Rongo, he revealed the outer sadhana of *Tukdrub Barchey Künsel*, complete with root and branches; the inner sadhana of *Sampa Lhündrub* with root and branches; and the secret sadhana of *Dorje Draktsal*. He also discovered the oral instruction of Guru Rinpoche, known as *Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo*, the *Gradual Path of the Wisdom Essence*. From Nabün Dzong he found the terma called *Padma Tsuktor*, a practice of Avalokiteshvara. From behind Ogmin Karmey Monastery at Damchen Drak he discovered the teachings of *Zabpa Kordün*. At Yegyal Namkhadzö he found the *Tukdrub Gongpa Kündü* and the *Sabdün Chalag* with many Anu Yoga teachings. At Meshö Dzomnang, in the cave of Padma Shelpuk, he revealed the *Dzogchen Desum*. At Sengchen Namdrak, he found the *Damchö Shokdey Drukpa*. At Khandro Bumdzong, he revealed the *Tukje Chenpo Gyutrül Drawa*, the *Magical Net of the Great Compassionate One*. At Karmey Pelbeu, he found the *Mamo Chidü*. At Dzogchen Rudam Sangtrö, he revealed the *Demchog Sangye Nyamjor*. These are the main earth treasures, but there are many others.

Chokling also found more than 100 sacred statues of Guru Rinpoche made of different materials as well as many other ritual articles such as vajras and kilayas. He discovered crowns and clothes of Guru Rinpoche, belongings of the twenty-five

disciples, and many relics of the Indian siddhas. Most of these were taken out before big gatherings of people. He revealed 100 *Nyingtig* teachings alone and a large amount of sacred substances to eat. He extracted materials for making statues of Guru Rinpoche, made many and gave them away. There are many marvelous and wondrous stories of how he retrieved all these treasures.

The third of the seven transmissions is *yangter*, re-finding and re-spreading a terma from previous lives. From his former life as Sangye Lingpa, Chokling revealed and then expounded the *Gurdrak Hungmar Nyingtig*. Dungsob Repa's wife, the dakini Kunga Bum, had a terma teaching called *Magyü Sangwey Lamkyer*. Chokling took it as a yangter and offered it to Jamgön Kongtrül. This is included in the *Rinchen Terdzö*.

Gongter, mind-treasure, is the fourth transmission. A mind-treasure arises, like a rainbow in the sky, within the mind of the tertön who is inseparable from Guru Rinpoche or the yidam. Chokling's mind-treasure is the sadhana of Tara with a long text on the development and completion stage practices.

Fifth is *jedren*, recollection. Chokgyur Lingpa was previously Nub Kölungpa Yönten Gyatso, a disciple of Nubchen Sangye Yeshe. Remembering this, Chokling transcribed the testament of oral instructions called *Lung Dorje Köpa*, given when his root teacher, Nubchen Sangye Yeshe, passed away. He also wrote down the *Garbu Nubkyi Khapho*, the method of chanting the Rulu Rulu mantra and performing the dances of the Nubchen tradition. The yogic exercises of *Lama Gongdü*, he also remembered from his incarnation as Sangye Lingpa.

Dagnang, pure vision, is the sixth transmission. Chokling had visions of many deities giving him sadhanas. He once had a vision of the great pandita Vimalamitra giving him the *Vimala Zabtig*, which he then transcribed.

Seventh is *nyengyü* meaning 'hearing lineage', the oral transmission from mouth to ear. Guru Rinpoche gave Chokling the *Dzogchen Ati Zabdön Nyingtig* in *five parts when he went to the Copper Colored Mountain.

In short, Chokgyur Lingpa fulfilled the prophesy stating he would open 25 great sacred places and 100 lesser ones.

There were 10 main lineage holders of his termas and 25 lesser ones. Jamyang Khyentse was the foremost, others included Karmapa Tekchok Dorje and Khakyab Dorje, Situ Padma Nyinche Wangpo and Padma Kunsang, Jamgön Kongtrül, Dazang

Tulku, Drimey Shingkyong Gönpö, Minling Trichen, Palyül Gyatrül, Pawo Rinpoche, Sakya Gongma, Reding Tulku, Chokling's own two sons, and Karmey Khenpo. These lineage holders later passed on the empowerments of *Chokling Tersar*; collected, printed and practiced the teachings; and wrote commentaries on them. Thus, the lineage of these teachings exists even at the present time.

Chokgyur Lingpa's terma teachings consist of 33 volumes. His own writings comprise 12 additional volumes. The details of all these teachings can be found in the respective tables of contents. The entire *Chokling Tersar* collection has been reprinted in Delhi.

Most of Chokling's terma teachings are *earth treasures*, only a few of them are of the other six types of transmissions because Chokling obeyed the order of Situ Pema Nyinche Wangpo telling him to take mainly earth-treasures and leave the others.

Descendants

Wangchok Dorje.

Chokgyur Lingpa had a daughter and one son with his dakini, Degah. The son, who was named Wangchok Dorje and also known as Tsewang Drakpa, was the incarnation of King Jah. At the age of 16 he wrote many amazingly profound songs and commentaries. An extremely learned teacher, everyone wanted him to become a tantric layman rather than a monk for the sake of the bloodline. He said, however, that he preferred to be a good practitioner. Traveling to Derge, he met Paltrül Rinpoche in the province of Golok. He told Paltrül Rinpoche that he wanted to be a monk, so Paltrül Rinpoche ordained him. Jamyang Khyentse cried like a small boy when he learned of this and said: “Something really went wrong today.” Wangchok Dorje returned to Dzongsar Monastery with a shaved head and said, “I wish to become a renunciant and wander everywhere, having no fixed abode.” He always dressed in a sheepskin coat. Jamyang Khyentse told him, “Don’t talk like that! Return to Neten Monastery and stay in retreat, but first give me your hair.” Wangchok Dorje gave Jamyang Khyentse his hair and then went to Neten where he supervised the expansion of the monastery. They still keep his hair. Each of Wangchok Dorje’s hairs is said to contain 100,000 dakinis, Jamyang Khyentse himself wrote a note about this. Remaining at Neten for many years, Wangchok Dorje died at 27, leaving no descendants.

