

## **THE ZHABDRUNG PHUNSUM TSHOGPA**

Arya Avaloketesvara was reborn in many forms as Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Kings in different universe and at different times. Of all the different forms that Arya Avaloketesvara manifested, I would like to explain the birth account in accordance with the Phunsum Tshogpa.

### **1. Supreme Noble Jigten Wangchuk (Arya Avalokitesvara)**

Firstly, in the abode of Sukhavati (the land of bliss) in audience of the Buddha Amitabha, He arose himself in the form of Bodhisattva Avaloketesvara, and benefited countless sentient beings. After Parinirvana of Buddha Amitabha, Avaloketesvara will succeed the Buddha of Sukhavati and Bodhisattva Vajrapani will succeed Avaloketesvara.

### **2. Rigden Padma Karpo**

In the second reincarnation, he was born as King Rigden Padma Karpo of Shambhala, in the northern hemisphere. He was prophesized by Sakyamuni Buddha to take rebirth in Shambhala, write detailed commentary on Kalachakra Tantra and benefit countless beings. Accordingly, Avaloketesvara took the reincarnation of Rigdhen Padma Karpo, became a great master and propagator of the Tantrayana.

### **3. Dharma King Songtsen Gampo**

The third reincarnation was Songtsen Gampo (629-710), the 33<sup>rd</sup> Dharma King of Tibet, who introduced the first light of the Buddha Dharma in Tibet. It was during his glorious reign that hundreds of temples were built in order to bless the region. The two famous Buddha statues, Jow Sakya Muni and Jow Mikoed Dorji were brought to Tibet from China and Nepal respectively. He sent several bright students including his minister Thumi Khenpo Sambotra to India to study language and literature. The Tibetan script was also formulated and grammars written during his glorious reign. Many sacred texts including twenty-one teachings on Avalokitesvara and the Prajnaparamitas were also translated into Tibetan language from Sanskrit for the first time. He codified laws based on Lhachod Geywa Chu (Ten Divine Virtues) and Michoed Tsangma Chudru (Sixteen Principles of Moral Conduct), as per Buddhist philosophy and teachings.

### **4. Khenchen Zhiwa Tsho**

Fourth reincarnation was the great Khenchen Zhiwa Tsho (Abbot Shanti Rakchita), who benefited countless sentient beings in the Indian sub-continent and the Himalayan countries. He was one of the famous chancellors of Nalanda University. Under his supervision and directions the first Sangha community was set up in Tibet. He was also attributed for Guru Padma Sambhava's arrival, building of the great Samye Monastery, modeled on O-Tantra Puri monastery and spread of Tantrayana Buddhism in Tibet. He was believed to have lived for over nine hundred years, propagating the Buddha Dharma in northern plains of India, Nepal, Tibet and other Himalayan countries.

## **5. Great Pandita Naropa**

The fifth reincarnation was the Great Pandit Naropa (964- ). He was born in Zahor, present day Kashmir. He was a leading professor at the famous Nalanda University. After following Tilopa as shadow for twelve years, he attained full enlightenment. Among the Eighty-four Maha Sidhas of India, he and his master Tilopa were known as the Moon and the Sun, and therefore were considered the crown jewel of all Maha Sidhas. Naropa taught the yoga on Psychic Heat, Illusory Body, Dream Yoga, Intermediate State, Clear Light and Transmigration of the Soul received from Tilopa extensively that these teachings later came to be known as the Six Yogas of Naropa. It was believed that Naropa had thousands of accomplished disciples such as Maha Sidha Maitripa and great translator Marpa Choiki Lodrey. He attained rainbow body at the end.

## **6. Dharma Lord Gampopa**

The sixth reincarnation was Dhakpo Lhaje (1079-1153), popularly known as Choeje Gampopa. He was born in Ngyel village of Dagpo province, in the Ngyiwa clan, in Earth Sheep Year in the 1<sup>st</sup> Rabjung. Gampopa flourished the teachings of Kargyuid all over Tibet, which later came to be known as Palden Dakpo Kargyud tradition. He combined the teachings of Atisha's Kadam and Milarepa's Mahamudra. Gampopa was prophesied by Lord Buddha Sakyamuni in the White Lotus Sutra and Dho Tingzin Gyelpo. Guru Padma Sambhava also prophesied Gampopa as his reincarnation:

I, Ugyen, will be born as Lhaje in lower Ngyel.  
With whose guidance, several enlightened practitioners will appear in Ngyel.

