

NOTES REGARDING TULKU NYIMA GYALTSSEN RINPOCHE

Dear Friends,

During an interview lasting many hours, I obtained the following information regarding Tulku Nyima Gyaltsen Rinpoche (“TNGR”) from Lama Garga, a student of TNGR’s who lives at the hermitage with TNGR. Lama Garga has been TNGR’s student for 13 years; he is one of 25 Abbots appointed by TNGR at Dokho Monastery over the last 12 years. Lama Garga spent 6 years at the Dokho Philosophical School, was a Monastery Disciplinarian for 3 years, and has lived at the hermitage for 7 years. Lama Garga had practiced the Longchen Nyinthig ngondro for 6 years but, under TNGR’s guidance, Lama Garga is now engaged in the “uncommon” practices.

Lama Garga suggested that there are three primary activities that we as students should do (in order of importance): 1) practice according to TNGR’s instructions; 2) meet TNGR’s physical needs; 3) donate money, clothes and other items to TNGR. Having been his student for these many years, Lama Garga believes that TNGR’s current teachings provide a clear indication that TNGR is nearing full enlightenment. Lama Garga made the point that we are very fortunate to receive teachings from TNGR at this time.

TNGR does not refuse any requests for assistance. In the “old” days, TNGR would ride a horse for days to perform Bardo rites for a deceased, regardless of the weather or other hardships (it must be kept in mind that distances can be great in Tibet and horse back travel can be difficult). TNGR routinely receives many gifts and money, but he gives all of this to the community. TNGR does not keep anything for himself and lives a very humble existence in his run-down hermitage [which I have verified].

TNGR was born in the village of Skimdüt. When TNGR was born, rainbows were seen over his family's nomadic tent. A Lama named Tatse was called to see the newborn. Lama Tatse advised TNGR's parents that TNGR would become a highly realized Lama and had to be kept clean. Lama Tatse also gave TNGR's parent's 7 Wisdom-God pills. At the time of his birth, TNGR had one tooth and hair. TNGR was born clean, as if he was covered in plastic during his birth. TNGR's parents were poor nomads and were unable to keep him clean, as prescribed by Lama Tatse. Early in his life, TNGR did not talk and lost his thumbnail. Lama Tatse determined that these problems occurred because TNGR's parents failed to keep him clean during his first year of life.

Lama Tatse scolded TNGR's parents for failing to keep TNGR clean. TNGR's parents were frustrated so they responded, if TNGR is to be a highly realized Lama, why didn't he keep clean on his own! Later, in order to ascertain TNGR's status, his father went to Gyatso Monastery for guidance. The High Lama at Gyatso (whose name is unknown to Lama Garga) put TNGR's cap under his pillow that night. During his sleep, the High Lama dreamt of Khenpo Ngagchung. This was the first indication of TNGR's prior incarnation. The Lama who made the final determination that TNGR was the voice reincarnation of Khenpo Ngagchung was Jamyang Kyentse Chokyi Wangpo.

Eventually, TNGR began his formal studies at Nu-she Monastery. TNGR entered the Philosophical School at Nu-she and was able to master his subjects within two to three years (amazingly fast). While at Nu-she, for extended periods, TNGR ate only lunch and fasted the remainder of the day. TNGR embarked on studies of the Thirteen Buddhist doctrines. During this period, TNGR had a vision of White Manjushri, in

which Manjushri instructed TNGR to study and pray from two specific pages in *The Guide to the Words of My Perfect Teacher*. TNGR followed Manjushri's instructions and consistently prayed from these pages. As a result of his studies and prayers, TNGR aroused his wisdom mind and was able to learn the Thirteen Buddhist doctrines and other matters with almost no study. TNGR learned so much material, that it would take forty days for someone to recite it all. In fact, TNGR is widely known throughout Tibet for his ability to memorize enormous amounts of material.

TNGR spent seventeen years hiding in the mountains and forests to evade the Chinese government during the Cultural Revolution. During this time, TNGR endured great hardship. TNGR was forced to move frequently and live in very difficult circumstances in run-down facilities. It was only after the Chinese government stopped hunting Tibetan Lamas that TNGR was able to go to Dokho Monastery

Lama Garga also told me the following story about Khenpo Ngagchung. As a young boy, Khenpo one day was pouring tea for senior Lamas. Khenpo Ngagchung accidentally spilled the tea, so a monk scolded Khenpo. The monk told Khenpo that he should use his eyes when he was pouring tea. Khenpo replied by quoting from the passage in the Heart Sutra (which he had been studying at the time), which reads: "there is no eye, no ear, no nose" etc. Khenpo then questioned the Lama, how can I use my "eyes?" The Lama replied that Khenpo should explain how it is that he has eyes. Neither the Lama, nor Khenpo was able to answer the other's question. So, Khenpo seriously contemplated the questions raised during the discussion. At some point in time, Dharmakirti, one of Lord Buddha's disciples, appeared to Khenpo and gave him a philosophy book to study while Khenpo tended to his animals. Longtoug Tenpa Nyima,

a teacher for Khenpo, was a main disciple of Patrul Rinpoche, author of *The Words of My Perfect Teacher*.

Lama Garga told me that to complete the prayer *Supplication to the Lineage Gurus* contained in the Longchen Nyinthig ngondro up to and including TNGR, we should add the following verses:

Compassionate God - Avalokiteshvara - Rigzen Wangchuk

A successor to the Wisdom God – Nyima Gyaltsen.

I hope you find this information enjoyable and useful.

From 1992-1993, Tulku Nyima taught at the Sichuan Provincial School of Buddhist Studies. During that time he also served as Professor at the School of Scriptural Studies at Dokho Monastery, and from 1994 until 2000, Tulku Nyima was Khenpo at the Monastery. In 2002, Tulku Nyima became Abbot and served until 2005. In 2002, he taught at the Beijing School of Buddhist Studies. In 2003, Tulku Nyima taught at the University of VA, as well as at several Buddhist Centers on the East and West coasts.