Tsewang Norbu.

In Derge, the daughter of the Somo Tsang family had a son by Chokgyur Lingpa named Tsewang Norbu. Being an incarnation of Yudra Nyingpo, he became the teaching holder of the *Dzogchen Desum*. He was very young when Chokgyur Lingpa conferred the transmission of the *Dzogchen Desum* on him. He studied with Jamyang Khyentse, Jamgön Kongtrül, Mipham Rinpoche and many others and became very learned, attaining a high level of realization through practice. He stayed in Neten and Kela Monasteries for a long time, helping them grow. He received the entire *Tersar* from Chokling, Khyentse and Kongtrül and passed it on to others.

He passed on the empowerments of *Dzogchen Desum* to the second Chokling, Ngedön Drubpey Dorje. Slowly, he traveled about Tibet with his consort, visiting Lhasa, Central Tibet and Tsang. He gave many empowerments and transmissions of the *Chokling Tersar* and had many disciples. Later, the king of Bhutan, Orgyen Wangchuk, invited him to Bhutan. Finally he returned to Tibet. Since he composed many written arrangements for the *Chokling Tersar*, he was extremely beneficial in spreading these teachings. He passed away in Lhasa at the age of 73. Some people still alive today met him. His life story is quite amazing. Unfortunately he left no children.

Könchok Paldrön.

Chokling Rinpoche and Degah also had a daughter, Könchok Paldrön. When she asked Chokling whether she should become a nun, he told her she should marry. She married Orgyen Chöpel, a son of the Tsangsar family. “Your yidam is Jetsün Tara,” Chokling told her. She practiced the Tersar sadhanas a great deal, and especially recited many mantras of her yidam, Jetsün Tara. She had actual visions of Jetsün Tara three times. She later said, “Although I lead a worldly life, I have no delusion during the day, and only slightly at night.” She was very skilled in the rituals and tantric traditions.

Könchok Paldrön received many teachings from the two Jamgöns, Chokgyur Lingpa, Mipham Rinpoche, Paltrül Rinpoche and the Karmapas. She brought great benefit to Chokgyur Lingpa’s *Tersar* teachings.

Könchok Paldrön often blessed grain by reciting mantras and blowing on it. People wore the grain in their amulets, tied around the necks of goats, these amulets made them immune to bullets. Women like Könchok Paldrön are true dakinis.

Thanks to Könchok Paldrön and Tsewang Norbu the tradition and the teachings still exist. When she died at Kela she was absorbed into the mind of Jetsün Tara. She had four sons: Samten Gyatso, Chimey Dorje, Lama Sang-ngak and Akhu Tersey. Before she died all four were summoned together. At that time the incarnation of Jamgön Kongtrül, a son of the 15th Karmapa named Palden Khyentse Özer, resided at Kela. He and the four sons performed the funeral ceremony and a drubchen. A small stupa was erected to hold her remains. Details about her sons follow.

Samten Gyatso.⁴

Samten Gyatso, Könchok Paldrön's eldest son, an incarnation of Vimalamitra, was a disciple of both Jamyang Khyentse and Kongtrül, as well as of Tsewang Norbu. Being a monk, he never ate after midday and consumed no meat or wine during his entire life. Very learned, he spent most of his life in retreat, completing 100,000,000 recitations of the Vajra Kilaya mantra. He mainly practiced Maha Ati teachings according to the *Kunsang Tuktig* and *Chetsün Nyingtig*. He was the root teacher of the 15th Karmapa, Khakyab Dorje. Invited to Tsurphu in Central Tibet, Samten Gyatso offered Khakyab Dorje the entire *Chokling Tersar* transmission. He spent most of his life at his seat at Dzong-Go, a towering rock partly surrounded by a large river. Only one small path led to the top where there were two levels of meadows with scattered trees.

Samten Gyatso spent his entire life practicing and teaching the *Chokling Tersar*. When Jamgön Kongtrül's reincarnation, the 15th Karmapa's son, came to Kham, he received the *Tersar* teachings from Samten Gyatso. In addition, Samten Gyatso offered the 16th Karmapa many empowerments and transmissions and was also the king of Nangchen's lama. He was very influential and had many higher perceptions, such as clairvoyance. His body barely cast a shadow. When Samten Gyatso was passing away, Tulku Urgyen offered him the instruction of the 21 A's. Samten Gyatso simply nodded. When Samten Gyatso had already passed away, his eyes gazed upwards and he was smiling. He stayed in meditative composure for three days sitting up, before the body was cremated.

Chimey Dorje.⁵

Konchok Paldrön's second son was Chimey Dorje. As a youth, he was a layman but was quite different from other people and able to perform various miracles. He remained a layman with long hair, carrying a gun and a long knife until he was 24 yrs. old. One day while he was acting as Samten Gyatso's attendant they met a yogi who made many prostrations to Chimey Dorje. Chimey Dorje said, "Do not bow to me, I am just a layman." The other did not listen, replying, "You are Chokgyur Lingpa's grandson and a descendant of the Tsangsar family lineage." That night, Chimey Dorje thought, "People think I am special, but I have no virtues." He had

already received transmissions from Jamyang Khyentse and Kongtrül Rinpoche, but it was only then that he began to practice the Dharma. He became a tantric practitioner and received the empowerments of the *Rinchen Terdzö* from Ngedön Drubpey Dorje. His root teacher was Gewa Namröl, a yogi and practitioner of Vajra Kilaya, a disciple of Ngedön Drubpey Dorje.

Chimey Dorje wore white robes and had braided hair. Everybody considered him an incarnation of Phadampa Sangye. Chimey Dorje remained in retreat for many years, practicing mainly the recitations from the *Tersar*. All the Dharma protectors said he could command them like servants. One day his horse was stolen and Chimey Dorje told Gyalpo Pehar to give the thief a little magical show. The thief was staying in a tent when he suddenly saw two human-sized monkeys grinning at him, one from the roof opening and one from the door. Terrified, he returned the horse.