## **7. Palden Drukpa Tsangpa Jarey**

The seventh reincarnation was Choeje Tsangpa Ja-rey (1161-1211), born in the lineage of Ja clan, in Tibet. His name, clan, year of birth and as reincarnation of Naropa is clearly spelled-out in the prophecy given by Lord Buddha in Jampel Tsawai Gyud as:

After my Parinirvana, at the passage of 2200 years,  
My monk Sonam Ngyingpo, will be born in Tibet.  
In the clan of Ja, in a place called Sa,  
A person with the name Ja will be born who is the re-incarnation of Naropa.

Padmasambhava also prophesized that:

Emanation of Pandit Naropa,  
Tsangpa Ja-rey will come to Druk and Ralung.

Thus, Choeje Tsangpa Ja-rey brought all the twelve divisions of Kargyud together and propagated this unique tradition as Palden Drukpa Kargyud. He discovered the sacred teaching on Ro-nygom Kordruk (six teachings on experiencing the single taste of all phenomena), concealed by Rechungpa at Kharchung Chagphurchen. He also received the

sacred teachings on Tendrel Rabdhuin (Seven Auspicious Teachings), directly from the Seven Buddhas. It is said that the teachings of Drukpa Kargyuid flourished all over the region stretching up to the distance of 18 days flight by a Vulture. There was this famous saying that, “Half of the population are Drukpas; half of the Drukpas are Mendicant; and half of the Mendicants are Drubthop (Siddhas). At the time of his death, many relics including 21 different deities, mostly Avalokitesvara like the Rangjung Khasarpani (Avalokitesvara Khasarpani - see attached picture) were born from his vertebrae. Including the Rangjung Khasarpani, we have four of these self created statues in Bhutan.

## **8. Nangwa Dudrel Sempa**

The Eighth reincarnation was born in the abode of Ngoenpargawa (Abhirati), the Buddha-field of Buddha Dorji Mikoedpa (Akshobhya) as Bodhisattva Nangwa Dhudrel Sempa to help immensely the beings in the pure land and direct them to the path of enlightenment.

## **9. Gyalwang Kuenga Paljor**

The Ninth reincarnation was then as the great translator Gyelwang Je Kuenga Peljor (1428-1476). He was born as prophesied by Guru Rinpoche that;

In the sacred place called Ralung,  
A Bodhisattva named Kuenga,  
With Paljor (richness and glory) of various knowledge,  
Will subdue and benefit most of the sentient beings.

He was blessed by Vajrayogini and received many sacred pith-instructions. Also he received teachings directly from Guru Padmasambhava and Gampopa. He followed the Indian Maha Pandit Nagi Rinchen for several years and had mastered in the sutras.

## **10. Chhoki Drakpa**

The Tenth reincarnation was born in Jayul, as a prince, Jamyang Chhoki Drakpa (1478-1522), in the Earth Dog Year of 8<sup>th</sup> Rabjung. As per prophesy found in the Treasure texts discovered by Tertön Dorji Lingpa, he became a king and propagated the dual fold teachings of Palden Drukpa Kargyud. He received the Whispering Dakini teachings from Rechungpa, accomplished the practices and left behind so many marvelous hand and foot prints on the rocks.

## **11. Omniscient Pundarika/Padma Karpo**

The Eleventh was Omniscient Padma Karpo (1527-1592). He was born in eastern Tibet in Kongpo, in the year Fire Hog of 9<sup>th</sup> Rabjung. At a very tender age, he took refuge in the great Grand Master, Ngawang Choki Gyelpo, the Head Abbot and Crown Jewel of the Drukpa Tradition. He propagated and refined the teachings of Palden Drukpa

Kargyuid. He was one of greatest scholars of Tibet who contributed twenty-four volumes of commentaries and sacred texts.

