

THE GEDEN PHACHO BHUCHO PROJECT

Preserving the Sacred Lineages of Empowerments and Oral Transmissions of the Geden (Gelug) Tradition of Tibetan Buddhism

The Geden tradition of Tibetan Buddhism was founded by the highly revered Buddhist master and scholar Lama Tsong Khapa, in the 14th century. Born in Eastern Tibet in 1357, Je Tsong Khapa studied the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni extensively from an early age, favouring the use of both powerful meditation techniques and incisive intellectual understanding. He explored the entire range of doctrine in all Buddhist schools flourishing at the time and sought to synthesise these into a cohesive whole. Tsong Khapa's legacy is enormous; he is credited with having revitalised many Sutric and Tantric lineages which would otherwise have become extinct. The thirty seven volumes which comprise the Collected Works of Je Tsong Khapa [and his two chief disciples, Gyalsab Dharma Rinchen and Khedrup Gelek Palsang] form the root texts containing their precious teachings and commentaries known as "Phacho" in Tibetan ("Teachings of the Fathers"). The works of their immediate disciples and their followers, together with commentaries of Indian Buddhist scholars are known as "Bhuchho" in Tibetan ("Teachings of the Sons").

The importance of pure Lineage Transmission in the form of Buddhism practiced in Tibet is immense. It ensures a stream of undiluted Blessing from the Buddha himself to contemporary students and is considered essential for the ultimate realization of Buddhahood. If a Lineage is broken, then the teachings themselves are threatened. Without qualified teachers giving correct personal oral Transmissions, the extraordinary Blessings, Enlightened understanding and spiritual energy of previous Masters cannot be passed on effectively.

Since 1959, when Tibetans began to leave Tibet and settle in many parts of the world, many precious teachings have already been lost. Often older Tibetan Lamas pass away, without having fully transmitted the teachings they held to the younger generation. If this continues to happen, some of Tsong Khapa's precious legacy is at risk of being lost forever. Work on the preservation of the Lineage teachings needs to be carried out now, or many of the vast and profound teachings of the Geden tradition may not survive for long. This will be a great loss not only to Tibetan Buddhists, but also to the whole world as this wise and unique tradition has much to offer humanity.

This project aims to focus at first on conducting comprehensive research into all known Lineages of the Geden tradition and successfully preserving as many Transmission Lineages as possible.

We have begun to realize these objectives:

1) ESTABLISHMENT OF MAIN OFFICE AND REFERENCE CATALOGUE

In August 2006, an office was established in Dharamsala, India to act as a base for the huge task of collecting data and vital research so that the initial stage of the project could begin. A network of volunteer field researchers working in different regions was also established. The office has a full time staff of three:

- Geshe Choze Wangyal, Chief Researcher, who spent over 20 years previously at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives;
- Chime Dorjee, Research Coordinator, a graduate of the Dialectic School in Dharamsala;
- Tenzin Dolma, Administrative Secretary and Bookkeeper.

Although most of the intensive research is being carried out at the Dharamsala office, much critical information is being collected by field researchers and monastic institutions. New findings are constantly analysed, researched and incorporated into the Reference Catalogue.

2) CONFERENCES, PROGRAMME OF ORAL TRANSMISSIONS AND TEACHINGS

On the advice of Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, Prime Minister, our 1st conference was held at the Norbulingka Institute in Dharamsala in June, 2006. H.H. Ganden Tripa gave a lecture, followed by the reading of a message from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Talks were given by Mr Lobsang Nyima (Minister of Religion and Culture),

Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche and several prominent Masters. After this, meetings were held to discuss the project and map out a course of action, which is now being implemented.

From data collected so far, including many prominent Scholars' records of teachings they have received and transmissions and empowerments they hold, we have identified those teachings which are in greatest danger of being lost due to a) no one having previously realized this and requested their transmission; b) the age of the Lineage Holders, many of whom are over 70 years old.

Realising how important it was to start the work without further delay, we held our first set of teachings in July, 2007 at Ganden Monastery in South India, where Lati Rinpoche gave rare and precious teachings to many hundreds of lamas and monks.

Following this successful event, in December, 2007 Kyabje Dhakpa Tritul Rinpoche kindly accepted our request to give some very rare teachings at Sera Me Monastery in South India. Many important Tulkus and Lamas attended, making this another success.

During the December teachings, we held our 2nd conference at Drepung Monastery, to report our progress and discuss how we can proceed more quickly, especially as we noted that since the inception of the project, five major Lineage Holders have sadly passed away.

OUR PLANS FOR 2008 AND BEYOND (some of the teaching dates below may change because of the current situation)

The next Teachings are scheduled for March in Dharamsala, when Kyabje Denma Loche Rinpoche will follow His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Spring teachings with 10 days of rare teachings in the Main Temple; GesheYonden will teach at Drepung Gomang in South India for 25 days in August; Kyabje Rizong Rinpoche will teach for 20 days at Tashilhunpo Monastery in South India in December, 2008 In January, 2009, DhakpaTritul Rinpoche will give 15 days teachings at Sera Monastery.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

The Catalogue of the Transmission Lineages of the Geden tradition will have the following features:

- Title of the texts;
- Classification as per the subject matter: Sutra or Tantra;
- Categorisation according to different Lineages: Oral Transmission or Empowerment;
- A short life history of each of the successive Teachers/Masters of each Lineage;
- Information on whether each Transmission Lineage is extant or broken;
- If extant, which Masters still hold the Transmission;
- If broken, how this happened; and
- In case of doubt, efforts will be made to verify the truth and these will be recorded to continually update the information in the Catalogue.