Chimey Dorje's main practice was *Chö*. When he practiced *Chö* everyone nearby would fall asleep. My father (Neten Chokling Tulku) tried various ways to prevent himself from sleeping, but through his higher perceptions Chimey Dorje always knew. Chimey Dorje manifested all the signs of having perfected Maha Ati practice. My father had seven relic pills of the Buddha which he requested Chimey Dorje to multiply. "I will try," Chimey Dorje replied, then placed them in a small bottle which he wrapped in cloth and sealed. He performed a consecration and when the bottle was opened, it contained 70 relic pills.

As a boy, my father once asked Chimey Dorje for a magic wand which could grant invisibility. "I will enjoin the protectors," he said. He called my father the next day and said, "Look toward the east." From there a crow came flying with a stick in its beak which it placed in front of them before flying away. Chimey Dorje said, "If you practice a little, this could be your magic wand." The stick however was later lost.

Chimey Dorje's son, Penjik, was once lying sick a month's journey away. Chimey Dorje decided to practice *Chö*. Even though the place was a month's journey away, both Penjik and other people there heard the sound of the bone trumpet.

Chimey Dorje frequently gave the transmission of *Chokling Tersar* along with many other teachings, including Maha Ati instructions. He also gave the reading

transmission for the *Kangyur*. He had a large group of disciples, a few sons and also some daughters. This merely sketches a few details of Chimey Dorje. (He died in 1948 at the age of sixty-three.)

Lama Sang-ngak.⁶

Lama Sang-ngak, Könchok Paldrön's third son, was a monk and extremely learned in the Chokling tradition of making tormas, chanting and so forth. A disciple of both Jamyang Khyentse and Kongtrül, he was a great practitioner who spent many years in retreat. He was famous in Kham for being unequalled in the recitation of mantras. (Lama Sang-ngak died in 1949 at the age of sixty-three).

Tersey Tulku.⁷

Tersey Tulku was Könchok Paldrön's fourth son. When Wangchok Dorje, Chokling's second son passed away, his mother and others asked Jamyang Khyentse about his rebirth. Khyentse Rinpoche replied, "He will be reborn to his sister. They were relatives in the past and will now be related as mother and son." Tersey Tulku met the two Jamgöns, as well as Tsewang Norbu and Paltrül Rinpoche, but his special root teacher was Shakya Shri. He is said to have gained realization of Mahamudra after meeting Shakya Shri, but *Tersar* was his main practice. He was a tantric lay practitioner with several consorts. Learned in the *Chokling Tersar* tradition, he composed many arrangements of these teachings and wrote many other things as well. His main residence was Kela Monastery where he spent most of his time in retreat. He also contributed greatly to the development of both the seats of Chokling. He restored the temple at Kela, had many new statues made and many blocks of the *Tersar* teachings carved. At Neten Monastery, he personally made 1,000 statues of Guru Rinpoche.

He carried a representative statue of Guru Rinpoche with him wherever he went, considering it to actually be Guru Rinpoche in person. He received the four empowerments first thing each morning and shed tears of devotion every time. He stayed at Neten Monastery for a long time. My father told me he would rise early in the morning to see whether or not Tersey Tulku was crying. He gave many transmissions of *Tersar* and had many disciples, frequently giving Maha Ati instructions. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche received many teachings from him. He

passed away a few years before the Chinese took over Tibet. Presently no reincarnation of him has been recognized but there must be one. We should search for him.

Tulku Urgyen.

Chimey Dorje had several sons. Tulku Urgyen is the one most highly regarded today. When he was young, the 15th Karmapa, Khakyab Dorje, recognized him at Tsangsar Nargon and gave him the name Karma Urgyen Chokdrub Palbar. He was then enthroned at Nargön monastery which belonged to the Barom Kagyü school. He received the *Chokling Tersar* teachings from two of his uncles and studied reading and the sciences under them. He stayed with Samten Gyatso for many years, receiving many teachings on Maha Ati. He met the Kela Chokling, Könchok Tenpey Gyaltzen, and acted as his attendant. He also received many transmissions from a close disciple of Jamgön Kongtrül's named Kyungrül Karjam.

Tulku Urgyen went to Central Tibet and received the *Rinchen Terdzö* from Karsey Kongtrül, who was the 15th Karmapa's son. He offered the entire *Chokling Tersar* transmission to the 16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpey Dorje, and was one of his root gurus. At Lhasa, he offered the *Dzogchen Desum* transmission to H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche. The Minling Khyung Rinpoche, Ngawang Chökyi Drakpa, requested the *Tersar* transmission from Tulku Urgyen, who obliged to go to Kham and so was unable to give it at that time. So he said, "I have already offered it to the Karmapa, you may receive it from him," which Chung Rinpoche later did. Tulku Urgyen then went back to Kham, returning to Central Tibet after Samten Gyatso passed away. At Tsurphu he offered many teachings to His Holiness Karmapa and also assisted him considerably in political matters. Then he proceeded slowly to Sikkim.

Tulku Urgyen completed the three year retreat four times. He also regularly performed the various drubchens according to *Chokling Tersar*. My father, the third Neten Chokling, regarded Tulku Urgyen very highly and was very close to him. He considered Tulku Urgyen the life-vein of the *Chokling Tersar*, both the spiritual and the family lineages. Tulku Urgyen constructed and restored many temples. During the later part of his life, he restored the monastery in Nepal called Nagi Gömpa, where he established a sangha of monks and nuns and invited H.H. Karmapa to visit

along with his spiritual sons.