In Ngyingma tradition, he was listed among the major Tertoen (Treasure Revealer). He had done fathomless service and much benefit for the welfare of sentient beings and for the propagation of the Buddha Dharma that he is considered as the second Buddha.

Further he received twelve auspicious signs of accomplishment, eight visions and four dreams. The main statue in Lhadhen Monastery, self created statue of eleven headed Avalokitesvara, which lay stooping for centuries was restored to its original position by Kuenkhen Padma Karpo's touch and prayers.

## **12. His Holiness Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal**

Finally in the land of sandal wood and herbal medicines, Bhutan, Avaloketsvara appeared in the human form as His Holiness Zhabdrung Rinpoche, Ngawang Tenzin Namgyel (1594-1651) alias Thugchen Duidjom Dorji. Buddha Sakyamuni prophesized the auspicious birth in Goenpo Ngyodrup Jungwai Gyuid as,

Conqueror of the demons of the Samsara,  
Vajra Acharya equal to Vajrasattva will appear.

Guru Padmasambhava also prophesized that,

There will appear a master called Dudjom Dorji,  
Who will be the lord of mystical teachings.

Through his Dharmic activities and the dual form of government, spiritual and temporal, he liberated many beings in this country to freedom. In brief, Zhabdrung Rinpoche unified the country, codified the laws in accordance with the Buddhist principles of Lhachod Geywa Chu (Ten Divine Virtues) and Michod Tsangma Chudru (Sixteen Principles of Moral Conduct). He also developed so many unique cultures and traditions that we are now proud to proclaim as Druk-lug (Bhutanese Traditions).

From Rigzin Yongdui, Padmasambhava further prophesizes Shabdrung's arrival, unification of the southern land, Bhutan and propagation of the Buddha Dharma as-

“On the nose of hill like a sleeping elephant,  
A saint name Namgyel will come,  
Where the two rivers of Thab-shey (Method & Wisdom) meet,  
He will build the base Dzong of the Drukpas.  
This will led to the unification of the land of four doors,  
And spread the Buddha Dharma.  
Thereafter, peace and tranquility will prevail in the Southern Land.”

In another prophesy, Guru Rinpoche foretold;

“Reincarnation of Drukpa Tsangpa Jarey, emanation of Namkhai Ngyingpo;  
Born again as Ngawang Namgyel, will come to the Southern Land.”

As mentioned above, Zhabdrung Rinpoche, the Lord Refuge is the true reincarnation of Arya Avaloketesvara. Therefore, Zhabdrung Rinpoche is also the reincarnation of Guru Padmasambhava of Ugyen, as Guru Rinpoche said;

“I, known as self arisen from Padma,  
Is born forth from the heart of Buddha Amitabha,  
And, reincarnated from the speech of Avaloketesvara”.

Besides prophesizing Gampopa, the 6<sup>th</sup> reincarnation of Zhabdrung Rinpoche as his own emanation, Guru Rinpoche further forecasted that,

“He (Zhabdrung Rinpoche) is one who converses always with me, Ugyen;  
And therefore, one who meets him will be born in the abode of Sukhavati”.

Therefore, we all must know that Zhabdrung Rinpoche is not only sole refuge of Bhutan, but also the protector and refuge of all sentient beings in the world. Moreover, as per Phuinson Tshogpa, Zhabdrung Rinpoche is truly,

“The foundational embodiment of all the past Buddhas (Victorious ones, Jina)  
The source of all the future Buddhas,  
And unparallel and in-differential protector to the present protectors (Buddhas)”.

As quoted and explained above, since His Holiness Zhabdrung Rinpoche is the true embodiment of the past, the future and the present Buddhas, who ever pray and pay homage to the Zhabdrung is like praying and paying homage to all the Buddhas of the three times residing in the ten directions. Therefore, if you pray to the Zhabdrung with faith and devotion, you will end the cycle of suffering and attain enlightenment definitely.

(Lopen Gembo Dorji's Note)