The process of compilation of the Catalogue will continue until all Lineages and their Holders are properly identified. In the meantime, the process of the transmission of Lineages to the younger generation has begun.

PHASE ONE: Identification of the Lineage Holder/Master and Disciple and the Transmission of Lineages

The First and Second Phase are intertwined with each other. In the First Phase, compilation of the Reference Catalogue is given priority, whereas in the Second Phase, it is the actual meeting of the Lineage Holders and the establishment of a process for the transmission of Lineages to the most appropriate disciples/students which is given more importance. However, these two activities can be done concurrently:

Step 1. Identify the lineages which are extant and their holders, with the help of revered Masters of the Geden tradition. Also identify all the doubtful cases and prove beyond doubt the status of a Lineage, whether extant or broken;

Step 2. Identify a group of highly qualified students or disciples, who shall receive the oral transmission of Lineages from their Holders;

Step 3. Facilitate the transmission of Lineages from the Holders to the students/disciples. Provided there are enough funds available, the project will facilitate transmissions of Lineages to all identified students/disciples. In

some cases, students will need to travel to many different places to meet the Lineage Holders. It may become practical to prioritise Teachings according to their rarity.

PHASE TWO: Completion and Follow-Up

Once the compilation of the Reference Catalogue is completed and all the existing Lineages are successfully transmitted from their Holders to the students/disciples, the project will be said to be complete. With this, the great legacy of Je Tsong Khapa and his Teachings could be secure for at least the next five decades.

Although this project is designed and expected to be completed within a decade, for the long-term sustainability of the project and the perpetuation of the great legacy of Tsong Khapa and the Founding Fathers of the Geden tradition, the Lelung Dharma Trust (a charitable organisation based in the UK), and the Project Director, H.E. Lelung Rinpoche, will be entrusted with the regular maintenance and continual updating of the Reference Catalogue in the future.

BOARD OF ADVISORS

The Geden Phacho Bhuchho Project for the Preservation of the Sacred Lineages of Empowerments and Oral Transmissions of the Geden (Gelug) Tradition was conceived of by H.E. Lelung Rinpoche and has been widely applauded and endorsed by many great Masters and Tulkus (incarnate holy beings) of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Without the guidance of these spiritual Masters, it would be impossible to embark on this journey. It is extremely good fortune for the whole of humanity that this project has the Blessings of these most highly revered Teachers.

Supreme Patron:

- H.H. The Dalai Lama

Honorary Patron:

- Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche

Chief Advisors:

- Ganden Tri Rinpoche
- Shartse Choje Rinpoche
- Jangtse Choje Rinpoche

Honorary Advisors:

- Denma Locho Rinpoche, Dharamsala, North India
- Dhakpa Tritul Rinpoche, Sera Monastery, South India
- Dagyab Rinpoche, Bonn, Germany
- Rato Khyongla Rinpoche, New York, USA
- Choden Rinpoche, Sera Monastery, South India
- Dagpo Rinpoche, Paris, France
- Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Nepal
- Doboomb Tulku, Delhi, India
- Lati Rinpoche
- Panchen Oetrul Rinpoche
- Khalkha Jetsun Dampa Rinpoche

Field Researchers:

- Abbot, Segyu Dratsang Tantric Monastery, India
- Gen Choeze Wangyal, formerly Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharamsala, North India
- Chime Dorjee

Field Research Consultants/Sponsor Liaison:

- Tobden Rinpoche (Abbot, Gyuto Monastery)
- Jhado Rinpoche (formerly Namgyal Monastery)

Field Researchers' helpers

- Gyuto Gen Samten
- Gyume Gen Chime

Reference Catalogue Consultants:

- Thubten Jinpa Langri, Canada
- Beri Jigme

- Sangye Tendar
- Lobsang Choephel

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further inquiries, suggestions and much-needed financial support, please contact:

Project Director: H.E. Lelung Rinpoche

lelungtib@hotmail.com

gedenpb@yahoo.co.in

Project Coordinator, Canada: Dolma Tulotsang

dolma@tashilhunpo.org

Project Management:

Lelung Dharma Trust:

27 St. Edmunds Avenue,

Ruislip, Middlesex

HA4 7XW, UK

Telephone +44 (0) 1895 639440

E-mail: info@lelung.org

www.gedenphachobhucho.org

Donations can be made online or by bank transfer to us:

Lelung Dharma Trust

Barclays Bank

London W12 8GG

Account number: 50994944 Sort Code 20 41 41

IBAN: GB04 BARC 20414150994944

SWIFT: BARCGB22