At the sacred place of Jarung Khashor at Boudhanath in Nepal, he erected the great monastery Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling. The Nepali king was invited to the consecration, which was performed by H.H. Karmapa. His Holiness gave the *Kagyü Ngakdzö* to thousands of people at that time. Urgyen Tulku also restored the sacred place of Asura Cave and constructed a retreat center for the practice of *Chokling Tersar*. Later he invited Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche to Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling to transmit the *Chokling Tersar* to the Chokling Tulku, the fourth Kela Chokling who lives there, and many other lamas. His monks study a lot and perform the drubchens of the Chokling tradition. Tulku Urgyen's two sons took care of the large monastery, while he remained in retreat at the hermitage of Nagi Gompa.

At the request of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Tulku Urgyen gave many transmissions, including the 100 empowerments of Chö which took five days. Dilgo Khyentse considered these empowerments to be very important and they were received by the Tulku of Dzongsar Khyentse, the 7th Dzogchen Rinpoche, the 7th Shechen Rabjam, the two Chokling Tulkus, and many other lamas. Tulku Urgyen was the first lama to spread the Tibetan tradition of Buddhism to Malaysia. His third visit to Malaysia was on a world tour during which he visited Germany, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Denmark, Holland, England, Scotland, U.S.A., Hong Kong and Singapore. I have heard that he possessed extremely great blessings. We do not know his secret life story, but Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche considered him the foremost Maha Ati practitioner in this world. He passed away in 1996 and I pray that his tulku will soon be found. He had several sons, the main ones being the two at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling. The elder, Chökyi Nyima, is a Drikung Kagyü tulku recognized by Karmapa. The younger son, a tulku of the Kela Chokling, is a tantric lay practitioner and has two sons, one of which has been recognized as the tulku of Dilgo Khyentse.

Chökyi Nyima.

Tulku Chökyi Nyima is Tulku Urgyen's eldest son and was born in Tibet. His mother was Kunsang Dechen. As a small boy, he was recognized by H.H. Karmapa as the reincarnation of a great lama from the Drikung Kagyü Monastery at Bong. He was enthroned at Bong Monastery by the monks and people of the area. According

to the tradition established in his former lives, he went to meet the Dalai Lama, visit Sera monastery and other places together with a lot of people. Before the Chinese took over Tibet his father took him to Sikkim.

At Rumtek and from different lamas and khenpos elsewhere, he studied all the philosophies and sciences and became very learned. He has received numerous transmissions from H.H. Karmapa, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and his father. At present he is supervising the Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling monastery.

This completes the family lineage of Chokgyur Lingpa.

INCARNATION LINEAGES

The Kela Chokling.

When Chokgyur Lingpa passed away his sons had no children, so the two Jamgöns felt reincarnation was necessary. The 2nd Chokgyur Lingpa, Könchok Tenpey Gyaltzen, was then found and recognized. He was from Derge and his family name was Kyensa. Placing him on a high throne one day, the two Jamgöns invoked the wisdom aspect of Chokgyur Lingpa in the sky, which then dissolved into the boy, blessing him to be inseparable from Chokgyur Lingpa. Könchok Tenpey Gyaltzen then had the same mind stream as Chokgyur Lingpa. On the day of his enthronement many rainbows appeared and a rain of flowers fell.

Jamyang Khyentse was his actual root teacher and he also received many teachings from Jamgön Kongtrül and other lamas. After he had attained a good education, the two Jamgöns said, “Go to Kela. Most of your work is there. You also have termas,” they continued asking him, “Do you want to continue the teachings of the previous Chokling or would you like to find your own termas?” “I will continue the previous Chokling’s teachings,” he answered, pleasing the two Jamgöns. “We hoped that would be your answer,” they said. “Whether you build an earthen temple at Kela or a temple of gold anywhere else the merit will be equal.” Then they sent him off.

At Kela he met Wangchok Dorje and they worked together, expanding the temples, the practice center and shrines and then making statues. Kela Chokling had wood blocks for more than 30 volumes of the *Tersar* teachings carved. He performed the Chokling drubchens and many dances, and also gave many teachings. Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö received many empowerments and transmissions from him. Once during a medicine drubchen the medicine all turned into self-appeared statues of Guru Rinpoche. He recited more than 100,000,000 Vajra Guru mantras and was considered by people to be perfect at everything.

Due to fighting between Tibet and China, the Chinese army once arrested him and put him in chains. Thinking he would die, he prayed to Jamyang Khyentse. Jamyang Khyentse appeared, the size of a mountain, in a vision and said, “Today

you need not fear.” Chokling then spoke to the Chinese soldiers: “I don’t want to see ordinary soldiers, take me to your highest ranking official.” They took him to the highest official. After their conversation, the official liked Kela Chokling and asked him to act as conciliator between China and Tibet. Chokling agreed and arranged for a meeting between the heads of China and Tibet; both countries respected him for this. He later made a pilgrimage to Central Tibet.

He benefited the tradition of Chokgyur Lingpa greatly. Had he not had the wood blocks of the *Tersar* carved, these teachings would probably be almost nonexistent today. At the base of Kela mountain he established a retreat center. In the later part of his life, he reached the level in Maha Ati called the exhaustion of dharmata.

When my father met Kela Chokling as a boy, Chokling recognized him as one of the Chokling tulkus and gave him many teachings. He always used to say, “When I die, I will be reborn in Yarlung, the most delightful place in all of Tibet.” He lived to an old age, passing away at seventy-five.

Kela Chokling’s reincarnation was born in Yarlung near the seat of Jigme Lingpa, and was recognized by the Karmapa. The tulku was then taken to Kela and enthroned. He studied very hard and everyone hoped he would become a great lama. Because of inauspicious events and things going against his wishes, however, he passed away at the age of thirteen. This tulku again had two reincarnations. One, born at Tinglung in Derge, was recognized by Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö and taken to Kela Monastery to be enthroned. Just after that, the Chinese took over Tibet and he went to Derge. He presently stays at Kela under the Chinese occupation.

At Tsurphu, the 16th Karmapa, Rigpey Dorje, recognized another incarnation of Kela Chokling, the second son of Tulku Ugyen, called Lungtok Gyatso. After arriving in India, he was enthroned at Rumtek Monastery and given the name Dewey Dorje. He has completed many studies. This tulku of Kela Chokling is not an ordinary person and has had many visions of Guru Rinpoche. At times he gives very reliable predictions. I think that he is a true incarnate tertön and I have complete confidence that he is a tulku of Chokgyur Lingpa in the Kela lineage. He is married to Dechen Paldrön, a daughter of the Terdhe family and they have two sons. One son has been recognized as the tulku of Dilgo Khyentse. Everyone now puts great hopes in this new son.

The Neten Chokling.

Ngedön Drubpey Dorje.

The incarnation line of the Chokling tulku at Neten is as follows. Before his death, Chokgyur Lingpa gave a letter to Karmey Khenpo Rinchen Dargye and said, “In the future you will become very depressed. Open this letter then, but not before.” Karmey Khenpo kept the letter in his reliquary. Later, after Chokgyur Lingpa had passed away, he became very saddened that Chokling had left no descendants. Then he opened the letter in which Chokling had written, “I will return to my old home.” Karmey Khenpo took this letter to Jamyang Khyentse who said, “I thought it would be like this. This is really Chokgyur Lingpa’s letter. Now we need a tulku for Neten Monastery.”

The tulku, born in the Kyasu family, was found and given the name Ngedön Drubpey Dorje. Taken to Neten monastery, from an early age he was very wonderful, displaying many miracles. He refused to listen to anyone, so no one could give him orders. Sometimes he hung his clothes on the rays of the sun. When his tutor taught him reading, he would neither learn nor study, only play. His tutor often beat him, yet he was never especially afraid. Even though the tutor locked him in a room, he could still be seen playing outside.

One day Neten Chokling was playing on the roof of the house and the disciplinarian scolded him, threatening to spank him. Trying to escape, he jumped from the roof of the three-story building, but landed safely on the ground. When the tutor came down to get him, he leapt up on the roof again. But as he still could not read, the tutor beat him. One day Wangchok Dorje told the tutor, “You must not beat him, in our family line it is impossible not to know how to read. If he cannot learn, it must be his karma.” When Neten Chokling was older, he learned reading even without being taught.

Ngedön Drubpey Dorje went to Derge and remained for seven years with Jamyang Khyentse and Jamgön Kongtrül receiving teachings and oral instructions. The last time Jamgön Kongtrül passed on the transmission of *Rinchen Terdzö*, Neten Chokling was the master of ceremonies. He then went to the seat of Neten in

Kham.

Ngedön Drubpey Dorje spent long periods of time in retreat. A tantric lay practitioner, his main consort was Kunsang Chödrön. He had many other consorts but not a single son. One or two women came, claiming that he was the father of their children, but the children then died immediately. When asked about this he replied, “They were not my sons, so Ekajati must have become displeased.”

Neten Chokling’s conduct was extremely crude, like that of an Indian mahasiddha. He drank a lot of wine and took lots of snuff. When people came to see him he would send for women and wine. Having higher perceptions, he could immediately reveal his visitors’ thoughts and he would expose any hidden faults right away. When great lamas or dignitaries came to visit him, the servant boys would be ordered to come in naked while bringing tea and in addition to fart loudly.

Ngedön Drubpey Dorje perfected all the Maha Ati practices and his body barely cast a shadow. Khenpo Ngakchung later met him and said, “On this side of the Ganges, no practitioner has higher realization.” Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö also traveled to Neten and received the *Dzogchen Desum* from this Chokling, who was his root teacher. One day Chökyi Lodrö told Chokling, “People say that you can read very fast. I would like to test that.” Khyentse then brought the *Kalachakra Tantra* volume from the *Kangyur* and asked him to read it. Chokling answered, “I can’t see anything, I can’t read.” Dzongsar Khyentse pleaded, “At least read a little bit!” Chokling then began to spell his way through the text, one letter at a time. Khyentse demanded, “Please read properly!” Chokling replied, “If you can’t allow me to just sit peacefully then I guess I must read, but first I need some snuff.” He took a big wad of snuff, cleaned his fingers on a cloth and began to read the *Kalachakra* text from beginning to end with amazing speed. He declared, “I can see both sides at once, but my tongue can recite only what is written on the front!”

Ngedön Drubpey Dorje gave the *Rinchen Terdzö* transmission to his disciples three times. He passed on the *Chokling Tersar* teachings four times and *Nyingtig Yabshi* seven times. He had many amazing disciples and he also displayed many miracles. One day while he was performing a tantric dance, lightning struck his head, but, though the stones beneath his feet shattered, he neither flinched nor interrupted the ritual.

Neten Chokling enjoyed playing dangerous games. In the area of our home was a

big river. One day he wanted to cross the stream in a boat. Once in the boat, he took the oars and threw them both over-board in midstream. As the current swept the boat downstream, all his attendants were frightened and closed their eyes while Chokling simply roared with laughter. Many people lived along the river and they all cried out, "Our lama is being carried away by the river!" They ran along the banks, but the river was wide and there was nothing they could do. Finally the boat approached some rapids. Just before entering them, Chokling touched a big rock with his hand and said to Genyen Borang, a naga living in the river, "That's enough now!" The boat immediately began moving upstream, his hand leaving a deep imprint on the rock. Though no one can reach it, the mark can be seen through binoculars.

Neten Chokling built a small house above Neten monastery where he spent most of his time sitting calmly with wide open eyes. Sometimes he would suddenly start laughing. Asked why, he would reply, that at such and such a place, so and so was doing something funny.

At the age of 46, he went to Riwoche Monastery. Before leaving Neten, Chokling told everyone, "I will not come back. If you want to see me, you will have to come to me." He sent for his consort and girlfriends, gave them advice and presented them with gifts. "In this life we will not meet again," he said, "but at the moment you die, I will come to welcome you."

Dressing up in his finest clothes, he asked the richest of his monks to accompany him and they rode off on horseback wearing splendid robes. At Riwoche monastery, he began the drubchen of the *Sabdiin Phurba* in the Taklung Kagyü wing of the monastery. From time to time during the drubchen, he fell ill. A doctor gave him medicine, but he did not eat it. Sometimes when he did take the medicine, he emitted it again through the tips of his fingers. At the conclusion of the drubchen he said, "We return to Neten Monastery tomorrow." Having gone only a short way, they set up camp and, not the least depressed, Chokling said, "Tonight we shall pitch our tents below and not above the road. We shall sleep with our heads facing down and not up valley, because tonight I'm going to die. My body won't remain in the meditation posture. Bind a rope tightly around its neck, put it in a sack and take it directly to Neten Monastery. My tulku will be immediately reborn in Derge."

All of the accompanying monks were young, no older than twenty-five, some

thought, “Maybe he will indeed pass away, he has great foreknowledge.” Others thought, “Perhaps he is not dying, but simply fooling us. Today he rode on horseback and sang many songs.” That night, however, he died. The oldest monks said, “He might have really passed away. We should check by holding a hair under his nose.” They did, and the hair did not move. This happened on the third day of the fifth month. All the young monks cried because he had died. Some said, “Don’t cry, our lama is not like other lamas. We should do as he said.” Tying a rope around his neck, they put him in a sack and returned the body to Neten.

Many miraculous signs occurred that night. The people at Riwoche said, “Last night there were many signs. Chokling must have passed away. We should go and see.” They went, but before dawn Chokling’s monks had already left. The body was cremated at Neten, many relic pills were found in the ashes. The heart did not burn but stayed red and intact. These relics were placed in a stupa. When the Chinese destroyed the stupa, one monk took the heart. A few years ago the monk gave it to me, but I later lost it.

This was the life story of Neten Chokling, Ngedön Drubpey Dorje, who also composed many written works and instructions.

Pema Gyurme.⁸

As soon as Ngedön Drubpey Dorje had passed away, Neten monastery sent some monks to Derge to seek the reincarnation. When they questioned Dzongsar Khyentse, he replied, “There probably is an incarnation. I had a vision and the tulku is in Derge.” The monks wanted to take him right away but Dzongsar Khyentse said, “He is at Meshö, near the seat of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, in a place called Bujo. The family name is Tsamchok, and the mother is called Pesang Drölma. The child is not yet born, but still in the womb.”

The monks waited for four months before the third incarnation of Neten Chokling was born. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche named him Pema Gyurme. They later discovered how Dzongsar Khyentse had learned of the reincarnation. Around the fifteenth of the fifth month he fell into a light sleep and Ngedön Drubpey Dorje appeared before him, saying “I have passed away. My tulku is born in the Tsamchok family.” Dzongsar Khyentse wrote this down in his diary. He later cut it out and gave it to one of our servants. We still have it in Bir.

Pema Gyurmey's family was quite poor. At five years old, he was taken to Neten Monastery, where he studied extensively. When he was seventeen, together with many monks, he went to see Dzongsar Khyentse and received many teachings, including the bodhisattva vows. He received many empowerments and transmissions from Palpung Situ, Padma Wangchuk Gyalpo, before returning to his residence at Neten.

Pema Gyurme wanted a monastic college established at Neten, so he erected a new building for it. He invited Kyungtrül Karjam to Neten Monastery to give the *Rinchen Terdzö* transmission. After completing the houses for the college, he invited Tsültrim Nyima, the highest khenpo from Katok, and studied the 13 great root texts of philosophy, many sciences and other topics with him.

At the age of 29 he thought, "This is not enough, I must go to see Dzongsar Khyentse." He left in secret with only one or two servants. On the way a mule preceding him on the narrow path suddenly slipped over the edge of a very steep precipice. He pulled it back up with one hand. Many people saw this. At first he thought, "I must be very strong," but he later realized it must have been the activity of the protectors. He did the solkha for Ekajati every day of the journey to help him arrive safely in Derge. "If you are going to Derge, I will help you!" Ekajati said to him.

Arriving in Derge, he went to meet Dzongsar Khyentse. The night before, Khyentse Rinpoche dreamed of Ekajati coming and saying, "I now put Chokling Tulku in your care." He told Chokling, "Ekajati really looks after you." When Chokling went to Neten Monastery as a small boy his mother did not go, but he always had a kind of mother unseen by others. Later on in his life, he realized that it must have been Ekajati.

From Khyentse Rinpoche he received the *Rinchen Terdzö*, *Dam-Ngakdzö* and many other teachings of all the different schools. One day when Khyentse Rinpoche was ordaining many people, he told Chokling, "You should become a monk, but you will not remain one in the future. No Chokling Tulku has ever been a monk. In the future I will not be able to give ordination." So Chokling took both novice vows and full ordination.

Chokling Pema Gyurme studied many root texts with many Khenpos and debated frequently. He studied linguistics and medicine as well. One day, while

studying dialectics, he couldn't understand anything. He prayed to Sakya Pandita, then closed the book and fell asleep. He dreamed of a monk with a long crooked nose, wearing a pandita's hat over his shoulder. The monk sat down beside Chokling and asked, "Are you studying dialectics?" "Yes," he answered, "But I understand nothing." "There is nothing that cannot be understood," the monk said. He opened the book at exactly the place which Chokling did not understand. The monk explained it once and Chokling understood immediately. "Who are you?" he asked. "I am called Kunga Gyaltzen," replied the monk. Chokling immediately woke up thinking, "What an extraordinary dream." Opening the book, he found that it was just as in the dream.

Chokling Rinpoche enjoyed great spectacles. One night he dreamed of Ekajati who said, "You like great spectacles, I will show you something: not only this world but the entire three thousand-fold universe." Taking a knife she cut her chest open. Inside was vast space with many universes and world systems amassed like cloud banks, clearly and distinctly.

He saw Ekajati in another dream, standing with legs apart, on her head she had a tripod and skull cup with a torma, inside of which Guru Dewa Chenpo sat amidst scintillating rainbow light. As he looked, Guru Rinpoche dissolved into the torma and the torma dissolved into the rakta in the skull cup which then began to boil over. Ekajati immediately took down the skull cup, handed it to Chokling and said, "Drink this!" He drank it and then awoke, so drunk he could not stand.

One day Dzongsar Khyentse told him of a special stone of Ekajati which could be discovered at a certain place. Finding it, Chokling gave it to Dzongsar Khyentse.

Chokling Pema Gyurme once went to a charnel ground with Gona Tulku to find some skulls. They searched many corpses and Chokling took one skull. He hid it under his bed where it made noises and bounced around all night long. A few days later Dzongsar Khyentse asked him if he hadn't found a new skull. Realizing that Dzongsar Khyentse possessed higher perceptions, he answered yes. Khyentse then said, "I need that skull!"

After staying at Dzongsar for quite some time, he returned to his own residence. He further developed the existing retreat center. At the monastic study center, Tsültrim Nyima was the first khenpo. After his death the next khenpo was Kuma Rinchen, then Khenpo Palden. The fourth, Khenpo Yeshe Rigdzin, was jailed by the

Chinese together with Khenpo Palden.

Chokling also established many shrines with representations of the Buddha's body, speech and mind. These included a one-story tall statue of Guru Rinpoche made of gold and copper and also life-size images of the 25 disciples.

Neten Chokling Pema Gyurme later became a tantric lay practitioner and married a daughter of the Langtsang family.

During his life Chokling Pema Gyurme gave many empowerments and transmissions, chiefly of the *Tersar*, which he passed on four times. On the first occasion, he gave the transmission to 40 great lamas, tulkus and many other people at Neten Monastery. During the empowerment of *Sampa Lhündrub*, all were at the point of fainting. Afterwards everyone asked, "What happened, what happened?" His disciples had all had different visions and wept out of devotion. Among those promising to practice the *Kunsang Tuktig* were many who later could pass freely through solid rock.

The second time he gave the *Tersar* was at Nyishen Monastery where he had many disciples. During the *Sampa Lhündrub* empowerment the wisdom deities entered into many people enabling them to speak Sanskrit. While preparing the empowerment of Tseringma, he heard a noise from the skull cup and when he looked up the nectar was boiling. Within the vapor, he saw the five Tseringma sisters who played their hand drums before dissolving into the nectar.

Chokling performed many drubchens in Kham. Once, during a medicine drubchen, the dry medicine placed in a skull-cup later turned into nectar. When his patrons died and he performed the phowa transference from a distance of one day's walk, the corpse's head would jerk and from the top some hairs would fly off. Similar in character to the previous Neten Chokling, he drank a lot and took snuff. He was rumoured to have many girlfriends. He was also fond of guns and was a very good shot.

Once, on his way to Lhasa, Dzongsar Khyentse visited Neten Monastery. For the sake of the doctrine and beings, Khyentse ordered Chokling to build a new temple at a place called Kawading where a temple built at the time of King Songtsen Gampo lay in ruins. With many people working under him Chokling set to work.

Dzongsar Khyentse informed Chokling of some obstacles and asked him to perform the *dokpa* ceremony of Terchen Chokgyur Lingpa's *Yamantaka* to remove

them. He did the retreat at the Tsegyal cave. First he placed the *dokpa* torma in a huge iron bowl. After performing the Yamantaka recitation for seven days, he took the *dokpa* out and placed it upon a big rock. When people looked the next morning, both the *dokpa* and the bowl had completely disappeared. A few days later, he did the recitation for three days, putting the *dokpa* on a stone plate. It disappeared again. He waited three days more and resumed the practice, this time placing the *dokpa* in a tiny plate and reciting for only one day. At dusk, he enjoined Yamantaka intensely and the earth trembled. His cave was very deep and from deep inside a long low sound like a bellowing buffalo accompanied the removal of the torma. The fiery torma flew into the southern sky and disappeared together with the sound. His attendants all fled outside in fear. Inside, Chokling continued exhorting and beating the drum. In his vision the cave became crowded with dogs running back and forth. A huge ferocious dog with striped markings ran up to Chokling and dropped a still-palpating heart into his lap. The next morning people saw a lot of blood on the stone where the torma had been placed.

For the construction of the Kawading temple Chokling had to go to Nangchen. One night, asleep in his tent, he dreamed one of his girlfriends said, “These times are not good. Dzongsar Khyentse has gone to India and you should go as well.” Awakening, he immediately ordered, “Saddle up right away!” and went to Neten Monastery where he told some of his special patrons and friends that they should leave for India. They prepared for seven days and then set out for Lhasa. People thought he had gone crazy, “He has just started to build a monastery, spending all the wealth of the previous incarnations, and now he is leaving!” Sometimes he said he would not return. Anyway, he went straight to Lhasa, taking only the complete edition of the *Chokling Tersar* with him. He visited the sacred places of Lhasa, such as Samye. Having been to Lhasa before, he did not stay long but went directly to Sikkim and met Dzongsar Khyentse to whom he offered the statue Tsedrub Dorje Trengwa as well as long life ceremonies. “Had Dzongsar Khyentse remained in retreat for three months, he would have lived for 113 years,” Chokling said. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Dzongsar Khyentse later returned the statue to Chokling and said, “It did not help for this life.” Chokling then went on pilgrimage in India and Nepal before returning to Sikkim. As a priest of the royal household, he performed many supporting ceremonies.

Dzongsar Khyentse then passed away, and to fulfill his guru's wishes Chokling Pema Gyurme made another pilgrimage. In Nepal, many practitioners of the *Chokling Tersar* invited him to Nubri. On the way he gave the *Chokling Tersar* to more than 200 monks and nuns at Thar Drupche. At Ru Monastery in Nubri he gave the *Chokling Tersar* transmission to more than 500 people. He also performed the drubchen of *Tukdrub Barchey Künsel* and gave the explanations of the *Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo*. People were astonished at his learning and his teachings were too profound for most of them to understand.

Returning to India, Chokling met H.H. Karmapa at House Khas in Delhi. Karmapa told him to start a center in India and gave him a lot of advice. He then proceeded to Tso-pema and founded Padma Ewam Chögar, where he also performed a drubchen. He traveled to many different places, performing drubchens with large groups of people.

During his youth, Chokling had many dreams in which a man dressed in leaves stretched out long arms. He once asked the man his name and the man replied that he was Shenpa, one of the protectors of Phurpa. "In the future I will give you a place in India," Shenpa said. Later on, with the help of foreign aid, he bought land in Bir. He did social work in order to help poor Tibetans. More than 1,000 people, mostly from Derge and Nangchen, live in Bir where he built houses for nearly 300 families. He also began the construction of a second Neten monastery in India called Tenchok Gyurme Ling.

Together with H.H. Karmapa, Khamtrül Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, Dzongnor Rinpoche, Katok Ongtrül and other lamas and Khampa chiefs, Chokling began the Tibetan Welfare Association to help poor refugees. He had direct contacts with the Indian Government as well as with foreign aid associations. Some high officials at the Central Tibetan Co-operation Society were unhappy about that, so he was in slight discord with that group.

Chokling Pema Gyurme revealed many terma teachings and, from an early age, had many visions of the Copper-Colored Mountain. Notes on these visions were lost in Tibet. From Yegyäl Namkhadzö he discovered the *Khandro Gongdü Nyingpo*. Likewise, in Bodhgaya he had a vision of Senge Dongma and received an extraordinary terma. At Tso-pema he had many visions of Guru Rinpoche and received teachings on how to supplicate the protectors of Tso-pema.

He once traveled to Varanasi with Khamtrül Rinpoche and they stayed in a bungalow. In the afternoon everybody had a nap because of the intense heat. Feeling that he should go out, Chokling got up. Not knowing how he had arrived there, he found himself in a forest conversing with a dignified *atsara* wearing a tiger skin skirt. The *atsara* was Guru Rinpoche. Giving some advice, his last words were “See you again soon!” Chokling turned to go back, taking two or three steps. Then, with still more questions, he looked around but the man was gone. He suddenly felt as if he had woken up and found himself in the deer park in Varanasi. He had no shoes on, having gone straight from his bed. He had trouble getting back.

Chokling performed many *drubchens* in Bir. At the age of 47 he had an accident on the road from Delhi and died instantly from a skull fracture. Later he revived, took a long breath and then passed away. It was on the 19th day of the twelfth month. Unknown to anyone, he had left a letter of advice. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Khamtrül Rinpoche, Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö’s reincarnation, Dzongnor Rinpoche and others were invited to come and perform the cremation ceremonies. A golden stupa, studded with jewels and decorated with many precious metals was made in his memory. It contains his relics and was placed in the temple in Bir.

The fourth Neten Chokling.

His reincarnation, the fourth Neten Chokling, was recognized by both H.H. Karmapa and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Born on the tenth day of the eighth month to a poor family in Bhutan, Karmapa named him Gyurme Dorje. At the age of seven, he was taken to his monastery in Bir and enthroned by Khyentse Rinpoche in Clement Town at the monastery Ngedön Gatsal Ling. Before arriving in his home monastery he was enthroned in Rumtek by H.H. Karmapa. He has received the transmissions of the *Kangyur*, *Nyingma Gyübum*, *Nyingma Kama*, *Rinchen Terdzö*, and *Chokling Tersar* as well as many other teachings from Khyentse Rinpoche. People say many things about him, such as that he has left foot prints in rock, but I haven’t seen them.

Epilogue

As I was asked to tell the life of Chokgyur Lingpa and something about his teachings. These five chapters contain the life story of Terchen Chokgyur Lingpa, his visions, his teachings, brief accounts of his descendants, as well as life stories of the incarnation lineages of the two monasteries. I have stated everything here very briefly and freely. The dating or sequence might be incorrect, but this repeats what I have heard. Besides the biography of Chokling Terchen, no other work on these subjects exists.

Tashi Delek

Orgyen Tobgyal

On the 21st of the fifth month in 1983 I recounted the life of Chokling Terchen and so forth at Chanteloube in France. Tulku Jigmey translated while it was taped. I later expanded and improved what had been taped and this was translated by Erik Pema Kunsang and written down with the help of many Dharma friends.

This version was completed during the first performance of the *White Amitayus* drubchen of Chokgyur Lingpa on the 12th of February, 1984, and later edited by Judith Amtzis at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling Monastery in Nepal.

This book was re-edited by Richard Arthure on October 30th, 1997 at Ka-Nying Shedrub Ling, with the wish that the tradition and teachings of Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa may spread far and wide and continue to bring benefit to countless beings.

This new edition was edited by Michael Tweed, at Sky Canyon, Leggett Ca. October 2000.

¹ Vairotsana had a problem with one of King Trisong Deutsen's queens. At that time Vairotsana was passing on teachings to the king. The queen continually made obstacles. Vairotsana prayed to the Dharma Protectors for help in pacifying the queen. She subsequently suffered from headaches for six months. Vairotsana could complete the transmission. However, there was still some residual karma. When reincarnated as Jamgön Kongtrül, he was struck by this particular disease.

² This is the famous *Vajradhatu Aspiration*, sometime nicknamed *Urgyen Soldeb*.

³ *Düpeydo* ('dus pa'i mdo) is the main scripture of Anu Yoga. *Gyutrül* (sgyu 'phrul) is the main

Maha Yoga tantra. *Semdey* (sems sde) is the Mind Section of Dzogchen Ati Yoga and in this context includes the other two sections: *Longdey* (klong sde), the Space Section, and *Men-ngak Dey* (man ngag sde), the Instruction Section.

4. (The tulku of Tsangsar Ngaktrin.)
5. (The tulku of Tsangsar Sönam Yeshe.)
6. (The tulku of Gegyal Sertsa Göñ.)
7. (The tulku of Tersey Tsewang Drakpa.)
8. The father of the author.